

SPIRITUAL GROWTH RESOURCES



WEEK 21 |
APRIL 3-10

**TOPIC: HEAVEN/
ETERNAL LIFE**

© 2020-2021

Spiritual Growth Resources brought to you by the Discipleship & Outreach Ministries of the Carmichael Seventh-day Adventist Church.

*Carmichael Seventh-day Adventist Church
4600 Winding Way, Sacramento, CA 95678
www.carmsda.org*



Carmichael
Seventh-day Adventist Church | celebrate.grow.serve

PROLOGUE

The Carmichael SDA Church is providing spiritual growth resources for individuals, couples, families, and small groups as an extension during this pandemic for a church that is scattered like salt and to indeed be salty; to be light and receive another infusion of power. Pick and choose from these resources for your spiritual growth, whether it's during your time of personal devotions or family worship or small group gathering. The 10 options include:

1. Video
2. Bible Dialogue
3. Prayer Experiences
4. Discussion Questions
5. Application Ideas
6. Sharing Options
7. Bible-In-My-Head, Heart, and Hand
8. Sing-Along
9. Inspirational Music
10. Kids of All Ages

HEAVEN/ ETERNAL LIFE

INTRO AND VIDEO



This past week our topic coincided with the Easter celebration of Christ's resurrection from the dead. What could top that?

This week we look forward to a reality made possible only because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's heaven, and spending eternity with Jesus.

A child's imagination can envision glimpses of heaven adults seem incapable of considering. Sliding down the long neck of a giraffe, racing at a full sprint on the back of a male lion while holding onto its mane, diving with porpoises, and soaring with eagles exemplify a child's imagination. Adults calculate the efficiency of attaining faster speeds from point A to point B, as though rocket travel is the optimum available in heaven.

As people on earth age, the idea of living forever can sound inviting and hopeful. Some have given up that hope and simply wish to be done with their misery.

When Scripture says that God will make all things new, it might be impossible for us to fully fathom what it will be. In addition to eternity (a difficult concept we haven't experienced), the possibilities of activities seem endless.

But the primary and central experience will be our relationship to God—finally face-to-face like it was in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. Those who want the gift of eternal life without the God of eternal life haven't understood either. To spend eternity with God when you have no interest or desire for God would be hell rather than heaven. It's probably safe to say that heaven will be populated with all the people who really want to be there.
May it be soon!

[Video](#) | [Bible Dialogue](#) | [Prayer Experiences](#) | [Discussion Questions](#) | [Application Ideas](#) | [Sharing Options](#) | [Bible in my HHH](#) | [Sing-Along](#) | [Inspirational Music](#) | [Kids of All Ages](#)

BIBLE DIALOGUE

For our “Bible Dialogue” study this week on eternity and heaven, we’ll look at an Old Testament passage in Isaiah 65:17-25. God’s vision to Isaiah depicts the city of Jerusalem, the previous capital of God’s people. But they were about to go into captivity to Babylon and their city, including the beautiful temple, would be destroyed. Yet God promised a return to a new city of Jerusalem, with God’s people living in faithful covenant with him. But when the time came, most of the Jews decided to remain in Babylon rather than return to the land and promises of God.

Hundreds of years later when Jesus came to earth, the promises given to the children of Israel were passed on to all the follows of Christ. And then John received his vision of a new heaven and a new earth, including the “New Jerusalem” as recorded in Revelation chapters 21 and 22. You might be more familiar with that passage. (Check out Ezekiel 47:1-12 and Ezekiel 48:30-35 for other Old Testament hints about the New Jerusalem described in Revelation.) But for our “Bible Dialogue” this week, we’ll turn to the Old Testament promise given to the Israelites, found in Isaiah 65:17-25.

THIS IS LIKE HEAVEN!

Where’s the best place you’ve lived (thus far in your life)?

READ ISAIAH 65:17-25

1. What amazes you about God’s new heaven and new earth?

- A. Living forever.
- B. The beauty of heaven.
- C. No more debt.
- D. No more death.
- E. The absence of sin.
- F. People getting along.
- G. The travel will be amazing.

- H. Sensory overload.
- I. Other.

2. How will you rejoice in heaven?

- A. I don't really know how to do that very well.
- B. Lots of music.
- C. I'm gonna dance.
- D. Shouts of praise.
- E. Serve others.
- F. Talk with Jesus.
- G. Feasting.
- H. Share testimonies.
- I. Other.

