



Small Group Guide | **Week 3**

Hope of Heaven

Review from Last Week, The Hope of the Resurrection:

- What do you think about the idea that Christ's resurrection was the prototypical event driving a new creation of which Christians are the beneficiaries of it and the agents through whom it happens?
- How does being the beneficiaries of God's new creation and the agents through whom it happens lead to praise and action?

Watch

Week 3 Video | Hope of Heaven

[Session Video](#) (17 minutes)

Read these Scripture passages aloud:

Genesis 1:1 NIV

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Ephesians 1:7-10 NIV

⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Matthew 6:9-10 NIV

⁹"This, then, is how you should pray:

'Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.'"

Head

What is the Hope of Heaven? (5–10 minutes)

Summarize 3–5 points of the message of this video.

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Heart

Reacting to the Hope of Heaven (10–15 minutes)

1. What did you wonder about heaven as a child? As an adult? Did you think in heaven you would be sitting on a cloud playing a harp? Did you think of heaven as a place a long way away? A boring place?
2. Have you ever thought about heaven and earth as interlocking spheres of God's good creation and that Jesus is the place where heaven and earth meet like the temple in Jerusalem? What is your reaction to this idea?
3. What do you think about Wright's explanation of hell? He said that heaven and hell are not equal opposites. "Hell" is the tragic result of a person saying, "No" to God's new reality. It is a state of existence separate from God where people become less human and more like the idols they worship.

Hands

Living the Hope of Heaven (10–15 minutes)

We continue to consider, as people of hope, having confidence in the hope of heaven, how we can be moved to action and bring hope right where we live today. What are some practical implications for our world, our community, and our lives? How is Jesus our model?

1. *What do you learn about the connection and overlap of heaven and earth (God's space and our space) from Ephesians 1:7-10? Tell about a time when you felt heaven and the presence of God close to you, overlapping into this world.*

2. *In Matthew 6:10 Jesus tells us to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” What can we do to help the kingdom of God enter into our daily lives in one or more of the following areas?*
 - *Our lives*
 - *Our communities (family, work, neighborhood, church)*
 - *The world*
3. *Spend time discussing and planning a small group service project (ideas, time, location) that will bring heaven to earth.*

Conclusion

For Those Reading the Book During this Study

Chapters 5-7 correspond to this week’s video.

“The whole world is waiting on tiptoe with expectation, for the moment when that resurrection life and power sweeps through it, filling it with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.”¹

Take Away

What are you going to take away from this study today?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we anticipate with joy the vibrancy and beauty of heaven! Jesus, we thank You for connecting heaven and earth through Your resurrection. The Holy Spirit, even though at times things are troubling and confusing, helps us to see and feel how heaven is breaking into this life and how we can be Your agents participating in that. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Spend the next six weeks memorizing and meditating on one verse, Romans 15:13. Even if your time is limited, this is possible! Consider doing this with your spouse, children, or friend.

Romans 15:13 NIV

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Memory Tip: Use hand signals to memorize phrases. Children do this and it works for adults, too. When reciting the verse to others, you can visualize the hand signals in your mind.