



Nowhere does the Bible speak of going to heaven, but from start to finish the Bible tells the story of heaven coming. It is God’s grand redemption plan from ages past, and it changes how we deal with the present when we know that Home is Coming!

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

1 Rick began by reminding us that only three questions ultimately matter: “*Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going?*” Why are these questions so crucial and how would you answer them? Follow up: How do your answers differ from the secularist viewpoint (see **Ecclesiastes 3:11**)?

2 ETERNITY is sure! *Jesus consistently urged all to live this life in view of the next.* **Read Matthew 5:11-12, Mark 12:24-27, Luke 10:20, and John 5:24.** What stands out to you from these verses? How do they encourage you to live here and for the hereafter?

3 ACCORDING TO JESUS... Everybody goes somewhere after here. Rick reminded us that “*The next life will not be the same for everybody, but everybody will have a next life.*” **Read John 5:28-29.** What are the implications for us since everybody has an appointment with God in the hereafter (how will people’s experiences be different)? Follow up: How does being reminded of this encourage you to live today?

4 ACCORDING TO JESUS... Anybody can go to hereafter to be with God. *Jesus came to us to reveal that God was for us—each one of us.* **Read John 3:16.** In what ways does this verse challenge the view that Christianity is “too exclusive”? Follow up: Share some examples of how Jesus welcomed people to his table (and how he still does).

5 Read Romans 3:22-25. Rick pointed out that the great question for your future will not be “*How much did you sin?*” but the great question will be “*How much did you trust God’s answer for your sin?*” Why is this distinction so crucial? Follow up: How are people “made right with God”?

6 ACCORDING TO JESUS... Nobody goes to God without Jesus. *Jesus didn’t claim to show the way; he claimed to be the way.* **Read John 14:6.** What does a person’s eternal destiny depend on? Explain how/why Jesus is the only “bridge” that can reach God (see **John 1:29**). Follow up: Rick went on to say, “*You can get to hell on your own, but you can’t get to heaven without Jesus.*” Why is that true (see **1 John 5:11-12**, and **John 6:40**)? How do those verses provide you hope and encouragement?

7 Eternity is sure, and because of Jesus, you can be sure of your eternity. Rick closed by reminding us that “*The most important thing to know about heaven is not what; it’s who.*” With that in mind, have you surrendered your life to Jesus? If so, share what led to you believing Jesus. If not, what questions do you still have about Jesus? As you close, spend some time praying for each other and for those in your life who haven’t decided to **put their trust in Jesus.**





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1 Rick began by reminding us that *"We all feel the tension of having to adjust to our current reality while longing for a different reality."* This was true for Paul as well. **Read Philippians 1:21-24.** What stands out to you from Paul's words? Follow up: What has this present crisis made you long for?

2 LET'S LONG FOR... what we're made for. As Christians we live in the world, but we are not of the world. How should we embrace this tension in the meantime? Follow up: **Read Colossians 3:1-2.** How exactly does a person set their mind on the realities of heaven? What specific practices or disciplines help you keep focused on the eternal?

3 As followers of Jesus we should not settle for *"it is what it is."* Something within our spirit should yearn for *"what ought to be."* In what ways are you sometimes tempted to settle for the way things are in this world? Follow up: **Read Romans 8:22-23.** How do these verses encourage you to remember the future glory you are heading to? How does that transform your view of life?

4 WE LONG FOR... a release from fallenness. Rick reminded us that *"We have never known a reality without the presence of evil and suffering."* In what ways has that made our world seem "normal" even though it shouldn't? **Read 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.** How does the Holy Spirit help us remember that we were not designed to live in this kind of world? Follow up: Rick went on to say, *"But my yearning*

is not just to be released from the fallenness in creation; it is to be delivered from the brokenness in me." How has that been true for you?

5 WE LONG FOR... a removal of loneliness. God said it is not good for man to be alone, and this was before sin corrupted His creation. Why is it significant that heaven is called a "city" 15 times in the last two chapters of the Bible (also see **Hebrews 13:14**)? What has the current situation taught you about the importance of community?

6 WE LONG FOR... a return of closeness. We were created for extreme intimacy with God, and of all the things we lost when we lost Eden, closeness with God was the worst (see **Isaiah 59:2**). With that in mind, how do the words from **Revelation 21:2-3** and **22:3-4** bring you hope and encouragement?

