



 **3ABN** BIBLE STUDY GUIDES
Searching Deeper

FINALLY HOME



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Many people wonder, *What is Heaven like?* Is it soft clouds and eternal harp lessons? No, not that. Grocery store shelves stocked with nothing but our favorites—and no price tags? No, not that, either. Will it be perfect cities with no garbage, pollution, fighting, or traffic? We're still thinking too low. What about perfect health, pristine weather, boundless energy, and no bugs that bite or plants that sting? We're getting closer, but our imagination is still too shallow. You see, Heaven is not just a better version of sinful Planet Earth, which is all we've ever known. Sin has plunged us so far below God's perfect plan that our expectations could never be high enough. God's future reward will be better than anything we could imagine. When Jesus leads us home to be with Him, life will not just be good, it will be *restored*.

1 Is God's home in Heaven a real place?

John 14:2–3 “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

Jesus spoke of Heaven, where He was going, as a real place. He entered “into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Hebrews 9:24). Our prayers ascend into Heaven (2 Chronicles 30:27), and angels come in and out of God’s presence in Heaven to minister (John 1:51).

2 How can we know what Heaven is like if we have never been there ourselves?

John 6:38 “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

We learn about Heaven from Jesus, who shared God’s glory in Heaven through all eternity past (John 17:5). We also learn about Heaven from the testimony of God’s Word, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Heaven is My throne ...’” (Isaiah 66:1).

3 Where is Heaven located?

Psalms 14:2 “The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God.”

Heaven is beyond Earth’s atmosphere (Isaiah 14:12–14), but God has not shown us its exact place in relation to the stars in the heavens. When John was taken in vision to Heaven, God said, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this” (Revelation 4:1). Yet, God is not withdrawn from our lives. He is near us: “Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?” says the Lord; “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” ...” (Jeremiah 23:24).

4 How will the redeemed arrive at Heaven?

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. ...”

At Jesus’ Second Coming, the redeemed will rise to meet Him. Together, they will travel beyond the atmosphere and through the expanse of space. To arrive at God’s home, the redeemed leave all earthly things behind.

5 What is the focal point of God's home in Heaven?

Revelation 4:2–6 “... Behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. ... Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. ...”

The indescribable beauty of God's throne surpasses anything on Earth. Heaven is filled with constant praise toward God on His throne. “The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ‘You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power ...’” (Revelation 4:10–11).

6 What will the bodies of the redeemed be like in Heaven?

Philippians 3:20–21 “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body”

1 Corinthians 15:51–53 “... We shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

The bodies of the redeemed will be instantly restored to perfect function and efficiency. Through God's grace, they will not deviate from His path of life, so that “there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4). Free from the disease of sin, their minds also will be revived to comprehend the things of God (1 Corinthians 13:12).

7 Will each individual's character be changed in Heaven?

Revelation 22:11 “He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”

Our character is established by the choices we make on Earth. The restoration we anticipate when Jesus returns is “the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23), but the condition of our character will remain, because



“Our character is established by the choices we make on Earth.”

God does not change what we choose. Nothing will enter Heaven that is contaminated by sin (Revelation 21:27), so God is working in us now to restore our character to be like Jesus, if we will give Him permission. Temptation, sin, and shame will be no more in Heaven (Isaiah 65:17), but the Christ-like character God is restoring in us will continue.

8 How will God clothe the redeemed in Heaven and the New Earth?

Revelation 3:5 “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments”

Daniel 12:3 “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.”

The covering God gives His redeemed saints is pure and radiant—His righteousness. In their perfection, Adam and Eve were clothed in God's righteousness; but when they sinned, they recognized they were no longer covered (Genesis 3:7). Sinless angels, clothed in white, are covered with “shining garments” (John 20:12; Luke 24:4–5), and when Jesus was transfigured before His disciples, He radiated sinless brightness—“His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light” (Matthew 17:2). Moses' face shone with heavenly brightness when He had been in God's presence (Exodus 34:29–30). God wants to restore us to what we were meant to be—sinless and holy, covered in His righteousness that shines light on everything around us.

9 Will we remain in Heaven forever without leaving?

Matthew 5:5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

Revelation 21:2 “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”



“... when sin is destroyed, God’s newly created world will be perfect.”

After the 1,000 years with the redeemed in Heaven, God’s capital city will transition to Planet Earth—the site of both sin’s great rebellion and God’s great redemption. By God’s power, we will travel through space to Earth. God has created other worlds, too (Hebrews 11:3), and through His power, we may visit those places, also.

