



Heaven: Questions & Answers

TAGE KLINT

1/28/2024

Class Logistics

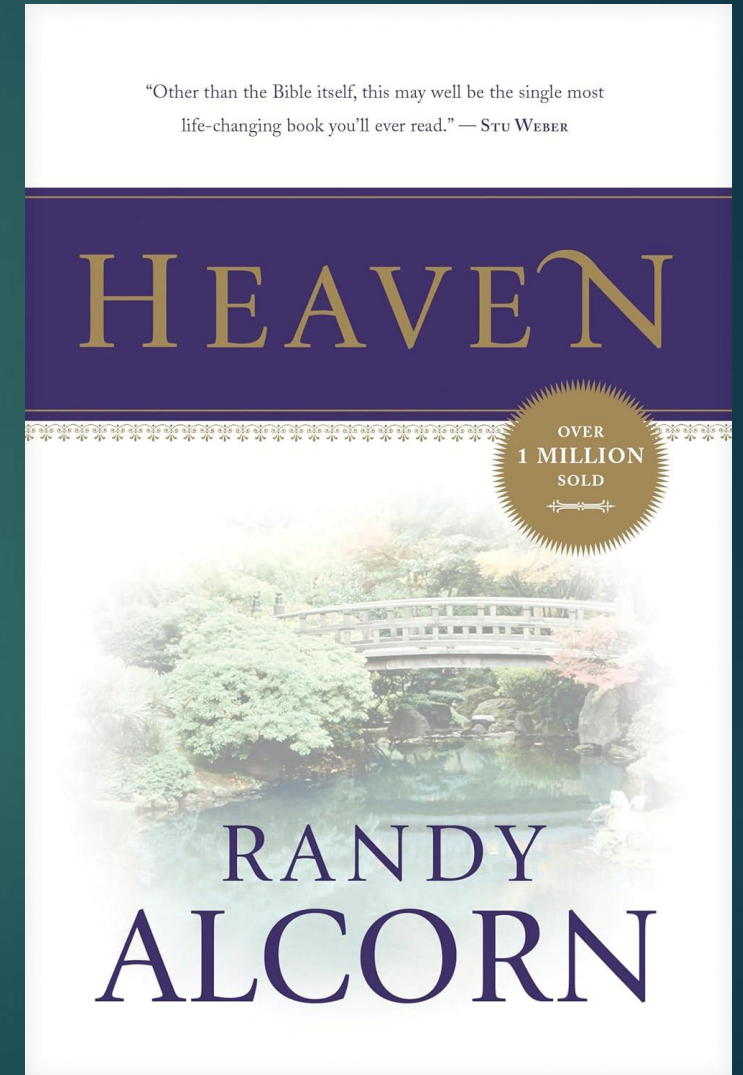
Logistics

Three-week class on heaven

- ▶ ~~Week 1: Theology of heaven~~
- ▶ Week 2: Heaven Q&A session ← You Are Here!
- ▶ Week 3: Living in light of heaven

Heaven by Randy Alcorn

- ▶ Much of this class draws from *Heaven* by Randy Alcorn
- ▶ Highly recommend
- ▶ There is a shorter booklet with the same name that covers essential material.
- ▶ Great place to start for further reading.
- ▶ Find in church library, local library, bookstores, Christianbook.com, Amazon, friends house...



Class Pedagogy

Appeal to Imagination & Intellect

- ▶ Truth will be presented
 - ▶ I will note what should be classified as “likely”, “reasonable”, or “best guess”
- ▶ Thinking about heaven requires “Divine Imagination”
 - ▶ “Color in the picture”
 - ▶ Add fullness, while staying inside the lines
 - ▶ Call of heaven appeals to a deeper part of us
 - ▶ Give that part space to think about a better world without temporal limits
- ▶ Today we will cover “mechanics” of heaven
 - ▶ Look at “What”, and “How”
 - ▶ Engineering that makes supports the Architecture

Let's Get Started



Last Week Key Points Recap!

Key Points

Heaven is....

- ▶ Real
 - ▶ Our True Home
 - ▶ New & Sin Free
 - ▶ Positive
 - ▶ Exciting
-
- ▶ If you forgot everything about last weeks class, remember these!

