
SEE YOU ON THE
OTHER SIDE!
A TOUR OF HEAVEN
KIDS' EDITION
by Rick Melick

FOR GROWN-UPS

This book takes the eight messages from Pastor Rick's series *See You on the Other Side* and retells them for kids in grades 3 to 5. It covers what the Bible says about heaven, what happens when we die, and how we can know for sure that we'll be with Jesus forever.

Whether you're a parent, grandparent, foster parent, guardian or another adult who loves a child, thank you for reading with them. In this book, "grown-up" means you.

How to use it

- **Read one stop at a time.** Each chapter is broken into short "stops." One stop takes about 5 minutes. A whole chapter takes about 20.
- **Read it together if you can.** Kids can read it on their own, but the best conversations happen when you read alongside them.
- **Use the Talk About It questions** in the car, at bedtime or anytime.
- **Be ready for big questions.** Talking about heaven means talking about death. If your child has lost someone they love, go slowly, and let them ask anything.

If your child wants to follow Jesus, or has questions about it, we would love to help. Talk with your pastor or one of your kids' leaders.

Written by Pastor Rick Melick from his sermon series See You on the Other Side*, for the kids of*

Capitol City Church. © 2026 Rick Melick.

MEET YOUR TOUR GUIDE





Woof! Hi there!

My name is **Baxter**. I'm Pastor Rick and Joy's dog. I weigh 13 pounds, and nobody knows exactly what kind of dog I am. (I like to say I'm one of a kind.) I love hunting for rabbits in the backyard. I do *not* love going outside when it's raining.

Pastor Rick and Joy are my favorite people in the whole world. (Well, them and anybody holding a treat.)

Pastor Rick wrote this book to help kids like you learn what the Bible says about heaven. And guess what? He picked *me* to be your tour guide!

I'll pop up in every chapter with fun facts, reminders, and questions. Just look for my face.

Ready? Let's go!

HOW THIS BOOK WORKS

This book is like a tour with **eight chapters**, one for each week of the series. Each chapter has four short **stops**. Here's what you'll find along the way:

 **Baxter's Bark:** fun facts and reminders from your tour guide.

Comic strips: some of Pastor Rick's real stories, told in pictures.

Story markers: Pastor Rick's stories start and end with ◆◆◆.

Whoa! boxes: amazing facts about heaven.

Remember It! One big truth at the end of every chapter. They add up, so by the last chapter you'll know all eight!

Checkpoints: quick questions. Tap the answer you think is right to find out if you got it!

Memory verse, Words to Know, Talk About It, and Try This at the end of each chapter.

Whenever you see a **blue button**, tap it! It will take you to answers and back again.

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PUNCHING MY TICKET

CHAPTER 1 · ROMANS 3:23–24 · ROMANS 6:23 · REVELATION 21

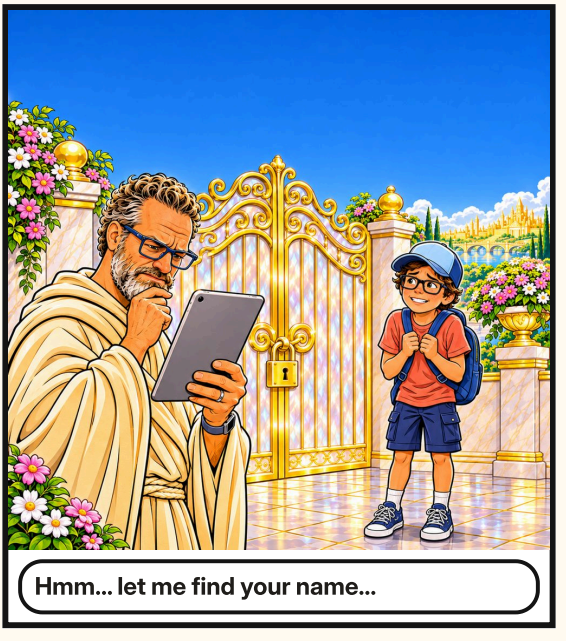


The Big Question: How can I know for sure that I'll go to heaven?

Imagine you're standing in the longest line you have ever seen. It's longer than the line for the best ride at the amusement park. It's longer than the lunch line on pizza day.

At the very front is a giant gate made of pearls. It's locked tight. And sitting in front of it is an old man with a long white beard, scrolling through a list on his iPad.


Lots of people picture heaven like this...


Hmm... let me find your name...



Is that really how it works? Do you have to sweat it out in line and hope you know the right answers?

Nope. Not even close. Let's find out what the Bible *really* says.



Baxter's Bark: Welcome to Chapter 1! We're going to make **four stops**. At each one, you'll learn something new about heaven. Let's go!

◆ Stop 1: What Do You Picture?

When you hear the word *heaven*, what do you see in your mind? Clouds? Harps? Angels with wings?

One Sunday, Pastor Rick asked a friend from church that same question. Here's what

happened.



Pastor Rick loved that answer, because most of us feel the same way. We know heaven is real. We just aren't sure what it's like.

So think of this book as your **tour of heaven**. Climb aboard the tram!

Here's the most important rule for our tour: we're going to stick to what the **Bible** says. Lots of ideas about heaven come from cartoons,

movies, and stories people made up. Some of them are fun, but they aren't true. When the Bible tells us something clearly, we'll trust it. When it doesn't, we'll say so.

If someone you love has died...

Maybe you're reading this because someone you love is gone. A grandparent, a friend, maybe even a pet. That hurts, and it's okay to feel sad. Jesus cried when his friend died, too (John 11:35).

As you read, you can ask any question you want. Talk to a grown-up who loves you, your pastor, or a kids' leader. They'd be glad to listen.

Checkpoint! Where should our ideas about heaven come from?

A. Cartoons and movies

B. The Bible

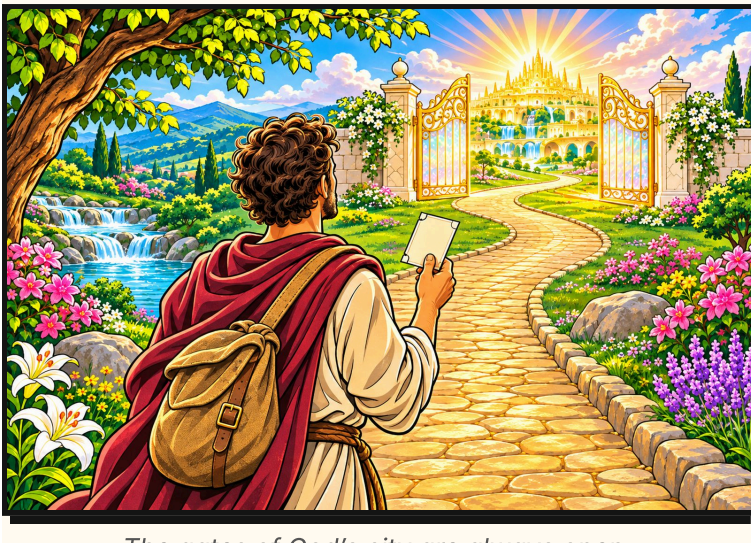
C. Whatever my friends think

Stop 2: The Pearly Gates

So are there *really* pearly gates? Yes! But they aren't what most people think.

At the very end of the Bible, in the book of Revelation, God gave a man named John a vision. John saw the amazing city where God's people will live forever with him. It's called the **New Jerusalem** (the city of God on the new earth).

The city has **twelve gates**. Each gate is made from one single pearl. (That's one big oyster!) And here's the best part: the gates are **never shut**. Not ever. Revelation 21:25 says so.



The gates of God's city are always open.

Whoa!

The Bible says the New Jerusalem is about **1,400 miles long** on each side. That's like driving from Des Moines to Denver *and back again*.

And it's just as **tall** as it is wide. The International Space Station flies about 250 miles above the earth. This city would be more than *five times* higher!

So where did the idea of St. Peter guarding the gate come from? Jesus once told Peter that he would get "the keys of the kingdom" (Matthew 16:19). Jesus meant that Peter would help lead the church and tell people the good news. But over the years, people pictured real keys, a locked gate, and Peter with a list. That story just isn't in the Bible.

Myth: St. Peter stands at a locked gate with a list and decides who gets in.

Truth: God's city has twelve gates, each made from one pearl, and they are never shut (Revelation 21:21, 25).

Checkpoint! What does the Bible say about the pearly gates?

A. They're locked tight

B. They're never shut

C. They're made of gold

Stop 3: Good Enough?

If St. Peter isn't quizzing people at the gate, how does someone get into heaven?

Ask most people, and they'll say, *"Be a good person. Good people go to heaven."*

That sounds right. But let's think about it. How good is good enough? Is it okay if you're nice most days? What if you only lie a little bit? What if you're better than your little brother? (He *did* start it!) Does God keep score like a basketball game?

Here's the problem. We all think we're pretty good, because we compare ourselves to other people. But God doesn't grade on a curve. God's standard isn't "better than the kid next to you." God's standard is **perfect**.

And only one person in all of history has ever been perfect: **Jesus**.

> **Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory. The free gift of God's grace**

> **makes all of us right with him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free.** ***(Romans 3:23–24, NIrV)***

Sin is anything we think, say, or do that goes against God's way. And *everyone* has sinned. Me. You. Your teacher, your grandma, and your pastor, too. Nobody is good enough to earn heaven.

That sounds like bad news. But hang on, because the best news in the world is coming.



Baxter's Bark: Pastor Rick and Joy call me a good boy. But even good boys mess up sometimes. That's why we *all* need Jesus!

Not long ago, Pastor Rick and his wife, Joy, visited a friend who was very sick. She loved Jesus. Her Bible was so worn out that the pages were soft.

She asked Pastor Rick to read to her from her Bible. But the print was teeny-tiny, and he needed reading glasses! So Joy held up her phone flashlight so he could see. What a team!

After he read, Pastor Rick asked her, "Are you at peace?"

