



# Links Players

## WHERE WE SEE JESUS

“They will see his face...” (Revelation 22:4a, NIV)

I'M NOT A SPORT PSYCHOLOGIST—though I can sure get in my own head when it comes to making my way around a golf course! I can't tell you whether positive motivations (carrots) are better than negative motivations (sticks). We probably need a little of both. What I can tell you is that you will often hear theologians speak suspiciously of conversions that come as “fire insurance,” or because someone wants to avoid hell. So maybe last Friday's devotion and study made you uncomfortable. Should we be strong in our teaching about hell?

The answer is *yes*. And we should also be strong in our teaching about heaven. So this week, we make a turn in that direction.

What the Scriptures tell us of heaven comes mostly from the Gospels and the Revelation. Mentions of eternal life are found in many other places, but to get an idea of heaven itself, we're going to need to dig into the New Testament. In a word, we can say that heaven is *paradise*. The source for this understanding is a surprising if familiar one. When Jesus promised eternal life to the humble thief on the cross, the Lord said to him, “Today you will be with me in paradise.”

Thus, when it comes to descriptions of heaven, we can expect to find pictures of wonder and beauty. And we do. First, we must recognize that this beauty is assigned to the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, “coming down out of heaven from God.” So our eternal home may actually be “heaven on earth.” Its foundations will be laid with precious stones and its great street will be pure gold. The river of life will flow down the center of that great street. The tree of life, on each side of the river, will bear 12 crops of fruit, one for each month.

Yet all of these wonders will be surpassed by one: Jesus Christ, the exalted Lamb. First, Jesus told his disciples that he was going to prepare a place for them in the house of his Father (John 14). Second, John observed in his revelation that the inhabitants of heaven will see the face of the Lord, even as they serve him there.

So perhaps your motivation to attain heaven should be to enter the very presence of God. What an awesome cause! There's no purer motivation, perhaps. But if from time to time you need the stick to keep you moving, don't fret it. Keep looking for Jesus, however dimly you may see him in this life—for one day, you shall see him as he is.

**Opening questions** Where is the most beautiful place you have played golf? What made it so?

**READING** John 14:1-7; Revelation 21:1-4

### Seeing Christ now and in eternity (John 14)

What promise did Jesus make to the disciples in this passage? What did he then explain to them about the way to this eternal dwelling?

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How do the truths in verses 2-7 allow you to trust Christ as he urged in verse 1?

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### The wonders of heaven (Revelation 21)

In addition to the physical aspects of the New Jerusalem listed in today's devotion (and found in Revelation 21:15—22:2), what do these opening verses in chapter 21 tell us about our eternal life with God?

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What does this elicit in you in terms of your appreciation for salvation?

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