

2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT - 17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

Contrary to external appearances our existence is not static. When you gave your life to Christ you became part of His new creation. But until His return and creation of a new heaven and earth we have only a glimpse of that future. But we can join with God in what He is doing.

2 Peter 3:9 NLT - 9 The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

Why does Peter tell us God's promise to return hasn't been fulfilled yet? What are some direct or indirect ways we can enable everyone to repent? (consider both what you do and other's efforts you support)

WRAP-UP

God came to earth as a child over 2000 years ago and He has promised to return. When He returns, He will create a totally new heaven and new earth. Our future hope is firmly rooted in the promise of our faithful God. Until His return we can join Him by giving ourselves fully to Him and supporting His desire that all should repent and be saved.

Memory Verse

*And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" ...
- Revelation 21:5a NLT*

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: _____

Challenge- Find a way this week to draw your focus back to the Light of the World, and let His promises be the source of your joy.

"God on the Move" Once and Future #4

INTRODUCTION

Christmas is upon us and the season of Advent will soon be past. During the last three weeks we have watched and waited in anticipation of December 25 when we commemorate Christ's first coming in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. But God has promised us that Jesus will return in the future, and so we are still in a state of expectation and hope as we see once again God is on the move.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

What are you looking forward to in 2020?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. Advent- Excitement and Joy

We may spend weeks or months or even years in preparation for a big event. That time of waiting can be almost as joyful and the event itself.

What big "life event" have you enjoyed anticipating (graduation, marriage, children)?

Isaiah 9:6 NLT - 6 For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

When Christ was born in Bethlehem it brought great joy because the waiting was over, God had been faithful to fulfill His promise to send a savior.

What is the most recent thing God has done in your life that made you joyful? What can you take joy in anticipating that God will do for you in the future?

During the advent season we do our best to make this time a great experience with bright lights, gifts and good food. But even our best efforts are fleeting. After Christmas, the leftovers are eaten, the gifts put away (or returned) and the lights come down.

Isaiah 9:2 NLT - 2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.

John 8:12 NLT - 12 Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

Jesus came to illuminate the world and be a light in the darkness.

What personal observances or family traditions can keep our focus on the Light of the World that does not fade rather than on the dazzling displays that temporarily draw big crowds?

2. Only God Makes New Things

*History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new. Sometimes people say, "Here is something new!" But actually it is old; nothing is ever truly new. We don't remember what happened in the past, and in future generations, no one will remember what we are doing now.
- Ecclesiastes 1:9-11 (NLT)*

Solomon may have been the wisest man in the world, but he wasn't the most optimistic. As much as we all enjoy things that are new, unique and advanced, Solomon observed there is actually nothing "new" that man can make.

What have you purchased that was supposed to be "new and improved" only to find there really wasn't much new about it?

Genesis 1:1 NLT - 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

From the beginning, God has been the unique creator. In Gen 1:1 it says He created (*bara'*) the heavens and earth. The word *bara'* refers to God making something out of nothing. God didn't take substance and reform it, he took nothing and made something. No matter what we create, we are really just reshaping something that already exists.

*What does Isaiah say God will create (*bara'*) in the future?*

Isaiah 65:17 NLT - 17 "Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore.

God originally created earth to be man's permanent home, but sin and death transformed it into a place of rebellion and alienation. God doesn't say He will repair the heavens and earth, but that he will *bara'*, or create a totally new heaven and earth.

What are some things about the new heaven and new earth that you are looking forward to?

3. Hope

Revelation 21:1-5 NLT - 1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." 5 And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true."

If you read the book of Revelation, and then check the news, you will find that God is moving things on this earth toward their conclusion. You may ask, "What is our part in this new heaven and earth?"