

THE JOURNEY

COMPASS STUDY SERIES

Welcome to the journey. These studies are designed to guide us through God's will for our lives as we travel between creation and heaven. In a few short studies you can know the master plan for your life as revealed from Genesis through Revelation.

*As you embark on this path, beginning with the **Introduction to God**, you will see God's amazing features that were first apparent through creation. Then you can understand the written **Word of God** and how both testaments are developed around two stories. As you continue you will discover the connecting figure of all history and all Scripture – the Messiah, **Jesus Christ**. Through **The Gospel**, Jesus' life and teachings fulfill the longings and answer the questions that plague mankind. God has always wanted the message of salvation to be simple and clear, verifying **The Promise** with miracles and testimonies among many eyewitnesses. Knowing the journey is both exciting and demanding, God makes our new life a part of the **Body of Christ**, his church. Our individual and collective eternal destination for this journey is **Heaven**.*

There are so many rich stories, lessons and truths within Scripture to help you on this epic adventure. As you seek a new, true and meaningful spiritual life, know that God will give you a new family of relationships to share the greatest journey ever.

The seven study framework used to help people become disciples of Jesus has always been helpful but our earlier version needed a serious review. The anchor studies offered here were written from scratch and developed in stages. I drafted the first version in order that these studies reflect the sequence of Bible revelation, its connectivity and its most obvious points and essentials. The current version is the result of review and use by many evangelists, elders, teachers and students. We are grateful for the numerous people and churches who made suggestions. It is important to note that these studies are only a tool to help people understand God and His Word. Hopefully they will be periodically reviewed as we remain committed to communicating the Gospel to the world in the best way possible. May we continue to plant and water the gospel seed as God makes things grow.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO GOD	2
THE WORD	4
JESUS CHRIST	6
THE GOSPEL	8
THE PROMISE	10
THE BODY OF CHRIST	14
HEAVEN	16

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INTRODUCTION TO GOD

This study covers some broad yet compelling features of God; the objective in this study is to help people see that God is the author of creation and that He is intimately involved in human affairs.

1. **God's Creativity** (Genesis 1:1-27)

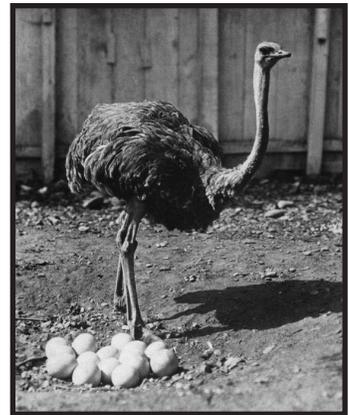
- a. God's creativity is revealed in the heavens and the earth (the sun, the stars, the skies, the weather, the land formations, the oceans, gravity, plants, animals, colors, shapes, sizes, etc.)
- b. God's creativity is revealed in the creatures of the sea (compare star formations and the miniscule seahorse)
- c. God's creativity is revealed in human beings (our diversity and our ability to be creative as well)

2. **God's Glory** (Psalm 19:1-6)

- a. The creation shouts a message of an intelligent creator who cannot be ignored
- b. The creation tells us of God's majestic qualities

3. **God's Engineering** (Job 39:13-18)

- a. Consider an ostrich who lays her eggs in the open ground
- b. She lacks the ability or wisdom to protect her young, yet her offspring survive
- c. Consider the defense abilities of other creatures or the human eye



4. **God's Vastness** (Psalm 8:3-5)

- a. Consider the immensity of God's work in the creation
- b. The current estimate is that over 250 billion galaxies exist
- c. It is very humbling that God focuses on us and cares for us, even though we are so small and seemingly insignificant

5. **God's Omnipresence** (Psalm 139:7-16, Hebrews 4:13)

- a. Omnipresence means that God is present everywhere, even when we were in our mother's womb (Psalm 139:13-16)
- b. The all-seeing eye of God reveals everything, both good and bad (Hebrews 4:13)
- c. We can't run or hide from God; we will one day have to give an account to this great God



6. God's Love (1 John 4:7-10)

- a. God displayed His love for us by providing the ultimate gift of Jesus
- b. God's love is consistent, selfless and in no way manipulative

God has made it clear that He wants to be known. State your own conclusions about these amazing traits. What do you think and feel about God?

