

DAY IN THE PARK: Saturday, October 6 from 10 to 4! Be there!

Small Group Leader Lesson: September 30

This week Pastor Tim's message is going to focus in on salvation (God's City is My Home) as a central part of this message found in Revelation 21:5-8. I encourage you to follow that lead to the extent that we want everyone to know that their name is written in the book of life so that they will be in Heaven with Christ.

Even as a Christian, when I reflect on the salvation message my faith grows stronger, my service becomes more fruitful, and my worship is more genuine. Praise God together.

You may have a group of strong Christians that have all been assured of their salvation. If so then just follow this study guide to reinforce our understanding of Heaven and dig into the details.

The next few weeks will be a good time to begin (if you haven't already) to dig into some of the questions in the book. Specifically I encourage you to dive into the discussion about our physical bodies and about our relationships in which we tackle this week.

What's New Earth Going to be Like?

Revelation 21:5-11

Memory Verse: Revelation 21:5

*"He who was seated on the throne said, **"I am making everything new!"** Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'"*

These words of Christ are so encouraging to me and one of my favorite verses in scripture. Knowing that Jesus Christ makes all things new are words that carry me through all trials and tough times in life! For me, the most moving moment in the movie, "The Passion of the Christ" was when Jesus collapsed under the weight of the cross and his mother ran to him. His encouraging words and promise came right from this verse, "Behold, I make all things new." (KJV). This brought tears to my eyes because I was reminded through this scene about passion. To redeem and restore what was lost. Our worn out death bound bodies, our aged and cursed earth, and our sin filled lives, and our separation from the God who made us. All of these things are made new by the blood of Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord!

In a loud voice we sing, "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" Revelations 5:12

Weekly Reading:

- Day 1 1 Corinthians 15:1-11
- Day 2 1 Corinthians 15:12-34
- Day 3 1 Corinthians 15:35-58
- Day 4 Revelation 21:9-21
- Day 5 Revelation 21:22-27

Study Questions:

- 1 How does the present Heaven, which we talked about last week, differ from the New Earth?

Let this question move you wherever it may go. It is ok to say, "I'm not sure but let's see what God says." Although it is obvious that present heaven has many of the attributes of our eternal home on new earth such as the presence of God, the tree of life and inexpressible beauty the one thing that is absent is our resurrected bodies on the resurrected earth. Plus it would seem that there are additional rewards which we have not yet studied but are still coming (Revelation 22:12). With that in mind it is good to study what God has in store for us!

On pages 82-85 in the book *Heaven* by Randy Alcorn, he charts three eras of mankind and earth. It is a great way to begin to compare human history and human destiny as we look at the past (Genesis 1 & 2), present (Genesis 3- Revelation 20), and future (Revelation 21 & 22). Use this chart to help begin to understand

- 2 What do you find most encouraging about this chart?

Discuss some of the highlights that you find in this chart. If others have the big book have them share. If your group does not have the big Heaven book then you will need to share the chart with them yourself. For me, God dwells face to face with humans! Paradise regained and magnified! Mankind unable to sin, permanently empowered!

- 3 After reading 1 Corinthians 15, what is the importance of understanding and believing in the physical resurrection of the body?

Study 1 Corinthians 15 in great detail. Focus in on verses 12-21. Also read in verses 42-44. And the highlight for me comes in verses 55-57. It is by Christ's resurrection that He overcame the power of death and therefore in God's promise of our resurrection, we are assured of Christ's power for us over death.

- 4 What do you think your resurrected body will be like? What scriptures might support your answer? (Look at Philippians 3:20-21 and 1 John 3:2)

Let this discussion go wherever it may. What will we look like? What age will we be? What physical shape will we be in? Will we wear clothes?

- 5 What do you think your relationship with others will be like in Heaven? What about your spouse, your children, and others close to you on this earth?

Again, let this discussion go wherever it may. Help people understand that the bible does not suggest we will not love others, in fact we will love more than ever before but our love will be pure and perfect and nothing will come between us and our God.

Keep encouraging your group to read the Bible everyday. As they read the daily passage, just meditate on it and write down what they learn about God and Heaven from those verses. This will greatly enhance the spiritual growth of your group members and will also enrich your small group gatherings.