

# BEYOND

*What the Bible says about about life after death*

## — Differences At The End —

John 11 / 2 Peter 3 / Luke 23 / 2 Corinthians 5 / John 14  
Small Group Plan

**Imagine**

*Stepping onto a shore and finding it heaven*

**Imagine**

*Taking hold of a hand and finding it God's hand*

**Imagine**

*Breathing new air and finding it celestial air*

**Imagine**

*Feeling invigorated and finding it immortality*

**Imagine**

*Passing from storm and tempest to an unknown calm*

**Imagine**

*Waking and finding it home*

### **OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...**

- As a child, were your thoughts about the after-life filled with wonder or fear? Explain.
- How has your understanding changed, as you have gotten older?

### **LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...**

**John 11:11**

*After he had said this, he went on to tell them,  
“Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”*

**Sleep is a natural part of our existence. We don't normally fear these moments of rest. In fact, we look forward to them. Sleep may break our contact with reality for a while, but we know that the morning will follow. There are differences between sleep and death. In fact, it is precisely in these differences that we find encouragement and hope.**

## — A DIFFERENT PLACE —

**2 Peter 3:13**

*But in keeping with his promise  
we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth,  
the home of righteousness.*

**Luke 23:43**

*Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

**When we fall asleep at night we expect to wake up in the same place in the morning. We would be surprised to wake up in a different room, in a different town, or even in a different existence altogether. But this is exactly what happens when Christians die. We move from one kind of life to another kind of life. And the experience of waking is one of joy. We will be with Jesus; in a place he has prepared for us.**

- Why do many people fear death and/or the unknown?
- What is the “new earth,” and how is it different from the earth we now live upon?

## — A DIFFERENT BODY —

**2 Corinthians 5:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup> because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

**In this life we wake each morning with the same bodies we went to sleep with. We may feel more rested than the night before, but we experience no basic change. If we were weak at night we are weak in the morning. We have the same hunger and thirst. We have the same diseases. But the sleep of death changes this. We awaken in a new body, a resurrection body. No more weakness, no more pain. Hunger and disease are gone.**

- What is the “earthly tent” that will be destroyed (v. 1), and how it is different from the “heavenly dwelling” (v. 2, 4)?
- How could Paul feel so confident in the face of bad health and death?
- How is God’s Spirit a guarantee of what is to come (v. 5)?
- What are the dangers of over emphasizing beauty and health?
- How do the weaknesses of our current bodies shape the character of our inner life?

## — A DIFFERENT PEOPLE —

*John 14:1-3*

<sup>1</sup> “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

**Each morning we wake up with the same people who were with us the night before. We can dream of those who have already passed on, but when we wake up, they are still gone. But again the sleep of death changes all of this – “many rooms.” When we wake-up from death's sleep we find ourselves with those we have loved and lost. And there is the promise that this great homecoming will only get bigger.**

- How does it feel to know that your relationships will continue on forever?
- Why did Jesus say to the Twelve, “I will come back and take you” “may be where I am?” Why did they need to know this?
- Why did Jesus tell the thief, “today you will be with me?”
- Think of someone you love who is already passed on. Imagine seeing them again in heaven. What will you say to them? How will you feel?

### **USE IT / APPLY IT ...**

- What kind of heart or attitude would walk with God into an unfamiliar future?
- What can you do this week to detach yourself from this **temporary world** and move closer to the coming **permanent world**?
- Why is it good to know that close relationships will be a major part of the afterlife?
- Close by praising God for His amazing presence. Thank Him for making our future so secure. Ask Him for a closer walk here as we wait to walk with Him there.