Further Reading: 1 John 1:5 – God is Light

Mark 10:17-18 – God is Good

1 Peter 1:15-16 – God is Holy

Romans 2:4, 11:22 – God is Kind and God is Stern

Acts 17:24-31 – God is Purposeful

THE WORD OF GOD

The Scriptures center around two major covenants.

The Old Covenant: 17 historical books, 17 prophetic books and 5 poetic books – the covenant is received by Moses and made available to the Israelites (Deuteronomy 5:1-32)

The New Covenant: 5 historical books, 21 letters and 1 book of prophecy – the covenant was ratified by the death (blood) of Christ and made available to all at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41)

1. **The Word of God Provides Divine Guidance** (Deuteronomy 4:32-40, 2 Timothy 3:14-17)
 - a. The Israelites were taught to remember the story of their deliverance
 - b. The Israelites would receive ongoing instructions from God
 - c. The Scriptures are a record of God's activities and how man responds to them
 - d. The Bible is God-breathed and is useful for all who will read it and apply it
 - e. God gives instructions for how we are to be delivered, or saved (2 Timothy 3:14)
 - f. God gives instructions for how we are to conduct our lives once we have been saved (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

2. **The Word of God Contains Specific Prophecies** (Isaiah 9:6-7, 53:3-7)
 - a. There is a continuity in Scriptures between predicted and fulfilled events
 - b. Many Old Testament prophecies have a direct relationship to the coming of Jesus Christ, predicted hundreds of years before His arrival to earth
 - c. This phenomenon is not found in other religions (2 Peter 1:20-21)

3. **The Word of God Reveals Our True Self** (James 1:21-25)
 - a. The Word of God exposes truth about ourselves, much like a mirror reveals how we are looking, whether it is good or bad
 - b. The proper response to the Word of God is to immediately act upon its truths, just as you would when discovering how you looked in the mirror

THE WORD OF GOD

4. **The Word of God Provides Doctrinal Discernment** (Acts 17:10-12)

- a. The Word of God gives us the ability to compare what all religious leaders teach and emphasize with what God actually says
- b. The Word of God helps us to discern between right and wrong and make appropriate choices in our daily lives

5. **The Word of God Contains the Path to Rebirth/Salvation** (1 Peter 1:22-25)

- a. The Word of God shows us the truth about how to be saved
- b. We are able to be born again through the seed (God's Word) and our obedient response to it (Acts 2:37-41)

The Bible reveals God, describes His relationship to mankind, exposes us and leads to everlasting life.

Further Reading: The book of Exodus or an Old Testament summary in Psalm 78

John 12:47-48 – the Word of God judges us

Matthew 15:1-9 – the Word of God is above any and all tradition

Romans 15:4 – the Word of God brings encouragement and hope

Hebrews 4:12-13 – the Word of God is living and active

2 Peter 1:3-5 – the Word of God gives us all we need for life

JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ was anticipated by Scripture and came to the world in the flesh to defeat death and provide a way out of the evil ages through walking in his steps.

1. **The Life of Jesus** (Philippians 2:5-11)

- a. Jesus came as God in the flesh (John 1:1, 14) and He is the exact representation of God (Hebrews 1:3)
- b. Jesus made himself nothing while He walked the earth, operating as a servant (slave)
- c. Jesus humbled himself by becoming a man, by enduring all the challenges we normally face and, ultimately, by surrendering Himself to die on a cross for our sins
- d. Jesus was exalted by God in His resurrection, and all mankind will one day bow before Him

2. **The Teachings of Jesus** (Matthew 5:1-16)

- a. This discourse (the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount) is respected throughout history by Christians and even other religions
- b. Jesus says that the blessed people all share one thing in common – they properly deal with their hearts
- c. Jesus states that our goal is to illuminate the way to God by living a godly life

3. **The Love of Jesus** (John 4:1-26, 13:1-17)

- a. Jesus did not follow popular prejudices of His day, and He even defied them (see also Mark 1:40-42)
- b. In the story of Jesus with the woman at the well, Jesus showed His love by sharing spiritual truths with her and exposing her sinful behavior
- c. Jesus' life was all about serving and loving those around Him, as is shown by His washing of the disciples' feet



4. The Call of Jesus (Luke 5:27-32)

- a. Like Matthew the tax collector, the call of Jesus begins with the need to address sinful areas of your life and make immediate changes whenever necessary
- b. Matthew's life drastically changed upon his encounter with Jesus (primarily honesty and a focus on giving to others rather than taking from others)
- c. Like Matthew, followers of Jesus created ways for others to hear His call

5. The Top Two Commandments According to Jesus (Mark 12:28-31)

- a. Jesus says we are to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength (what does that mean to you?)
- b. Loving our neighbor (or others) is the second greatest commandment according to Jesus (what does that mean to you?)