Discussion Heaven

- ▶ Any discussion about heaven and the future requires a dose of divine imagination.
- ▶ Like many topics, the *Bible* provides information about Heaven.
 - ▶ Covers what we *definitely* need to know
 - ▶ Real, Our True Home, New, Sin Free, Positive, Exciting
 - ▶ Does not provide full details
 - ▶ If we know how great heaven is going to be, we'd all be looking for an early exit.
 - ▶ Why we have this class 😊

4 Categories of Answers

- ▶ YES!
- ▶ NO!
- ▶ Probably!
- ▶ Sure, why not!



4 Categories of Answers

▶ YES!

- ▶ Questions where the answer is clearly stated in *Bible*.
- ▶ My grandma believed in Jesus as her savior, will she be in heaven? – YES!

▶ NO!

- ▶ Questions where the answer is clearly stated in the *Bible*.
 - ▶ Will we be married in heaven? – NO!
- ▶ Questions that go against the nature of heaven described in the *Bible*.
 - ▶ Will we float on clouds and strum harps in heaven? – NO!

4 Categories of Answers

▶ Probably!

- ▶ Using wisdom and logic to apply Scripture, our understanding of original creation, and general knowledge, we can reasonably conclude an answer.
 - ▶ Will there be guitars in heaven? – Probably!

▶ Sure, why not!

- ▶ Questions the *Bible* is silent on, but do not go against the nature of heaven.
- ▶ It is impossible to determine, but if the answer is “no” it will be replaced by something better.
- ▶ Will there be McDonald’s cheeseburgers in heaven? – Sure, why not.
- ▶ Important for us to build excitement for heaven.
 - ▶ Broken human creativity has designed amazing worlds
 - ▶ Lord of the Rings, MCU, Star Wars
 - ▶ How much more amazing will the New Heaven and New Earth be which are designed by the most creative being ever using pure materials.



Q: Why a New Earth?

DON'T WE ALL JUST GO TO HEAVEN AND CALL IT GOOD?

New Earth Logic



Purpose of New Earth

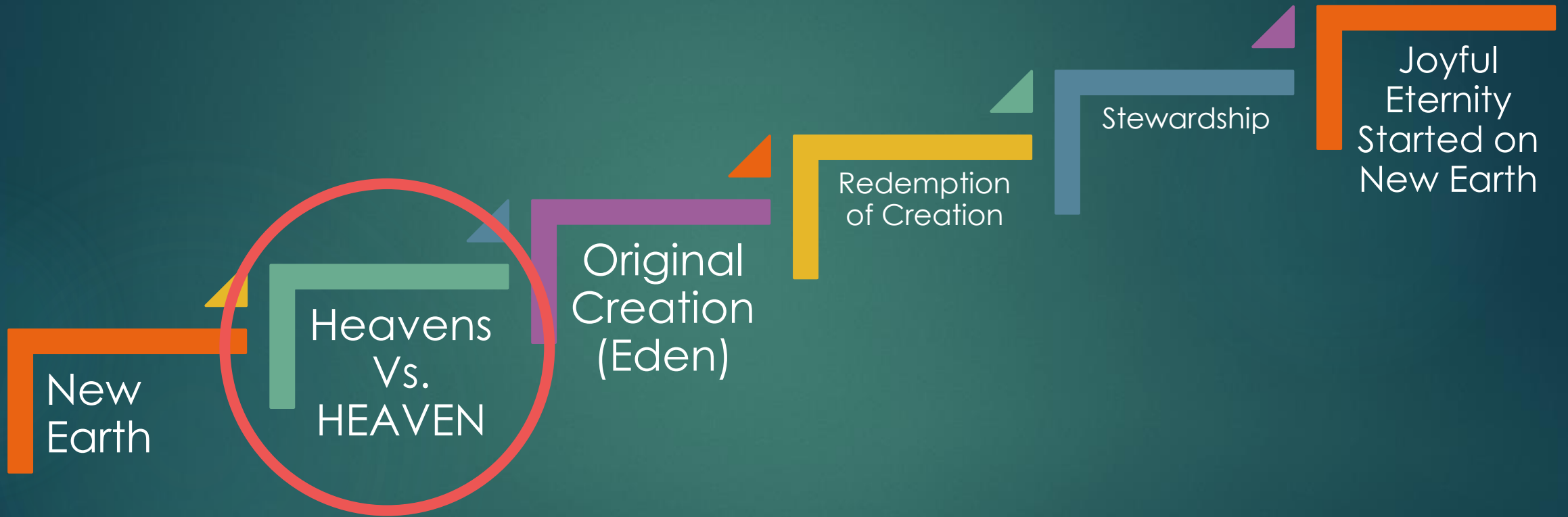
▶ New Earth is our Eternal Home

▶ Revelation 21:1-3

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² I also saw the holy city, **the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God**, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

³ Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, **God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples**, and **God himself will be with them and will be their God.**

New Earth Logic



Heavens vs HEAVEN!

