

# HEAVEN

God's Eternal Home for You



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# HEAVEN: A STUDY OUTLINE

## I. GOD HAS AN INHERITANCE WAITING FOR YOU

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*"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory." Ephesians 1:13-14*

Wayne Grudem writes,

*"After the final judgment, believers will enter into the full enjoyment of life in the presence of God forever. Jesus will say to us, "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). We will enter a kingdom where "there shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him" (Rev. 22:3).*

When referring to this place, Christians often talk about living with God "in heaven" forever. But in fact the biblical teaching is richer than that: it tells us that there will be new heavens and a new earth—an entirely renewed creation—and we will live with God there." (Grudem 1158)

Dave Hunt reminds us that,

*"Heaven remains the place that everyone hopes to reach someday, but which almost no one wants to be taken to right now." Hunt further states, "We may well arrive at a deeper understanding of Christ's love than we thought was possible, and find awakening within us a renewed and richer love for him. We may even thrill to the discovery that there is a romance between Christ and his bride—and find ourselves caught up in its wonder and joy." (Hunt 9)*

However, popular culture tends to make a caricature out of heaven as a place where people sprout wings and become angels, wear halos, strum harps, and walk on clouds. St. Peter supposedly sits at heaven's gate, deciding who may enter. And heavenly choirs sing incessantly—not a bright prospect for those who have trouble singing or do not like to sing! But what is heaven really like? The Bible does not give us a detailed description, but it does offer several glimpses, often using metaphors, about the nature of heaven.

"Before we go to our eternal home we should try to become acquainted with it." \_J. C. Ryle

### A. Three Worldviews of Life

John MacArthur describes three main views of life and life after death (MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 & 2 Thessalonians 140-141)

1. Cyclical View: An endless circle, spiraling back through the same things over and over again (Ancient Greeks, Hinduism, New Age).
2. Linear and non-repetitive view: There is no meaning to life; no ultimate goal or purpose (Evolutionists, atheists). Life ceases at death.
3. Christian View: Life has a purpose and an ultimate goal (Job 42:2; Isa. 46:10; 43:13). Believers will ultimately live for eternity in heaven with God.

### B. Five Common Misconceptions about Heaven

1. Heaven doesn't exist.
2. Heaven will become very boring.
3. All we will be doing is floating around in the clouds strumming harps.
4. We won't know anyone or anything from earth because of Isaiah 65:17 "The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind."
5. Instead of having physical bodies we will be spirits...vapor-like beings.

*"Most of us find it very difficult to want 'Heaven' at all—except in so far as 'Heaven' means meeting again our friends who have died. One reason for this difficulty is that we have not been trained: our whole education tends to fix our minds on this world. Another reason is that when the real want for Heaven is present in us, we do not recognize it."*

C.S. Lewis quoted in "Heaven" by Randy Alcorn

### C. Questions often asked about heaven

1. What is heaven?
2. Is heaven just a state of mind?
3. Where is heaven?
4. Are heaven and the new heaven the same place?
5. What will heaven be like?
6. What will be doing in heaven?
7. Does time exist in heaven?
8. Will everyone eventually go to heaven?

### D. Can we really know what Heaven will be like?

1. Randy Alcorn comments,

*"The Bible tells us God has prepared a place, for those who belong to him, which is beyond human imagination. Should this prevent believers from trying to imagine heaven? Too often we've been taught that Heaven is a non-physical realm, which cannot have real gardens, cities, kingdoms, buildings, banquets, or bodies. So we fail to take seriously what Scripture tells us about Heaven as a familiar, physical, tangible place." (Alcorn, 15)*

2. Some have incorrectly assumed that we cannot know what heaven will be like because 1 Corinthians 2:9 says, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."
3. However, in the following verse it continues, "...but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit." The context makes it clear that this revelation is God's Word (v. 13), which tells us what God has prepared for us.
4. God says he has revealed to us through his Spirit. This means that God has explained to us what Heaven is like—not exhaustively, but accurately. (Alcorn 18-19)

## II. GOD'S HOME FOR YOU IS A REAL PLACE

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*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." John 14:1-3*

### A. Different views of what happens after death (Rose Publishing)

1. Christian Science: Death is not real; heaven is a state of mind
2. Jehovah's Witnesses: The 144,000 live as spirits in heaven. The rest of the righteous live on earth.