6. The Expectations of Jesus (Matthew 16:24-27)

- a. Jesus expects His followers to deny themselves, or put their wants and desires behind those of God and others
- b. Jesus expects His followers to take up their crosses, or be willing to endure difficult times and even suffer to continue to follow Him
- c. Jesus expects His followers to follow Him, or look at His life and live their lives in imitation of His (see also 1 John 2:5-6)

Jesus alone is considered to be the author of life (Hebrews 12:2) and the only one who can bring us into a relationship with God (John 14:6, Acts 4:13)

Further Reading: Matthew 5:1-7:24—The entire Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 16:13-19—Jesus is revealed as 'The Christ'
Luke 14:25-34—The cost of following Jesus
Colossians 1:15-20—The supremacy of Jesus

THE GOSPEL

The root word for gospel is evangel, meaning good news and more often refers to the focal events of His life – His death, burial and resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15:1-6) The gospel is of first importance to a Christian and something on which we must take a stand.

1. **Jesus was Betrayed** (Matthew 26:36-50)

- a. Jesus suffered intense psychological strain in this late night prayer in Gethsemane
- b. Jesus was extremely tired, lonely and disappointed with his friends
- c. Jesus had just been betrayed by one of his closest friends, Judas

2. **Jesus was Despised and Rejected** (Matthew 26:56-75, 27:11-31)

- a. Jesus was deserted, even by his closest friends
- b. Jesus faced false accusations, false witnesses and much hurt to his soul
- c. Jesus was spat upon, struck by fists, slapped and taunted
- d. Jesus encountered Peter's blatant and bitter denial of Him
- e. Jesus was rejected by the crowds and given over to death in place of a known criminal
- f. Jesus was flogged, an immensely painful punishment
- g. Jesus was mocked as a king, even though He truly was the King of the Jews

3. **Jesus was Crucified, Separated from God and Suffered Death** (Matthew 27:32-56)

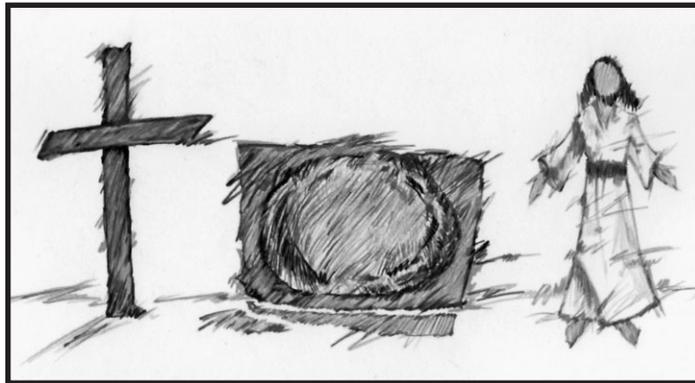
- a. For the first three hours Jesus hung on the cross, He endured the humiliation of the crowd's insults and taunting
- b. For the final three hours Jesus hung on the cross, darkness reigned and Jesus endured the pain of being separated from God while taking upon Himself the sins of the world (2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24-25)
- c. Upon Jesus' death on the cross, there was an earthquake, almost as if the earth was groaning at the injustice
- d. Jesus' death on the cross was an example and inspiration to one who was there

4. **Jesus Was Buried** (Matthew 27:57-66)

- a. Jesus was placed in the tomb of Joseph, a disciple and a member of the Jewish Council (Mark 15:43)
- b. The tomb was highly secured with a massive stone and a Roman seal was put on the entrance, all to keep anyone from possibly stealing the body of Jesus and claiming that He had been resurrected

5. **Jesus Was Made Alive Again** (Matthew 28:1-7)

- a. The area was shaken by an earthquake and the tomb was found empty
- b. The news came quickly about His resurrection; some women, the apostles and many others saw Him alive (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)