- ▶ Heavens = Cosmos
 - ▶ Space
 - ▶ Milky Way galaxy, Sun, Moon, Stars

- ▶ HEAVEN!
 - ▶ Place where God Dwells
 - ▶ Currently unknown location
 - ▶ Intermediate Heaven
 - ▶ Angels, Throne Room, Stephen saw it when he was martyred

Heavens

- ▶ Heavens = Cosmos
- ▶ Ancient Hebrew does not have a word for “Cosmos”
 - ▶ Genesis 1:1 – “heavens and the earth”
 - ▶ Mean universe
 - ▶ Same idea that “The Law and The Prophets” means the entire Hebrew Bible
- ▶ References to “new heavens” meaning a new creation of the cosmos or space
 - ▶ Old Testament
 - ▶ Isaiah 65:17a - “See, I will create new heavens and a new earth”
 - ▶ Isaiah 66:22 – ““For just as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make”
 - ▶ New Testament
 - ▶ 2 Peter 3:13 – “13 But based on his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.”

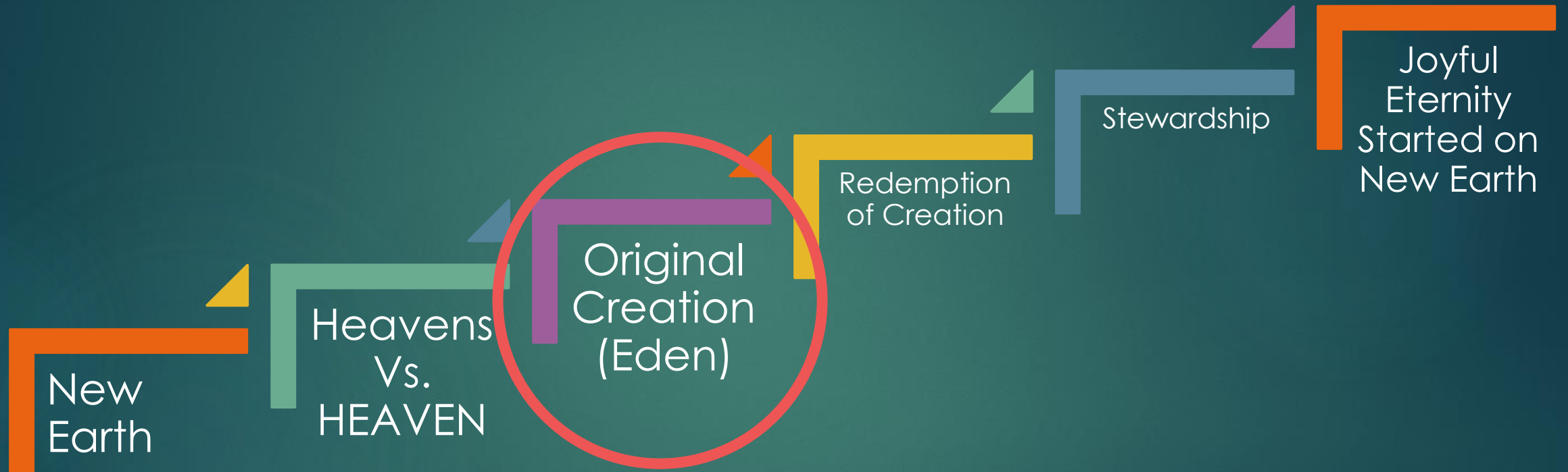
HEAVEN!

- ▶ Where God dwells
 - ▶ Matthew 6:9: “Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy”
 - ▶ Isaiah 66:1: “This is what the Lord says: Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool.”
- ▶ Physical location is currently unknown
 - ▶ “Up” – Jesus ascended into heaven, Jesus came “down” to earth
 - ▶ Isaiah 40:22: “God is enthroned above the circle of the earth; its inhabitants are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like thin cloth and spreads them out like a tent to live in.”
- ▶ Angels & dead believers are currently there.

