**What is Heaven really like?**

An outline on “Heaven” FROM Randy Alcorn’s book on this subject.

His book is 499 pages and most people do not have the time or energy to

read such a long book...**it is worth every page**!

I am going to provide headings and questions with outline style answers, plus scriptures that apply. As I am still reading the book, this article will continue to grow as I gain more material to share with you.

**CONTENTS**

**Part 1** – A Theology of heaven...7 sections.

**1**. REALIZING OUR DESTINY

 1. Are you looking forward to Heaven?

 Some people feel no joy when thinking about eternity in heaven. One pastor confessed that, “Whenever I think about heaven, it makes me depressed. I would rather just cease to exist when I die.” So sad! They say that they would be bored stiff praising God all day for eternity. Others think it is continuous church services over and over...how wrong they are. The Bible tells us what heaven will really be like! These types of people have failed to read and SEE what is written in the Bible. This concept of people with regard to life after death is so depressing! Nobody would want to go there if that is all there was. To change their thinking and show what heaven is really about is the purpose of this article, with the help of the book I am using, to explain what the truth is from the Bible.

 *While Christians still accept heaven as an article of faith their vigour in defining the nature of eternal life has much diminished. In spite of the current revival of religious interest in America and Europe, the desire to discuss the details of heavenly existence remains a low priority. COLLEEN MCDANNELL and BERNHARD LANG*

 2. Is Heaven beyond our imagination?

 We cannot anticipate or desire what we cannot imagine. The Bible has to fire up our imagination and kindle a desire for Heaven in our hearts. Satan discourages our imagination so that we will not desire Heaven. You need to look around you and imagine what everything would look like without sin, without death, without suffering or sickness and without corruption, perfect seasons and weather...like the Garden of Eden before the fall. That is just the start...more later.

 *A.J. Conyers argues that until recently the doctrine of Heaven was enormously important to the church. Belief in Heaven was not just a nice auxiliary sentiment, It was a central, life-sustaining conviction.*

*Sadly, even for countless Christians, that is no longer true.*

Teachers often get enmeshed in the different views of Hell, Israel and the church, the Tribulation, and the Millennium, leaving no time for discussing the New Heavens and New Earth...Heaven has fallen off our radar screens! How can we set our hearts on Heaven when we have an impoverished theology of Heaven? Why do we talk so little about Heaven—or to stay excited about it-- when they grow up? Why do we talk so little about Heaven? And why is the little we have to say so vague and lifeless?

 By the time this manuscript is finished I guarantee you will be longing to get there, the sooner the better! This study by Randy Alcorn is fantastic and is confirmed by many scriptures!

 *Most of us find it very difficult to want “heaven” at all—except in so far as “heaven” means meeting again our friends and family who have died...we have not been trained: our whole education tends to fix our minds on this world. C.S. LEWIS*

 *Until that time, I encourage you to meditate on the Bible’s truths about Heaven. May your imagination and your heart rejoice. RANDY ALCORN*

 3. Is Heaven our default destination. . . or is Hell our destination?

 Matthew 7:13-14: “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

 What would keep us out of heaven is universal: “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. “Sin separates us from a relationship with God.” Isaiah 59:2 God is so holy that he cannot allow sin into his presence: “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.” Habakkuk 1:13. Because we are sinners, we are not entitled to enter God’s presence. We cannot enter heaven as we are.

 So Heaven is NOT our default destination. No one goes there automatically. Unless our problem is resolved, the only place we will go is our true default destination. . .Hell. This subject is brought up now because the rest of this book is for the believers. Jesus has made it very clear that most people are NOT going to be in Heaven. It is too late to wait and see where you go when you die; your decision to become followers of Jesus Christ must take place BEFORE you die.

 Those who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior will have their name in “The Lamb’s Book of Life.” Only those recorded in His book of life will enter heaven. Rev. 21:27; Daniel 12:1.

