

# Now and Forever

## Heaven, Part 2

### Summary for Teachers

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#### Theme

Lay up rewards in Heaven!—Our resurrection bodies. Our Heavenly co-workers. Getting ready for Heaven. When is it our time to go?

#### Aim

To help the students understand that because they've already received Jesus, their place in Heaven is guaranteed; yet the rewards they will receive are dependent upon their works. This should challenge them to prepare by doing more for others and for the Lord. This class is also meant to encourage the students with a better understanding of what lies ahead and the wonders of the resurrection bodies we will one day receive. Another important aim is to help them understand that many of those in the world beyond are working for the Lord, communicating with and actively helping those still on earth. A side issue for them to understand is that our lives are in the Lord's hands and God is opposed to suicide.

#### Roundup

Prayer and Opening Activity (15 minutes)

Prayer

Icebreaker: group quiz

Class Section 1: What Will You Be Like in Heaven? (30 minutes)

The mystery of the resurrection

Spirit bodies until we receive our new bodies at the resurrection

When we are resurrected, we will be like Jesus after His resurrection

The qualities of our new heavenly bodies

Powers of movement

The pleasures of life continued

Class Section 2: Our Heavenly Co-Workers (30 minutes)

Heaven is a busy place

Helping those on earth

The cloud of witnesses—Hebrews 12:1

Delivering prophecies

Heavenly communication

The Book of Revelation

Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration

The saved of all ages can communicate with those still in this life

Class Section 3: Getting Ready for Heaven (40 minutes)

[Optional] Songs: Praise the Lord for Heaven!

We don't have to fear death

Our lives are in the Lord's hands. He'll bring us Home when it is time.

We can prepare for Heaven by pleasing the Lord

Closing Activity and Prayer (5 minutes)

Prayer

[Optional] Video clip

### Get Prepared

- Before teaching this class, please read again the “Get Prepared” section of the first Heaven class. Much of the same advice applies, as this second class follows on what was introduced in that class.
- Be sure to leave enough time for the final section “Getting Ready for Heaven” which presents the challenge in this series of classes on Heaven. We want the students to be encouraged and convicted to do more for others and for the Lord.
- The section on “Our Heavenly Co-Workers” develops the theme of prophecies and communications from beyond. You will recall that in the two classes on prophecy, the emphasis was on the Lord speaking to us. Now, in the context of Heaven and who lives there, we introduce them to the idea that those who have passed on can also speak to us and help us.
- The concept of receiving messages from the departed saints may be controversial for some students. For this reason, we have included a number of Scriptural examples. If your students understand this concept easily, you will not need to read all of the verses.
- Songs in this class are from the “Heaven Song Sheet.”

### Student Reading Material

Optional: *Heaven’s Secrets* (soon to be published)

Optional: *Hearing from Heavenly Messengers* (statement)

## Prayer and Opening Activity

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15 minutes

### ► Prayer

① *Ask for a volunteer to pray for the class.*

### ► Icebreaker: group quiz

Divide the class into teams of 2–3 people. Each team has a sheet of paper and together they try to answer the following questions. At the end of the quiz, read out the list of answers. They check off what they wrote. They can speak up if they came up with more answers than you already read out. Each item on a list scores one point. You can then ask each team to tell their score and see who got the most.

- Question 1: List as many references or verses as you can that tell about salvation.  
Answers: Read out references from the *Key Bible Verses\** section on salvation. (\**Aurora* publication)

- Question 2: List as many signs of the times that prove we are living in the Endtime as you can remember.

Answers can include: deceivers; falling away from faith; wars and rumors of wars; civil wars [nation against nation]; famines; pestilences; earthquakes and other natural disasters; persecution of God's people; love of many growing cold; Gospel preached in all the world; one world government; false Christs and false prophets.

- Question 3: List as many things about Heaven as you can remember from the last class.

Answers can include: Jesus will be there; our loved ones will be there; no sorrow; no more death; no more pain; wall of jewels; gates of pearl; mansions; river of life; trees with many fruits; etc.