Salvation is described as a free gift from God, but is said to be unattainable without good works (e.g. preaching) that are prompted by faith (Wikipedia).

3. Islam: Paradise includes a garden populated with maidens (“companions”)<sup>1</sup> designed by Allah to provide sexual pleasures to righteous men.
4. Buddhism: People do not have their own individual souls or spirits, but one’s desires and feelings may be reincarnated into another person.
5. Mormonism: Eventually everyone goes to one of three “heavenly” kingdoms, with some achieving godhood. Apostates and murderers go to “outer darkness”.

### **B. Is Heaven a real place?**

1. Heaven is the real place where God most fully makes known his presence to bless. It is in heaven where God most fully reveals his glory, and where angels, other heavenly creatures, and redeemed saints all worship him (Grudem).
2. It is where Christ sits at the right hand of God the Father (Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1)
3. Heaven is a real place, not just a state of mind (Geisler-313)
  - a) Jesus used the word “place” three times in regard to heaven (John 14:2-4)
  - b) Jesus also taught us to pray to “our Father in heaven,” and that his will be accomplished “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:9-10).
  - c) Heaven is a different place than earth (Rev. 21:9-27).
4. The biblical words for “heaven” (Heb. *Shamayim*; Gk: *ouranos*) are used in three different ways (Geisler 294):
  - a) The sky above us (earth’s atmosphere—Matt. 6:26)
  - b) The stars (the realm of space—Matt. 24:29)
  - c) The very abode of God, called “the third heaven”<sup>2</sup> or “paradise”—2 Cor. 12:2, 4

### **C. Where is heaven?**

1. Heaven may be somewhere in a far corner of the universe, shrouded from human view behind a cloud of God’s glory, or in an entirely different physical dimension (Geisler 313)
  - a) In favor of heaven being in a faraway place, some have cited Job’s reference to God coming from the north (Job 37:22; cf. 26:7)
  - b) In favor of heaven being in another physical dimension, others have noted that Jesus seemed to step in and out of this dimension when in his resurrected body (Luke 24:31; John 20:26)
2. But it is important to remember that God is always near us when we call on Him (James 4:8), and we are encouraged to “draw near” to Him (Hebrews 10:1, 22)
3. Perhaps God has intentionally covered its location in mystery, for it is more important for us to focus on the God of heaven than the description or location of it. It is more important to know the why than the where (Got Questions Ministries).

### **D. Fourteen things we know about heaven**

1. Heaven is only for those who have been born-again (John 3:3)<sup>3</sup>
  - a) That should compel us to share the gospel while there is still time!
  - b) This contradicts the view of universal salvation

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<sup>1</sup> Surah 33:33; 37:48-49; 38:52; 44:54; 52:20; 55:56-58, 70-76; 56:22-23, 35-38; 78:33 (Mohammad)

<sup>2</sup> There are no biblical references to celestial, terrestrial, or telectual heavens, or of three degrees of glory in heaven.

<sup>3</sup> Heaven is also occupied by good angels (Rev. 7:11; 12:7, 9; 14:10).

