

BEYOND

What the Bible says about about life after death

— Big Hope —

Psalm 16 / 1 Peter 1 / Acts 2 / 1 Corinthians 15
Small Group Plan

C. S. Lewis wrote a lot about our hope in heaven. Here is one of his best.

Hope is one of the theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do.

It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.

Aim at Heaven and you will get earth “thrown in”: aim at earth and you will get neither.

— from Mere Christianity

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- What strikes you about the Lewis quote?
- How do you respond to his last sentence?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— DAVID PREDICTED OUR BIG HOPE —

Psalm 16:9-11

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, ¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your **Holy One** see decay. ¹¹ You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

- Why did Peter quote these verses and apply them to Jesus in Acts 2?

- Why did David write about his joy — “glad” “rejoices” “fill me with joy”?
- Describe the “*path of life*” (v. 11) that God made known to him.

— JESUS PROVIDED OUR BIG HOPE —

1 Peter 1:3-5

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

- Why is the “new birth” a gift of God’s “great mercy” (v. 3)?
- How does the “resurrection of Jesus Christ” provide us with a “living hope” (v. 3)?
- How does our “faith” activate the “shield” of “God’s power” (v. 5)?

— PETER PROCLAIMED OUR BIG HOPE —

Acts 2:24, 38-39

²⁴ God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him ... ³⁸ “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

- Why was it “impossible for death to keep its hold on” Jesus (v. 24)?
- What is the connection between God raising Jesus (v. 24) and God giving us his “promise” (v. 39) at our “baptism” (v. 38)?

— WE PRACTICE OUR BIG HOPE —

Colossians 3:1-4

¹ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

- How would you define our initial resurrection with Christ (v. 1)? What is it?
- What commitments are you making when you “set your heart on things above”?
- What are you turning from when you do not “set your minds ... on earthly things”?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- How does the hope of heaven in the future help us to live in the here and now?
- How do you feel to be part of the those “who are far off” who are receiving the “promise” of God (v. 39)?
- Close by praising and thanking God for his great promise of heaven.