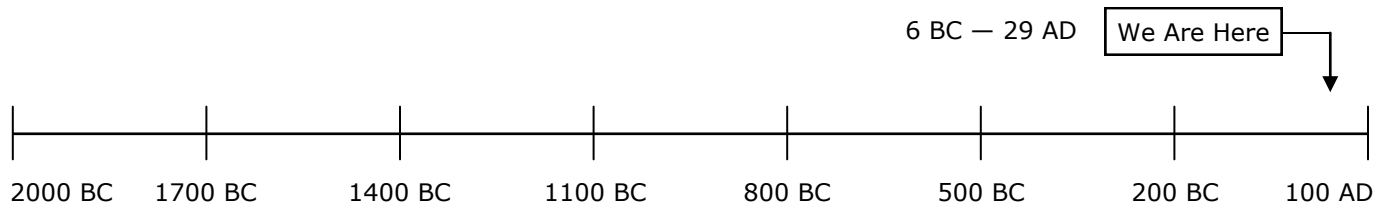


Citizens of Heaven

BiAY.org | Reviews

Week 42: October 15-21 — *The Gospels*

80% Complete — 71 Days to Go



Helpful Resources

Map of Palestine in the Time of Christ (p.119)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

We have spent nearly a month in the New Testament, and here at the beginning, of course, we are focusing on the life and ministry of Christ, His miracles, His teaching, His prophecies, and certainly His purpose for being here — *to provide salvation for mankind*. In light of His earthly purpose, we can see clear pictures of Jesus' Gospel focus; here are a few examples:

1. **Parable of the Wedding Feast** (*Luke 14:15-24*): Although His aim was His own people, the Jews, His audience soon included all Gentiles as well.
2. **Story of the Lost Sheep** (*Luke 15:1-7*): This illustration expressed His primary mission — to seek and save the lost.
3. **Story of the Lost Coin** (*Luke 15:8-10*): Jesus made it clear that His plan was to do whatever it took to redeem the valuable souls of men, to search until they were found.
4. **Story of the Lost Son** (*Luke 15:11-32*): God's love through Christ became evident as He is pictured as a Father who forgives a son, no matter what sins he has committed.
5. **Resurrection of Lazarus** (*John 11:38-44*): Lazarus' death and burial are symbols of our status in sin. Thus, his resurrection is a picture of Jesus' salvation mission. Note His words when He raised His friend from the grave — "unbind him and let him go."
6. **Can't Be Snatched Away** (*John 10:28-30*): Not only was the salvation of men won at Christ's coming, but its security was won as well. Believers will be preserved for eternity.

- Personal Application

To God, there is a clear difference between a citizen of heaven and a citizen of this world:

A **Citizen of Heaven** understands the big picture of life on earth, that the time, talents, and treasures of his life are meant to be used for the purposes of God's Kingdom (*Mark 10:17-31*).

A **Citizen of Heaven** understands that all things are for God's glory, not his own, and that His focus is to be on God's will and way and not on the distractions of this world (*Luke 10:38-42*).

A **Citizen of Heaven** understands the cost of discipleship, that following Christ requires sacrifice, but he is willing to do what it takes to influence others for Him (*Luke 14:25-35*).

A **Citizen of Heaven** understands that he is the chief of sinners, that he is better than no one else, that others are his equal in Christ, and that whenever he reaches out to the person in need, he ministers to the Lord Himself (*Luke 10:30-37; 16:19-31; 18:9-14*).

A **Citizen of Heaven** is constantly bearing good fruit for others to see, not out of pride, but with humility, so that people may see the goodness of God (*Luke 13:6-9; 18:8*).

A **Citizen of Heaven** understands that hypocritical living hurts the name of Christ, and that his life's choices will be reviewed at the judgment (*Luke 11:37-54; 12:1-21; John 9:1-41*).

A **Citizen of Heaven** is aware that earth is a temporary home, that his time is short and is not to be wasted but invested in the work of God in his sphere of influence (*Luke 12:35-48*).

Here are some characteristics of a **Citizen of the World**:

He foolishly wastes his time, talents, and treasures on selfish pleasures.

He is distracted by the temporal temptations offered here.

He has better things to do than follow God's will for his life; he's got his own way.

He sees no one as equal to himself and will not stop or stoop to help others.

He may talk like a Christian but there is no evidence of godly fruit in his life.

He lives as if life is his own, as if there won't be consequences.

He believes that he should get it all while he can, fulfilling only his goals.

You are a citizen of one of these worlds, whether you like it or not. The problem is you may be a citizen of one but you are living like a citizen of another. That's called being a hypocrite. The word "hypocrite" comes from the words "stage actor." To you and I, it is a pretender. Are you a true citizen of heaven, or are you pretending to be one? Do you have everyone fooled by your masks and charades, or do people know the real you? Citizens of heaven are not hypocrites. They wear no masks; they play no role. They are genuine and real.

- Prophetic Passages
 1. **Did Caiaphas Prophecy?** (*John 11:45-52*): When the High Priest, Caiaphas, proclaimed that Jesus must die, rather than the nation be destroyed, he pronounced Jesus' purpose.
 2. **Good Shepherd** (*John 10:1-21*): Jesus foreshadowed His death for sin in a simple parable about the heavenly fold. He mentioned that the Good Shepherd is not afraid to lay down His life for the sheep.
 3. **Sign of Jonah** (*Luke 11:29-32*): Jesus foreshadowed His death and resurrection as He likened it to the story of Jonah, who was practically dead in the big fish.
 4. **I'll Be Back!** (*Luke 12:35-48*): Jesus prophesied His return to earth and challenged His followers to be ready for that day.

The Bottom Line

We are *citizens of heaven* but too often we live like *citizens of earth*.

Questions to Consider

1. Why is it so difficult to live like a citizen of heaven while here on earth?
2. You only live once, so make your life count. How do you do that?