

*"This book will end your fretting and fearing about life after death.
You'll gain the confidence and peace of mind that come from settling your eternal destiny."*

—RICK WARREN

THE CASE FOR Heaven

*A Journalist Investigates
Evidence for Life After Death*

LEE
STROBEL

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

ZONDERVAN BOOKS

The Case for Heaven

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For Further Evidence

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Scripture Speaks

Some of My Favorite Verses Dealing with Heaven

Psalm 16:9–10

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest secure,
because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

Psalm 23:4, 6

Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me . . .
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

Psalm 84:10

Better is one day in your courts
than a thousand elsewhere;
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

Psalm 116:3–4

The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave came over me;
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.
Then I called on the name of the LORD:
“LORD, save me!”

Isaiah 11:6

The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.

Isaiah 65:17

“See, I will create
new heavens and a new earth.
The former things will not be remembered,
nor will they come to mind.”

Daniel 6:26–27

“For he is the living God
and he endures forever;
his kingdom will not be destroyed,
his dominion will never end.
He rescues and he saves;
he performs signs and wonders
in the heavens and on the earth.”

Matthew 6:19–21

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth,
where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break
in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven,
where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves
do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there
your heart will be also.”

Matthew 25:21

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”

Luke 23:42–43

Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

John 14:2–4

“My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:18

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

1 Corinthians 2:9

However, as it is written:

“What no eye has seen,
what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived” —
the things God has prepared for those who love
him . . .

1 Corinthians 15:42–44

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:54–57

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

“Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:1

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–14

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

2 Timothy 4:7–8

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

1 John 5:11

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Revelation 3:5

“The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels.”

Revelation 7:16–17

“Never again will they hunger;
never again will they thirst.
The sun will not beat down on them,
nor any scorching heat.
For the Lamb at the center of the throne
will be their shepherd;
‘he will lead them to springs of living water.’
‘And God will wipe away every tear from their
eyes.’”

Revelation 21:1–5

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is

now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Revelation 21:23–26

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.

Revelation 22:4–5

They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

Discussion Guide

Questions for Group Interaction or Personal Reflection

Whenever I read about a subject that intrigues, inspires, or challenges me, the first thing I like to do is discuss it with someone. I've found that I'm more likely to apply the lessons of a topic if I'm in a circle of friends who each offer insights. In community, truth often goes deeper.

I've written this guide to stimulate your thoughts on the topic of an afterlife. Yes, the questions can aid you in privately reflecting on what you've read, but my hope is that you'll join with a few friends to grow together in your understanding and application of the insights from the experts I've interviewed for this book.

This is not a Bible study. Instead, it's designed to encourage your thinking about what happens to us after we leave this world. There may be more questions for each chapter than you're inclined to wrestle with. That's all right; sift through them and select the ones that best fit you or your group. Notice that I refer to myself in the third person. That's because it makes the questions more understandable if they are read aloud during a discussion.

Regardless of where you find yourself on your spiritual journey, I hope this guide will lead you into a more robust appreciation of the topic of heaven and how it applies to your own circumstances. In the safety of authentic community, let's engage in honest dialogue so we can emerge ever more invigorated and transformed by God's teachings about life after death.

Introduction

1. As you begin this book, where are you on your spiritual journey? Imagine a scale of one to ten, with one representing staunch atheism, five representing the point of coming to faith in Christ, and ten representing full devotion to him. What number would best reflect your current spiritual status? Why did you choose that number? What would it take for you to move up on the scale?
2. Philip Yancey wrote, “Grace means there is nothing we can do to make God love us more . . . And grace means there is nothing we can do to make God love us less.” If this is true, what does this say about God’s love? Do you *really* believe there is nothing you could do to make God love you less? Please explain.
3. The introduction describes Lee’s brush with death. Have you ever come close to dying? What were the circumstances? What emotions did you experience? In what ways did this incident alter your view of life and death?
4. If you could ask God any one question about the afterlife and you knew he would give you an answer right now, what would you ask him—and why?
5. Do you believe it’s possible to *know* with reasonable certainty what happens to us after we die? What would you need in order to have that kind of confidence?
6. The introduction previews many of the topics this book will cover: our fear of death, the existence of the soul, near-death experiences, evidence for Christianity, heaven, hell, and reincarnation. Which of these issues are the most intriguing to you and why?
7. When you were a child, what was your image of heaven? How has that vision changed as you’ve grown into adulthood?

