



STUDY GUIDE

MY NAME IS GOD: Week 10 4.13.14

[WARM-UP]

Where is “home” for you? What are some things about it that make you feel “at home” there?

What are some things that have happened in your life that make you feel like you are in captivity?

[DIGGING DEEPER]

Which of the names of God that we have studied have had the greatest impact in your prayer life? In your daily life?

Which of the names of God that we have studied have been the most challenging to you? The most comforting?

Read the following synopsis of the book of Ezekiel:

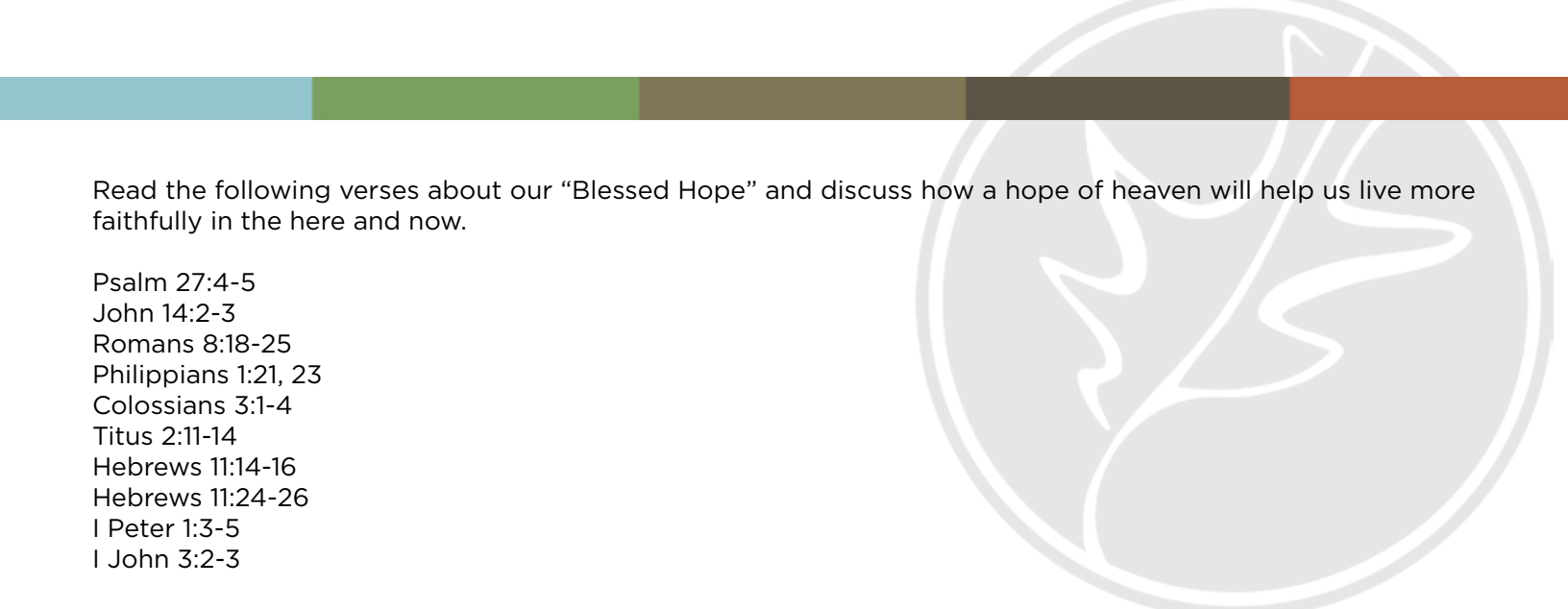
After centuries of warnings against sin, prophetic messages against idolatry, and invasions from foreign armies as the discipline of God, God chose to remove His people from their promised land, Israel. They were taken into Babylon as captives. Ezekiel lived among the Jewish exiles in Babylon. The Babylonians had brought about 10,000 Jews to the Ezekiel's village in 597 BC, including Ezekiel and the last king of Judah, Jehoiachin. A majority of Ezekiel's message communicates judgment for sins committed (1:1-32:32). However, like all the prophets, he also provided his people, now without a land of their own, some hope for the future (33:1-48:35). Ezekiel pronounces judgment on both Israel and surrounding nations, but it also provides a vision of the future kingdom. Ezekiel gives us a picture of the resurrection and restoration of God's people in Ezekiel 37. It also offers us a picture of the reconstructed temple in Jerusalem, complete with the return of God's glory to His dwelling place (40:1-48:35).

With that as a background, read Ezekiel 48:35. How might the name of their future home - The LORD is There - be a source of encouragement to God's people who were living in captivity?

Describe a time in your life when you experienced the very presence of God in a palpable way. Now, describe what you think it might be like to experience His presence - the LORD is There - in a tangible way day-after-day, week-after-week, year-after-year, forever and ever.

Take some time together as a group to read Revelation 21:1-22:7 aloud. You might want to assign different people to read certain sections beforehand. What is especially appealing or attractive to you about these visions of the Lord and His heaven?

There is an old expression that states, “Don't be so heavenly minded that you are of no earthly good.” Read Colossians 3:2 and discuss why the old expression is not true. See if you can craft with your LifeGroup a statement that does ring true to what the Bible actually teaches.



Read the following verses about our “Blessed Hope” and discuss how a hope of heaven will help us live more faithfully in the here and now.

Psalm 27:4-5
John 14:2-3
Romans 8:18-25
Philippians 1:21, 23
Colossians 3:1-4
Titus 2:11-14
Hebrews 11:14-16
Hebrews 11:24-26
I Peter 1:3-5
I John 3:2-3

Read and discuss the following quote from C.S. Lewis: *“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world... I must take care, on the one hand, never to despise, or to be unthankful for, these earthly blessings, and on the other, never to mistake them for the something else of which they are only a kind of copy, or echo, or mirage. I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death; I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside; I must make it the main object of life to press on to that country and to help others to do the same”* (C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity).

How can earthly blessings be copies, echoes, and mirages of heavenly blessings?

What kills your desire for your “true country”? What in your life causes your hope for heaven to “get snowed under or turned aside”?

For more study, refer to Randy Alcorn’s excellent article, Heaven: Our Certain Hope on the Eternal Perspective Ministries website: <http://www.epm.org/resources/2002/Jun/1/heaven-our-certain-hope/>

[LIVING IT OUT]

How can you keep alive your desire for your “true country” – the heavenly city?

How will you remind yourself this week that this world is not your home, but that heaven is? How will this actually fuel you to live more faithfully – fulfilling the mission that God has given to you?

Who do you know who is not assured of entrance into the eternal city of God where the Lord is There? Would you spend some time in your LifeGroup praying for them by name? Ask God to work powerfully in their lives to bring them to salvation through Christ and to His eternal home?

In closing, spend some time in prayer asking God to use the hope of heaven as fuel to help you live more faithfully on mission.