

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 1

Ecclesiastes 3:11

January 10, 2016

I. God has put eternity in our hearts.

“He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”

Ecclesiastes 3:11b (NIV)

* Jesus taught it.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 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.”

John 14:1-3 (NIV)

* Christians look forward to it.

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.”

Philippians 1:21-23 (NIV)

II. There is a lot of incorrect thinking about eternity.

“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.”

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (NIV)

1. The devil lies about eternity.

“He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

John 8:44b, c (NIV)

“He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.”

Revelation 13:6 (NIV)

2. Science only teaching has led to incorrect thinking about eternity.

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)

3. The idea that the physical realm is evil or unspiritual has led to incorrect thinking about eternity.

III. God encourages us to think biblically about eternity.

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

Colossians 3:1-2 (NIV)

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 2

Colossians 3:1-4

January 17, 2016

“After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’”

Acts 1:9-11 (NIV)

- The present heaven is normally invisible to those living on earth.

Acts 7:55-56

“And Elisha prayed, ‘O LORD, open his eyes so that he may see.’ Then the LORD opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”

2 Kings 6:17 (NIV)

- There will be some surprises in heaven but there is much about heaven that God wants us to know now .

“Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

1 Corinthians 13:12 (NIV)

“However, as it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’—but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.”

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 (NIV)

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.”

Deuteronomy 29:29 (NIV)

- The bible very clearly teaches that all people will spend eternity in one of two places: Heaven or Hell.

“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Matthew 25:46 (NIV)

- Where a person spends eternity depends on one's relationship with Jesus Christ.

*"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."
Acts 4:12 (NIV)*

- The Outline of a Christian's Existence

1. Birth on earth.

2. Salvation.

3. Entrance into the present heaven.

4. Entrance into the eternal heaven.

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'"

Revelation 21:1-4 (NIV)

- Two main differences between the present heaven and the eternal heaven are our bodies and location.

- A key to understanding the bible's teaching about eternity is knowing which passages are talking about the present heaven and which passages are talking about the eternal heaven.

- When a Christian dies, he immediately goes to the present heaven.

"If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far."

Philippians 1:22-23 (NIV)

"Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:6, 8 (NIV)

"Jesus answered him, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.'"

Luke 23:43 (NIV)

- Where is the present heaven?

"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband."

Revelation 21:2 (NIV)

"But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'"

Acts 7:55-56 (NIV)

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 3

January 24, 2016

Observations Concerning Luke 9:28-32

1. Moses and Elijah have a physical form that could be seen.
2. Moses and Elijah were fully conscious and rational. v. 31a
3. Moses and Elijah were aware of what was happening on earth. v. 31b

Observations Concerning Luke 16:19-31

1. There are 2 very different eternal destinies described.
2. The rich man and Lazarus are depicted as having a physical form.
3. Both the rich man and Abraham reasoned and communicated.
4. The rich man and Lazarus are remembered for their lives on earth.

Observations Concerning
Revelation 6:9-11

1. The martyrs are depicted as having a physical form.
2. The martyrs are remembered for their lives on earth.
3. The martyrs remember their lives on earth.
4. The martyrs are aware of what is happening on earth.
5. The martyrs are fully conscious, rational, and aware.
6. The martyrs have a strong connection with those on earth.
7. The martyrs have a deep concern for justice.

Observations Concerning
1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 and Revelation 19:11-14

1. Christians who have died are with Jesus.
2. When Jesus returns he brings the Christians with him.

Observations Concerning
Revelation 18:20 and 19:1-5

1. The saints in heaven rejoice at the fall of Babylon.
2. The saints in heaven have a deep concern for justice. v. 19:2

Observations Concerning
1 Samuel 28:16-19

1. Samuel remembers what he had done and what king Saul had done on earth before he died. v. 17a
2. Samuel knew what king Saul was doing on earth after he died. v. 17b-18
3. Samuel knew what the Lord was going to do. v. 19
4. Samuel was recognizable.

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 4

John 14:1-4
January 31, 2016

I. Heaven is described as paradise.

“Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.’”

Luke 23:43 (NIV)

* The word *paradise* means “a walled park” or “an enclosed garden.”

* God’s plan from the beginning was for mankind to care for God’s garden and to be with God and to live in full joy.

“Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.’”

Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17 (NIV)

“Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name”

Genesis 2:19 (NIV)

“Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”

Genesis 3:8 (NIV)

* God’s plan was interrupted when man sinned and experienced the consequences of his sin.

“And the LORD God said, ‘The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.’ So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”

Genesis 3:22-24 (NIV)

* Nothing can ultimately stop God’s plans and purposes!

