

Lesson 20: Our pilgrimage to heaven

Aims for each learner:

- Be certain they will reach paradise safely and look forward to it eagerly.
- Learn to recognize and resist the devil's attacks.
- Memorize 1 Peter 5:10-11.

Cultural clues:

- Muslims, Pilgrimage & Paradise
- Jerusalem & Zionism

Prepare: Write or print the quote (see question 22) with 'us' and 'we'. Plan to celebrate the end of the course, e.g. with a meeting to share testimonies and have a meal together.

Opening

Start with Prayer then review the practical task: Did you ask a friend what gifts you have? What did they say? Did you have an opportunity to serve others this week? *Each member should speak.*

Lesson 20 home study review:

Question 1: a) Jerusalem; b) heaven (or paradise)

Question 2: a) us; b) Christ

Question 3: who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast; the power for ever and ever (5:10-11)

Question 4: Personal answers. *God wants us to be fully certain. We will not pass through torture first, but will go to be with God in paradise when we die! If any individuals still have doubts, show them from Luke 23:39-43 that Jesus promised even a criminal 'Today you will be with me in paradise'!*

Introduce today's topic: We are on a lifelong journey to heaven, or paradise. We have a glorious destination, but on the journey we must fight our enemy the devil. Today we will learn about this spiritual pilgrimage.

Discussion

Our spiritual pilgrimage (Questions 1-5)

Questions 2-3: Read the whole of question 2 and the first paragraph of question 3.

- On what kind of hajj or pilgrimage do we go as Christ's followers? *A spiritual pilgrimage which lasts our whole life. We are travelling towards our homeland in heaven.*
- These days when Christ's followers pray, why don't they turn towards Jerusalem? *Because our prayers and our lives should not point to an earthly city, but to God himself.*

Question 4: Read the question, including 'Stop and Think'.

- Did you think about this and what did you decide?

Resist the devil (Questions 6-16)

Read 1 Peter 5:6-11



- How can verse 6 help us when we are too proud?
- How can verse 7 help us when we are anxious?
- Who is like a lion, according to verse 8?
- Are we able to resist him, according to verse 9?
- Read verses 10-11 together in one voice till everyone has memorized them.



*It helps us be humble.
It gives us a strong promise, that
God cares for us!
The devil.
Yes, if we 'stand firm'.*

Question 7: Read the whole question and share what you wrote in the three parts:

- What can make Christ's followers become weak? *E.g. if they stop praying and reading God's Word. Or if they hide it for too long that they are Christ's followers (though hiding it for a period is OK).*
- What things can make Christ's followers not alert? *E.g. When they do not realize the devil is tempting them. Then they can fall into sin, such as pride, anger or sexual sin.*
- What things can separate Christ's followers from the flock? *E.g. if they stop joining other believers for fellowship, for example because they are married to a non-Christian.*

Question 11: Read the first paragraph.

- Sometimes our hardships seem so great that we think we can endure no more! But **read 1 Corinthians 10:13**. What hope does this give us?
- Can you describe an occasion when you thought you could endure no more? How did God give you strength to stand up under it? *Give everyone the opportunity to share without pressure.*

Question 12: Look at the pictures in question 12.

- Which two believers are being attacked through outer difficulties? *Gul (b) and Iftikhar (d).*
- Which two of them are being attacked through inner temptations? *Akhtar (a) and Shireen (c).*
- Describe a time when Satan attacked you through outer difficulties or inner temptations. What happened? What did you learn from it? *This is important, allow time for everyone to share.*

Question 15-16: Look at the picture in question 15. Read the whole of question 16.

- Whenever we come to a fork in the road, what choices do we have?
- The devil tempts us to go his way. Who must make the choice to resist this temptation - us or Christ? *We must make the choice. If we go the devil's way it is our fault, not Christ's.*
- For Akhtar and Shireen in q.12, who must choose to turn away from temptation? *They must choose themselves.* Who will give them the strength to make the right choice? *Christ*
- When the devil tempts us, we can resist him if we make the choice to do so. **Read 1 John 4:4**, Christ is in us and he is stronger than Satan!

Our destination in heaven (Questions 17-22)

Question 19: Read the question.

- How can we be certain that God will accept us into paradise?

Jesus Christ himself will carry us across the bridge to paradise. We have put our trust in him, and he will not let us fall off!

Question 21: Read the true account of Umar *(in the box)*.

- How much do you look forward to being in heaven: a little or a lot?
Discuss together. It is fine to be happy and fulfilled serving God on earth, but we should never take our eyes off our true destination, heaven! May we long for it more and more like Umar!

Question 22: Read the whole question.

- Which words in this passage do you love the most?
- What wonderful promises are in this passage! Let's read it again, replacing 'them' with 'us'.

The extra quotation marks in the NIV text are removed here to make it easier to read through.

Ask each learner to speak, and you should also share.

To help your learners, write or print out the passage in advance with the replacements already made; e.g.
"We will be his people, and God himself will be with us and be our God. He will wipe every tear from our eyes" etc.



Question 22: Look at the picture on the final page and read the words.

- What emotions do you feel?
- Imagine God wiping away all our tears in paradise!

Conclusion

Obeying today's teaching:

- What difference will today's lesson make in your life?
- **Read together the practical task.** Each day this week take one phrase. Think deeply on it. Roll it around your mind as a child rolls a toffee in their mouth, enjoying its sweet taste for a long time.
- **Celebrate:** How will the group celebrate completing the course? E.g. a meal together next week, with testimonies of what you have learned from the course? Discuss and make a plan.
- **Discuss** how ongoing discipleship will continue, either as a group or in personal mentoring relationships.

Pray together:

Everyone should open 1 Peter 5:8-11. In turn, everyone should pray one short prayer based on different parts of this passage.

Pray especially for our 'family of believers around the world undergoing the same kind of sufferings' (v.9)