She said, "I just wish I had done more for Jesus."

Pastor Rick smiled. “You haven’t done enough,” he said. Then he waited a second, because pastors love a dramatic pause. “And *I* haven’t done enough either. Nobody can. Getting to heaven isn’t about what we do.”

She smiled back. “Oh, I know. It’s all God’s grace.” Then she told him she wasn’t afraid at all. She was ready to see Jesus.

She knew the secret. You can’t earn heaven. Not with good grades, good behavior, or good deeds. It’s all **grace** (God’s kindness that we don’t deserve and can’t earn).

Checkpoint! How good do you have to be to earn your way into heaven?

- **A. Better than most people**
- **B. Good most days**
- **C. Perfect, and only Jesus is**

Stop 4: Paycheck or Present?

Here’s one of the most important verses in the whole Bible:

> **When you sin, the pay you get is death. But God gives you the gift of eternal life. That’s because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done. *(Romans 6:23, NIrV)***

This verse talks about two very different things: **pay** and a **gift**.

Pay is something you earn. If you do chores and the grown-ups at home give you an allowance, you worked for it.

A **gift** is different. On your birthday, nobody hands you a present and says, “Okay, now you owe me ten dollars.” You can’t earn a birthday present.

Sin earns us something terrible: death and being separated from God forever. That’s the “pay” we deserve. But God doesn’t give us what we deserve! He offers us a gift instead: **eternal life** (life with God that never, ever ends). Jesus paid for our sin when he died on the cross. Then he came back to life! Now he offers that gift to everyone.

But here’s something important about gifts: **a gift doesn’t do you any good until you receive it.** Imagine a beautifully wrapped present with your name on it, sitting on the table. If you never pick it up and open it, it’s still a gift. It’s still for you. But it isn’t really *yours* until you take it.

God’s gift of eternal life is like that. Jesus already paid for it. It already has your name on it. But you have to receive it.

So how do you “punch your ticket” to heaven? You don’t buy it. You don’t earn it. You receive it.

More Than a Ticket

Some people treat Jesus like a ticket and nothing more. They think, *I'll say the right words one time. Then I can live however I want.*

Imagine your best friend asking, "What's the *least* I have to do to stay your best friend? I don't want to hang out. I don't want to talk. Just tell me the minimum."

Would that be a best friend? Not even close!

Jesus doesn't just want to get you into heaven someday. He wants to be your friend and your Lord *right now*. Following Jesus is a relationship, not a checklist.

How to Receive the Gift

You can remember it with **A-B-C**.

A — Admit. Tell God, *I have sinned. I'm not good enough on my own.*

B — Believe. Believe that Jesus is God's Son. He lived a perfect life, died on the cross for your sins, and rose again.

C — Choose. Choose to follow Jesus. Tell him, *I want you to be my Savior and my Lord. I want to follow you for the rest of my life.*

You can talk to God about this anytime, anywhere, in your own words. Do you want to follow Jesus? Do you have questions? Talk with

a grown-up who loves you, your pastor or one of your kids' leaders. They would *love* to talk with you.

And someday, if anyone asks, *"Why do you get to be in heaven?"* you'll know the answer:

"Because Jesus paid for me, and he invited me in."



Baxter's Bark: That's the end of Chapter 1! Before you go, check out the memory verse and the activity below. See you at the next stop!

REMEMBER IT! TRUTH 1 OF 8

1 Heaven is God's gift. NEW!

Say it out loud three times!

MEMORY VERSE

"When you sin, the pay you get is death. But God gives you the gift of eternal life. That's because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done."

Romans 6:23 (NIrV)

Say it 3 times, then try it with only the first letters ▸

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Heaven:** The place where God lives. Someday God's people will live with him there forever.
- **Sin:** Anything we think, say, or do that goes against God's way.
- **Grace:** God's kindness that we don't deserve and can't earn.
- **Eternal life:** Life with God that never, ever ends.
- **New Jerusalem:** The amazing city where God will live with his people forever.

TALK ABOUT IT

1. Before you read this chapter, what did you picture when you thought about heaven? Where do you think that picture came from?
2. Why can't anyone be "good enough" to earn heaven?
3. What's the difference between pay and a gift? Why do you have to *receive* a gift for it to be yours?

TRY THIS: PAY OR GIFT?

Read each one and say **“Pay!”** or **“Gift!”** out loud.

1. An allowance for cleaning your room
2. A birthday present from Grandma
3. A paycheck from a job
4. A surprise hug from a friend
5. Eternal life from God

Check your answers ▸

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PREPARE FOR LANDING

CHAPTER 2 · 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1–10 · LUKE 23:43



The Big Question: What happens when someone who loves Jesus dies?

Pastor Rick was at the gym, walking on the treadmill. His earbuds were in. His music was loud. He did *not* want to talk to anybody.

Then his shoe came untied.



See you on the other side. No more bad knees. No more pain. No more sickness or sadness. But what will it be like? And what happens when we get there?



Baxter's Bark: This chapter is about what happens right after someone who loves Jesus dies. It might feel like a hard thing to think about. But I promise, there's really good news ahead. Let's go!

🔶 Stop 1: Everybody's Story Has an Ending

Here's something true: everybody dies someday. The Bible says people die once (Hebrews 9:27). Unless Jesus comes back first, all of us will die.

That might sound scary. But for people who follow Jesus, dying is not the end of the story. It's more like the end of a long trip, when the plane finally lands and you get to go home.

So what happens when you "land"? Here's the best answer in the whole Bible.

When Jesus was on the cross, two other men were on crosses next to him. One of them said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And Jesus told him, "Today you will be with me in **paradise**" (Luke 23:43).

Today. Not someday. Not after a long nap. *Today.*

Paradise is the beautiful place where people who love Jesus go right away when they die. They are with Jesus. They are happy. They are home.

Thinking about someone you miss?

If someone you love has died and they loved Jesus, they are with him right now. They're not scared or hurting. And if you love Jesus too, you will see them again. That's what "see you on the other side" means!

Checkpoint! When people who love Jesus die, what happens to them?

A. They become angels

B. They sleep for a long time

C. They go to be with Jesus right away

◆ Stop 2: Do People Become Angels?

Have you ever heard someone say, "Grandpa is an angel now"? Lots of people believe that when we die, we turn into angels and get wings.

People usually say that because they love the person and they miss them. That's a kind thing to say. But it's not what the Bible teaches.

Angels are a different kind of being. God made them separately. They are not people, and people never turn into angels.

When Pastor Rick was a kid, he was afraid he'd turn into a chubby baby angel, like the ones on greeting cards. He pictured himself sitting on a cloud, playing a harp for a thousand years. *No thanks!*



Nope! You won't turn into one of these.

Here's the truth: God made you to be *you*. When you get to heaven, you'll still be you. You'll just be the very best version of you, without any of the bad stuff.

Myth: When you die, you turn into an angel.

Truth: Angels are a different kind of being. God made you a person, and you will always be you.

Checkpoint! What did Paul compare our bodies to?

A. A tent

B. A castle

C. A car

Stop 3: Your Body Is a Tent

The apostle Paul wrote a lot of the New Testament. Do you know what job he did to earn money? He made **tents**!

So when Paul wanted to explain what happens when we die, he used a tent to explain it.

Think about going camping. A tent is great for a little while. But it's not a forever home. The wind blows, the rain leaks in, and the zipper gets stuck. When the trip is over, you fold up the tent and go home to your real house.

Paul said our bodies are like tents. They're good for now. But they wear out. They get sick. They get hurt. (Just ask Pastor Rick's knees.) Someday, our "tent" will be folded up. But the real *you*, the part of you that thinks and loves and laughs, will go to be with Jesus.

> **We are certain about that. We would rather be away from our bodies and at home with the Lord.** ***(2 Corinthians 5:8, NIrV)***

Whoa!

When someone dies, people have a funeral and bury their body. But Pastor Rick says that if the person loved Jesus, *they're not really there.* That's just the tent they used to live in. The real person is already home with Jesus!

And someday, God will give us brand-new bodies that never wear out. (We'll learn all about that in Chapter 8!)

Stop 4: The Finish Line

The Bible says that someday everyone who follows Jesus will stand before him (2 Corinthians 5:10). Does that sound scary?

When Pastor Rick was a kid, he imagined a giant movie screen in heaven. Jesus would sit next to him, along with his grandma and his Sunday school teacher, and they'd watch every bad thing he'd ever done. Yikes! Honestly, he was more scared of his grandma seeing it than anybody.

But that's not what the Bible means.

The word Paul used makes people think of a race, like the Olympics. At the end, the runners stand by a platform at the finish line. Nobody makes fun of the runners. They *finished!* And the ones who ran well get a reward.

If you follow Jesus, your sins are **forgiven**. Gone! The Bible says God takes them as far away as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). Jesus won't make you watch a movie of your mistakes.

Instead, he'll celebrate the ways you lived for him: how you treated people, the kind words you said, the times you forgave someone, the times you shared, and the times you told someone about him.

You're saved by grace. And you're rewarded for how you live.

Checkpoint! At the finish line, what will Jesus reward us for?

A. Being famous

B. How we lived for him

C. How much stuff we have

One rainy evening, Pastor Rick was helping his family fix up a little cabin in Arkansas. He called it the *Shabin*: part shack, part shop, part cabin. (Say it out loud. It's fun!)

Pastor Rick's job was to carry empty boxes through the mud to a burn pile. He was cold. He was soaking wet. But on one of his trips back, he stopped and looked at the little cabin.

The lights were on inside. His whole family was in there. They were laughing and eating pizza and working together.

Pastor Rick stood in the rain with tears in his eyes. It was as if God whispered to his heart:

"You think this is good? Just wait till you get home."



The Shabin, lit up on a rainy night.

That's heaven. The happiest moment you've ever had with the people you love? Heaven will be even better. Because the best part of heaven is being with Jesus.