2. Heaven's beauty and wonder will be beyond our imagination (1 Cor. 2:9)
  - a) But there are still descriptions that stimulate our imaginations and give us insights that make us long for our eternal home.
  - b) However, in the following verse it continues, "...but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit." The context makes it clear that this revelation is God's Word (v. 13), which tells us what God has prepared for us.
  - c) God says he has revealed to us through his Spirit. This means that God has explained to us what Heaven is like—not exhaustively, but accurately. (Alcorn 18-19)
  - d) [See ID3, 4 above]
3. Heaven will be filled with singing (Rev. 5:13)
  - a) Q: Who will do you suppose will be singing in heaven and what will they be singing about?
  - b) READ Rev. 5:13
  - c) Q: In what ways is singing so important when it comes to worshipping God?
  - d) Ans: Singing/music is more from the heart (expressive) and is much more pleasing to the ear.
  - e) Q: Do you think there will be different styles of singing in heaven?
  - f) Ans; See Ephesians 5:19
4. A Holy City, Jerusalem, will come down out of heaven (Rev. 21:10)
  - a) READ Revelation 21:10 and 16
  - b) Notice the size and shape of this city...a perfect cube.
  - c) ~1400 miles wide, long, high.
  - d) Q: Why will this city be a perfect cube?
  - e) Ans: READ 1 Kings 6:20 - Possibly to remind us of the Holy of Holies
  - f) The place where God met man in the Tabernacle and provided forgiveness of his sins.
  - g) Possibly also to remind us of the Trinity
5. The gates of heaven will never be closed (Rev. 21:25a)
  - a) READ Rev. 21:25a
  - b) Q: Why are there gates and walls in heaven since they were designed to keep people out, especially enemies?
  - c) Ans: No enemies to keep out in heaven.
  - d) Read Psalm 122:2-7 → peace, security.
  - e) The open gates may symbolically remind us that our safety has been permanently bought by our God.
  - f) The wall might also give us a sense of permanent security.
  - g) Also, they show that everyone will have access because of Jesus Christ atonement.
  - h) People have always gathered at the gates of a city to share news and tell stories.
6. There will be no night in heaven (Rev. 21:25b; 22:5)
  - a) READ Rev. 21:25b, 22:5
  - b) Q: Do you think this means we will never sleep in heaven?
  - c) Ans: Sleep is one of life's greatest pleasures, not restless, troubled sleep, but refreshing sleep.
  - d) It is quite possible we will enjoy a wonderful, enjoyable sleep from time to time as part of God's design for the rhythm of life. (Alcorn 318, 264)
7. "Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev. 21:27)
  - a) Q: Will we still be capable of sinning in heaven?
  - b) Ans: No (Rev. 21:27).

- c) Note: It is not that outside of the New Jerusalem, unsaved people are still roaming around, but this pictures a city with open gates on a new earth where believers will dwell throughout eternity.
  - d) Ans: Hebrews 9:26 says with an air of finality that Christ sacrificed himself to “put away sin” (NASB) or “to do away with sin” (NIV).
  - e) We will be raised “incorruptible” (1 Cor. 15:52, NKJV) or imperishable (NAU). The Greek word *aphthartos* means uncorrupted (immune to corruption)
  - f) Anyone who has died has been freed from sin (Romans 6:7).
  - g) Christ will not allow us to be vulnerable to the very thing he died to deliver us from (Alcorn 300)
  - h) Three times in the final two chapters of Scripture, we’re told that those still in their sins have no access to Heaven, and never will (Rev. 21:8, 27; 22:15)
8. Heaven will have a river of life flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb—it will flow down the middle of the great street of the city (Rev. 22:1)
- a) We may need refreshing water in heaven like we need water now.
  - b) Notice the source of the river is the throne of God, and of the Lamb.
  - c) It may remind us of God’s thirst-quenching, need satisfying nature. Read John 4:14 and Phil. 4:19. (Alcorn 248)
  - d) READ Gen. 2:10. There was also a river in the Garden of Eden which nourished the garden itself.
9. On each side of the river the tree of life will stand, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month (Rev. 22:2)
- a) The tree of life is first seen in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9).
  - b) It appears to have been a source of on-going physical life (Alcorn 249)
  - c) However, once Adam and Eve sinned they were banished from the Garden, separated from the tree, and subject to physical death, just as they experienced spiritual death.
  - d) [Note: Although we cannot say for certain that Adam and Eve will be in Heaven, there are enough indicators (God covered them with skins of a sacrificed animal, they knew a Savior would come) for us to work out that this is probably the case, and almost no indicators against it].
  - e) Note: Tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not mentioned in description of the New Earth...no longer to tempt us.
  - f) Time in heaven: “Yielding fruit every month” → time will still exist in heaven. A misleading translation in the KJV says “there should be time no longer” (Rev. 10:6), but other translations correctly translate this phrase “There will be no more delay” (NIV, RSV). (Alcorn 258).
  - g) Time in heaven: The Noahic Covenant, which is everlasting (Gen. 9:16), also stated that seasons would always exist (Gen. 8:22)
  - h) [See Alcorn, 259 for other evidences of time in heaven].
10. The leaves of the tree will be for the healing<sup>4</sup> of the nations (Rev. 22:2b)
- a) Why will nations require healing (Grk. *therapeia*) in heaven since there will be no death, or crying, or pain in heaven (Rev. 21:4).
  - b) It could be the leaves will have properties that will help people maintain health and energy (Alcorn 250).
  - c) Another view is that John appears to be quoting from Ezekiel 47:12, where water from the temple produces trees with healing leaves.

