Introduction: Why Study Heaven?

1. Our **MISCONCEPTIONS** are crippling us.

   • Common misconceptions

2. We’re **COMMANDED** to do so. **Colossians 3:1-4**

3. A faulty view of heaven destines us to a **WASTED** life on earth. **John 14:1-11**
A Theology of Heaven

Definition – 3 uses of the word:

1. 
2. 
3. 

The promise of heaven:

- It’s a real, tangible, place
- The Father is there
- Jesus is at His right hand
- Believing loved ones are there
- Our names are recorded there
- We have an inheritance there
- Our citizenship is there
- Specific, eternal rewards given
- It’s the best of earth…better
- Sin, death, and sorrow are absent
- Adventure, work, discovery and rulership await us

Heaven in historical context:

1. Past: Eden
2. Present: Intermediate Heaven
3. Future: New Heaven on New Earth
Understanding heaven requires a macroscopic view of **SCRIPTURE** and a microscopic view of God’s **PURPOSE** for His people.

**Macro view of scripture:**

![Diagram showing the timeline of events related to heaven and the afterlife.]

**Micro view of God’s responses:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With man on</td>
<td>Separated from man</td>
<td>With man on a</td>
<td>With man on a perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perfect earth</td>
<td>and a cursed earth</td>
<td>temporary earth</td>
<td>earth forever</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genesis 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Genesis 3 – Rev 20</td>
<td>Revelation 20</td>
<td>Revelation 21 &amp; 22</td>
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<td>JESUS</td>
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<td>JESUS</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Theophany</td>
<td>The incarnate Savior</td>
<td>King of Kings</td>
<td>The Emmanuel</td>
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<tr>
<td>visits earth</td>
<td>and Redeemer</td>
<td></td>
<td>forever</td>
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**Summary:** God **WANTS** to be with His people!
An Accurate View of Heaven Provides...

- **PERSPECTIVE** in times of trouble
  
  2 Corinthians 4

- **PERSEVERANCE** in times of temptation
  
  John 14

- **PRIORITIES** when under pressure
  
  Matthew 6

Application / Discussion Questions:

1. Prior to today’s message, how would you rank your knowledge about heaven?

   Minimal
   
   Expert
   
   1 —————————————————— 10

2. What did you learn today that shifted your view of heaven? It’s importance? It’s attractiveness?

3. What relationship do you see between overcoming challenges/temptations and one’s view of heaven?

4. What are you facing today that requires perspective? Perseverance? Priorities?
Introduction: What’s your idea of heaven?

Review – A biblical overview* of heaven:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAST</th>
<th>PRESENT</th>
<th>FUTURE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 1-2</td>
<td>Genesis 3 – Revelation 20</td>
<td>Revelation 21-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original mankind</td>
<td>Fallen mankind; some believe and are transformed</td>
<td>Resurrected mankind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original earth</td>
<td>Fallen earth with glimmers of the original</td>
<td>New earth; resurrected on mankind’s coattails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God delegates earth’s reign to innocent mankind</td>
<td>Disputed reign with God, Satan, and fallen mankind</td>
<td>God delegates earth’s reign to righteous mankind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation and mankind are perfect</td>
<td>Creation and mankind are tainted by sin</td>
<td>Creation and mankind restored to perfection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mankind in ideal place</td>
<td>Mankind banished, struggles, and wanders in fallen places</td>
<td>Mankind restored to ideal place, but much improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God’s plan for mankind and earth revealed</td>
<td>God’s plan for mankind and earth delayed and enriched</td>
<td>God’s plan for mankind and earth realized</td>
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</table>

*From Randy Alcorn’s book *Heaven*
Question: What’s Heaven like?

What will heaven be like if you died today?  
Revelation 4-20

A moment after a believer dies...