Baxter's Bark: I've never been to the Shabin, but I hear there are rabbits. Lots of rabbits. That sounds like heaven to me! (Just kidding. Jesus is the best part!)

REMEMBER IT! TRUTH 2 OF 8

1. Heaven is God's gift.
2. **At home with Jesus.** NEW!

Say all 2 out loud. Can you do it without looking?

MEMORY VERSE

"We are certain about that. We would rather be away from our bodies and at home with the Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:8 (NIrV)

Say it 3 times, then try it with only the first letters ▸

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Paradise:** The beautiful place where people who love Jesus go right away when they die.
- **Angel:** A spiritual being God created to serve him. People don't become angels.
- **Forgiven:** When God takes away our sin and doesn't hold it against us anymore.
- **Reward:** A prize Jesus gives for how we lived for him.

TALK ABOUT IT

1. What did you think happens when someone dies? What did you learn that surprised you?
2. Why is a tent a good picture of our bodies?
3. Have you ever had a happy moment like Pastor Rick's at the Shabin? What was it?

TRY THIS: TRUE OR FALSE?

Say **"True!"** or **"False!"** out loud.

1. People turn into angels when they die.
2. Jesus told the man on the cross, "Today you will be with me in paradise."
3. Our bodies are like tents.
4. Jesus will make us watch a movie of every bad thing we ever did.
5. If you follow Jesus, you'll see other believers again someday.

Check your answers ▸

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MEETING IN THE MIDDLE

CHAPTER 3 · MATTHEW 24



The Big Question: Jesus is coming back. What should I do while I wait?

When Pastor Rick was a kid, some cars had bumper stickers that said:

> ***In case of rapture, this vehicle will be unmanned!***

That meant: *If Jesus comes back and takes me to heaven, nobody will be driving this car anymore!*

Little Rick imagined Jesus coming back and finding nothing but a pile of clothes where his mom used to be standing. Poof! Gone!



A pile of clothes and an empty car. That's how Little Rick pictured it!

That idea scared him for a long time. But here's the good news: Jesus never wanted his followers to be scared. In this chapter, we'll find out what Jesus *really* said about the future, and what he wants us to do while we wait.



Baxter's Bark: Big words alert! This chapter has some grown-up words in it, like *tribulation* and *rapture*. Don't worry. I'll help you. Just look for the definitions!

Stop 1: Jesus Is Coming Back!

Here's something every Christian agrees on: **Jesus is coming back!** He promised.

The Bible also tells us about a hard time before the end, called the **tribulation** (a time of big trouble on the earth). Many Bible teachers

believe it will last seven years. At the end of it, Jesus will come back and set everything right.

Some Christians believe Jesus will gather his people *before* the tribulation starts. That's often called the **rapture** (when Jesus gathers his people to be with him). Other Christians believe he'll gather them at the *end* of the tribulation.

Which one is right? Here's an honest answer: Christians who love Jesus and study the Bible very carefully don't all agree. And that's okay. You can study it for yourself someday.

But here's what we *all* agree on: Jesus is coming. And whenever it happens, if you love Jesus, you will be with him.



Baxter's Bark: Here's the simple version. Jesus is coming back. Nobody knows when. Hard times may come, but Jesus wins, and he takes care of his people. So don't panic. Keep trusting him!

Whoa!

The Bible says that when Jesus comes back, a trumpet will sound, and his people will be changed in the blink of an eye (1 Corinthians 15:52). A blink of an eye takes about one-third of a second. That's fast!

Checkpoint! Do Christians all agree about exactly when Jesus will gather his people?

A. Yes, everyone agrees

B. No, but we all agree he's coming

C. Nobody cares

Stop 2: Don't Panic!

One day, Jesus' friends asked him, "What will happen at the end? How will we know?"

Jesus told them some things that sound pretty scary. He said there would be wars, and news about wars. He said there would be earthquakes and hard times.

But then he said something important that people often skip. He told them not to be alarmed (Matthew 24:6).

In other words: **Don't panic!**

When you see scary news, you might wonder if the world is falling apart. But Jesus knew all of this would happen. He is not surprised, and he is not worried. He's still in charge.

Jesus also warned his friends to watch out for people who try to fool them. Some people will say, "I know exactly when Jesus is coming!" or

“I’m the one you should follow!” Jesus said, *Don’t believe them.*

Here’s a good way to tell if someone is teaching the truth: Do they point to themselves? Or do they point to Jesus and the Bible? Real teachers always point to Jesus.

Checkpoint! Jesus said there would be wars and scary news. What did he tell us to do?

A. Panic!

B. Don’t be afraid

C. Hide under the bed

Stop 3: Don’t Quit!

Jesus said following him won’t always be easy. Sometimes people will make fun of you. Sometimes it will feel hard to do the right thing when everyone around you is doing the wrong thing.

But Jesus promised that the one who stands firm to the end will be saved (Matthew 24:13).

Standing firm means you don’t give up. You keep trusting Jesus, even on hard days.

Think about running a long race. Your legs get tired. Your side hurts. You want to stop. But your

coach is at the finish line cheering, *Keep going! You can do it!*

Jesus is like that. He cheers you on. And he gives you the strength to keep going.



Baxter's Bark: I don't like going outside when it's raining. But when I *really* need to go, I go anyway. That's standing firm! (Okay, it's not exactly the same thing. But you get the idea.)

Stop 4: Don't Waste the Wait

Jesus told a story about a servant whose master went on a long trip. The master put him in charge of the house. Would the servant work hard while the master was gone? Or would he goof off?

Jesus said the servant who did a good job would be rewarded when the master came home.

We're like that servant. Jesus has gone to get our forever home ready. While we wait for him to come back, he wants us to **not waste the wait**.

How do you not waste the wait? Here are some ideas:

- Love God and talk to him every day.

- Be kind to the people in your family, even your brothers and sisters. (Yes, even them!)
- Help someone who needs it.
- Tell your friends about Jesus.

You don't have to be a grown-up to make a difference. You can live for Jesus *right now*.

> **So you also must be ready. The Son of Man will come at an hour when you don't expect him. *(Matthew 24:44, NIrV)***

Being **ready** means you've decided to follow Jesus, and you're living for him every day. Then it doesn't matter when he comes. You'll be ready!

Checkpoint! What does "don't waste the wait" mean?

A. Do nothing until Jesus comes

B. Live for Jesus and love people now

C. Worry a lot



Baxter's Bark: You made it through a chapter full of big words! Great job. Remember: Jesus is coming, don't panic, don't quit, and don't waste the wait!

REMEMBER IT! TRUTH 3 OF 8

1. Heaven is God's gift.
2. At home with Jesus.
3. **Keep trusting Jesus.** NEW!

Say all 3 out loud. Can you do it without looking?

MEMORY VERSE

"So you also must be ready. The Son of Man will come at an hour when you don't expect him."

Matthew 24:44 (NIrV)

Say it 3 times, then try it with only the first letters ▸

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Tribulation:** A time of big trouble on the earth before Jesus comes back to set things right.
- **Rapture:** When Jesus gathers his people to be with him. Christians disagree about exactly when it will happen.
- **Second coming:** When Jesus returns to earth as King.
- **Ready:** Following Jesus and living for him every day.

TALK ABOUT IT

1. Does thinking about the end of the world ever scare you? What did Jesus say about being afraid?
2. What's one way you can "stand firm" when following Jesus is hard?
3. What's one thing you can do this week so you don't waste the wait?

TRY THIS: DON'T, DON'T, DON'T, DO!

Jesus gave us three "don'ts" and one "do." Can you say them from memory? Say them out loud, then check your answers.

1. Don't _____!
2. Don't _____!
3. Don't _____ the wait!
4. Do be _____!

Check your answers ▸

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ETERNITY REVEALS WHAT LIFE CONCEALS

CHAPTER 4 · LUKE 16:19–31



The Big Question: Why does it matter what I decide about Jesus right now?

This chapter starts with a story about your tour guide. Baxter, do you want to tell it?



Baxter's Bark: Um... no. You tell it. I'll be under the couch.

Okay, we'll tell it.

It had been raining in Iowa for two whole weeks. And Baxter *hates* going outside in the rain. So at three o'clock in the morning, Baxter scratched

and scratched on the bedroom door until Pastor Rick woke up.

Pastor Rick stumbled to the back door and let Baxter out. Baxter sniffed around for rabbits. Then he came back in. Pastor Rick shuffled back toward bed in the dark, in his socks, and...

Squish.



SQUISH.



BAXTER!





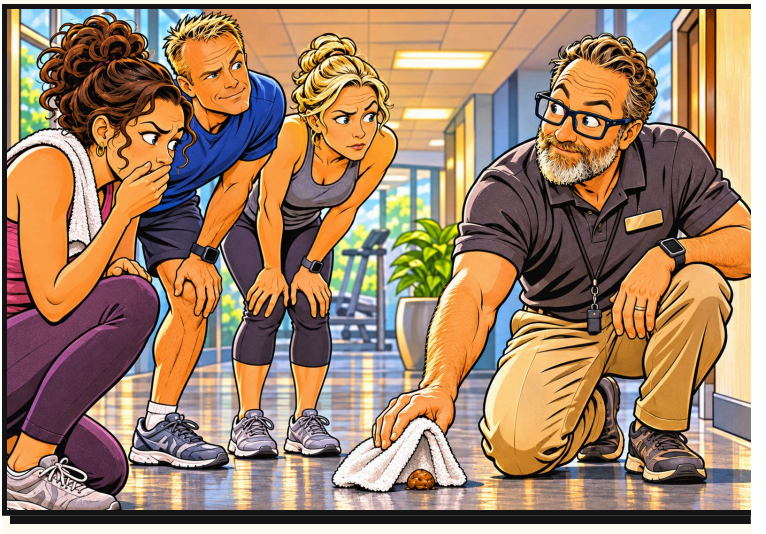
Baxter, hiding. He knows what he did.

