

The book cover features a vibrant, abstract background of blue and yellow paint splatters and brushstrokes. A large, textured gold circle is centered on the cover, containing the title and author's name. A smaller white circle in the bottom right corner contains a subtitle.

THE GLORY NOW REVEALED

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WHAT WE'LL
DISCOVER
ABOUT GOD
IN HEAVEN

The Glory Now Revealed: **What We'll Discover About God in Heaven**

I. Heaven... We Don't Think About It Enough!!

As Christians, we are commanded to hope... to be filled with hope, radiant in hope, buoyant in hope, strong in hope. This is especially vital for our ministry in this hopeless world; we are surrounded by people without hope and without God in the world. These hopeless people need to be shown what hope is, where they may obtain it. Because they don't have it.

If Christians are filled with hope, and they put that hope on display every day, but especially in the worst situations – when diagnosed with cancer, when you lose your home to a hurricane, when you lose a child, when you lose your job... if even in those circumstances Christians are obviously, clearly, filled with buoyant hope, the onlooking hopeless world will ask us to “give a reason for the hope that we have.”

That hope was won for us by the blood of Christ shed on the cross, and by his triumphant resurrection from the grave. That hope is plainly a hope in HEAVEN. As Paul said, “If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are above all men to be pitied.” We hope in Christ primarily for the world to come. And that means our hope is in HEAVEN.

What is our “hope”? Is it not a strong feeling in the heart that the future is BRIGHT based on the promises of God?

And our future IS indescribably bright! The Apostle Paul in his life was given a rare privilege... he was caught up to heaven and heard and saw “inexpressible things, things man is not permitted to talk about.” (2 Cor. 12:4) That means the things he saw and heard were beyond human description... and he was not allowed to try.

That task was left to another Apostle, the beloved John, the “disciple whom Jesus loved,” who was lifted up from his exile on the tiny rocky island of Patmos off the coast of modern-day Turkey... over nineteen centuries ago. He was lifted up into the heavenly realms and saw them... and he was carried ahead in the Spirit to see the future world, the New Heavens and New Earth, and the radiantly beautiful New Jerusalem. Whereas Paul was forbidden to talk about what he heard, John was openly commanded to write down what he saw of the glorious world to come. “Write this down!” he was told, “for these words are trustworthy, and they are true.”

Revelation 21-22 are the clearest descriptions of the heaven to which all Christians are going. The words are stunning, the reality will be moreso.

In this conference, we are going to probe closer to the limits God has imposed on our knowledge of heaven... we are going to avoid speculation. I want what Paul calls, a “hope that does not disappoint” (Rom. 5:5) Meaning, the things we have set our hearts on will actually come true. The only way that can occur is if all our thoughts are based on SCRIPTURE. I am against speculation on heaven. I am not personally opposed to hearing about “near-death experiences”, but I do not consider them anything we can base our hope and our knowledge on. It’s like a friend telling us he had a dream about heaven. Fine... that’s great. I’ll listen. But I’m not taking it as a source of information about heaven.

This conference is based on the rock-solid truth of the word of God, as well as on SOUND THEOLOGICAL REASONING based on scripture. Sound logic, deductions that can be proven from scripture... deductions... if A is true and B is true, then A+B must be true... and on and on. This is the work of sound theology.

So, in this conference, we seek to obey Paul’s command in Colossians 3:1-4 to set our minds and hearts on things above and things to come. We will do what Jesus told us to do... store up our

treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal, so that WHERE OUR TREASURE IS (namely, HEAVEN) there our hearts will be also.

Meditating on heaven is therefore COMMANDED and it will be BLESSED. That's what this conference is about.

Listen to our basic text:

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 there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

Later in that same chapter:

Revelation 21:9-14 *[An angel] said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

And again:

Revelation 21:22-27 *I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light,*

and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

And finally:

Revelation 22:1-5 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

II. Central Idea: An Eternal Education in the Glory of God

Many Christians have a tragic and faulty view of our eternity in heaven. They think we will be sitting on some fluffy white cloud with a golden harp singing "Amazing Grace" over and over. And when we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less years to sing that song than when we've first begun!

That static view of heaven is DEPRESSING to many people! And it is false. As a result, many people just don't think about heaven at all. One woman told me, "I just figured I would die and go to heaven and see Jesus and be happy. I didn't think about anything else."

I am here to say that heaven will be pulsating with energy and light and DISCOVERY.

Revelation 21-22 make it plain that heaven is all about the GLORY OF GOD. The New Jerusalem is radiant with the glory of God, shining all through it.

Main Idea: For the redeemed, heaven will be a dynamic place of continual education in the glory of God, resulting in wave upon wave of worship for all eternity.

