

Heaven
How Does Heaven Help Me Now? • Message 6
Bryan Jones
May 31, 2026

Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- Pray for a greater vision of Jesus in the middle of everyday life.
- Ask God to strengthen your faith when waiting feels long and hard.
- Pray that Brookwood would be deeply anchored in eternity while faithfully living today.

Worship Psalm:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16 (ESV)

Scripture Reading:

I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”

Revelation 1:12-20 (NIV)

A. Introduction

In the game of hide and seek... when someone counts... they will often say this phrase right after they are done... *Ready or not... here I... (what?)... come.* And ready or not, there is a day where Jesus is coming...

But there is a problem... we hate waiting.

The other day, I was playing in this room... and my kids got tired of waiting... so they would shout out clues...

I have learned this: we hate waiting...

When we talk about heaven, a lot of people, especially those younger, go, *Yeah, but that's a long way away probably. How does that affect me now? How does that help me now?*

In Revelation 1, the people had some real problems, facing trials and persecution, and they needed something that could help them now... so John gave them a picture of what heaven is all about: Jesus... this picture, if you wake up to it, changes you...

B. How Does Heaven Help Me Now?

1.) RELEASES hope in suffering.

(Revelation 1:12-13)

As some of you know... I had a season of anxiety... I wasn't sleeping... one night my kid was standing over me, and that gave me more anxiety...

A little while ago, I was talking to my mom, and she said, *You know, one of my favorite times with you was when you walked through your season of anxiety... and I told her, I am so glad my suffering was one of your greatest moments in life... glad to help you there.*

But she said something that made me think. She said, *That was one of the few times you needed me.*

Now, I moved away when I was 19 and have, for the most part, always been independent. But what she said made me think...

Often times when things are good, we don't need God. But I have noticed, in the hard times, we seek God, we draw near, we come to church, we are desperate for God...

I wish it wasn't this way... but often times, in the suffering of life... it allows us to see God, and it's where God does some of His richest work.

Year (AD)	Estimated Number of Christians	Roman Emperor / Key Event
30	150	Tiberius – Jesus crucified
40	1,000	Caligula
64	2,000	Nero – persecution in Rome
70	4,000	Vespasian – Jerusalem destroyed
95	8,000	Domitian – Book of Revelation written
100	9,000	Trajan
200	200,000	Septimius Severus
250	1,000,000	Decius – empire-wide persecution
300	5,000,000	Diocletian – Great Persecution begins

Persecution grows the church... the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.

During the time of Revelation, there were two emperors that had an extreme hatred for Christians. These emperors were Nero and Domitian. Now during Nero's reign, a great fire broke out (like the Chicago fire).

He actually blamed this on Christians as a way to execute them.

Listen to what a Roman historian, Tacitus, says about what he witnessed.

"...a vast multitude were convicted, not so much of crime, but rather as of hatred of the human race and their faith. And in their deaths they were made the subjects of sport; for they were wrapped in the hides of wild beasts and torn to pieces by dogs, or nailed to crosses, or set on fire; and when day declined, were burned to serve for nocturnal lights."

- Tacitus

When it says nocturnal lights, they would have Christians wear a special shirt that was filled with flammable materials and light them on fire to serve as a lamp. The punishments were so cruel they would also drill into their heads and pour hot metals in their skull while still alive.

What do you say to people who are walking through this kind of suffering... Here is what John gives them in Revelation 1...

I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.

Revelation 1:12-13 (NIV)

The lampstands = churches ... the son of man = Jesus.

Notice it says, *He is among them...*

So, the hope John gives them is a picture of a powerful and compassionate God who walks with His people...

Suffer well

Grief (despair)

Hope (surrender)

You need to grieve what you face... but then have hope... hope that God will walk with you and give you strength... Have you actually grieved what you're walking through? Are you living with hope, or have you given up?

Listen, faith never promises you won't walk through hard things... but what faith promises is you will always have someone who will walk through it with you!

The church exploded as a result of this... and it kept growing partly because Christians were dying with joy, and people in the Roman Empire couldn't understand... Why are they forgiving those who are killing them? Why do they have hope?

It only comes from seeing Jesus for who He is... and when you begin to see it, it releases hope to suffer well.

2.) RESHAPES how you see Him.

(Revelation 1:14-16)

I grew up in the church... but for most of my life I had a small view of God... I remember going to youth group... they would get a balloon and some shaving cream, and we would try to shave the balloon without it popping... and then someone got up and said, *Here's why Jesus came... to shave the sin off our life...* and I'm thinking... I'm 9 years old... I haven't even gone through puberty yet... there isn't a hair on my body...

But I just never had a vision of Jesus that captured my heart and imagination...

I find it interesting that Jesus would often ask His disciples this question... *Who do you say I am?*

Why?... Because the picture you have of Jesus determines your future. If you have a small view of Him, you won't really live for Him...

