



# HEAVEN / *God's Promise Our Hope*

**SPRING 2026**



**MURRIETA MEN**

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# HEAVEN

## GOD'S PROMISE, OUR HOPE

A Study on Heaven  
Based on the Book  
Heaven by Randy Alcorn

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# Series Schedule

## **1) Your True Home Is Waiting**

Session One, January 20<sup>th</sup>: Church  
Session Two, January 27<sup>th</sup>: Small Group

## **2) The Moment You Die, You Live**

Session Three, February 3<sup>rd</sup>: Church  
Session Four, February 10<sup>th</sup>: Small Group

## **3) Earth Made New**

Session Five, February 17<sup>th</sup>: Church  
Session Six, February 24<sup>th</sup>: Small Group

## **4) Ruling With Christ Forever**

Session Seven, March 3<sup>rd</sup>: Church  
Session Eight, March 10<sup>th</sup>: Small Group

## **5) Seeing God Face to Face**

Session Nine, March 17<sup>th</sup>: Church  
Session Ten, March 24<sup>th</sup>: Small Group

## **6) No More Goodbyes**

Session Eleven, April 7<sup>th</sup>: Church  
Session Twelve, April 14<sup>th</sup>: Small Group

## **7) The Hope That Changes Everything**

Session Thirteen, April 21<sup>rd</sup>: Church  
Session Fourteen, April 28<sup>th</sup>: Small Group

## **8) Conclusion**

Session Fifteen, May 5<sup>th</sup>: Church



## Introduction

We all naturally have questions about heaven. We wonder about our missed loved ones as well as our own destiny after we die. It would seem that heaven is nothing but a mystery, a wondering into the darkness. But the Bible actually tells us more than we may assume about the believer's future. We do not need to be left with images of baby angels and pious harp-playing angels. Instead, the Bible offers answers and hope that shape the way we live today. Heaven re-orientes our worries, trials, hopes, goals, and efforts as we learn to long for our true home.

These sessions draw from Randy Alcorn's book *Heaven* in which he presents a full biblical teaching on the believer's future after death. This book seeks to answer questions about heaven and does so very thoroughly. Although not required, if you would like a greater understanding, you may purchase and read Alcorn's book alongside this series. Chapter numbers that correspond to each session will be listed for you.

While the Bible gives us more information about heaven than we may think, some things are matters of interpretation. In reality, whenever we seek to lay out biblical answers on a topic, we are engaging in some level of interpretation. Alcorn's conclusions are all biblically-based and researched, but still involve his conclusions or applications which may not always be completely biblically certain.

As you proceed through this study, may the Lord give your life eternal perspective, rooted in the One who is preparing a place for you.



## ABOUT THE BOOK

Heaven by Randy Alcorn

(Tyndale House Publishers, 2011 Revised & Expanded Edition – 560 pages)

Randy Alcorn's bestselling Heaven answers the questions most Christians have about eternity with Scripture, clarity, and hope. This book has transformed millions of readers by replacing vague myths with the Bible's vivid picture of a physical, joyful, adventure-filled future with God.

**You do NOT need the full book to participate in this series.**

The study guide contains everything you need — complete summaries, Scriptures, and discussion questions — so you can fully engage without reading the book.

For a deeper dive, the complete book is available (optional):

Hardcover/Paperback (\$15-\$25) – Available in the lobby

Kindle eBook (\$14-\$15) – Instant download on Amazon

Audible Audiobook (Narrated by Randy Alcorn) – 17 hours (\$24.99 or free with Audible trial/subscription)

Scan QR to find book on Amazon



or visit [amazon.com/Heaven-Randy-Alcorn/dp/0842379428](https://amazon.com/Heaven-Randy-Alcorn/dp/0842379428)

“Heaven will change how you live today.” – Randy Alcorn

# ONE: YOUR TRUE HOME IS WAITING

Optional Reading: Chapters 1-7 - Approx. 84 pages

## SCRIPTURES

### John 14:1-3

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

### Ecclesiastes 3:11

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end”

### Revelation 21:1-5

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words trustworthy and true.

### Luke 24:36-43

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them.

### Isaiah 65:17-25

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.18 But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress.20 No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

22 They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord, and their descendants with them. 24 Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall graze together the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,"

### **Hebrews 12:1**

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

### **Matthew 25:21**

And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen.

