



Assembly of
Confessing Congregations
within the Uniting Church in Australia

The Hope of a New Heaven and New Earth

A Study Guide

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Conversation 1 – Christ Is the Firstborn over All Creation

What stood out for you from this conversation that never occurred to you before?

Are there any Bible passages that were shown in a new light in this conversation?

“God is taking creation with Him into the fulfilment of His great plan”.
What hope does this bring to you in light of the way that creation seems to be out of control?

Read John 1:14 and Heb 1:3. Jesus the Word became flesh and He is now at the right hand of God still as a man with flesh! What does this mean for us?

As fallen creatures – why is it encouraging to know that everything is created through Christ (and therefore in expectation of redemption) and that everything is still not ‘stuck’ in Adam?

Conversation 6 – The New Heaven and New Earth

The judgement of our final death actually removes corruption from us completely. Then in the new heavens and new earth with transformed bodies the curse will finally and completely be gone. We then will have the joy of returning to fulfil God’s original intention for us. Where do you see this intention in Gen 1:26-31, 2:15 and 3:8a?

Read Heb 2:9-18. God’s plan is a family plan. His will as the heavenly Father is to gather together His family to be with Him for eternity.

A Christian band expressed their hope of heaven like this:

“It’s a big big house with lots and lots of rooms.

There’s a big big table with lots and lots of food.

A big big yard where we can play football.

A big big house – it’s my Father’s house.”

How does this concrete description of the final restoration give you an eager expectation?

Conversation 5 – Dear Death or Dark Devourer?

If everything ends in a grave then life is completely meaningless! This is true for the Christian too (1 Cor 15:19)! What difference does the resurrection make to you?

Until Easter Sunday the rule had always been, “All who live die and remain dead!” Jesus broke this rule and therefore it no longer has to be viewed as a dark devourer. Read Heb 2:14-15 and consider what this means about the fear of death.

Christ suffered death in its totality. He broke the power of death in His dying, therefore death has been overcome and broken. Think on how Paul now describes death in light of Jesus' victory (1 Thess 4:13-14, 1 Cor 15:6).

He tasted death for everyone. He felt the full extent of death, judgement and punishment in our place. How complete does this mean your salvation is?

Conversation 2 – Covenant and Creation

“God has an ultimate plan to glorify His creation. His plan is to renew this creation and us.” Our world labours under a perceived lack of purpose and attempts to discover its own purpose apart from God. What would it mean to you to know that God has a firmly established purpose and that He is bringing it about?

“Covenant is the way God enters into a relationship with human beings and with His creation”. God confirms this covenant in Gen 9:9-10 after the judgement of the Flood. How will it affect our lives as we know that God has always had all of creation included in His relational plan?

God's plan for all things has meaning for us as we see His faithfulness and love. God acts consistently with His own unchanging character which is truth and love. Reflect on the assurances this gives as you consider the future in spite of doomsday media warnings about the future.

Sometimes we are overwhelmed with problems in creation and think that it is all falling apart. However in God's plans for creation it is not 'running down' but 'running up'!

Conversation 3 – Our Resurrection – Our Future

What would you look forward to more; a ghostly intangible body or a future body where we can know and relate to one another and creation as we do now – but free from sin and decay? Why?

Read 1 Cor 15:45-57. We will be raised like Him! When Jesus was raised from the dead He had a physical (but heavenly) body. Thus Acts 3:21 speaks of a time where God will restore all things. Discuss the importance of the body resurrection in connection with the restoration of all things.

What do you make of those Bible passages which say that: the wolf will live with the lamb; the leopard will lie down with the goat; and the trees of the field will clap their hands? (Isa 11:6-10, 55:12-13, 65:25).

Read Rev 21:1-4 and 22:1-5. It appears that creation begins and finishes with a perfect garden. In the meantime one songwriter said, *“All of us are homesick for Eden, we yearn to return to a land we’ve never known”*. How does this thought resonate with you?

Conversation 4 – What about Heaven?

Because Jesus has ascended, raised from the dead, He now rules from God’s throne in heaven over all things. What does it mean to us that He is both in heaven and yet also present to every atom of creation.

Read Col 3:1-4. Your life is hidden with Christ in God! Your life both present and future was not separated from Christ in His death, resurrection and ascended glory and will not be separated from Him when He appears on the last day. Christ will still be identified with us and the executive power of God Himself. What assurance does this bring to you in your Christian witness?

As you read Col 3:1-4 and also further into the passage it becomes obvious that our assured resurrection and glory has a profound effect on our present behaviour. How could this work out for you?

Heb 10:22 speaks of us being in the Presence of God now with full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.” How confident do you feel as you sing with Charles Wesley, *“Bold I approach the eternal throne, and claim the crown through Christ my own!”*?