



Theology of Heaven

TAGE KLINT

1/28/2024

Class Logistics

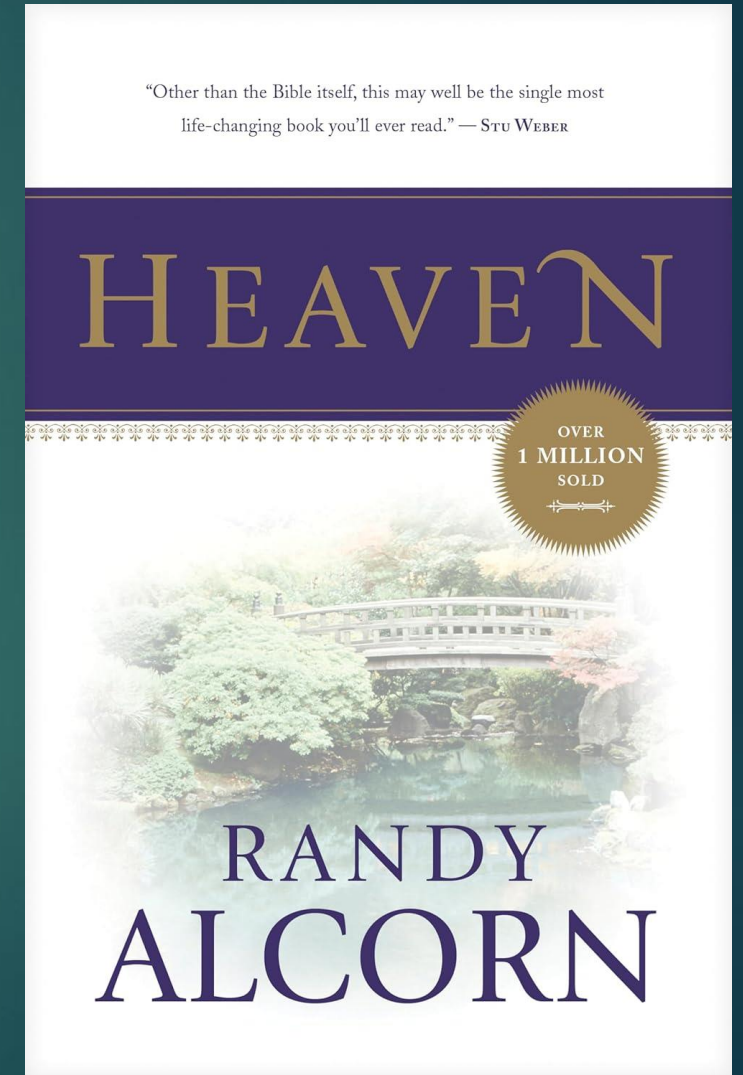
Logistics

- ▶ Three-week class on heaven
- ▶ Week 1: Theology of heaven
- ▶ Week 2: Heaven Q&A session
- ▶ Week 3: Living in light of heaven

- ▶ Q&A Session Next Week!
- ▶ Ask questions, so I do not have to make them up.
- ▶ 4 ways to ask:
 - ▶ 1) Write it on the question paper at your tables
 - ▶ 2) Email the church office: northsub@northsub.com
 - ▶ 3) Text questions to (224) 300-0240
 - ▶ 4) Post on Realm

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 & Emotion

- ▶ 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 I will appeal to emotions first to build excitement about heaven.
 - ▶ Goal is to “stir the soul” like great art.
 - ▶ Today is Architecture
 - ▶ Next week is Engineering
 - ▶ Questions will be critical for next week

Let's Get Started

Table Setting Discussion Questions

- ▶ What do you think of when you hear the word heaven?
- ▶ What do your unsaved friends, family, neighbors think of when they hear heaven?
- ▶ How does our culture portray heaven?

Key Points

Key Points

Heaven is....

- ▶ Real
 - ▶ Our True Home
 - ▶ New & Sin Free
 - ▶ Positive
 - ▶ Exciting
-
- ▶ If you forget everything else about this class, remember these.

Heaven is Real

Heaven is real

▶ References to heaven book end the Bible.

- ▶ Genesis 1:1: **In the beginning God created the heavens** and the earth.
- ▶ Revelation 21:1 **Then I saw a new heaven** and a new earth; **for the first heaven** and the first earth had passed away,

▶ Jesus spoke about it as a real place

- ▶ John 14:2-3: ²In my Father's house are many rooms. **If it were not so, would I have told you** that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.

