

Heaven

by Randy Alcorn

Book Discussion Guide

These questions are intended to facilitate study and discussion. Other significant issues and statements in each chapter may also stick out to you. Feel free to jot down a Scripture passage, quotation, or page number from the book related to something that you've underlined or wish to discuss.

In preparation for your study of the book *Heaven*, read through Revelation 21–22 at least three times using a couple of different Bible translations if possible. (You might want to write down some observations and questions as you go.) This will whet your appetite for Heaven! We hope that when you're done reading the book, you'll have a much deeper understanding and appreciation of this and other passages about Heaven.

PREFACE AND INTRODUCTION

Was there anything in these brief introductory sections that struck you as particularly significant? What?

PART I: A THEOLOGY OF HEAVEN

Section One: Realizing Our Destiny

Chapter 1: Are You Looking Forward to Heaven?

1. As you begin reading the book, what do you already believe about Heaven?
2. What do you remember learning about Heaven as you were growing up? Who or what were your sources of information?
3. Randy Alcorn explains that God's plan for Heaven is "a resurrected life in a resurrected body, with the resurrected Christ on a resurrected Earth." (p. 7). How does this concept of Heaven compare with yours?
4. Discuss how Heaven has "fallen off our radar screens" as a culture. Why don't we think more about it?

5. At the end of Chapter 1, the author quotes C. S. Lewis's story about the witch's spell in Narnia, and talks about resisting naturalism's spell. What is naturalism, and why must we resist it? *How* can we resist it?

Chapter 2: Is Heaven Beyond Our Imagination?

1. God has given each person an imagination, and he expects us to use it. Why do you think that so many Christians distrust their imagination and shy away from using it to visualize what Heaven will be like?

2. In Colossians 3:1-2, what are we commanded to do? How can we do this in our daily lives?

3. What does 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 tell us about Heaven? How does its real meaning differ from the way it is often applied to Heaven?

4. Why is it important—and biblical—to involve all of our physical senses when imagining Heaven?

Chapter 3: Is Heaven Our Default Destination . . . or is Hell?

1. How do Christ's words in Matthew 7:13-14 relate to the fact that for every American who believes he's going to Hell, 120 believe they're going to Heaven?

2. How does this incorrect thinking motivate us to preach the truth about sin and God's gift of redemption?

3. Where do we, as a culture, receive our information about Hell? What are some of the stereotypical depictions you've heard or seen? How do these depictions differ from the reality revealed in Scripture?

4. Jesus talked more about Hell than anyone else in the Bible. Why is this significant when people assume it is unloving to talk to others about Hell?

5. Read Mark 8:34-38. What haunting questions did Jesus ask? How does this motivate you to share the truth about sin, redemption, Heaven, and Hell?

6. Explain how talking honestly about both Heaven and Hell expresses love for your family and friends. Is there someone you need to talk to about the only two possible eternal destinations?

Chapter 4: Can You Know You're Going to Heaven?

1. In what ways does our culture reinforce the mistaken idea that everyone is going to Heaven?
2. What are some of the reasons you've heard for why people deserve to go to Heaven? What is the only thing that will get them there?
3. What did you think of the story of the wedding singer whose name was not written in the guest book and therefore couldn't enter the wedding reception?
4. In this chapter, the author cites various passages that show there is only one way to enter Heaven. List a few of those passages, and what they say.
5. Do you know for sure that you're going to Heaven? Why or why not?
6. How would you respond to a person who says he believes in Christ but doesn't need to be part of a church?

Section Two: Understanding the Intermediate Heaven

Chapter 5: What is the Nature of the Intermediate Heaven?

1. What do you think of the idea of an intermediate Heaven, a place to live prior to the resurrection? Is this a new thought to you?
2. How does the present (intermediate) Heaven differ from the eternal Heaven?
3. What does Revelation 21:1-4 teach us about the New Earth? What is the particular significance of verse 3 as it relates to where Heaven (God's dwelling place) will be located?
4. Where does the human spirit go at death? Cite Scripture to support your answer.

5. What are the implications of God's coming down to live with us on the New Earth, as opposed to our going up to live forever in the spirit realm as disembodied beings?

