

## A Study of Heaven – Week 3

Chip Ingram gives two important principles about heaven and eternal life. First, heaven is being with Jesus. In John 14:3, Jesus tells us *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be.”* Also Jesus told the thief on the cross beside Him, *“Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”* (Luke 23:43)

There are numerous other verse that tells the same thing. Some of the additional verses include: 1 Thessalonians 4:17, 2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23 and 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10.

Jesus’ great joy is to have us with Him. John 17:24 tells us so. It says, *“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”*

The second important principle about heaven and eternal life is that our faith decision is permanent. We must make the decision before we die. Remember in the story of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man wanted someone sent to warn his brothers but Abraham would not allow even Lazarus to go back and warn them. The decision must be made when we are on earth.

### **Will heaven be boring?**

One of the most asked questions about heaven is won’t heaven be boring? Depending on how you view worshipping God will influence your answer. Let a pastor preach for more than 30 or 45 minutes and the church membership will start grumbling.

Look at the world before Covid 19 and compare it to the world during quarantining. If ever we have had an opportunity to see the negative effects of boredom, it is during this pandemic. Boredom can cause crime, infidelity and ruins retirement, just to name a few things. There is a saying, *“The devil makes work for idle hands.”*

Revelation 4:8-11 describes the throne room and what goes on there. It says, *“8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,*

*“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.”*

*9 And when the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and they will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,*

*11 "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."*

Based on this description of heaven, some people think that heaven will be boring. It sounds like church 24-7 for eternity.

All of the authors that I have read or listen to cover the topic of a boring heaven. David Jeremiah and Chip Ingram give us 5 reasons why heaven cannot and will not be boring.

First of all, God is not boring. Psalm 16:11 tells us that there is joy in His presence, with pleasures forever. Consider just one of our senses, say Taste. God could have made everything taste the same. Why do we taste everything differently? God could have made everything taste like chicken. We can taste the difference between grain fed beef and beef that came from a cow that grazed in a field. Why? Because God is not boring and God does not want us to be bored.

"No, I don't worry about boredom in heaven, because that's where God is – and God is omnipotent, breathtaking, electrifying, exhilarating and inspiring. Almighty God is the unsearchable dynamic that sustains the universe and we were made by Him, through Him and for Him. Heaven will be just as intriguing as God Himself." (Dr. David Jeremiah)

The second reason that heaven will not be boring is that WE are not boring. 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 51-52 tells us, *42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. . . 51 Behold, I am telling you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."*

Won't it be like sitting around a nursing home? According to these verses, we will be radically changed at resurrection. These verses say:

<u>Old body</u>	<u>New body</u>
Perishable	Imperishable
Dishonor	Glory
Weakness	Power
Natural body	Spiritual body.

Based on the changes to our body, it will not be the same as it has been on earth. After the fall, death, decay and deterioration of our bodies changed everything. Our new bodies will not wear out or run down.

Another reason heaven will not be boring is because our friends will not be boring. Hebrews 12:22-23 tells us that heaven will be populated by believers or the church, angels, God and Old Testament Saints. Wouldn't it be amazing to while away the hours listening to stories from Moses or King David. Remember that our life in heaven will have continuity with our live on earth. We have already learned that we will know our loved ones that have passed on before us, as well as the Old Testament saints.

The fourth reason heaven will not be boring is that our work will not be boring. The Book of Revelation has numerous verses that tell us that we will be serving God with the angels. Revelation 1:1, 2:19, 6:11, 7:15, 15:3, 19:5, 19:10.

For example, Revelation 22:6 says "*And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show His bond-servants the things which must soon take place."*

Finally, heaven is the place we've always longed for. When we were successful on earth, it was never completely satisfying. But in heaven, we will be completely fulfilled. As Jesus told His disciples in John 15:11, one of Jesus goals was to make our joy complete. In heaven, the race is over. Our joy will be made complete.

"Earth is a tiny preview of heaven. I believe that Jesus gave us a glimpse of what He wants for us on the new earth and new heaven in John 10:10, when He said "*I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*" (NASB) (Dr. Jeremiah)

Remember Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, "He has also set eternity in the *human heart.*" We all have a yearning for heaven and that yearning will be fulfilled when we get to heaven. We will have arrived fully satisfied.

Imagine how different our relationships with others will be without sin. When you think of how relationships are today, after the fall of man, what negative behaviors will not be present in heaven? No gossips, no egos, no anger, no lying, stealing . . . The list goes on and on. Anything related to sin or man's fall will not be in heaven.

Go even further, what things on earth will not make it to the "new earth? Consider Genesis 3:12-19, Psalm 16:9-11, Exodus 20, Revelation 21:1-4

No decay so there will be no flies, buzzards, No thieves and robbers so no locks, no police, No more death so funeral directors are out. Weeds, thistles, poison ivy . . .

One of Satan's tools is to instill in us the thought that heaven will not be perfect. Not only does Satan attack God but also Satan attacks God's dwelling place. In Revelation 13:6, John tells us, "*And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.*"

Believing that heaven will be boring, is flawed thinking. It assumes that sin is exciting, fun and more enjoyable than righteous. 1 Corinthians 5:6 tells us that sin ruins everything it comes in contact with. This verse says "*Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?*" The leavening represents sin.

Randy Alcorn says it this way, "Those who believe that excitement can't exist without sin are thinking with sin-poisoned minds. Drug addicts are convinced that without drugs they can't live happy lives."

What will we do in heaven? Here are some Scripture verses that give us some indication of what we will do in Heaven.

- a. Ephesians 2:10 - Good works
- b. Luke 19:11-27 - We will run the universe with Jesus
- c. Revelation 7:15 - We will serve God.
- d. Revelation 22:3 - Again we will serve God.
- e. Genesis 4:20-22 - There will be music and physical work.
- f. 1 Corinthians 12:7 -Just as on earth, we will all have different gifts.
- g. Psalm 104:33 - There will be singing in heaven
- h. Revelation 15:2-3 - Again, singing and music
- i. Jeremiah 31:4-5 - There will be dancing and farming
- j. Luke 6:21 -There will be laughing

- k. 1 Corinthians 9:24 - Since sports are not inherently sinful, sports may be in heaven.

“I can only imagine.”

“Our belief that Heaven will be boring betrays a heresy – that God is boring. There’s no greater nonsense. Our desire for pleasure and the experience of joy come directly from God’s hand. He made our taste buds, adrenaline and the nerve endings that convey pleasure to our brains. Likewise, our imaginations and our capacity for joy and exhilaration were made by the very God we accuse of being boring. Are we so arrogant as to imagine that human beings came up with the idea of having fun?” (Alcorn)