

Gathering Guide

for Communities and Friends
5 Questions That Matter: "What Happens When We Die?", 8/18/19

The Big Idea

What happens to us when we die? All religions seek to address this question, and even the atheist will make their determination. Jesus invites us into eternity. His death defeated our death; and his resurrection is ours. "And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?" Heaven is for real, and God is God of the living not the dead.

Where we are in the Bible

In Mark 12:18-27 the Sadducees come to Jesus with a question. Like most opponents of Jesus (and he had many) these men came to Jesus with a question, not in a sincere quest for knowledge and truth but to trick Jesus into blasphemy. We know this because they ask a question about the afterlife, of which they don't believe. Their religious authority lied in holding up the Torah of the Pentateuch (first 5 books of the Bible) as the sole voice for the people, and they were seen as purists (or orthodox) in that regard. As such, because it is vaguely and hardly mentioned in the Pentateuch, they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees were high-ranking religious and political leaders in first century Israel, and critics will point out that they enjoyed their power and would do what it takes to maintain it. Occupation of Jerusalem by first Greeks and then later Romans was an opportunity for the Sadducees, and so they used their networking and familiarity with Greco-Roman culture to gain favor and eventual governance in a body known as The Sanhedrin.

Other scriptures to consider

John 6
Colossians 3:1-17
Luke 12:13-59
John 1:4
Mark 8:31-38

Finding a bit of ourselves

- What are some of your biggest questions about eternity and heaven?
- If someone were to ask you your beliefs about the afterlife, what would you tell them?
- What effect does eternity or heaven have your everyday life if any?
- Do you fear death?
- Eternity is often synonymous with meaning. Why is that?

Where do we go from here?

- Read through John, chapter 6 and reflect or discuss how it speaks to you.
- If someone asked you, "What's the big deal about being a Christian?" could you explain how your life is different?
- What is an 'eternal perspective' and how is it lived out?
- In the message we were encouraged to 'leave your luggage behind.' What does that mean to you?

Prayer focus

With eternity on your heart, ask the Lord to help you take on the things of God and let go of the things of the world...

- For your schedule and life priorities
- On what gives you joy and fulfillment
- On what feeds your soul
- For your calling and purpose in life
- In your relationships

