

Life+

A SERIES ON THE AFTERLIFE

4 – Home Forever

Randy Alcorn writes,

“This world – including its natural wonders – gives us foretastes and glimpses of the next world. These people – including ourselves – give us foretastes and glimpses of the new people to come. This life – including its culture – gives us foretastes and glimpses of the next life.”ⁱ

We all have some level of interest in what our lives will be like in Heaven.

In this life we’ve only been able to observe people, animals, weather, earth, and nature through the clouded lens of separation from God – as all things today exist under the curse of sin.

But, in Heaven on the New Earth life will be made new.

God said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Revelation 21:5

Don Wyrzten authored a beautiful hymn in 1971 titled *Finally Home*. The lyrics offer a blissful vision of an introduction of heaven.

When engulfed by the terror of tempestuous seas,
Unknown waves before you roll,
At the end of doubt and peril is eternity,
Though fear and conflict seize your weary soul.

But just think of stepping on shore, and finding it heaven.
Of taking a hand, and finding it God.
Of breathing new air, and finding it celestial.
Of waking up in glory, and finding it home.ⁱⁱ

“Home” is the description of Heaven that I want to hear. It bears the hope of familiarity, and comfort.

According to scripture -

The New Earth will feel FAMILIAR to us.

As Alcorn mentioned in our introduction, what we are living today is a glimpse of what is yet to come.

Last week we discovered that Eden is our backward-looking reference point, and the New Earth is our *forward*-looking reference point – expecting the New Earth to be like Eden, only better – redeemed, made whole, and like all things – it will all be re-NEW-ed!

Notice the prophecies that relate to the restoration of earth when Heaven comes down.

*The Lord will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the **garden of the Lord** (Eden). **Joy and gladness** will be found in her, **thanksgiving** and the **sound of singing**. Isaiah 51:3 ⁱⁱⁱ*

*They will say, “This land that was laid waste has become **like the garden of Eden**; **the cities** that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, **are now fortified and inhabited**.” ³⁶ Then the nations around you that remain will know that **I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate**. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.’ Ezekiel 36:35-36*

The Lord said,

*“You will go out in **joy** and be led forth in **peace**; the **mountains and hills will burst into song** before you, and all **the trees of the field will clap their hands**. ¹³ Instead of the thornbush will **grow the juniper**, and instead of briars the*

myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever.” Isaiah 55:12-13

The redeemed Eden will be our home – not a garden, but a world of paradise.

What will Heaven be like for us personally?

In terms of activities in Heaven we have already learned in past messages that we will eat, walk, serve, laugh, and play.

Just as Adam and Eve had participated in life, so have we in an unredeemed way today, but we *will be living* in a redeemed Eden with the original Eden as a model.

We will WORK, REST, and WORSHIP

Eden is a picture of rest – work that’s meaningful and enjoyable, abundant food, a beautiful environment, unhindered friendship with God and other people and animals. Even with Eden’s restful perfection, one day was set aside for special rest and worship. Work will be refreshing on the New Earth, yet regular rest will be built into our lives. ^{iv}

In **Genesis 2:15-17** we hear, *“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”*

Revelation 22:3 indicates that “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.”

Revelation 14:13 says, *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.”*

God is a worker, Jesus labored, and God created human beings to engage in labors of love for Him, now and forever!

My Father is always at His work to the very day, and I too, am working...
(John 5:17).

*“And whatever you do, whether in word **or deed**, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17).*

Will we have a place of our own to rest? If so, what will it be like?

Personal space is **PROMISED** and **PREPARED** for all who believe

Jesus promised us this, *“My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?” (John 14:2)*

1. God’s kingdom (“My Father’s house”) has “many rooms” (Heaven has enough space to accommodate all God’s followers).
2. Our space will be uniquely prepared for each one of us personally (“I am going there to prepare a place [singular space] for you [personally]”).

Community/**RELATIONSHIP** is the heart of God’s character

Faith community is God’s family.

Family is the Biblical image for this community.

Heaven is the ultimate presence of loving, spiritual family community.

Relationships have been at the core of God – the God of love, mercy, grace and forgiveness.

And we were created to be relational creatures from the beginning.

Jesus desired a relationship with people so deeply that He willingly sacrificed His own life for all people, from all of time, who lived all over the world.

And He is still imploring us to answer the door as He patiently knocks, waiting to establish a close relationship with us all.

Deep and satisfying relationships will be among God's greatest gifts in Heaven.

He wants a PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with you today!

Jesus said, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." (Revelation 3:20)

If we want a heavenly dwelling with God, we need a personal relationship with Jesus, today.

See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. (Hebrews 3:12-14)

ⁱ Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 241.

ⁱⁱ Finally Home, by Don Wyrzten and L.E. Singer © 1971 New Spring (ASCAP) (Adnim by Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, Inc.

ⁱⁱⁱ All scripture references will be taken from the New International Version unless otherwise indicated.

^{iv} Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 331.