

Surprised by Hope
Chapter 6 Study Questions
Prepared by Pastor Andy Smothers

Please read chapter 6, and answer these questions as you read.

Chapter 6

I. Do you believe God's original creation was good? What does Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31 indicate God thought of the creation? What does this mean of God's creation today?

II. Do you think evil exists? If so, is it powerful? And if so, where do you see or have you seen evil present in the world?

III. Wright claims that evil is not defined as everything created, nor everything that is not God, nor everything made of matter and everything belonging to space and time, nor everything that is transient, changeable, or subject to decay. What do you think? Can things in these categories be good or even neutral (if neutral is possible)?

- IV. Wright claims that evil is defined by rebellious idolatry — where humans honor elements of the natural world rather than the God who made them. What are the idols in our culture? What are the consequences of this misguided worship?
- V. If the world was created “good” and “very good” (Genesis 1), when did evil come into the world, and how? Was it through something physical (from matter)? What does Genesis 2:16 suggest?
- VI. Wright indicates humans were created to be God’s stewards of his creation, and this is well-supported by scripture (if interested, see Genesis 1:28 and elsewhere). How have humans done as God’s stewards of his creation? Do we need Jesus to show us how — even to transform what we have messed-up, or can we entirely fix things on our own?

VII. Wright continues the chapter with six New Testament texts that speak of the cosmic dimension of Christian hope. The first of these is seedtime and harvest. Which do you find compelling and why? Would you challenge any?

VIII. What is the last aspect of the unredeemed creation that is defeated? Can it be defeated if we don't take on new physical bodies sometime after death? Why or why not?

IX. In the redeemed creation, where is God's presence, his love, and knowledge of him? If the world is filled with knowledge of God "as the waters cover the sea", can there be evil in the world?



X. What do you think of Wright's (and the Apostle Paul's) claim that the creation is in slavery today but that Jesus will lead humanity into their true identity — even that following Jesus leads us to be more ourselves?

XI. We pray every week, “thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” When this prayer is answered, what will the world look like?



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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