



# Truth for Today

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## God, the Beginning and the End of the Story

by Shane Scott

*For from him and through him and to him are all things.  
To him be glory forever. Amen (Rom. 11:36)*

Every worldview must answer these questions: Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going?

Christianity has a very simple answer to all three questions – GOD. Where did we come from? We came from God, “from whom are all things” (1Cor. 8:6). Why are we here? We are here “for him” (Col. 1:16), since he is the one “for whom we exist” (1Cor. 8:6). And where are we going? Our ultimate destination, the final goal of our existence, is God, “for from him and through him and to him are all things” (Rom. 11:36).

It is this last point that I think is especially worth serious reflection – at least, I need to think about it more. It is the truth I have most neglected in my own view of the world. The question of origins is so fundamental that I – like many Christians – have placed great emphasis on the role of God as Creator and on the serious weaknesses of a purely naturalistic view of the origin of the universe, life, and consciousness. And early in my preaching, I encountered several authors who helped me see the crucial purpose for our lives as revealed in Scripture – to glorify God (as Jesus taught in Matthew 5:16).

But the answer to that third question – “where are we going” – is the one that I have failed to grasp for far too long. And yet, the Bible could not be clearer. Just as surely as God is the origin of our story, he is also the destination of our story. “To him are all things.” The end of the story for a child of God is God.

When the Bible speaks of heaven, it uses language like “many mansions” (John 14:2, KJV) and “streets of gold” (Rev. 21:21). And if our vision of eternity is not properly God-centered, then it is easy for these portraits to distract us, or even to mislead us, away from the true meaning of eternity. Heaven is not a celestial Disneyland, where we can ride all the rides we want without waiting in line or have an endless supply of Mickey Mouse ice cream bars. For many years, if you had asked me if I would be satisfied to go to such a “heaven” even if God wasn’t there, I would have said, “YES!”

But what those biblical images are designed to convey is the much deeper truth that in heaven we will be reunited with God. The streets are said to be made of gold because heaven is the new and eternal temple of God – the dwelling place of God – and the most holy place of the temple in the Bible is always decorated with gold. This emphasis is found all throughout the glorious picture of heaven in Revelation 21-22. “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man” (21:3). Indeed, in this vision, there is no separate temple because the entire heavenly city is itself one enor-

mous Holy of Holies, and “its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb” (21:22). When this reunion is realized, we “will see his face” (22:4).

The same God-centeredness is true with the “many mansions” of John 14. Jesus was not promising that everyone in heaven gets their own personal Biltmore House! The word translated “mansions” in the King James Version is better rendered “many rooms,” which is how modern translations express the point. And the point of the many rooms is that there will be plenty of room for all of Christ’s disciples to abide with him. “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also” (14:3).

Traditionally, the final goal of dwelling with God and seeing his face is called the “beatific vision.” But I am sad to say my own grasp of such a vision has been seriously impaired through the years. And there really is no excuse, since Scripture and reason so clearly point to this truth.

Why do I say that even reason pushes us to this conclusion? Because it speaks to universal human realities, such as truth, goodness, and beauty. Human beings have an innate desire for truth, fueled by the unique human capacity for reason. And we also have a yearning for goodness, and for its derivatives like justice and compassion. And we have a longing for beauty, that which is intrinsically deserving of adoration. Where can we find truth, goodness, and beauty? In the final and complete sense, only in the One who is Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

This to me explains the restless longing of those who do not seek God and therefore face frustration and disillusionment. In the words of Isaiah, they “labor for that which does not satisfy” (Isa. 55:2). Worse, those who accept the atheistic dogma of materialism undermine the concepts of truth, goodness, and beauty by reducing human consciousness and rationality to purely physical processes.

But I am primarily writing this for fellow Christians who, like myself, need reminding that the goal is God, that the one ambition that counts is “the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14). This longing will indeed be completely and eternally fulfilled by the one who made us, “the Alpha, and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Revelation 22:13).

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of  
my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to in-  
quire in his temple (Psalm 27:4).

*Or as a more recent psalmist put it –  
Riches I heed not, nor man’s empty praise  
Thou mine inheritance, now and always  
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart  
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art  
 (“Be Thou My Vision,” Eleonore Hull 1912).*

# NEWS & NOTES

## UPDATED PRAYER LIST

- **Kaymesia Barkoh** is expecting anytime. Her due date is 12/23.
- **Paula Dobbs** has an CT scan on Wednesday.
- **Harvey Glover** has an outpatient procedure to remove a skin cancer.
- **Imogene Hodges** has been diagnosed with an Afib issue and will have an Echocardiogram and Ultrasound on January 4<sup>th</sup>.
- **Cecelia Neel** is having substantive oral procedures to resolve infections in her bone.
- **Judy Gillespie's** niece, Emma, tested COVID positive.
- **Morgan Potter's** mother, Jackie, was able to get the feeding tube removed Wednesday and will have a follow up appointment about future treatments.

