

Heaven

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Lesson #9

Good Perspective

If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy - the most probable explanation is - I was made for another world...

C.S. Lewis

Future Timeline



Microcosm of Redemption



The Bible Trilogy

Past	Present	Future
Genesis 1-2	Genesis 3 - Revelation 20	Revelation 21-22
God's original design. Perfect humans living in a perfect environment.	Fallen man struggling to survive and endure life on a sin cursed earth.	Redeemed man living on a redeemed earth.

What we assume about Heaven

What the Bible teaches about Heaven

Non-earth

New Earth

Unfamiliar Setting

Familiar Setting

Disembodied

Resurrected Bodies

Leaving Favorite Things Behind

Retaining the Best Things

No Time and Space

Time and Space

Static

Dynamic

Nothing to do, boring.

Unlimited opportunities to worship and serve with meaningful work.

No learning, instant and complete knowledge.

An eternity of learning and discovery.

Absence of evil, but little we desire.

Presence of the wonderful and everything we were designed to desire.

Two Quotes

- “I must keep alive in myself my desire for my true country, which I shall not find until after death; I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside; I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country and to help others do the same.”
C.S. Lewis

- “Our greatest affliction is not anxiety or even guilt, but rather homesickness – a nostalgia or ineradicable yearning to be at home with God.”
Donald Bloesch

What the World Says

- **When the world says “you can never go home again” they mean that you can’t roll back history to the good ole days of your youth or some other pleasant time of your life.**
- **For the believer, this saying merely points us to a time when we will truly be home for the first time in a restored earth that we have always wanted, but could not completely identify.**

Going to a party?

- Luke 6:21 Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. NIV
- Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." NIV
- *We should not associate dullness and boredom with heaven as is often the case* – nothing could be further from the truth.

Going to a party?

- What are the chances that behind the typical image of heaven we would find the enemy of our soul?
- Angels floating around on clouds playing harps seems to be an innocent enough image, but what does that image convey?
- *It conveys boredom, monotony, and is in fact a lie that is intended to lessen our desire for heaven.*

Going to a party?

- There is an old proverb derived from scripture that says, “eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die”.
- 1 Cor 15:32 If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die ." NIV
- Paul’s words put context to the proverb, but most don’t think about the context – just the message.

Going to a party?

- Here is how it needs to be understood – *if there is no God and if there is no judgment for sin, then live it up* – this is all the enjoyment you will ever have.
- Sadly, most of our society subscribes to this point of view.
- However, the truth about Heaven teaches us that we are not going to a place where there will be no pleasure – *we are going to a place of ultimate pleasure.*

Heaven is our source of optimism.

- Rom 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. KJV
- Luke 6:22 Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. 23 "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven." NIV
- Anticipating Heaven does not make our pain less painful or our sorrow less sorrowful --- it provides the context for it.

Heaven is our source of optimism.

- Sometimes we trudge through what we have to endure that week that precedes our vacation. We work feverishly getting ready to go – we are tired, but the week of vacation that lies ahead makes it all much more bearable.
- We may be tired from the preparation, but it all seems like a light affliction compared to what we will be doing the next week.
- Should going to Heaven be seen much differently?

Heaven is our source of optimism.

- There are trials and tribulations we endure in this life that are sometimes unexplainable – some seem to make no sense at all.
- However, there will come a day when all of this life will be seen from a different perspective.
- James 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. NIV

Through the Doorway

- Five months before he died, C.S. Lewis wrote these words to a woman who feared her own death was imminent.

“Can you not see death as a friend and deliverer? – what is there to be afraid of? – your sins are confessed. Has this world been so kind to you that you should leave with regret? There are better things ahead than any we leave behind. Our Lord says to you, Peace child, peace. Relax, Let go. I will catch you – do you trust me so little? – of course, this may not be the end. Then make it a good rehearsal. Signed – yours, (and like you, a tired traveler, near journey’s end.)”

Through the Doorway

- **“Can you hear the sighing in the wind? Can you feel the heavy silence in the mountains? Can you sense the restless longing in the sea? Can you see it in the woeful eyes of an animal? Something’s coming Something better. Joni Erikson Tada**
- **We should not glorify or romanticize about death, Jesus didn’t. John 11:35 “Jesus Wept”.**
- **That short verse tells a big story – death was an unintended consequence of Adam’s sin. It can be painful and, in a physical sense, horrible.**

Through the Doorway

- While it's true that some leave this life suddenly and quietly in their sleep, there are many who do not.
- We could all tell stories of those we know who died under horrible circumstances – death is our enemy.
- 1 Cor 15:54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" NIV

Through the Doorway

- Death is painful for the loved ones left behind even if the person went out quietly.
- It can bring unbearable sorrow and pain so we ought never to cause it, or even hasten ourselves to it, but neither should we fear it.
- Jesus' work on Calvary took the eternal sting out of death. No longer should we fear death – avoid it as long as possible, yes --- but never fear that which will only free you to a life that will be as much as and more of what you've always wanted.

God's Intentions

- **Isa 65:17** "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. NIV
- **Isa 66:22** "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the Lord, "so will your name and descendants endure. NIV2 **Peter 3:13**
- **2 Peter 3:13** But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. NIV
- **Rev 21:1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. NIV

God's Intentions

- **“If God’s plan were just to take us to the present heaven (the intermediate state) or a place of just spirit beings there would be no need for a new heaven or new earth.” Randy Alcorn**
- **Jesus did not die to make the most of a bad situation, he died to redeem us, and to restore all things.**
- **The Devil threw mud on God’s creative canvas, but God will do more than just wipe it clean. He will completely restore it.**

God's Intentions

- Reconcile, redeem, restore, return, renew, regenerate, and resurrect all point to a restoration and not an alternative plan.
- This explains to a great extent why God is always viewing us as what we can be, more so than what we are.
- We are fallen people living in a fallen world; we will be redeemed people living in a redeemed world and that is what both parties long for.

Restoration

- **“If God were to end history and reign forever in a distant Heaven, Earth would be remembered as a graveyard of sin and failure. Instead, Earth will be redeemed and restored.” Randy Alcorn**
- **When one has unlimited power to restore and repair there is no reason to start from scratch.**
- **Satan will not have the victory; God will restore Earth and mankind to His original design.**

Questions / Comments