

# The Hope of New Creation

*Understanding God's  
heavenly plan for humanity*

*1. Setting the scene*



# A new heaven and a new earth



*Rev 21:1*

- I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea

*Rev 21:4*

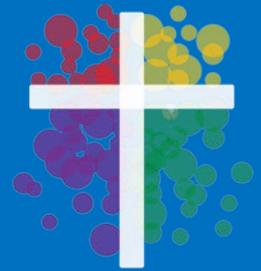
- He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness. The world of the past has gone.

# Image search for 'heaven' ...



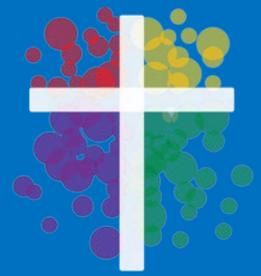
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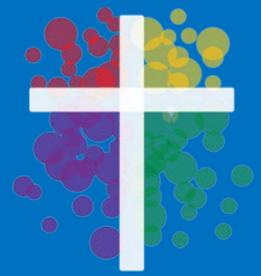
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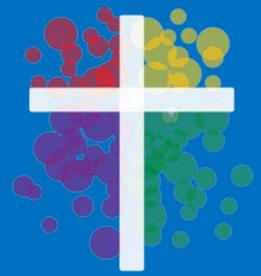
# Questions about death and hope

- What happens when we die?
- What do we hope for after death?
- What is the cause of our hope?
- What, indeed, is the ultimate Christian hope?
- What does it mean to be *saved*?



# The nature of hope

- *Belief about death comes in all shapes and sizes.*
- But there is a world of difference between the various religions and cultures and Christian ideas about death
- Annihilation *vs* absorption *vs* reincarnation



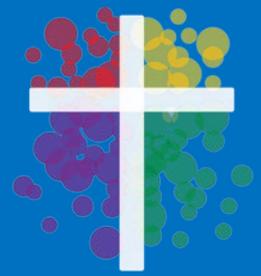
# Funerals

- The way we celebrate funerals in our society speaks volumes about our understanding of death.
- What is the **best** funeral you have ever been to. Why?
- What is the **worst** funeral you have ever been to. Why?
- **What about you?**  
*What do you think the dead are up to right now?*



## In the Creed we profess

- “I believe... in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.”
  - What does that mean for us now, and what did it mean for the first Christians who spoke it?
  - When we talk about Easter, what do we believe?
  - What do we hope for after death?
  - What exactly does the Bible and the Church teach on these questions?



# What happens after death

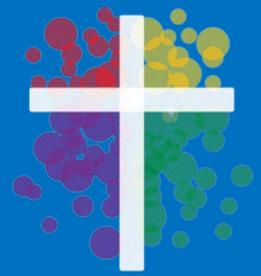
- Many in our society minimise it
- “Death is just a slipping away into another room.”
- But for a Christian, death is important. Death is an enemy – but a defeated enemy.



## Death be not proud

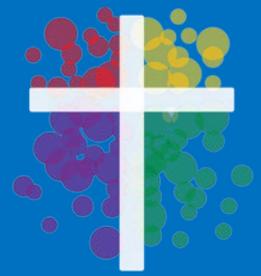
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And death shall be no more, death thou shalt die.

John Donne, *Holy Sonnets 10*



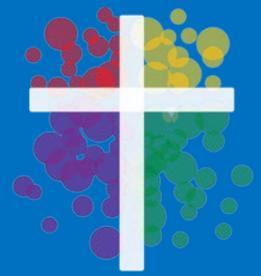
## Death and souls

- In the end death will not simply be redefined, but defeated. God does not intend for death to have its way with us.
- If the promised final future is simply that immortal souls will have left behind mortal bodies – then death still rules.
- That view of heaven is just death redescribed – death seen from another angle.



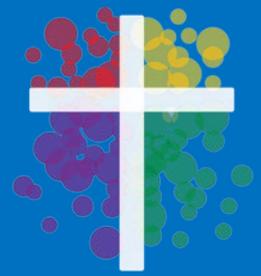
- The early Church / early Christians believed that God was going to do for the *whole cosmos* what God had done for Jesus at Easter.

**Hope – what the whole world's waiting for**



# Fundamental structures of hope

1. The goodness of creation
  2. The nature of evil
  3. The plan of redemption
- Redemption is not simply making creation a bit better; nor is it rescuing spirits and souls from an evil material world. It is the remaking of creation, having dealt with the evil which is defacing and distorting it.



# The Biblical teaching

- In the Bible: very little about 'going to heaven when you die.'
- The 'kingdom of God' is about God's sovereign rule coming 'on earth as it is in heaven.'
- Many Christians are more inclined to believe that there is something deeply suspect about the present world & our current bodies.
- *Hopefully we can begin to change this during this series*