 Since you could die at any given moment, it is imperative that you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior by asking Him to forgive you for your sins and committing your life to Him. Right away. Satan will whisper to you to wait and live the “good life” and worry about it later; that could be too late! Siding with Satan means spending eternity in Hell with him, the Lake of Fire, where all Satan and his believers will burn forever and ever, never dying! It is your choice! God forgives even the worst sinner as long as he is sincere and God knows the difference! This doctrine has the full support of many scriptures. It is terrible beyond belief, but when God says it will be that way, then that is what will happen to unbelievers. Remember, it is YOUR choice. Accept Jesus Christ now and join the believers in Heaven when that time comes.

 4. What you need to know and do.

 To sin is to fall short of God’s holy standards. Sin is what ended Eden’s paradise. All of us are born as sinners...*you* are a sinner. We are all born as sinners. Sins deceive us and makes us think that wrong is right and that right is wrong but its end is the way of eternal death. Proverbs 14:12

 Forgiveness is not automatic : God made him (Jesus Christ) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5:21; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8-9. This gift cannot be worked for, earned, or achieved in any sense. It depends solely on Christ’s generous and sufficient sacrifice on our behalf. We need Jesus the Savior. It is the person, God, who graciously gives us the place, Heaven.

 All that is required of you to do is to ask Jesus to forgive your sins and ask him to come into your heart to stay. God has seen us at our worse, but he still loves us, his creation, and forgives us, making us eligible to live in Heaven with him for eternity.

 Join a local church that serves Jesus Christ for fellowship and support, read your Bible regularly to learn more about all the wonderful things God has in store for faithful believers. Talk to him about all your troubles and problems. He hears and understands your problems and situations. Asked him for guidance in everything you do. He answers prayers for those who believe in him. When he seems far away, pray and worship God. He does not always do things in the way we expect, but he is always ready to hear from us.

 Warning! Being religious will not get you into heaven! Those who assume that their religious activities will get them into heaven have a terrible surprise ahead. God looks at your heart and knows exactly who you are and what you are doing. God wants you, not your activies only. He wants you to talk to him daily, reading you Bible faithfully and living to help others to know about him.

 **2**. UNDERSTANDING THE INTERMEDIATE HEAVEN

 5. What is the nature of the intermediate heaven?

 When a Christian dies, they enter into what theologians call the intermediate state, a transitional period between our past lives on Earth and our future resurrection to life on the New Earth. This location is a temporary one, a place where the souls of believers wait for their physical bodies to be resurrected when the rapture of all the current believers in earth takes place. **1Thessalonians 4:16-18.**

 Example: You buy a ticket to a distant city where you plan to retire. However, you decide to vacation for a couple of months at the first stop of your airplane. Does this mean it is your end location? No, it is a temporary place you are living until time to continue your journey to the original place on your ticket. That is where you will stay and live. That is your permanent stopping place to live.

 Current believers who die are often referred to as those who are asleep in Jesus. Their soul is separated temporarily from their body, but will be joined together again at the time of the rapture. God knows where every particle of our bodies are located and they will be gathered together and returned to the soul in a “twinkling of an eye” at the same time as the living believers are caught up into heaven to be with Jesus.

 6. Is the intermediate heaven a physical place?

 Yes! God is a spirit, but heaven is one of God’s creations. That is not his permanent dwelling place. God’s throne is in the third heaven. God is everywhere, but that does not mean his throne is in this intermediate heaven. The first heaven is the heavens of our natural earth. God’s throne is not here either, but his spirit is.

 God does not need a permanent dwelling place because he is a spirit; he is everywhere. Humans do need a dwelling place because we are not spirits. We have physical bodies with his spirit living within us, so we do need a dwelling place.

 The physical New Earth will be our dwelling place. We occupy space means we are also physical.