## **SESSION SUMMARY**

You've felt it your whole life — that restless ache nothing on earth can satisfy. Ecclesiastes 3:11 tells us why: God "has set eternity in the human heart." C.S. Lewis put it plainly: "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." That longing is not a flaw — it's a homing beacon.

Jesus looked His fearful disciples in the eye and said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled... In my Father's house are many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1-3). He didn't say "a place" — He said "a place for you." Your name is already on the door. Timothy Keller writes, "Heaven is not just the place we go when we die — it is the place we were always meant to be."

Death is not the end of the story; it is the beginning of the life we were born for. Heaven is not a ghostly, floating existence. We will have resurrected bodies like Jesus after He rose — bodies that can eat, walk, touch, and be touched (Luke 24:39). Revelation 21 shows a city descending with streets of gold, gates of pearl, and the tree of life bearing fruit every month. N.T. Wright says, "Heaven is not a place in the clouds but the future of the renewed creation."

God created us as physical beings for a physical world, and eternity fulfills that design. We will taste food, smell flowers, feel the wind, laugh with friends — only everything will be perfected. Alcorn summarizes: "Heaven will be more real than anything you've ever experienced on earth." God is not abandoning this planet — He is redeeming it. Isaiah 65:17 promises, "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth." Romans 8:21 says creation itself will be "liberated from its bondage to decay." The same mountains you've hiked, the same oceans you've watched, the same animals you've loved — all restored.

The curse of sin will be reversed: no more thorns, no more sweat, no more death. Every act of stewardship you do today — raising kids, loving your wife, working with integrity, caring for creation — is practice for the New Earth. Heaven is not escape from earth; it is earth made new, better than Eden, with God walking among us again.

Culture has lied to us: heaven as boring harps, endless church, and disembodied spirits.

The Bible explodes with adventure, meaningful work, deep relationships, and endless discovery. Revelation 21:4 guarantees, “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.” This is real healing for every wound you carry. John Piper declares, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him — and in heaven that satisfaction is complete.”

Alcorn adds, “Heaven’s better than your wildest dreams.” Sports, art, creativity, feasting — all continue, perfected. Your personality is not erased — it is finally set free.

Eternity comes in two glorious phases. First, the Present Heaven — the moment you die, you are consciously with Christ. Luke 23:43 records Jesus telling the thief, “Today you will be with me in paradise.” II Corinthians 5:8 confirms, “Absent from the body... present with the Lord.” Then comes the New Earth, our eternal resurrected home after Christ returns. To clarify, those who die in Christ now are in His presence in the present heaven. But God’s design for us is not to be with us in this disembodied state. He will make a new earth where He will be with us forever. When we talk about heaven we need to understand the current version and the eternal version.

Present Heaven is the appetizer; New Earth is the feast. In the Present Heaven, life is vibrant — worship, fellowship, and a heavenly perspective on earth. Hebrews 12:1 calls it a “great cloud of witnesses”, which Alcorn views as cheering us on like family at a championship game. Your loved ones who knew Christ are not lost — they are home, praying, celebrating every step you take. Paul called it “better by far” (Philippians 1:23). This truth turns the funerals of believers into promotions and grief into anticipation. Of course we still grieve these losses, but we do so as those with hope (I Thess. 4:13).

Finally, your choices today shape your eternity. Matthew 25:21 rings out, “Well done, good and faithful servant... Come and share your master’s happiness!” Every dollar given, every moment sacrificed, every work hour offered with integrity becomes eternal capital. Luke 19:17 promises authority over ten cities for trustworthiness in small matters. Your 9-to-5 job, your fatherhood, your marriage — all training for heavenly leadership. Timothy Keller says, “The resurrection of Jesus means that every good thing we do in this life will be remembered and rewarded.” Ordinary faithfulness compounds into extraordinary eternal impact.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. When have you felt that “eternity in the heart” ache most strongly — and what were you chasing at the time?

2. How does Jesus saying “I go to prepare a place for you” hit you differently than just “a place”?

3. What part of the physical New Earth (mountains, cities, feasting, creativity) excites you most — and why?

4. Which cultural lie about heaven has robbed you of hope the longest and how does Revelation 21:4 begin to change that?

2. What in this lesson is most impactful for you now in your life?

3. Application: This week, do one specific act (money, time, words) with heaven in view — and be ready to share next week how it felt different.

