

Heaven

“...He has shown us kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons.”
Acts 14:17

Play the song ‘Thank You’ by Ray Boltz as people enter the class

The Doctrine of Continuity

The Doctrine of Continuity states that what is done for Christ in this life carries over into the next life (eternity).

Some things that are continuous are:

- 1) The character of God **Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8**
- 2) God’s unfolding story of redemption
- 3) God’s moral laws

The apostles assumed that most Jewish laws would continue.

Are there some things that didn’t continue? Yes...

- 1) The dietary laws **Acts 10:9-16**
- 2) The Jewish sacrificial system; Jesus fulfilled it, so we don’t have to sacrifice a lamb every year anymore... **Hebrews 9:24-28**
- 3) The Jewish Law/Old Covenant is now to be written on our hearts; not on tablets of stone. **Hebrews 8:7-13**

The general rule is things will continue unless specifically addressed. Because of this, Jewish Christians assumed that God’s character and moral laws did not change; although penalties for violating them did change in other countries outside of Israel.

The Judgement Seat of Christ:

All Christians will appear before the judgement seat of Christ. This is not judgement for salvation, as our receiving Jesus into our hearts took care of that.

John 3:16 and Acts 4:12

This is judgement for what we did in this life for Jesus, that is, our ‘works’.

1st Corinthians 3:10-15 2nd Corinthians 5:10 Revelation 22:12

Our works will be tried by ‘fire’. Those that survive will follow us into eternity and will determine what “crown of life” we get. C.T. Studd said, “Only one life, will soon be past. Only what’s done for Christ will last.” **Galatians 6:7-9** says this also. And, while this may apply to this present life, it definitely applies to our eternity.

(Continued next page)

Page one

4
Lesson

Heaven

“...He has shown us kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons.”
Acts 14:17

The Judgement Seat of Christ: (Continued)

In ***Revelation 21:24-27*** it says that the nations and kings will bring their splendor, glory and honor into the new Jerusalem. What ‘splendor, glory and honor’? People make up the nations, so could this be the collective ‘works’ that survived God’s fire? Many theologians think so. Remember that the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable. ***Romans 11:29***

Whatever good things that God made you with were for eternity. Even if you didn’t become all that you were meant to be in this life, you will become that in eternity (and let’s face it; most of us probably missed some things). God’s ultimate justice will prevail. He will not forget what we have done in His name and with His strength. ***Hebrews 6:10-12*** He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. ***Matthew 16:27***

What will the future heaven be like?

The new Earth will be more than just Eden. It includes a carry-over of culture and nations. ***Revelation 21:24-27***

All we love about the old Earth (that is not sinful), will be ours on the new Earth and more. Only the curse will be removed. ***Romans 8:20-23***

Heaven

“...He has shown us kindness by giving you
rain from heaven and crops in their seasons.”
Acts 14:17

What will the future heaven be like? (continued)

There will be mountains. ***Revelation 21:10***

More mountains, lakes (not seas) and flowers than those on this Earth.

If we imagine the new Earth to have fewer and less beautiful features than the old, this would be a regression. Sin affects everything in a negative way.

So the new earth would have more beautiful features, not less...

Earth will be renewed, not destroyed. ***Revelation 21:1***

Look at God’s work in creating natural wonders in this fallen universe:

Olympus Mons on Mars: *Show PowerPoint picture on screen.*

(three times as high as Mt. Everest, its base would cover the entire state of Nebraska)

The Valles Marineris on Mars: *Show PowerPoint picture on screen.*

(a valley that goes 1/6 of the way around Mars and is 4.5 miles deep – hundreds of Grand Canyons could fit into it)

Imagine what we would find on a new Mars, or a new Jupiter with its magnificent moons.

The new Earth’s waterfalls may dwarf Niagara Falls...

We may find new rock formations more spectacular than Yosemite’s, mountain peaks higher than the Himalayas. Could you imagine the hiking trails on a new Earth? Some current phenomena won’t be there, like earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, etc. There will be a “river of life” ***Revelation 22:1,2*** and a “tree of life”.

Revelation 22:2 and ***Ezekiel 47:12***

Why would we need ‘healing’ in heaven? Revelation 22:2

We won’t experience pain or disease but maybe they’ll have life-sustaining or life-enhancing powers that will help our bodies maintain health and energy.

Why will we need food at all? While we will still have ‘needs’, they will all be met.

Note: While we don’t have exact answers for the above two questions, these suggestions are interesting to think about. ***1st Kings 19:5-8***

Heaven

“...He has shown us kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons.”
Acts 14:17

Will we explore outer space and time? Show PowerPoint pictures on screen.

The new Jerusalem is described in ***Revelation 21:1-27*** in detail.

Why would God go into great detail unless it was meant for our education?

While some passages suggest that the universe will wear out and be destroyed, others indicate that it will last forever. ***Psalms 148:3-6*** This isn't contradictory.

In the same way, we will be destroyed by death, yet we will be resurrected to live forever.

Earth is the first domain of our stewardship, but it's not the only domain. Because the whole of creation fell under the curse of our sin, it makes sense that the whole universe was meant to be under our dominion. If so, then the entire universe will be ours to travel to and explore.

Are the restored planets mere ornaments only meant for us to look up at or are we destined to explore them? What do you think will happen when we have resurrected minds, using resurrected technology, unlimited resources and no more death? Since God is creative by nature and we are made in His image, our creativity will be resurrected and righteous. Our creativity is not the problem, the curse was. Even under the curse, we've been able to explore and land on the Moon, Mars and other planets.

Imagine that we'll explore other worlds, not as conquerors who seize what belongs to others, but as faithful stewards who will occupy and manage the full extent of God's physical creation.

God has built into us the longing to see the wonders of His far-flung creation.

The popularity of science fiction reflects this longing. The doctrine of resurrection.

Is an emphatic statement that we live forever as physical beings in a physical universe.

Maybe we'll be able to see all dimensions instead of just the four that we see today. Maybe one of the other dimensions will be a relational one, where other beings can see our true intentions & real feelings. But don't worry, these things will all be good and pure. Won't it be great to be finally understood completely?

Space & time aren't evil. They're good because God made them. ***Genesis 1:31***

They will be redeemed, not eliminated.

(Continued next page)

Page four

4
Lesson

Heaven

“...He has shown us kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons.”

Acts 14:17

Will we be able to be in several places at the same time?

Probably not. Only God can do this. One of His attributes is omni-presence. The promise of Heaven is not that we become infinite, but that we'll be far better finite human beings than we ever have been. Even though we may be able to move rapidly from one place to another, or to pass through solid objects like the risen Jesus did (*John20:19,20*), we'll still be finite...

Will we know everything?

Probably not, as only God knows everything (His omniscience). While learning will be much easier and faster, we will be discovering things forever. And we'll marvel at God's creation...

Time will exist: ***Revelation 22:2 Isaiah 66:22,23 Genesis 8:22***

Time isn't the enemy, death is: ***1st Corinthians 15:26***

Without the curse, time will never work against us.

We'll live with time but no longer under its pressure.

Most of our time is spent working for our sustenance: ***Genesis 3:17-19***

It won't be in the new heavens.

Most other religions, like Buddhism, teach that time and the body will be extinguished. Christianity teaches that both will be redeemed, and resurrected.

God is the one who inhabits eternity: ***Isaiah 57:15***

His creatures inhabit space and time. Jesus, as the God-man, inhabits both.

Lesson 4