

I've Got Questions about Heaven
#4 Home Coming or Foreign Country?
Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, May 14, 2006

Revelation 21:1-5 “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ ⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’”

I. Heaven Will be Better than Anything You've Experienced on Earth but Not Alien

God's not going to make **All New Things...** He's going to make **All Things New.**

Rev. 21:5 – ‘Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’

Randy Alcorn “By calling the New Earth Earth, God emphatically tells us it will be earthly, and thus familiar. Otherwise, why call it Earth? When Scripture speaks of a ‘new song,’ do we imagine it's wordless, silent, or without rhythm? Of course not. Why? Because then it wouldn't be a song. If I promised you a new car, would you say, ‘If it's new, it probably won't have an engine, transmission, doors, wheels, stereo, or upholstery’? If we buy a new car, we know it will be a better version of what we already have, our old car. Likewise, the New Earth will be a far better version of the old Earth.” *Heaven*, p. 158

We certainly don't have all the details we wish we did, but the Apostle John's terminology in **Rev. 21** gives us some clues...

- In **Rev. 21:1** he uses the Greek word ‘**Kainos**’ for **new**
- He could've used the word ‘**Neos**’ but he didn't. The word ‘neos’ also means new – but it carries with it the idea of ‘**new**’ as in ‘different’ or something ‘other.’
- And that's not what God wanted to communicate to us about heaven.
- In contrast to ‘**Neos**’ he used the word ‘**Kainos**’ which also means new – but it means **new** as in ‘renewed’ or ‘restored.’

Just as our current bodies are the blueprints for our resurrection bodies, this present earth is the blueprint for the New Earth. The new earth is going to be a renewed or restored version of this present earth.

II. Heaven will be Paradise Restored to the Glory of God and the Defeat of Satan

Romans 8:18-23 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³ Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”

Genesis 1&2 was paradise created...

Genesis 3 is paradise lost...

Revelation 21&22 is paradise restored!

Psalms 19:1-2 “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.”

John Calvin called creation “the theater of God’s glory.”

Nathan Bierma “The vastness, the beauty, and the intricacy of nature make it a glorious work of art. G.K. Chesterton called nature ‘a symphony that plays on whether or not I stop to listen.’ In fact, the Greek word kosmos, for ‘created order,’ can be translated as ‘beautiful arrangement.’ Why should this ever stop? Why bring this to an end? Why submit this labored-over masterpiece to a fiery demise rather than a dazzling rebirth? This tapestry does not exist for its own sake, just to be admired. Its grit and grandeur has a purpose... It has God’s fingerprints all over it.” *Bringing Heaven Down to Earth*, Bierma, p. 47-48

Heaven is going to be paradise restored... and set into motion for eternity... world without end!

Colossians 1:15-19 “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together... For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on the earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.”

Acts 3:19-21 “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you – even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through His holy prophets.”

Randy Alcorn “Christ proclaims from his throne on the New Earth: ‘Behold, I am making all things new’ (Revelation 21:5, ESV). It’s not just people who will be renewed but also the earth and ‘all things’ in it. Do ‘all things’ include animals? Yes, Horses, cats, dogs, deer, dolphins, and squirrels-as well as the inanimate creation-will be beneficiaries of Christ’s death and resurrection.

Christ’s emphasis isn’t on making new things but on making old things new. It’s not about inventing the unfamiliar but about restoring and enhancing the familiar. Jesus seems to be saying, ‘I’ll take all I made the first time, including people and nature and animals and the earth itself, and bring it back as new, fresh, and indestructible.’” **Heaven**, Randy Alcorn, p. 383

III. Heaven is What’s Making You So Homesick!

I Peter 1:1 “... God’s elect, aliens in the world, scattered...”

Philippians 3:20-21 “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

And nothing gets misdiagnosed more often than this homesickness for Heaven!

What we’re really aching for is the **person** we were made for – Jesus... and the **place** we were made for – Heaven. Right now you’re homesick... and nothing less than Christ and heaven’s going to satisfy you.

Conclusion:

- So where have you been looking for satisfaction?

Titus 2:13 “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Nathan Bierma writes, “... our preoccupation with the material numbs us to the reality of the immaterial, the transcendent, the eternal. Materialism trains us on the moment, the passing of desire, the good that will soon be gone when we want something else. Sellers do not want buyers to be mindful of eternity, since eternity is a distraction from our passing desires and thus a threat to their profits... Today we focus much more on the concrete and immediate... the more our lives are defined by what we can see and feel and obtain, the more we become numb to infinity... the coming of heaven.” **Bringing Heaven Down to Earth**, Bierma, p. 30-31

John 14:1-3, 6 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also... I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”