## **Class Section 1: What Will You Be Like in Heaven?**

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**30 minutes**

You can hardly appreciate Heaven and what it will be like unless you know what *you're* going to be like! Of course, we don't know all the details, as it is somewhat a mystery, but here are some verses and ideas on the subject.

### **► The mystery of the resurrection**

*1 Corinthians 15:51–52—Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—(52) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

When the Lord created the life cycles of butterflies and moths, He was illustrating resurrection. They hatch from eggs into little worm-like caterpillars. Then they wrap themselves up in a cocoon called a chrysalis, almost like a coffin, and it seems they die. But then spring comes and suddenly the coffin splits open and out comes a beautiful butterfly or moth! Once it was just a little crawling worm, and all of a sudden it breaks out into a beautiful butterfly that flies in the heavens!—One of God's prettiest creatures.

Like the difference between the grain of wheat and the full-grown, full-blown stock and head that comes from one grain, or the flower and the tiny seed it comes from, that's how much better your new Heavenly body is going to be! It will be so much more wonderful; it will be like the difference between the seed and the flower! Paul writes:

*1 Corinthians 15:35–38—But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" (36) Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. (37) And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. (38) But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.*

Paul says it's such a mystery you can hardly understand it, just like most of us do not understand how a seed buried in the ground comes to life and springs up and becomes a whole new plant. That's how much more wonderful your new body's going to be, and how different!

He says there's one kind of this and one kind of that, and if you bury a grain of wheat in the ground you're not going to get apples. What comes out, the final end product, is going to look like the grain of wheat you buried. In Heaven you're going to look like yourself, but with a marvelous new body!

## ► Spirit bodies until we receive our new bodies at the resurrection

When we're talking about how we will be in Heaven, it's important to understand there are two stages. If we die now, before Jesus returns, we are given a type of spiritual body. When Jesus returns, then the bodies of the saved believers (who were already in Heaven) will be resurrected. Those who are still alive at His coming will be instantly transformed to receive their resurrected bodies:

*1 Thessalonians 4:15-17—For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. (16) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

The Bible doesn't say much about the present state of those who die now (before Jesus returns) but tells in some detail our state when resurrected. So now let's look at what we will be like in our resurrection bodies.

## ► When we are resurrected, we will be like Jesus after His resurrection

*Philippians 3:20-21—For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

We're going to be like Jesus! We're going to look like Jesus did when He rose from the dead. We are going to be much the same as we are now, except that we're going to have supernatural bodies. We will look like we do now, just as Jesus did after His resurrection. He could even eat and drink and they could feel Him and touch Him as well as see Him. Jesus took on a physical form, which means it is some kind of a form of flesh. Theologians call them *theophanies*, a word literally meaning "God body," the fleshly physical embodiment of a spirit being. We'll be like Him—God's Word says so!

*1 John 3:2—Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

He was born of woman, of flesh. He died like a man, like flesh dies, but He was resurrected like we'll be resurrected, being in a sense part spirit and part flesh.

*1 Corinthians 6:14—And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.*

*Romans 6:4-5—Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.*

## ► The qualities of our new heavenly bodies

Let's look at the qualities that Jesus had when He was resurrected.

### ■ A new kind of body

When Jesus was resurrected, He was not purely spirit.

*Luke 24:36-40—Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." (37) But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. (38) And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? (39) Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." (40) When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.*

Jesus was still human and still had a body of flesh and bone—He says so! Flesh and bone! You notice He doesn't say blood, because "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11). Corruption comes through blood and the carnal nature of our present physical bodies that are from the dust. We're going to have flesh that looks like this flesh and feels like this flesh too, but it's not going

to have the kind of life that blood gives, which is not eternal life.

We are going to have a new kind of a spiritual, resurrected, marvelous, eternal, glorified body; and yet it's going to be material enough and natural enough and recognizable enough and seeable, feelable, enjoyable enough to actually be constructed as we now are of flesh and bones—but eternal flesh and bones, incorruptible, immortal flesh and bones.—Flesh and bones! Think of it! And that kind of marvelous glorified Heavenly body is going to be able to enjoy all the pleasures that our body enjoys here and now.

