

*Simply Good News*

Chapter 5: "Rethinking Heaven"

1. Wright describes some contemporary theology to outline what people expect will happen, "the overarching point is to get to heaven. Whether they get there immediately after they die or whether Jesus comes back to take them to heaven with him, that's what they think it's all about. Elaborate theories about the second coming have been developed in which the whole point is that Jesus will come back, not to stay on this earth to transform and renew it, but to take his people away" (90). Does this theological outline describe what you have believed or currently believe? Why do you think Wright says it misses the whole point?
2. Wright goes on to explain that what Scripture promises is two fold: 1) "the rescue and renewal of the whole creation" and 2) the creation or coming together of the, "new heaven and new earth, which are one and the same place" (91). What are the implications of these two different expectations of the fulfilment of God's plan?
3. From pages 92–93 Wright gives us both Old Testament and New Testament references which help us see the new creation expectation of Scripture. How has your reading of these Scriptures change the picture you have had regarding heaven?
4. Wright meets a common objection and explains that what Jesus said about his kingdom is that it is not from this world, but it is for this world (94). Can you understand and explain the logic that he describes, regarding the need for the kingdom on earth, rather than in heaven?
5. How does having a historical understanding of Roman citizenship and ancient expectations of the emperor's coming help correct the ways twentieth century theology about the second coming of Jesus? (94–95)
6. Wright explains that the renewal of creation comes through the renewal of humanity (97–99). What are the implications of this? How does this impact our understanding of being stewards of the earth?
7. From pages 101–102 Wright describes the way the resurrection of Jesus is the fulfilment of the Scriptural/Israel story. Can you see why it is so vital to know the whole of Scripture rather than 'boiling' Christianity down to a system about how to be saved? What difference does knowing the Old Testament do for understanding the New Testament?