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

Revelation 2:7 (NIV)

“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.’ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 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.”

Revelation 21:2-3; 22:1-3 (NIV)

**Sin interrupted God’s plan but sin did not defeat God’s plan.
Jesus Christ defeated sin on the cross!**

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 5

Revelation 21:9-27

February 7, 2016

“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly.”

Hebrews 12:22 (NIV)

“For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.”

Hebrews 13:14 (NIV)

The City Described

1. The size of the city.

“The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man’s measurement.”

Revelation 21:15-17 (NIV)

2. The great street of the city.

“The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.”

Revelation 21:21b (NIV)

3. The 12 gates of the city.

"It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there."

Revelation 21:12-13, 25 (NIV)

4. The throne of God and of the Lamb in the city.

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city."

Revelation 22:1-2a (NIV)

"The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them."

Psalms 11:4 (NIV)

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.'"

Isaiah 6:1-3 (NIV)

"Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"

Matthew 19:28 (NIV)

5. The river of life and the tree of life in the city.

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

Revelation 22:1-2 (NIV)

"There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells."

Psalms 46:4 (NIV)

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."

Revelation 2:7 (NIV)

"Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing."

Ezekiel 47:12 (NIV)

6. The beauty of the city.

"It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoberyl, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass."

Revelation 21:11, 18-21 (NIV)

7. The complete absence of anything impure in the city.

"He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Revelation 21:7-8, 27 (NIV)

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 6

February 14, 2016

IX. The value of the kingdom is supreme.

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

“Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable.”

Matthew 13:34 (NIV)

X. The invitation to the kingdom is the gospel.

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

Matthew 24:14 (NIV)

XI. The inhabitants of the kingdom are the born again.

“In reply Jesus declared, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.’”

John 3:3 (NIV)

I. Heaven is described as Paradise.

II. Heaven is described as a city.

III. Heaven is described as a kingdom.

“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.’”

Matthew 6:9-10 (NIV)

* God’s plan from the beginning was to create a kingdom over which he sovereignly rules. He would authorize his people to rule in his kingdom under his authority and for his glory.

* When mankind fell into sin, Satan usurped authority as ruler.

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

2 Corinthians 4:4 (NIV)

“...prince of this world.”

John 14:30; 16:11

* Satan’s rulership in this world is temporary and will one day end because God’s plans are always completed.

Scriptural Overview of God's Heavenly Kingdom

I. The owner of the kingdom is God.

"Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all."

1 Chronicles 29:11 (NIV)

II. The nature of the kingdom is not worldly.

"Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.""

John 18:36 (NIV)

III. The ultimate place of the kingdom is the earth.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:3, 5, 10 (NIV)

"And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.'"

Revelation 5:9-10 (NIV)

IV. The duration of the kingdom is everlasting.

"Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him."

Daniel 7:27 (NIV)

V. The preparations of the kingdom are extensive.

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'"

Matthew 25:31, 34 (NIV)

VI. The descriptions of the kingdom are literal.

"There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God."

Luke 13:28-29 (NIV)

VII. The purity of the kingdom is uncompromised.

"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NIV)

VIII. The primary activity of the kingdom is ruling / reigning.

"And they will reign for ever and ever."

Revelation 22:5c (NIV)

"if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us."

2 Timothy 2:12 (NIV)

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 7

February 21, 2016

Heaven is Described as a Kingdom

4 Main Elements of a Kingdom

- I. The king of the kingdom.
- II. The citizens of the kingdom.
- III. The kind of government in the Kingdom.
- IV. The territory of the kingdom.

- I. The king of the kingdom.

1. The king anticipated.

“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.”

Genesis 49:10 (NIV)

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NIV)

2. The king announced.

"You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

Luke 1:31-33 (NIV)

3. The king's acknowledgement.

"You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

John 18:37 (NIV)

4. The king's authority.

a. His ability to create gives Jesus authority to be king.

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Revelation 4:11 (NIV)

b. His ancestry of royalty gives Jesus the authority to be king.

"This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, Judah the father of Perez and Zerah."

Matthew 1:1-3a (NIV)

c. His all sufficient power to reverse the curse gives Jesus authority to be king.

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control."

Philippians 3:20-21b (NIV)

"Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them."

Matthew 4:23-24 (NIV)

"But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

Matthew 12:28 (NIV)

* Almost every miracle which Jesus performed while on earth foreshadows the conditions that will exist in his kingdom.

d. His authorization by the Father gives Jesus authority to be king.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.'"