7 Read 2 Corinthians 4:18. Let's ask for what we long for. Rick closed by reminding us that *"Jesus taught us to pray for the kingdom to come, for things to be on earth like they are in heaven."* He went on to say, *"The prayer is more than a petition; it is an offering. We are asking God to use us to give the world a foretaste of heaven."* Share some examples of how you've seen this lived out recently. Follow up: What is one specific thing you can do this week to give the world a foretaste of heaven? Spend some time praying for God to use us to bring more of heaven to earth.





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1 Rick began by reminding us that some people feel that a study of heaven isn't practical. What are some reasons people might think that today and how does that stand in contrast with what the first followers of Christ would have thought?

2 OUR FUTURE HOME... is a present help. *The consistent New Testament witness is that what's coming should affect what's happening.* **Read Colossians 3:1-2, 5, 10, and 17.** In what ways do these verses remind us that thinking about heaven should impact the way we live today? What teachings of Jesus confirm the idea that "then" impacts "now"?

3 HEAVEN... helps us line up! *Being heavenly-minded can keep us from winding up in a ditch.* Peter reminds us to "Honor God while you live as strangers here on earth" (**1 Peter 1:17, CEV**). How does being heavenly-minded help you honor God now as it relates to wealth, people, and morality (share some specific examples of how being heavenly-minded in these areas will produce some *strange views*)?

4 Rick pointed out that "It takes great intentionality to keep our moral code in line with the values of the kingdom of God." How have you experienced the struggle to live by the ethics of the kingdom? Follow up: **Read Colossians 3:6-10.** What is something you

still need to "get rid of"? What are some intentional steps you can take today to do so?

5 HEAVEN... helps us chill out! *Heaven helps us recognize the trivial stuff for what it really is. It also helps us realize that most of life is trivial stuff.* How have you experienced that to be true in your life recently? Follow up: **Read 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.** How many of the things that have been upsetting you lately could pass the eternity test? How can focusing on heaven help you change your mind-set?

6 HEAVEN... helps us hang on! *Believing that the next life will be good does not mean pretending that this life isn't hard.* Why is it important to face the truth about the difficulties of our current reality while retaining faith in our future victory? Is that easy or hard for you? Follow up: How do scriptures like **Romans 8:18** and **2 Timothy 4:7-8** encourage you to hang on when life gets hard? What other scriptures help you?

7 Rick closed by reminding us that "Our future home is a present help, and our present race is a future win!" With that in mind, share at least one practical way that thinking of "then" is doing you a lot of good right "now". Close in prayer by asking God to help you stay aligned, remain calm, and to finish strong.





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1 Rick began by pointing out that you will not find the phrase *"Go to heaven"* one time in the Bible (Note: the title of this series is "Home Is Coming" not "Going Home"). Is that surprising to you? Follow up: What were you taught about heaven growing up and where did those images and ideas come from?

2 Read Revelation 21:1-4. Is the idea of heaven and earth rejoining at the end of the Biblical story a new concept for you? How does that differ from popular conceptions of the end of the world?

3 WHAT IS THE NEW EARTH? Rick reminded us that *"the Bible does not start in Genesis 3; it starts in Genesis 1."* Why is that important to remember and what are some of the implications of this? Follow up: *The Bible predicts the ultimate restoration movement.* **Read Acts 3:21 and Matthew 19:28.** What stands out to you from these verses? In what ways do they point to restoration and not destruction? Note: also look at **Isaiah 65:17-19** and **2 Peter 3:13.**

4 WHERE IS THE NEW EARTH? *God's original plan was not a failed experiment. The next coming of Jesus will bring with it the complete redemption of everything under the curse, including creation.* **Read Romans 8:20-22, 2 Peter 3:5-7, and Revelation 21:5.** What picture do these verses paint in regards to how God will restore His masterpiece? How does the idea of purification rather than

annihilation encourage you and how does this differ from the idea of "escape"?

5 HOW IS IT LIKE/UNLIKE THE OLD EARTH?

Rick pointed out that *"the preeminent difference in the new earth will be the removal of the curse. We will finally see what God means when He describes something as 'good.'" How does that make you feel? Why is that such a strong longing for us? Follow up: Rick went on to say, "The new earth will engage, delight, and astound all our senses."* When you think of some of the examples he shared (work, play, learn, relationships, food, animals, etc.) which ones are you most looking forward to experiencing in all of their goodness?

6 WHEN WILL THE NEW EARTH APPEAR?

When Jesus returns he will bring to all creation what resurrection brought to him. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.** Why is it significant to see that we will accompany our victorious King back to the new earth instead of leaving with him? How does this differ from how some teach this passage?

7 WHY DOES THE NEW EARTH MATTER?

Rick pointed out that the new earth **renews my hope for what will be, informs and shapes who I want to be, and compels me to pursue what ought to be.** How can our understanding of the new earth impact the way we act, live, and treat the world today?