Key Definition: God's glory is the radiant display of his attributes (e.g. his love, knowledge, wisdom, power, justice, mercy, grace, patience, etc.) before a delighted audience of angels and humans.

This is the reason why God created everything, especially humanity in his image. That we would know his glory and delight in it and worship God because of it.

Worship is based on revelation and response... God reveals, we respond.

Past, present, future glory: When we get to heaven, our experience of the glory of God will be in three categories: God's **past** glories (revealed in his mighty works throughout the history of the world); God's **present** glories (his face his throne, Christ, the radiant redeemed, the angels, the New Heaven and New Earth, the New Jerusalem); God **future** glories (the unfolding events of our eternal life in the New Heavens and New Earth).

Heaven will thus be dynamic... and the redeemed will be growing in our knowledge of God. Since **we will never be omniscient**, there will always be more we can learn about the infinite topic of God and his glory!

My insight is that GOD WILL TEACH US HIS GLORY as best displayed in REDEMPTIVE HISTORY... how God saving a multitude from every nation on earth brought him glory.

God will show us the past... so we may see his mighty works.

Heavenly amnesia is absurd! Why would God do glorious things for six thousand years of redemptive history, and then wipe our memories clean of all of it? What then was the point of it all?

Key Text:

Psalm 111:2-4 Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them. ³ Full of splendor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever. ⁴ He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and merciful.

III. Biblical Proof of Heavenly Memories

Grace: ***Ephesians 2:6-7 God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.***

Rewards: ***Matthew 5:11-12 Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.***

The Wounds, Works, and Words of Christ:

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Stories of the Multitude: ***Revelation 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ...***

Revelation 7:13 Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes-- who are they, and where did they come from?"

IV. Resurrected Bodies, Minds, and Hearts

In glorification, all the redeemed will receive resurrection bodies.

According to 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, those bodies will be **imperishable, glorious, powerful and spiritual.**

We will also have resurrected mind and hearts as well. Those minds and hearts will be eternally freed from idolatry, pride, weariness, dullness, and forgetfulness.

With these glorified bodies, minds, and hearts, we will be perfectly equipped for the eternal education in the glory of God that we will be receiving.

Yet, we will still have limits. We will never be omniscient, and we will also have other limitations as creatures. There will only be so much we can handle at once.

V. Better Than Virtual Reality

Heaven is about seeing, not merely hearing:

Job 42:5 My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.

1 Corinthians 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

1 John 3:2 ... we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

God has often transported prophets through Spirit-visions to show them things far away, either geographically or in time:

Ezekiel 8:3 The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem

Revelation 4:1-2 *After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." ² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.*

One key example is how the Spirit showed the Apostle John the future glories of the New Jerusalem:

Revelation 21:9-10 *One of the seven angels... said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.*

Why couldn't the Spirit carry us all away *back in time* to show us how she was built?!

In any case, God has power to teach us the past in ways far more fascinating than a dry history lecture.

VI. Rewards: Unequal Capacities for Heavenly Glory

The three C's of rewards: Crowns... Commendation... Capacity

There will be no jealousy in heaven:

1 Corinthians 12:26 *if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*

Heavenly rewards are "more of God" in some sense:

Luke 6:38 *Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

None of us, no matter how glorious, will be able to comprehend completely the infinite glory of God. But some will have a greater capacity than others.

Capacity: Think of it like an infinite ocean of glory with a vast number of submerged vessels. The various vessels have larger or smaller dimensions: a thimble, a bucket, a vat, a water tower, an oceangoing super-tanker. They are all submerged and 100

percent full, but they have vastly different capacities. So it will be with rewards.

VII. God's Sovereign Weaving of the Tapestry of History

History is like a vast, complex tapestry in which there are countless threads of varying lengths, colors, and materials... all woven together to make a massive picture of the glory of God.

History is infinitely more complex than we can possibly imagine:

2 Peter 3:8 With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

In the heavenly review of history, we will see how God sovereignly orchestrated every single day for his own purposes and glory.

The rise and fall of every world empire, the scope and dimensions of their conquests, the details of their histories... all were planned and orchestrated by God

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

God's ultimate purpose in the control of nations and peoples is his own glory in the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, and from the resurrection of Christ to the end of time. In heaven, we will study the details and dimensions of all of human history to learn what God has done.

VIII. Honoring Heroes, Worshiping God

Some Christians did many and mighty things for the glory of God, thus winning a name among the greatest heroes among God's people; other Christians did far less; no Christians did nothing.

David was given a great name:

2 Samuel 7:9 Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth.

But Jesus was given the greatest name:

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In heaven, we will honor all the heroes of church history appropriately and proportionately to their achievements, without the smallest amount of jealousy. But we will reserve worship for God and for Christ alone.

