

LIFE IN HEAVEN:

Is Heaven a real place?

Why doesn't God write more about Heaven?

When God writes about Heaven what is the point?

What are you most looking forward to about Heaven?

Do you understand the intermediate Heaven called Paradise versus New Heaven?

Did you know that God cannot allow sin into Heaven?

What will our relationship with God be like in Heaven?

What will our relationship with one another be like?

What will we do in Heaven?

RESOURCE: "HEAVEN" by Randy Alcorn

Heaven on Earth?

Matthew 6:10 "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in **heaven**."

Why Study Heaven? Can we really figure it out?

John 3:12 "If I have told you about things that happen on earth and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you about things of **heaven**?"

Matthew 13:11 He answered them, "Because the secrets of the kingdom of **heaven** have been given for you to know, but it has not been given to them.

MATTHEW 13 – "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE..."

PRESENT HEAVEN & FUTURE HEAVEN:

Present Heaven - intermediate Heaven or Paradise: This is the place we go when we die. Our soul is in the presence of the Lord in Heaven.

New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem - the place that will be our eternal home.

Rev. 21:1-3

God's plan was always for us to live on His created Earth. The Fall caused a Curse to be upon all of creation and Humanity. God's plan was redemption of humanity and creation. In Revelation we see the effects of a bodily resurrection and an earthly resurrection. There will be a new universe, new earth, New Jerusalem and New Heaven.

Romans 8:19-23 - a world delivered from the curse will take place someday.

19 For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility —not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it—in the hope 21 that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of God's children. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. 23 And not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the first fruits —we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Genesis 1 - God's original creation was good. He created the Heavens and the Earth...so He will redo His creation redeemed and resurrected as the New Heaven and New Earth.

New Heaven is an Actual place - John 14:3 - Jesus refers to a place and that He will come back. So is the intermediate Heaven – on the Cross Jesus told the thief who accepted Him "Today you will be with me in Paradise (Heaven)."

John 14:3 – “If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back¹ and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also.

Heaven is described in imagery terms. We have no reason not to believe that they are true. Unfortunately many times Heaven is viewed as some high in the pie place. Heaven's description is sometimes thought of as metaphoric or allegoric. But instead the description is spoken of in more literal terms and we should like in this way as well.

If we had cities, houses, buildings and streets on earth now...why not in the New Creation described in Revelation 21-22.?

Jesus clearly leads us to believe that Heaven is being prepared. Things are being built. We will have dwellings. This is most likely referring to the New Creation, not the present Heaven.

Animal lovers. There is no reason not to believe that God will have animals in their pre-fall new created existence. If God created everything for us to enjoy and He gave us dominion why would the New Creation be any different?

HEAVEN WILL NOT BE LIKE THIS PHYSICAL EXISTENCE:

Revelation 21: 3-4 - Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look! God's dwelling is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will exist no longer; grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer, because the previous things have passed away.

Physical Humanity will no longer exist as it does now. Jesus' body in the example of our resurrected bodies. He is the prototype if you will of what we will be like. There will be no death, pain, suffering, tears and so forth. The penalty of sin removed, the curse gone!

WHAT WILL WE DO IN HEAVEN?

Heaven will not be boring. Many times we picture Heaven as something boring. We see angels laying around on clouds, singing in Heavenly choirs for all eternity. But Heaven instead will be our greatest experience and a life filled with fun, joy, and pleasure. Our greatest pleasure will be God Himself. We will be in the fullness of God's presence and we will reign over His new creation with Him for eternity. God will restore our dominion over His creation as it was always intended.

In Heaven we will reach our full potential. We will be as we should have always been without sin. We will work and serve the Lord in Heaven. We will also experience rest. Our work will be pleasurable and our rest peaceful.

We will see God face to face in Heaven. We will see things clearly. We will be fully aware of the reality of all things. Although we are not God and even though our awareness will be complete, we are not all-knowing as God is.