1. Angels usher your soul to heaven.  
Luke 16:22

2. You immediately enter God’s presence.  
2 Corinthians 5:6-8

3. You are conscious, in command of your faculties of thinking, feeling, speech and memories.  
Luke 16:19-31

4. You participate in magnificent worship with angels and believers before the throne of God and Christ.  
Revelation 4-5

5. You are aware to some degree of activities and events on earth.  
Revelation 6:9-10  
Hebrews 11 & 12

6. You will recognize and communicate with believers who preceded you to heaven.  

7. You will be joined by all living Christians when Jesus “raptures” the Church from the earth to be judged for rewards at the Bema Seat. You will then enjoy the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven with Christ and His Bride.  
2 Corinthians 5:10  
Revelation 19:6-10

8. You will await God’s judgment of the earth at the end of the tribulation and will be bodily resurrected to reign and judge with Christ for 1,000 years on the earth.  
Revelation 20:4-6

9. You will witness the justice of God at the judgment of Satan, angels and the wicked dead at the Great White Throne.  
Revelation 20:11-15

10. You will witness the new heaven coming down on the new earth.  
Revelation 21:1
What will heaven be like in the new heaven and the new earth? Revelation 21-22

1) It will be a lot like the “new” ME.
   - Just as my body will be RESURRECTED 1 Corinthians 15:40-53
     so the earth will be RESTORED.
   - My new body will be like CHRIST’S. 1 John 3:2-3
   - Jesus’ resurrected body ATE and DRANK and
     had flesh and bone and new capabilities. Luke 24:39

2) It will be a lot like the old EARTH.
   - The new heaven and new earth is FAMILIAR. Revelation 21:1
   - The old earth “passes away” not ANNIHILATED. 2 Peter 3:8-9
   - Like the “old me” passed away, so will the old EARTH. 2 Corinthians 5:17
   - The new earth = New, better, different, but with continuity from the old earth.

Summary:
- As mankind was, so was the earth.
- As mankind went, so went the earth.
- As mankind will be, so will be the earth.
Two big questions for you:

1. Do you know for certain that you’ve trusted God’s plan and accepted Jesus’ sacrifice for your salvation?

2. On what are you focusing / how are you living today?

Discussion Questions:

1. What new fact about heaven or the intermediate heaven most surprised you? Why?

2. What about heaven give you the most comfort and hope? Why?

3. How does a specific and clear view of heaven impact how and why you live each day?

4. What are some of the sobering aspects of entrance into heaven and the justice of God’s judgment for those who reject Him?

Recommended Resources:
Book – *Heaven* by Randy Alcorn
Book – *The Glory of Heaven* by John MacArthur
CD Series – *The Revelation* by Chip Ingram
Introduction: “There’s no place like home.”

Have you ever wondered…

1. Will heaven be an actual place?
2. What will we look like in heaven?
3. Will heaven be boring?
4. What will we do for all eternity?
5. Will animals be in heaven?
6. Where will we live in heaven?
7. Who gets to go to heaven?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Earth (Eden)</th>
<th>Fallen Earth (Now)</th>
<th>New Earth (Heaven)</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>God visits mankind</td>
<td>Christ restores mankind</td>
<td>God lives with mankind forever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect environment</td>
<td>Creation groans (tornados, earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.)</td>
<td>Restored environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No sin</td>
<td>Sin and death</td>
<td>No sin or death – ever</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What will heaven be like on the new earth?

1. It will be a lot like the new me.
   - A **RESURRECTED** body  
     1 Corinthians 15:42-49
   - A **RESTORED** earth  
     Isaiah 65:17, 2 Peter 3:9-13

2. It will be a lot like the first earth.  
   - A perfect environment  
   - A tree of life  
   - A river, trees, fruit, food  
   - Animals, harmony, peace, beauty  
   - No death no shame, no curse  
   - No sin, no sorrow, no pain  
   - Meaningful work to accomplish  
   - Intimacy with God and people
3. It will be a lot different and infinitely better because we will have…

- A new kind of relationship with **GOD.**  
  Revelation 21:1-3

- A new kind of relationship with **SIN.**  
  Revelation 21:4-5

- A new kind of experience of complete **SATISFACTION.**  
  Revelation 21:6-8

- A new city and people to **ENJOY.**  
  Revelation 21:9-23

- A new earth with new **NATIONS,** commerce, culture, and capabilities **TO SERVE** and love our God.  
  Revelation 21:9 – 22:5

**Summary:** Behold I will make all things **NEW!**  
Revelation 21:5
Three very important questions for you:

1. Are you certain you are going to heaven? Why?  
   1 John 5:11-13

2. Do your current priorities and passions reveal an eternal or earthly prospective?  
   Have you considered the implications carefully?  
   Philippians 3:17-21

3. Are there people you care about who don’t know about heaven or how to get there?  
   How could God use you to help them?  
   Luke 19:10

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