HEAVEN!

- ▶ Current HEAVEN is not “fixed”
- ▶ Heaven moves
 - ▶ Revelation 21 & 22
 - ▶ God comes down to live with humanity on earth
 - ▶ That makes New Earth “Heaven”
- ▶ Does not mean God is limited to New Earth
 - ▶ God is omnipresent
- ▶ Does not mean new earth is all there is for us

New Earth Logic



Return to Eden

- ▶ New Earth can be considered a Return to Eden
- ▶ World created without sin or corruption
 - ▶ God called his creation “Good”
 - ▶ Genesis 1:4, 1:10, 1:12, 1:17, 1:21, 1:25
 - ▶ Genesis 1:31: “God saw all that he had made, and it was **very good indeed.**”

Original Paradise

- ▶ After God creates the world, he purposefully plants a garden.
 - ▶ Genesis 2:8-9: “8 **The Lord God planted a garden in Eden**, in the east, and there he placed the man he had formed. 9 The Lord God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”
- ▶ The *Bible* does not spend much time on Eden
 - ▶ 16 verses between the 7th day of rest and the fall story
 - ▶ Planting – 2
 - ▶ Rivers – 4
 - ▶ Adam's job – 1
 - ▶ Warning about Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil – 2
 - ▶ Creation of Eve – 7

Fall happens right after, and Eden is lost forever

Paradise Lost

- ▶ 22 verses after God plants the Garden of Eden, Adam & Eve eat the fruit and sin enters the world
 - ▶ Genesis 2:8-3:6
- ▶ Sin twisted the world
- ▶ Eden and all it represented was lost
 - ▶ Direct physical communion with God
 - ▶ Perfection
 - ▶ Order
 - ▶ Goodness
 - ▶ Rule over creation
 - ▶ Mutual teamwork with creation

