

# HEAVEN

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## Lesson 2

## Understanding the Present Heaven

In this lesson, we continue our study of heaven with a look at what author Randy Alcorn refers to as the "present heaven", or the "intermediate" heaven. As he points out, if our final home is the New Earth and New Heaven in our resurrected bodies with God and our resurrected Savior, Jesus; then what we think of as heaven today is only an intermediate destination.

What does the heaven look like where followers of Christ go today when they die? Is it a physical place with physical people? Will we have a physical body there before we get our resurrected body? These and other related questions are addressed in Section 2 (Chapters 5 - 7) of Alcorn's book, which we will be examining in this lesson. In addition to looking at the questions below, we will be discussing two specific questions from the Study Guide, specifically, Question 7 from Chapter 6 and Question 4 from Chapter 7.

As we study heaven, we need to remember that only God knows all about heaven. Our knowledge is limited to only what He reveals. This lesson's material can have several meanings, as Randy is quick to point out. One of these views is that there is a physical realm outside of earth; a diametrically-opposed view is that there is not a physical realm, and that any physical references to such a realm found in the Bible are purely symbolic. After our study in this lesson, I am sure you will be able to decide for yourself which is true; but before you make up your mind, let's look at evidence which suggests that the present heaven is a very real place where both physical and spiritual beings abide together as they wait on Christ's return to earth and the coming resurrection.

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***Explore the scripture passages and verses referenced below and answer the following:***

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1. What is the difference between Hell (or Hades) and "The Lake of Fire"? (see Luke 16:19-31 and Rev 21:1)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What happens when Christians die? Are we conscious, or do we fall into a sleep-like state? Read the following verses, and list what each tells you:
  - a. Luke 23:43
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Philippians 1:23
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. 2 Corinthians 5:8

3. Is the heaven that exists today a physical place? What do the following verses tell you?

a. 2 Kings 2:11

b. Acts 7:55-56

c. Hebrews 8:5

d. Revelation 7:9

e. Revelation 8:6

f. Revelation 8:13

g. Revelation 19:14

4. Are physical bodies present today in heaven? What do the verses below indicate?

a. Genesis 5:24

b. 2 Kings 2:11-12

c. Luke 9:28-36

d. Acts 1:11

e. Hebrews 11:5

5. Do people in heaven see or know what is happening on earth?

a. Luke 15:7

b. Luke 15:10

c. Hebrews 12:1

d. Revelation 6:9-11

e. Revelation 19:1-5

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In this lesson, we have tackled some of the real "meat" in God's Holy Word, and it is difficult. We have been challenged on many levels, yet we are encouraged and comforted as well, as we learn more about the heaven that today is the home for loved ones who have already gone before us, and where someday we will be reunited with them and with the God who saved us through the great gift of His Son Jesus.

Have a great week everyone, and thanks for studying with us.

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