8. Joni Eareckson Tada has said her first impulse in heaven won't be to jump out of her wheelchair to run and dance, but rather to fall on her knees in worship of her Savior. Can you relate to that? Why or why not?

Chapter 1: The Quest for Immortality

1. Describe what frightens you. Snakes? Confined spaces? Heights? Failure? Finances? Drowning? Public speaking? Are your fears purely irrational, or do they stem from a trauma that you went through, possibly as a child?
2. Specifically, do you fear death? What is it about dying that particularly concerns you? Is it the process of dying? The uncertainty of what comes after this life? Losing all that you have in this world? Can you relate to the physician, Alex Lickerman, who said, "I've tried to resolve my fear of death intellectually and come to the conclusion that it can't be done, at least by me." Elaborate as best you can.
3. Do you think very often about dying, or do you generally avoid contemplating your death? Is it difficult for you to ponder the subject? Do you ever discuss this topic with family members or others? What's at the root of our general reluctance to broach this issue?
4. What do you want written on your tombstone? Can you put it in a sentence or two?
5. Staks Rosch said in a *Huffington Post* article that "depression is a serious problem within the greater atheist community and far too often, that depression has led to suicide." In your view, what are some reasons for this? Does spiritual skepticism always have to lead to hopelessness, or can people find courage and optimism without a belief in God? Try imagining that there is no God. What are some ways you would seek to inject hope into your life?

6. Clay Jones in his book *Immortal* described various approaches that people take to outlive themselves through symbolic immortality and other means. Can you relate to any of those? Do you think some people are motivated to have children in order to leave a legacy?
7. Do you have a desire for your name to be remembered after your death? What was your reaction to the fact that very few people can give the first names of their great-great-grandparents—and they don't really care about their ancestors? How would it feel to you to have your name lost from memory?
8. Science fiction writer Isaac Asimov is quoted as saying, "Whatever the tortures of hell, I think the boredom of heaven would be even worse." What's your reaction to that observation? Because it lasts for eternity, is it inevitable that heaven will be boring? Why or why not?

Chapter 2: Searching for the Soul

1. Psychiatrist Ralph Lewis said, "There is simply no room for belief in a spiritual realm, in a scientific view of reality. Period." After reading this chapter, do you agree or disagree with him? What are some reasons for your conclusion?
2. Some experts believe all our actions and emotions are simply the product of brain activity. In fact, philosopher Patricia Churchland said, "Gosh, the love that I feel for my child is really just neural chemistry? Well, actually it is. But that doesn't bother me." Would that bother you? Do you believe everything we feel and do is just the product of interacting molecules? If so, what are some of the implications this would have?

3. Philosopher J. P. Moreland gives biblical reasons for believing that our soul separates from our body at the point of death as we enter into a temporary intermediate state of disembodiment until the general resurrection of the body. Are the verses he provides sufficient to convince you that this is the biblical teaching? How so?
4. As a bright and curious youngster, Sharon Dirckx suddenly became aware of her own consciousness, asking the questions, *Why can I think? Why do I exist? Why am I a living, breathing, conscious person who experiences life?* Have you personally wrestled with thoughts like this? Describe when your consciousness became apparent to you.
5. Dirckx went away to college thinking it's incompatible for a scientist to believe in God. Have you ever held that opinion—or do you now? Does this make sense to you? Why do you think many people hold this belief?
6. How would you describe the smell of coffee? Do you agree with Dirckx that to understand what coffee smells like, you need to *experience* it? How would you describe the difference between a first-person and third-person point of view? Why do you think this is relevant to the question of whether we have a soul?
7. Dirckx uses a framework of three questions to investigate whether we are just our brains and nothing more: (1) Is this idea internally consistent? (2) Does it make sense of the world? and (3) Can it truly be lived? What's your opinion of her analysis? Do you agree with her that the brain-only hypothesis fails these tests? How so?
8. Some philosophers say that because God is conscious, this explains why we are conscious. Is that persuasive to you? Why or why not?