[illegible]

# TWO: THE MOMENT YOU DIE, YOU LIVE

Optional Reading: Chapters 8-14 Approx. 84 pages

## SCRIPTURES

### 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

6So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

### Luke 23:43

And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

### Philippians 1:21-23

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

### Revelation 6:9-11

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. 10They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

### Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

## SESSION SUMMARY

Picture this: one heartbeat you're here, the next heartbeat you're standing in the presence of Jesus — fully awake, fully alive, fully yourself. No dark tunnel. No waiting room. No soul sleep. Soul sleep is the belief that when a believer dies, the soul goes into a sort of coma until God resurrects it and gives it a body.

Paul said it plainly: "We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). He couldn't wait: "To depart and be with Christ... is better by far" (Philippians 1:23). On the cross, Jesus told the dying thief, "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Same day. No delay. No purgatory. No blackout. John Piper puts it this way: "The instant a believer dies, the next thing he or she is conscious of is being with Christ in glory." Death for the Christian is not a coma — it is a coronation.



The Present Heaven is not a dim holding area; it is a place of vibrant life. After all, the Present Heaven is where Jesus is now, and He certainly is not in stasis! Revelation 6:9-11 shows martyrs at the throne — crying out, receiving white robes, talking with God. They are conscious, aware, and engaged. Alcorn writes, “They’re not sleeping — they’re living in God’s presence with perfect memory and perfect joy.” There is worship that never grows old (Revelation 7:9-10), fellowship that never ends, and a front-row seat to watch God’s plan unfold on earth. You don’t lose your personality — you finally become the real you, free from sin and pain. Your loved ones who died in Christ are not “gone.” They are safe, happy, and actively cheering you on.

Alcorn sees Hebrews 12:1 calling them a “great cloud of witnesses” — picture a stadium packed with family and heroes of the faith, roaring as you run your race. He says, “They’re in the stands waving banners with your name on them.” Charles Spurgeon wrote, “To be with Christ is far better.” That’s where they are right now — more alive than ever, waiting for the day we all get our resurrected bodies and move into the New Earth together. Again, in the Present Heaven, believers do not yet have their new resurrected bodies.

This means that even the Present Heaven tells us that God has more in store. This truth changes everything. Funerals become promotions. Grief carries hope. Fear of death loses its grip. Alcorn reminds us: “Death is not a wall — it is a doorway.” The moment you die, you live — really live — in the presence of the One who loved you and gave Himself for you.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Which part of “the moment you die, you live” comforts or excites you the most?

2. How does Jesus’ same-day promise to the thief (Luke 23:43) change the way you think about death?

3. Imagine your loved ones in the “great cloud of witnesses” cheering for you — how does that picture affect your daily race?
4. What fear of death or grief has gripped you longest, and how does the Present Heaven begin to loosen it?
5. John Piper says the next thing a believer is conscious of is being with Christ — how does that truth change the way you face risk, aging, or illness?
6. Application: This week, try to use the truths we are learning to encourage someone who is suffering and report back to the group on how it went.

## SERMON NOTES

[illegible]

# THREE: EARTH MADE NEW

Optional Reading: Chapters 15-21 Approx. 84 pages

## SCRIPTURES

### **Revelation 21:1-5**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

### **Isaiah 11:6-9**

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. 9 They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

### **Romans 8:19-23**

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption

### **Revelation 22:1-5**

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

### **Isaiah 65:17-25**

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.<sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.<sup>19</sup> I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. <sup>20</sup> No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. <sup>21</sup> They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. <sup>22</sup> They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. <sup>23</sup> They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord, and their descendants with them. <sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. <sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox,

### **Revelation 21:10-21**

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,<sup>11</sup> having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— <sup>13</sup> on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. <sup>14</sup> And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. <sup>16</sup> The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. <sup>17</sup> He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel’s measurement. <sup>18</sup> The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. <sup>19</sup> The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup> the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup> And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

## SESSION SUMMARY

The incredible mystery of God's plan for our future is that one day heaven is coming down.

Not us floating up to some cloudy never land, but God descending to live with us on a perfected earth.

Revelation 21:1-5 is the grand climax: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them.'" The whole Bible's story bends toward this beautiful resolution. Originally, God was present with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. After the fall into sin, they were separated from God and the garden. Later, God dwelt among His people Israel in the Tabernacle and Temple. Jesus being incarnated was a temporary but powerful time of God dwelling on earth. Currently the Church community in dwelt by the Holy Spirit is His presence on earth, yet we know there is still a gap between us and Him. We long to be nearer to Him and to never again feel distant. That is what He promises us in the New Earth.