6. Discuss the differences between the two types of judgment we will encounter after death. What is the result of the judgment of faith? What is the result of the judgment of works?

Chapter 6: Is the Intermediate Heaven a Physical Place?

1. Randy Alcorn argues that although the current Heaven may be a completely nonphysical place, there is considerable biblical evidence that it has physical properties. What is some of this evidence? What is your own viewpoint?

2. The author has coined the term *Christoplatonism*. What does this mean, and how does it apply to our view of Heaven, the resurrection, and the New Earth? Have christoplatonic assumptions affected our own view of Heaven? (For further treatment of this subject, see Appendix A.)

3. According to Scripture, what are some of the things that are similar in Heaven and on Earth? In the following Scripture passages—Revelation 7:9; 8:6, 13; 15:8; 19:14; Hebrews 8:5; 2 Kings 2:11—what suggests that Heaven could be a physical realm?

4. The word *paradise* comes from the Persian word *pairidaeza*, meaning “a walled park” or “enclosed garden.” It is used to describe the great walled gardens of the Persian King Cyrus’s royal palaces. The Greek word for *paradise* is used of the Garden of Eden, and it became the word to describe the eternal state of the righteous, and even the intermediate Heaven (Jesus spoke of Paradise and so did Paul). The tree of life from Genesis 1–2 is presently in Paradise (Revelation 2:7). In light of this, what does the use of the word *paradise* to describe the intermediate Heaven suggest about whether or not it has any physical components?

5. What do the depictions of people wearing clothes, holding palm branches, and walking and talking in the intermediate Heaven imply about the possibility of our having physical forms in Heaven? What about the rich man and Lazarus? Enoch, Elijah, and Moses?

6. Randy Alcorn emphasizes that resurrection doesn't happen one person at a time, and that if we do have physical forms in the intermediate Heaven, it is a temporary condition as we await the resurrection (which will involve the reconstitution of our original bodies). Do you agree or disagree with this view?

Chapter 7: What is Life Like in the Intermediate Heaven?

1. Review the list of characteristics of the intermediate Heaven as described in Revelation 6 (summarized on pages 65-67 of *Heaven*). Are any of these surprising to you? If so, which ones and why?
2. What is the biblical evidence that, in Heaven, we will have memories of life on Earth? Is that a comforting thought to you, or not? Why?
3. Why is it hard for us to conceive of people in the intermediate Heaven seeing and praying for people on Earth? Would awareness of what's happening on Earth keep people in Heaven from being happy? Why or why not?
4. What is the difference between happiness as a result of ignorance, and happiness as a result of perspective? Which sort of happiness do you think people experience in Heaven?

Section Three: Grasping Redemption's Far Reach

Chapter 8: This World is Not Our Home . . . Or Is It?

1. Have you ever been homesick? What did it feel like? Because of our connection to Adam and Eve, can you see how we could be homesick for Eden? How might that emotion make us long for a New Earth?
2. How does our ability to imagine Heaven as a tangible place, with physical wonders and human relationships and activities, relate to our desire to go there?
3. Study the chart on pages 82-85 of the three eras of mankind and Earth. Does it make sense to you? Does it raise any questions?
4. Comparing Genesis 2–3 with Revelation 20–21, cite at least two examples of the perfect symmetry of God's plan.
5. How does God's plan for resurrection and a New Earth demonstrate that "matter matters"?

Chapter 9: Why is Earth's Redemption Essential to God's Plan?

1. Christians talk a lot about being “made new” in Christ. Chapter 9 talks about being restored to God’s original design (the way humanity was before the corruption of sin and the Curse). Is this a different take on being “made new” than you have previously considered?
2. When Revelation 21:1 speaks of the old Earth passing away, does it mean that the earth will be utterly annihilated, and will cease to exist? Explain.
3. Since we know that our bodies are destroyed, yet God will raise them into new bodies, does it make sense that though the Earth will be destroyed, God will raise it into a New Earth? Is this a new idea for you?
4. Why is it significant that the world to come is called not a *non-earth*, but a *New Earth*? Alcorn uses the example of a new car, despite its new and different features, being first and foremost a *car*, not a non-car. Does that apply to what we should envision a new earth to be like?
5. For further study, compare Isaiah 60, Isaiah 65:16-25, and Ezekiel 47 with Revelation 21–22. Although some statements in the Old Testament passages may apply to the old Earth, still under the Curse—or perhaps during the Millennium—some clearly speak of the New Earth. What do these passages suggest about life on the New Earth?