Chapter 3: Near-Death Experiences

1. According to one survey, as many as one out of ten people over thirty-five countries have had a near-death experience (NDE). Have you or anyone you know undergone one? If so, what was it like? Has it altered your thinking about the afterlife?
2. Before you read this chapter, what was your reaction when someone described an NDE? Were you receptive? Were you intrigued? Were you mostly agnostic on the validity of the experience, or were you skeptical? Describe any way in which your attitude about NDEs has shifted after reading Lee's interview with researcher John Burke.
3. A few people have been caught making up stories about a near-death experience for publicity purposes or to make a profit. How much does that fact influence your skepticism as you evaluate the legitimacy of NDEs? Do you believe other people can have a sincere motive in describing their NDE? How would you evaluate whether someone is sincere or lying?
4. Some Christians won't even consider the possibility that NDEs are legitimate, because they consider them to be the product of the occult or New Age thinking. Yet, other Christians, notably theologian R. C. Sproul, urge people to keep an open mind and conduct more research. Based on the expert testimony of John Burke, what do you think is the wisest approach toward NDEs?
5. Which story of an NDE in the chapter intrigued you the most? What was it about that case that sparked your interest?
6. How did you react to the story of Howard Storm's violent and frightening near-death experience? What emotions did it evoke? Do you believe it has the ring of truth? Explain.

7. Echoing the sentiments of neuroscientist Sharon Dirckx, Lee said that just one well-documented case of an NDE would be sufficient to constitute strong evidence that our consciousness continues after clinical death. Do you believe this threshold has been met? What kind of research should be pursued in the future as NDEs are further investigated?
8. Lee took a rather conservative approach to NDEs by zeroing in on instances in which there is some sort of external corroboration—for example, the story about the woman who saw a tennis shoe on the upper ledge of the hospital while she was out of her body, as well as other such cases. Lee concluded that, at a minimum, NDEs show that our consciousness can survive our clinical death, at least for a while. Do you believe that’s a reasonable way to look at the evidence? Why or why not?

Chapter 4: The Pyramid to Heaven

1. As you began reading this chapter, how would you have classified yourself—as a hardcore skeptic, a moderate skeptic, spiritually neutral, a spiritual seeker, a believer in Christ, or a strong and confident Christian? Did this chapter change where you fit along that continuum? In what way?
2. Chad Meister went through a period of doubting Christianity after he encountered credible people with conflicting beliefs. Have you ever doubted your faith? What happened? How did you process that experience? Did you come to any resolution?
3. Does the “heaven pyramid” make sense to you? Do you believe it covers the essential issues that need to be investigated? Which level of the pyramid was the most important for you and why?

4. In John 18:38, Pontius Pilate famously asked, “What is truth?” How would you answer him?
5. Meister gave three reasons for believing in God: the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of the universe, and the existence of objective morality. In what ways do you find these arguments persuasive?
6. The Qur’an and the Bible make conflicting claims. How important is the eyewitness nature of the Christian claims? Is corroboration of Christianity from outside sources important to you? On a scale of one to ten, with one being absolute skepticism and ten being a belief that the Bible is trustworthy, where would you place yourself and why?
7. Why do you think the resurrection of Jesus is the key to Christianity? If he did, indeed, return from the dead, what are some of the implications for the world? For your life and future?
8. If Jesus was resurrected, it would be a miracle—but miracles are possible if God exists. Philosopher Richard Purtill described a miracle as an event brought about by the power of God that is a temporary exception to the ordinary course of nature for the purpose of showing that God has acted in history. Have you ever had an experience in your life that you can only describe as a miracle? If so, describe what happened and how it affected you.
9. The top level of the heaven pyramid is the gospel. If someone asked you why Jesus died “for our sins,” what would you say to him? Does God’s kingdom, as Meister described it, sound attractive to you? Are you confident at this point that you will spend eternity with God? Please explain.