Heaven will be filled with great beauty, endless bounty and abundance, and complete joy – all in the presence of the Lord forever. We will have the glory of God as our light. We will be sharing in God's glory and rejoicing in His glory continuously. We will worship the Lord completely and fully in who we are in relation to Him. We will see the complete beauty of the Lord. And much more.

REUNION WITH CHRIST AND OTHERS – SIMPLISTICALLY

Not only will we be united with Christ we will also have a reunion with those we loved on earth. Although it is not clear exactly what we will recall there is scriptural evidence that leads us to believe that we will remember. Our memory will be complete we will see things for how they really were. What took place in every experience of life will be fully revealed. WE will see the hand of God's providence, protection, love, mercy and grace that surrounded us at every moment of life. We will see life as God see life.

The reunion in Heaven is a good thing. It makes Heaven an awesome place. A place where we will live forever with those who meant so much to us here on this earth. It will be an opportunity to experience the New Creation of God as God intended life always to be.

The good news about Heaven goes beyond the New Creation and all the fun, excitement, enjoyment and adventure that awaits us. It is what the New Creation does not have that is so blessed. See Revelation 21 (No curse, no death, no sin, no suffering, no pain etc.)

- *Name some things you will be grateful will not exist in the NEW CREATION?*

In the New Creation (Heaven, Earth, Jerusalem) there will be no decay, no death, no pain, no suffering, no bills to pay, no medical bills, no aging, no brokenness, no evil, no war, no terror, no fear, no worries, no burdens, no rape, no abortion, no cancer, no tragedies, no hurricanes, no tornadoes, no abuse, no loss, no selfishness, no famine, no hunger, no false religions, no deception, and you fill in the blank. Heaven is really about what we don't face for we will face the fullness of God's goodness as a total reality.

HEAVEN AS ETERNITY:

We are not eternal like God. We were originally created to live forever, but are created. Only God is the self-existent, eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient One. So what will eternity be like for us?

It appears that eternity will exist by ongoing moments that will never end. We will have an awareness of experiences and will live by a succession of moments. Only God can experience eternity all at one time with total awareness and clarity. We will live and share in moments of Heaven forever in the fullness of His presence. For example, Heaven will have singing...this requires tempo or order....one thing comes before the other. Heaven has events such as things occur moment by moment, one after the other. It will be a sequence of events without end - literally an adventure that never ends.

- Have you ever experienced something in this life and you thought – “I wish this moment would never end.” That is in part what heaven will be like!

HEAVENLY PERSPECTIVE ON EARTH:

How should Heaven impact us on Earth?

Ps 73:25-28;

25 Whom do I have in heaven but You?

And I desire nothing on earth but You.

26 My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart,
my portion forever.

27 Those far from You will certainly perish;
You destroy all who are unfaithful to You.

28 But as for me, God's presence is my good.
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,
so I can tell about all You do.

- Do you desire eternal things more than earthly things?
- What are the eternal truths of this passage?
- How does this Psalm relate to us here and now?

Matt 6:19-21;

19 "Don't collect for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But collect for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Where is your heart?
- Where is your treasure?
- How do we lay up treasure in Heaven?
- Is there a connection between Heaven and Earth?
- Can we experience Heaven on Earth?

Phil 3:20-21;

But our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subject everything to Himself.

- Where is our first citizenship and allegiance?
- Do you see the connection in this passage to our resurrection?

THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH:

Did you know there will be a New Heaven and a New Earth?

Did you know the Old Heaven and Old Earth would be destroyed?

Where is the Scriptural evidence of this? (Revelation 21:1-2; 2 Peter 3:7; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Luke 21:33; Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66:22)

Revelation 21:1 -2;

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea existed no longer. 2 I also saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

2 Peter 3:7;

7 But by the same word the present heavens and earth are held in store for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2 Peter 3:10-13

10 But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that [day] the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, [it is clear] what sort of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness 12 as you wait for and earnestly desire the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be on fire and be dissolved, and the elements will melt with the heat. 13 But based on His promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will dwell.