Matthew 28:18 (NIV)

e. His atonement for mankind gives Jesus authority to be king.

"And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.'"

Revelation 5:9-10 (NIV)

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 8

Isaiah 9:6-7

February 28, 2016

The Government of God’s Kingdom

I. Concerning its power, it’s a conquering government.

“The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth...’ He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it... But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.’”
Daniel 7:17, 23, 26-27 (NIV)

“For this world in its present form is passing away.”
1 Corinthians 7:31c (NIV)

“Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: ‘See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.’”
Jude 14-15 (NIV)

II. Concerning its extent, it's a comprehensive government.

"And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ."

Ephesians 1:9-10 (NIV)

"...and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."

Colossians 1:20 (NIV)

III. Concerning its character/nature, it's a Christ-centered government.

"...the government will be on his shoulders... establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness..."

Isaiah 9:6-7

"Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!'"

Revelation 5:13 (NIV)

"'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.'"

Jeremiah 23:5 (NIV)

IV. Concerning its organization, it's a co-ruling government.

"Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."

Romans 8:17 (NIV)

"If we endure, we will also reign with him."

2 Timothy 2:12a (NIV)

V. Concerning its increase, it's a continual government.

"Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end."

Isaiah 9:7a (NIV)

VI. Concerning its coming, it's a certain government.

"The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this."

Isaiah 9:7c (NIV)

2 Peter 3:1-13

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 9

March 6, 2016

The Territory of God’s Kingdom

- * The territory of the eternal kingdom of God is the earth.

“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’”

Matthew 6:9-10 (NIV)

“He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.”

Acts 3:21 (NIV)

“...with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”

Revelation 5:9b-10 (NIV)

- * God’s redemptive plan climaxes not when a Christian dies and goes to the present heaven nor at the rapture, but when Christ reigns on the new earth.

1. This is God’s stated plan.

“And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.”

Ephesians 1:9-10 (NIV)

2. God gave the apostle John a vision of God's stated plan's fulfillment in Revelation 21.

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.'"

Revelation 21:1-3 (NIV)

3. The Bible repeatedly speaks of a new heaven and new earth.

"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth."

Isaiah 65:17a (NIV)

"But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness."

2 Peter 3:13 (NIV)

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea."

Revelation 21:1 (NIV)

4. The earth is eternally the Lord's and he doesn't surrender what is his.

"The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters."

Psalms 24:1-2 (NIV)

5. The earth was made for people to live on and people were made to live on earth.

"This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens—the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed."

Genesis 2:4, 7-8 (NIV)

"For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land. But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace. Turn from evil and do good; then you will dwell in the land forever. The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever. Wait for the LORD and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it."

Psalms 37:9, 11, 27, 29, 34 (NIV)

6. The earth was created to declare the glory of God and it will eternally.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard."

Psalms 19:1-3 (NIV)

"...the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth."

Numbers 14:21 (NIV)

"And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Isaiah 40:5 (NIV)

"Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory."

Ezekiel 43:1-2 (NIV)

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 10

2 Corinthians 5:1-5

March 20, 2016

- * God has placed within us a home sickness for the heavenly home.

“He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”

Ecclesiastes 3:11b (NIV)

“Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one.”

Hebrews 11:16a (NIV)

What Makes Heaven Home?

1. Home is yours.

“And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.”

Hebrews 11:13b-14 (NIV)

“He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

Revelation 21:7 (NIV)

2. Home is where your heart is.

“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’”

Matthew 22:37 (NIV)

*"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
Matthew 6:21 (NIV)*

3. Home is where your family is.

"Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers."

Hebrews 2:11 (NIV)

"Now you are no longer strangers to God and foreigners to heaven, but you are members of God's very own family, citizens of God's country, and you belong in God's household with every other Christian."

Ephesians 2:19 (LB)

4. Home is where the best home cooking is.

"People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God."

Luke 13:29 (NIV)

"And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Luke 22:29-30 (NIV)

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."

Revelation 2:7 (NIV)

5. Home is a place of familiarity.

6. Home is where you fit right in.

"But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness."

2 Peter 3:13 (NIV)

7. Home is made for you.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 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."

John 14:1-3 (NIV)

"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband."

Revelation 21:2 (NIV)

8. Home is our permanent place.

"Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life."

2 Corinthians 5:1, 4 (NIV)

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 11

1 Corinthians 15:12-26

March 27, 2016

- I. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, there is no Christianity.

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”

1 Corinthians 15:17 (NIV)

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.”