The gospel, or death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that our righteousness cannot save us. The gospel is about a righteousness that comes from God, that we were reconciled to Him at His expense even when we were ungodly. Our responsibility is to respond in faith to this gospel, accepting the means that God has determined by which he rescues us by faith. (Romans 1:17, 5:6-11, 6:1-4)

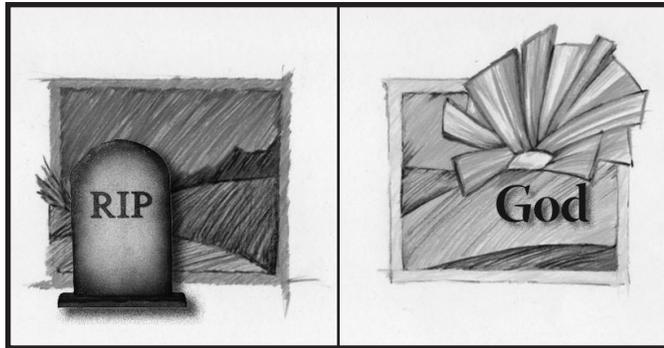
Further Reading: Luke 24:13-53 – A discussion about the gospel story
Romans 3:9-20 – Our lost state before God
1 Corinthians 1:18-25 – The foolishness of the cross
1 Peter 2:13-3:22 – The application of the gospel to our daily lives

THE PROMISE

There is a clear promise of salvation offered by God through Jesus Christ. The promised message of reconciliation is based on the accomplishments of Jesus and is received when someone submits to the conditions of the promise.

1. **The Promise is Offered Despite Our Condition** (Ephesians 2:1-6)

- a. All of mankind has been pronounced spiritually dead
- b. We are dead because we follow the ways of the world and Satan
- c. God intervenes when we are in a helpless state and offers to rescue us
- d. The good news is that we are saved by grace and can become spiritually alive through Christ by being raised up with Him

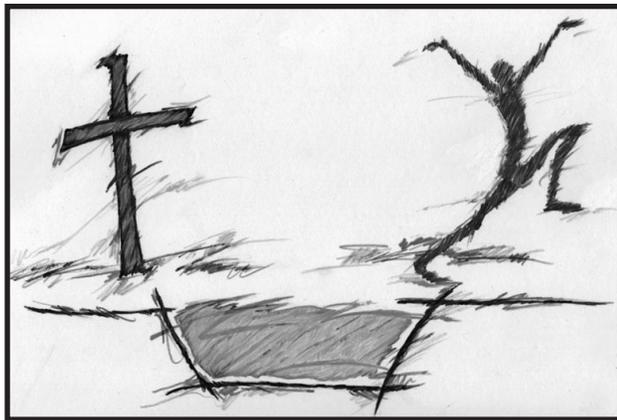


2. **The Promise is Fully Revealed for the First Time** (Acts 2:1-13, 22-40)

- a. The miracles displayed by the apostles confirmed that the new covenant was about to be revealed (similar to the old covenant that came through Moses and also was confirmed by miracles)
- b. The truths about Jesus and the essentials of the gospel message were revealed by Peter – for all time (Acts 2:39)
- c. Many in the crowd were affected greatly by his revelations of Jesus (they were cut to the heart, or convicted in their hearts)
- d. Repentance (changing your mind and your direction in life) and baptism (immersion or dipping) were needed to gain access to the promise

3. The Promise is Granted for the First Time (Acts 2:41, 1 Peter 1:3, 3:19-21)

- a. God added to His list of souls saved and he “caused them to be born again to a living hope”(1 Peter 1:3, NASB); the pledged response made by these 3,000 people to repent and be baptized certified God’s pardon and the promise they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 3:21, Ephesians 1:12-13)
- b. The salvation process is also called regeneration, rebirth, or being born from above. It means to be formed, restored or created again (Titus 3:3-7)
- c. Our faith, repentance and baptism does not earn us the new birth, it simply secures it as the gift of salvation God presented to us (we simply opened the gift and reaped the benefits)
- d. Our baptism is the point in time when we surrender to his terms and pledge ourselves to God (1 Peter 3:19-21)