The New Jerusalem — a 1,500-mile golden cube — comes down like a bride adorned for her husband with Jesus at its center for all to access.

N.T. Wright says, "Heaven is the future of the renewed creation."

As sin marred God's perfect design for Mankind, it also broke His creation so that it does not function as He intended. In the New Earth, all will be set right forever. This is likely not destruction and replacement; it is restoration on steroids.

Everything you love about this planet gets redeemed.

Isaiah 11:6-9 paints the picture: "The wolf will live with the lamb... the infant will play near the cobra's den... they will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain."

Romans 8:21 promises, "The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God."

Your favorite mountain trail, ocean sunset, childhood pet — all restored, perfected, death-free.

Alcorn writes, "God will not abandon His creation — He will rescue it."

The New Earth is the ultimate fulfillment of Eden — only bigger, better, and forever.

The city itself is mind-blowing.

Revelation 21:16-21 describes a cube 1,500 miles on every side — walls of jasper, streets of pure gold, twelve gates each a single pearl.

The tree of life lines the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit every month (Revelation 22:2).

There is eating, drinking, feasting — the marriage supper of the Lamb, banquets with Jesus Himself.

Alcorn says, “We’ll taste food, smell flowers, feel the wind — only everything will be perfected.”

Your resurrected body will never tire, never age, never sin — capable of running marathons, composing symphonies, exploring galaxies without end.

Culture will explode in glory. All the cultures of the world will bring their glory into the New Jerusalem. Their songs, foods, strengths, and people will arrive in style to worship the King together.

Psalms 90:17 prays, “Establish the work of our hands.”

Alcorn envisions a Shakespeare writing better plays, a Beethoven composing new symphonies, architects designing cathedrals that touch the stars.

Sports will be perfected — no injuries, eternal friendly competition.

Your skills in woodworking, teaching, engineering, cooking — all enhanced for eternity.

Work becomes joyful service, not toil. Tim Keller writes, “In the New Earth, culture will be redeemed and all human gifts will be brought to their fullest expression.”

Best of all, God dwells among us — no temple needed.

Revelation 21:22 says, “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” A temple is the place that heaven and earth meet. It is where Mankind can approach God to worship Him. In heaven, we will not have a building between us. Jesus Himself will be the temple. Revelation 22:4 promises, “They will see his face.” The Aaronic blessing asking that God’s face would shine upon His people (Num. 6:25) will be closer than ever before.

No more night — God’s glory lights everything eternally. We walk and talk with our Creator every day, face-to-face, forever.

This vision is not just future hope — it is present motivation.

Every act of stewardship today — raising kids, loving your wife, working with integrity, caring for creation — is practice for the New Earth. While we know God will ultimately be the one to restore His broken creation, we act now as good stewards of His world, enjoying and caring for it.

Alcorn declares, “What we do in this life echoes in eternity.”

Your choices today are building materials for the city whose architect and builder is God.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Which picture of the New Earth (peaceful animals, resurrected bodies, feasting, culture) grabs you the hardest — and why?
2. Read Revelation 21:1-5 aloud — how does “God dwelling with us” change your daily grind?
3. What earthly beauty (mountain, ocean, skill) do you most want to see redeemed?



4. How does knowing your work and creativity continue perfected shift the way you approach Monday morning?

5. In light of Romans 8:21, what one act of stewardship will you do this week with New Earth hope?

6. Application: Share one specific way the New Earth vision fuels your perseverance — and report back next group.

## SERMON NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# FOUR: RULING WITH CHRIST FOREVER

Optional Reading: Chapters 22-28 Approx. 84 pages

## SCRIPTURES (ESV)

### **Revelation 22:3-5**

No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

### **Matthew 25:21, 23**

21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your

### **1 Corinthians 6:2-3**

Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

### **Luke 19:17-19**

And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made five minas.' 19 And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.'

### **Psalms 90:17**

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!

### **Luke 22:16-18**

For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. 18 For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

## SESSION SUMMARY

Heaven is not eternal retirement — it is eternal reign. Revelation 22:3-5 thunders the truth: "No longer will there be any curse... His servants will serve him... and they will reign for ever and ever."

Work is not the curse; the curse is removed.

What was broken by sin becomes joyful, creative, fruitful service forever. Your God-given abilities and strengths have never been by accident. You are fearfully and wonderfully made, knitted together in the womb for God's planned works (Ps. 139:13-14; Eph. 2:10). What God made you to do will find its fullest expression in His eternal Kingdom.