3. Why won't there be any sound of crying/weeping in heaven?

- A. The praise will drown out the crying.
- B. No more death.
- C. No more sorrow.
- D. No more pain.
- E. Reunions from resurrections.
- F. We'll forget past pain and loss.
- G. Christ makes all things new.
- H. The new will completely dwarf the old.
- I. Other.

4. Why does Isaiah's description still include death?

- A. Isaiah's vision was for the Jews returning from Babylon.
- B. Life can go longer, but not forever.
- C. Isaiah needed Revelation 21-22.
- D. The Messiah wouldn't arrive for more than 500 years.
- E. For a Jewish mind, this life is all there is.
- F. Infant mortality was a big problem in Isaiah's time.
- G. "No more death" won't happen until Christ's 2nd Coming.
- H. Other.

5. What makes you proclaim, "I am blessed"?

- A. Pastor Keith asking, "Carmichael, are you blessed?"
- B. I've had so much given to me.

- C. Seeing how difficult life is for so many others.
- D. Financial security.
- E. My family and my church family.
- F. I don't feel blessed.
- G. Intimacy with God.
- H. Other.

6. What changes in nature will be different in heaven?

- A. I'll be able to play with wild animals.
- B. Gravity will be easier to overcome.
- C. New bodies.
- D. No more death.
- E. Absence of weeds.
- F. Selfishness gone with the demise of the sinful nature.
- G. Harmony replacing the struggle for survival.
- H. Other.

7. What are 3 things you want to do when you get to heaven?

8. How do you keep heaven in mind while living on this earth?

[Video](#) | [Bible Dialogue](#) | [Prayer Experiences](#) | [Discussion Questions](#) | [Application Ideas](#) | [Sharing Options](#) | [Bible in my HHH](#) | [Sing-Along](#) | [Inspirational Music](#) | [Kids of All Ages](#)

PRAYER EXPERIENCES

Tap into your imagination regarding heaven. For starters, go to “Google Images” which you can access at images.google.com and then type in “heaven” and return. Look at the images of heaven that Google provides. Pray through these, recognizing that God didn’t send them to you; Google did! And Google hasn’t figured out heaven yet. But it can certainly create conversation for your prayer time with God.

Another starter for a prayer experience would be to turn to Scripture. Many Christians have grown up with the key text found in 1 Corinthians 2:9 (KJV), “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” The quick paraphrase often given goes something like this: You have no idea what God has in store for you in heaven!

Instead of taking this one verse, consider the context and include other verses as part of your prayer time in conversation with God. Try verses 6-12. The New Century Version translates to a third grader’s reading level. Let’s give that a try!

Paul, writing to the believers in Corinth, wrote:

I speak a wisdom to those who are mature. But this wisdom is not from this world or from the rulers of this world, who are losing their power. I speak God’s secret wisdom, which he has kept hidden. Before the world began, God planned this wisdom for our glory. None of the rulers of this world understood it. If they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written in the Scriptures (Isaiah 64:4): “No one has ever seen this, and no one has ever heard about it. No one has ever imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”

BUT GOD HAS SHOWN US THESE THINGS THROUGH THE SPIRIT
(emphasis supplied).

The Spirit searches out all things, even the deep secrets of God. Who knows the thoughts another person has? Only a person’s spirit that

lives within him knows his thoughts. It is the same with God. No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we did not receive the spirit of the world, but we received the Spirit that is from God so that we can know all that God has given us (1 Corinthians 2:6-12 NCV).

Paul actually wrote the opposite of what many Christians think he wrote. It's the people of the world who have no idea what God has for us. That's why they don't follow Jesus. If they knew, it would be a "no-brainer" and they would join. Only those who have the Spirit of God understand. And that's because God reveals it through the Holy Spirit. So continue your conversation and ask the Holy Spirit to share with you some things about heaven and about eternity.

Another passage of Scripture that can spark your prayer experience is Revelation 5:1-14. This records what happened in heaven when Jesus returned following his resurrection and ascension. I'll give you a hint: All heaven came unglued in praise and worship because of what Jesus had done on earth and because he was then enthroned in heaven. By the way, that's when the Holy Spirit was sent to the earth in greater power (Rev 5:6). You know you're in heaven because of Rev 4:1-2 that leads into chapter 5. As you read, pause after each verse and imagine it.