 7. What is life like in the intermediate heaven?

 It is possible that God has provided our souls with some sort of physical body during this period of time. We need bodies to function? The Bible is not clear about this aspect of the souls in heaven. If we are

Given intermediate forms, they are at best temporary vessels, distinct from our true bodies, which remain dead until our resurrection. They will know each other and others and will fellowship together while they wait for the rest of us to join them when we die...or the rapture takes place. Luke 16;19-31 This refers to Paradise which was the resting place for believers before Christ’s death and resurrection. When Jesus was resurrected, He went down into Paradise and took them with him up to the intermediate heaven to wait there for the rest of us. {Note: remember the book has 499 pages! There is much I am leaving out. If you want more details, I recommend you get the book; it is amazing and full of references and more info than I am providing you with in this article. This article is to give you an understanding—enough to wet your appetites for more information.}

 In Rev. 6:9-11 provides 21 brief observations concerning this passage and total subject. I will give you three of them; you see if you can find the other 18!

 1. (v9) When believers die on Earth, they are relocated to Heaven—righteous people made perfect.

 2. (v9) This includes all the people who were martyrs. .. because of their faith. Hebrews 12:23...

 3. (v9) Remembered for their testimony on earth—believers.

 4-10. (v10-15)

 11-21. (11) . . . See if you can find the rest of them yourself! The clues provide more things that we will know and experience at this stage. When I complete this article, I will give you the rest of them and you can see if you find the same things! Learn to SEE what you are actually reading! **Really seeing** helps you **see** all kinds of things in the Bible more clearly, enlarging your understanding.

**3**. GRASPING REDEMPTION’S FAR REACH

 8. This world is not our home...or is it?

 We are homesick for Eden, a perfect and beautiful earth with free and untainted relationships with God, each other, animals, and our environment. Every human progress has been an attempt to overcome what was lost in the Fall. This provides clues to the nature of the eternal heaven.

 Heaven is described as a city...Hebrews 11: 10; 13:14. Heaven is also described as a country...

Hebrews 11:16. It is logical to believe cities and countries have governing people, working people, etc. So it must be that Heaven will have both; believers will occupy the cities and countries. Cities have buildings, gatherings, conversations and work. Countries have territories, rulers, national interests, pride in their identity, and citizens who are both diverse and unified.

 This world is our home but is now in a fallen state. We hear echoes of Eden and the approaching footfalls of the New Earth.

 Earth matters, our bodies matter, animals and trees matter, *matter* matters, because God created them and intends them to manifest his glory. God has not given up on creation and he has not given up on us.

 9. Why is earth’s redemption essential to God’s plan?

The entire physical universe was created for God’s glory. Humanity rebelled, and the universe fell under the weight of our sin. Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God, but God was not caught by surprise. He knew they would sin and had a plan already in place by which he could redeem mankind—and all of creation—from sin, corruption and death. Jesus promises to make all things new, including the earth.

Isaiah 65:15; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1. There are many more passages, find them using your concordance. God’s redemptive plan climaxes not at the return of Christ, not in the millennium kingdom, but on the final New Earth. Revelation 21:1-4.

 10. What will it mean for the curse to be lifted?

 “No longer will there be any curse.” Revelation 22:3. NO MORE CURSE!!! What can we anticipate?

No more hard toil in farming, no more weeds, thorns or thistles. The crops and forests, etc. will all function perfectly as they did in the days of Eden! Genesis 3:17. Unencumbered by sin, human activity will lead naturally to a prosperous and magnificent culture. We will glorify God by developing skills in all fields of endeavour, even sports? Why not? All businesses will prosper, no more hunger and thirst. No more jealousy and hate. Love for one another will please God and is one way of worshipping him! I will not list all the possibilities that are possible. Use your imaginations...a world without sin and evil...an earth to explore and enjoy without fear of wild animals. No more preying for food; all animals will eat grass and herbs of the fields. In the garden of Eden animals and birds could talk in human language(remember the snake that talked to Eve and caused the curse in the first place? They lost speech in the curse. (See Jubilees in the Dead Sea Scrolls for more on this one.)