Some of the greatest names:

Polycarp (69–155); Felicitas (c. 101–65); Athanasius (c. 296–373); Augustine of Hippo (354–430); Columba (521–597); Boniface (675–754); John Wycliffe (c.1330–1384); Jan Huss (1369–1415); Martin Luther (1483–1546); William Tyndale (1494–1536); John Calvin (1509–1564); John Owen (1616–1683); John Bunyan (1628–1688); Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758); George Whitefield (1714–1770); David Brainerd (1718–1747); William Wilberforce (1759–1833); Adoniram (1788–1850) and Nancy (1789–1826) Judson; George Müller (1805–1898); John Paton (1824–1907); Hudson Taylor (1832–1905); Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892); Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899); J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937); Brother Andrew (1928–); Jim (1927–1956) and Elisabeth (1926–2015) Elliot

IX. Obscure People and Events Finally Revealed

1 Corinthians 1:26-27 Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

The overwhelming majority of God's people are obscure, and the overwhelming majority of the significant acts of church history were never recorded on the pages of any book. History is made up of common, ordinary, obscure people whose quiet actions resulted in the conversion of the overwhelming majority of

souls. In addition, undoubtedly there are many significant movement in church history – theological movements, missionary movements – that are similarly not recorded.

Heaven will reveal all these hidden things and bring them out in full view.

George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch*:

For the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs.

X. Spiritual Dimensions Unveiled

Scripture reveals that we are surrounded every moment by an invisible spiritual dimension where angels and Satan and demons affect human history every moment in ways that are impossible for us to comprehend, let alone record.

There is a sort of barrier or wall between this world and the spiritual realms that is occasionally rent:

Mark 1:10 As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

Revelation 4:1 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven.

Satan:

1 John 5:19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

Demons:

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Angels:

Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Heaven will fully reveal the full activity of angels and Satan and demons in every day of human history, including our own personal history.

XI. Of Personal Interest: Our Spiritual Heritage

In heaven, all of the things that most closely concerned us will be fully explained and revealed. What God did to save us in Christ, to protect us and sustain us, and then use us for his glory will be unveiled. The full effects of our good works will be revealed, our spiritual heritage... people we shared the gospel with, prayers we prayed... things God never let us know on earth, seeds we planted.

XII. Our Sins, Our Sufferings, and the Damned: Painlessly Remembered

Obviously there are some topics that we may feel right now that we would never want to remember in heaven... for we cannot see how such remembrance would be anything but painful and shameful. However, this is a key text:

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

God says plainly in a number of places that he will never remember our sins:

Hebrews 8:12 I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

However, we know that this does not truly mean God forgets... for then God would no longer be omniscient. What it means is that God will not treat us as our sins deserve, but will act as though

he does not remember them at all. We will be seen as righteous as Christ.

Yet, God cannot tell the full story of our lives or the lives of all people without including their sins. Sin is so completely woven together in the fabric of human history that the tapestry itself would unravel without those sins being included. For example, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus must include what he did before he was converted. And the story of the spread of the gospel in Acts must include Paul's bitter disagreement with Barnabas over John Mark.

Yet, the heavenly recounting will cause us no pain whatsoever... and it will not be done for the purpose of our shame, but to reveal what actually happened so that God can be glorified.

The same is true of the sufferings of God's people... even extremely painful things on earth can be recounted in heaven with no pain whatsoever to us in that perfect world. God's full purposes in our sufferings will be revealed and explained to us.

And the damned – including people we loved in life who never came to Christ – will be fully revealed to the redeemed, and their torment will cause us no pain whatsoever... but their final just punishment must be revealed or there truly was no point to their existence.

Key texts:

John 15:15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Genesis 18:17 Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?"

XIII. The Consummation of Our Education in Evil

One of the best ways to understand the entire flow of human history is to realize that, when Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he sought an education in evil. The full unfolding of human history since that time was just that – a detailed education in the nature and effects of evil.

If in heaven, we forget all of human history... what was the point of that education? In heaven, we will be perfectly conformed to Christ. And of Christ it is said:

Hebrews 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness

For the redeemed in heaven to love righteousness and hate wickedness, we must remember history... including how evil evil was.

This knowledge, I believe, will be instrumental in preventing a future fall of the redeemed from heavenly glory into new forms of evil.

XIV. Applications: How Much Heaven Do You Want?

Jonathan Edwards's resolution:

Resolved, to endeavor to obtain for myself as much happiness, in the other world, as I possibly can, with all the power, might, vigor, and vehemence, yea violence, I am capable of, or can bring myself to exert, in any way that can be thought of.