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<sup>4</sup> Why will nations require healing in heaven? It could be the leaves will have properties that will help people maintain health and energy (Alcorn 250). Another view is that John appears to be quoting from Ezekiel 47:12, where water from the temple produces trees with healing leaves. He is not implying that there will be illness in the new earth, he is emphasizing that the water of life produces health and strength wherever it goes (Life Application Bible 2333)

- d) He is not implying that there will be illness in the new earth, he is emphasizing that the water of life produces health and strength wherever it goes (Life Application Bible 2333)
11. We will see God's face, and his name will be on our foreheads (Rev. 22:4).
- READ Rev. 22:4
  - This may be shocking because God said "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" (READ Exod. 33:20)
  - Even Moses did not see God's face, he saw only his back (Exod. 33:18-23)
  - "Face" may be an anthropomorphism since God is a spirit (John 4:24), but somehow we will see the Father's face (Alcorn 166-168).
  - Name on forehead. This name upon their foreheads recalls the dedication of the high priest who wore a plate of gold upon his headdress which was engraved: "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" (Ex. 28:36).
12. All things in heaven and on earth will be together under one head, Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:10)
- "To bring all things together" meaning there will no longer be separate realms of heaven and earth.
  - "Heaven and earth will no longer be separated as they are now," Peter Toon. (Alcorn 183)
  - New heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem will all be accessible and under one head, Jesus Christ.
  - No longer will there be two universes, one for humans and one for God. Both will be together (2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 21:3) (Alcorn 177-178).
13. In eternity we will be made perfect and complete—we will no longer need the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 13:10)
- Meaning is debated.
  - View No. 1: All spiritual gifts will no longer be needed in heaven. We will no longer need the spiritual gifts which were needed for the church, so they will come to an end (Life Application Bible 2083)
  - View No. 2: All miracle gifts will no longer be needed when the Bible ("perfect") is completed [Cessationist View].
  - View No. 3: Only miracle gifts will no longer be needed in heaven. Others such as S. Michael Houdmann and Matthew Henry believe the phrase "the imperfect disappears" is referring to the gifts of prophecy, knowledge and tongues (vs. 8-9). (Got Questions Ministries 1 Cor. 13:10) (Logos Bible Software 5.2a SR-6 (5.2.1.0155) Matthew Henry's Commentary)
14. No longer will there be any curse (Rev. 22:3)<sup>5</sup>
- No longer will the earth be cursed (Gen. 3:17)—a new earth will be made which will be restored to its original design—we have never seen the earth as God originally made it
  - Man will no longer have to "toil painfully" in order to survive (Gen. 3:17-18)—man will work for the sheer pleasure of it, to please and glorify God by developing skills and abilities (Alcorn 104)
  - No longer will the earth produce "thorns and thistles" (Gen. 3:18)—it will produce incredibly pleasant plants and trees
  - No longer will man "return to the ground," (Gen. 3:19)—man will live forever

*"Because of man's fall into sin, a curse was pronounced over this creation. God now sent his son into this world to redeem that creation from the results of sin. The work of Christ, therefore, is not just save certain individuals, not even to save an innumerable throng of blood-bought people. The total work of Christ is nothing less than to redeem this entire creation from the effects of sin. That purpose will not be accomplished until God has ushered in the new earth."*

Anthony Hoekema quoted in  
"Heaven" by Randy Alcorn

<sup>5</sup> Nothing accursed will be in God's presence (Life Application Bible 2333)



e) More on this later in Part IV.

### E. The Bottom Line

These 14 things are revealed to “unfasten” you from this present life of sin and struggle...and fix your focus on your eternal home in heaven with God.