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1 Rick began by reminding us that **"Heaven is the real deal."** Most views of heaven divorce the physical from the celestial and see heaven as a place of *"fluffy clouds, floating spirits, and endless church."* Why is that view dangerous and what role does Satan play in the existence of this view? Follow up: How does he like to slander these three realities (God's person, God's people, and God's place)?

2 OUR HOME IS a real place... *One result of dualism's influence is the common tendency to spiritualize all of scriptures heavenly images.* **Read Hebrews 11:16, Revelation 21:10, and John 14:1-2.** What stands out to you about the descriptions of heaven in these verses? What is significant about the different ways they describe heaven?

3 WHERE WE WILL HAVE real bodies... *Our hope is not disembodied bliss but restored physical existence.* **Read Romans 8:23 and Philippians 3:20-21.** Why does God care so much about our bodies? What does this say about how we steward them now? Follow up: With that in mind how does **2 Corinthians 5:2-5** encourage you today?

4 AND BE real active. *We will eat, laugh, dance, work, play in a real place with real bodies...* What surprises you and/or excites you about that statement? How does it make you feel to know that we will continue to learn (see **Ephesians 2:6-7**) and to work/reign (see **Revelation 22:5**). In what ways is

our work now practice/training for our work then? Follow up: **Read Matthew 25:14-21.** How does the way we handle our responsibilities now impact the responsibilities we will have then? Why is that significant?

5 SERVING A real Jesus... *The foundation of our faith is the bodily resurrection of Jesus.* **Read Luke 24:39.** Why is the bodily resurrection of Jesus so important and how does it impact not only our future resurrection but how we should live in the present? Follow up: Rick noted that *"God's ultimate goal is not our salvation. Our salvation is the means to God's ultimate goal: fellowship."* (see **Revelation 21:3**). Why is that distinction so important and how does it bring you joy today?

6 WHO WILL REWARD what's real. *While heaven is not a reward, in heaven all that was done for Christ will be rewarded.* **Read Ephesians 6:8.** How does it make you feel knowing that all good work done now will be rewarded then? Follow up: What are some intentional choices you need to invest in now with that in mind?

7 Rick closed by reminding us, *"Life will constantly tempt us to misspend our energies and affections on that which has no eternal significance."* How has this been a struggle for you recently? Follow up: What is one way being reminded that "Heaven is for real" can help you "seek first the kingdom of God" more today?





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1 Rick began by reminding us that *"When the new earth comes, one of the best things about it will be the things that won't be coming with it."* With that in mind, what are some things you face now that you will not miss then?

2 **Absence makes the hope grow stronger.** *The new earth will not be contaminated by the fallout from the fall.* **Read Revelation 21:1-4, 22-27; 22:3-5.** What stands out to you the most regarding the observations John makes? Follow up: How does knowing this provide encouragement for you to stay faithful in the meantime?

WON'T BE HEARD... the rest of this message focuses on some phrases we use now that will be missing then.

3 **"I fear the worst."** *Fear has been the companion of sin since the fall.* In what ways has fear been prevalent in your life? How has that impacted your daily outlook on life? Follow up: how does it make you feel knowing that **Revelation 21:27** says *"Nothing evil will be allowed to enter..."*?

4 **"Nothing lasts forever."** *Life has a way of constantly reminding us of our mortality.* Where have you seen or experienced the "evidence of death" in your own life recently? Follow up: **Read Revelation 20:13-14.** How does knowing that *"God is going to put death to death"* help you face the challenges of today?

5 **"There's never enough time."** *It's not true that in heaven "time shall be no more."...but it is true that we will not live under its pressure.* What does living under the pressure of time look like today? How can this type of pressure impact the condition of your soul and your relationship with others? Follow up: **Read Revelation 22:5.** How can knowing you'll never have to be in a rush then help you to begin living an unhurried life now?

6 **"My bad."** *One of the most frustrating things about fallenness is the awareness that I rarely give God or others all that I should.* Rick noted that there are several reasons for this, *"my sin nature, my sense of inadequacy, my mortal weakness."* How have each of these impacted the way you relate to God and others? Follow up: **Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.** How do these words from Paul encourage you today and give you hope for the future?

7 **"Where's God?"** *The greatest fallout of the fall is the level of proximity we can currently have with God.* Talk about a time when God felt distant from you and what that experience was like for you. In contrast, what truth do John's words in **Revelation 21:3-4, 22** reveal about God's ultimate desire for His relationship with us? Follow up: Revelation closes with these words, *"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen."* (**22:21**) How do these words bring you hope and comfort?