Baxter had left a little surprise on the carpet. And Pastor Rick stepped right in it!

Two days later, Pastor Rick was at the gym. As he hurried around a corner, he saw something on the floor that looked *exactly* like what Baxter had left on his carpet.

He stopped. A few other people stopped too. They all stared at it. If that was what it looked like, Pastor Rick was going to find a new gym!

Finally the manager came over, picked it up with a towel, and said, “Relax. It’s just mud.”



It’s just mud!

Pastor Rick wasn’t sure he believed it. But once he decided it really was mud, everything changed. He stayed at the gym. What he decided was true changed what he did.

That’s what this chapter is about.

Stop 1: IF or SINCE?

There are two little words that make a big difference: **IF** and **SINCE**.

Some people think, *“IF the Bible is true, then maybe I should follow Jesus.”* They’re still wondering. They aren’t sure yet.

Other people think, *“SINCE the Bible is true, I’m going to follow Jesus.”* They’ve decided. They trust what God says.

When hard times come, the IF people often give up. But the SINCE people stand on solid ground, like a house built on a rock.

If you're still at IF, that's okay. Keep asking questions! God loves honest questions. But Pastor Rick hopes you'll get to SINCE. Because the Bible really is true.

Checkpoint! What is the difference between IF and SINCE?

A. There's no difference

B. IF wonders. SINCE is sure.

C. SINCE is a kind of dog

Stop 2: Two Men, Two Gates

Jesus told a story about two men. (A story Jesus told to teach a lesson is called a **parable**.)

The first man was very rich. He wore fancy purple clothes, which cost a ton of money back then. Every day he had a huge feast. His life was all about *him*.

The second man was named **Lazarus**. He was very poor and very sick. Somebody had dropped him off right outside the rich man's fancy gate. Lazarus was so hungry that he wished he could eat the scraps that fell from the rich man's table.

Every day, the rich man walked right past Lazarus. And every day, he did nothing to help.



Lazarus at the rich man's gate.

Then both men died.

Angels carried Lazarus to be with Abraham in paradise. He was comforted and happy at last.

But the rich man went to a place called **Hades** (a place of punishment for people who turn away from God). He was in pain, and he was sad. He looked far away and saw Lazarus being comforted.

The rich man begged for help. But Abraham told him there was a huge canyon between them, and nobody could cross it.

Here's the sad part. The rich man could have walked through his own gate to help Lazarus anytime he wanted. He never did. And now there was a canyon he could never cross.

On earth, the rich man looked like the winner. But after they died, everyone could see the

truth. That's what the title of this chapter means: **eternity** (forever) **reveals** (shows) **what life conceals** (hides).

This is a hard story.

It's okay if this story makes you feel sad or a little scared. Jesus told it because he loves us and doesn't want *anyone* to be separated from God. If you have questions, talk with a grown-up you trust or a kids' leader. And remember: the next part has good news!

Checkpoint! Why did the rich man end up in the bad place?

A. Because he was rich

B. Because he only cared about himself and never turned to God

C. Because he had a dog

Stop 3: There's Still Time

The rich man had one more request. "Please send Lazarus to warn my five brothers," he said. "I don't want them to end up here too."

Abraham said, "They have the Scriptures. They can listen to God's Word."

“But if someone came back from the dead, they’d listen!” the rich man said.

Abraham answered, “If they won’t listen to God’s Word, they won’t listen even if someone rises from the dead.”

Do you know who *did* rise from the dead? **Jesus!** And some people still don’t believe.

Here’s the most important thing in this story: the rich man’s brothers still had time to choose. And so do you.

The difference between heaven and Hades isn’t being rich or poor. It isn’t being good or bad. It’s the choice we make about **Jesus**.

> **I tell you, now is the time God shows his favor. Now is the day he saves.** ***(2 Corinthians 6:2, NIrV)***

Now is the time. You don’t have to wait until you’re a grown-up. Kids can follow Jesus too!



Baxter’s Bark: Remember the A-B-C from Chapter 1? **A**dmit. **B**elieve. **C**hoose. You can talk to God about it anytime. And you can always talk to a grown-up who loves Jesus.

◆ Stop 4: Who’s at Your Gate?

Jesus didn’t tell this story just to teach us about heaven and Hades. He also wanted us to look

around.

The rich man walked past someone in need every single day. Is there someone at *your* gate?

Maybe it's a kid at school who sits alone at lunch. Maybe it's a neighbor who's lonely. Maybe it's someone in your family who's having a hard time. Maybe it's a friend who doesn't know Jesus yet.

You can be the one who stops. You can be the one who helps. And you can be the one who tells them about Jesus.

Checkpoint! When is the time to choose Jesus?

A. Now, while there's time

B. After we die

C. When we're grown-ups

REMEMBER IT! TRUTH 4 OF 8

1. Heaven is God's gift.
2. At home with Jesus.
3. Keep trusting Jesus.
4. **Say yes to Jesus today.** NEW!

Say all 4 out loud. Can you do it without looking?

MEMORY VERSE

"I tell you, now is the time God shows his favor. Now is the day he saves."

2 Corinthians 6:2 (NIrV)

Say it 3 times, then try it with only the first letters ▸

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Hades:** A place of punishment for people who turn away from God.
- **Parable:** A story Jesus told to teach a true lesson about God.
- **Eternity:** Forever and ever, with no end.

TALK ABOUT IT

1. What's the difference between IF and SINCE? Which one describes you right now?
2. Why do you think the rich man never helped Lazarus?
3. Who is at *your* gate? How could you help them this week?

TRY THIS: LOOK AROUND

Close your eyes and think about your school, your neighborhood, and your family. Then say out loud:

1. The name of someone who might be lonely.
2. One kind thing you could do for them this week.
3. One friend you could pray for who doesn't know Jesus yet.

Now pray for them!

Need some ideas? ▸

☰ Contents

ONE WAY OR THE OTHER

CHAPTER 5 · MATTHEW 11:28–30 · MATTHEW 24–25



The Big Question: When Jesus comes back, what will happen?

Pastor Rick does *not* like waiting in line. Not one bit.

One day, Pastor Rick and Joy were at a store with a long row of cash registers. When a register opens up, a light turns on and a voice says, “Register number five is available!”

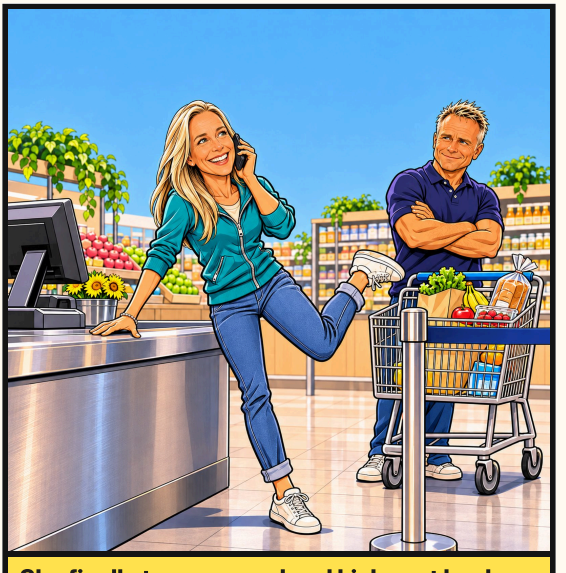
The lady in front of them was talking on her phone. Loudly. And she was next in line.

Ding! “Register number five is available!”

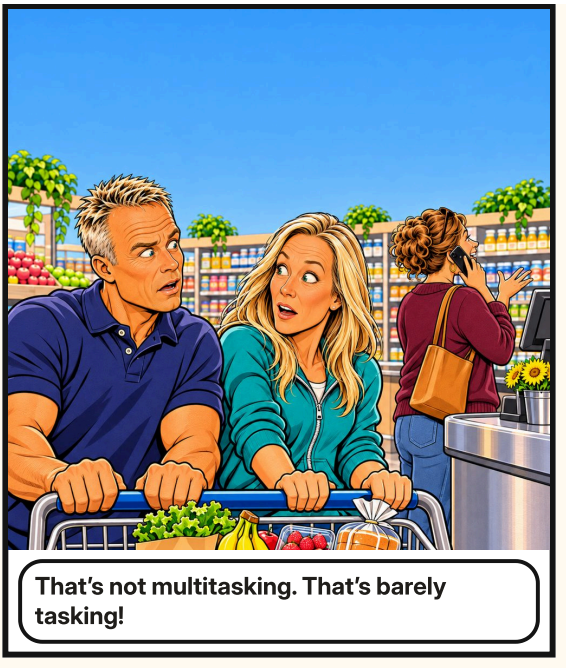
She didn’t move.



Register number five is available!



She finally turns around and kicks out her leg...



Finally, she put down her phone. But instead of walking to the register, she turned around, kicked her leg out, and said to everyone in line, “Hee hee! I’m multitasking!”

Pastor Rick’s eyes got very big. Multitasking means doing *two* things at once. She was barely doing *one*!

Maybe you’re a “barely tasking” kind of person. Maybe you’re a “multitasking” kind of person. Either way, Jesus has an invitation for you. Let’s find out what it is.

Stop 1: Come to Me

This chapter talks about some hard things. But before we get to them, let’s start where Jesus started: with an invitation.

> **Come to me, all of you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest. *(Matthew 11:28, NIrV)***

Do you ever feel tired? Not just sleepy, but tired inside? Maybe you're worried about school, or friends, or something at home. Jesus says, *Come to me. I'll help you carry it.*

Jesus' arms are always open. He spent three years showing it. He went to a wedding and did his very first miracle there, just to keep the party going. He welcomed kids when his friends tried to send them away. He ate dinner with people nobody else liked.

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6). That means *anyone* can come to God through Jesus. Anyone!



