

END OF THE WORLD | WEEK 1

Day 1: The End or the Beginning?

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 66:8, Ezekiel 37:21–22, Matthew 24:14

Read

“Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment?” Isa

“I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will bring them back into their own land, and they will be one nation in the land.”

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

Reflect

Every generation has looked around at the chaos of the world and thought, *This must be it. This has to be the end!* (Remember the turn of the century in the year 2000?! Everyone waited with baited breath as the clock struck midnight in each time zone ANNNNDDDD...nothing happened. A collective sign or either relief -or disappointment -was heard around the world)

Yet when we read Scripture carefully, we see that God’s idea of “the end” is not destruction. It is redemption and restoration.

Isaiah prophesied that Israel would be reborn in a single day, and Ezekiel spoke of dry bones coming back to life. Centuries later, these prophecies were fulfilled when the nation of Israel was reestablished in 1948. In a moment the prophecies were fulfilled and it caused the world to pause and wonder if we were nearing the final chapters of history.

But the heart of biblical prophecy isn’t about predicting dates or deciphering disasters. It’s about revealing a God who keeps His promises. Even when the world seems to be falling apart, heaven is moving forward.

Jesus then widens the lens when speaks of ‘the end’ in Matthew 24. The sign He points out is the gospel of the kingdom reaching all nations. The end is not collapse for collapse sake. It is completion of God’s saving purpose. That reframes the headlines we read today. Conflict in the Middle East matters. Global shaking matters.

Prophetically this shows a clear arc of completion. God restores a people after exile. God through Jesus is now gathering people from every tribe and tongue. The story is moving toward a new heaven and a new earth where God dwells with His people. So we look forward to the future not with fear but with excitement for His faithfulness.

Journal

How might I live differently if I viewed “the end” as the beginning of everything I’ve been waiting for?

Day 2: Heaven is Home but Not Like You Think

Read

Revelation 21:1–4

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look, God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’”

1 Corinthians 2:9

“But, as it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human mind has conceived the things God has prepared for those who love Him.’”

Psalms 16:11

“You make known to me the path of life. In Your presence there is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Reflect

When people imagine heaven, the picture often looks like a painting from a children’s Bible filled with glowing clouds and endless light. But when John describes heaven in Revelation, he is not describing a faraway place. He is describing a world, our world, made completely new.

Heaven and earth are made new, not because they are patched up, but because they are completely transformed by the presence of God. The old order of pain and decay is gone, and God Himself takes up residence with His people.

Think about that for a moment. The presence of God is not distant or hidden behind prayer or worship alone. It fills everything. It restores everything. There are trees, rivers, colors, and joy, but all of it is saturated with the life of the Creator. Every ounce of beauty you have ever known is only a shadow of what is coming.

That is why Paul said no eye has seen and no ear has heard. Heaven will be both familiar and completely beyond imagination. The best parts of life now are only whispers of what is to come. The love of a friend, the laughter of a child, the beauty of a sunrise. Each one is a small reflection of a reality we cannot yet fully see.

David wrote that in God's presence there is fullness of joy. That means joy that never fades, pleasure that never turns bitter, peace that never ends. The defining feature of heaven is not the landscape but the presence. What makes heaven, heaven is that God is there, and His glory fills it all.

Journal

What are some things on earth that remind you of God's beauty and goodness?

How does knowing that heaven is not distant but deeply personal change the way you imagine eternity?

Day 3: What is Hell

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 7:31 to 32, Matthew 10:28, Luke 12:5, Matthew 25:41

Read

Jeremiah 7:31 to 32

"They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire, something I did not command, nor did it enter My mind. So beware, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when people will no longer call it Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter, for they will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room."

Matthew 10:28

"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

Luke 12:5

"But I will show you whom you should fear. Fear Him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him."

Matthew 25:41

"Then He will say to those on His left. Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Reflect

When we say the word hell today we often picture a blend of ideas. Flames and darkness. Pitchforks and caves. Cartoons and medieval art and modern films. We tend to use one word for many different pictures. Scripture uses several words that we sometimes intertwine without noticing. Understanding those words helps us hear Jesus clearly.

