

Overall Class Objective: To intensify our pursuit of a God-centered, Gospel-based life through a deeper understanding of the character and work of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Class Overview

1. Discuss the danger of understating the Gospel in view of the new heavens and new earth.
2. Understand how the new heaven and new earth complete the story of the Bible.
3. Explain God's ultimate goal in bringing about the new heavens and new earth.
4. Examine the scope of sin's effects as reflected in God's intent to renew all things.
5. Discover the way in which the Gospel is exalted by the promise of the new heaven and new earth.
6. Delineate what the resurrection of Jesus reveals about the new heavens and new earth.
7. Determine the relationship between the present heavens and earth and the new heavens and earth.
8. Consider the nature of our existence in the new heavens and earth.
9. **Reflect on why the Bible's teaching about the new heavens and earth is critical to joyful and faithful Christian life.**

Notes

9) Reflect on why the Bible's teaching about the new heavens and earth is critical to joyful and faithful Christian life.

- a) The future blessing of the believer is presented by the New Testament as a powerful source of joy, encouragement, endurance, edification and hopeful anticipation.
 - i) Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:2
 - ii) To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27
 - iii) "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. John 14:1-3
 - iv) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Romans 8:18
 - v) ¹⁶ 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. 2 Corinthians 4:16, 17
 - vi) ¹³ 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. Hebrews 11:13-16

vii) ³ 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, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-6

viii) ¹¹ 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. Titus 2:11-13

ix) ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. 2 Peter 3:11-14

x) ⁹ For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10

xi) ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Philippians 3:20, 21

xii) ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. Hebrews 9:27, 28

xiii) ⁵ For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. Gal. 5:5

xiv) And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. Romans 8:23

xv) ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:7-9

b) God has always intended to dwell with his people in a material world.

i) He happily created humans to be and ultimately remain physical beings.

ii) He made their redeemer an incarnate Savior.

- iii) He raised Jesus bodily from the dead to be alive forever as a material being.
 - iv) He will give his people eternal, physical bodies like the body of their Savior.
 - v) He will dwell forever with his people in a renewed material world.
 - vi) “New creation is the New Testament’s hermeneutical and eschatological center of gravity. . . .This is the dominating notion of biblical theology because new creation is the goal or purpose of God’s redemptive-historical plan; new creation is the logical main point of Scripture.” Greg Beale
- c) We commonly portray the new heavens and new earth in inadequate or inaccurate ways.
- i) We refer to the intermediate state without referencing our ultimate physical existence in a new heavens and new earth.
 - (1) We say things like, “He/she has gone to be with the Lord.” (true but incomplete)
 - (2) We sometimes present the Gospel as the way to “go to heaven when you die.”
 - (3) This world is not my home I'm just a passing through
 My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue
 The angels beckon me from heaven's open door
 And I can't feel at home in this world anymore
 Oh lord you know I have no friend like you
 If heaven's not my home then lord what will I do
 The angels beckon me from heaven's open door
 And I can't feel at home in this world anymore. (1962)
 - ii) Misrepresenting heaven (intentionally or otherwise) can play into the devil’s strategy.
 - (1) “No wonder Satan, the liar, seeks to deceive us about heaven and the resurrection. If he convinces us that eternity will be boring, spent floating on clouds, then we’ll waste this life, thinking it is our only chance to experience happiness.” Randy Alcorn
 - iii) “One of the greatest gifts we can give our children and grandchildren is to teach them the doctrines of the resurrection and the new earth. They need to know they are made for a person and a place. *Jesus* is the person. *Heaven* is the place — not a ghostly place but God’s central dwelling place, which he promises to relocate to the new earth. . . . Don’t try to get children excited about becoming ghosts. They’re no more capable of wanting that than of developing an appetite for gravel. God has made us to be physical beings living in a physical world — eating, drinking, playing, working, loving, and laughing to God’s glory. That’s the promise of resurrection. . . . I am convinced that the typical view of heaven — eternity in a disembodied state — is not only completely contrary to the Bible but obscures the far richer truth: that God promises us eternal life as totally healthy, embodied people *more* capable of worship, friendship, love, discovery, work, and play than we have ever been. I am convinced that the typical view of heaven — eternity in a disembodied state — is not only completely contrary to the Bible but obscures the far richer truth: that God promises us eternal life as totally healthy, embodied people *more* capable of worship, friendship, love, discovery, work, and play than we have ever been.” Randy Alcorn

- d) The Bible gives us the true picture of our existence in the material world of the new heavens and earth.
- i) 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. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And 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. ⁴He 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. ⁵And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Revelation 21:1-5
 - ii) In the last book of C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia, The Last Battle*, Jewel the unicorn laments over Narnia: "The only world I've ever known." . . . "Those hills," said Lucy, "the nice woody ones and the blue ones behind — aren't they very like the southern border of Narnia?" "Like!?" cried Edmund after a moment's silence. "Why they're exactly like. Look, there's Mount Pire with his forked head, and there's the pass into Archenland and everything!" "And yet . . .," said Lucy. "They're different. They have more colors on them and they look further away than I remembered and they're more . . ." "More like the real thing," said the Lord Digory softly. Suddenly Farsight the Eagle spread his wings, soared thirty or forty feet up into the air, circled round and then alighted on the ground. "Kings and Queens," he cried, "we have all been blind. We are only beginning to see where we are. From up there I have seen it all — Ettinsmuir, Beaversdam, the Great River, and Cair Paravel still shining on the edge of the Eastern Sea. Narnia is not dead. This is Narnia." "The Eagle is right," said the Lord Digory. "The Narnia you're thinking of . . . was only a shadow or a copy of the real Narnia, which has always been here and always will be here: just as our own world, England and all, is only a shadow or copy of something in Aslan's real world. You need not mourn over Narnia, Lucy. All of the old Narnia that mattered, all the dear creatures, have been drawn into the real Narnia through the Door. And of course it is different; as different as a real thing is from a shadow or as waking life is from a dream." . . . The new [Narnia] was a deeper country: every rock and flower and blade of grass looked as if it meant more. I can't describe it any better than that: if you ever get there, you will know what I mean. It was the Unicorn who summed up what everyone was feeling. He . . . cried: "I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now. The reason why we loved the old Narnia is that it sometimes looked a little like this."
 - iii) Lewis concludes their story this way: "And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read; which goes on forever; in which every chapter is better than the one before."
 - iv) You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16:11