Chapter 5: Heaven: A Guide

1. In a sense, astrophysicist Sarah Salviander describes climbing the heaven pyramid in her spiritual journey, coming to the conclusion that Christianity is true. But it was the death of her stillborn baby that ended up cementing her faith. What did you think of her story? Can you relate to any of it? In what ways?
2. What do you think of John Eldredge’s observation that “nearly every Christian I have spoken with has some idea that eternity is an unending church service. We have settled on an image of the never-ending sing-along in the sky, one great hymn after another, forever and ever, amen. And our heart sinks. *Forever and ever? That’s it? That’s the good news?* And then we sigh and feel guilty that we are not more ‘spiritual.’ We lose heart, and we turn once more to the present to find what life we can.” Have you ever wrestled with feelings like that? How has this chapter helped change that?
3. Theologian Scot McKnight gave nine reasons he believes in heaven. Which of those resonated with you the most? Did you find some of the reasons more persuasive than others? If so, which ones?
4. McKnight said the Bible teaches that heaven isn’t some ethereal place populated by disembodied souls, but it’s the “new heaven and new earth”—the renewal and renovation of creation, where we will have resurrected bodies like Jesus did. Was that a new concept for you? What is your reaction to it?
5. McKnight said some people see heaven purely as “theo-centric,” or exclusively focused on individuals worshipping God, while others see it as more “kingdom-centric,”

- stressing the community aspect of the afterlife. Which camp do you most naturally fall into and why? Do you think it's possible to have a balanced view between these two perspectives?
6. McKnight describes the first hour in heaven being filled with people reconciling with those they have been in conflict with. He said this could be instantaneous or take place over a period of time. How do you feel about that? Is there someone you would wince at seeing in heaven because you are currently estranged from them? What would it feel like to live in harmony even with those you disagree with? Would you look forward to this period of reconciliation or would it concern you?
 7. McKnight uses the veranda as a way of describing the social aspects of heaven. Which would you tend to use most: the veranda or a garden in the backyard? Why?
 8. How do you feel emotionally about the prospect of seeing God face-to-face? What do you think that will be like? Does McKnight's illustration of the "magic eye" help you at all? The famous preacher Charles Spurgeon said, "The very glory of heaven is that we shall see him, that same Christ who once died upon Calvary's cross, that we shall fall down, and worship at his feet—nay, more, that he shall kiss us with the kisses of his mouth, and welcome us to dwell with him forever." How do you feel about that quote?
 9. As you finished reading McKnight's chapter, what aspect of heaven are you the most curious about?

Chapter 6: Seven on Heaven

1. Do you believe that God welcomes our questions or do you think he is offended by them? Have you had an experience in which a question about God has hindered your

- faith but you eventually received a satisfactory explanation that removed this obstacle? If so, describe what happened.
2. The question of whether pets will be in heaven sounds trivial, but actually it's a significant concern for a lot of people. What was your favorite pet as a child or adult? What did you appreciate the most about your pet? Do you expect to see this pet in heaven? If you did, what would that say about God?
 3. Scholars are split on whether there will be marriage in heaven. As for McKnight, he believes there won't be any *new* marriages there. Everything seems to hinge on the one verse that McKnight discusses. Whose position do you favor and why?
 4. New Testament scholar Craig Blomberg says the motivation of Christians ought to be to please God, not to strive for rewards in heaven. He believes the gospel should "liberate believers from all such performance-centered conceptions of the Christian life." On the other hand, McKnight said he does find some motivation in verses that speak in terms of heavenly rewards. Where do you come down on this issue? Will everyone be treated the same in heaven, or do you believe some Christians will be rewarded more than others?
 5. Heaven will be a perfect place populated by holy people, yet most, if not all, Christians haven't achieved that status prior to death. Does the idea of purgatory make sense to you? Or do you believe that God will instantly perfect believers at death by an act of glorification? Which position makes the most biblical sense to you and why?
 6. Casket or urn? Do you want to be buried or cremated when you die? After reading the section on this issue, has your attitude changed? If you want to be cremated, how would you describe your motivation?

7. Have you or someone you know gone through a miscarriage or the death of a young child? It's a heartrending experience. Are you encouraged by McKnight's comments about whether children will be in heaven? If God is loving, good, and just, how do you think he may deal with them?
8. Jesus said in John 14:6 that he is the only route to heaven. Does this claim rankle you? Or does it make sense? How would you recount the story of Jesus that McKnight tells? Why is it "good news"?