## III. GOD’S NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

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*“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Rev. 21:1*

### A. God’s First Heaven

1. Heaven now is a real place of departed spirits, the place of bliss in God’s presence where believers go when they die (Geisler 294).
  - a) Enoch entered heaven when “God took him to be with himself (Gen. 5:24).
  - b) Elijah also “went up to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11).
  - c) A repentant thief went to heaven also when Jesus said to him, “Today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).
  - d) Paul referred to heaven when he wrote, “absent from the body” and “present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8 NKJV).
2. The first heaven (Rev. 21:1) also called by some theologians as the “intermediate heaven,” is the place Christians go when they die (Alcorn 41).
3. Mistaken views about where individual go when they die include “purgatory,” and “soul sleep.”
  - a) Mistaken View #1: When people die their souls go to purgatory<sup>6</sup>
    - The Roman Catholic concept of a place where souls are made pure through suffering before going to heaven.
    - Concept of Purgatory was first established by Pope Gregory I, about AD 600 (Latourette 340-341).
    - Pope Gregory I was more of an administrator than a theologian
    - Roman Catholics base the concept on 2 Maccabees 12:43-45.
    - Related RC doctrine → praying for the dead and indulgences (sinners reduced time in purgatory by good works and prayers priest → Treasury of merit).
    - The concept of Purgatory fails to recognize that Jesus’ death was sufficient to pay the penalty for ALL of our sins.
  - b) Mistaken View #2: When people die their souls sleep until the resurrection<sup>7</sup>
4. The first heaven is temporary and will eventually be replaced by the new heaven (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).
5. Heaven is also occupied by angels.
  - a) Angels are also said to be “in heaven” (Matt. 18:10), to come “from heaven” (28:2), to dwell “in heaven” (Mark 13:32), and return to heaven (Luke 2:15) (Geisler 295).
6. Are there bad angels in heaven?

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<sup>6</sup> The concept of Purgatory is based on 2 Maccabees 12:43-46 found in the Apocrypha, not part of inspired Word of God. Compelling Truth, *Is the Concept of Purgatory Biblical?* <<http://www.compellingtruth.org/purgatory.html>>. Accessed February 12, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> For more about “soul sleep,” a view held by Seventh-Day Adventists, see Richison 100ff and Smith 155ff.

- a) Satan was originally one of God's holy angels, but he rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven (Luke 10:18). That was only the first stage of his judgment.
- b) Until his final judgment, Satan is "the prince of this world" (John 14:30), but it seems that he still has restricted access to the heavenly realms.
- c) In Job 1:6, Satan stands in the presence of God to accuse Job of ulterior motives in his worship of God. (See 2 Chronicles 18:18-21 for a similar situation involving a "lying spirit.").
- d) Here are some other facts to note:
- Satan does not have open access to God's presence. He is summoned by God.
  - The visits are temporary. His time before God's throne is limited.
  - In no way is the purity of heaven tainted by the brief, God-ordained presence of a sinful being, "quarantined," as it were, by God's regulatory power.
7. Since those who die will not have resurrected bodies until Jesus Christ returns, they will be in what some call an intermediate state—bodies which are incomplete and in an unnatural state (Lutzer 69). Scripture does not reveal much information about the believer's intermediate state probably because the hope of the believer is not centered upon a temporary intermediate state (Smith 155). However, Scriptures give several clues that believers may have some form of a physical body in the intermediate state between death and Christ's return (Rev. 6:9-11; Luke 9:28-36; 16:19-31) (Alcorn 65-67).
- a) Clue No. 1: In Revelation Chapter 6:9-11 martyred believers in heaven appear to be in a physical form (Alcorn 65-67).
- When believers die on Earth, they are relocated to Heaven (Rev. 6:9a)
  - People in Heaven will be remembered for their lives on Earth. These were known and identified as ones slain "because of...the testimony they had maintained" (Rev. 6:9b)
  - Since they "called out in a loud voice," they were able to express themselves verbally (Rev. 6:10). Doing this indicates that they are rational, communicative, and emotional beings (Rev. 6:10)
  - Those beings in Heaven are free to ask God questions, which indicates they are in God's presence (Rev. 6:10)
  - These beings know what is happening on Earth (Rev. 6:10)
  - The question raised, "how long..." is time-dependent implying they are aware of time's passing (Rev. 6:10)
  - Those in Heaven are distinct individuals, "Then each of them was given a white robe..." (Rev. 6:11).
  - The wearing of white robes suggests the possibility of having physical forms...not disembodied spirits (Rev. 6:11).
- b) Clue No. 2: Moses and Elijah appeared physically with Christ at the Transfiguration in Luke 9:28-36 (Alcorn 60) (Lutzer 68-70).
- c) Clue No. 3: The rich man in Luke 16:19-31 asked to have Lazarus put a drop of water on his tongue (Alcorn 61).
- d) Conclusion: We cannot be fully human without a spirit and a body. Though there is some uncertainty about this, it seems possible that between our earthly life and bodily resurrection, God may grant us some physical form that will allow us to function as human beings while in that