Alcorn writes, “We were made for productive service, and heaven is where that calling is finally fulfilled without frustration.”

Jesus Himself said the faithful servant will hear, “Well done... You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things” (Matthew 25:21).

Luke 19:17 adds: “Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.” The Apostles will rule over Israel (Matt. 19:28) and the believers will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3). We do not even know the sum total of what purposes God will give us to enjoy.

Your faithfulness in the small stuff today — the honest invoice, the patient parenting, the extra mile at work — earns you authority over cities, regions, perhaps galaxies tomorrow.

John Piper says, “God is preparing us to be kings and priests — every act of obedience is training for the throne.”

Work becomes pure joy, not toil.

Feasting and celebration never stop.

Jesus said, “I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes” (Luke 22:18).

Revelation 22:2 shows the tree of life bearing twelve kinds of fruit every month.

Imagine endless banquets — the marriage supper of the Lamb, steak dinners with Jesus, fresh fruit that never spoils.

Alcorn writes, “We will eat and drink in the kingdom — and it will be better than any meal we’ve ever had.”

Exploration awaits the adventurous.

Revelation 22:5 promises, “They will reign for ever and ever.”

While we are not really sure of our heavenly capabilities, Alcorn pictures touring God’s universe — visiting distant stars, exploring new dimensions, discovering wonders we can’t imagine.

Far from the cultural understanding of heaven as an endless harp concert, no boredom plagues eternity; instead, dynamic growth, learning, and discovery continue forever.

Every day brings fresh wonder, deeper understanding, greater awe. We will be getting to know God and His people ever more fully.

Your current job is boot camp for ruling with Christ.

That difficult boss is practice for governing cities. The demanding project is preparation for Kingdom administration.

Alcorn adds, “Excellence now equals authority later.”

Fatherhood, marriage, ministry — all build leadership capacity for eternity. Every honest effort, every faithful “yes” compounds into eternal responsibility.

The Parable of the Ten Minas drives this home: “Well done, my good servant! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.” (Lk. 19:17).

Alcorn applies this: every meeting endured, diaper changed, budget dollar stewarded becomes kingdom capital.

Your ordinary choices forge extraordinary eternal destiny.

Live worthy of the crown awaiting you.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How does “ruling with Christ” redefine your view of success and ambition?
2. Read Matthew 25:21 aloud — what “small faithfulness” in your life right now feels like Kingdom training?

3. Which area of eternal creativity or activity (sports, art, exploration feasting) excites you most — and why?
4. How does knowing your current job prepares you for heavenly leadership change your outlook this week?
5. John Piper says every act of obedience is training for the throne — what one act will you do this week with that in mind?
6. Application: Lead and/or serve one person this week as practice for ruling — report back next group how it felt different.

## SERMON NOTES

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# **FIVE: SEEING GOD FACE TO FACE**

**Optional Reading: Chapters 29-35 Approx. 84 pages**

## **SCRIPTURES**

### **Revelation 22:3-4**

No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

### **Psalms 16:11**

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

### **Revelation 4:8-11**

And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" 9 And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

### **John 17:24**

Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

### **Isaiah 6:1-3**

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

### **Revelation 7:9-10**

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

### **I John. 3:1-2**

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

### **I Corinthians 13:12**

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.



## SESSION SUMMARY

Everything we've ever wanted is found in one moment: seeing God face to face.

Revelation 22:4 declares the ultimate promise: "They will see his face."

No more veil. No more sin blocking the view.

John 17:24 records Jesus praying, "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory."

This is heaven's heartbeat — the beatific vision. This term refers to when we finally see God as He is. I John 3:2 tells us, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is." Jonathan Edwards wrote, "The enjoyment of God is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied."

Everything else — mountains, relationships, creativity — is glorious, but secondary.

Heaven's greatest joy is God Himself. All our lifetime of deep longing leads us to this. When we are finally this close to God, we will be truly satisfied.

Worship will be the rhythm of eternity, and it will never grow old. If we think of worship as only music, we can see why some are less interested in that idea of heaven. But worship is every act born out of knowing God's glory and finding life in Him. We get to bask in His goodness forever.

Revelation 4:8-11 shows the throne room alive with praise: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty."

Psalms 16:11 promises, "In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

This is not dull, repetitive singing — it is explosive, creative, all-consuming celebration.

