

HEAVEN, HELL AND OTHER HOT TAKES

Heavens Above | Discussion Notes

As an icebreaker, give everyone a minute to draw what they first think of when they think of heaven. For extra laughs you can ask everyone to do this with their eyes closed. Then use this as a starting point to ask everyone what comes to mind when we talk about heaven. Is it sitting on clouds? Is it singing songs forever?

A basic premise of this series comes from Philippians 3:15-16 when Paul says: "All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained." Paul is saying that we don't have to all agree on everything, in fact some topics are just too difficult for us to fully comprehend. So we can **think differently** from each other, but we also have to **live differently** from the world - following Jesus' example.

- Do you agree that Christians shouldn't have to agree on everything?
- Are there certain things we have to agree on?
- Do you think the wider Church today is good at disagreeing with each other on big topics?

Read the rest of Philippians 3 from verse 17 onwards together.

- What does it mean to be a 'citizen of heaven'? What difference does this make to our identity, how we see ourselves?
- How does being a citizen of heaven separate us from everyone else in society? How should it change the way we live?
- What difference would it make to our lives if we had a stronger sense of the hope of heaven?

Philip's hot take was that we don't go to heaven when we die. Instead, heaven comes to us. Heaven is actually all around us already, we just can't comprehend it or experience it at the moment. It's like heaven is 3D and we can only experience the 2D world around us.

- Have you heard this explanation of heaven before? If not, how does it change the way you think about it?
- If we don't escape up to heaven after we die but instead heaven comes to Earth, how should we change the way we think about life on Earth?

The Christian Hope of Heaven is about transformation, not extraction. Spend some time praying together in smaller groups, first asking God to show you what transformation - or bringing heaven to Earth today looks like - and then praying for that to happen here in Bristol.

Suggested Reading: **Heaven: It's not the end of the world** (David Lawrence), **Surprised by Hope** (Tom Wright)