One more passage for prayer on this topic could be John 14:2-3. In my father's house are many "rooms." The KJV has "mansions" but a better translation is "rooms." Don't worry, it will be mansion-like enough. The point is not quality, but quantity—there are MANY rooms! Why? Because there are going to be lots of people. If you don't like people, heaven might not be the place for you. You'll still get your quiet time, but there are going to be lots and lots of people there. So let your imagination run free as you consider what your "room" will be like, and who will be in the next room, and what that will be like, and on and on and on. Amen!

[Video](#) | [Bible Dialogue](#) | [Prayer Experiences](#) | [Discussion Questions](#) | [Application Ideas](#) | [Sharing Options](#) | [Bible in my HHH](#) | [Sing-Along](#) | [Inspirational Music](#) | [Kids of All Ages](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Select from these questions, or let them prompt your own questions. You can reflect on these by yourself, or discuss them with another person or group of people.

1. How old do you think you will be when you die?
2. Where is the best place to live?
3. Do you want to live forever? Why or why not?
4. Do you want to go to heaven? Why or why not?
5. What does it take for a person to go to heaven?
6. What does it take to live forever?
7. Who has lived forever so far?
8. Who is in heaven right now?
9. Who are some of the people you look forward to seeing in heaven?
10. Who would you be surprised to see in heaven?
11. Who would be surprised to see you in heaven?
12. What's the closest thing to heaven you've experienced so far?
13. What would you like to take to heaven with you?
14. What are you looking forward to leaving behind?
15. Is heaven just an escape mechanism to deny one's reality?
16. What will your sense of time be like when you're living for eternity?
17. What will this earth be like when heaven comes here after the millennium?
18. Will the majority of people from earth be in heaven or not be in heaven?
19. How have your views of heaven changed as you've matured?
20. How do "heavenly-minded people" live on earth in helpful ways?

[Video](#) | [Bible Dialogue](#) | [Prayer Experiences](#) | [Discussion Questions](#) | [Application Ideas](#) | [Sharing Options](#) | [Bible in my HHH](#) | [Sing-Along](#) | [Inspirational Music](#) | [Kids of All Ages](#)

APPLICATION IDEAS

Create a little bit of heaven here on earth. There are multiple ways to do this. The “Make-A-Wish Foundation” does this for children with critical illness so they can experience something that may seem completely out of reach in what appears to be a shortened lifetime. Started more than 40 years ago, children’s wishes and dreams become reality, which inspires them and others with both hope and joy. It’s a bit of heaven on earth. You can donate at wish.org.

You don’t have to be a non-profit organization to do this on a smaller scale in your own world. What can you do to inspire hope and joy for someone else? What can you do to give them “a taste of heaven”? Here are a few ideas that might spark other ideas of your own. The idea doesn’t matter; what matters is doing something. As we come out of COVID restrictions, some of these might be more “do-able.”

- Help someone plant a garden this Spring.
- Call a church member you haven’t seen in a while.
- Deliver a special food treat to someone—a food they would like!
- Spend time playing with children outdoors.
- Buy popsicles and give them out on a warm Spring day.
- If you have a swimming pool, invite kids who don’t have a pool to come swim.
- Make homemade cards for someone who can’t get out of the house.
- Pay the bill for someone behind you in the drive through.
- Babysit for parents of preschoolers one day or evening.
- Connect some older people with Pandora or Spotify and set it up with their preferences.

Make a contrast on time and place—now and where you are compared to eternity and heaven. It can change your perspective. Time crunches often push us into negative attitudes and actions. We simply don’t have the time we need. How often will that be the case if we think in terms of eternity? Most of us have easy access to see glimpses of places that are better than where we live, as well as places not nearly as nice. But what compares to heaven? In your devotional “time” consider your current

time and place and ways it might be inadequate—coming up short. Then look at it from the perspective of eternity and heaven. And then release those current concerns. Maintaining a perspective of eternity and heaven can certainly alter how we relate to the here and now.

[Video](#) | [Bible Dialogue](#) | [Prayer Experiences](#) | [Discussion Questions](#) | [Application Ideas](#) | [Sharing Options](#) | [Bible in my HHH](#) | [Sing-Along](#) | [Inspirational Music](#) | [Kids of All Ages](#)

SHARING OPTIONS

Draw on two questions from the “Discussion Questions” above. We recommend these two compound questions:

1. Do you want to go to heaven? Why or why not?
2. What do you imagine heaven will be like and what will you do there?

Answer these for yourself. Then reach out to people of different ages. Often young children have a much more definitive view than others. Teens might feel foolish if their childish images haven’t matured to match their maturity in other areas. Young adults might question the reality of heaven, or feel quite uncertain if they (or anyone else) really knows for sure. Adults might be too busy to give it much thought. Older people might think of heaven fondly or not at all.