New Earth Logic



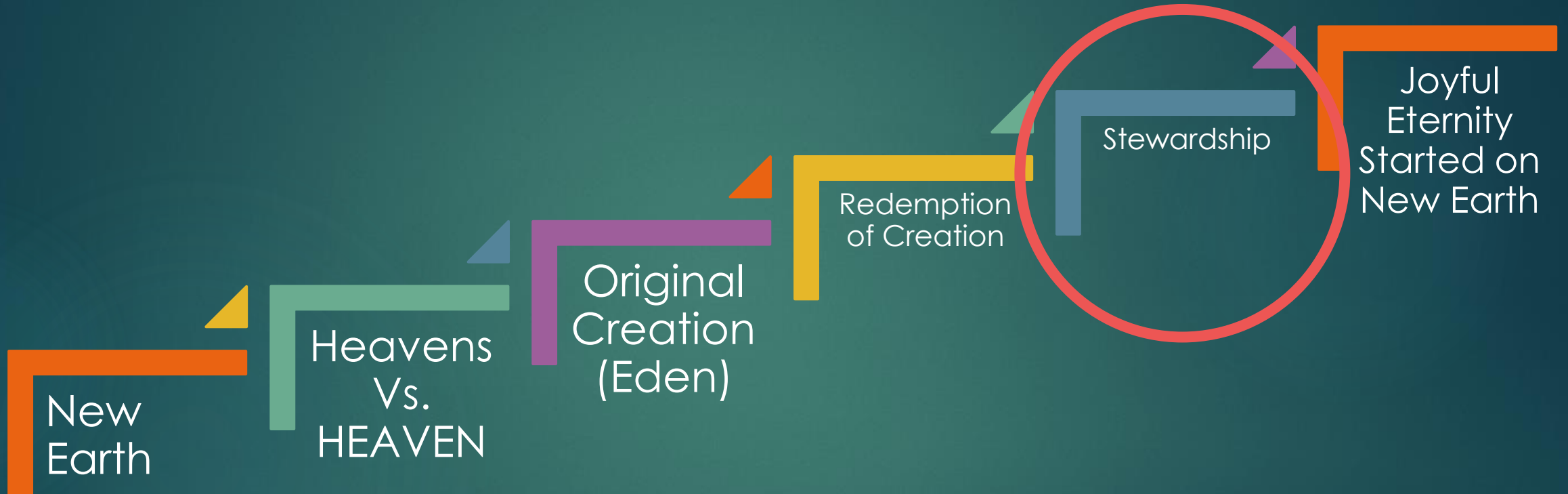
Current Earth is Damaged

- ▶ All creation is twisted by sin
- ▶ Current problems
 - ▶ Environmental damage
 - ▶ Rising sea levels/ shrinking aquifers
 - ▶ Extreme hot & cold temperatures
- ▶ Future problems
 - ▶ After the tribulation, the earth will be a wreck
 - ▶ Revelation 17 (after the 7th Bowl)
 - ▶ 17 Then the seventh poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder. And **a severe earthquake occurred like no other since people have been on the earth**, so great was the quake. 19 The great city split into three parts, and the **cities of the nations fell**. Babylon the Great was remembered in God's presence; he gave her the cup filled with the wine of his fierce anger. 20 **Every island fled**, and the **mountains disappeared**. 21 **Enormous hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, fell from the sky** on people, and they blasphemed God for the plague of hail because that plague was extremely severe.
- ▶ Tempting to think that earth and creation is too far gone to be restored

Final Redemption of Creation

- ▶ God is omnipotent
- ▶ Bigger, stronger, able to do more than we can ask or imagine
 - ▶ Applies to restoring creation
- ▶ God will redeem all of creation
 - ▶ Romans 8:19-21: “19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the **creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.**”
 - ▶ Isaiah 65:17: “¹⁷ **“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.**”
- ▶ Belief in God’s ability to create a perfect, restored, world requires faith
- ▶ Belief that this new creation is a good place to spend eternity also requires faith

New Earth Logic



Mankind's Original Mission

- ▶ Steward the earth
 - ▶ Genesis 1:28-29: God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and **subdue** it. **Rule** the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.” 29 God also said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, 30 for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth—everything having the breath of life in it—I have given[h] every green plant for food.”
 - ▶ Genesis 2:15: 15 The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden **to work it and watch over it.**
- ▶ Subdue/Rule/Dominion vs. Steward
 - ▶ Not intended to be dominating, damaging, or authoritarian
 - ▶ Caretaking
 - ▶ Allowing creation to expand, grow, and help it become everything God intended

Made in God's Image

- ▶ God made humans in his image to accomplish our task
- ▶ Genesis 1:26
 - ▶ 26 Then God said, “**Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.** They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.”
- ▶ Creative
 - ▶ Desire to invent, combine, make new
- ▶ Critical thinking
 - ▶ Problem solving, curious,

