

2. YOU DON'T KNOW THE POWER OF GOD

There is a further challenge that Jesus presents and it is that they limit the creative power of God.

If you are to believe in future life then you need to be absolutely convinced that God has the power to raise the dead.

Something to think about from **Bishop Tom Wright**: *Jesus' resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven.'*

- When we think about Heaven, what are the areas where we will see the fullness of God's power at work as never before? Creation itself will experience the power of God's salvation where it will become the creation it was purposed to be. Creation redeemed, restored, recreated, renewed into something we have never seen before.

3. YOU DON'T KNOW THE REALITY OF HEAVEN

One of the big problems is that too many fail to understand how different heaven will be compared to earth now.

As Jesus says **when the dead rise** ...that will change everything!

- In what way does Jesus indicate that Heaven is a whole new quality of existence that will be radically different?
- What does Jesus say about relationships in heaven, especially marriage?

Yet, remember that there is a marriage in Heaven. It is all about Christ and his bride that happens to be the church.

- Heaven will offer interaction with angels that we rarely experience now. How do you feel about meeting and communicating to angels?

It is as we allow the scriptures to release the inherent power that is contained within the Word of Life – then we will be in touch with reality and begin to live in the light of that reality in our everyday life of responsibilities.

Alan

HEAVEN HERE I COME

Study 3 : HEAVEN ACCORDING TO JESUS!

**Willesborough Baptist Church small group notes
based on the Sunday sermon on 19th June 2016
Mark 12:18-34**

Where do we get our information on heaven?

There are plenty books published – an Amazon search for 'books on heaven' offers a selection of 63,857 – what a choice!



There are many **cartoons** about heaven – what does this one suggest?

- Why do you find that you readily identify with the caption?
- Have you seen any films that touch on theme of heaven?

Any survey regarding personal beliefs, raises a very high percentage of people who believe in life after death. 8% of the population may attend church but 80% might indicate that they believe in an afterlife.

- Why do you think that there is this high percentage who are convinced they are heaven bound?

In the first two studies, we have reflected on heaven. There is the **Present Heaven** which is where we go at the present time when we die; we are brought into the presence of God, for heaven is God's home. We await for the **Second Coming of Jesus**. This is when there will be the **Bodily Resurrection** and the **New Heavens and New Earth (Future Heaven)** that the redeemed will occupy. Heaven will invade earth and be united in a whole new way for all eternity.

- Do you see how scripture declares that we live today between resurrections – Jesus' resurrection and our own resurrection? This underlines the importance of believing in resurrection!

Revelation 21:3 *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."*

What did Jesus say about heaven?

- He came from heaven (Incarnation)
- He returned to heaven (Ascension)
- There was the voice from heaven at his Baptism and Transfiguration.
- His first message was *Repent for the King of Heaven is at hand.*
- He spoke of two ways, two futures for mankind – a heaven and a hell.
- He spoke about rewards in heaven *well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your reward*
- Jesus celebrated how Heaven is going to be a great banquet that will be filled joy.

Heaven is going to be the place where the power and the presence of God is to be fully experienced. It will be the time when the multifaceted wonders of God, will be enjoyed for all eternity.

JESUS WAS TESTED BY THE SADDUCEES in Mark 12:18-27

The Sadducees were the Jewish aristocracy who were a powerful secular group running the 'religious' business in Jerusalem.

- How do you think they would have reacted to Jesus throwing out the moneychangers from the temple?

They raised the stakes of opposition by highlighting the ridiculous nature of 'resurrection belief.'

There was a Jewish law that said, if a man dies leaving his wife a widow and without child then it was the responsibility of the man's brother (who had a legal and moral duty) to marry the woman and

raise children. [Deuteronomy 25:5-10]

This is the background to the amazing story of Ruth in the OT.

- Get someone in your group to summarise the story of Ruth in two minutes!

The Sadducees used this Jewish law to create their own amusing scenario of seven brothers who died one after another. Before they died they had married the original brother's widow. This woman ends up being married 7 times!

The question was: **'At the resurrection, whose wife will she be?'** They were highlighting the illogical notion of an afterlife in heaven.

JESUS' ANSWERS THESE 'RELIGIOUS' PEOPLE WHO DID NOT BELIEVE IN HEAVEN.

- Have you ever had a discussion with someone about the afterlife? If so what kind of questions do they ask?

1. YOU DON'T KNOW THE SCRIPTURES

The Sadducees only accepted the first five books of Moses and did not read of any specific information on an afterlife, therefore the idea of heaven was never entertained by them. Jesus decides to focus on the books of Moses that they accept and does not refer to other parts of scripture.

In v.26 Jesus takes them to Moses at the Burning Bush in Exodus 3 where God speaks to Moses in the present tense saying ***I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.***

Jesus is indicating here that the scriptures speak of God as the God of the living – and how these great patriarchs are very much alive.

- What is the implication for the Sadducees who were asking the question?
- What is the wider lesson for us today?
We need to be constantly open to the scriptures as the source of truth.
- Do you regularly immerse ourselves in the scriptures?