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 (NIV)

- * The claim of Christianity and the gospel is that Jesus’ death on the cross and his resurrection from the grave are sufficient in dealing with sin and all of its effects.

What effects has sin had on mankind?

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 6:23 (NIV)

1. Sin → death → separation from God.

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God.”

Isaiah 59:2a (NIV)

2. Sin → death → separation of our body and spirit.

* Jesus' death and resurrection deals with sin's effects on our spirit and our body: sin's curse on mankind is reversed.

II. The resurrection of Jesus Christ ensures the resurrection of Christians.

"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him."

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 (NIV)

How can we know what our resurrected bodies will be like?

1. Our current physical body is the best reference point for understanding what our resurrected body will be like.

"I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"

Job 19:25-27 (NIV)

"Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.' But the temple he had spoken of was his body."

John 2:19, 21 (NIV)

2. Scripture gives us the example of Jesus' resurrected body so we can know what a resurrected body is like.

Why did Jesus appear to some people after his resurrection?

1. To prove he was alive.

2. To show them what a resurrected body is like.

"But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

1 John 3:2b (NIV)

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."

Philippians 3:20-21 (NIV)

"Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope."

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (NIV)

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 12

Romans 8:16-25

April 3, 2016

- * For the Christian, the best is yet to come!

“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

Romans 8:16-18 (NIV)

“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 (NIV)

“Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create.”

Isaiah 65:17-18a (NIV)

1. There is coming a time when Christians will experience creation as God planned it.

Romans 8:19-22

- a. All creation has been terribly affected by sin.

*"For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time."
Romans 8:20, 22 (NIV)*

*"To Adam he said, 'Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, "You must not eat of it," Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.'"
Genesis 3:17-19 (NIV)*

b. All of creation will be redeemed.

*"...that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God."
Romans 8:21 (NIV)*

c. Creation's redemption is linked with man's redemption.

*"The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed."
Romans 8:19 (NIV)*

2. There is coming a time when Christians will experience a physical body as God planned it.

Romans 8:23-25

a. Our physical bodies have been terribly affected by sin.

*"Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."
Romans 8:23 (NIV)*

b. Our physical body will be redeemed.

*"For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?"
Romans 8:24 (NIV)*

c. Our body's redemption is guaranteed in Christ.

*"Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."
Romans 8:23, 25 (NIV)*

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 13

1 Corinthians 15:35-57

April 10, 2016

Question #1: How can the dead possibly be raised?

1. The illustration of a seed.

“But someone will ask, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?’ How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.”

1 Corinthians 15:35-38 (NIV)

a. Death/Decay

“How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.”

1 Corinthians 15:36 (NIV)

b. Difference

“When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else.”

1 Corinthians 15:37 (NIV)

c. Continuity

“...and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.”

1 Corinthians 15:38b (NIV)

2. The power of God.

*"But God gives it a body as he has determined."
1 Corinthians 15:38a (NIV)*

*"Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?"
Acts 26:8 (NIV)*

Question #2: With what kind of body will the dead be raised?

1. Pertaining to durability: perishable vs. imperishable.

*"So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable."
1 Corinthians 15:42 (NIV)*

*"When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'
1 Corinthians 15:54 (NIV)*

2. Pertaining to purity: dishonorable vs. glorious.

*"It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory."
1 Corinthians 15:43a (NIV)*

*"So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin."
Romans 7:21-25 (NIV)*

3. Pertaining to ability: weakness vs. power.

*"...it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power."
1 Corinthians 15:43b (NIV)*

4. Pertaining to quality: natural vs. spiritual.

*"...it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."
1 Corinthians 15:44 (NIV)*

“Thinking About Eternity”

Part 14

John 13:31-14:7

April 17, 2016

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV)

- I. This passage teaches that in the midst of the troubles and worries of life we can have peace and comfort through trusting in God.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.”

John 14:1 (NIV)

A. Things that can trouble our hearts:

1. Thoughts about death.
2. Thoughts about trials.
3. Thoughts about disloyalty.
4. Thoughts about eternity.

B. Finding peace and comfort.

1. Don't allow troubles to stop your relying on God.
2. Continue to believe scripture about the things that trouble you.

- II. This passage teaches the reality of Heaven.

“Simon Peter asked him, ‘Lord, where are you going?’ Jesus replied, ‘Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.’”

John 13:36 (NIV)

“In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.”

John 14:2 (NIV)

- III. The passage teaches that entrance into heaven is exclusively through Jesus Christ.

“‘You know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’ Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

John 14:4-6 (NIV)

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Acts 4:12 (NIV)