



The Biggest Obstacle to Understanding Heaven

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Foundational assumption of the Heaven series: Heaven is a completely _____ place.

A brief history...

_____ – introduced us to a _____ worldview that separates physical reality with spiritual reality.

_____ – was an evangelist of Greek culture and worked diligently to embed dualistic Greek thinking throughout the known world.

_____ – interpreted the Bible through a Greek (not Hebrew) worldview and used _____ to explain away physical descriptions of Heaven.

_____ – a highly revered theologian and influencer of Christian thinking, was “radically influenced by Plato.” (Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church)

A Hebrew understanding of the Bible recognizes that there are not distinct _____ realities of physical and spiritual – rather there is just one human reality: It’s a _____ one that is infused with _____ significance.

Heaven and Earth are intrinsically _____
(cf. Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66:22, 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1)

Heaven is described as a _____ (Hebrews 11:10; 13:14)
and a _____ (Hebrews 10:16).

Ephesians 1:8-10 NIV says: *...With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.*

Redemption is not a matter of an addition of a spiritual or supernatural dimension to creaturely life that was lacking before; rather, it is a matter of bringing new life and vitality to what was there all along. . . . The only thing redemption adds that is not included in the creation is the remedy for sin, and that remedy is brought in solely for the purpose of recovering a sinless creation... Grace restores nature, making it whole once more. ~ Albert Wolters

The Bible’s central storyline revolves around a question: Who will reign over the Earth? Earth’s destiny hangs in the balance. Because it is the realm where God’s glory has been most challenged and resisted, it is therefore also the stage on which his glory will be most graphically demonstrated. By reclaiming, restoring, renewing, and resurrecting Earth—and empowering a regenerated mankind to reign over it—God will accomplish his purpose of bringing glory to himself. ~ Randy Alcorn

Small Group Questions

1. What did you take away from the sermon? Did anything surprise you?

2. What pictures do you think most people have of Heaven? What in our culture has shaped people's view of Heaven? Have you found yourself believing any of these kinds of things?

3. Pastor Jeremy unpacked some of the historical context that has shaped much of our worldview. Can you see evidence in your thinking that suggests a dualistic approach to life? (ie. distinguishing and elevating the 'spiritual' over the 'physical'?) Share some examples.

4. Interact with theologian A. A. Hodge's assertion:
Heaven, as the eternal home of the divine Man and of all the redeemed members of the human race, must necessarily be thoroughly human in its structure, conditions, and activities. Its joys and activities must all be rational, moral, emotional, voluntary and active. There must be the exercise of all the faculties, the gratification of all tastes, the development of all talent capacities, the realization of all ideals.

The reason, the intellectual curiosity, the imagination, the aesthetic instincts, the holy affections, the social affinities, the inexhaustible resources of strength and power native to the human soul must all find in Heaven exercise and satisfaction. Then there must always be a goal of endeavor before us, ever future... Heaven will prove the consummate flower and fruit of the whole creation and of all the history of the universe.

Do you agree with all of the statements that Hodge says "must" be true? Why or why not?

Consider the implications of some of the statements on their own merit. If, for example, the imagination "must find in Heaven exercise and satisfaction" what might that look like? Have you ever considered how you might use your imagination in heaven? What might it look like for "intellectual curiosity" to find "exercise and satisfaction" in Heaven?

Listening Prayer Questions

1. Jesus, what are some things that I've believed about Heaven that aren't true? How is this affecting the way I see the world and my day to day life?

2. Jesus, what do you think I'm going to enjoy about Heaven?