#### ■ Recognizable

*1 Corinthians 15:49—And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly man.*

Even as we have looked on Earth, we will resemble that same image in Heaven. We will bear the same looks and general appearance—here called “image”—as we have here on Earth, but much more glorious.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 that it's going to be like the difference between sowing a seed, and then what comes up out of the seed. He says it's going to be new and different, and yet we'll recognize each other; we'll “know even as also we are known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

### ► Powers of movement

When Jesus was resurrected, He was not only able to do all the normal natural things we humans do, but when His disciples were in a locked room with the doors all barred, all of a sudden He came walking right through the door without unlocking it! Jesus could appear or disappear; He could walk right through walls or locked doors.

*John 20:19—Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.”*

*John 20:26—And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!”*

In your new body, you'll be able to walk through walls, doors, and appear and disappear just like Jesus did. Perhaps we'll even fly!

*Isaiah 60:8—Who are these who fly like a cloud, and like doves to their roosts?*

### ► The pleasures of life continued

All of the pleasures of this present physical life can be continued into the next life as well, since we will have a body which is similar to our physical body, but so much more glorious and wonderful and supernatural that it's even called spiritual. Yet it can actually materialize and eat and drink and be merry, have fun, love and all of the present pleasures of this life extended into the next. We will have an immortal, incorruptible, all-powerful body that can enjoy these pleasures even more there than we do here, and forever without ever suffering pain or sickness or weariness or death. It will be absolutely marvelously heavenly forever!

#### ■ Still able to eat, although it won't be necessary

*Luke 24:42-43—So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.*

Jesus ate with His disciples several times after He was resurrected. In Luke 24 we read how He sat down and ate with them. Another time He broke bread with the disciples after the walk down the road to Emmaus. They didn't recognize Him until after He broke bread.

*Luke 24:13-17, 30-31—Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. (14) And they talked together of all these things which had happened. (15) So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. (16) But*

their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. (17) And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" ... (30) Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. (31) Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

- For more on this subject, be sure to read 1 Corinthians 15, if you haven't already.

## **Class Section 2: Our Heavenly Co-Workers**

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**30 minutes**

### **► Heaven is a busy place**

*Job 1:6a; 2:1a—Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. (1) Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord.*

*Revelation 4:2, 6, 9–10; 5:11—Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in Heaven, and One sat on the throne. (6) Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. (9) Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, (10) the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne. (5:11) Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.*

Being in Heaven does not mean an eternity of nothingness, but a whole new life of movement, action, learning, and achievement. When you read the book of Revelation, you'll see there are lots of things happening!—People coming and going, trumpets blowing, singing, praising, people being called in for audiences, sent on assignments, and more!

### **► Helping those on Earth**

From the Scriptures we can see that one of the activities of Heaven's inhabitants is helping those of us still alive here on Earth. Those in Heaven are not only observing our activities, but they are assigned by the Lord to actively assist and sometimes communicate with us on Earth.

Some examples of God using the spirits of departed believers to communicate with those still living on Earth are found in the account of the spirits of the departed prophets, Moses and Elijah, appearing and conferring with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration; and Saint John's account in the book of Revelation of his conversation with a heavenly messenger sent by God to reveal to him mysteries of the future.

Let's look at some of the Scriptures that explain this.

### **► The cloud of witnesses—Hebrews 12:1**

The 11th chapter of the New Testament Book of Hebrews is an inspiring account of the faith and exploits of many of the most outstanding men and women of God who appear in the Old Testament. Immediately following this listing of heroes and heroines of faith, we are told in the first verse of the next chapter,

*Hebrews 12:1—Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.*

The original manuscript of the New Testament was not divided into chapters, so you've got to keep in mind the chapter before this (11) in order to know what "great cloud of witnesses" he's talking about. Those who have already gone on to be with the Lord are watching us, praying for us, and trying to help us.

## ► Delivering prophecies

In almost every case of the Biblical prophets there was some spiritual agent or an angel or someone helping him most of the time. Time and again when the prophets revealed something, they said the angel of the Lord or someone else was there showing them. So it must have been the angel who was communicating those visions, and the prophet was able to see what God was showing the angel to show to the prophet to pass on to the people.