 We can continue all our artistic talents and improve them. God created mankind to learn and grow in all areas of activities. You will be able to fulfil some of your earthly wishes, such as travel around all God’s wonderful new earth. How about being able to sit down and chat with all the famous people and patriarchs of the Bible. What a pleasure is ahead for believers who trust in God for their salvation and future.

 There will be no more death, sorrow or illness, no more twisted bodies—everyone will be whole and new. Foods will have all the nutrition we need! No more medicines, doctors and hospitals. They will have to get a new trade.

**4**. ANTICIPATING RESURRECTION

 11. Why is resurrection so important?

 The physical resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of redemption—both for mankind and for the earth. Without his resurrection there will be no fully restored earth and there would be no Christianity. The resurrection is physical. Jesus physically went up to heaven in front of many witnesses. Our resurrection will be sudden, in a twinkling of an eye.

 Conversion does not mean eliminating the old but transforming it. Despite the radical changes that occur through salvation, death, and resurrection, we remain who we are. We have the same history, appearance, memory, interests, and skills. This is the principle of *redemptive continuity*. God will not scrap his original creation and start over. It was good before the Fall. Instead he will take his fallen, corrupted children and restore, refresh, and renew us to our original design. Satan cannot and never will defeat God. He will keep trying until the end. . .his end in the Lake of Fire.

 When we receive our resurrected bodies, we will no doubt have some welcome surprises!

 12. Why does all creation await our resurrection?

 All the creation waits for and anticipates resurrection.

Romans 8:19-23 AMP – For [even the whole] creation [all nature] waits eagerly for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration and futility, not willingly [fault on its part], but by the will of Him who subjected it, in hope [Eccl. 1:2] that the creation itself will also be freed from its bondage to decay [and gain entrance] into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

 For we know that the whole creation has been moaning together as in the pains of childbirth until now. [Jer. 12:4, 11]

 And not only this, but we too, who have the first fruits of the Spirit [a joyful indication of the blessings to come], even we groan inwardly, as we wait [at the resurrection] eagerly for [the sign of] our adoption as sons—the redemption and transformation of our body [at the resurrection]. [2 Cor. 5:2, 4; Eph. 4:30]

 Is it possible that the Fall affected all the universes? Astrology shows terrible collisions all over the universes. If so, the redemption of mankind could also become the redemption of the universes. We might even rule and reign with Christ over universes, not just our earth. . . just an interesting thought!

 13. How far-reaching is the resurrection?

 The resurrection of our deeds! Anticipating eternal life as resurrected beings in a resurrected universe has present practical implications.

 [I Cor 15:58AMP] Therefore [in light of our eventual resurrection], my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourself to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor is not in vain. [1 Cor 15:58] God knows and remembers all our deeds; we will be rewarded accordingly at the throne of judgment.

 How do we know that our labor in the Lord is not in vain? Because of our bodily resurrection. Just as we will be carried over from the old world, so will our labor. In a sense, not only our bodies but our service for Christ will be resurrected.

**5**. SEEING THE EARTH RESTORED

 14. Where and when will our deliverance come?

 This brings in a discussion about the PREMILLENNIUM period by some and A MILLENNIUM by others. The Millennium is 1000 literal years that will follow the 7 years of the “Great Tribulation.” I am not going to get into this at this point; it does not change anything recorded above! At the end of the millennium period there will be a final war between God and Satan, with his fallen angels. Satan loses and he and his angels will be sent into the Lake of Fire.

 At this point God will restore the earth, and the universes. . .Heaven will come down and settle on the New Earth. More will be explained later in this article.

 15. Will the old earth be destroyed...or renewed?

 [Rev 21:1AMP] 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. Answer – RENEWED.

 16. Will the new earth be familiar...like home?

 God, in His wisdom, knows mankind better than we know ourselves. He assures us we are coming home to the place we always were meant to live...before the Fall.