Go ahead and be bold. Reach out and ask some individuals for a couple of minutes of their time. Then ask them the questions and ruminate on their answers. Don’t push your own answers on them; listen to theirs. If they ask you, feel free to share; but that’s not the main purpose of asking at this time.

Invite a friend to do the same thing and then compare the responses you get after asking people of different ages.

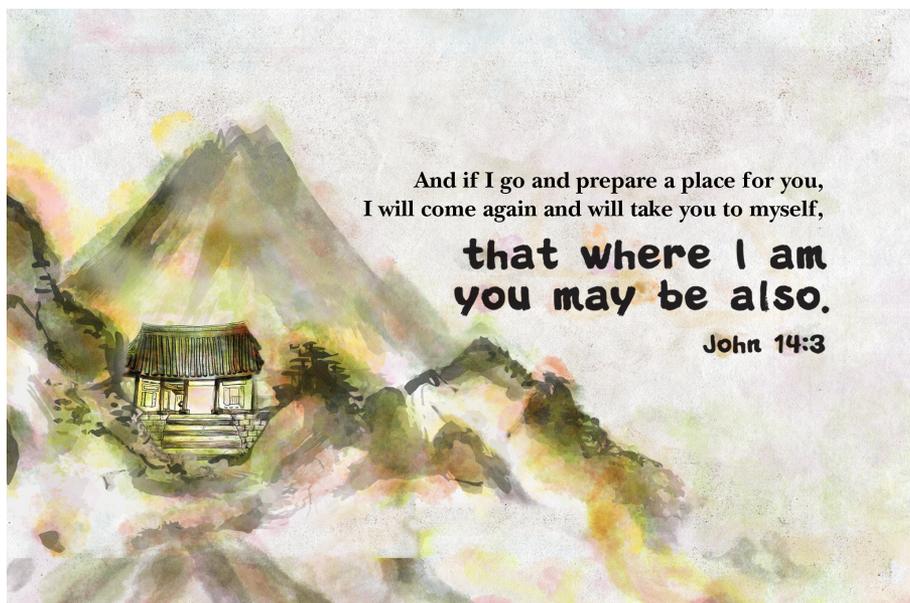
Then go back to your original responses and consider editing them based on the input you’ve received from others, and impressions God may have sent your way since you started talking (and listening) about these things.

And here's one more sharing option. Please share your experimenting with these Spiritual Growth Resources with Pastor Pedro Trinidad. Phone or text at 925-951-7041, or email at ptrinidad@carmsda.org.

[Video](#) | [Bible Dialogue](#) | [Prayer Experiences](#) | [Discussion Questions](#) | [Application Ideas](#) | [Sharing Options](#) | [Bible in my HHH](#) | [Sing-Along](#) | [Inspirational Music](#) | [Kids of All Ages](#)

BIBLE-IN-MY-HEAD, HEART, AND HAND

Shortly before his death, Jesus told his disciples he would be leaving them. Of course that concerned them deeply. But Jesus followed up with this promise: "I will come again . . . so we can be together. You can find that promise in John 14:3. Memorize it, and remember it especially when you feel alone.



And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again and will take you to myself,

**that where I am
you may be also.**

John 14:3

Caption

[Video](#) | [Bible Dialogue](#) | [Prayer Experiences](#) | [Discussion Questions](#) | [Application Ideas](#) | [Sharing Options](#) | [Bible in my HHH](#) | [Sing-Along](#) | [Inspirational Music](#) | [Kids of All Ages](#)

