

Introduction: And they lived _____, is this only true in _____?

- It is often said, “I’ve read the back of the book and we win.” I think it is more Biblical to say _____, What began at the cross culminates at the end of time when God is finally united with His people, his bride.
- Since believers are “in Christ” all of Christ’s blessings are ours, partially now, fully then. Heaven is the _____ of our salvation! “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ —by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:4–7, ESV)
- Revelation 21 _____ describe heaven, it describes the New Jerusalem, created by God, coming down from heaven.
- The Bible doesn’t reveal everything we want to know about heaven, but it does reveal enough to want to _____,
- We’ve sung about it, we’ve read about it, some of us long for it, but how much do _____ about heaven?

Key thought: Heaven is the hope that will _____ you and the home you are _____.

- I. Heaven is our _____,
 - A. It provides stability in times of great transition, John 14:1-3 Jesus was departing and he thought it important that the disciples knew he was 1) preparing a place for them and 2) he was returning to take us there,
 - B. It provides encouragement when there are no good options, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.” (Philippians 1:21–24, ESV)
 - C. It gives perseverance in times of great difficulty. “They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.” (2 Thessalonians 1:9–10, ESV)
 1. It encourages perseverance in marriage when you remember what your spouse will one day be instead of seeing them for who they are today,
 2. It encourages perseverance to the church when we remember what the church one day will be,
 - D. It provides perspective in the midst of great suffering, “So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,” (2 Corinthians 4:16–5:2, ESV)
 - E. It is a hope rooted in Christ’s redemption and glorification, A promise is only as good as the one who makes the promise, Believe in God, believe also in me. It is part of the finished work of Christ.

1. It is the final end of this fallen world. Groaning is a natural and normal response to living in this fallen world. This world is not always going to be this way. "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." (Romans 8:20–25, ESV)
2. It is a final end of man's rebellion. Cities were man's invention and an act of rebellion. "Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch." (Genesis 4:17, ESV)
 - a) God began the church in the city where Christ was crucified. Acts 2
 - b) Paul's missionary journeys were focused on cities teeming with sin and with people (Rome, Ephesus, Corinth, Athens, Philippi, Colossae, etc)
 - c) We enjoy the presence of God and fellowship with others in a city- built by God. "By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God." (Hebrews 11:9–10, ESV)

II. Heaven is our _____.

- A. It is home because God is there. Because God is there in all his glory.
 1. There will be no temple (unheard of in the ancient world)
 2. There will no need for sunlight because God's glory will be the light
 3. The city is made of transparent gold so God's glory will permeate every nook.
 4. It will be a transformative experience- now and in the future. "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." (1 John 3:2–3, ESV)
 5. Home is about people not just a place. Illustration of why home is not the same anymore. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. C. S. Lewis
- B. It is home because of the people that are there. We will be with family. It is the place we will live for eternity.
 1. 12 foundation stones names after 12 apostles- NT saints
 2. 12 gates- 12 tribes- OT saints
 3. God will live in our midst in fulfillment of the OT (21:3)
- C. It will be home because there will be no struggle there, Home is to be a safe place. In this world sadly that is too often not the case, it will be safe in heaven. The gates are never shut. There is an endless supply of food and water.
- D. It will be home because it will include the best this world has to offer minus the fall, Kings and nations will bring their glory there.

"Few commentaries bring out the meaning of the eighth Scene better than the final paragraph of C. S. Lewis's classic story *The Last Battle*.

'The things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. 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 for ever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.

Conclusion: Do you want to live happily ever after?