

## **PICTURE THIS!**

### **The Big Picture of Our Faith in Pictures!**

*A study for all ages @ Gorrie Bible Fellowship!  
September – December 2016*

#### **Week #13 – Eternity**

##### **Picture It!**



##### **Caption It!**

*People were made to live forever in the presence of God, but sin brought death into the world. God has made a way to save people from death so they can live with Him for eternity, but those who reject God will spend eternity alone and far from God.*

##### **Save It!**

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever. Revelation 11:15

## Picture It!

### 1. Made for Eternity!

- a. God's original Creation was made for eternity! There was no death! There was no curse! The universe and everything in it was fully alive!
- b. Sin brought death into the world. This was the promise God made to Adam and Eve regarding the tree they were forbidden to eat from in the Garden of Eden: *"you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die"* (Gen. 2:17).
- c. Although Adam and Eve did not drop dead the moment they ate from the forbidden tree, they did die in two ways:
  - i. First, their relationship with God was broken. This was spiritual death. They now had a sin nature and they could no longer live in the presence of God.
  - ii. They also became physically mortal. They would no longer live forever. Instead, they experienced the reality of aging, sickness, injury and ultimately physical death.
- d. Sin also brought death into the entire universe. Science has proven that the universe is winding down. Given enough time, our sun will stop burning, the moon will crash to the earth and our oceans will become too salty to sustain aquatic life. This too is because of sin! Sin brought death and a curse upon humanity and the entire universe.
- e. While our world is filled with death, the Bible makes it clear that human souls are eternal. Though we can be sure that our physical body will die, our soul, that inner part of us, will live on forever. This is because human beings were made for eternity!
- f. Have you ever gone to a funeral and felt like something was very wrong; that this was not the way it was supposed to be? Have you ever struggled to come to grips with your own immortality? This is because you were made for eternity!

### 2. Two Destinies

- a. The Bible uses a number of words to describe the location of the souls of human beings after death. Ultimately, the Bible describes two eternal

destinies for all human souls at the end of time which we commonly think of as Heaven and Hell.

- i. In reality, the eternal destiny of God's people is not in Heaven but on a new earth! The new earth is probably better understood as a renewed earth! When God first created the world He said it was very good! (Genesis 1:31). The new earth will be God's original world with every trace of sin and the curse removed. (Romans 8:20-21; 2 Peter 3:10-12). In the new earth, the people of God will spend eternity living in the presence of God! Notice the top part of this week's picture includes the river of the water of life (Revelation 22:1) and the tree of life (Revelation 22:2).
- ii. The unrighteous will spend eternity separated from God's presence and from everything that is good.

### 3. Is Hell for Real?

- a. The Bible describes Hell as a terrible place. It is represented in the bottom of the picture:
  - i. It is a place of punishment (2 Thessalonians 1:9).
  - ii. It is a place of darkness (Matthew 8:12).
  - iii. It is a place of fire (Revelation 20:15).
  - iv. It is a place of pain and sadness (Matthew 8:12).
  - v. It is eternal (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:41; Mark 9:48; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 14:11).
- b. Because of the Bible's descriptions of Hell, many people (even believers) struggle with the reality of Hell. We wonder how God could punish human souls in such a terrible way. There are a number of Biblical truths that can help us trust God with the reality of Hell:
  - i. God is perfectly fair and right (Gen. 18:25; Deut. 32:4; Job 34:12; Psalm 9:7-8).
  - ii. God does not want to send people to Hell (2 Peter 3:9).
  - iii. Jesus believed in Hell (Matthew 23:33).

- iv. Hell was made for Satan, not people (Matthew 25:41). This is why Satan is shown in the bottom of the picture, not as the ruler of Hell but as one who is being punished there.
- v. God is much holier than we can imagine
- vi. Sin is much worse than we can imagine
- vii. There are degrees of punishment in Hell (Matt. 11:20-22; Luke 12:47-48; Hebrews 10:29).
- viii. Hell is a destiny that people choose for themselves by choosing independence from God. Notice the people in Hell in the picture appear to be running away from God.

#### 4. The New Earth!

- a. The Bible gives us many glimpses of what eternity with God on the new earth will be like, but these are just glimpses. They help us piece together aspects of what it will be like but they also leave lots of questions unanswered. No wonder the Bible says, *“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived—the things God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).*
- b. The most wonderful reality of life in the new earth will be the intimacy that God’s people experience with God. We will be drawn into ‘the dance’ of God’s presence and we will live happily and selflessly forever and ever!
- c. Here are some clues the Bible gives us about eternity with God:
  - i. It is like a return to Eden only better! (Revelation 22:1-5).
  - ii. The curse is gone (Revelation 22:3).
  - iii. Sin is gone (Revelation 21:27).
  - iv. Suffering is gone (Revelation 21:4).
  - v. Sadness is gone (Revelation 21:4).
  - vi. God and Jesus dwell there visibly (Revelation 21:3; 22:4).
  - vii. God’s people will serve Him (Revelation 22:3).
  - viii. God’s people will worship Him (Revelation 7:10). In the picture, one person is worshipping before the throne and the other is active, representing service for God in eternity.

- ix. God's people will reign with Christ (2 Timothy 2:12). This is why the people around the throne in the picture have crowns.
- x. There will be feasting! (Luke 22:30).
- xi. Rewards and responsibility will be granted based on the loving sacrifice of our lives here on earth (Matthew 25:20-23). This is the other reason that the people in eternity of crowns.

### **Panorama!**

God created humanity to be fully alive in His presence, but sin brought death and removed us from the life-giving presence of God. But God has made a way to restore life to all who recognize their need and receive His offer of forgiveness. Those who trust Him are promised perfect life in the presence of God for all eternity!

### **Selfie!**

I was made to live forever with God, a vibrant life of selflessness in 'the dance' of God's being. Although sin had stolen life from me, through Jesus, I can be restored to true life through the salvation that He offers. If I acknowledge my need of God, I will spend eternity in His presence. But if I refuse God and choose my own way then I will get my wish for all eternity.

### **Instagram!**

As human beings we rebel against death. We instinctively know it is not the way it is supposed to be. Death is the result of sin but God offers us forgiveness from sin and the opportunity for eternal life. Those who come to depend on God will spend eternity in His presence in a beautiful new world without death. Those who choose independence from God will live in darkness and loneliness for all eternity.

### **Key Story!**

The Parable of Investments – Matthew 25:14-30

## Key Questions!

1. Why do people have eternal souls?
2. In what ways did Adam and Eve die when they ate the forbidden fruit?
3. Where will God's people spend eternity?
4. Why do the people around the throne in this week's picture have crowns?
5. In the new earth there will be no sun or moon and Hell is described as a place of 'outer darkness.' What does that tell us about God's glory in eternity?
6. How do we know that Hell is a terrible place?
7. How can we be confident that Hell is real, even though we find it so hard to accept? How should this influence us as believers?
8. What clues do we find in Revelation 22:1-5 that remind us of the Garden of Eden?
9. How will eternity with Christ be similar to life in the Garden of Eden? How will it be much better?