- **Sheol**
- This is a Hebrew word in the Old Testament. It often means the grave or the realm of the dead. It is usually a neutral term. It is where all the dead go, both the righteous and the wicked, unless the passage adds more detail.

- **Hades**
- This is a Greek word in the New Testament. It also means the realm of the dead. In some passages it is a temporary place before final judgment. It is not the same as the final lake of fire in Revelation.
- **Tartarus**
- This word appears once in the New Testament in second Peter chapter two, speaking of a place where rebellious angels are kept for judgment. It is not described as the human destination.
- **Lake of fire**
- This image appears in Revelation. It pictures the final judgment and the end of all evil powers that oppose God. It is distinct from Hades.
- **Gehenna**
- This is the word Jesus used when our English translations say hell. Gehenna comes from the Hebrew name Ge Hinnom which means Valley of Hinnom. It is a real ravine just outside Jerusalem. Israel's memory tied that valley to idolatry and child sacrifice as you read in Jeremiah. Kings defiled it to stop those practices. Prophets pointed to it as a place of judgment and shame. By the time of Jesus Gehenna had become a strong symbol of the judgment of God.

So when Jesus warned about Gehenna He was not inventing a new concept. He was speaking in the language of the Jewish people He took a known place that stood for idolatry, for covenant betrayal, and for the result of casting off the authority of God, and He used it as a living picture. Gehenna meant judgment. It also carried the memory of idols and the absence of the rule of God. It is a picture of what life becomes when we shut God out. It is a picture of where that path leads into eternity. To push God away is to push away every good thing, since every good gift comes from Him.

Jesus also gave us a vital truth that puts light onto a question of "Why would a good God send people to hell?"

The eternal fire mentioned in Matthew was prepared for the devil and his angels. Hell was not made for people. God is not interested in throwing humans into Hell - but His invitation can be refused by each of us. That's the opportunity that we are given - to run towards God or run away. It's ultimately our decision as to whether we choose separation or closeness with God for eternity.

Journal

What has been your personal idea of hell? Where does that stem from?

What questions do you still have about heaven, or the purpose each takes?

Day 4: The Details

Scripture Reading: 2 Peter 3:9 to 13, Revelation 20:11 to 12 and 15, Matthew 25:46, Matthew 10:28, Colossians 1:19 to 20

Read

2 Peter 3:9 to 13

“The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar. The elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be. You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.”

Revelation 20:11 to 12 and 15

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Matthew 25:46

“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Matthew 10:28

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Colossians 1:19 to 20

“For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.”

Reflect

Theologians do not all agree on every detail of the end times. Scripture does make several things wonderfully clear. Jesus is Lord. He will return. There will be a final judgment. God will make a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness lives. Our response to Jesus matters forever.

Within that shared confession, Christians lean in a few different directions.

One view is often called *eternal conscious separation* from God. Some call it *eternal conscious torment*. It understands the final state of the wicked as ongoing exclusion from the presence of God. It gives weight to passages like Matthew 25: 6 that speak of eternal punishment and to images of unquenchable fire such as Mark 9 and to the scene of final judgment in Revelation 20.

A second view is often called *conditional immortality or annihilation*. This view is that the final judgment will end in the complete destruction of the wicked rather than their unending conscious existence. It gives weight to passages that speak of death and perishing and destruction. It pays close attention to Matthew 10:28 where Jesus says that God can destroy both soul and body in hell. It also notes texts like Malachi 4 that picture evildoers as stubble in a fire that leaves neither root nor branch.

A third view is often called *ultimate restoration or universal reconciliation*. It hopes that through Christ, God will finally heal all things while still affirming the reality of judgment and the urgent call to repentance now. It leans on texts like Colossians 1 19- 20 about God reconciling all things through the cross and on promises that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.

No matter where you stand - each viewpoint each agrees that Jesus will return and that God will make all things new and showcases God's mercy.

Whichever way the details unfold, we will not know everything in advance. Peter brings us back to what matters most. Since these things are true, what kind of people ought we to be? Holy and godly. Hopeful and steady. People who live ready and on mission today. Grace is not only a future rescue, it's God's welcome invitation into a relationship now.

Journal

Which of the clear truths named above most strengthens your hope today and why?

As you consider these viewpoints, which Scriptures do you want to study more deeply this week?