

NOTES ON TODAY'S TOPIC.

John 14:1-7.

If you could ask God one question... What is heaven like?

What are the 3 Heavens?

1. Heavenly realms (Kingdom of heaven)
2. Heaven (paradise)
3. New heavens and earth (at home with God)

What do the 3 heavens mean to us?

1. There is a perfect reality
2. There is a perfect rest
3. There is a perfect new dawn

How do we access the 3 heavens?

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

Notes for discussion this week

'Mostly, Jesus himself got a hearing from his contemporaries because of what he was doing. They saw him 'saving' people from sickness and death, and they heard him talking about a "salvation", the message for which they had longed, which would go beyond the immediate into the ultimate future. But the two were not unrelated, the present one a mere "visual aid" of the future one, or a trick to gain people's attention. The whole point of what Jesus was up to was that he was doing, close up, in the present, what he was promising long-term, in the future. And what he was promising for that future, and doing in that present, was not about saving souls for a disembodied eternity, but rescuing people from the corruption and decay of the way the world presently is so that they could enjoy, already in the present, that renewal of creation which is God's ultimate purpose.' Tom Wright, 'Surprised by Hope' (SPCK 2007).

What difference does it make knowing there will be a new creation where heaven and earth are together and we live with God and enjoy purpose in paradise?

What do the following passages teach us about the heavenly realms, heaven and the new heavens and earth?

- Eph 2:4-7
- Heb 4: 14-16
- 2 Cor 5:1-10
- 1 Pet 1: 3-5
- 1 Thess 4:13 - 5:11
- Rev 21:1-5, 22:1-6

In Matthew 13 Jesus gives several parables about the Kingdom of Heaven.

Read them through and discuss: what are the implications of these parables for you and for your friends and family this week?