

Title: Open Heaven

Text: Various

- “And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were **OPENED** to him.” (Matthew 3:16a).
- “Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and (was praying), the heavens were **OPENED**.” (Luke 3:21)
- “And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens **being torn OPEN** and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.” (Mark 1:10)

Target: An open heaven is afforded and available to us only IN JESUS NAME.

I. An Open Heaven is Affirmation:

- The Pre-existence of Jesus:** “In the **beginning** was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)
- The Pleasure of Jesus:** “And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you **before** the world existed” (John 17:5)
- The Purpose of Jesus:** “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, **may be with me where I am**, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:24)

Discussion Question: Read Ephesians 3:1-14. Here Paul reminds the church at Ephesus that as we believe in Jesus we become adopted sons and daughters. Sometimes we forget that we are joint heirs with Jesus and we act like beggars waiting for scraps from the table. What does it mean to be a joint-heir with Jesus? Do you need to be reminded that you have been affirmed as a son or daughter of the Most High King through Christ Jesus from the foundation of the world?

II. An Open Heaven is Validation:

- The Way of Jesus is Specific:** “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is **no other name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)
- The Way of Jesus is Singular:** “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. **No one** comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)
- The Way of Jesus is Sufficient:** “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior **appeared**, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:4-7)

Discussion Question: There are many religions that tout a plethora of paths to a universal god. However, Jesus is very clear when He asserts that there is only one way to the Father and that way is through Him. Now read Ephesians 2:4-10. Can you save yourself? Are your good works enough? Isaiah 64:6 reminds us that all our righteousness or good deeds are like filthy rags before God. That’s why Jesus was and is the only way. He alone is worthy to be our substitute and our saviour. Recount to the group when you became a Christ-follower. Remembering this, when you feel like you should be “doing” more to earn your salvation, remind yourself that Jesus did it all and that is His grace is sufficient.

III. An Open Heaven is an Invitation:

- **Hebrews 10:19-20:** "...we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way **OPENED** for us through the curtain, that is, his body."
- **Mark 15:37-38:** "...breathed his last, and the veil of the temple was **torn** in two, from top to bottom."
 - A. **Jesus is our Mediator:** "For there is one God, and there is one **mediator** between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5)
 - B. **Jesus is our Advocate:** "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an **advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1)
 - C. **Jesus is our Intercessor:** "Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make **intercession** for them." (Hebrews 7:25)

Discussion Question: Did you know that this veil was made of fine cloth and linen and the dimensions were 60' long x 30' high x 4" thick? It was big and heavy, much like our sin. I love the imagery of the veil being torn from top to bottom. God, Himself, doing what only He could do in granting us access to Him through Jesus. Jesus now does what only He can do and mediates, advocates, and intercedes on our behalf. If you are a Christ follower, let's describe and give thanks for all He has done and continues to do. When has He been your mediator? Your advocate? Your intercessor? Maybe you have never trusted Jesus for your salvation. Would you consider doing so today and let today be your adoption day into the family of God?

Take Away: An Open Heaven is before us, so come boldly (Hebrews 10:23) through the door that is IN JESUS NAME! (John 10:9)