Alcorn writes, "Worship will be the air we breathe, the song we never tire of singing."

Every nation, tribe, and tongue will join in perfect harmony (Revelation 7:9-10).

We will create new songs, new art, new expressions — all flowing from hearts fully alive to God.

Heaven's beauty will overwhelm every sense.

Revelation 21:18-21 describes streets of pure gold, walls of jasper, gates of single pearls.

Isaiah 6 shows seraphim crying "Holy!" before a throne that shakes the doorposts.

Alcorn imagines colors we've never seen, sounds richer than any symphony, light purer than any sunrise.

Again, John Piper says, "The chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever — and in heaven that enjoyment is complete."

Your senses, resurrected and perfected, will drink in beauty that makes earth's greatest wonders look like shadows.

Children in heaven radiate joy, growing eternally in wisdom and stature.

Music fills the air — choirs, instruments, new compositions.

Alcorn envisions, "Handel's Messiah performed better than ever, with you Depression, addiction, loneliness are erased forever.

"Your best day on earth multiplied by eternity," Alcorn writes.

Relationships reach their perfect form — no conflict, no distance, only love. The fall into sin broke our relationships with one another. So much of our anxieties and grief start here. But in heaven all is set right. Conflicts with other believers will be a distant memory of another life. Trust and peace will reign at last.

Everything good you've ever tasted was just a hint of the feast awaiting in His presence.

These glimpses are not for daydreaming — they are for living.

Seek God's presence now as a preview of forever.

Alcorn urges, "Taste heaven on earth by pursuing God today."

The beatific vision isn't just heaven's heart — it is the motivation for holy living right now.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which picture of seeing God face to face stirs you the deepest — and why?
2. Read Psalm 16:11 — where in your life right now ~~do you most need~~ does the “fullness of joy” to come speak to you?
3. How does the promise of explosive, creative worship change the way you think about Sundays or personal worship?

4. John Piper says our chief end is to enjoy God forever — how does that truth reframe your daily priorities?

5. Alcorn calls the beatific vision heaven's heartbeat — what one step will you take this week to pursue God's presence more intentionally?

6. Application: Spend an extra 10 minutes in worship or prayer this week focused only on enjoying God — be ready to share your experience with the group.

## SERMON NOTES

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# **SIX: NO MORE GOODBYES**

Optional Reading: Chapters 36-42 Approx. 84 pages

## **SCRIPTURES**

### **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

### **1 Corinthians 13:12**

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

### **Matthew 17:1-4**

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. 3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4 And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for

### **Matthew 22:30**

For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

### **Revelation 7:9-10**

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

### **Hebrews 12:22-24**

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

## SESSION SUMMARY

One of heaven's sweetest promises is this: relationships never end.

At the Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah were instantly recognized by the disciples (Matthew 17:3).

First Corinthians 13:12 guarantees, "Then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."

No more forgetting faces or names — perfect memory restores every connection.

Alcorn writes, "You will pick up every conversation exactly where you left off, only now with no sin to distort it."

Death does not sever love; it perfects it.

In this life, marriage can be the best relationship we have, but it can also be disappointing and painful. But marriage is ultimately our best picture of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:22-30). In heaven, marriage finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ.

Matthew 22:30 says, "At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage."

Alcorn explains this is not loss — it is gain.

The best of marriage — companionship, intimacy, joy — continues, but now shared with all believers in perfect unity with no jealousy, no conflict, no loneliness.

Your spouse becomes an eternal friend in a family of billions, all centered on Jesus.

Tim Keller says, "In heaven, marriage is swallowed up into something far greater — union with Christ."

Sin-free bonds will mean perfect family and friendships.

First Thessalonians 4:17 describes the moment we're caught up together: "And so we will be with the Lord forever."

Every wound will be healed, every misunderstanding resolved, every broken relationship restored.

Grandparents hold great-grandkids they never met on earth.

Siblings laugh again.

Friends pick up where they left off — only now with no selfishness to spoil it.

Alcorn writes, “Every earthly relationship finds its completion in heaven.”

Ultimate community unites every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Revelation 7:9 shows “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne.”

While beautiful distinctions remain, there will be no more divisions of such things as race, politics, generation, or gender.

Babel is reversed; every language understood, every culture celebrated.

Alcorn pictures lifelong friends from every continent sharing stories around the throne.

The Church becomes the perfect family we always longed for.

Children in heaven radiate joy, growing eternally in wisdom and stature.