*"We do not know exactly what kind of body we will have in order to have the assurance that our personalities will continue. We will be the same people we were on Earth, we will have the same thoughts, feelings, and desires. Though our struggles with sin will be over, we will be aware of who we really are. There will be no doubt in our minds that we have just moved from one place to another without an intermediate stop. And we will await the final resurrection."*

Erwin W. Lutzer, "One Minute After You Die"

unnatural "between bodies," awaiting our resurrection (Alcorn 57)

8. Children and mentally handicapped people: There are strong indications in the Bible that children and severely mentally handicapped people will also be in heaven (2 Sam. 12:23; Psa. 23:6) (Lutzer 73-77) (Got Questions Ministries).
  - a) The first key is from the only passage in the Bible where something specific is said about the death of infants. In 2 Samuel 12 we learn of David's affair with Bathsheba, another man's wife. David was informed by the prophet Nathan that the child produced by that union would die. David then began to fast and pray, asking the Lord to not carry out His judgment. When the child did die, David got up from praying and fasting and ate something.
  - b) When asked about this behavior, David uttered the words recorded in 2 Samuel 12:23, "Now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." David's words reflect a clear understanding that the child could not come back to earth, but David would be with his child one day in heaven. This indicates not only David's assurance of his own future in heaven (Psalm 23:6), but also the assurance that his child would share that future. From this account, we can conclude that infants who die are destined for heaven.
  - c) S. Michael Houdmann explains that from this statement, we can assume that babies and young children were, by God's grace, covered for salvation by Christ's death.
  - d) He postulates from this that mentally handicapped people are covered by this principle as well. The Word of God does not specifically say this, however. Knowing the love, grace, and mercy of God, this would seem consistent with His character. Any person who is mentally challenged to the extent that he could not be aware of his sinful state and believe in Christ for salvation, is in the same category as a child and it is not unreasonable to assume that person is saved by the grace and mercy of the same God who saves babies and small children.
9. In the first heaven believers will be joyfully in the presence of Jesus Christ but they will be looking forward to his return to earth, their bodily resurrection (Phil. 3:20-21), and the permanent relocation to the new heaven and the new earth (Alcorn 42).

## B. God's First Earth

1. When God created the first earth he said it was "good," (H. tob) meaning pleasant, agreeable, pure and clean (Brown, Briggs and Driver 373-4) (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31).
2. But the first (present) earth became cursed when man disobeyed God and sinned (Gen. 3:17).<sup>8</sup> For more about this see, "Why Does God Allow Evil & Suffering" (www.TaylorNotes.Info).
3. But God, in his grace, revealed his plan to defeat Satan and offer salvation to the world through his Son, Jesus Christ (Gen. 3:15; Rom. 16:20; 1 John 3:8) (Life Application Bible 12).
4. The first earth, as does all creation, now awaits renewal in eager expectation, Romans 8:19-23. (Alcorn 119ff).

## C. God's New Earth

1. At first glance, the present earth and the entire universe appear to be utterly destroyed (e.g. pass away), and the New Earth and new universe will be made from scratch (Psa. 102:25-26; Luke 21:33; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 21:1) (Alcorn 145ff).
2. However, in contrast, there are passages that speak of the earth *remaining* forever (Ecc. 1:4; Psa. 78:69). Randy Alcorn states that the Hebrew word translated "forever" in these passages is used in ways that don't mean (*completely destroyed*) forever (e.g. Deut. 15:17). Alcorn states that the earth *as it is now* will not remain forever." (Alcorn 145-146)

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<sup>8</sup> For more about evil and suffering in this world today, see "Why Does God Allow Evil & Suffering?" <www.TaylorNotes.Info>.

