

## Trail Guide -- Week of October 26, 2020

Next Sunday is “All Saints Day”, November 1, when the Church recognizes the saints who have died during the year. Amidst our remembering in peeks our notions of heaven and the after-life. I believe that heaven is real. But what do we mean by “real”? Something tangible? That it exists? That we can have a sensory experience of this reality – see, taste, touch, hear, smell? And what exactly is heaven – or, where exactly is heaven? I imagine most of our perceptions of heaven have been largely influenced by popular beliefs or notions that we hear talked about, and even shown in movies or television (just picture Morgan Freeman as God in “Bruce Almighty”; the popular television series, “The Good Place” [we love Jason!]).

One heavenly scenario I hear talked about frequently pictures heaven as a family reunion. Then, I wonder, how far back, or how far out does the family tree extend? In fact, the more I think about heaven, the more questions I begin to ask. Many of them have no definitive answer... for now. My expectation is those questions probably won't even matter when I finally, and fully, experience the real deal.

Even so, many believe that life is a preparation for heaven even though we mostly gloss over the dying part. If true, then what we believe about heaven *should* impact how we live here and now. Jesus used the language and even imagery of heaven through parables in order to help us think more deeply about life here and now. So, I invite you to read and reflect on various parts of scripture this week as we compare our wonderings about heaven with what scripture has to say – “and whoever wishes, let them take the free gift of the water of life” ([Rev. 22:17](#))! By the way, I'm counting on Christ that I will see you all in eternity – I pray that you feel the same!

😊 Grace and peace.

**Monday, 10/26** – What is the author of Revelation trying to convey about heaven by his metaphorical description. [Read Revelation 21 and 22:1-5](#). How can your hope of heaven positively shape your Christian life and faith today? This life is the journey that has heaven as its final destination. Are you preparing for heaven now? How?

**Tuesday, 10/27** – When speaking about the ultimately rule of God, the Hebrew prophets painted word pictures of life when God restored all things. This restoration was associated with the coming of the Messiah & the Messianic Age. Christians believe this began with Jesus' earthly ministry, death and resurrection; but that the final consummation will not take place until his Second Coming. As you read the following scriptures, what do they envision about what life will be like when God makes all things new? [Isaiah 2:1-5](#), [Isaiah 11:1-9](#) and [Isaiah 65:17-25](#). The imagery of the new heaven and new earth that is based upon what the prophet knows of this earth. How should these images shape how we live?

**Wednesday, 10/28** – Jesus Christ came into this world as the Son of the Heavenly King, and he made a way for us to enter heaven, gave us instructions on how to get there, and gave us, in his ministry and teachings, glimpses of what life is like in heaven. [Read Matthew 18:1-4](#). What does this tell us about heaven, and how we might live today to prepare ourselves for heaven? What we might infer about our heavenly/resurrection body from [Luke 24:28-35, 36-43](#).

**Thursday, 10/29** – When believers gather for worship Christ is present in our midst in a way that foreshadows heaven. Read [I Corinthians 15:35-58](#). Verse 58 gives us the implication of our hope in heaven for our daily lives.

**Friday, 10/30** – A glimpse into what heaven may be like is to turn back to God's original intent with creation. Read [Genesis 1:28-3:19](#) looking for how life was originally meant to be lived, and what changed after Adam and Eve sinned. What can you infer from this about what heaven might be like?

**Today is Reformation Day** – 503<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Martin Luther's “95 Theses”.

**Saturday, 10/31** – Halloween – originally called, “All Hallows Eve”. Where did this name originate? Tomorrow is All Saints Day. See what you can discover about ways that All Saints Day is observed around the world.

Pray for those who feel they have no hope of heaven, nothing to look forward to, and no sense that God is present with them, loving them. Look for an opportunity to share the reason for your hope.