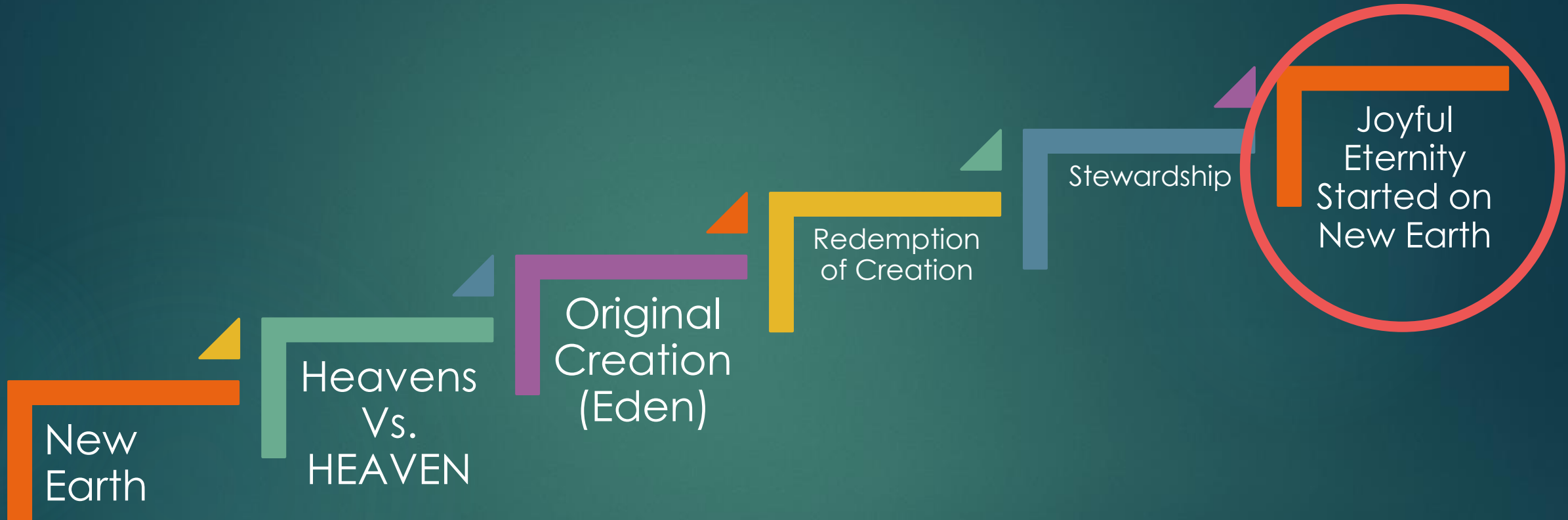
Mankind's Heavenly Mission

- ▶ We will have ruling responsibilities in Heaven
 - ▶ 1 Corinthians 6:2: “2 Or don't you know that **the saints will judge the world?**”
 - ▶ 2 Timothy 2:12: “if we endure, **we will also reign with him;**”
 - ▶ Revelation 5:9b-10: “and you purchased people for God by your blood from every tribe and language and people and nation. 10 **You made them a kingdom** and priests to our God, and **they will reign on the earth.**”
- ▶ Rule in the manner of Jesus
 - ▶ Care for creation
 - ▶ Love for creation
 - ▶ Train creation to work for his glory
 - ▶ Does not abuse creation

Elements of Stewardship

- ▶ Good Stewardship
 - ▶ Caretaking
 - ▶ Treat the item as a gift
 - ▶ Return in better shape than it was given
- ▶ Sin has caused us to be poor stewards of a broken earth
- ▶ Heaven we will be righteous stewards of new redeemed earth
- ▶ God made man in his own image
 - ▶ Creative
 - ▶ Desire to invent, combine, make new
 - ▶ Critical thinking
 - ▶ Problem solving

New Earth Logic



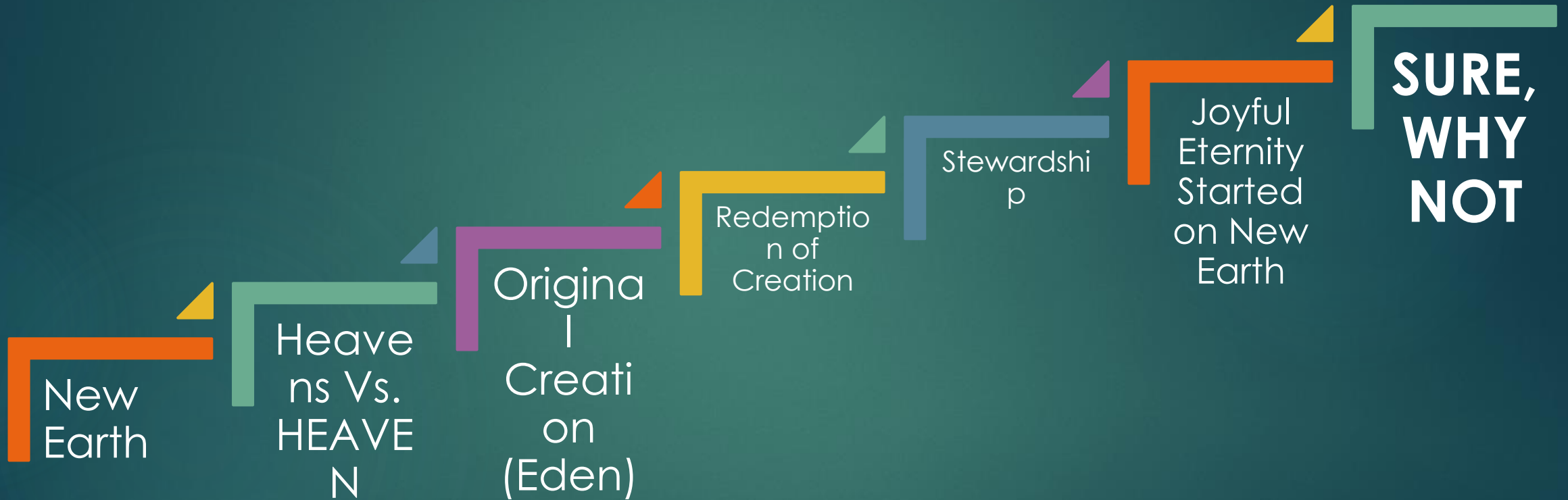
Heaven is what you make it

- ▶ God's original instructions were:
 - ▶ Be Fruitful
 - ▶ Multiply
 - ▶ Subdue (and steward) the earth
 - ▶ God wanted humans to care for and expand Eden
- ▶ Same idea God will want us to care for and create in the New Heaven
 - ▶ Righteous minds will use righteous materials to create righteous new things