① *You probably will not have time to read all of these Scriptures during the class—just select a few. They are also listed in the Study Notes book.*

*Daniel 8:13a—Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking.*

*Daniel 8:15—Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.*

*Daniel 9:21–23—Yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. (22) And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. (23) At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:”*

*Daniel 12:5–7—Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. (6) And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?” (7) Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.*

*Ezekiel 40:1–4—In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was captured, on the very same day the hand of the Lord was upon me; and He took me there. (2) In the visions of God He took me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain; on it toward the south was something like the structure of a city. (3) He took me there, and behold, there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze. He had a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand, and he stood in the gateway. (4) And the man said to me, “Son of man, look with your eyes and hear with your ears, and fix your mind on everything I show you; for you were brought here so that I might show them to you. Declare to the house of Israel everything you see.”*

*Zechariah 1:9—Then I said, “My lord, what are these?” So the angel who talked with me said to me, “I will show you what they are.”*

*Zechariah 2:3—And there was the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him.*

*Matthew 1:20—But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”*

*Matthew 2:13—Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.”*

*Luke 1:11–13—Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. (12) And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. (13) But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias.”*

*Revelation 1:1—The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants— things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John.*

## ► Heavenly communication

*Isaiah 30:21—Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.*

*Zephaniah 3:9—For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one accord.*

Communication in the spirit world may be different than in this physical world, and perhaps includes thought transference. This helps to explain how we receive messages from those beyond, as they usually communicate directly in our thoughts.

### **[Optional] Try the spirits**

Of course, not every communication from the spirit world comes from a good source. In this class we are focusing on angels or men and women who loved the Lord in their lifetimes and went on to help from Heaven.

There is another side to spiritual communication—the darker side. Not every spirit is from the Lord and not every prophecy is inspired by Him!

*1 John 4:1–3—Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.*

As the Word says, you must “test the spirits” through His Word so that you will not be led astray.

The judgment of prophecies was explained in the classes on prophecy and you may like to review this subject.

## **► The book of Revelation**

In chapter 19 of the book of Revelation, written by the apostle John, after receiving a glorious revelation of the future from a heavenly being, he writes,

*Revelation 19:9–10—Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.” (10) And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”*

A similar passage from chapter 22 says,

*Revelation 22:8–9—Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. (9) Then he said to me, “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”*

The book of Revelation contains a number of other passages where John records messages he received from departed saints.

*Revelation 6:9–11—When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held. (10) And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” (11) Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

It is interesting that in this passage John sees and hears the so-called “dead,” and identifies these “souls” as “fellow servants” and “brethren”—the same terms applied to the messenger that he fell down to worship in the previously quoted text. It’s also noteworthy that these spirits who had already left this life still expressed concern about “them that dwell on the earth.”

In chapter 7, John describes more astounding sights and sounds he partook of during a spiritual trip to Heaven:

*Revelation 7:9–14—After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, (10) and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (11) All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, (12) saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” (13) Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?” (14)*

*And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*

Here John beholds an innumerable multitude of people in Heaven, and he then carries on a two-way conversation with one of them, an "elder," who clearly appears to be a departed believer. In chapter 5, verse 9, these same "elders" proclaim to Jesus, "You have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation," showing that indeed these elders are departed brethren.

## ► **Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration**

Another outstanding appearance of two renowned departed saints is recounted in three of the four Gospels, in the description of Moses' and Elijah's meeting with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. These two prophets had left this life hundreds of years earlier, but held what was no doubt an important conference with the Lord shortly before His crucifixion.

*Luke 9:28–31—He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. (29) And as He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. (30) And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*

## ► **The saved of all ages can communicate with those still in this life**

The privilege of helping those still in this life is not limited to personalities from the Bible. The saved of all ages who have passed on to the spirit world can communicate with us. Our loved ones who have passed on, and those unknown to us personally, may on occasion deliver messages from Heaven.

One example of this is the founder of our movement, David Berg, who departed this life in 1994. It makes sense that those who devote their lives to sharing the good news of Jesus' love will want to continue doing so when they pass on beyond, so the Lord gives them opportunities to communicate with us.

