

Surprised by Hope

Prepared by Pastor Andy Smothers

Please read chapter 5, and answer these questions as you read.

Chapter 5

- I. When you look at our world today, do you see a general progression toward a utopian/perfect world? What signs suggest this to you?

- II. Wright indicates that many leaders in our world offer a hope in steady progress toward utopia. What are the claims you hear from such leaders (politicians in particular)? Do you believe them? Will their plans save us? Why or why not?

- III. Do you believe there is hope for a perfect future? Why or why not? If so, what does it look like, and how does it come into being?

- IV. Wright notes that many who trust in the 'myth of progress' see or at one time saw that the world was ours to discover, exploit, and enjoy. How does this fit with your understanding of Christianity and our place in relationship to God?
- V. Do you believe the world will be made into a utopia if we only educate ourselves well enough, work hard enough, and utilize science and technology extensively enough? Why or why not?
- VI. Do you believe there is radical evil in the world? If so, from where does it come? How do you generally explain the source of world wars, multiple genocides, enslavement of other people, drug crime, apartheid, human trafficking, child pornography, climate change, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and other similar things?

VII. Do you agree with Wright that the world remains a sad and wicked place, not a happy upward progress toward the light or toward perfection/utopia? Why or why not?

VIII. Do you believe that matter, such as our bodies, are inherently evil because they degrade and change or for other reasons? Would it have been better had we never had bodies?

This study guide is written to guide study and discussions of *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* by N. T. Wright. The full set of study guides is available at <https://livingintograce.com/2022/02/21/study-guide-questions-for-surprised-by-hope-rethinking-heaven-the-resurrection-and-the-mission-of-the-church-by-n-t-wright/>. While based on the book, this guide was not prepared in cooperation with the author, N. T. Wright, nor the publishers (SPCK and HarperOne).



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