Luke 21:33;

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.

HEAVENLY BODIES: 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

1. What do you know @ our resurrected bodies?
2. What do you know @ the resurrected body of Christ?
3. What are some differences between our physical and spiritual bodies?
4. Scale of 1-10 how terrified or excited are you @ your heavenly bodies – explain?
5. Did you know you would have a body in Heaven? What have you been taught about or have you thought about what you will be like in Heaven?
6. What do you think it will be like to be immortal? 2 Cor. 5:1-5; 1 Cor. 15:50-54
7. What are our physical bodies like to our soul?

HEAVENLY REWARDS:

Resource: "A life God Rewards" Bruce Wilkinson

Will there be rewards in Heaven?

How important is it to realize our destination and the reward of that destination?

- **Luke 14:14 – God will repay**

And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

- **Matt 16:27 & Luke 6:23– Great is your reward**

Matthew 16:27 "For the Son of Man is going to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will reward each according to what he has done."

Luke 6:23 "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! Take note—your reward is great in heaven, because this is the way their ancestors used to treat the prophets.

- **Hebrews 11:6 – God is a rewarder**

"Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him."

REWARDS: Life, Righteousness, Glory, and the Great Reward of pleasing God.

- Reward of LIFE – life itself and eternal life with God. (John 10:10; John 14:6; John 3:16)
- Reward of RIGHTEOUSNESS – to be made right with God.
- Reward of GLORY – to share in God's glory.
- And the GREAT reward –pleasing God. – "WELL DONE MY GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT."

- *What kind of life must we live to earn Heaven? (Consider your answer carefully)*
- Can we lose Heaven?
- Can we lose Rewards?
- What will it be like to be rewarded by God in eternity?

Corinthians 3:12-15 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

12 If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, 13 each one's work will become obvious, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one's work. 14 If anyone's work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved; yet it will be like an escape through fire.

- The joy we will have knowing that our works were of quality to the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

9 Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or bad.

Understanding that there are differing degrees of rewards for the redeemed/saved of God:

- (GRUDEM) "Even though there will be degrees of reward in Heaven, the joy of each person will be full and complete for eternity....our perception of happiness is based on the assumption that happiness depends on what we possess or the status of power that we have. In actuality...our true happiness consists in delighting in God and rejoicing in the status and recognition that He has given us"

Our greatest reward is pleasing God. Happiness comes from delighting in the Lord...rejoicing in His acknowledgment of our delight to Him. Pleasing God and His acknowledgment of His pleasure is what brings us inner joy, contentment, and happiness.

OTHER PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE: Ps.17:14-15; Ps 19:9-11; Proverbs. 19:17; Proverbs. 25:21-22; Matthew 6:1-2; Luke 6:35; Ephesians 6:8; 2 John 8-10.

HEAVENLY CELEBRATION:

What a day it will be when we all see Jesus!
Do you look forward to seeing Jesus?
How will the encounter change you?
How will Heaven be like a Celebration?

John 3:27-30 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

John 3:27-30 John responded, "No one can receive a single thing unless it's given to him from heaven. 28 You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah,^(AT) but I've been sent ahead of Him.^(AU)' 29 He who has the bride^(AV) is the groom. But the groom's friend, who stands by and listens for him, rejoices greatly^[n] at the groom's voice. So this joy^(AW) of mine is complete. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease."

Revelation 19:6-10 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

Marriage of the Lamb Announced

6 Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude, like the sound of cascading waters, and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying: Hallelujah —because our Lord God, the Almighty, has begun to

reign! 7 Let us be glad, rejoice, and give Him glory, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has prepared herself. 8 She was permitted to wear fine linen, bright and pure. For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: Blessed are those invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb!" He also said to me, "These words of God are true." 10 Then I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow slave with you and your brothers who have the testimony about Jesus. Worship God, because the testimony about Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Revelation 22:17 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

17 Both the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Anyone who hears should say, "Come!" And the one who is thirsty should come. Whoever desires should take the living water as a gift.