3. Other prominent Bible scholars concur with Alcorn's view that the first earth and the entire universe will not be completely destroyed but will be renewed.
  - a) Wayne Grudem, in his discussion of 2 Pet. 3:10, which speak of everything "in the earth being "laid bare," suggest that Peter was not speaking of the earth as a planet but rather the surface things on earth (Grudem 1160-61).
  - b) Anthony Hoekema argues that if God had to completely destroy his original creation, Satan would have won a great victory. (Alcorn 146)
  - c) John Piper argues that God did not create matter to throw it away. He argues that when the Bible speaks of "passing away" (Rev. 21:1 and 2 Pet. 3:10) it means their present condition passes away. (Alcorn 147)

#### **D. God's New Heaven**

1. God said that he would make everything new (Rev. 21:5). This includes a New Jerusalem, a New Earth, and a New Heaven (Rev. 21:1).
2. Scripturally, this takes place after the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).
3. Our eternity in heaven will be unimaginably wonderful, beyond our fullest comprehension. See "Fourteen things we know about heaven" above.
  - a) Norman Geisler describes five more characteristics of heaven as follows (Geisler 298-304).
  - b) It will be a place of perfect bodies--glorification (Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2).
  - c) It will be a place of everlasting service (Rev. 22:3).
  - d) It will be a place of abundant life (John 10:10; 1 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 22:1-2).
  - e) It will be a place of grand reunion (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
  - f) It will be a place of indescribable glory (Rom. 8:18).

#### **E. God's New Jerusalem City**

1. A Holy City, Jerusalem, will come down out of heaven. It will be a 1,400-mile cubic city (Rev. 21:10, 16).
  - a) Notice the size and shape of this city...a perfect cube. About 1,400 miles wide, long, high.
  - b) Why will this city be a perfect cube? Possibly to remind us of the Holy of Holies (1 Kings 6:20), the place where God met man in the Tabernacle and provided forgiveness of his sins.
  - c) Possibly also to remind us of the Trinity
2. The gates of the city will never be closed (Rev. 21:25a)
  - a) Why are there gates and walls in heaven since they were designed to keep people out, especially enemies? There will be no enemies to keep out in heaven, but they may be reminders to us that God is our peace and security (Psa. 122:7).
  - b) Ancient cities shut their gates at night for security purposes. However, since there will be no night there, and since all evil will have been eradicated, these gates will stay open constantly (Got Questions Ministries).
  - c) The open gates may also represent the unimpeded access we have into God's presence (Rev. 22:14).
3. Based on Hebrews 11:16, Randy Alcorn believes the New Jerusalem is already in the present intermediate Heaven. When God fashions the New Earth he will relocate the entire city, Heaven's capital city, the New Jerusalem from heaven to the New Earth (Alcorn 179-180).
4. It will be a place of beauty beyond our present framework of understanding (Rev. 21:2-24; 22:1-2).
5. If city consisted of different levels (we don't know this) and if each story were a generous 12 ft. high, the city could have over 600,000 stories, billions of people could occupy the New Jerusalem, with many square miles per person (Alcorn 242).

6. Rev. 22:1-5 (Notice 12 things about the New Jerusalem City)
  - a) The river of the water of life will flow down the middle of the great street
  - b) The crystal clear river will flow from the throne of God and the Lamb (Jesus)
  - c) The tree of life will be on each side of the river.
  - d) It will bear twelve crops of fruit each month
  - e) Its leaves will be for the healing of the nations
  - f) No longer will there be any curse.
  - g) The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city,
  - h) His servants will serve him.
  - i) They (*those who serve God*) will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.
  - j) There will be no more night.
  - k) They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light.
  - l) And they will reign for ever and ever.

## IV. LIVING IN YOUR ETERNAL HOME

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*"...and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Psalm 23:6*

### A. Will life in the new heaven be boring?

1. Some have said, "I'd rather be having a good time in Hell than be bored in Heaven." Unfortunately, this comment is based on a false view of both Heaven and Hell.
2. Notice what King David wrote:
 

*"You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." Psalm 16:11*
3. The misconception that heaven will be boring may stem from the false assumption that sin is exciting and righteous living is boring. The fact is that sin's emptiness inevitably leads to boredom.
4. Another reason why some people assume heaven will be boring is because their Christian lives are boring.
5. If we envision ourselves being happy for a few days or a week, it may be because we are unable to grasp the fact that millions of years, and more, of happiness are possible.
6. Since we have always lived under the Curse, we cannot fully comprehend life without living under the Curse.