4. The Promise Involves Being Raised Up by God’s Power (Colossians 2:6-15)

- a. Understanding Jesus is Lord is crucial in receiving the promise
- b. Christ circumcised our sinful nature (helped us to repent) which was a cutting and painful process
- c. Our sinful being is buried with Christ in baptism where we are washed clean by His blood (Hebrews 10:19-20)
- d. We are forgiven and then raised up with Christ by His power to be made new and made alive as a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- e. God gains the victory in our baptism and willingly cancels the debt we owed due to our many sins



5. The Promise Involves Dealing With Our Sinful Nature (Colossians 3:5-9)

- a. Sexual immorality, or fornication – sexual vices, sex outside of the marriage relationship
- b. Impurity – unclean, lewd behavior, unnatural acts (Romans 1:18-25)
- c. Lust, passions – looking at someone in a sexual context, indulging in sexual activity in the mind
- d. Evil desires – an active impulse or condition toward wickedness, malice or sinful cravings
- e. Greed – to covet something, to keep for yourself at the expense of others
- f. Idolatry – debasing yourself by worshipping or serving things and not God
- g. Anger – a wrathful state, having an outburst with revenge in mind
- h. Rage – a violent motion, an outburst without thought of control
- i. Malice – an evil habit of mind, wanting harm to fall upon someone
- j. Slander – wounding another’s reputation by your words, giving an abusive report or speaking evil of a person
- k. Filthy language – using inappropriate words to debase something or someone
- l. Lying – stating something false to protect yourself or puff yourself up

God calls us to rid these things from our lives by putting them to death. The first step in that process is admitting our sin, then allowing the Word of God and other Christians to help us remove them from our life. As Christians, we are called to help each other in this battle against Satan and our sinful nature (Hebrews 3:12-14)

6. The Promise is Dramatic (Titus 3:3-7)

- a. Each of us was involved in much sin when God intervened on our behalf
- b. Our salvation is connected to the appearance and working of God our Savior, the washing of rebirth and being made new by His Spirit
- c. Our justification (being forgiven and being made right with God) came based upon God’s grace and mercy, not our works

7. **The Promise is Opposed by Satan** (1 Timothy 4:1)

- a. Innovations to receiving the promise have been taught throughout the years, such as removing or minimizing repentance or baptism (Luke 7:29-30).
- b. Gradualism has been accepted by many, a teaching that says, “I know I’m right with God, but I don’t know when I was saved” (Romans 6:1-4)
- c. Self-sufficiency has also been taught, stating, “I am a good person and I do not need to be saved” (Romans 3:21-26)

This message of repentance and rebirth is a free offer. But free doesn't mean cheap, as this offer came at the expense of Christ suffering for our sins and it involves painful decisions we must make to surrender to His Lordship and turn away from our sins.

Further Reading: Acts 8:26-40 – The promise of salvation received by an Ethiopian
Acts 9:1-19 – The promise of salvation received by a persecutor
Acts 16:16-34 – The promise of salvation received by a religious woman and a pagan jailor
Acts 19:1-5 – The promise of salvation received by sincere followers of Christ
Galatians 5:19-21 – The promise comes when we decide to deal with (repent of) our sin
2 Corinthians 7:8-11 – the promise involves sincere repentance

THE BODY OF CHRIST – THE CHURCH

The body of Christ is comprised of people from various backgrounds, all bound by a common belief and faithfulness to God, and connected through Christ. Jesus is the head (or leader) of the church and we are called to follow His lead as He directs us where to go and what to do to bring honor to God. (Matthew 16:13-17, Colossians 1:18)

1. The Church is Made Up of Disciples (John 13:33-35)

- a. Disciples in Christ's church are to be known by their love; this can be demonstrated in many ways such as mutual service, forgiveness and the absence of cliques and favoritism
- b. The term disciple eventually became interchangeable with other terms such as Christian, saint and witness, each name essentially identifying a follower of Jesus

2. The Church is an Assortment of Many Body Parts (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

- a. All members come into the body of Christ in the same manner – through baptism
- b. Each member of the body is unique and fulfills a crucial role; nobody is unwanted or not needed
- c. Each member of the body needs the other members of the body and must accept those who are different (comparison to our physical bodies)
- d. In the body, there will be an assortment of strengths, weaknesses, age-groups, backgrounds, ethnicities and appearances

