

Present Heaven

I believe Heaven is a real place (John 14:2) in another dimension just beyond our sight and is the dwelling place of God (Mt. 5:16, 6:9), His holy angels (Lk. 2:15; Rev. 4) and His redeemed people who have died (Rev. 4-5; Lk. 16:19-22) and now live in God's presence! As the dwelling place of God, Heaven is the location Christ came from when He entered into human history as a man (John 6:42), it is where He returned following His ascension (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:1,11) and where He will once again come from when He physically returns to earth (Acts 1:11; Rev. 19:1-16).

I believe upon death, the human spirit leaves the body (Ecclesiastes 12:7) and goes either directly to Heaven or Hell, where they will consciously exist forever (Rev. 6:9-11; Lk. 23:43). Those who have trusted Christ as their Savior King will enter into Heaven, while those who have not trusted Christ as their Savior King will enter into Hell (Jn. 14:6). Heaven's inhabitants will live in a place of extreme joy and pleasure (Ps. 16:11) while being with Christ (Phil. 1:23), worshipping the Lord (Rev. 4:9-11), and being reunited with our loved one's who have also been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (1 Thess. 4:14-18), while Hell's inhabitants will live in a place of constant, conscious punishment and torment (Lk. 16:19-31; 2 Pet. 2:9), while being completely separated from God (Jn. 5:28-29; Rev. 20:11-15) and any good thing.

I believe upon entrance to Heaven we will be delivered from our sinful condition (Rom. 7:24), clothed in Christ's righteousness (Rev. 6:11) where we will enjoy a new level of intimacy with Christ (Rev. 2:17) and receive our inheritance from the Lord "that can never perish, spoil or fade" (1 Pet. 2:4). In addition, we will receive varying rewards based upon our service to Christ in this age (1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:9, 10).

I believe Heaven is a Christian's country of citizenship (Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:16) and what we instinctively know to be 'home' and therefore, we should desire in an ever-increasing manner to be home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:2, 8) and focus more and more of our attention upon it (Col. 3:1-4).

Eternal Heaven or the New Earth

I believe when Christ returns and we are resurrected, Heaven itself will change! It will be unified with a new, resurrected earth. Heaven and earth will be joined together (Rev. 21:1, 2) for all of eternity in this new creation.¹ This is referred to as the New Earth, and it is here, upon a renewed physical earth², where Believers will live forever with the Lord and each other (Rev. 21:1-3) in our physical, glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:42-44).

I believe the New Earth to be a restoration of God's original creation (Acts 3:21),³ which means we can rightly anticipate mountains, trees, rivers, land and animals restored to their original design, unhindered by sin, far more glorious than anything we have yet to experience in our fallen state! At the center of the New Earth will be the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10), a large (Rev. 22:15-17), extremely beautiful city (Rev. 21:19-21) that Jesus Himself has prepared for His people to enjoy and dwell in forever (Jn. 14:2) as we come

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Bible Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1158

² Theologian Anthony Hoekema writes, "Heaven and earth, now separated, will then be merged: the new earth will also be Heaven, since God will dwell there with his people. Glorified believers, in other words, will continue to be in Heaven while they are inhabiting the new earth." In *Surprised by Hope*, N.T. Wright when referring to Heaven and earth says, "One day...they will be joined in a quite new way, open and visible to one another, married together forever."

³ Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes, "Everything will be glorified, even nature itself. And that seems to me to be the biblical teaching about the eternal state: that what we call heaven is life in this perfect world as God intended humanity to live it. When he put Adam in Paradise at the beginning, Adam fell, and all fell with him, but men and women are meant to live in the body, and will live in a glorified body in a glorified world, and God will be with them."

before the throne, see God's face and worship Him for redeeming us by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 22:3, 4; Rev. 12:11)!