

Series: Eternal Choices

C.R. 8-5-18

“The Reality of Heaven”

Text: John 14: 2

Intro: From the very beginning there has been a fascination with life after death. Even those who spend no time at all studying scripture consider life after death. When it comes to life after death more often than not the picture has been one of peace and bliss. Australian aborigines pictured Heaven as a distant island beyond the western horizon. Mexican, Peruvians, and Polynesians believed that they went to the sun or the moon after death. The Romans believed that the righteous would picnic in the Elysian fields while their horses grazed nearby. Seneca, the Roman philosopher, said, “The day thou fearest as the last is the birthday of eternity.”

There is anthropological evidence that suggest that every culture has a God-given, innate sense of the eternal-that this world is not all there is. The Roman catacombs, where the bodies of many martyred Christians were buried, contain tombs with inscriptions such as these: • In Christ, Alexander is not dead, but lives. • One who lives with God. • He was taken up into his eternal home. Pictures on the catacomb walls portray Heaven with beautiful landscapes, children playing, and people feasting at banquets.

We just can't help it. We were designed by the creator of Heaven and Earth. We just know that there is something other than this. Last week we looked at one of the two destinations of life after death in Hell. Today we will begin to look at the Reality of the other, Heaven. Today will only scratch the surface of this vast topic.

1) Is Heaven A Real Place

- a. Some say that Heaven is just a state of mind, and that those who believe in a literal place called Heaven live in a fantasy land.
- b. Again, today I will not base any information on something man said, I will base it on the fact of scripture.
- c. Let's look again at the text of John 14 and hear from Jesus himself.
- d. **Php 1:21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
- e. **Php 1:23** For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:
- f. **2Co 5:6** Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:
- g. **2Co 5:7** (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)
- h. **2Co 5:8** We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.
- i. Jesus deliberately used common terms like houses, rooms, place, to describe where He was going and what He was preparing for us.
- j. He spoke of an actual place, with actual rooms, and where we would go to be with Him.

- k. The word place (topos) is used three times in John 14:2-3. We get our word topography from this word. When used in the N.T. almost always indicates a locatable and inhabited space.
- l. Jesus used dwelling places. Rooms. This is real and physical.
- m. **Act 1:9** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.
- n. **Act 1:10** And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;
- o. **Act 1:11** Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.
- p. Jesus did not go to a state of mind. He went from one geographical location to another one.

2) How Long Does It Last?

- a. No question it is eternal.
- b. **2Co 5:1** For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
- c. **1Th 4:17** Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
- d. **Joh 10:28** And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

3) How Good Can It Really Be?

- a. I was amazed as I started preparing this message at how many people thing Heaven is going to be boring.
- b. A Pastor confessed to Randy Alcorn "Whenever I think about Heaven, it makes me depressed. I'd rather just cease to exist when I die". Why? "I can't stand the thought of that endless tedium. To float around in the clouds with nothing to do but strum a harp...it's all so terribly boring. Heaven doesn't sound much better than Hell. I'd rather be annihilated than spend eternity in a place like that."
- c. I agree with this statement by John Eldredge in The Journey of Desire: "Nearly every Christian I have spoken with has some idea that eternity is an unending church service. . . . We have settled on an image of the never-ending sing-along in the sky, one great hymn after another, forever and ever, amen. And our heart sinks. Forever and ever? That's it? That's the good news? And then we sigh and feel guilty that we are not more 'spiritual.' We lose heart, and we turn once more to the present to find what life we can."
- d. To say Heaven is boring is to say God is boring. How can we look around and say that God is boring.
- e. Think about how he created us. Think about the God given desires he gave us. He gave us laughter, different colors, different foods, different bodies. He gave us marriage and

- sex. He gave us waterfalls, and mountains, snow, and rain. He gave us beaches and lakes. That is not boring.
- f. Can you imagine Heaven? You are going to have to use some imagination.
 - g. Satan wants you to think Heaven is going to be boring. But as you will see it is not.
 - h. Heaven will have no more Sea, no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain, no more stress, no more worry, no more handicap, no more deaf, no more blind, no more financial strain, no more elections, no more disputes, no more adultery, no more taxes, no more nursing homes, no more root canals, no more cancer, no more chemo, no more radiation, no more Alzheimer's, no more denominations, no more jealousy, no more fakeness, and the list goes on and on.....
 - i. What it will have is Jesus and his presence continually. That my friend cannot be boring.

4) Who Is Going There?

- a. Those who have placed their trust in the Lord Jesus.
- b. In 1952, young Florence Chadwick stepped into the waters of the Pacific Ocean off Catalina Island, determined to swim to the shore of mainland California. She'd already been the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways. The weather was foggy and chilly; she could hardly see the boats accompanying her. Still, she swam for fifteen hours. When she begged to be taken out of the water along the way, her mother, in a boat alongside, told her she was close and that she could make it. Finally, physically and emotionally exhausted, she stopped swimming and was pulled out. It wasn't until she was on the boat that she discovered the shore was less than half a mile away. At a news conference the next day she said, "All I could see was the fog. . . . I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it."
- c. My friends that shore is Jesus and being with Him for ever and ever.
- d. I was raised on Hyatt Creek. It is all I have really ever known. After long trips and days of being away there is just something so wonderful about going up that driveway and making it back home. The times that I have been gone from the family how great to be able to sit down with them and just enjoy being home.
- e. Read Illustration from Heaven by Anne Graham Lotz. (See attached)