### B. Will I live in the new heaven or the new earth?

*"And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. Eph. 1:9-10*

1. The phrase "...to bring all things together" suggests there will no longer be separate realms of heaven and earth.
2. Peter Toon writes, "Heaven and earth will no longer be separated as they are now," Peter Toon. (Alcorn 183)
3. The new heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem will probably all be accessible and under one head, Jesus Christ.
4. No longer will there be two universes, one for humans and one for God. Both will most likely be

together (2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 21:3) (Alcorn 177-178).

**C. What will our resurrected bodies be like in heaven (Alcorn 281)**

*“This image of planting a dead seed and raising a live plant is a mere sketch at best, but perhaps it will help in approaching the mystery of the resurrection body—but only if you keep in mind that when we’re raised, we’re raised for good, alive forever! The corpse that’s planted is no beauty, but when it’s raised, it’s glorious. Put in the ground weak, it comes up powerful. The seed sown is natural; the seed grown is supernatural—same seed, same body, but what a difference from when it goes down in physical mortality to when it is raised up in spiritual immortality!” 1 Cor. 15:42-44 (Msg)*

1. Notice what the following verses tell us about our resurrected bodies? (Tyndale House Publishers 282)

1 John 3:2	It will be like Christ’s body
Rev. 21:4	It will not die or experience pain
1 Cor. 15:42	It will not be perishable (Grk. <i>aphtharsia</i> , meaning incorruptible; everlasting; morally upright)
1Cor. 15:43	It will be raised in power
1 Cor. 15:44	It will be a spiritual body <sup>9</sup>
Rom. 8:18; 1 Cor. 15:43	There will be a glory revealed in us
Rev. 21:4; 22:2	It will never get sick or have pain
2 Cor. 5:1	It will last forever

**D. Man who was created in God’s image (Gen. 1:26-27) will be free from present limitations**

1. In our glorified state we will most likely have greater reasoning and intellect abilities.
  - a) We resemble God mentally in that man was created as a rational being with a certain amount of volition.
  - b) We can reason and, within limits, we can choose, a reflection of God’s intellect and freedom.
  - c) We have the same creative impulses that God has, proclaiming our having been made in God’s image anytime we invent a new and better machine, writes a poem, creates a symphony, reason through a problem, or performs any of millions of other mental calculations.
2. We will have a greater desire for communion with our fellow believers.
  - a) Socially, man’s desire for communion with his fellow man reflects God’s triune nature and His love.
  - b) God made the first woman because He understood Adam’s need for the company of another human being like himself.
  - c) Being alone is not good for man (Genesis 2:18).
  - d) All human relationships—marriage, friendship, Christian fellowship—demonstrate the fact that we are made in the likeness of God.
  - e) Just as the three Persons of the trinity share perfect social communion with one another, so do we desire social interaction with others.
3. We will most likely speak a common language.

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<sup>9</sup> 1 Cor. 15:44; *spiritual body*. This will be a regular physical body, but like with the exception that it may have some powers of an unusual nature, much like Jesus Christ has after his resurrection. (Alcorn 117-118)

- a) Prior to the Tower of Babel event, everyone spoke a common language (Gen. 11:1), but God created many other languages so that man would be fruitful and fill the earth (Gen. 1:28; 9:1, 7), and not stay on one area near the Tower. It seems reasonable that in reversing the Curse, God will restore man to a common language.
  - b) Scripture says of those from every nation, tribe, people and language, "cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb'" (Rev. 7:9-10) suggesting they were speaking a common language.
  - c) It also seems reasonable that a common language will enable all in heaven to worship and sing with a common language.
4. We will experience a deeper relationship with God.
- a) No longer will our old sinful nature impede our relationship with God.
  - b) We will have a spiritual life that enables us to relate to God as persons, to pray and praise him, and to hear him speaking to us in a much deeper, more intimate way (Rom. 8:16).

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