Baxter's Bark: When lots of people come over, the house gets noisy and crowded, and there are crumbs everywhere. It's my favorite! Jesus loved a big, happy crowd too.

Checkpoint! What did Jesus say to people who are tired and worn out?

A. "Go away"

B. "Try harder"

C. "Come to me"

Stop 2: Sheep and Goats

Jesus' friends wanted to know how the story ends. So Jesus told them.

He said that one day he will come back in glory, with all his angels. He will sit on his throne as King. And all the people of the world will be gathered in front of him.

Then Jesus will separate them into two groups, the way a shepherd separates **sheep** from **goats**. The sheep will go on his right side. The goats will go on his left.



Like a shepherd, Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats.

Whoa!

Pastor Rick once owned goats. He says they were the stinkiest, nastiest animals he ever had! But Jesus isn't calling anyone a sheep or a goat. He's using a picture that everyone in his day understood. Shepherds separated their animals all the time.

To the people on his right, Jesus will say, **"Come!"** They'll go into the amazing kingdom he has prepared for them.

To the people on his left, he will say, **"Depart."** That means *go away*. They'll be separated from God forever.

There are only two ways. One way or the other.

What about babies and little kids?

Pastor Rick believes with all his heart that a child who dies before they're old enough to choose is safe with Jesus. Jesus loves children!

Checkpoint! When Jesus comes back, how many groups of people will there be?

A. One

B. Two

C. Ten

Stop 3: How Can You Tell?

So how does Jesus decide who goes where? Is it about doing enough good things?

No! Remember Chapter 1? Heaven is a gift. You can't earn it. The only thing that decides where you'll spend forever is whether you've chosen to follow Jesus.

But Jesus said something interesting. The people on his right had fed hungry people and given water to thirsty people. They had welcomed strangers and visited people who were sick. Jesus said that whatever they did for people in need, they did for *him* (Matthew 25:40).

Good deeds don't get you into heaven. But when Jesus lives in your heart, your life starts to look like his. You start caring about people the way he does.

Here's a way to remember it: **Good deeds don't make you a Christian. But they show that you are one.**

Checkpoint! What do our good deeds show?

- **A. They earn heaven**
- **B. They show that our faith is real**
- **C. Nothing at all**

🔶 Stop 4: Which Word Will You Hear?

Jesus said that when he comes back, it will be like the days of Noah. People were busy eating, playing, and going about their lives. They weren't paying any attention to God. Then the flood came, and it was too late.

Pastor Rick calls it living in a **three-foot world**. That's when you only think about what's right in front of you: your stuff, your games, your plans. You never look up to see what God is doing.

Jesus doesn't want you to live in a three-foot world. He wants you to look up! He wants you to know him, love him, and be ready.

So here's the big question for this chapter. When Jesus comes back, which word will you hear?

"Come!" or **"Depart"**?

If you've chosen to follow Jesus, you'll hear the best word ever: **"Come!"**

And Jesus is already saying it to you right now: *Come to me.*



Baxter's Bark: "Come!" is my favorite word. Usually it means a treat. When Jesus says it, it means something even better: forever with him!

REMEMBER IT! TRUTH 5 OF 8

1. **Heaven is God's gift.**
2. **At home with Jesus.**
3. **Keep trusting Jesus.**
4. **Say yes to Jesus today.**
5. **Jesus will return as King.** NEW!

Say all 5 out loud. Can you do it without looking?

MEMORY VERSE

"Come to me, all of you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28 (NIrV)

Say it 3 times, then try it with only the first letters ▸

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Second coming:** When Jesus comes back to earth as King.
- **Throne:** The special chair where a king sits to rule.
- **Depart:** To go away. Jesus will tell people who rejected him to depart.
- **Three-foot world:** Only paying attention to the stuff right in front of you, instead of looking up to God.

TALK ABOUT IT

1. What makes you feel tired inside? How can Jesus help you carry it?
2. Why can't good deeds get us into heaven? What do they show?
3. What fills up your "three-foot world"? How can you look up this week?

TRY THIS: FOR JESUS?

Jesus said that whatever we do for people in need, we do for him. For each one, say **"For Jesus!"** if it's a way to love people like Jesus does, or **"Nope!"** if it isn't.

1. Sharing your snack with a friend who forgot lunch
2. Ignoring the new kid
3. Making a card for someone who is sick
4. Inviting someone to sit with you
5. Laughing when someone trips

Check your answers ▸

☰ Contents

HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN: MILE MARKER 1,000

CHAPTER 6 · REVELATION 20 · JOHN 14:1–3



The Big Question: How does the story end for the devil? (Spoiler: Jesus wins!)

The last two chapters were pretty serious. Are you ready for some good news? Because from here on, the story gets really, really good.

◆ ◆ ◆

Remember Pastor Rick's friend from Chapter 1, the one who was very sick? Pastor Rick went to visit her again. They talked about everything you've been learning in this book.

Her body was getting weaker. She looked down at herself and asked, "I leave this body behind?"

"Yep," Pastor Rick said.

“And I get to be with Jesus?”

“Yep. That’s God’s promise.”

She was quiet for a moment. Then she smiled and said, “I am ready.” And then: **“I can’t wait!”**

That’s why it matters to know how the story ends. When you know the ending, you don’t have to be afraid.

Stop 1: The Devil Gets Locked Up

The apostle John had a vision of the future. He wrote it down in the book of Revelation. Here’s part of what he saw.

An angel came down from heaven. He was holding a key and a great big chain. He grabbed the devil (also called **Satan**) and tied him up with the chain. Then he threw him into a deep pit called the **Abyss**. Then he locked it and sealed it shut.

How long was Satan locked up? **One thousand years.**

> ***Whoa!***
>
> The Bible mentions the thousand years **six times** in Revelation 20. One thousand years is longer than the United States has been a country. It’s about four times longer!

This time is often called the **millennium** (a thousand years) or the **millennial kingdom**. And

here's the best part: with Satan locked up, **Jesus is King!**

Checkpoint! During the 1,000 years, what happens to Satan?

A. He's in charge

B. He's locked up

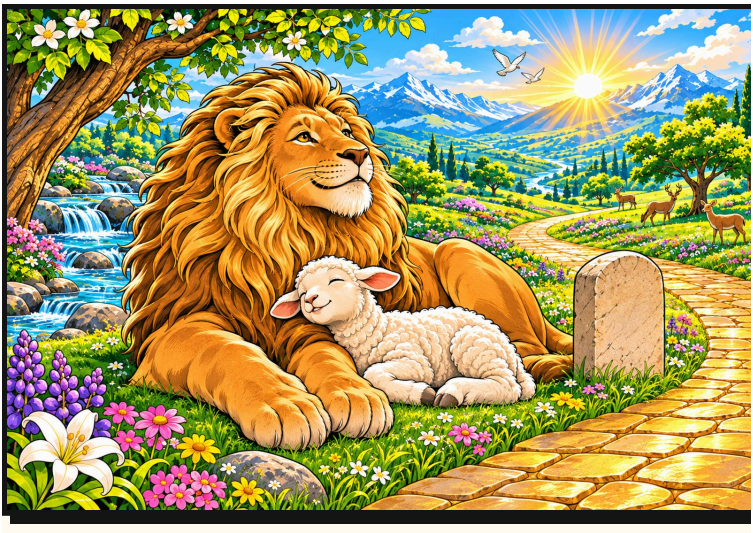
C. He goes on vacation

Stop 2: Jesus Is King!

What will the world be like when Jesus is King? The Bible gives us some hints.

People who love Jesus will rule *with* him. That means you could have a job helping Jesus take care of his kingdom!

The prophet Isaiah described a time when wolves and lambs would live together in peace. Even a lion would eat straw like an ox (Isaiah 11:6–7; 65:25). Some Bible teachers believe this will happen during the thousand years.



A lion and a lamb, side by side.

Imagine streets so safe that kids can play anywhere. Imagine a world where nobody is mean and nobody is in charge except Jesus. That's what it will be like when the King is on his throne!

Pastor Rick believes the thousand years are a real thousand years. Some Christians see it a little differently. That's okay. The most important thing is this: Jesus is King, and if you follow him, you'll be with him.



Baxter's Bark: A lion and a lamb taking a nap together? I'd like to see that. Maybe I'll even make friends with a rabbit. (Probably not. But maybe.)

◆ Stop 3: Jesus Wins!

At the end of the thousand years, Satan will be let out of the Abyss for a short time. He'll try one

last time to fight against God. He'll gather a huge army and surround God's city.

But it won't work. **Not even close.**

God will defeat the army in an instant. And the devil will be thrown into the **lake of fire**, where he will be punished forever and ever (Revelation 20:10). He'll never bother anyone again.

Here's something important to remember: the devil is dangerous, but he is **never** in charge. God is always in charge. And in the end, **Jesus wins!**

Myth: The devil rules over hell like a king.

Truth: The devil doesn't rule anything. He is punished there forever. Jesus is the only King.

Checkpoint! How does the devil's story end?

A. He wins

B. He is defeated forever

C. Nobody knows

◆ Stop 4: Is Your Name in the Book?

The Bible says God has a special book called the **Lamb's Book of Life**. (The *Lamb* is a name

for Jesus.) Everyone whose name is written in that book will live with God forever.

A long time ago, Pastor Rick was the pastor of a tiny church in the country. One day, a man in their community died, and Pastor Rick was asked to lead his funeral.

The church treasurer, a very sweet older lady, said, “I know he was a Christian.”

“Well,” Pastor Rick said gently, “he told people he didn’t want to follow Jesus.”

“I *know* he was a Christian,” she said again.

“How do you know?”

She went to the church storage room and came back with a big, dusty book. On the cover, it said: ***Lamb’s Book of Life***.



I've got the Lamb's Book of Life!



Do you have the Ark of the Covenant back there too?



Pastor Rick wrote his own name in it later, just to be safe!