① *Teachers: You may like to explain that some of the prophecies in the 12 Foundation Stones course, for instance those in the section at the end of the Study Notes book, were delivered by David Berg.*

## **Class Section 3: Getting Ready for Heaven**

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**40 minutes**

### ► **[Optional] Songs: Praise the Lord for Heaven!**

♫ *Songs: Select and sing two or three songs from the "Heaven Song Sheet" to thank the Lord for Heaven and its wonders.*

### **[Optional] Getting this far**

You can tell the class: I'm like the old lady when they made fun of her because she believed that when she died she was going to go to Heaven. "Ah," they said, "didn't you know all that stuff's been debunked and there's no such thing as God and Heaven? That's ridiculous to believe like that!"

She said, "Well, even if it isn't so, I sure have had a good time getting this far!"

Think that one over! Even if we don't get to enjoy it forever, we've had a good time getting this far, haven't we? But the fact is we are going to enjoy it forever! Heaven is our destination!

## ► We don't have to fear death

*1 Corinthians 15:55–57—“O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (56) The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. (57) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Romans 7:24–25a—O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (25a) I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

For us, as believers, death will have no sting because our sins are forgiven, and the grave will have no victory because we have won the victory over the grave through Christ and our salvation and our eventual resurrection. Our spirits are immediately free to go be with the Lord, so it's not really death for us in the same way it is for others. We don't really “die” in the sense that they die.

That's why we don't really like to call it “dying” or “death.” It's better to call it “graduation,” “passing on” or “promotion.” It's just like passing from one room to another. It's a very beautiful experience for most people who know and love the Lord.

*John 11:25–26—Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. (26) And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.”*

*John 8:51—Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My Word he shall never see death.*

Jesus Himself said we don't really die! He doesn't even want to call it death or dying. At times when they said somebody was dead or had died, He said they were “sleeping.” He didn't even want to say that they were dead. At least apparently their body was sleeping and probably their spirits had an after-death experience or life after life.

*Matthew 9:24—He said to them, “Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.” And they ridiculed Him.*

*John 11:11—He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”*

Whenever it comes and whenever we go to be with the Lord, however we go to be with the Lord, our entry into the next world is going to be a wonderful experience! Our place in Heaven is guaranteed!

*Matthew 16:28a—Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death.*

*Psalms 23:4a—Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me.*

*Hebrews 2:14b–15—That through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the Devil, (15) and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

### [Optional] Dying Grace

You don't have to worry about death and fear it and wonder about what's going to happen when you die. When it comes the Lord will give you dying grace and dying will probably be the easiest thing you ever did. The hard thing is to live!—Right?

It's like what Dwight L. Moody told the old ladies when they asked him, “Doctor Moody, have you got dying grace?”—Two self-righteous Holiness sisters who figured, of course, they had dying grace already!

He shocked them by saying, “No, sisters, I'm sorry, I don't have dying grace!”

“You mean, you, the great D.L. Moody, the great evangelist, you don't have dying grace yet?”

He said, “No sisters—I'm not dying yet!”

### [Optional] Out of sight, but not gone

♪ *Song: “White Sails”*

I am standing on the seashore. A ship spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the ocean. I stand watching her until she fades on the horizon, and someone at my side says, “She is gone.” Gone where? The loss of sight is in me, not in her. Just at the moment when someone says, “She is gone,” there are others who are watching her coming. Other voices take up the glad shout, “Here she comes!” That is dying.

## [Optional] The other side—those who die without the Lord

We've talked a lot about Heaven and we haven't talked much about what happens to those who die without knowing the Lord.

Most of the people whose Near-Death Experiences we've heard about must have been saved, or at least good people, and that's why they all had such good experiences. However there have been other studies of other kinds of people, some of them not so good and criminals and whatnot, and some of their experiences were not so happy, it was more like a bad drug trip! There is a Hell and a very unhappy side to eternity, but we don't have time to get into it in this class.