Alcorn writes, “Parents who miscarried or buried infants will hold them again — grown, laughing, whole.”

Loved ones who have long felt lost will be with you safely again. There will be no more empty chairs at the table.

You will meet ancestors and historic Christians who followed Christ long before you were born.

The beauty of heaven’s relationships is that they never grow stale.

Time is infinite, love is perfect, discovery never ends.

Your best friendship on earth will be multiplied by eternity. Men’s bonds will be perfected into unbreakable brotherhood.

Alcorn says, “Every handshake, every hug, every conversation now is laying the foundation for relationships that will deepen forever.”

Invest in people today — it’s the only thing you can take with you.

Forgive quickly, love boldly, reconcile now.

Alcorn urges, “Reconcile on earth and celebrate in heaven — or regret forever.”

Heaven’s relationships are not just promised — they are the reward for loving as Christ loved.



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who are you most excited to embrace with no more goodbyes — and why?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:12 — how does “know fully” heal wounds from earthly relationships?
3. How does marriage fulfilled in Christ free you from fear or pressure in your current relationships?

4. Revelation 7:9 shows every nation together — what division on earth do you long to see healed forever?
5. Alcorn says every conversation now builds eternal foundation — who do you need to reconcile with or invest in this week?
6. Application: Reach out to one person (forgive, encourage, reconnect) with heaven's forever in view — report back next group.

## SERMON NOTES

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# SEVEN: THE HOPE THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

Optional Reading: Chapters 43-47 Approx. 56 pages

## SCRIPTURES

### **Colossians 3:1-4**

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

### **Matthew 6:19-21**

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

### **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

### **Titus 2:11-13**

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

### **Hebrews 11:13-16**

These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

### **1 Peter 1:3-4**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

## SESSION SUMMARY

Heaven is not an escape hatch; it is the reason we fight.

Colossians 3:2 commands, “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” Matthew 6:20 adds, “Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.”

Everything changes when we live backward from eternity.

Work stops being a grind and becomes worship.

Fatherhood stops being duty and becomes legacy.

Trials stop being pointless and become training.

Alcorn writes, “Heaven is the lens through which every moment gains eternal weight.”

Evangelism and generosity become non-negotiable. Before He returns, Jesus has left us with His Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, anticipating their being with Him in heaven (Matt. 28:19; Rev. 7:9-10).

Every soul won, every dollar given, every act of kindness is an eternal investment that compounds forever.

Lost friends represent eternal tragedy, but Alcorn challenges, “Invite now, celebrate then.”

Your witness today could fill heaven’s halls tomorrow.

Tim Keller adds, “The gospel is the good news that heaven has already broken into history through Jesus — and we get to live in that reality now.”

Trials lose their power when seen through heaven’s lens.

II Corinthians 4:17-18 promises, “Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”

Cancer, divorce, betrayal, failure — they become 0.0001% of your existence.

Alcorn reframes suffering as refining fire: temporary pain yielding eternal gain.

Charles Spurgeon said, “I have learned to kiss the wave that throws me against the Rock of Ages.”

Heaven turns every scar into a story of glory.

Longing for home fuels daily perseverance.

Titus 2:13 calls it our “blessed hope — the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Hebrews 11:16 describes the faithful as “longing for a better country — a heavenly one.”

Earth feels like exile; heaven is citizenship.

Alcorn urges pilgrim living: focused, unattached, expectant.

Every sunrise reminds us we’re one day closer.

Adopt an adventure mindset — live boldly for Christ.

| Peter 1:3-4 celebrates our “living hope... into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.”

Risk for the kingdom brings eternal reward.

Share your faith without fear.

Serve radically.

Love sacrificially.

Alcorn declares, “Your greatest adventure starts NOW.”

The day you see Jesus face-to-face makes every sacrifice worthwhile.

This series has shown heaven is not “someday” — it is today’s strength.

Work becomes worship.

Fatherhood becomes legacy.

Trials become training.

Alcorn summarizes, “Live worthy of your heavenly calling.”

Every moment counts toward eternity.

Finish strong — heaven awaits. The story isn’t over.

It’s just getting started.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What single truth from this series has most changed your daily perspective?
2. Read Colossians 3:2 — where do you most need to “set your mind on things above” right now?
3. How has understanding eternal rewards shifted your view of money, time, or risk?





## SERMON NOTES

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## GROUP CONTACT INFORMATION

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MURRIETA MEN

**SPRING 2026**