

Heaven

#1 Going Home

I. Homesickness

“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” (Augustine)

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

“If I find myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probably explanation is that I was made for another world.” (CS Lewis)

II. The Believer’s Home is Heaven

A. The term “heaven” is used three different ways in the Bible:

1. Cosmological...”heavens and earth” referring to the entire universe (Gen. 1:1, Matt. 5:18 and Matt. 11:25)
2. As a synonym for God Himself...see Luke 15:18 and John 3:27
3. As the abode of God...
 - a. “Our Father who art in heaven” (Matt. 5:16, 7;21, 10:32, 16:17)
 - b. “The Lord’s throne is in heaven” (Ps. 11:4)

B. The general nature of heaven

1. Heaven is the presence God. (See Rev. 21:3)
2. Heaven is a place that shows God’s glory and radiance. (See Rev. 21:4)
3. Heaven is a place that shows God’s glory and radiance (See Rev. 21:18-23)

C. Some wide spread assumptions regarding heaven

<u>WHAT WE ASSUME ABOUT HEAVEN</u>	<u>WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT HEAVEN</u>
Non-Earth	New Earth
Unfamiliar; otherworldly	Familiar;earthly
Disembodied	Resurrected (embodied)
Foreign	Home (all the comforts of home with all the innovations of an infinitely creative God)

<u>WHAT WE ASSUME ABOUT HEAVEN</u>	<u>WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT HEAVEN</u>
Leaving favorite things behind	Retaining the good; finding the best ahead
No time and space	Time and space
Static	Dynamic
Neither old (like Eden) nor new and earthly, just strange and unknown	Both old and new
Nothing to do; floating on the clouds	A God to worship and serve; a universe to rule; purposeful work to accomplish; friends to enjoy
No learning or discovery; instant and complete knowledge	An eternity of learning and discovering
Boring	Fascinating
Loss of desire	Continuous fulfillment of desire
Absence of the terrible (but presence of little we desire)	Presence of the wonderful (everything we desire and nothing we don't)

(From Randy Alcorn's *Heaven*, p. 155)

D. Heaven is a real place

1. Some believe heaven is a state (of mind or being)

Example: "It is probably safest to say that while heaven is both a place and a state, it is primarily a state. The distinguishing mark of heaven will not be a particular location, but a condition of blessedness, sinlessness, joy and peace." (Austin Farrer, *Saving Belief*)

2. However, the plain and literally understanding of biblical references teaches that heaven is a real place.

John 14:2 "I go to prepare a place for you" Greek term is "topos" (topography). It's a geographical space, might be a town or district (Acts 16:3 and Luke 10:1)

Thought: the imagery of a "dwelling place" speaks of the middle eastern custom of children having apartments in their parents' homes.

Heb. 11:10 "...he was looking for the city which has foundation whose architect and builder is God."

Heb. 11:16 "...they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one..."

1 Peter 1:4 "...to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you..."

III. We must look forward to heaven

A. It's a place to intimately and personally dwell with Christ

Look at John 14:1-3 and Rev. 21:3 again

Luke 22:3 "...eat and drink at my table..."

"As eternity unfolds, the thrill of knowing Him will grow."

B. It's a place of relationships

"I know Christ is all in all, and that it is the presence of God that makes heaven to be heaven. But yet it much sweetens the thoughts of that place to me that there are such a multitude of my most dear and precious friends in Christ."

1. Christians will be together (1 Thes. 4:13-18)
2. Will speak with each other with one language (Rev. 7:10)
3. Will recognize each other (1 John 3:2, Gen. 25:8 "Abraham was gathered to his people." Matt 17:3 "The apostles recognized Moses and Elijah")

C. It's a place of comfort and joy

1. No more sorrow, tears or heartache (Rev. 21:4 and Isa. 25:8)
2. We will laugh (Luke 2:21-23, 6:21-23)

D. Its a place of productivity (Ruling, reigning and rewards)

1. Heaven will not be boring.

Ps. 16:11 " You have made¹ known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."
2. Heaven will be a place of meaningful work. (Luke 19:11-27)
3. We will sing and make music (Isa. 38:20, Rev. 14:2-3), we will dance (Jer. 31:4-5), we will worship (Rev. 7:9-12)
4. We will rule and reign (2 Tim. 2:12, Rev. 22:5)

IV. Remember, heaven is designed for believers. (See Matt. 22 – parable of the marriage feast and Matt. 25 – parable of ten virgins)

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Acts 4:12 “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Gal. 5:21 “and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”
God is not willing that any should perish (1 Tim. 2:3-4, 2 Pet. 3:9)

John 1:12 “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”