

# *Heaven*

Jim Hoffman

Lesson #3

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# Looking Ahead to Heaven

- Eccl 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. NIV
  - God has placed a desire in our heart for the very things he wants to give us; a home in a world where peace reigns and love is the only law necessary.
  - Having never been to heaven, it has the appeal of 'home'.
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# Heaven

- **Fact: most of the Bible College textbooks give little attention to the doctrine of Heaven.**
  - **Have we become so obsessed with avoiding hell that we have forgotten what God is preparing for us?**
  - **We must ask ourselves “am I as interested in going to heaven as I am in avoiding hell?”**
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# Heaven

- Gen 2:7 the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. NIV
  - 1 Cor 15:44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. *If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.* NIV
  - The first man was a physical being, we are physical beings, and we will have a resurrected body.
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# 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:35-49

- But someone may ask, “How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?” <sup>36</sup> What a foolish question! When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn’t grow into a plant unless it dies first. <sup>37</sup> And what you put in the ground is not the plant that will grow, but only a bare seed of wheat or whatever you are planting. <sup>38</sup> Then God gives it the new body he wants it to have. A different plant grows from each kind of seed. <sup>39</sup> Similarly there are different kinds of flesh—one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. <sup>40</sup> There are also bodies in the heavens and bodies on the earth. The glory of the heavenly bodies is different from the glory of the earthly bodies. <sup>41</sup> The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their glory.
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# 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:35-49

- <sup>42</sup> It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. <sup>43</sup> Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. <sup>44</sup> They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies. <sup>45</sup> The Scriptures tell us, “The first man, Adam, became a living person.” But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. <sup>46</sup> What comes first is the natural body, then the spiritual body comes later. <sup>47</sup> Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven. <sup>48</sup> Earthly people are like the earthly man, and heavenly people are like the heavenly man. <sup>49</sup> Just as we are now like the earthly man, we will someday be like the heavenly man.
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# Heaven

- **What if heaven will be just like the world we know, minus sin and it's effects?**
  - **Is it so far fetched to think that heaven is a re-make of the Garden of Eden with many more people?**
  - **What if it turns out that heaven is a perfect planet Earth?**
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# Heaven

- **1 Cor 2:9** However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" — **10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.** The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. NIV
  - It sounds nice, but is untrue to say that heaven is beyond our imagination. God has revealed heaven to us in His word.
  - The verse actually says the opposite of what most people think it does.
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# Heaven

- Col 3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. NIV
  - Heb 11:16 Instead, they were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. NIV
  - It's not only fun to dream about heaven, but it's encouraged by God himself.
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# Heaven

- There is a certain sense of peace, stability, and well-being that comes from understanding that another world awaits us after this one.
  - All the better when we look around this one and see the devastating affects of sin.
  - We should strive to improve our world, but rest in the fact that we need only get through it.
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# Is heaven our default destination?

- “The safest road to hell is the gradual one – the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.” C.S. Lewis
  - Matt 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. NIV
  - “For every American who thinks they are going to hell there are 120 who think they are going to heaven.” Randy Alcorn
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# Is heaven our default destination?

- In Dante's *Inferno*, there is a view of a sign over hell's gate that reads, "Abandon every hope, you who enter".
  - Hell is the exact opposite of heaven. For everything we have to look forward to there are equal reasons to dread what awaits the one who dies without Christ.
  - "I had rather walk, as I do, in daily terror of eternity than feel that this was only a children's game in which all contestants would get equally worthless prizes in the end." T.S. Elliot
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# Is heaven our default destination?

- “Hell will be agonizingly dull, small, and insignificant, without company, purpose, or accomplishment. It will not have it’s own stories; it will merely be a footnote on history, a crack in the pavement.” Randy Alcorn
  - “As the new universe moves gloriously onward, Hell and it’s occupants will exist in utter inactivity and insignificance; an eternal non-life of regret – and – perhaps diminishing personhood.” Randy Alcorn
  - Mark 8:36 “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?” Jesus of Nazareth
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# Is heaven our default destination?

- There is danger in every church of thinking that if we fit in here we must surely be a Christian.
  - The tightrope we walk as a local church is to be inclusive of the unsaved without reinforcing the same dangerous thought above.
  - How do we conduct ourselves so as to make people comfortable enough to listen to the message that will make them uncomfortable in their sins?
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# The Intermediate State

- **1 Thess 4:13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. NIV**
  - **The intermediate state is the place and condition of the Christian from the time we die until the resurrection of our bodies.**
  - **Is it still Heaven? Yes, but it's a place of waiting for the new Heaven and new Earth.**
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# The Intermediate State

- **Dan 12:1** "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people — everyone whose name is found written in the book — will be delivered. 2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the Earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.  
**NIV**
  - **What is meant by ‘multitudes who sleep’?**
  - **Does the Bible teach something called soul sleep?**
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# The Intermediate State

- **Luke 16:23** In Hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' NIV
  - The rich man was not sleeping -- Lazarus certainly looked awake enough to the rich man because he asked him for water.
  - Our physical bodies do give the appearance of sleeping, but there is ample evidence to refute the notion of soul sleep.
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Questions / Comments