Chapter 10: What Will it Mean for the Curse to Be Lifted?

1. Revelation 22:3 tells us there will no longer be any Curse. Imagine what life will be like when the Curse is lifted! What will change? What will remain the same?
2. How can the resurrection succeed in reversing the Curse, whereas simply destroying the world cannot?
3. What is Christ’s role as the “second Adam”? How will he fulfill his role as the second Adam as he occupies the throne in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth?
4. In addition to rescuing human souls from ultimate destruction, for what other reason did Jesus come to Earth? (See page 106.)

Section Four: Anticipating Resurrection

Chapter 11: Why is Resurrection So Important?

1. Why is a spiritual or “nonphysical” resurrection a contradiction in terms?

2. What factors make it difficult for some people to accept the idea of bodily resurrection?

3. The author speaks of “redemptive continuity,” saying that God will not scrap his original creation and start over. Instead, God will take his fallen, corrupted children and restore, refresh, and renew us to our original design; and he will do the same for Earth (page 112). Why is the principle of “redemptive continuity” important to our understanding of the Heaven in which we’ll live forever?

4. What will be some of the similarities and differences between our earthly bodies and our resurrected bodies? What Scripture supports your answer?

Chapter 12: Why Does All Creation Await Our Resurrection?

1. What is the central teaching of Romans 8:18-25? How does this affect your view of the concept of a coming New Earth and what we might expect to find there?

2. Have you ever thought about Christ’s resurrection as affecting *all* of creation—not just human beings? How does this truth affect your view of Heaven?

3. Discuss Paul’s use of childbirth imagery (as opposed to death imagery) to describe the end of the world.

Chapter 13: How Far-Reaching is the Resurrection?

1. First Corinthians 15:58 (NIV) states, “Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” In the context of 1 Corinthians 15, *why* is our labor not in vain?

2. What is off-target with the following statement made by a Christian father about his Christian son who had died: “That’s the last time I’ll ever see him in his body”?

3. When we think of God only “saving souls,” how does this underestimate the extent of God’s redemption? (What does God save besides souls?)

4. Review the description of Heaven from Alcorn’s novel *Safely Home*, cited on pages 131-133. Does this description match your conception of Heaven? How is it different?

Section Five: Seeing the Earth Restored

Chapter 14: Where and When Will Our Deliverance Come?

1. What are some of the things the Old Testament teaches us about Heaven? Consider especially the promises concerning land (*erets*, the Hebrew word for Earth), animals, and Jerusalem at peace. Why are we sometimes slow to recognize these promises?
2. Read Revelation 20 and note the six references to the Millennium, a thousand-year reign. What are the three major differing viewpoints concerning the Millennium?
3. Do those who disagree about the Millennium necessarily have to disagree about the New Earth? Why or why not?

Chapter 15: Will the Old Earth be Destroyed . . . or Renewed?

1. Discuss both the destructive and the purifying qualities of fire. How do these images help us think about the present Earth coming to an end?
2. What evidence does the Bible offer to support a temporary—not final—destruction of the earth? Consider 2 Peter 3:5-13, especially noting how the earth was “destroyed” by water in the Flood, yet still continued to exist. If the surface of the earth is scorched and purified, would that qualify as destruction?
3. Even if Earth is utterly obliterated, and its atoms scattered, would it be any harder for God to restore it than to restore millions of decomposed bodies, many of which died thousands of years ago?
4. In Revelation 21:1, what does “new” mean in the context of a New Heaven and New Earth? (See page 149.)

Chapter 16: Will the New Earth Be Familiar . . . like Home?

1. Do you think that Christians sometimes speak of God’s original work on Earth, and his plan for people to rule the earth, as if he has failed? Has Satan messed up God’s plan, such that righteous people will never rule a totally righteous and sinless earth?
2. Review the list of Heaven’s qualities on page 155. Which of these are familiar, and which are new ideas to you?