## ► Our lives are in the Lord's hands. He'll bring us Home when it is time.

As much as we're looking forward to Heaven, we should never consider taking matters into our own hands. God knows when and how we're supposed to die. If you love the Lord, God has appointed a time and a place for you to die when your job is done.

*Psalm 48:14—For this is God, our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to death.*

We do not consider suicide an acceptable act in the eyes of God. Anyone who commits suicide is robbing God of the life that He has given them to serve others! God knows when and how you're supposed to die, and we should each wait for God to make the decision and have His way, whatever it is, and not die at our own hand.

Life is a precious thing, given to us by God, and though He has given man the freedom of choice, He means for you to leave with Him the choice of when your physical body dies and you return to His arms. God has His Own timetable for each person on Earth, and when your time is up, He'll call you Home.

This present life on Earth is for a reason. There are lessons to be learned to prepare us for Heaven, and it's wisest and best for each of us to live our lives on Earth through to the end in order to be prepared and learn what we need to learn before our arrival in Heaven!

Although Heaven has wonderful beauties and glories, including freedom from the pain and suffering that exists in our earthly life, those who end their lives prematurely will have to face the consequences of their action once they get to the other side. They will have to learn the lessons that the Lord wants them to learn from their wrong decision. They will still have to face the sorrow, pain, and suffering which they have caused their friends, relatives, and loved ones.

Self-destruction is no victory. It could come under the classification of the Scripture about respecting the "temple of God" which you are:

*1 Corinthians 3:16–17b—Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (17b) ... For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.*

The worst disrespect of all would be to destroy your own body. We need to wait for God to make the decision of when our life on Earth should be over. We have no right to destroy the God-given life which He's given us to live for Him and others!

## [Optional] NDE: June's story

(As told by her doctor:) June had had a cardiac arrest at the age of five during surgery to repair her heart valves and to install a pacemaker. She often talked about her near-death experience, mainly because it was such a beautiful event that it always seemed to be with her. Although she was deeply anesthetized during the surgery, she suddenly found herself floating above the doctors, watching them as they worked. She could recount details: the appearance of certain instruments, for instance, and the fact that one of the doctors was right-handed and the other left-handed. When the doctors began their procedure to restart her heart, she found herself leaving the operating room and traveling down a long tunnel. At the other end, she was bathed in light, a bright warm light that she always described as "the Light of God." As she later told her husband, Don, "I was never afraid again after I experienced the light. I know that I can die at any time, and yet I have no fear."

It was the experience of this light that gave her such a positive outlook on life. Without it, much of her life would have been dark. Her parents died when she was young. Her sister died of a drug overdose at the age of eighteen. June knew that pacemakers sometimes stop working, causing heart

failure, but she didn't dwell on it. "I was more afraid than she was," said Don. "She had no fear because she had seen the light."

The day before she died June was having a cup of coffee at her kitchen table, when her dead sister appeared. She stood before her and announced, "June, it's time to go." Then the apparition sat down across the table and drank a cup of coffee. When the apparition finished, she simply got up and left the house. June felt that she couldn't tell her husband what had happened. Instead, she called the aunt and uncle who had raised her and told them about the peculiar occurrence. "I am going to die, and I just wanted to say good-bye," she said. Then she called her two brothers. She told them not to mention their conversation to her husband until she died because it would be too upsetting for him.

She simply told Don how happy he had made her. She was glad to have such a beautiful home and a wonderful child. Nothing could have made her happier. That night she died in her sleep (at age 28) because her pacemaker failed. Her heart simply stopped.

## ► We can prepare for Heaven by pleasing the Lord

Our lives in the world to come depend upon the choices that we make while on Earth. Those who choose to love God and receive Him and try to do good and love their fellow man will be blessed with love in the world to come. On the other hand, those who hate and destroy and kill will be judged in the world to come, and they will suffer for their choices and for their lack of love.

If we want to go to be with the Lord in Heaven, if you have received the Lord into your heart, that's what counts! You're saved!