10 What will God’s capital city on Earth be like?

Revelation 21:9-27 describes the handiwork of God’s New Jerusalem. It will be beyond our expectations:

- It shines with the glory of God (verse 11).
- Its 12 gates, each made of one massive pearl, are each inscribed with the name of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. The redeemed will enter through one of those gates whose inscribed name matches their experience of overcoming, and the gates will never be shut (verses 12, 21, 25).
- Its 12 foundations, each made of precious stones, are inscribed with the names of the 12 apostles (verses 14, 19–20).
- The shape of the city is a cube, like the Most Holy Place in the Sanctuary of the Old Testament, where God dwelt among His people (verses 16–17).
- Its walls and streets are made of transparent gold. From outside the city, nothing will block the view of God’s throne (verses 18, 21).
- It is illuminated by “the glory of God” that outshines the sun, and there is no temple in it, “for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (verses 22–23).

11 What will be inside God’s capital city on Earth?

Revelation 22:1–2 “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore

twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

The river of life and the tree of life point to Jesus’ promise, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). When returning often to this tree and this river, the redeemed will be gathering at their favorite place—the throne of God. “... And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

12 What will the recreated Earth outside the walls of the city be like?

Revelation 22:3 “And there shall be no more curse ...”

The curse that spread to all things on Earth was caused by sin (Genesis 3:17), but when sin is destroyed, God’s newly created world will be perfect. The animals will be gentle (Isaiah 65:25), the fruit to eat will be healthy (Revelation 22:2), the skies will be clear from pollutants and storms (Revelation 21:1). In fact, God’s re-creation will be even better than what Adam and Eve saw with their flawless eyesight. “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him’” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

13 What will the redeemed do forever on the New Earth?

Isaiah 65:21–22 “They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.”

God’s redeemed will live peacefully and care for the Earth. God will restore humanity’s dominion over the Earth to care for its creatures (Micah 4:8; Genesis 1:26).

Isaiah 66:22–23 “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,’ says the Lord, ‘So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,’ says the Lord.”

Every Sabbath, the redeemed will gather in God’s presence and savor the fruit produced by the tree of life that month (Revelation 22:2).

Isaiah 55:9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”



“Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.”
Psalm 119:165

The light of God’s righteousness will reveal wonders we could never understand before. There will be no end to searching out new beauties in the infinite thoughts and ways of God, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3). “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! ...” (Romans 11:33).

Psalm 119:165 “Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.”

The redeemed will love to obey God’s law because it reveals His character of love and guarantees eternal peace. “Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89).

Revelation 22:3 “... His servants shall serve Him.”

It is the joy of the redeemed to serve God—not out of obligation, but from love, because Jesus gladly served us (Mark 10:45).

14 Why are the redeemed overjoyed to serve God forever?

Revelation 21:7 “He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”

Matthew 25:34 “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.””

God is not a tyrant king. He adopts us into His family as children (Galatians 4:5) and gives us the inheritance that belongs to a loved child. Like the father in Jesus’ parable of the two sons, God says, “All that I have is yours” (Luke 15:31). How could we not love and serve Him who gave His life to purchase us, and then gives a priceless inheritance we do not deserve?

15 How will God demonstrate His intimate love for those He has redeemed from sin?

Luke 12:37 “Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.”

This unbelievable promise exceeds any thanks we could give in return. We are undeserving of the great honor of being served by God. Thank you, Jesus!

Revelation 2:17 “... To him who overcomes ... I will give him a white stone and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

Revelation 3:12 “... And I will write on him My new name.”

Not only has God prepared a home for each person, but He also gives each one a special name that no one else knows—a unique connection with Him. His relationship with each of His children is so personal and complete that it is as though there was no one else He created to enjoy His love, and no one else Jesus died to save. We will recognize His voice calling us personally, because He calls us by name (John 10:4; Isaiah 43:1).

16 What position will redeemed humanity hold in Heaven and on the New Earth?

Revelation 3:21 “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

2 Timothy 2:12 “If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. ...”

Daniel 7:27 “Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. ...”

Luke 12:32 “... It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

Not one of us deserves to be seated on the throne with God. Sinless angels surround God’s throne (Daniel 7:9–10), and humanity was made “a little lower than the angels” (Psalm 8:5). But God promises that former sinners who caused the death of His Son will be given authority that even surpasses the angels. Reigning with God is nothing like the worldly rulers on Earth, who use power to control others. The redeemed will follow God’s example of greatness by gladly humbling themselves to serve others (Matthew 20:25–26).



“The relationship between God and the redeemed is described as a sacred, intimate marriage.”

17 Why will God exalt redeemed humanity to such an undeserved position of honor?

Ephesians 2:4, 6–7 “But God, who is rich in mercy ... made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

This position of honor doesn't give glory to redeemed humanity, but gives all glory to God. The redeemed will have the greatest story to share that no angel can tell, but each one wants to hear (1 Peter 1:12). It is the personal story no sinless angel has experienced, that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15). Retelling the firsthand testimony of God's great love will be the highest honor and the clearest praise to God that will never grow old.

18 What will our relationship with God be like in Heaven and on the New Earth?

Revelation 19:6–7 “And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’”

Revelation 21:3 “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.’”

