

Week 2, January 22

## Exploring Heaven

*What is Heaven and where is Heaven?*

What does the Bible mean by “Heaven”?

C.S. Lewis sums up the Bible’s meaning of Heaven as follows:

Heaven can mean:

1. The unconditional divine life beyond all worlds (God’s existence)
2. the blessed participation in that life by a created spirit (John 17)
3. the whole nature or system of conditions in which redeemed human spirits, still remaining human, can enjoy such participation fully and forever. This is the heaven Christ goes to ‘prepare’ for us.
4. the physical heavens, the sky, the space in which earth exists.

Two-thirds of Americans who believe in the resurrection do not think they will have bodies in Heaven. What do you think?

What does the Bible say?

What was Christ’s body like after the resurrection?

Will there be cats in Heaven? What about beer?

What does Kreeft mean with: “Heaven, because it is no part of the universe, is present in all parts of the universe”?

Is Heaven a real place?

So, where is Heaven? If Heaven is in space why can’t you get there with a rocket ship?

Kreeft writes, “History (time) is cosmic pregnancy.” If so, at the end of time Heaven will be “born”. If earth is like a foetus in the womb, does it mean that as earth gets older it becomes better, more like Heaven? Do you think today earth is more heavenly than 500 years ago and 500 years ago it was more heavenly than 3,000 years ago? If so, how does that square with Jesus questioning whether there will be faith on the earth at the Second Coming? Think about this, keeping in mind the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. (Matt. 13:24-30)

### Main thought:

- Week One: Heaven gives hope, purpose and meaning to life on earth.
- Week Two: ???

### Handout

Much has been written about the time-line and its sequence. Will the redeemed be in Heaven immediately upon death? When is the judgment? etc. etc. To me the mechanics and timing are not very significant. We will not spend much time on it. If interested read Andy Kuyvenhoven’s *The Day*. Personally, I think of the time-line sequence as follows:  
Death                                      Body and soul separate.

Following death	Spiritual existence without the body in the presence of God.
Second Coming	Body and soul are reunited into spiritual bodies. Heaven and Earth are united, the consummation of the Kingdom.

John Piper quoted in Aldcorn, *Heaven* p114

“Not the mere spirituality of the soul, but rather the resurrection of the body and the renewal of all creation is the Christian faith.”

Joni Eareckson Tada quoted in Aldcorn, *Heaven* p 118

“Somewhere in my broken paralysed body is the seed of what I shall become. The paralysis makes what I am to become all the more grand when you contrast atrophied, useless legs against splendid resurrected legs. I’m convinced that if there are mirrors in Heaven (and why not?), the image I’ll see will be remarkably ‘Joni’, although a much better, brighter Joni.”

CS Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm*, pp 123-24

I don’t say the resurrection of the body will happen at once. It may well be that this part of us sleeps in death, and the intellectual soul is sent to Lenten lands where she fasts in naked spirituality – a ghost-like and imperfectly human condition. Yet, from that fast my hope is that we shall return and re-assume the wealth we have laid down. Then the new earth and sky, the same yet not the same as these, will rise in us as we have risen in Christ. And once again, after who knows what aeons of the silence and dark, the birds will sing and the waters flow, and the lights and shadows move across the hills, and the faces of our friends laugh upon us with amazed recognition. Guesses, of course, only guesses. If they are not true, something better will be.

Peter Kreeft, *Heaven: the Heart’s Deepest Longing*, excerpts

All artistry reflects the artist; and if God *is* love, then his world is eternal love made visible in time. It is made of matter, but more fundamentally, it is made of love. Once you see the face of God the world is forever transformed into his features. The whole world is a sacrament. The transcendent is immanent, heaven is on earth. Heaven, because it is no part of the universe (you can never get there in a rocket ship), is present in all parts of the universe. The whole universe is an atom in Heaven, or a womb. To ask, “Where is Heaven” is like an unborn child asking “Where is the world?”

If earth is part of Heaven, does that mean all earthly things are parts of Heaven? Is there dirt in Heaven? Cats? How about beer? Remember, everything real and valuable on earth came from Heaven. A cat is not just merely evolved molecules in motion; it is a divine idea, a work of art, and a sign. It is a natural sign; it has something of what it signifies, and what it signifies is heavenly; so there is something of Heaven in the cat. And Heaven does not die. God does not throw his artwork into the wastebasket; God doesn’t make junk. All his work has eternal value. It passes through time and seems to pass away – “today is and tomorrow is thrown into the fire” – but it *is* in eternity. Time is part of eternity.

Paul lets the last cat out of the bag, “The whole creation has been groaning in travail until now.” History is cosmic pregnancy. Mother Earth was impregnated by Father Heaven

some two thousand years ago. The haunting (*longing, yearning for Heaven NL*) we feel is cosmic birth pangs, contractions.

CS Lewis, *God in the Dock* p 216

“Yes,” my friend said, “I don’t see why there shouldn’t be books in Heaven. But you will find that your library in Heaven contains only some of the books you had on earth.”

“Which?” I asked. “The ones you gave away or lent.” “I hope the lent ones won’t still have all the borrowers’ dirty thumb marks,” said I. “Oh yes they will,” said he. “But just as the wounds of the martyrs will have turned into beauties, so you will find that the thumb marks have turned into beautiful illuminated capitals or exquisite marginal woodcuts.”

“All that seems earth is Hell or Heaven.” (*Think about this sentence and read once more what Kreeft just said about cats and beer and how all earthly things are part of Heaven. NL*)