The Aftelife

PART 2

BUILD YOUR LIFE ON THE FOUNDATION OF 11 CORE BIBLICAL TRUTHS

Life Change Objectives

- Joy!!
- To decide to live in the light of eternity in one significant way the next week.

> I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven.
>
> —Philippians 3:14 (NLT)

God has created men and women with a sense that this life is not all there is. The Bible says,

> He has also set eternity in the hearts of men.
>
> —Ecclesiastes 3:11

All of us know instinctively that the grave is not our final destiny. In the last session we explored what the afterlife will be like for unbelievers.

Many questions remain about the specifics of the afterlife for believers:

Where is heaven?

Who will be in heaven?

How will I be judged as a believer?

What will heaven be like?

How can heaven affect my life now?

Where Is Heaven?

Heaven is _____

LORD, I look up to you, up to heaven, where you rule.

—Psalm 123:1 (GNT)

In the Old Testament, heaven is spoken of figuratively in terms of layers of sky. The heavens are where the birds fly, the trees breathe, and the rain falls. This was referred to as the _____.

The heavens are also where the moon and stars move in their orbits. This was referred to as the _____.

The _____, or highest heaven, was said to be where God dwells in a special way.

Heaven is _____

Heaven is God's _____ and the _____ of believers.

I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them."

—Revelation 21:3 (NLT)

One of the names given to heaven is the _____.

But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a heavenly city for them.

—Hebrews 11:16 (NLT)

Who Will Be in Heaven?

In Hebrews 12:22–23 we're told of many inhabitants:

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands of angels gathered together with joy. You have come to the meeting of God's firstborn children whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all people, and to the spirits of good people who have been made perfect.

—Hebrews 12:22–23 (NCV)

This passage tells us that in heaven there will be:

Angels

God

The church

Old Testament believers

As we saw in the last study, the only people who will spend eternity with God are those who choose him in this life.

> That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
>
> —Romans 10:9

A Closer Look

Will babies or children who die go to heaven? *Yes!* Although they are not old enough to be saved, they are kept safe by God's grace. A child (or someone who is mentally handicapped) who dies before reaching the age that they can understand their sin and need for Christ will not be held accountable for what they cannot understand. That would violate both God's justice and God's grace. Although the Bible does not directly answer this question, we can see two specific indications that the answer is yes.

1. God is just and righteous in everything he does.

   > The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.
   >
   > —Psalm 145:17

   He will not make a mistake in any of his judgments.

2. David believed that he would be reunited with his baby who had died (2 Sam. 12:23).

How Will I Be Judged as a Believer?

The Bible tells us of two times of judgment at the end of the world:

1. The _____

   At this judgment those who do not believe in Christ will hear their final judgment and sentencing of separation from God. Those who trust in Christ will not face this judgment.

2. The _____

   In speaking to the believers in Corinth, Paul writes:

   > For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.
   >
   > —2 Corinthians 5:10

   Bema is the Greek word translated "judgment seat" in these verses.

The nature of the bema judgment

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

—1 Corinthians 3:10–15

1. What we've built into our lives that will last will be _____.
2. What we've built into our lives that will not last will be _____.
3. Whatever our rewards or loss, our salvation is _____.

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

—1 Corinthians 4:5

A Closer Look

We're told in Scripture that believers will be rewarded based on three specifics:

1. _____

For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

—Matthew 16:27

2. _____

I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.

—Jeremiah 17:10

3. _____

But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.

—Matthew 12:36

What Will Heaven Be Like?

Six truths to bring you joy

You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

—Psalm 16:11

1. Holiness

And now, all glory to God, who is able to keep you from stumbling, and who will bring you into his glorious presence innocent of sin and with great joy.

—Jude 1:24 (NLT)

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and we have not yet been shown what we will be in the future. But we know that when Christ comes again, we will be like him, because we will see him as he really is.

