

“What Does the Bible Say About Eternity?”

I’m Glad You Asked Sermon Series | Week Three | Newbreak Church

October 3rd, 2022

Newbreak’s Sermon Study Guide is an in-house resource that serves sermon-based Life Groups and/or individuals who want to reflect further on how the message contributes to our spiritual formation.

In this week’s study, we talk about the big question of eternity and how the Bible gives us a vision of two different **destinations**: one without God and the other with Him.

Icebreakers for Life Groups

- Do you feel close to God during this particular time of your life? Why or why not?
- Growing up, did you have a positive view of how the Bible speaks of after life and eternity or a negative one? Why?

Going Deeper Into the Message

What does the Bible say about eternity?

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9

Point 1 – Understand that eternity without God exists

My daughter (Heather Britt) had a friend in kindergarten who didn’t believe in God. My daughter loved church and God and wanted all of her friends to go to heaven one day, so they could all play together forever. So, when we said our prayers at night we would always pray for this friend. My daughter said one particular night, “Next time we play together I’m going to tell her about God.” Awesome idea, right?

Her friend came over for a play date that weekend and when I passed by my daughter’s room I heard her say, “otherwise you will go to hell forever.” Halt, stop, caution, danger! I went into the room and asked the friend to finish coloring her picture downstairs for a couple of minutes. I turned to my daughter and said, “Tell me what you’re talking about with your friend, kiddo.” My daughter replied, “I want to tell her about God and to believe in God so she can play in heaven with me forever.” “Okay, but why are you saying she’ll

be in hell forever.” “Well, I figure if she doesn’t know about where else she would go if she dies then she won’t care about coming to heaven with me.”

Now, that’s not very scriptural, but I think if Jesus Himself cared about warning us that the alternative to heaven for eternity **with** God was hell for eternity **without** Him, then we need to consider that carefully. We all have an eternity and we each get to decide where we will spend eternity. This is a sobering truth for our lives and the lives of everyone around us. Jesus gave us the warning because He doesn’t wish that any are separated from Him, but that **“everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)**

Jesus’ desire is that we all take advantage of the gift of His sacrifice on the cross.

N.T. Wright says it well: “God is the living and loving creator, who must either judge the world or stand accused of injustice, of letting wickedness triumph. People who have lived in societies where evil flourishes unchecked will tell you that it is a nightmare. To live in a world where that was the case forever would be hell.”

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What are your thoughts of hell? Are these ideas based on Scripture? What does Jesus say about hell?
- As you consider the awful events going on in our world lately, what do you think an existence completely separated from God looks like?
- As a believer, how do you integrate the idea of a loving Father God with the idea that some will reject His invitation for eternity with Him? Is this a struggle for you? Why, or why not?

What does the Bible say about eternity?

Read Revelation 21:1–7, 22:1–5; 1 Corinthians 15:20–55

Point 2 – Remember that eternity with God also exists.

Thank God that there is an alternative to an eternal existence without Him. That’s an eternal existence with Him, in His presence, face to face, forever! We get to see Him and know Him fully and be known by Him, with nothing separating us. We get to worship Him with all of the other believers in all of the ways we love to worship. Do you

love singing? Sing. Painting? Paint. Writing? Write. Cooking? Cook. Whatever ways in which God has made you, whatever things make you excited about life, those ways of worship will be perfected in life eternal. All those things you wish you had the time to do now, you'll be able to do then. But it will all be in service and worship of Him.

We will have our perfect, redeemed bodies. *Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:30-31 NIV)* Who among us can't wait to run and not grow weary, or walk and not get faint? We will never be tired again, never be sick again, never be aching again. Everything about our bodies will work perfectly as the Creator originally designed them to. Praise God!

C.S. Lewis's *The Last Battle* concludes with an amazing description:

"All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before."

New Creation will be even better than Eden:

- From the possibility of death to death being no more (Rev 21:4).
- From one tree of life to "trees of life" on both sides of the river (Rev 22:2).
- From the presence of the Serpent (Satan) to his overthrow and destruction.
- From having a body like Adam to having a glorified body (1 Cor 15:45–48).

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What are your thoughts of heaven? Are these ideas based on Scripture? What does Jesus say about eternity with Him?
- If you had infinite time and resources, what would you like to do? What does it look like to consider worshipping God like that?
- What are you most excited about spending eternity with God and the family of believers?

What will my eternity look like?

Read John 3:16, 14:6; Romans 6:23

Point 3 – My eternity is determined by how I respond to Jesus.

God originally created us for fellowship with Him. He wanted to enjoy our company for eternity. Satan threw a wrench in that plan when he tempted Eve. And we all fell to sin through Adam. Even after all of that, God provided a way for us to come back to Him and live with Him forever. He provided His Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice that covered all of our sins, *if* only we believe, *if* only we accept His free (to us) offer of salvation. The gift is free to us, but it cost Him everything.

Jesus calls us to come to Him. He offers us eternity with Him. That can start now. It doesn't need to start after death. He wants us to enjoy His love and mercy and grace even now. But He leaves the decision to us. He will not force us to believe in Him, to love Him, or to put our faith in Him. Romans 2:4 says that it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance, not His force.

It's as CS Lewis once said: There are 2 groups of people: Those who say "Thy will be done" to God, and those who won't, so God says to them "Thy will be done."

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Have you made the decision to follow Jesus? If not, what's the biggest concern holding you back?
- If you have accepted God's invitation for eternity with Him, are you sharing that awesome message with others? If not, what's holding you back?
- How seriously do you think others take the good news of Jesus' offer of salvation if we're not excited to share it with them? What can we do to change this?

Memory Verse: Revelation 21:3–4 (NIV) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 '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."

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think or live differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

How does this week's message shape or nurture your relationship with God?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids in a way that they would relate to or understand?