Heaven is what you make it

- ▶ **Heaven is not static – it is dynamic**
- ▶ God never condemns humanity for technological improvements
 - ▶ 1 Corinthians 10:31: "31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God."
 - ▶ Jesus is a carpenter
 - ▶ Carpenter inherently requires technology
 - ▶ Hammer, saw, nails, files
 - ▶ All technological advances
 - ▶ Require metallurgy to create
 - ▶ Build technology to make people's lives easier
 - ▶ Yoke, plow, chair, table
 - ▶ Bronze in the temple requires technology
 - ▶ Bronze requires heat, different amounts of copper & tin

New Earth Conclusion



Sure, Why Not

- ▶ New Earth is a greater version of the original Eden
 - ▶ Walled city is a greater version of a hedged garden
- ▶ God created man to steward Eden
- ▶ God created man to steward the New Earth
- ▶ God is fine with technological advancement

- ▶ Opens up many “Sure, Why Not” Questions
 - ▶ How will we find our loved ones?
 - ▶ Heavenly Facebook? Phone Directory? Ask Jesus?
 - ▶ In his book, Alcorn makes a convincing argument that we will ultimately expand past the new earth and colonize other planets.

Speed Round of Questions

SORRY, I RAN OUT OF TIME 😞

Speed Questions

- ▶ Will we eat food?
 - ▶ YES!
 - ▶ Wedding banquet of the Lamb, tree of life gives 12 harvests of fruit

- ▶ Will I recognize my loved ones?
 - ▶ YES!
 - ▶ Peter was able to recognize Moses and Elijah during the Transfiguration
 - ▶ Disciples recognized the risen Jesus
 - ▶ Probably look different from earth, but recognizable

Speed Questions

- ▶ Will we sleep in heaven?
 - ▶ Rest – YES!
 - ▶ Sleep – Sure, Why Not.
- ▶ What will the weather be like?
 - ▶ Probably! all types of weather. God made many biomes on earth with different weather, so there will likely be places with snow, wind
 - ▶ Whatever the weather, we know it will not fight the earth like tornados, hurricanes, etc.
- ▶ Where is Heaven?
 - ▶ Currently “Up” – no one knows where the intermediate heaven is
 - ▶ Future Heaven will be on the New Earth

Speed Questions

- ▶ Do we go straight to heaven and judgement or is there a waiting period?
 - ▶ You go straight to intermediate heaven when you die.
 - ▶ There is no waiting period.
 - ▶ Jesus to the thief on the cross: Today you will be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43)
- ▶ Will we be able to interact directly with God?
 - ▶ YES! God the Son, Jesus, second person of the Trinity.
 - ▶ NO! Most commentators say humans will not interact directly with God the Father.

Speed Questions

- ▶ Will my pets be there?
 - ▶ Sure, Why Not.
 - ▶ YES! Animals will be in heaven.
 - ▶ Isaiah 11:6-9, 65:25 make explicit references to animals in the New Earth
- ▶ How will we locate & travel to see everyone?
 - ▶ Sure, Why Not.
 - ▶ First Class air travel in an Airbus A380
 - ▶ Heavenly Facebook
 - ▶ The *Bible* does not tell us the mechanics of how we will be able to see and find people, but we will be able to.

Speed Questions

- ▶ Will our concepts of beauty change?
 - ▶ YES!
 - ▶ New Earth is so much more than the old earth the same way the Pacific Ocean is more than a glass of water
- ▶ When does it all begin?
 - ▶ At the exact right moment.
 - ▶ No one knows the data or time, but regardless when it begins, we will love it forever.

Conclusion

- ▶ God will dwell on the New Earth.
- ▶ Making the New Earth the New HEAVEN!
- ▶ God will want us to steward the New Earth and possibly beyond.
- ▶ There are a lot of “Sure, Why Not” questions, and they all point to a wonderful place beyond our wildest imaginations.

Heaven is....

- ▶ Real
- ▶ Our True Home
- ▶ New & Sin Free
- ▶ Positive
- ▶ Exciting