Chapter 7: The Logic of Hell

1. Jesus warned in Matthew 7:13 that "broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it," and yet only 2 percent of Americans believe they'll end up in hell. How would you reconcile these two statements?
2. Many people react vehemently against the teaching that hell involves eternal conscious suffering. One Bible teacher called it the "crazy uncle" that the church has kept locked in the back bedroom for centuries because of "justifiable embarrassment." What's your visceral reaction to the idea that the unrepentant will undergo torment forever? Do you believe Christians should nevertheless continue to teach that doctrine if the Bible supports it?
3. Have you ever heard a sermon on hell? If so, did it make sense to you? What emotions did it evoke? If not, do you believe churches are negligent in failing to proclaim the whole counsel of God? Are congregations well served if pastors ignore this topic? If you were to write a sermon on hell, what are some of the points you would want to emphasize?
4. How would you describe the difference between *torture* and *torment*?

5. Philosopher Paul Copan said that God doesn't *send* people to hell, but that people "who reject the rule of God *send themselves* to hell." As musician Michael Card says, God "simply speaks the sentence that they have passed upon themselves." Does this distinction make sense to you? Why or why not?
6. Lee admitted he once struggled with reconciling the doctrine of hell with the justice of God, but he was helped when he realized there are different degrees of punishment in hell. How does it affect your attitude toward this topic to know that in hell, one size doesn't fit all?
7. What's your reaction to *The Twilight Zone* episode that Copan described? Alternatively, how do you feel about the afterlife as it's depicted in the popular Netflix show *The Good Place*?
8. Read the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19–31. Granted, this is a parable and it's about the inter-mediate state. But are there some lessons you can take away from this story? If so, what are some of them?
9. Pastor Richard Wurmbrand was tortured for his faith under Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu. Wurmbrand later wrote, "The cruelty of atheism is hard to believe. When a man has no faith in the reward of good or the punishment of evil, there is no reason to be human. There is no restraint from the depths of evil that is in man. The Communist torturers often said, "There is no God, no hereafter, no punishment for evil. We can do what we wish.'" Do you believe teachings about hell provide a deterrent to evil behavior in our world? How much of the world's current cruelty can be attributed to people losing their belief in any kind of an afterlife?

Chapter 8: Escape from Hell

1. What's your reaction to evangelical icon John Stott "tentatively" embracing annihilationism? He denied he was motivated by emotion, but is it really possible to divorce our feelings from this issue? In your opinion, how much does his stature as a Christian leader give credibility to the idea of annihilationism?
2. Stott offered several reasons for why God might snuff the unrepentant out of existence rather than subject them to an eternity of torment. Which of his reasons, if any, did you find the most persuasive and why?
3. Paul Copan defended the traditional teachings on hell by using a variety of Bible references, philosophy, and logic. Did he succeed, in your view? Which, if any, of his counterarguments against annihilationism carried the most weight with you?
4. Agnostic New Testament scholar Bart Ehrman claims that Jesus was an annihilationist. If he made that statement to you, how would you respond? What evidence would you use to defend your position?
5. Christian universalism says that in the end God will forgive and adopt all people through Christ, perhaps after a limited period of restorative punishment in hell for some. Copan called this "an aberrant and dangerous doctrine." In your view, what's the strongest argument in favor of universalism and the most persuasive case against it?
6. How does Copan respond to the assertion that even God wants everyone to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9)? How would you describe the difference between Christ being the *potential* Savior of all but not the *actual* Savior of all? If everyone doesn't end up in heaven, do you

believe Jesus failed in his mission “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10)? Why or why not?

7. Martin Luther, though not a universalist, nevertheless speculated that some people might have an opportunity after their death to come to faith in Christ. What’s your reaction to this “Luther option”? Are there good biblical reasons for endorsing it? What would its implications be?
8. If someone who was not a Christian asked you directly, “Am I going to hell?” how would you respond to them?

Chapter 9: The Reincarnation Sensation

1. Why do you think that the ancient idea of reincarnation has become such a popular belief in modern Western societies?
2. What’s your reaction when celebrities like Shirley MacLaine, Loretta Lynn, and Sylvester Stallone say they had previous lives? Are you intrigued? Skeptical? Amused?
3. What did you think of the Bridey Murphy phenomenon when you read about it at the beginning of the chapter? What captured your imagination? Can you see why it became a national phenomenon? What was your reaction when you read the rest of the story later in the chapter? What evidence against her do you think was the most damaging?
4. Douglas Groothuis offered several reasons why reincarnation doesn’t make logical sense. Which of those explanations resonated most with you? What are some of the shortcomings of the law of karma?
5. How would you describe the difference between heaven and nirvana?
6. If someone made the claim to you that Jesus taught reincarnation, how would you answer?