▶ Angels spoke about heaven as real

- ▶ **Acts 1:10-11:** ¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you **into heaven**, will come back in the same way you have seen him go **into heaven.**"

Present and Future Heaven

- ▶ Heaven in 2 stages
 - ▶ Present or Intermediate Heaven
 - ▶ Where we go when we die
 - ▶ Future Heaven
 - ▶ “New Heaven & New Earth”

Intermediate Heaven

- ▶ “Current” heaven - where believers go when they die
- ▶ **Wonderful because Jesus is there!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
- ▶ Physical place
 - ▶ Stephen sees it before he is stoned
 - ▶ “Paradise” – idea of a walled garden, something cared for and managed
- ▶ Temporary place
 - ▶ Connecting airport on your flight to a final destination
- ▶ We have consciousness and some physical properties
 - ▶ Lazarus & the Rich Man. Jesus to the Thief on the cross, martyrs before the altar in Revelation
- ▶ Judgement of faith
 - ▶ Separating sheep & goats, not Final Judgement of works & rewards

New Heaven & New Earth

- ▶ At the end of the Thousand Year Kingdom God remakes creation brand new
 - ▶ Revelation 21:1-2
 - ▶ 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.
 - ▶ Isaiah 65: 17
 - ▶ “See, **I will create new heavens and a new earth.**
The former things will not be remembered,
nor will they come to mind.
- ▶ We will unpack the significance of “new” later.



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Through some unfortunate celestial error, Ernie is sent to Hog Heaven.

Heaven is Our True Home

True Home

▶ You are made for heaven

- ▶ Ecclesiastes 3:11: ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. **He has also set eternity in the human heart;** yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. (NIV)
- ▶ There is amazing joy when something does what it is made to do.
 - ▶ Golden retriever chasing a ball
 - ▶ Jon Bon Jovi playing a rock show

▶ Earth is an airport terminal; We are waiting for our final flight to depart.

- ▶ Hebrews 13:14: **For here we have no lasting city,** but we seek the city that is to come. (ESV)
- ▶ Philippians 3:20: **Our citizenship is in heaven,** and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why do we forget our true home?

▶ The visual world around us

- ▶ Matthew 24:1: As Jesus left and was going out of the temple, his disciples came up and called his attention to its buildings.
- ▶ Story of Peter walking on water
 - ▶ The wind and the waves distracted him and took his eyes off Jesus.

▶ Life in the North Shore is pretty good

- ▶ We have ability to create heaven on earth
 - ▶ Parable of the rich fool “I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones...”
- ▶ Not criticizing wealth, success, or North Shore culture
- ▶ We need to be aware

▶ Lack of correct knowledge

- ▶ Explain Disney World to a Mongolian shepherd

Heaven is New & Sin Free

Sin Stained World

Sin has twisted everything in the world

- ▶ Obvious evidence:
 - ▶ Relationship with God:
 - ▶ Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin is death...
 - ▶ Relationship with others
 - ▶ Kids pick on each other on the playground
 - ▶ Genesis 3:6-Revelation 20:15
 - ▶ Relationship with self
 - ▶ Romans 7:15 ¹⁵I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

Sin Stained World

Sin has twisted everything in the world

- ▶ Hidden impacts:
 - ▶ Death, disease, aging, decay
 - ▶ Genesis 3:17: **Cursed is the ground** because of you.
 - ▶ Romans 8:21: 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.
 - ▶ Building blocks of nature have been twisted
 - ▶ DNA, periodic table of elements, laws of nature
 - ▶ Human institutions
 - ▶ Economics, politics, sociology, anthropology
- ▶ The earth as we know it is fundamentally broken at every level, every interaction, every quark, lepton, neuron, and neutrino that make up the building blocks of matter are corrupted by sin.

New Heaven & New Earth

► Revelation 21 God remakes creation brand new

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:^[a] **Look, God's dwelling^[b] is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples,^[c] and God himself will be with them and will be their God.^[d]** ⁴ **He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things^[e] have passed away.**

⁵ Then the one seated on the throne said, **“Look, I am making everything new.”** He also said, “Write, because these words^[f] are faithful and true.” ⁶ Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I **will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life.**” ⁷ The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son.

