

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth." (Colossians 3:1-2).

I. Common Misconceptions of Heaven

- a. Anyone remember the movie *Heaven Can Wait*? A Los Angeles Rams quarterback, accidentally taken away from his body by an overanxious angel before he was meant to die, returns to life in the body of a recently murdered millionaire. What is wrong with this picture of Heaven?
- b. The Bible's description of Heaven is dramatically different compared to Hollywood's portrayal.
- c. When you think of Heaven what comes to mind? Most of our images have been shaped by movies, art images and family stories that have been passed down through generations.
- d. These are a few common misconceptions of Heaven. What are some more?
 1. Heaven is filled with "out of body people" (Heaven is only clouds). There is no fashion, no colors
 2. Heaven is a "really long" church service
- e. Why study heaven? To refocus our attention and to dispel our misconceptions.
- f. If we live our lives with these perspectives, we will not fully appreciate the sacrifice made by Jesus and we will fix our minds on the here and now.
- g. In the early church going to Heaven was a central theme. Believers of that day expected the immediate return of Christ. Many thought He would return in their lifetime. Do we?
- h. If we believed that Jesus would return soon, how would that inform our lives (what we did, what we bought, where we went, who we spoke to and how)? (1 Thess 4:11-12)
- i. We can get so comfortable in this life that well will not give attention to the next.
- j. By what authority do we believe Heaven to be?

II. Theology of Heaven (John 14:1-6)

- a. What does the Bible say about heaven? What can we learn about Heaven from this text? Heaven is not what you think, and it is better than you imagine.
- b. An incomplete *Heaven* Definition - God's habitation where He is worshipped and served by angels. Based on faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, believers will inherit a place in heaven and will forever enjoy perfect fellowship with God in worship and service.
- c. The word Heaven is used in these primary ways in the Bible.
 1. Heaven is God's dwelling place (Psalm 103:19); the planets, stars, and galaxies of the universe (Palm 8:3); it is real and tangible (John 14); Jesus is there (Acts 1:11).
- d. Heaven reflects who God is, because it is where God's permanence lives.
 1. **Past** – Eden (Genesis 1-2); **Present** – We await Heaven (Gen 3 – Revelation 20)
 2. **Future** – New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 22)
- e. Paul was caught up in the third heaven. If a third heaven exists, there must also be two other heavens.
- f. The first heaven is most frequently referred to in the Old Testament as the "sky" or the "firmament." This is the heaven that contains clouds, the area that birds fly through.
- g. The second heaven is interstellar/outer space, stars, planets, and galaxies (Genesis 1:14-18).

III. Application and Practice

- a. How did this study shift your understanding of Heaven?
- b. Why do you think in the modern church Heaven is rarely talked about?