The relationship between God and the redeemed is described as a sacred, intimate marriage. It is not about wealth or control, but genuine love. The angels in Heaven cheer to witness the complete unity of God and the redeemed saints to whom they have ministered. When God united Adam and Eve in marriage they became “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24), and when God is united to His people, there will be no barrier of

sin between them. “They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads” (Revelation 22:4).

19 How valuable is the gift God wants to give you one day soon?

Philippians 3:13–14 (NASB) “Brothers and sisters, I do not regard myself as having taken hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

2 Timothy 4:7–8 “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

The words “goal,” “prize,” “upward call,” “crown of righteousness,” and “award” describe a winner's reward. Whoever labors expects a reward at the end (1 Corinthians 9:24–25). You are the reward God desires, and He is your reward (Genesis 15:1). “Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown” (Revelation 3:11).

20 How can we prepare to be a citizen of Heaven today?

Colossians 3:1–2 “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

1 John 2:15 “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

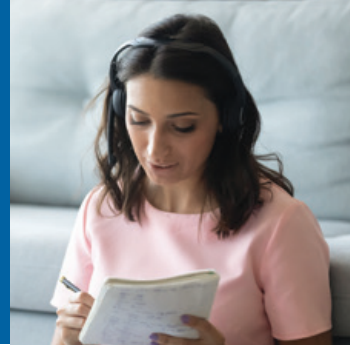
If we don't love the things of Heaven now, we would not love them if we were there. So think often of the virtues that Heaven approves, and by God's grace, live them out (Philippians 4:8). Abraham longed for Heaven and the New Earth (Hebrews 11:9–10), as did David and Job (Psalm 17:15; Job 19:27). As we talk of God's promise of Heaven and the New Earth, we will encourage others. We will long to be with Jesus, and be like Him, too.

21 What is the greatest blessing of Heaven and the New Earth?

1 John 4:16 “... God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.”

When the conflict of sin is over, we end where we began: “God is love.” His love has no limit, and our experience of God's love in Heaven and the New Earth will grow without end. “Love never fails ...” (1 Corinthians 13:8). “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13). “... God is love” (1 John 4:8).

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY LIFE TODAY?



1. How can thinking on what the Bible says about Heaven and the New Earth lift you above the daily trials you face?

2. Consider your habits, recreation, friendships, spending, and entertainment. Are you storing up earthly treasures that do not have value in Heaven (Matthew 6:19–21)? What can you do with the time and talents God has given you to store up treasure in Heaven that will not pass away?

3. Everything on this planet outside the walls of the New Jerusalem will be consumed by fire when God recreates the Earth. How can you keep from getting so attached to earthly things that you would choose them over Jesus?

4. Romans 8:21 says that “creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption.” Begin a list of what will be changed when Jesus returns. How long is your list, and how can this encourage you to pursue Jesus’ righteousness?

5. God wants you to enjoy the privilege of declaring the goodness of God even to the angels. (They want to learn more about God’s love, too.) Who do you know that you can practice sharing with here on Earth? “... I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house” (Acts 20:20).

Additional Notes:

WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS FOR ME IN HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH?



1. God wants you to be with Him in Heaven. God chose you for Heaven. God's grace gives you power to be in Heaven. "... He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:4).

2. You don't have to wait until Jesus returns to be a citizen of Heaven. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

3. God will keep every promise, even if we don't see their fulfillment on Earth. "For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

4. When you put God first, Heaven will be the result. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

5. We can't imagine what life without sin will be like, but we know that what God has prepared for us surpasses anything we could conceive. "Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You ..." (Psalm 31:19). "But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalm 37:11).

6. When believers experience trials in life, we can encourage them with God's promise of Heaven and the New Earth. "... We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

7. There is no cost too great compared with the reward of eternal life with Jesus, and there is no cost greater than the price Jesus paid for you. "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and

the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:7-11).

LESSON SUMMARY

1. God's dwelling in Heaven is a real place. When Jesus returns, He will take the redeemed to be with Him there.

2. In Heaven, God's throne is more wonderful than words can express and is the focus of eternal praise.

3. Our characters are formed before Jesus returns. Only those who accept Jesus' righteous character will enter Heaven.

4. God will restore the bodies of the redeemed, and there will be no more sickness, pain, or death.

5. After the 1,000 years in Heaven, the redeemed will dwell in God's capital city, the New Jerusalem, on the re-created Earth.

6. God will exalt redeemed humanity to a position above angels, where they will share their firsthand testimony of God's goodness with those who have never experienced salvation from sin.

7. Throughout eternity, the redeemed will learn more about God's love and grow closer to Jesus, who died so we could be saved.

Additional Notes:



*"Behold, He is coming with clouds;
and every eye will see Him."
— Revelation 1:7*

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