New Heaven & New Earth

► Revelation 21 God remakes creation brand new

¹⁰He then carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain and **showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ arrayed with God's glory.** Her radiance was like a precious jewel, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. ¹²The city had a massive high wall, with twelve gates. Twelve angels were at the gates; the names of the twelve tribes of Israel's sons were inscribed on the gates. ¹³There were three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. ¹⁴The city wall had twelve foundations, and the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb were on the foundations.

¹⁸The wall was made of jasper, and **the city of pure gold,** as pure as glass. ¹⁹The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. **The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls,** each gate made of a single pearl. **The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.**

New Heaven & New Earth

► Revelation 22 – The River of Life & Tree of Life

¹ Then the angel showed me the **river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb** ² **down the middle of the great street of the city.** On **each side of the river stood the tree of life**, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ **No longer will there be any curse.** The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

New Heaven & New Earth

▶ Isaiah 65:17-25

▶ **17 “See, I will create
new heavens and a new
earth.**

**The former things will not be
remembered,
nor will they come to mind.**

18 But be glad and
rejoice forever
in what I will create,
for I will create Jerusalem to be
a delight
and its people a joy.

19 I will rejoice over Jerusalem
and take delight in my
people;

**the sound of weeping and of
crying
will be heard in it no more.**

▶ **20** “Never again will there be in it

an infant who lives but a few
days,
or an old man who does not
live out his years;
the one who dies at a hundred
will be thought a mere child;
the one who fails to reach^[a] a
hundred
will be considered accursed.

21 They will build houses and
dwell in them;
they will plant vineyards and
eat their fruit.

22 No longer will they build
houses and others live in them,
or plant and others eat.
For as the days of a tree,
so will be the days of my
people;

**my chosen ones will long enjoy
the work of their hands.**

23 **They will not labor in vain,**
nor will they bear children
doomed to misfortune;
for they will be a people
blessed by the LORD,
they and their
descendants with them.

24 **Before they call I will answer;
while they are still speaking I
will hear.**

25 **The wolf and the lamb will
feed together,
and the lion will eat straw like
the ox,
and dust will be the
serpent’s food.
They will neither harm nor
destroy
on all my holy mountain,”
says the LORD.**

Table Discussion Question

- ▶ What would it be like to live in a world uncorrupted by sin?

New Uncorrupted World

Relationships as they should be

- ▶ Relationship with God:
 - ▶ Experience the fullness of his love, goodness, grace, and mercy
 - ▶ See him face to face
- ▶ Relationship with others
 - ▶ Experience the richness of every relationship as God intended it.
 - ▶ Fullness of friendship without hurt, betrayal, accidental misunderstandings
- ▶ Relationship with self
 - ▶ You will be all that God made you to be.
 - ▶ You will not fight yourself
 - ▶ Physically restored without decay
 - ▶ No aches, no tears, no pain, no old age

New Uncorrupted World

Everything as it should be

- ▶ Death, Decay, Disease, Aging all gone
- ▶ Building blocks of nature work as they should
- ▶ Broken parts of the world will be made as they were originally intended
 - ▶ Imagine seeing the new Grand Canyon through new eyes
 - ▶ Imagine eating a new ripe strawberry with new tastebuds




Grand Canyon



Yellowstone



Everglades



"I have heard of those little scratches in the crust that you Topdwellers call mines. But that's where you get dead gold, dead silver, dead gems. Down in Bism we have them alive and growing. **There I'll pick you bunches of rubies that you can eat and squeeze you a cupful of diamond juice.** You won't care much about fingering the cold, dead treasures of your shallow mines after you have tasted the live ones in Bism."

--*Golg, an Earthman*, Ch. 14 The Bottom of the World, *The Silver Chair* by C.S. Lewis

