

HEAVEN...A Real Place

John 14:1-6

As you listen to popular views about **heaven** and **hell**, you can test what you hear with a few biblically-discerning questions:

- *Does this view of hell diminish the threat of God's justness and judgment?*
- *Does this view of heaven diminish the glory of God's grace, mercy, and justness?*
- *Does this teaching soften the urgency of repentance?*
- *Does this teaching offer the sinner any hope of salvation beyond this life?*
- *Does this teaching offer the sinner any hope of salvation other than through Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone?*

Modern views of **heaven** and **hell** typically don't survive the *test of biblical fidelity*. They allow the sinner to *feel more comfortable* and *complacent* by *redefining* God...by making Him appear *less severe* in His judgment. They redefine His *righteousness*.

"People today are beginning to not be as open to discussing spiritual things as they were in the past."

"No one wants to hear about what the Bible says about heaven and the qualification that is necessary for entering heaven."

"This generation only cares about life in the here and now."

And on it goes...all the reasons we hear from those who say you just can't reach young people with the Gospel.

Donald Grey Barnhouse...*"Dr. Barnhouse, don't you believe in freedom of religion?" asked a woman who had heard Dr. Barnhouse conclude his message by expounding on the absolute necessity of receiving Jesus as Savior. "I certainly do believe in freedom of religion" the great Philadelphia preacher replied. "I believe everyone has the right to go to heaven God's way and to hell his own way."*

I. HEAVEN IS A PREPARED PLACE:

Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me (vs. 1)...

Two subjects seem to be popular in our culture and society...**angels** and **heaven**. A book by **Randy Alcorn** simply called **Heaven** came

out in **2004** and is considered to be one of the best books at presenting a biblical insight about what **heaven** and the **new earth** will be like... and how incredible both will be.

People may be interested in heaven...but the problem is that they aren't looking at what the Bible has to say about heaven...and the church isn't teaching the truth about heaven.

Heaven is mentioned *over 500 times* in Scripture...both in the Old Testament (Heb. *shamayim*) and in the New Testament (Gk. *ouranos*). These words for heaven refer to high and lofty places. Heaven is a consistent theme in the Bible. Everyone has an opinion, but the average Christian knows little about it.

Troubled...means *stirred* or *agitated*.

Believe...is in the **imperative tense**. Actually it's a **double imperative**...meaning *go on believing...continue believing*.

• It's enormous:

"The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal."

~Revelation 21:16

Heaven, prepared uniquely for the redeemed to inhabit in glorified bodies, will be laid out like a *cube*. **Fifteen hundred miles squared** is **2.25 million square miles**. An area that size would cover almost *half the continental United States*. To give a point of reference, **London** is **140 square miles**. If only the *ground floor of heaven* were populated at the same ratio as **London**, it could hold **1,000,000 million** people...**30 times** the current population of our world...in their glorified bodies, and still have plenty of room to spare. **Fifteen hundred miles cubed** is **3,375,000,000 (3.375 billion) cubic miles**, a volume larger than most of us can conceive. **Heaven** is *large*, but the *fellowship* in heaven is *intimate*.

• It's extravagant:

Heaven will be an indescribably beautiful and glorious place. Imagine what it must be like...God, the One who created the universe in a week, has been laboring for several millennia preparing heaven to be the habitation of His people.

Revelation 21:10-14, 18-27 describes it.

- **It's intimate:**

All of **John 14** is very intimate.

“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’ And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ And He said, ‘Write, for these words are faithful and true.’”

~Revelation 21:2-5

Everything that is precious to us is there...

...My <i>Father</i> is there.	...My <i>citizenship</i> is there.
...My <i>Savior</i> is there.	...My <i>fellow saints</i> are there.
...My <i>reward</i> is there.	...My <i>affections</i> are there.
...My <i>home</i> is there.	...My <i>heart</i> is there.
...My <i>name</i> is there.	...My <i>inheritance</i> awaits me there.

I many times wonder what am I doing here?

- **It's personal:**

In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you (vs. 2)...

House...the word means *home*. A place where the family *dwells*.

It's home...specifically **prepared for the child of God:**

If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also (vs. 3)...

I will come again...a *promise of Christ's personal return*.

“But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.”

~Hebrews 11:16

At a prepared time:

“...In Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.”

~Psalm 139:16b

“There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven...a time to give birth and a time to die...”

~Ecclesiastes 3:1-2

For prepared individuals:

“For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens...Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

~II Corinthians 5:1, 17

Actually...all of **II Corinthians 5**...

II. HEAVEN IS A PROMISED PLACE:

If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also (vs. 3)...

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

~John 14:18-20

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.”

~John 14:27-29

III. HEAVEN IS A PROTECTED PLACE:

- **By the power of God:**

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are **protected by the power of God** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”*

~I Peter 1:3-5

- **By the presence of God:**

Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me’ (vs. 6)...

Notice the *direction*...I am the way.

Next, the *declaration*...the truth.

Finally, the *deliverance*...the life.

“For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all...”

~I Timothy 2:5-6a

“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

~Acts 4:12

IV. HEAVEN IS A PRECIOUS PLACE:

- **Our Savior is there:**

The description of heaven suggest that it is going to be a beautiful place, but I believe all that beauty will pale into insignificance when we behold the beauty of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. When we see the One who died and suffered to pay the penalty for our sins...when we see the scars of His suffering, nothing will compare...when we see Him as He really is. (**Revelation 1:9-20**)

- **Our inheritance is there:**

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to

a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”

~I Peter 1:3-4

Unlike earthly inheritances, our heavenly inheritance is not dependent on the economy as to its value. It has been perfectly established in heaven and will never change.

- **Our citizenship is there:**

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”

~Philippians 3:20-21

- **Our rewards are there:**

“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great...”

~Matthew 5:12

FIVE CROWNS...

Incorruptible Crown...(**I Corinthians 9:24-27**) For those who live a life of holiness, self-control...unyielding to trials, temptations, and testings...obedient and self-sacrificing.

Crown of Righteousness...(**II Timothy 4:8**) For those who are faithful till Jesus comes...those who endure through the years as a child of God. For those who run the race with endurance in such a way to receive the prize.

Crown of Rejoicing...also known as the **Crown of Exaltation...** (**I Thessalonians 2:19-20**). For those who witness and share their faith.

Crown of Glory...(**I Peter 5:4**) For those who are faithful pastors and elders.

Crown of Life...(**James 1:12**) For all those who are saved...for those who have repented...for those who love Jesus...sacrificially (**Revelation 2:10**).

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- **Heaven is only for those who repent and accept God's forgiveness and receive His free gift of eternal life.**

Matthew 7:13-27...especially verses 21-23.

"...Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

~Revelation 21:27

- **Heaven is an eternal dwelling place.**

...God is there (**II Corinthians 12:2-4; Revelation 4; Revelation 21-22**, specifically, **Revelation 22:3**)

...The angels are there (**Isaiah 6; Matthew 22:30; Luke 15:10**).

...The saints of God are there (**John 14; Revelation 4; Revelation 20:6; Revelation 22:3**).

...**Will you be there?**