—1 John 3:2 (NCV)

2. A glorified body

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

—2 Corinthians 5:1

For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

—2 Corinthians 5:4

3. Immortality

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

—Revelation 21:4

For our earthly bodies, the ones we have now that can die, must be transformed into heavenly bodies that cannot perish but will live forever.

—1 Corinthians 15:53 (LB)

4. Satisfaction of all needs

Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.

—Revelation 7:16

5. Sharing of Christ's glory

Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

—Romans 8:17

6. Intimate fellowship with God and other believers

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

—1 Corinthians 13:12

How Can Heaven Affect My Life Now?

Let's look at five specific areas that can affect our lives now by being heavenly minded.

1. Motivation for _____

> Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
>
> —John 14:6

> This is what God told us: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life, but whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.
>
> —1 John 5:11–12 (NCV)

2. Wise use of _____

> Don't store treasures for yourselves here on earth where moths and rust will destroy them and thieves can break in and steal them. But store your treasures in heaven where they cannot be destroyed by moths or rust and where thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your treasure is.
>
> —Matthew 6:19–21 (NCV)

3. Serving the _____

> Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."
>
> —Matthew 25:34–40

Listen, Christian

I was hungry, and you formed a humanities club and discussed my hunger. Thank you.

I was imprisoned and you crept off quietly to your chapel in the cellar and prayed for my release.

I was naked and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.

I was sick and you knelt and thanked God for your health.

I was homeless and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.

I was lonely and you left me alone to pray for me.

You seem so holy, so close to God. But I am still very hungry, and lonely, and cold.

Thank you.[1]

4. Endurance in _____

> So we do not give up. Our physical body is becoming older and weaker, but our spirit inside us is made new every day. We have small troubles for a while now, but they are helping us gain an eternal glory that is much greater than the troubles. We set our eyes not on what we see but on what we cannot see. What we see will last only a short time, but what we cannot see will last forever.
>
> —2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (NCV)

5. Easing of _____

> Since you became alive again, so to speak, when Christ arose from the dead, now set your sights on the rich treasures and joys of heaven where he sits beside God in the place of honor and power. Let heaven fill your thoughts; don't spend your time worrying about things down here.
>
> —Colossians 3:1–2 (LB)

Acting on the Truth

God's Word repeatedly instructs us to shift our focus from earthly matters to focus on God's perspective. Take seven minutes at the beginning or the end of the day for a week to focus on these seven truths:

1. His plan for me will never change.
2. My salvation is safe and secure in heaven, where nothing can destroy it.
3. When he comes for me I will go with him to the home he carefully and lovingly has been preparing for me.
4. Nothing can ever separate me from his love—no pain, no suffering, no tragedy, no hardship, no demon, no horrible mistake on my part, nothing!
5. I am to spend my days learning to love him and to trust him.
6. I am to be his arms and hands of compassion to fellow human beings.
7. And someday, I will join millions of other believers at his throne, and together we will worship him. We will sing with the angels,

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!

—Revelation 5:12

Finish memorizing memory card 9, "The Truth about the Afterlife."

Discussion Questions

1. Do some brainstorming together for a few moments about how great heaven will be by giving one-line completions to the following statements. Have fun with this!

   The greatest thing about heaven will be that I won't have to . . .

   The greatest thing about heaven will be that I will be able to . . .

   A picture that helps me to think of the greatness of heaven is . . .

   In heaven there will be an abundant supply of . . .

   In heaven there will be no . . .

   Someone I'm looking forward to meeting in heaven is . . .

   Something I'm looking forward to doing in heaven is . . .

2. First Corinthians 3:10–15 says that believers who build the wrong things into their lives will "suffer loss" but will be saved. What do you think are some of the things that we build into our lives now that will be "burned up"? What are some of the things that will last? What kind of loss do you think we will suffer?

3. Look again at the list of six things that describe "what heaven will be like." Which two sound the most attractive to you right now? Which one is difficult to understand?

4. How would you like your glorified body to look? What would you like it to be able to do?

5. In what way would you like the truth of heaven to have a greater impact on your daily life?

For Further Study

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