

**Destiny - John 1:14-18, 14:1-3**  
**Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

**Notes from the Sermon**

The final topic on our journey through the great questions of life this Christmas season is the question of destiny. It might be asked in this way. What happens after death and how and why will history end? These questions are big, not only because they have philosophical implications. The brevity of life and the reality that the death rate is always 1 per person can haunt us. We want to know if there is something after this life and if there is a reality that will go on if and when this world ends. No matter how much planning and New Year's promises we make to ourselves about health and fitness, we have to live with the possibility that each day could be our last, or the truth that the alternative is for life to get much more difficult as we age and then one day...

The reality is that any answer given to this question feels like speculation, as beyond the grave is a place that no one living has actual been. OK, there are some cheesy books from people who had near death experiences. But, to be honest, I would take those with a grain of salt even though people buy them by the caseloads hoping to find hope. On the other hand, every world view has to answer this important question, and there are sorts of approaches. Many religious attempts to answer the destiny question come up with a version of heaven, a place where we will live on in another world. Most of these see salvation as the rescue from the physical world and being taken to a place of bliss. But what you will find is that way too often these "places" are nothing more than the fulfillment of the idolatries of the leaders and those in the religion. Heaven ends up being a place with lots of wives (and sex), riches, power, and no work (other than playing a harp on a cloud). The Ghostbusters version of the afterlife sees our existence as going on after the grave, with our spirits entering some plane of existence where evil and good are still at war. Or maybe we are recycled, coming back in a series of cycles that include birth, life, death, and rebirth as another life form through reincarnation. The most cynical approach is that of naturalism which ultimately believes that we will make great worm food, that this life is all there is and there is nothing for us beyond the grave. Not a lot of hope, but all of it is still speculation. If someone had just been to whatever after life exists and then came back to tell us about it. Hmm.

If you are a follower of Jesus having spent any time in church at all you know where this is going. But don't miss it. The central tenet of our faith is built on a historical event that happened in time and place to a man who really lived and then died. His friends mourned his death believing about Jesus what they had experienced in every death before him, that his life here was over, no more communication with him, no more teaching or just hanging out around a fire to laugh and chat. Dead means dead, and we can stand over the body and believe, but nobody had been back. That was until the first Easter Sunday morning. The beauty and hope of our faith in Christ is that the manger, the cross, and the empty tomb are connected in deep and glorious ways. And our hope is not rooted in some kind of wishful thinking, it comes from a person who originally came from heaven, lived his perfect life among us, died, and then came back from the grave. And, as Acts 1:3 tells us, Jesus gave many proofs of his resurrection. No, our hope is in Jesus who conquered death in history at an event that is historical and can be verified. Jesus really did rise again, and therefore He is the only One who can speak to us with hopeful authority on what God has for us beyond the grave.

This is why Jesus made a simple promise to His followers in John 14. He

challenged them not to be troubled and to believe in Jesus just as they believe in the One True God. Then Jesus promises a place prepared, a return, a resurrection for us, and an eternity in the presence of Jesus. This promise is further explained at the end of Revelation by Jesus (to the same John who wrote this). There we are told that there is a New Heaven and New Earth. Not new, as in ditching this one and starting over, but renewed, with the taint of sin removed and the glory of God filling the earth. In other words, heaven is not a place we go and spend eternity in some spiritual plane where we get all of our idols. Ultimately heaven is this place renewed, me raised again to eternal life, and spending all of eternity in the presence of Jesus with all of those who have believed in Him. This is the hope revealed in Scripture from the lips of Jesus to His best friends, given by a man who was dead, is now alive, and is coming again!

**Bible Reading for the Week**

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Isaiah 25	Isaiah 26	Isaiah 27	Isaiah 28	Isaiah 29	Isaiah 30	Isaiah 31

Reading from this past week: John 1:14-18, 14:1-7

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Romans 12:1-2

**Family Worship**

Song - *Go Tell it on the Mountain*

<https://youtu.be/C2Sf-luP4mY>

Gospel Project

Unit: God Keeps His Promises

Story: God parted the Red Sea

Big Picture Question: Does God keep His promises?

Answer: Yes, God always keeps His promises because He is faithful.

Scripture: Isaiah 9

New City Catechism

Question #52: What hope does eternal life hold for us?

Answer: That we will live with and enjoy God forever in the new heaven and the new earth, where we will be forever freed from all sin in a renewed, restored creation.

Verse: Revelation 21:1-4

Scripture

John 14:1-7

- There are so many movies, TV shows, and other forms of entertainment that look at life after death. Why do we want to know what happens then?
- Why is the resurrection of Jesus so important in our faith about our existence past this current life?
- What promises does Jesus make in John 14:1-3? Why then does Jesus say that He is the way there?

Prayer

\*Pray for our teenagers and their leaders as they travel to Extreme Winter. Pray that those who do not know Christ would be saved and for our Christ-following teens to have their faith ignited.

\*Pray that we would truly believe in the hope God has provided us and live as resurrection people.