But when you wake up to who He is, you will surrender your whole life to Him...

I told you this happened to me... I went to a camp and had this little Ab-tronic around my stomach, because it was supposed to shock you and give you a six pack... and I took a bet... but while I was in that service I found God.. I awakened to Him and everything changed...

This is important... when you think of Jesus... you often think of this... (show Jesus pictures: creepy side photo, PETA Jesus)... let me show how John reveals Him...

The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.
Revelation 1:14 (NIV)

White here shows the antiquity of His reign. Think about it... kings come and go... empires fall. Shops come and go; remember Blockbuster?... but Jesus has been reigning and ruling since the beginning of time... and notice **white as wool**... it's a sign of purity...

Some commentators talk about His hair actually shining and glowing because of His glory... and that makes sense ... because His eyes were like a blazing fire... this is a sign of judgment... meaning Jesus can see all.

The other day I put an Oreo on the table, and I did it because I wanted to see if my kids would sneak it and eat it... I won't tell you which one... but when they thought I wasn't looking, they grabbed it... and went into the corner... like Sméagol from Lord of the Rings... and devoured that thing... they thought that no one saw...

And yet we do this with God. We think no one saw or it's hidden, but the Bible says Jesus has piercing clarity...

His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.

Revelation 1:15 (NIV)

Bronze was one of the strongest metals in the ancient world... so it shows Jesus' stability and permanence... said another way... Jesus can never be knocked off His throne.

Jesus' voice was booming like a waterfall...

In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

Revelation 1:16 (NIV)

The seven stars here are the leaders of the church... so when Jesus says He will build His church...He is the only one with power...

I like how Charles Spurgeon says it...

“What do you see in Christ’s right hand? Seven stars; yet how insignificant they appear when you get a sight of His face! But who can see seven stars or, for the matter of that, seventy thousand stars when the sun shines in His strength? How sweet it is when the Lord Himself is so present in a congregation that the preacher, whoever he may be, is altogether forgotten! I pray you, dear friends, when you go to a place of worship, always try to see the Lord’s face rather than the stars in His hand; look at the sun, and you will forget the stars.”

- Charles Spurgeon

Listen, I told you God is doing some powerful things in our church... what makes a church powerful is when people aren’t saying, *Come hear my pastor*, or *Come see this ministry*, or *Come hear the worship*... but rather, *Come and see my God*.

And so often in our world, we are enamored with all the people in the spotlight... and we take for granted the One who shines with the radiance of the sun.

The sword here shows the power of God’s Word... you can’t hold a double-edged sword without being cut... and the Word of God, every time you open it up, cuts deep into our soul...

And I love this last part: His face was shining with the sun in all its brilliance... How many of you remember the solar eclipse of 2017? {show picture} Remember where you actually had a moment of blackout... where the sun is covered by the moon and you can look at it... for a moment you can look directly at it...

Now I was in Texas then and I had ten seconds of blackout...very little, but parts of South Carolina had two minutes... you ask, *Were you mad or disappointed?* ... No, I’m a Cowboys fan, I’m used to losing... but I still had ten seconds where I could see the sun without glasses.

Now let me ask you this question... did I see the sun? Yes. But did I see it in its full glory? No.

Did people see Jesus back in the New Testament? Yes. But did they see Him in His full glory? No.

Jesus' humanity allowed us to look at Him as the Son... but one day in heaven we will see Him in His full glory... think about it in Matthew 17... Peter, James, and John saw His partial glory, and they were overwhelmed and afraid...

This leads me to my final point... when you see Jesus...

3.) RUINS you for anything else. (or anyone)

(Revelation 1:17-18)

If you stared at the sun long enough... and let me say, if you stare at Jesus long enough... you will go blind to things of this world...

When John sees the picture, listen to what happens:

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave."

Revelation 1:17-18 (NLT)

In heaven we will see Jesus and walk with Him in His full glory... when you understand this, it causes you to long for His return...

Let me ask you a rhetorical question... if I told you Jesus was coming back right now, would you be excited? Many of you would, but you know the secret truth is... for years I didn't want Jesus to return...

I loved Him, but I thought there were some things I want to see and do first... I would love to work at a church, I would love to get married, own a home, have some memories with my friends, see my kids grow up...

I remember one time telling God, when I lived in Illinois, *Let me move somewhere warm before You return...*

And then one day I realized I need to repent of a weak view of who Jesus is... there is no pleasure, person, power, or thing that can compare with Him... that's why the psalmist says, *Better is one day in your courts than thousands elsewhere...*

When you start to wake up to who Jesus is, you realize nothing on this earth will ever satisfy except Him. And the day He shows up, for those who have lived for Him, it will be one thousand times or even one million times better than your best day on this earth... because

Jesus will take us home where we get to be with the most powerful being in the universe, who loves us... there is no one like Him!