 It will be more like home than here on earth! All our believing friends and relatives will be there and what a family reunion that will be! Think of the hugs and sharing stories we will experience! That is just a start! We will see Jesus and experience His glorious presence and love...it will be like home.

 It is possible Jesus has many other things in store for us to surprise us; a new home, a new name and a whole new life. Using your imagination, you can envision visiting all the past famous people and leaders as if you knew them all your life and have wonderful conversations, travel around the world and admire all the beauty. Play with and enjoy wild animals, birds and other creatures without fear. There will no longer be preying animals; they will eat grass and foliage like they originally were intended to do. Fishing will be exciting and plentiful...on and on we can go. We will know for sure when we get there, but we are told to watch and wait for the coming of Jesus for His bride in the meantime. There are many scriptures for these things, so I will let you look them up for yourselves...or buy this book. It is a long one and very interesting.

**6**. CELEBRATING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

 17. What will it mean to see God?

 God is the One we really long for! His presence brings satisfaction. God’s greatest gift to us is, and always will be, himself.

 Moses saw God, but not His face. The New Testament says that God “lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see.”[1 Tim 6:16AMP] To see God’s face was unthinkable. [ Rev.22:4AMP]

It’s only because we will be fully righteous in Christ, completely sinless, that we will be able to see God and live. To see God will be our greatest joy, the joy by which all others will be measured.

 18. What will it mean for God to dwell among us?

 We will not have to leave home to visit God, nor will God leave home to visit us. God and mankind will live together forever in the same home—the New Earth.

 The marriage of the God of Heaven with the people of Earth will also bring the marriage of Heaven and Earth. Nothing will separate us from God.

 Our intimate link with Christ in his redemptive work makes us inseparable from him, even now. As we walk with him and commune with him in this world, we experience a faint foretaste of Heaven’s delight and wonder.

 19. How will we worship God?

 Many Christians have come to depreciate or ignore the beautific vision, supposing that beholding God would be of mere passing interest, becoming monotonous over time. Seeing God will be dynamic, not static. It will mean exploring new beauties, unfolding new mysteries--forever. We’ll explore God’s being, an experience delightful beyond comprehension.

 In heaven, we’ll be at home with the God we love and who loves us wholeheartedly. Lovers do not bore each other. People who love God could never be bored in his presence. To see God is to participate in the infinite delight of he triune Godhead! We can commune with him privately or corporately, anytime we desire to do so! There is much more to know and see!

**7**. RULING ON THE NEW EARTH

 20. What does God’s eternal kingdom involve?

 Jesus is the King of the New Earth and the believers of Jesus Christ are the bride! That is us! We belong to Jesus Christ; he is part of the triune Godhead. Jesus provides us a dwelling place in the New Jerusalem. It is 1400 cubic miles in size and there is a home for each of the believers. This house is referred to as the New Jerusalem. Jesus will rule and reign from this city, which is also our home. During the millennium years, we shall live here with Him. At the end of the millennium years, Jesus Christ will face Satan and his army one more time and defeat him. The believers will ride on white horses behind Jesus in the sky and we will watch Him strike the army and kill them all. The birds of the air are called in for a feast. Satan and his fallen angels will be thrown into the Lake of Fire, along with the resurrected unbelievers. .. a horrible ending. God warned them; they would not listen. Too late now; they are gone forever.

 There are many scriptures for all of the above.

 21. Will we actually Rule with Christ?

 God gave management of the earth to Adam and Eve but they disobeyed God and failed. In the New Earth the believers will be given management of the New Earth. This time they will not be able to fail.

 “He himself {Jesus)} shall dwell here in prosperity, and his descendants shall inherit the earth.”[Psa 25:13] “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” [Gal 3:29] After our bodily resurrection, we shall inherit a physical inheritance. He has uniquely created and gifted us to handle such responsibilties.