**IN-PERSON SCHEDULE** (*Seating is based on pew capacities to maintain safe seating distances. Please follow recommended wearing of face masks, especially when singing. Overflow seating for worship is in classroom 5 and 9).*)

- **SUNDAY**
  - BIBLE CLASSES, 9:00 AM. | For All Ages.
  - WORSHIP, 10:00 AM.
- **TUESDAY**
  - ADULT BIBLE CLASS, 10:30 AM
- **WEDNESDAY**
  - BIBLE CLASSES, 7:00 PM. | For All Ages.

## VIRTUAL SCHEDULE

- ALL inperson events are LiveStreamed at the time of the scheduled event and will be replayable on our YouTube Channel.
- [Woodlandschurchofchrist.org/live-stream](http://Woodlandschurchofchrist.org/live-stream)

## MEETINGS, EVENTS, SINGINGS & STUDIES

- **2:52 Kids Class** on first Sundays [2-12] | TBA
- **TEEN BIBLE CLASS** [12-18] | Bible Class on First Sundays | TBA (classroom 5)
- **BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES** Bible Class on

- first Sundays | 1/3, 4:00 p.m. (auditorium)
- **TEEN HOME DEVO** [12-18] | TBA
- **YOUNG ADULTS STUDY** | TBA until January
- **ADULTS STUDY** [30/40] | TBA until January
- **2021 EVENTS**
  - Area-Wide Singing | Sat., 3/6
  - Gospel Meeting with Ed Brand | 3/28-31
  - VBS | 6/22-25\* (Tue-Fri)
  - Youth Lectures | 8/7-8
  - Gospel Meeting with Mike Wilson | 9/26-29

## OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

- **VOLUNTEER SIGN-UPS** See the Monthly Assignments and let Barrett, Al, or Nathan know if you cannot fulfill an assignment.
- **Willing to TEACH?** We now need teachers for Spring quarter. **Please contact Don Hooton if you are willing to teach.**
- **WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE?** See Leo Betancourt.
- **HOSPITALITY?** Maureen Chegin and Cecelia Neel will coordinate food for members who need assistance during an extended recovery period after surgery or for the family at a funeral.

## DIRECTORY UPDATES

- Contact Brian with updates or if you need a PDF of the directory.



We are glad to welcome a new couple to our family: **Beau and Jasmine Frisby.** Look for their info in this week's enews.

## WEEKLY BIBLE READING

**Week Fifty** (beginning 12/13)

- READ Psalm 49, 99, 149
- MEMORIZE Psalm 99:1-3

Attendance	InPerson Average Last-Month	Virtual Average Last-Month	InPerson Last Week	Virtual Views Last Week
Sunday Classes	n/a	n/a	72	11
Sunday Worship	77	52	107	32
Tuesday Adult Class	11	7	5	14
Wednesday Classes	39	20	53	8

SUNDAYS	10:00 AM - 12/13	10:00 AM - 12/20	CONTACT INFORMATION
Foyer 1-Welcome	Craig Preuss	Jay Dulin	<b>Elders</b>
Foyer 2-Ushering	Leo Betancourt	Jonathan Chandler	Keith Arrants   936.582.1244
SongLeading	Alan Stilts	Norman Davis	George Chapman   281.298.1303
1 <sup>st</sup> Prayer	Adam Bohanan	Nathan Shows	Norman Davis   832.326.2966
Scripture	Carson French	Michael Harvey	Don Hooton   936.443.6230
Scripture Reading	Ecclesiastes 12:1-7	Matthew 5:13-16	<b>Deacons</b>
Communion_Lead	Dwight Osteen	Barrett Blankenship	Adam Bohanan   281.798.1093
Preaching	Don Hooton	Don Hooton	Brian Clark   281.513.0706
2 <sup>nd</sup> Prayer	Michael Henss	Adam Bohanan	Gary LeBlanc   281.292.0262
Announcements	Keith Arrants	Norman Davis	Craig Preuss   832.477.0578
Sanitize-Bathrooms After	C&T Chapman	Osteens	<b>Evangelists</b>
Sanitize-Pews After	Randows	Shows	Don Hooton   936.443.6230
Building Open/Lockup	Haas	Bohanan	<b>Website</b>
Sound 1	Chris Latson	Chris Latson	www.woodlandschurchofchrist.org
Communion Prep	G&L Chapman	G&L Chapman	<b>Office Phone</b>
Counting Contribution	Norman Davis & Michael Henss	George Chapman & Brian Clark	281.367.2099
<b>WEDNESDAYS</b>	7:00 PM - 12/16	7:00 PM - 12/23	<b>Church Email</b>
SongLeading	Hayden Clark	Keith Arrants	woodlandschurchofchrist@gmail.com
Invitation/Talk	Jay Dulin	Barrett Blankenship	
Prayer	Nathan Shows	Gerald Hodges	
Announcements	Norman Davis	Don Hooton	

