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(Resources: *Heaven* by Randy Alcorn and KJV scriptures)

Looking *Forward* to Heaven

It's Beyond Imagination What's in Store (or is it?)

I Corinthians 2

God's people in ages past had a source of strength and perspective largely unknown to us today: Heaven. It was their central reference point, the North Star by which they could navigate their lives. But in contemporary society, Heaven has fallen off our radar screens.

C. S. Lewis: "If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world."

1. ***Why do we not think about Heaven more than we do?***

God wants us to set out hearts and minds on Heaven, but we've allowed Satan to deter us. He has slandered God's **person** God's **people** and God's **place** After being forcibly removed from Heaven (Isaiah 14:12-17), the devil became bitter. "It must be maddening for him that we're now entitled to the home he was kicked out of."

Satan doesn't need to convince us that Heaven doesn't exist. He needs only to convince us that Heaven is a place of boring, unearthly existence. If we believe that lie of Satan, it robs us of our joy and we don't set our sights on heavenly things, but rather on earthly things (Colossians 3:2). "**Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**"

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4).

Satan uses his power as the god of this world to mold our **weak minds** and trap us in our dark, fallen world.

We must work to resist the bewitching spell that Satan has cast. Sitting here in a dark world, we must remind ourselves of the **truths** of Heaven. It's real. Don't allow Satan to convince you otherwise.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

2. ***Is Heaven beyond our Imagination?***

Imagination is important because we cannot anticipate or desire what we cannot imagine. No doubt, that is why God has given us glimpses of Heaven in the Bible—to spark our imagination and make us long for it. Many people quote I Cor. 2:9 but look at verse 10!

The present Heaven is just the beginning. We won't see our eternal home until the new earth—until after the resurrection of the dead. And it will be far better than anything we have ever seen. So, look out a window. Take a walk. Take a deep breath. Imagine it all in its original condition, before sin. Think of friends or family members who loved Jesus and are with Him now. Picture them with you, walking with you, healthy and strong and perfect. Imagine laughing, playing, talking, reminiscing. And then you see someone walking toward you, and it's the Lord

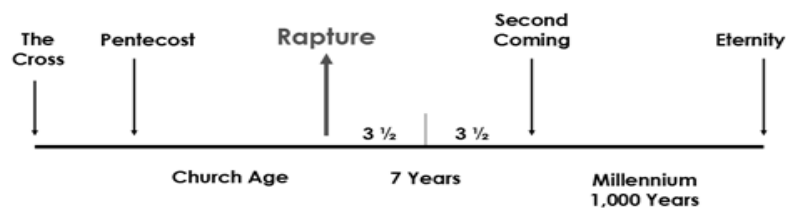
Like I Corinthians 2, see also Deut. 29:29. In 2 Cor. 12:2-4, God didn't **didn't** permit Paul to talk about his visit to Heaven, but God **commanded** John to talk about his visit to Heaven, which he did in great detail in Revelation. God chose to reveal it to us.

3. ***What is happening in Heaven now—and where exactly is that?***

Where Heaven is now is not our **final** abode. At the end of the Bible is the end of the story—which is actually a new beginning.

Paul tells us what we should be thinking in I Thess. 4:13-18. When Christians die they go to the present Heaven, where God is, for now. Being there is “far better” than being here on Earth where we are, for now (Phil. 1:23). Still, the Heaven where they are is not our final destination. Those who are saved die “in Christ” and are transported to the present Heaven to await the time of Christ's return to the earth, our bodily resurrection, the final judgment, and the creation of the new heavens and new earth.

Timeline of the End Times



The Heaven we will go to when we die—where Heaven is now—is a temporary dwelling place, a stop along the way to our final destination: the **new** earth.

The present heaven is the angelic realm (though likely having more physical qualities than we have ever thought). By contrast, the future Heaven will be in the human realm, on Earth. THEN, the dwelling place of God will be on earth, with us. Some would argue that the new earth should not be called Heaven, but Heaven will be wherever God is. See Revelation 21:1-5

To think about: ***Do we remain conscious after death?***
 Is the present Heaven part of our universe or another?
 What is life like in the present Heaven at this moment?