SING-ALONG

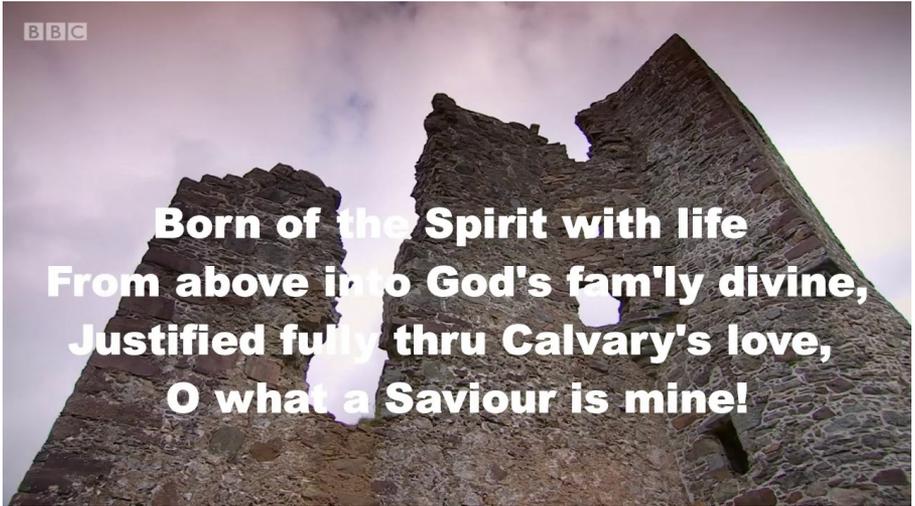
Soon and Very Soon



I Will Rise

He is risen from the dead

Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled my Soul



Heaven is a Wonderful Place



INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC

I Can Only Imagine



Home



We Shall Behold Him



B.J. THOMAS
The Definitive Collection

KIDS OF ALL AGES

It's like the craziest movie you ever saw: The sky is torn apart and Jesus blasts through the clouds with angels shouting and trumpets blaring, and dead people are rising up—they're rising up out of their graves! And living people are rising up too—into the air—everyone's rising up into the air to meet the Lord in the clouds, in the greatest most joyful reunion anyone has EVER seen. These happy risen followers of Jesus return to heaven with Him for a thousand years—the longest time any of them have ever lived at all—and they get to live it in heaven, with Jesus!

Meanwhile, back on earth, sly old Satan is bound by a "chain of uselessness"—nobody alive, nobody to tempt, no sickness or trouble or death to cause. Just nothing, nothing. It's like a deep dark pit of nothing. For a thousand long miserable years.

Finally, he sees something - wait, WHAT?! The Holy City, the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven? It's coming down! It's coming back to earth, what kind of craziness could this be? This time every eye is awake to see it. The wicked people who died, who did not choose Jesus, are raised to life and together with Satan they launch one last-ditch effort: overthrow Jesus, and defeat heaven forever. They storm the city in a full-fledged attack of panic and rage, desperate to destroy anything and anyone.

Then, in an instant, in a fiery blaze of light, they are gone. Gone forever and ever and ever. Their death lasts, it is final. And with the death of the wicked and the death of Satan forever, the earth is cleansed in fire. It happens so fast, like a snap. This old earth is made perfect and new, and "there will be no more death, no more sickness, no more sadness, no more pain. For he will wipe away every tear from every eye...and so, we will be with the Lord forever."

True story. You can read about it in the last few chapters of Revelation. And if you have more than a few questions at the end of it, you won't be

alone. I still have questions, too. But I'm not afraid of it, because my biggest questions have answers. Yours can too:

Yes, Jesus wins.

Yes, those who belong to Jesus are safe.

Yes, Jesus will save everyone He can.

No, Satan doesn't come back ever again.

No, nobody feels interested in sin anymore.

Yes, we will get to spend forever with Jesus.

It's a pretty great story—even better than a movie, if you ask me. This is what we mean when we talk about the "New Earth." The earth will actually, literally be made all brand new, and we get to live in it. For eternity—that means, forever.

What do you think it will be like? Do you think it will still have Yosemite and raspberries and rainbows on rainy days? Will the animals be different, or the same? What will we do forever and ever? What will it be like to finally see Jesus? And lastly - who's going to be there? I know I plan to be there, with Peter and David and Abraham and all my family along. What about you—do you plan to be there, too?

Until it happens, we are waiting. Waiting for our best friend to come back. And while we wait, we better not waste time - we better tell everyone we can, that Jesus the Savior is coming SOON.

"Even so—come Lord Jesus."

Family Talk Time:

1. What did we learn about the new earth in this story? What did we already know?
2. What do you think the New Earth is going to be like?
3. Why does Satan get one more chance to attack God's people? Why is it important that Satan is gone forever after that?

4. How can we know we are on the right side - Jesus' side - when all these things happen? How can we make sure our family is there together in the New Earth?

[Video](#) | [Bible Dialogue](#) | [Prayer Experiences](#) | [Discussion Questions](#) | [Application Ideas](#) | [Sharing Options](#) | [Bible in my HHH](#) | [Sing-Along](#) | [Inspirational Music](#) | [Kids of All Ages](#)