*John 6:37b—And the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*

However, if we want the Lord to rejoice at our arrival and if we want rewards, then we need to do the things that please Him. We have already prepared for Heaven by receiving the Lord. Now our lives need to show and manifest our faith. Remember what Jesus told us:

*Revelation 14:13—Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on, and their works follow them.*

*Matthew 16:27—For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

A good question to ask yourself at the end of each day is: "What have I done with my life this day? What did I do for Jesus? What did I do for others?"

Believers will be rewarded at the Judgment of Jesus Christ, the Throne of Christ. For many, the greatest part of our reward will be meeting people that we have helped, especially meeting people in whose salvation we were involved. When these people get to Heaven, they're going to be so thankful and appreciative because we were instrumental in bringing them into that heavenly Kingdom!

### [Optional] Rewards in Heaven

*Matthew 6:19–21—Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on Earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; (20) but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (21) For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

*Matthew 25:31–40—When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. (32) All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. (33) And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. (34) Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (35) for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; (36) I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' (37) Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? (38) When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? (39) Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' (40) And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

*Psalm 62:12—Also to You, O Lord, belongs mercy; for You render to each one according to his work.*

*Jeremiah 17:10—I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.*

*Revelation 22:12—And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*

*2 Corinthians 5:10—For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

### [Optional] Skit: Sophie the Washerwoman

See skit text at the end of this class.

### [Optional] Heaven is full of sinners!

① *You may like to sing the following song and/or read it out as a poem.*

Heaven is full of normal people, just like we are. Anyone who arrives in Heaven is there because they are saved by grace, not because they're some sort of holy, self-righteous hypocritical type of person! This song expresses the thought very well.

#### Heaven Is Full of Sinners

By Jeremy Spencer

I know Heaven is full of sinners  
You never thought you would see.  
They were lost, humble, loving sinners  
Jesus came to free.  
I know Heaven is full of sinners,  
People like you and me.  
All so happy to be forgiven  
For eternity!

You can never be too bad for Jesus,  
Only too good!

Heaven's open to all who will receive Him  
If only they would!

I know Heaven is full of sinners.  
We just might be surprised  
At the characters we will meet There  
In our Home up high!  
They're our sisters  
And they're our brothers,  
All saved by grace.  
Sinning saints! There are no others  
In that heavenly Place!

# Closing Activity and Prayer

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5 minutes

## ► Prayer

- ① Give everyone three minutes to think about what more they could do in their lives for the Lord and others. Then go around the class and have everyone pray a brief prayer asking the Lord for His help.
- 📺 [Optional] Video clip: If you have the video 20 Minutes to Go available, you may like to show the song, "This Must Be Heaven!"

## Skits and Songs

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### Skit: "Sophie the Washerwoman"

**Characters:** Narrator, Rich Woman, Sophie, Postman, Rich Man Guest, Rich Woman Guest, Angel.

**Narrator:** Did you hear the story about the rich woman who was so selfish she gave very little to the Lord's work, and about her poor washerwoman whom she cheated and short-changed and paid so poorly and who loved the Lord and did everything she could to give gifts to the missionaries and the mission fields?

**(Sophie singing in the background as she washes her clothes.)**

**Rich Woman:** Sophie! Where are you?

**Sophie:** Yes, Madam! Coming Madam!

**Rich Woman:** Oh, there you are! The church meeting was absolutely boring today!—Going on and on about missionaries and giving to the poor! Huh, why should I? It's not my fault if they're poor! Did anyone call while I was out?

**Sophie:** Yes, Madam, the newspaper boy. He said that you had told him to come today and that you had promised to tip him if he would bring the papers to the door instead of leaving them in the mailbox in the gate.

**Rich Woman:** Ugh! That lazy boy! So what did you tell him?

**Sophie:** Well, Madam, I gave him some money for you.

**Rich Woman:** You what?! Well, of course that's up to you. If you wanted to tip him, that's out of your own pocket. Good heavens, I dislike that boy! He always looks so scruffy and he needs a haircut! (Clock chimes go off.) Oh, look at the time! Sophie, I know it's your day off, but I'm having guests for dinner tonight so I want all the curtains washed, dried and ironed, and hung back up before they arrive, and then you can help the cook to prepare the food.