It was the church's record book, with every name since the 1800s. She flipped through it and found the man's name. "He was baptized here when he was eight years old. His name is in the Lamb's Book of Life!"

That was a funny moment. But it was also a little sad. Because the *real* Lamb's Book of Life isn't kept in a church closet. It's kept by God. And your name isn't written in it because of a church record or a ceremony.

Your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life the moment you decide to follow Jesus.

> **Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God. Believe in me also.** ***(John 14:1, NIrV)***

Jesus said those words to his friends. He was about to go back to heaven, and he wanted them to know he was getting a place ready for them. He says the same thing to you. You don't have to worry. If you follow Jesus, your name is in his book, and he has a place ready just for you.

Checkpoint! When does your name get written in the Lamb's Book of Life?

A. When you follow Jesus

B. When it's written in a church record book

C. When you go to church enough

REMEMBER IT! TRUTH 6 OF 8

1. **Heaven is God's gift.**
2. **At home with Jesus.**
3. **Keep trusting Jesus.**
4. **Say yes to Jesus today.**
5. **Jesus will return as King.**
6. **Jesus rules for 1,000 years.** NEW!

Say all 6 out loud. Can you do it without looking?

MEMORY VERSE

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God. Believe in me also."

John 14:1 (NIrV)

Say it 3 times, then try it with only the first letters ▸

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Satan:** The devil, God's enemy. He is powerful, but God is much more powerful.
- **Millennium:** A thousand years. During the millennium, Jesus rules as King.
- **Abyss:** A deep pit where Satan is locked up during the thousand years.
- **Lamb's Book of Life:** God's book with the names of everyone who follows Jesus.

TALK ABOUT IT

1. Pastor Rick's friend said, "I can't wait!" Why wasn't she afraid?
2. What do you think it will be like when Jesus is King of the whole world?
3. How can you know for sure that your name is in the Lamb's Book of Life?

TRY THIS: PUT IT IN ORDER

Say these four events in the order they'll happen.

- Satan is thrown into the lake of fire forever.
- Satan is locked up in the Abyss.
- Satan is let out for a short time and loses one last battle.
- Jesus rules as King for 1,000 years.

Check your answers ▸

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LEAVING THE LIGHT ON

CHAPTER 7 · REVELATION 21:1–22:5 · JOHN 14:1–6



The Big Question: What will heaven be like?

Joy, Pastor Rick's wife, loves taking *hot* showers. Super hot. So hot that the whole bathroom fills up with steam, like a cloud.

◆ ◆ ◆

One Sunday morning, Pastor Rick needed to use the bathroom mirror while Joy was getting ready. The steam was so thick he couldn't see a thing!

He wiped the mirror with his hand. For one second, he could see himself. Then the steam rolled right back in. Wipe. Steam. Wipe. Steam!



Wipe. Steam. Wipe. Steam!

That's a little like trying to imagine heaven. Every now and then, we catch a glimpse. But then it gets foggy again. Our eyes just can't see it clearly yet.

But someday they will. And the Bible gives us some amazing clues about what we'll see.



Baxter's Bark: This is the chapter Pastor Rick was most excited about. It's all about heaven! Let's go!

Stop 1: Everything New!

At the very end of the Bible, John saw something incredible. He saw **a new heaven and a new earth**. The old world, with all its sadness and sin, was gone.

Then God, sitting on his throne, said, *"I am making everything new!"* (Revelation 21:5).

Everything! Here are some of the new things God will give us:

- **New bodies** that never get sick, tired, or hurt.
- **New hearts** that never want to do wrong. No more sin!
- **A new world** that's even better than the Garden of Eden.

Will there be animals on the new earth? Pastor Rick thinks there probably will be! God made animals and called them good. It makes sense that he'd include them in his perfect new world.



Baxter's Bark: I would like it noted that Pastor Rick said "probably." I'm going to choose to hear "definitely."

Checkpoint! Why does God's city never need the sun?

A. It's always cloudy

B. God's glory lights it up

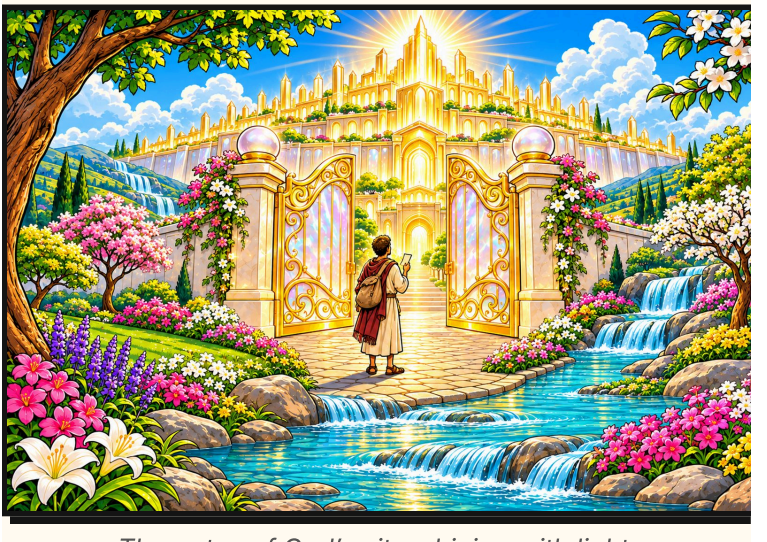
C. Everyone has flashlights

◆ Stop 2: The City of God

Remember the New Jerusalem from Chapter 1? It comes down from heaven onto the new earth. It's where God will live with his people.

Here’s what John saw:

- The city is shaped like a **giant cube**, about 1,400 miles on each side.
- It has **twelve gates**, each made from **one giant pearl**. And the gates are never shut!
- The walls are decorated with **beautiful jewels** of every color.
- The main street is made of **gold**, so pure it looks like clear glass.
- A **river** of crystal-clear water flows down the middle of the street, right from God’s throne.
- The **tree of life** grows on both sides of the river, with fruit every month.



The gates of God’s city, shining with light.

Whoa!

The city doesn't need the sun or the moon, because **God's glory lights it up** (Revelation 21:23). And there's no night there. God always leaves the light on!

That's why this chapter is called *Leaving the Light On*. When you come home late at night, it feels so good to see the porch light on. It means someone is waiting for you. God is waiting for you, and his light is always on.

Checkpoint! What will there be NO more of in heaven?

A. Fun and friends

B. Tears, sadness, and pain

C. Food

Stop 3: No More Tears

Here's one of the most beautiful promises in the whole Bible:

> **He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sadness. There will be no more crying or pain. Things are no longer the way they used to be.** ***(Revelation 21:4, NIrV)***

Think about all the things that make you sad: when someone you love gets sick, when a pet dies, when friends are mean, when you feel left out. None of that will be in heaven. None of it!

No more hospitals. No more funerals. No more scraped knees. No more bad days.

God himself will wipe away every tear. That's how much he loves you.

Stop 4: I Drive, You Ride

One afternoon, Pastor Rick and Joy were driving to the grocery store. The sun was setting right in front of them, super bright.

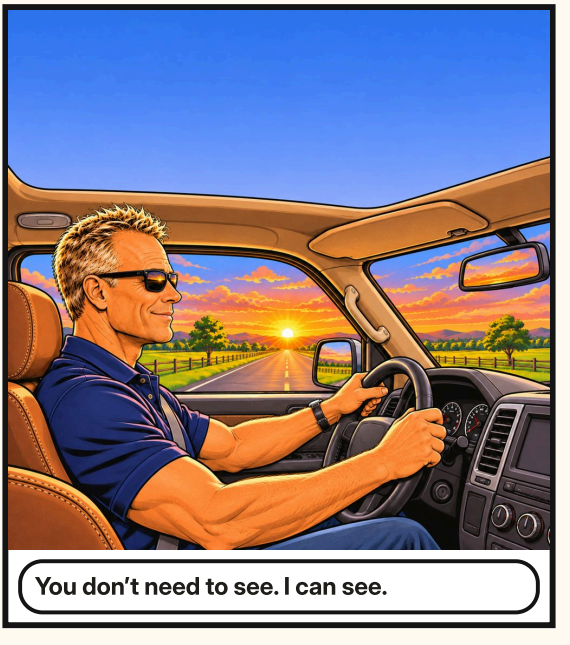
Joy grabbed the door handle. "Stop! You have to stop!"

"What? I'm fine," said Pastor Rick. He had his sunglasses on, and he'd pulled down the sun visor.

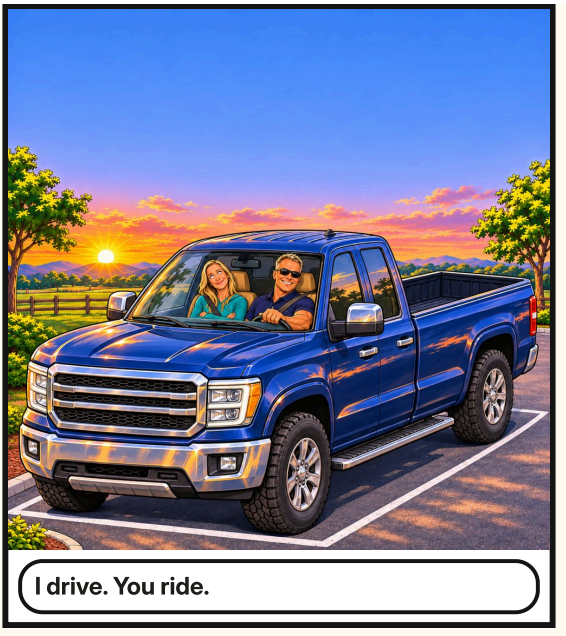
"I can't see where we're going! I can't see where we're going!"



Joy can’t see a thing!



You don’t need to see. I can see.



Pastor Rick said, as nicely as he could, “You don’t need to see. I can see. I drive. You ride.”

Joy didn’t like that very much. But Pastor Rick liked it a lot!

Jesus once told his friends, “I’m going to prepare a place for you.” His friend Thomas said, in other words, *Stop, Jesus! We can’t see where you’re going!*

And Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). In other words: *You don’t have to see. I can see. I’ll take you there. I drive. You ride.*

We don’t know everything about heaven. But we know a lot about **Jesus**. And the very best part of heaven isn’t the gold streets or the pearl gates. It’s being with him.

Checkpoint! What's the very best part of heaven?

A. Gold streets

B. Being with Jesus

C. No homework

REMEMBER IT! TRUTH 7 OF 8

1. Heaven is God's gift.
2. At home with Jesus.
3. Keep trusting Jesus.
4. Say yes to Jesus today.
5. Jesus will return as King.
6. Jesus rules for 1,000 years.
7. **God makes all things new.** NEW!

Say all 7 out loud. Can you do it without looking?

MEMORY VERSE

"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sadness. There will be no more crying or pain. Things are no longer the way they used to be."

Revelation 21:4 (NIrV)

Say it 3 times, then try it with only the first letters ▸

WORDS TO KNOW

- **New earth:** The perfect new world God will make, where his people will live forever.
- **Glory:** The amazing brightness and greatness of God.
- **Tree of life:** A special tree in God's city that grows fruit every month.

TALK ABOUT IT

1. What are you most excited to see in heaven?
2. What is something that makes you sad that won't be in heaven?
3. Where do you need to stop trying to "see the road" and just trust Jesus?

TRY THIS: HEAVEN OR NOT?

Say **"Heaven!"** if you'll find it in God's city, or **"Nope!"** if you won't.

1. Gold streets
2. Tears and crying
3. A river as clear as crystal
4. Night-time
5. Jesus

Check your answers ▸

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NOW THAT I'M HERE

CHAPTER 8 · 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35–58 · REVELATION 22:3–5



The Big Question: Who will I be in heaven, and what will I do there?

Pastor Rick and Joy work out at the gym together. But they work out a little differently.

One day, Joy was lifting dumbbells. The whole time, she was chatting with Pastor Rick: "Don't forget to take out the trash tonight!"

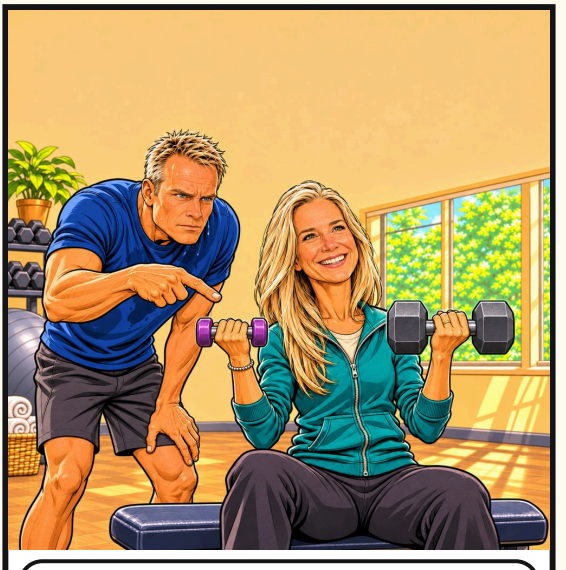
When she finished, Pastor Rick asked, "How was it?"

"Hee hee! It was fun!"

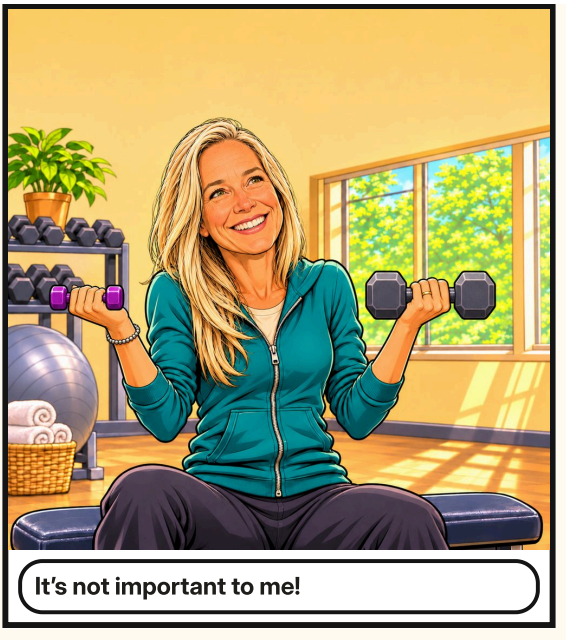
Then she looked down at her hands. "Hee hee! I have two different weights!"



Joy, having a great time.



One arm will be pumped up and the other one shriveled!



Pastor Rick was very serious about working out. Joy was there to have a good time. And honestly? It's working great for her!

This book is a little like that. Maybe you came along just for fun. That's great! But maybe you worked hard and learned a lot. Either way, you've made it to the last stop on our tour. And it's a good one!



Baxter's Bark: We made it to Chapter 8! The last stop is all about YOU: who you'll be in heaven and what you'll get to do. I'm so proud of you!

Stop 1: You'll Still Be You!

Have you ever wondered, *Will I still be me in heaven?*

Yes! You'll still be **you**. God made you on purpose, and he's not going to turn you into someone else. People will recognize you, and you'll recognize them.

After Jesus rose from the dead, his friends recognized him. He ate fish with them. He talked with them. He was still Jesus!

Your personality will still be yours, only without the grumpy parts. The things you love, like music, nature, or art, will be even better. You'll be the very best version of yourself.

Checkpoint! In heaven, will you still be you?

A. No, you'll be someone else

B. Yes, the best version of you

C. You'll be an angel

Stop 2: A Seed and a Plant

Paul said our new bodies will be like what happens when you plant a seed.

Think about a little seed. It's small. It's brown. It's kind of boring. But plant it in the ground, and it grows into something amazing: a tall sunflower, a juicy watermelon, or a giant oak tree. The plant looks totally different from the seed, but it came from that seed.

That's what our new bodies will be like. Paul said our bodies now are weak and wear out. But our new bodies will be strong and **glorious** (full of God's goodness and brightness). They'll never get sick, never get hurt, and never die.

Whoa!

A giant sequoia seed is about the size of an oatmeal flake. But it can grow into a tree more than 250 feet tall. That's taller than a 20-story building! If God can do that with a seed, imagine what he'll do with you!

Jesus was the first one to get a new body when he rose from the dead. And because he did, we know we will too!

Checkpoint! Why did Paul talk about a seed?

A. A seed looks different from what grows

B. He liked to garden

C. Seeds are tasty

◆ Stop 3: Getting More Like Jesus

The Bible says that someday we'll be **like Jesus**. How does that happen? There are three steps, and they have big names.

1. Saved *(the big word is* justification*)*. This happens the moment you choose to follow Jesus. God forgives you and makes you his child.

2. Growing *(the big word is* sanctification*)*. This happens your whole life. Every day, God's Spirit helps you become a little more like Jesus. A little less sin, a little more Jesus.

3. Glorified *(the big word is* glorification*)*. This happens in heaven. You'll finally be completely like Jesus, forever!

Right now, if you follow Jesus, you're in step 2. You're growing! Some days it might feel like you're not growing at all. But God never gives up on you.



Baxter's Bark: Babies start out crawling. Then one day they take a wobbly step, and before long they're running everywhere! That's growing. Every day, a little more. That's what God does in us too.

◆ Stop 4: What Will We Do Forever?

Some people think heaven will be boring: sitting on a cloud, playing a harp forever. *Yawn.*

But the Bible tells us three amazing things we'll do (Revelation 22:3–5):

- **We'll worship God.** Not just singing songs, but enjoying God with everything we've got!
- **We'll serve him.** God will give us important and wonderful things to do.
- **We'll see his face.** This is the best part of all. We'll be with Jesus, face to face.

> **They will see his face. His name will be on their foreheads.** ***(Revelation 22:4, NIrV)***

Heaven won't be boring. It will be the greatest adventure ever, and it will never end.

Checkpoint! What will we do forever in heaven?

A. Sit on clouds and play harps

B. Worship, serve, and be with Jesus

C. Nothing at all

◆ The End of Our Tour (But Not the End of the Story!)

You did it! You finished the tour of heaven. Here are the eight truths from our whole trip, one from every chapter:

REMEMBER IT! ALL 8 TRUTHS

1. **Heaven is God's gift.**
2. **At home with Jesus.**
3. **Keep trusting Jesus.**
4. **Say yes to Jesus today.**
5. **Jesus will return as King.**
6. **Jesus rules for 1,000 years.**
7. **God makes all things new.**
8. **New bodies. Life forever!** NEW!

Say all eight out loud. You did it!

Here's one last big question: *Five minutes after I die, what will matter most?* Now you know the answer: **Jesus.** So let him matter most to you *today*.

If you haven't chosen to follow Jesus yet, you can do it right now. Remember the A-B-C: **Admit** you've sinned. **Believe** Jesus died and rose again for you. **Choose** to follow him. Then tell a grown-up who loves Jesus. They'll want to celebrate with you!



Baxter's Bark: Thanks for taking the tour with me! I had the best time. And remember what Pastor Rick always says...

See you on the other side!

MEMORY VERSE

"They will see his face. His name will be on their foreheads."

Revelation 22:4 (NIrV)

Say it 3 times, then try it with only the first letters ▸

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Glorious:** Full of God's goodness and brightness.
- **Justification:** When God forgives you and makes you right with him.
- **Sanctification:** Growing more like Jesus every day.
- **Glorification:** Becoming completely like Jesus in heaven.

TALK ABOUT IT

1. What part of you are you glad you'll still have in heaven?
2. How have you seen yourself grow more like Jesus?
3. What are you most looking forward to doing in heaven?

TRY THIS: SEED TO SUNFLOWER

Can you name the three steps of becoming like Jesus? Say them out loud: the simple word *and* the big word for each one.

1. S_____ (J_____)
2. G_____ (S_____)
3. G_____ (G_____)

Check your answers ▸



See you on the other side!

☰ Contents

ANSWERS

Not quite!

Cartoons and movies can be fun, but lots of their ideas about heaven are made up. The Bible is the only place we can trust.

◂ Try again

You got it!

The Bible is God's true Word. It tells us everything we need to know about heaven.

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Our friends might have good ideas, but they can be wrong too. The Bible is the only place we can trust.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

That’s what the cartoons show. But Revelation 21:25 says the gates will never be shut.

◂ Try again

You got it!

The twelve gates are each made from one pearl, and they are never shut. Ever!

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

The *streets* are gold. Each *gate* is made from one giant pearl, and they're never shut.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

God doesn't compare us with other people. His standard is perfect, and only Jesus is perfect.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

Even being good most days isn't enough. God's standard is perfect, and only Jesus is perfect.

◂ Try again

You got it!

Nobody can be good enough. That's why heaven has to be a gift.

Next stop ▸

Memory Verse Challenge · Romans 6:23

W y s, t p y g i d. B G g y t g o e l. T b o w C J o L h d.

Can you say the whole verse using just these letters? Try it!

◂ Back to Chapter 1

Try This · Answers

1. Pay · 2. Gift · 3. Pay · 4. Gift · 5. **Gift!** Eternal life is always a gift. You can't earn it. But you do have to receive it!

◂ Back to Chapter 1

Not quite!

People never turn into angels. Angels are a different kind of being. You will always be *you*.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

The Bible sometimes calls death “sleep,” but that’s a gentle way of saying it. People who love Jesus go to be with him right away.

◂ Try again

You got it!

Jesus told the man on the cross next to him, “Today you will be with me in paradise.” Today!

Next stop ▸

You got it!

Paul was a tentmaker! He said our bodies are like tents. Someday God will give us a forever home.

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Not a castle! Paul said our bodies are like tents: good for now, but not forever.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

Good guess, but Paul said our bodies are like tents: good for now, but not forever.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

Being famous won't matter at all. Jesus will reward how we lived for him and loved others.

◂ Try again

You got it!

Heaven is a gift. But Jesus will celebrate and reward the ways we loved him and loved others.

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Stuff stays here. Jesus will reward how we lived for him and loved others.

◂ Try again

Memory Verse Challenge · 2 Corinthians 5:8

W a c a t. W w r b a f o b a a h w t L.

Can you say the whole verse using just these letters? Try it!

◂ Back to Chapter 2

Try This · Answers

1. False! People never become angels. · 2. True! · 3. True! · 4. False! If you follow Jesus, your sins are forgiven. · 5. True!

◂Back to Chapter 2

Not quite!

Actually, Christians see the timing differently. But we all agree that Jesus is coming back.

◂ Try again

You got it!

Christians who love Jesus see it differently, and that's okay. What we *all* agree on: Jesus is coming back!

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Lots of people care! Christians see the timing differently, but we all agree that Jesus is coming back.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

Jesus said the opposite! He told us not to be alarmed, because he is in charge.

◂ Try again

You got it!

Jesus told us not to be alarmed (Matthew 24:6). He's in charge!

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Ha! No need. Jesus told us not to be alarmed, because he is in charge.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

Jesus doesn't want us to just sit around. He wants us to live for him and love people now.

◂ Try again

You got it!

While we wait for Jesus, we love God, help people, and tell others about him.

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Worry doesn't help. Jesus wants us to live for him and love people now.

◂ Try again

Memory Verse Challenge · Matthew 24:44

S y a m b r. T S o M w c a a h w y d e h.

Can you say the whole verse using just these letters? Try it!

◂ Back to Chapter 3

Try This · Answers

1. Don’t **panic**! · 2. Don’t **quit**! · 3. Don’t **waste** the wait! · 4. Do be **ready**!

◂ Back to Chapter 3

Not quite!

There's a big difference! IF is still wondering. SINCE means you're sure.

◂ Try again

You got it!

“If it’s true” is still wondering. “Since it’s true” means you’ve decided to trust what God says.

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Ha! Baxter wishes. IF is still wondering. SINCE means you're sure.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

Being rich wasn't the problem. God gives some people money to share. The rich man lived only for himself and never turned to God.

◂ Try again

You got it!

Being rich wasn't the problem. He lived only for himself and never turned to God.

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Dogs are great! (Baxter agrees.) The problem was that the rich man lived only for himself and never turned to God.

◂ Try again

You got it!

The rich man's brothers still had time. So do you. Now is the time!

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

After we die, it’s too late to choose. That’s why the Bible says now is the time.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

You don’t have to wait! Kids can follow Jesus too. Now is the time.

◂ Try again

Memory Verse Challenge · 2 Corinthians 6:2

I t y, n i t t G s h f. N i t d h s.

Can you say the whole verse using just these letters? Try it!

◂ Back to Chapter 4

Try This · Answers

Some ideas: sit with someone at lunch, ask a lonely neighbor how their day is going, make a card, help a sibling with a chore, invite a friend to church, or simply pray for them by name every day this week.

◂ Back to Chapter 4

Not quite!

Jesus would never say that! He says, “Come to me.”

◂ Try again

Not quite!

Jesus doesn't say "try harder." He says, "Come to me, and I will give you rest."

◂ Try again

You got it!

Jesus' arms are wide open. He says, "Come to me, and I will give you rest."

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Jesus said there will be two groups, like sheep and goats.

◂ Try again

You got it!

Like a shepherd, Jesus will separate people into two groups: those who follow him and those who don't.

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Jesus said there will be two groups, like sheep and goats.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

Remember Chapter 1? Heaven is a gift. Good deeds don't earn it, but they show that our faith is real.

◂ Try again

You got it!

Good deeds don’t get us into heaven. But when Jesus lives in us, our lives start to look like his.

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

They do matter! Good deeds don’t earn heaven, but they show that our faith is real.

◂ Try again

Memory Verse Challenge · Matthew 11:28

C t m, a o y w a t a a c h l. I w g y r.

Can you say the whole verse using just these letters? Try it!

◂ Back to Chapter 5

Try This · Answers

For Jesus: **1, 3, and 4!** Nope: **2 and 5.** Those aren't ways Jesus would treat people. Instead, you could welcome the new kid and help up the person who tripped.

◂ Back to Chapter 5

Not quite!

Never! Satan is locked up, and Jesus is the King.

◂ Try again

You got it!

An angel ties him up with a great chain and locks him away. Jesus is King!

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Ha! No vacation. Satan is locked up, and Jesus is the King.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

No way! Jesus wins, and the devil is defeated forever.

◂ Try again

You got it!

Jesus wins! The devil is defeated forever. He’s dangerous, but he is never in charge.

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

We do know! The Bible says the devil is defeated forever. Jesus wins!

◂ Try again

You got it!

Your name is written in God's book the moment you decide to follow Jesus.

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Remember the dusty book in the church closet? God's book is different. Your name is written there when you decide to follow Jesus.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

Church is great! But your name is written in God's book when you decide to follow Jesus.

◂ Try again

Memory Verse Challenge · John 14:1

D n l y h b t. Y b i G. B i m a.

Can you say the whole verse using just these letters? Try it!

◂ Back to Chapter 6

Try This · Answers

1. Satan is locked up in the Abyss. · 2. Jesus rules as King for 1,000 years. · 3. Satan is let out for a short time and loses one last battle. · 4. Satan is thrown into the lake of fire forever. **Jesus wins!**

◂ Back to Chapter 6

Not quite!

It’s not cloudy! God’s glory is so bright that the city doesn’t need the sun.

◂ Try again

You got it!

God and Jesus, the Lamb, are the light of the city. God always leaves the light on!

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Ha! No flashlights needed. God’s glory is so bright that the city doesn’t need the sun.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

There will be lots of fun and friends! What will be gone are tears, sadness, and pain.

◂ Try again

You got it!

God will wipe away every tear. No more death, sadness, crying, or pain!

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

There’s a tree of life with fruit, so we’ll probably eat! What will be gone are tears, sadness, and pain.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

Gold streets are amazing, but the very best part is being with Jesus.

◂ Try again

You got it!

Gold streets are cool, but being with Jesus is the best part of all.

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Ha! Maybe. But the very best part is being with Jesus.

◂ Try again

Memory Verse Challenge · Revelation 21:4

H w w a e t f t e. T w b n m d o s. T w b n m c o p. T a n l t w t u t b.

Can you say the whole verse using just these letters? Try it!

◂ Back to Chapter 7

Try This · Answers

1. Heaven! · 2. Nope! · 3. Heaven! · 4. Nope! There’s no night there. · 5. **Heaven!** Being with Jesus is the best part.

◂Back to Chapter 7

Not quite!

God made you on purpose. In heaven you'll still be you, only better than ever.

◂ Try again

You got it!

You'll still be you, only better than ever, and more like Jesus!

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Remember Chapter 2? People never become angels. You'll still be you!

◂ Try again

You got it!

A seed looks plain, but it grows into something amazing. Our new bodies will be amazing too!

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Maybe he did! But his point was that a seed looks different from what grows, just like our new bodies.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

Ha! His point was that a seed looks different from what grows, just like our new bodies.

◂ Try again

Not quite!

That’s a cartoon idea! We’ll worship God, serve him, and see his face.

◂ Try again

You got it!

We'll worship God, serve him, and see his face. It will never be boring!

Next stop ▸

Not quite!

Not nothing! We'll worship God, serve him, and see his face.

◂ Try again

Memory Verse Challenge · Revelation 22:4

T w s h f. H n w b o t f.

Can you say the whole verse using just these letters? Try it!

◂ Back to Chapter 8

Try This · Answers

1. **Saved** (Justification) · 2. **Growing** (Sanctification) · 3. **Glorified** (Glorification)

◂ Back to Chapter 8

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