3. What qualities of “home” will we discover in Heaven? Is this thought comforting to you?
4. Why is it important to refer to Heaven as the *New Earth* as opposed to a *non-Earth*?
5. Discuss why it is partially accurate yet also partially inaccurate for Christians to say, “This Earth is not my home.” How would you edit or reword the sentence so that it is fully accurate?

Section Six: Celebrating Our Relationship with God

Chapter 17: What Will It Mean to See God?

1. Revelation 22:4 promises us that we will see God’s face on the New Earth. Why is this an astounding statement?
2. What do you think it will be like to see God face-to-face?
3. What is the essence of eternal life according to John 17:3? How does this truth motivate the way we live day-to-day?
4. Refer to page 172. What is the lesson to be learned from the movie *Babette’s Feast*? (It might be worth renting this full-length movie and watching it together as a family or group.)
5. How does reminding ourselves that God made the earth, and desires us to enjoy it—and that we will live on a New Earth—help us to appreciate and thankfully enjoy our present lives?

Chapter 18: What Will It Mean for God to Dwell Among Us?

1. If you have read the best-selling novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, or seen the made-for-TV movie based on it, in what ways is it accurate or inaccurate in how it portrays Heaven? (See page 179.)
2. How does Satan interfere with our ability to envision Heaven? How does he stand to gain from our misconceptions?

3. Read John 14:3, 2 Corinthians 5:8, and Philippians 1:23. What is the common thread? What do you think it will be like to be inseparable from Jesus?

4. Can you envision what it will mean to rest and relax in Heaven? What will it mean to be happy, content, and completely unworried and without fear about what will happen next, or what we or others will do?

Chapter 19: How Will We Worship God?

1. Describe the best worship experience you've ever had. How does it compare to what worship will be like in Heaven?

2. How does Revelation 5:11-14 depict worship?

3. What word picture represents the righteous/faithful acts of the saints (Revelation 19:8), and how does it motivate you to live for Christ? (See pages 191-192.)

4. Read Hebrews 10:25. Why does properly preparing for Heaven involve being part of a church now? (See page 193.)

5. What are the main reasons for celebrating in Heaven?

Section Seven: Ruling on the New Earth

Chapter 20: What Does God's Eternal Kingdom Involve?

1. Discuss the differences between "earthly" things and "worldly" things.

2. What is the significance of "land" in God's Eternal Kingdom? Read Genesis 12:1, 7.

3. When God made a covenant with Abraham, what did he promise to Abraham first?

4. What is God's plan for the new heavens and New Earth according to Ephesians 1:10?

5. With the knowledge of a transformed Earth and Kingdom, how has your picture of

Heaven changed? Does this increase your motivation to live every day for the King?

Chapter 21: Will We Actually Rule with Christ?

1. Read Zechariah 9:9-10 and discuss the twofold prophecy. When was the first part fulfilled? When will the second part be fulfilled?
2. Who are Christ's coheirs? What do heirs inherit? Who will rule the earth with Jesus Christ? What might this ruling entail?
3. What do you think about the idea of being a ruler of the earth? Can you see yourself in this role? Why is this idea hard to grasp?
4. What if we don't like the idea of ruling, and we think we would rather not? (How might God answer this concern?)

Chapter 22: How Will We Rule God's Kingdom?

1. What is God's purpose for human beings? How does Genesis 1:26-28 help to answer this? (See page 218.)
2. Randy Alcorn encourages us to be clear about what Scripture is saying when it refers to this world in a negative way. For instance, he suggests the following understanding of James 4:4: "Friendship with the world [*as it is now, under the Curse*] is hatred toward God." What is the significance of the words that are in brackets? Do they accurately capture the meaning of the passage? What interpretive error do they keep us from committing? (See page 219-220)
3. How do our actions on the present earth affect the role we will fulfill on the New Earth?
4. How will ruling—and being ruled—on the New Earth differ from those responsibilities on the present Earth?

PART II: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT HEAVEN

Section Eight: What Will the Resurrected Earth Be Like?

Chapter 23: Will the New Earth Be an Edenic Paradise?

1. What are some of the differences between Eden, the present Earth, and the New Earth? What are the similarities?
2. What portions or aspects of the old Earth do you hope will be found in the New Earth?
3. Based on Revelation 22:1-4, what type of place will the New Earth be?

Chapter 24: What is the New Jerusalem?

1. Discuss the evidence that the New Jerusalem will be an actual city. What will it have in common with the world's capital cities? What will be different?
2. According to Philippians 3:20, where is a believer's citizenship *now*, and why does that matter?
3. Will your enjoyment of Heaven depend on whether or not you presently enjoy city life on this earth? Why or why not?

Chapter 25: What Will the Great City Be Like?

1. Which details of the New Jerusalem especially appeal to you?
2. What do the elements of the New Jerusalem suggest about the kind of life resurrected people will live there?
3. What is the significance of the city's twelve great gates? (What do the gates suggest?)
4. The tree of life that was in Eden (Genesis 1-3) is presently in the intermediate Heaven (Revelation 2:7), yet will be in the center of the New Jerusalem on the New Earth (Revelation 22:2). What is the tree of life, and what will it mean to eat its abundant and varied fruit?

5. Why is it significant that there is no mention of a tree of the knowledge of good and evil to test us, as there was in Eden? (See page 249.)

Chapter 26: Will There Be Space and Time?

1. What does the forming of the new heavens suggest about the future of planets, stars, and deep-space elements of the present cosmos?

2. Is there any biblical evidence that space and time will be nonexistent or different in Heaven? (What about the phrase “time shall be no more”?) Here are some verses to help you answer: Luke 15:7; Ephesians 2:7; Isaiah 66:22-23; Genesis 8:22; Revelation 4:10; 5:9-12; 6:10-11; 7:15; 8:1; 22:2. (See pages 259-260.)

3. According to 1 Corinthians 15:26, is time the enemy, or is it something else? The author says, “Buddhism, which knows no resurrection, teaches that time will be extinguished. Christianity, solidly based on a resurrection of cosmic dimensions, teaches that time will go on forever.” Do you agree or disagree?

Chapter 27: Will the New Earth Have Sun, Moon, Oceans, and Weather?

1. Do Revelation 21:23 and 22:5 say there won't be a sun or moon? What do they say?

2. Revelation 21:1 says that on the New Earth “there will be no more sea.” Randy Alcorn suggests that this means there will be no more sea *as we now know it*. Ezekiel 47:6-12 mentions several things that are applied to the New Earth in Revelation 22. Ezekiel, 47:8-9 refers to “the Sea,” and the river’s waters making the Sea fresh. How can this and other New Earth passages that refer to the Sea (e.g. Isaiah 60:5, 9) be reconciled with the statement that there will be no more sea? Is it possible that the sea’s salt waters being made fresh would mean it would no longer be the sea as we now know it under the Curse?

3. Will there be weather and seasons on the New Earth? How would you defend your answer from Scripture and/or logic? (See pages 267-268 for some ideas.)

4. Do you think we tend to err on the side of assuming that life will be very much the same on the New Earth, or assuming that it will be radically different? Why do you think most Christians err on the side they do?

Section Nine: What Will Our Lives Be Like?

Chapter 28: Will We Be Ourselves?

1. Discuss the differences between disembodied spirits and resurrected people.
2. In Heaven, will humans have emotions? Why or why not? See Revelation 6:10, 7:10, 21:4; Luke 6:21.
3. How do you feel about being yourself (i.e., maintaining your own identity) in Heaven? Is that a relief or does it make you uneasy?
4. Read Isaiah 62:2; 65:15; Revelation 2:17; 3:12. What evidence is there that we will keep our own names as well as receive new names in Heaven?

Chapter 29: What Will Our Bodies Be Like?

1. Is it good news to you that you will have a body in eternity?
2. What are the bodily senses and qualities that you are most looking forward to exercising as a resurrected person on the New Earth? What aspects of your present body are you most looking forward to being different?
3. Read Romans 8:17-18; 1 Peter 5:1-4; 2 Corinthians 4:17. What prepares us to participate in God's glory?

Chapter 30: Will We Eat and Drink on the New Earth?

1. What biblical evidence is there that we will eat and drink as resurrected beings on the New Earth?
2. Romans 14:17 says, "The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Randy Alcorn says that this passage is talking not about the afterlife, but about our walk with God in the present age, and the importance of not causing other people to stumble because of what we eat and drink. Do you agree or disagree? (See page 291.)
3. Another passage cited to argue against eating and drinking in Heaven is 1 Corinthians 6:13: "You say, 'Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food.' This is true, though someday God will do away with both of them." Randy Alcorn says that, in context, Paul is simply saying that the old body will die, so we shouldn't let the desires of

that body control us, but that Paul is not saying our resurrected bodies won't have stomachs and that we won't eat or drink on the New Earth. (See page 294.) Do you agree or disagree? Why?

4. Describe the very best meal you've ever eaten here on Earth. Randy Alcorn says that we have never tasted food as good as it was meant to be, nor has our ability to taste been at its highest capacity. Christ ate in his resurrection body. Do you look forward to eating in yours?

5. According to Isaiah 25:6, who will prepare a banquet for us, and what will we enjoy together?

6. The author discusses the question of whether "meat" on the New Earth will be dead animals or some kind of substitute. What are the pros and cons related to the question of animal death, and whether we'll be vegetarians, as were Adam and Eve?

Chapter 31: Will We Be Capable of Sinning?

1. Because Adam and Eve sinned in Eden, how do we know that we won't sin in Heaven and bring about another Fall? What makes our situation different from Adam and Eve's?

2. How will seeing God, his creation, and ourselves for what they really are affect how we behave?

3. Based on Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15, what bearing will evil have on people in Heaven? (See page 300.)

4. Randy Alcorn says that our greatest deliverance in Heaven will be from ourselves. In what sense is this assertion true? (See page 303.)

Chapter 32: What Will We Know and Learn?

1. Will we ever know as much as God does? Explain the difference between seeing *clearly* and seeing *comprehensively*.

2. Do you agree that Ephesians 2:6-7 indicates we will always be learning in eternity?

3. How do you feel about the idea of always learning more, rather than instantly knowing all we will ever know?

4. The author discusses the existence of books in Heaven. What do you learn from what Scripture says about the Book of Life and other books?

5. Will we all have the same knowledge and skill levels in Heaven? Why or why not? How does the doctrine of continuity play into this?

Chapter 33: What Will Our Daily Lives Be Like?

1. Why is it important to have a day of rest in our present schedules, and how does that relate to the restfulness of Heaven? See Hebrews 4:11; Matthew 11:28.

2. How would you respond to someone who says, “Heaven is about rest, and resting all the time means inactivity and boredom”?

3. According to Genesis 2:15, was work a part of the Curse? How was work affected by the Curse? See Genesis 3:17-19.

4. Prior to this study, as you have thought about Heaven, did you envision being active and having work to do there? How does this idea make you feel?

5. Discuss the role of homes and hospitality on the New Earth. (Can living space be both spacious and intimate?)

Section Ten: What Will Our Relationships Be Like?

Chapter 34: Will We Desire Relationships with Anyone Except God?

1. If God is sufficient to meet all our needs, why will we still have relationships with people in Heaven? See Genesis 2:18.

2. On this earth, we are tempted to make idols out of people and things, putting them before God. Will we have those temptations in Heaven? How will people and things created by God affect our relationship with God?

3. Among people you've known on Earth, who are you most looking forward to seeing in Heaven? Where might you want to go with them, and what might you want to do with them on the New Earth?

4. In Heaven, will we remember our present lives? If so, then how do we reconcile what Isaiah 65:17 says? (See page 330-331.)

5. People often wonder whether we will recognize each other in Heaven. Randy Alcorn points out that the resurrected Jesus was normally recognized by his followers. Do you agree or disagree that if we wouldn't know our loved ones in Heaven, the "comfort" of an afterlife reunion taught in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 would be of no comfort at all. (See page 333.)

Do you think that people's christoplatic assumptions about our being disembodied spirits in Heaven play into their wondering if we'll know each other? (How do you recognize a spirit?)

Chapter 35: Will There Be Marriage, Families, and Friendships?

1. Read Mark 10:29-30. What does it mean to you that we'll all be part of one big family in Heaven?

2. In Matthew 22:29-30, what does Jesus teach about marriage in Heaven? Randy Alcorn says it's not that there will be *no* marriage in Heaven, but that there will be *one* marriage. What does that mean?