**Sophie:** But Madam, I promised to visit my...

**Rich Woman:** I'm sorry, my dear, the guests will be arriving at seven—and I want the house to look spic and span! Do you understand?

**Sophie:** Yes, Madam.

**Rich Woman:** I'm invited for tea after the church board meeting, so I must hurry along and make myself ready. **(Door slams.)**

**Narrator:** Sophie is busy washing the curtains, when doorbell rings.

**Sophie:** Now, who could that be?

**Postman:** Good morning! I have a registered letter for Miss Sophie Give-All.

**Sophie:** Oh, that's me!

**Postman:** Very well, sign here please. Thank you. Good day to you!

**Sophie:** Oh, thank you so much! And a good day to you too! **(Opening letter.)** Oh, I can't wait to see who this is from. **(Reads)** "Dear Sophie, Thank you so much for your sweet letters of encouragement to me while I was ill, and for doing the shopping and watching the children. Enclosed is 20 pounds as a token of our appreciation for all your help. God bless you! Much love from Joan and Ben and children." Oh, what a lovely surprise! Now, what shall I do with this money? Oh, I know! I'll send it to the missionaries in India! They need all the help they can get, great or small. Wow, that's really cheered me up! Ooops, I'd better get back to work.

**Narrator:** Later that day, after the guests had eaten....

**Guest (Man):** Goodnight, Mrs. Stoneheart, and thank you for a wonderful dinner.

**Rich Woman:** Oooh, it was nothing! Goodnight!

**Guest (Woman):** Absolutely gorgeous evening, Mrs. Stoneheart! The dinner was superb!—And you keep the house so fresh and clean, I don't know how you manage.

**Guest 1 (Man):** Oh yes, a real woman's touch—what our home could with a little bit more of.

**Guest (Woman):** Henry!!

**Guest (Man):** Oh, yes—yes, yes, yes. Well, goodnight Mrs. Stoneheart, goodnight.

**Rich Woman:** Goodnight, goodnight! **(Slams the door.)** Oh! Thank God that's over with! Sophie!

**Sophie:** Yes, Madam.

**Rich Woman:** I'm rather tired after this long day, so I'll be off to bed now. Make sure the kitchen is clean before you go, won't you? Goodnight.

**Sophie: (Tiredly)** Yes, Madam. Goodnight.

**Narrator:** But that same night, the rich woman had a dream that both she and her washerwoman died and went to Heaven. The angel was leading the rich lady through the streets of the Heavenly Space City.

**Angel:** Come right this way, Mrs. Stoneheart.

**Rich Woman:** Oh, it's absolutely beautiful! I never imagined that Heaven could be like this—gorgeous! Oh, look at that fine mansion! Whose is that?

**Angel:** That belongs to your washerwoman. The one that you paid so little and didn't appreciate.

**Rich Woman: (Thinking to herself)** Oh my, if my washerwoman got a mansion like that, think what a fine place I'm going to get! **(To angel)** Can you show me my place now?

**Angel:** Yes, Mrs. Stoneheart, if you'll just come this way, please.

**Rich Woman:** Oh, this is a rather poor, shabby neighborhood, isn't it? Surely we must be going the wrong way!

**Angel:** Almost there now. Yes, here we are.

**Rich Woman:** What's this!?

**Angel:** Well, Mrs. Stoneheart, that's your house.

**Rich Woman:** My house! How could you dare give me such a shabby little shanty as this! After all I've been and done! This is outrageous!

**Angel:** Well, that's all the material you sent us, that's all the things you stored up in Heaven in the way of gifts and prayers and works for the Lord. That's all you sent us, so that's the best we could do. Your washerwoman was praying all the time and giving to missions what little she could and doing good

works for the Lord and witnessing. So she kept sending us up so much material, we couldn't help but build her a beautiful mansion. But this is all the material you sent, and so this shack is all that we were able to build.

**Narrator:** What a surprise we're going to get when the Lord hands out the rewards as to who was really greatest. Some people serve unselfishly, sacrificially and yet never getting the credit for it. But God has a great big book and it's known to Him and He's writing it all down. So be sure you're doing a good work for the Lord. Be faithful unto the end, then you can rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven!