

Heaven is For Real

Introduction

Challenges to Studying the Topic of Heaven

1. The Periods of Heaven

- a) Old Testament – Sheol, The Grave, or the Bosom of Abraham
- b) NT & Today
- c) Future Heaven and the New Earth

2. Places of Heaven

- d) Celestial Heaven
- e) New Heavens & New Earth (Is. 65:17; Rev. 21)
- f) New Jerusalem, The Holy City, Zion

3. Plural Meanings of Heaven (in NT – all that same word)

- g) Sky
- h) Stars and Universe OR A Spiritual Realm
- i) God's Dwelling (Third Heaven)

Practically every reference to Heaven in the NT is the same Greek word:
OURANOS – air (9); sky (22); heaven (218); heavenly (11); heavens (24)

4. Prophecy and Heaven

Millennial Kingdom vs. New Earth

The Wisdom of God in the Mystery of Scripture

1) Mystery creates a sense that we are fallen and cannot see clearly (read Quote)

From **Heaven**, by Randy Alcorn

“In “the country of the blind”, H.G. Wells writes of a tribe in a remote valley deep in a towering mountain range. During a terrible epidemic, all the villagers lose their site. Eventually, entire generations grow up having no awareness of site or the world they are unable to see. Because of their handicap, they do not know their true condition, nor can they understand what their world looks like. They cannot imagine what realms might lie beyond their Valley.”

2) Mystery gives us a sense of how GREAT He is (Isa. 55:9)

3) The mystery creates a longing! Want to know more, want to understand, want “in on the secret”.

I The Phases (or chronology) of Heaven

a) **Old Testament – Abraham’s Bosom**

Genesis 37:35; Job 14:13; Psalm 6:5;16:10; 88:3; Isaiah 38:10; Luke 16:22-31

b) **New Testament Heaven – With God**

II Cor. 5:8; Matt. 3:17; Matt. 5:12; Matt. 6:9; Acts 1:11; II Cor. 12:2; Phil. 3:20

c) **Millennial Kingdom – (not Heaven, but informative of life with Jesus ruling)**

Zech. 14:1-9; Rev. 20:6; Is. 65 & 66

>>“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress...The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,” (Is. 65)
>>”The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Is 11:6-9)

d) **The New Earth - New Jerusalem comes down to a New Earth**

Rev. 21:1-2; Revelation 3:12

II The Physicality of Heaven – Christoplatonization of Heaven (Plato: Physical Bad, Spiritual Good)

1) **Lazarus & the Rich Man**

Tongue, Thirst, Water, Finger, Memory all visible in Luke 16:19-31

2) **John’s Vision of Heaven** (Rev. 2:7 - tree of life: EATING; Rev. 6:9-11 - John saw martyrs in heaven given robes)

3) **New Jerusalem is described in VERY physical detail.**

4) **The Marriage Supper of the Lamb**

5) **Garden of Eden**

6) **Jesus Himself (Our body like His - Phil. 3:21)**

III The Pull of Heaven

1) **The Garden** - We were created for more than this.

2) **Disciples on the Mount** – wanted to take up permanent residence because they had tasted heaven

3) **We thirst for God and Relief**

Romans 8:18-25

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, **groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For** in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

I Cor 2:9

But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”

Does that sound boring? Where do we get the idea that heaven will be boring??

[Candy Stop illustration]

All the good of earth is intended to whet the appetite for Heaven!

In his book *Things Unseen*, pastor Mark Buchanan asks, “Why won’t we be bored in heaven? Because it’s the one place where both impulses— to go beyond, to go home—are perfectly joined and totally satisfied. It’s the one place where we’re constantly discovering—where everything is always fresh and the possessing of a thing is as good as the pursuing of it—and yet where we are fully at home—where everything is as it ought to be and where we find, undiminished, that mysterious something we never found down here. . . . And this lifelong melancholy that hangs on us, this wishing we were someone else somewhere else, vanishes too. Our craving to go beyond is always and fully realized. Our yearning for home is once and for all fulfilled. The ahh! of deep satisfaction and the aha! of delighted surprise meet, and they kiss.”

Author Victor Hugo, in reflecting on his life's work, spoke profoundly of anticipating his work in Heaven: "I feel within me that future life. I am like a forest that has been razed; the new shoots are stronger and brighter. I shall most certainly rise toward the heavens the nearer my approach to the end, the plainer is the sound of immortal symphonies of worlds which invite me. For half a century I have been translating my thoughts into prose and verse: history, drama, philosophy, romance, tradition, satire, ode, and song; all of these I have tried. But I feel I haven't given utterance to the thousandth part of what lies within me. When I go to the grave I can say, as others have said, "My day's work is done." But I cannot say, "My life is done." My work will recommence the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. It closes upon the twilight, but opens upon the dawn."

IV The Purpose of Heaven

To worship, glorify, serve and enjoy God forever!

When you spend time in the Word of God, how often do you feel a tension between fulfillment and a terrible gnawing in your soul that you feel the distance between you and God, that you are not understanding, not getting all you could out of it? You long for the chasm, the distance, the wall to be removed.

How often do you feel the weakness of your flesh as it gives in yet again to sin?

Everything in a Christian's being draws him to desire a perfect, intimate relationship with God, beyond the confines of this earth and this body.

Revelation 21

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place[a] of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,[b] and God himself will be with them as their God.[c] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is

done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia.[d] Its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, 144 cubits[e] by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 7:9-12

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

Resources:

BOOKS

Heaven

by Randy Alcorn

Heaven, Your Real Home

by Joni Eareckson Tada

The Slumber of Christianity

by Ted Dekker

WEBSITE

www.NotesOnHeaven.com