Heaven is Positive

Every Positive Trait

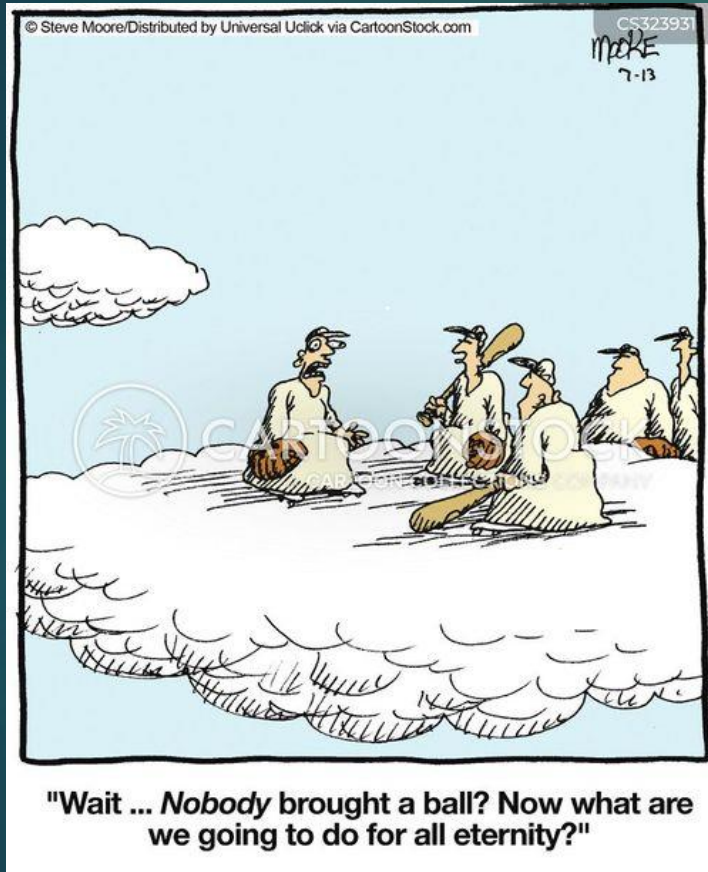
- ▶ Hell is always referred too using negative terminology
 - ▶ Fire, Worm, Gnashing of Teeth, Pain, Suffering
- ▶ Heaven is the opposite
 - ▶ The ideas associated with heaven are always positive
 - ▶ Life, Water, Reconcile, Redeem, Restore, Banquet, Feast, Rest, Reward, Mansions
- ▶ Example: Restored
 - ▶ Imagine earth without environmental damage
 - ▶ Water without microplastics
 - ▶ Sky without smog
 - ▶ Food without health consequences
 - ▶ Earth without extinction
 - ▶ Earth without language barriers

Table Discussion Question

- ▶ What are positive characteristics of heaven you look forward to experiencing?
- ▶ What are positive characteristics of heaven you haven't thought about before?
- ▶ Do you sometimes associate negative characteristics with heaven?

Heaven is Exciting

Heaven is not Boring



Corrupted Earth is Pretty Cool

- ▶ What are some of the coolest places you've been able to visit on earth?
- ▶ What is a place you want to go, but do not think you will ever see?



Eternity to Explore

If...Then

- ▶ If the corrupted earth has cool places....
- ▶ Then how much cooler will the uncorrupted, renewed, Jesus prepared New Heaven and New Earth be?

Eternity to Connect

- ▶ Every single soul who believed in God's salvation will be there.
- ▶ Reconnect with old friends we've lost touch
 - ▶ Relatives who passed away
 - ▶ Friendships dropped due to life circumstances
- ▶ We will have a chance to meet people who died before us or born after us.
 - ▶ Discover a new friend born in 1395 in Lisbon, Portugal
 - ▶ Find a pickleball partner born in 2345 in Mumbai, India

Eternity to Serve

- ▶ We will have jobs in heaven
 - ▶ Revelation 22:3 says that God's servants will serve him – That's us
- ▶ God's Kingdom is referred to as a city & a country
 - ▶ Require administration, have culture, commerce, art, transportation, green space
- ▶ Reasonable assumption: God will match us with a job we can do and enjoy.
 - ▶ God knows you better than anyone
 - ▶ God loves you more than anyone
 - ▶ God is gets joy seeing us experience joy
 - ▶ A job you can jump out of bed excited to do every day.

Eternity to Adore

► Revelation 22:1-5

¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. **⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.** ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

Eternity to Adore

The Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, Sovereign Over All Existence, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Prince of Peace, Lord of Heaven's Armies, Lamb Who Was Slain, Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, Holy One will be present with US.

- ▶ Your God Shaped Hole will be filled.
- ▶ Our deep desire for transcendence and connection with the divine will be completely and continually satisfied.
- ▶ We will be HIS PEOPLE.
- ▶ He will be OUR GOD.
- ▶ He will be close enough physically, emotionally, spiritually, to wipe away every tear from our eye.

Next Week

- ▶ Week 2: Heaven Q&A session
- ▶ 4 ways to ask:
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