

# BEYOND

*What the Bible says about about life after death*

## — A Day In Heaven —

### Revelation 5 Small Group Plan



Heaven ...

Somewhere along the way the image of sitting among the clouds playing a harp became a common enough picture that it shows up frequently, not only in conversations, but also in internet searches.

But is this a helpful picture? Is it a compelling image? And more importantly, is it true?

What will our experience in heaven be like?

## OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- A day on earth ...  
Begin your discussion by polling the group ... describe a typical day on earth with all its cruelty, pain and selfishness.
- Now picture a very different place ...  
What would it be like to live in a place
  - without sin?
  - without arrogance?
  - without cruelty/selfishness?
  - without pain?
  - without vengeance?
  - without disease?

## LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

### — HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF WORSHIP —

#### Revelation 5:11

<sup>11</sup> Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. <sup>12</sup> In a loud voice they were saying: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and **glory** and **praise!**” <sup>13</sup> Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be **praise** and **honor** and **glory** and power, for ever and ever!” <sup>14</sup> The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and **worshiped**.

- In scripture, when an angel encounters a human, the angel knows to say something like “don’t be afraid” (Luke 1:13, 30, 2:9-10). Why did the appearance of an angel usually bring fear into the hearts of people?
- Some have pictured heaven as boring. Look again at Rev 5:11. Picture 100 million angels leading us in worship. Describe the impact. Does this image sound boring? Why? Explain.
- And think of the diversity of people gathered to worship God. Revelation 7:1-10 says they will come from “every nation, tribe, people and language.” How can this future picture of heaven enlighten people today who don’t desire to be with those from different nations, races, and languages?

### — HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF SERVICE —

#### Revelation 5:10

You have made them to be a kingdom and priests **to serve our God**.

#### Revelation 7:15

Therefore, they are before the throne of God **and serve him** day and night in his temple.

#### Revelation 22:3

No longer will there be any curse.

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants **will serve him**.

- Name the most enjoyable work of service you have done here on the earth (career, hobbies, building, creating, repairing).
- What is it about the gift of work/service that is so enjoyable?
- Why is our work here on earth so easily infiltrated by greed, arrogance and insecurity?
- Picture a work in heaven that is not stained by greed, arrogance or insecurity. What makes the heavenly work/service different?

## — HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF REST —

### John 14:1-3 1

<sup>1</sup> Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that 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.

### Hebrews 4:1-3, 9-11

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since the promise of **entering his rest** still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. <sup>2</sup> For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. <sup>3</sup> Now we who have believed **enter that rest** ... <sup>9</sup> There remains, then, a **Sabbath-rest** for the people of God; <sup>10</sup> for anyone who **enters God's rest** also rests from their works, just as God did from his. <sup>11</sup> Let us, therefore, make every effort to **enter that rest**, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

- Why has heaven's rest always been a welcome thought for God's people?
- In these texts, how is sharing in God's rest based on faithfulness?
- Describe the kind of faithfulness that prepares us for heaven's rest?

## — HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF RECREATION —

### Revelation 19: 6-9

<sup>6</sup> Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. <sup>7</sup> Let us **rejoice** and **be glad** and give him glory! For the **wedding** of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. <sup>8</sup> Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear" (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people). Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the **wedding supper** of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

- Why do some today find it difficult to think of heaven as a "fun" place?
- This text describes heaven using the imagery of a wedding banquet. Our typical wedding celebration will take place in an afternoon and evening. The typical Jewish wedding took seven days.
- Do you think we will have less enjoyment in heaven than we do here? Explain.
- How will heaven be more enjoyable? — think banquets, celebration, food, dinners.

## — HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP —

### Matthew 8:8-11

<sup>8</sup> The centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup> For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” <sup>10</sup> When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, “Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. <sup>11</sup> I say to you that many will come from the east and the west and will take **their places at the feast** with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

### Luke 23:40-43

<sup>40</sup> But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? <sup>41</sup> We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” <sup>42</sup> Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be **with me in paradise.**”

- Think of your most enjoyable gatherings of family or friends - holidays, vacations, etc? What happens at these gatherings that make them so enjoyable?
- Would heaven’s gathering be less enjoyable than our greatest moments of companionship, friendship and fellowship? How would it be more?
- What kind of presence — “with me” — was Jesus promising to the criminal (v. 43)? Was he taking him to the “criminal” division of heaven or to the undivided, full-fellowship of heaven? Explain.

## USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- We all know that God uses our language and imagery in an attempt to describe the limitless value of heaven (gold, pearls, etc.) and that heaven’s reality is far beyond our ability to even comprehend. Nevertheless, there are categories that shine through and touch us deeply.
- Of the five categories we looked at today — Worship, Service, Rest, Recreation and Fellowship, which touches you most deeply? Explain why.
- Close in prayer by thanking God for His amazing presence right here in our present world. Ask for His strength to use your time here to prepare your “heart, soul, mind and strength” (Mark 12:30) for an even more amazing time in the next world.