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1 WE KNOW that we can't know everything about our new home. One reason the Spirit instructed John to share his revelation is so that it would spark our imaginations in a way that inspired faith and hope. How has this series sparked your imagination as well as inspired faith and hope in you?

QUESTIONS ABOUT HOME... the rest of this message explores some questions people often have about heaven.

2 "Where do saints go when they die?" Read **Luke 23:39-43**. In what ways does Jesus' response provide some answers to where followers of Jesus go and when? Follow up: Read **Philippians 1:21-23**, **Acts 7:59** and **1 Thessalonians 4:14-16**. What are some things each of these scriptures imply about what happens when people die?

3 "Are those now with Jesus aware of us?" Read **Revelation 6:9-10**, **Luke 15:10**, and **Hebrews 12:1**. What is one significant thing each of these scriptures point out? Follow up: How should knowing this motivate us to have greater resilience, courage, and faithfulness in the meantime?

4 "Will we know each other on the new earth?" The Father is not going to gather His family together as strangers. We will know each other, but in a new way. What encourages you most about that statement? Follow up: Rick went on to say,

"We will be reunited with saints we love, introduced to saints we admire, and have a new earth full of new friends to make." What excites you most about that idea?

5 "Why will there be no more marriage when Jesus returns?" Read **Luke 20:34-36**. What stands out to you regarding what Jesus says? How does that make you feel and what does that help you realize about the marriage between Christ and his bride, the church (see **Ephesians 5:32**)?

6 "What's to prevent another fall?" *Genesis 3 is not going to have a sequel.* What stood out to you the most about some of the reasons Rick mentioned in regards to this point (*Jesus died "once and for all," nothing evil will be allowed to enter, etc...*)?

7 "How can I enjoy eternity without all those I know and love?" *Perhaps the glories of the next life will simply overwhelm the memories of this life (see **Isaiah 65:17**).* How does that make you feel? Follow up: How can reflecting on this series help you become more urgent about sharing the good news of Jesus with others?

8 WE KNOW that we can trust the One who knows everything. You don't have to be right about heaven to go to heaven, but you do have to be right about Jesus. Why is that true? What are some of the main reasons you've trusted Jesus with your life?





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1 Rick began by reminding us that "As followers of Jesus we long for our place, the new earth that will be our home when Jesus returns. But that means we must live now as a displaced people." **Read Hebrews 11:13-16 and Philippians 3:20.** What stands out to you from these scriptures in regards to how those before us lived as a "displaced people"? Follow up: How has this series encouraged you to live now while you wait for your new home to come?

2 WHO WE ARE... We must maintain dual citizenship. We used to be exiles from God; now we are exiles for God. **Read 1 Peter 1:1,17; 2:11-12.** What is significant about how scripture connects teachings on heaven and Jesus' return with calls to holiness and goodness? Follow up: In what ways are we often tempted to become "nationalized" and what intentional steps have you taken to remain faithful to God?

3 WHAT WE DO... Stay prayerful. Prayer is the alien's native language. **Read 1 Peter 4:7.** How has the gift of prayer been an encouragement and resource in your journey with God? **Follow up:** Jesus taught his first followers to pray "up there, down here" prayers. **Read Matthew 6:10.** Why is praying these types of prayers so important? Take some time as a group praying for some specific areas where a move of God is most needed.

4 WHAT WE DO... Remain graceful. The enemy wants us to pick sides, start fighting, and care more about hating than healing. **Read 1 Peter 4:8.** Why is loving

people deeply so vital for the life of the church and our witness to the world? How have you seen this type of love displayed in our community recently? **Follow up:** Grace requires proximity. **Read 1 Peter 4:9.** Why is practicing hospitality so important?

5 WHAT WE DO... Be useful. Every alien is a minister; every pilgrim is a priest. Rick said, "My faithfulness to Jesus should not depend on knowing when he will return, but in knowing what will matter most to him when he does. Did we love God by loving our neighbor?" Why is that so important and what often gets in the way from making it happen? **Follow up: Read 1 Peter 4:10-11.** What are some tangible ways we can use the gifts God has given each of us to bless this world?

6 WHY IT MATTERS... We must model home away from home. When the days are the darkest the church has the opportunity to shine the brightest. How have you experienced this to be true in your lifetime? Follow up: In what practical ways can we do a better job today (as a church) showing the world what tomorrow will look like (an earth filled with diversity and love)?

7 As you reflect on this series what is one key thing you learned and what next step do you need to take while you wait/long for your new home to come?