3. The Church Has Been Given Guidelines for Unity (Ephesians 4:1-16)

- a. All in the body of Christ are called to be completely humble, gentle and patient with each other
- b. There are seven ones that define the core convictions of the church
- c. Jesus gave gifts of preparation (raising up evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc.) to ready the church for service, unity, knowledge, maturity and fullness in Christ
- d. The body of Christ is designed to have boundaries against external forces
- e. The body of Christ (both locally and internationally) matures and grows (both numerically and spiritually) as each member trains to grow and does their part





4. The Church Has a High Calling for Its Members (2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

- a. The role of each Christian in the body is to appropriately represent Christ as a new creation
- b. All Christians are called to minister in sharing the good news of forgiveness with others

5. The Church Has Responsibilities in This World (1 Corinthians 9:7-14)

- a. Members of the body of Christ give to support full-time ministry staff, pay for facilities and meet other needs in the local church
- b. Members of the body of Christ also have a heart to give to meet various brotherhood needs (worldwide) such as helping the poor around the world, supporting various missionary efforts and staying connected with each other (see Romans 15:23-27)

6. The Church Follows Christ Jesus (Romans 15:1-7, 14, 1 John 2:5-6)

- a. As members of the body of Christ, we are called to look out for each other and do what we can to please our neighbors
- b. Individual disciples in the body of Christ use Scripture to strengthen themselves and one another
- c. The expectation for each member of the body of Christ is to accept one another and praise God with one heart and mouth
- d. Each disciple in the body of Christ has the mindset before them of being like Christ – the head of the church

The local congregation consists of disciples that may be differentiated by heritage or abilities but are equal in Christ. They share the same mission of saving the lost and glorifying God by demonstrating both love and unity with one another without compromising essential truths.

Further Reading: Acts 2:42-47 – The activity of the very first body of Christ
1 Corinthians 3:1-9 – The importance of unity in the body
Ephesians 2:11-3:21 – The unity of Jews and Gentiles
Hebrews 3:12-14, 10:19-25 – The need to be involved with each other on a daily basis

HEAVEN

Heaven is a place where the saints will be brought to be with God forever. Living in anticipation of this promise greatly affects how we live. (2 Peter 3:13-16)

- 1. The Experience of Heaven is Inconceivable** (1 Corinthians 2:6-10)
 - a. Our senses (eyes, ear, mind, etc.) cannot fathom what Christ in heaven will be like
 - b. Heaven is a place that has been prepared for those who truly love God

- 2. The Hope of Heaven Inspires Us to Overcome the World** (Revelation 21:1-8, 22:1-5)
 - a. In its final form, heaven will be a new place designed for God to dwell with man without the challenges and curses of this earthly life
 - b. Those who overcome in this life will receive heaven's rewards, but certain unrepentant acts will disqualify a person from reaching there
 - c. In heaven, there will be healing, the ability to see God's face, no more night and, thus, no more fear, all of which will last forever and ever

- 3. The Blessings of Heaven are Worth the Price of Discipleship** (Mark 10:17-31)
 - a. Following Jesus means giving up the deception of earthly riches for the real riches which await us in heaven
 - b. The decision to follow Christ means leaving everything, but God ensures us that the benefits of heaven far outweigh the losses we may face on this earth
 - c. God also promises to give us many blessing long before our time in heaven

- 4. The Hospitality of Heaven is Incredible** (John 14:1-6)
 - a. Jesus says that He is preparing a room in heaven for us
 - b. Our accommodations in heaven will be better than the best offered here on earth
 - c. We must continue to follow Christ to ensure our spot in heaven
(see also 2 Peter 3:16-17)

5. The Inhabitants of Heaven Will Enjoy the Banquet of God (Matthew 22:1-14)

- a. Many were invited to attend the banquet of heaven but turned it down
- b. The banquet pictures a feast of blessings that God will spread out for us upon our arrival to heaven

For the person who embarks on this eternal journey, their life on earth, though important and contains great joy, pales in comparison to what they are expecting upon arriving in heaven. The promise of heaven helps us to refuse the temporary offerings of Satan and motivates us to give up any hindrance in order to reach our eternal home.

Further Reading: Luke 14:25-32 – the costs and blessings of life’s biggest decision

1 Corinthians 15:35-58 – the bodily resurrection

Philippians 3:20-21 – we have citizenship in heaven and the hope of a new body

2 Corinthians 5:1-5 – we have an eternal home awaiting us

2 Corinthians 12:1-10 – Paul’s vision of heaven