7. Have you ever experienced déjà vu? Can you give an example? What natural explanations do you have for it?
8. Douglas Groothuis said if he had a choice, he would rather that his deceased wife, Becky, face resurrection than reincarnation. What would you prefer for yourself? What are your reasons?

Chapter 10: On the Edge of Eternity

1. Before reading this chapter, were you familiar with evangelist Luis Palau's ministry? How so?
2. Palau described how his oncologist was blunt in telling him he only had a short time to live. Can you imagine getting that kind of news for yourself? What would be your first thought? What emotions would you feel? What are the first three things you would want to do?
3. Palau described the last words of his father before he died. Palau said, "He taught me how to die—with a hymn in my heart and Scripture on my lips." If you could orchestrate your final moments in this world, what would they be?
4. During Lee's interview with Palau, he described some questions he would like to ask God. If you could ask God any question in heaven, what would it be and why?
5. Besides God, who are the top three people you'd like to meet in heaven? Why did you choose these individuals? What's the first question you'd like to ask them?
6. Over the years, Palau said his approach to preaching has changed, so that today he tries to focus on the love and grace of God. Do you feel you spend enough time meditating on those attributes of the Father? Or do you tend to linger on your own unworthiness of his affection? Which do you feel more—the smile of God or his critical judgment? Why is this so? What would it take for you to bask in God's love?

7. Palau said he would tell believers “to go for it” by taking risks to tell others the good news of the salvation available through Jesus. Can you recall a time when you got into a spiritual conversation with someone who was far from God? What were the circumstances? What did you feel before and after the encounter? What keeps you from taking more risks to share Christ with others?
8. Palau said he would tell non-Christians, “Don’t be stupid!” What do you think he meant by that? Do you feel he was speaking out of harshness or genuine love? If you’re a Christian, how did you react to his advice? If you’re not a Christian, were you offended? Challenged? Encouraged? What were your emotions?

Conclusion

1. Have you ever visited someone shortly before they died? What do you remember most about the encounter? Did they say or do something that you remember to this day?
2. Author Max Lucado said we cannot fathom eternity, and that’s true. Did Chad Meister’s illustration of sand on a beach give you a peek into what “forever” is like? How would you try to help someone “feel” the extent of eternity? In light of heaven’s infinite nature, the suffering from this lifetime will fade into distant memories. Are there particular aspects of your life that you’d like to see swallowed up by eternity?
3. Jesus’ resurrection and the promise of heaven revolutionized his disciples in *this* world, changing their values, mission, and priorities. In what ways might living in the light of heaven change your attitudes today?
4. Why wait until heaven to reconcile with someone you’re at odds with? Are you in conflict with another person? Bring

- their face to your mind. What are three steps you can take to become reconciled with them? What are the depths you would go to forgive? Or is there a line that could be crossed that would be “too far” for you to forgive someone? Explain.
5. If someone asked you about the fate of people who have never heard the Jesus story, what would you tell them?
 6. The first verse Lee memorized as a new Christian was 1 John 5:13: “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” How confident do you feel that you have been safely adopted into God’s family forever? Do you know in your heart and mind that you will spend eternity with God in heaven? On a scale of one to ten, with one being totally doubtful and ten being totally confident, what number would best represent you? Why did you choose that number?
 7. Lee became a Christian when he applied the “formula of faith” to his life: *Believe + Receive = Become*. Maybe you’ve believed the Jesus story for a long time, but your life and values have never really changed. Could it be because you have never received Jesus’ freely offered gift of forgiveness and eternal life? If you lack confidence that you’re safely adopted as a child of God, is there anything keeping you from praying the kind of prayer that changed Lee’s life and eternity?
 8. If you’re not a follower of Christ, what additional evidence would you need to believe the Jesus story? What are some concrete steps you can take to investigate Christianity further? Are you willing to commit to taking those steps with urgency? Remember, you don’t have to know *everything* to know *something*. If the evidence discussed in this book is sufficient, is there any reason why you wouldn’t receive Jesus right now as your forgiver and leader through a prayer of repentance and faith?