3. Do you believe that the connection of being married to Christ will draw *all* of your relationships closer? (See page 336.) Is it possible that, next to Jesus himself, someone's best friend on the New Earth may be the person they were married to on the old Earth? Is it possible that parents and children will enjoy very close relationships in Heaven, closer than the ones they have now?

4. Read the section titled "Will We Be Reunited with Infants Who Have Died?" Record any concepts presented here that are new to you or difficult to understand. (Page 340-342.)

Chapter 36: Whom Will We Meet, and What Will We Experience Together?

1. What people that you *haven't* known on Earth are you most looking forward to meeting in Heaven? What would you like to do with them or what would you like to talk about?
2. What activities will you enjoy doing with both new and old friends and family?
3. To whom do you want to say “thank you” in Heaven?
4. If some people we loved on Earth are in Hell, will that spoil our experience of Heaven? Why or why not? See 2 Corinthians 1:3 and Revelation 21:4.
5. What does Revelation 18:20 suggest about how people in Heaven feel about God executing judgment on sinners?

Chapter 37: How Will We Relate to Each Other?

1. Do you believe there will be privacy in Heaven? Why or why not?
2. What does the Bible say that suggests there will be private ownership in Heaven? See Luke 16:9; Matthew 6:20; Colossians 3:24; Daniel 12:13; Revelation 2:17; 21:7.
3. What comfort did you find in the section titled “Will We Regain Lost Relational Opportunities?” Do you think that some of what Randy Alcorn suggests might happen?
4. If you are a Christian, describe what you think your first day will be like in the intermediate Heaven (where Christians go when they die).
5. Describe what you think your first day on the New Earth will be like. What will you see? What broken things will be fixed, or sicknesses healed? Where will you want to go, and what will you want to do? What will your relationship with Christ be like?

Chapter 38: What Will New Earth Society Be Like?

1. What kind of diversity in Heaven is indicated by Revelation 7:9-10? (How will we be truly united on the New Earth if we can't manage it here on this Earth?)

2. What can we do now to get a head start on the kind of unity between races that we will experience in Heaven?

3. Discuss the role of languages in Heaven. Why is it unlikely that diverse languages will be abolished? Does it make sense that we will have one central common language in Heaven? Why?

4. Read Revelation 21:24-26. Do you think these verses teach that there will be distinct nations on the New Earth, with their own rulers?

5. If modern nations will exist on the New Earth, what about ancient nations that no longer exist on Earth? Does it make sense to you that ancient and bygone cultures will be represented in Heaven? Why or why not? (Which past cultures would you be most interested in visiting and learning about on the New Earth?)

Section Eleven: What About Animals?

Chapter 39: Will Animals Inhabit the New Earth?

1. What do animals and people have in common? How are they different?

2. Read Genesis 1:30; 2:7; 6:17-20; 7:15, 21-22. What do these passages suggest about the special nature of animals?

3. Read Genesis 9:9-17. Does it strike you as remarkable what this passage says about God's view of animals, and their connection with humans? (Clearly, some people overestimate the value of animals, putting them on the same level as people. But do you also think that some people underestimate the value of animals to God?)

4. Read Psalm 148:10-13 and Psalm 150:6. What important directive have animals been given? (See page 378.)

5. Some people interpret Isaiah 11:6-9 and 65:25 as relating only to the millennial kingdom. Do you think these passages speak of the Millennium, the New Earth, or both? Why?

6. Explain the importance of animals here on Earth, and how their care and management is a major part of the responsibilities that God entrusted to us. How would you expect this to be similar or different on the New Earth?

Chapter 40: Will Animals, Including Our Pets, Live Again?

1. Is it right or wrong to grieve at the death of our pets? Is the attachment that people feel to their animals primarily a result of creation or the Fall?
2. Did Adam and Eve have a higher or lower regard for animals than most people have had since Eden? Why is this significant?
3. From the statement in Genesis 3:1 about the talking serpent being “more crafty” than other animals in Eden, what can we surmise about the original level of animal intelligence?
4. What did John Wesley say in the sermon he preached in 1781 about animals? (See page 388-399.) What is your response to his thoughts?
5. Does Romans 8:18-21 suggest the possibility that some animals now alive (perhaps including pets) might live again on the New Earth on the “coattails” of our resurrection? What in the text either supports or refutes this idea?

Section Twelve: What Will We Do in Heaven?

Chapter 41: Will Heaven Ever Be Boring?

1. Read Psalm 16:11. What does it say about what we will experience in God’s presence?
2. What indications does the Bible give us that Heaven will not be boring? In your heart, do you believe it’s true? Where do we get the idea that Heaven might be boring? Does it suggest we believe that God is boring?
3. Why do some Christians struggle with the idea of having fun in Heaven? What does this say about how our churches and Christian families portray Heaven?
4. Explain the difference between “lifeboat” theology and “ark” theology concerning this life and the next. Is your theology of life on Earth a lifeboat theology or an ark theology? Which do you think is more biblical?

Chapter 42: Will There Be Arts, Entertainment, and Sports?

1. Why is it reasonable to expect cultural elements such as music, dance, stories, and the arts to continue in Heaven?
2. What biblical passage clearly demonstrates there will be laughter in Heaven?
3. What kind of laughter will there be in Heaven? What kind will not be there? Give examples of God-honoring kinds of laughter.
4. Is there anything inherently bad about sports? What bearing do 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and 2 Timothy 2:5 have on this question?
5. Do storytelling, creativity, and sports result from our sinfulness or our humanity? When we live on the New Earth as resurrected beings, will we *still* be human? If so, what does this suggest about the kinds of things we will do and want to do?

Chapter 43: Will Our Dreams be Fulfilled and Missed Opportunities Regained?

1. Do you have unfulfilled dreams that you would love to see fulfilled on the New Earth? Which of those might likely be truly fulfilled there?
2. How will the measurement of success be different in Heaven than it is on Earth?
3. What do you think about the statement, “The better we use our time and opportunity for God’s glory now, the greater will be our opportunities there”? Consider Luke 16:11-12 and 19:17 in formulating your answer.
4. What are we commanded to do in Matthew 6:19-21? What does this suggest about the relationship between the choices we make today and the Heaven we will experience forever?

Chapter 44: Will We Design Crafts, Technology, and New Modes of Travel?

1. When you consider that the New Earth may well include much that is normal to our lives today, including technology, travel, and perhaps even a modified form of business, are you encouraged or disappointed? Do you feel that you’ve had enough of these things on the present Earth? Explain how you think these things will be different on the New Earth.

2. If you were going to describe the eternal Heaven to someone who had never heard of it, what would you say? Is your explanation any different after reading this book than it was before you read it? Explain.

3. What truth in Colossians 3:23-24 motivates you in your present work and as you anticipate your future work on the New Earth?

PART III: LIVING IN LIGHT OF HEAVEN

Chapter 45: Reorienting Ourselves to Heaven as Our Home

1. Heaven will include all of the good things about our earthly homes, and none of the bad. What elements of “home” do you expect to see in Heaven?

2. What factors inhibit our ability to see Heaven as “home”?

3. Has this chapter helped you think differently about terminal illness and “premature” death, especially in terms of the “party” going on in Heaven?

4. Read Luke 6:22-23; Colossians 1:24; James 1:2; and 1 Peter 4:13. How do these verses address the misconceptions of the “health and wealth” gospel? (See page 444.)

5. Explain how we can have a longing—and even a sort of nostalgia—for life on the New Earth, even though we haven’t yet experienced it.

Chapter 46: Anticipating the Great Adventure

1. What purposes does God have for keeping us here on Earth for the time being?

2. If Heaven is so wonderful, what is wrong with taking one’s own life to get there quicker?

3. What are some ways in which we can prepare *now* for eternal life in Heaven? Meditate on Galatians 6:7-10; 2 Peter 3:11-14; 1 John 3:3; Philippians 3:13-14; Hebrews 12:28.

4. Jot down some of the truths about the New Earth found in Revelation 21–22. What especially stands out to you?

5. Looking back at your study of *Heaven*, what are some of the key things that you have learned from Scripture, and from the book?

6. How has this study motivated you to live differently? Consider 2 Peter 3:11-14.

Appendices

What did you learn from the two appendices?