



ETERNAL PERSPECTIVES

☞ A COLLECTION OF QUOTATIONS ☞
ON HEAVEN, THE NEW EARTH, AND LIFE AFTER DEATH

*From Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin,
Wesley, Spurgeon, Lewis, and many more ...*



RANDY
ALCORN

It's only right that Nanci and I should dedicate a book named *Eternal Perspectives* to the wonderful staff, board members, and volunteers of Eternal Perspective Ministries, the nonprofit organization we launched in 1990, which by God's grace and their efforts continues to expand its Christ-centered impact: Brenda Abelein, Janet Albers, Lance Alcorn, Stephanie Anderson, Bryan Brown, Doreen Button, Amy Campbell, Kress Drew, Jay Echternach, Rebecca Ekstrom, Robin Green, Bonnie Hiestand, Mary Hunt, Linda Jeffries, Wendy Jeffries, Steve Keels, Dave Martin, Paul Martin, Sharon Misenhimer, Dwight Myers, Kathy Norquist, Bob Schilling, Sandi Swanson, and Sherie Way.

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Introduction

In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

PSALM 16:11, ESV

The sense that we will live forever somewhere has shaped every civilization in human history. Australian Aborigines pictured Heaven as a distant island beyond the western horizon. The early Finns thought it was an island in the faraway east. Mexicans, Peruvians, and Polynesians believed that they went to the sun or the moon after death. Native Americans believed that in the afterlife their spirits would hunt the spirits of buffalo. Although various depictions of the afterlife differ, the unifying testimony of the human heart throughout history is belief in life after death. Anthropological evidence suggests that every culture has a God-given, innate sense of the eternal—that this world is not all there is.

But which beliefs are true? And which speculations are grounded on solidly biblical concepts? In researching my book *Heaven*, I collected and read 150 books on the subject, and I've read another dozen since writing it—nearly every book about Heaven I have ever been able to locate. I underlined particularly significant portions of many

of these, but only a small amount of the most interesting material made it into that book or my other books on the subject, including *In Light of Eternity*, *50 Days of Heaven*, *TouchPoints: Heaven, Heaven for Kids*, and *We Shall See God*. I've often regretted that great words of insight into Heaven and the New Earth have been left to sit unseen in hundreds of files in my computer!

Over the years I've received thousands of letters and had hundreds of conversations with people about the Heaven books. I find many people thirsty for more insight. This compilation of quotations is true to Scripture and, I believe, speaks to areas of great interest. Necessarily, some of these involve speculation, but I have tried not to include any that contradict what God has revealed in his Word. I don't agree with every aspect of the theologies or personal lives of those I quote from, but I do believe these quotations will help prepare God's children for the magnificent world our Savior and Lord is preparing for us.

The majority of quotations in this book are from other people. But because I've written a number of nonfiction books on Heaven, and I have scenes depicting Heaven in most of my novels, I have included passages from my own books that may prove enlightening or encouraging for readers. It's inevitable, since I've written all these books on Heaven and believe what I wrote (and know where to find it!), that there are a significant number of those quotes. I have deliberately chosen ones that supplement and expand on others' quotations. My greatest delight in assembling this book has not been in my own writing but in what I have discovered over many years of research in the writings of others. I am indebted first to God's Word and then to these many writers who helped me formulate my own insights.

Whether our hearts are heavy or light, whether recent days have brought us joy or sorrow or both, there is something soul stirring about contemplating what God has promised us and what Christ shed his blood and rose to guarantee us—eternal life with him and his people in a land of never-ending wonder.

As W. H. Griffith Thomas wrote, "The consideration of heaven is

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no mere spiritual luxury, no mere intellectual dissipation, no imaginative revelry, but is really and definitely practical and suitable . . . and has a real bearing on our daily life.”¹

I have always enjoyed reading books of well-chosen quotations on interesting subjects. I like the breadth, the variety, the joy of discovering a beautifully written or particularly insightful observation. I like writing that causes me to think about and to rethink positions I have taken for granted but that may not be accurate. I enjoy marking the page, writing notes in the margin, or highlighting the e-book, and I hope you'll find yourself doing the same with this volume.

If while reading a compilation of quotations I come periodically to something I don't much value, I console myself that I've wasted very little time reading it! You won't treasure everything equally in this volume, but I'm confident many entries will encourage and enrich you as you contemplate God's revealed promises concerning Heaven and the great and eternal world that will be our home, where we will live forever with him.

I am especially grateful to God for the opportunity to assemble this book because my many interactions with grieving, lonely, and hurting believers have prompted me to envision how some people will use it. They will pick it up and perhaps read just one quotation or page or section at a sitting, and they will smile, nod, weep, pray, and worship. They may underline it, read a quotation to a friend, e-mail it, or post a quotation on Facebook. They may copy it and place it somewhere prominent. God may use it to touch their hearts and comfort them, or to help them find joy and prepare for the world to come. I know how deeply God has spoken to me through many of the words in this book, and I am thrilled at the thought that he will do the same for others.

Whether you skip around this volume looking at topics of interest or work your way from cover to cover, I pray God will use it to help you set your mind above, where Christ is (Colossians 3:1-2). I pray your heart will testify more and more that you are a citizen of another world, of a better country, with a glorious King. And I pray you will joyfully cling to his promises that he will return to restore

and remake a ruined Earth. He will bring his throne and Heaven itself down to it to set up his eternal Kingdom, where he will reign as King of kings. In that world, joy will be the air we breathe—may this book help us to inhale some of that joy here and now!

You'll notice *Eternal Perspectives* contains a number of quotations from Scripture directly following each new topic heading. That's because no other statements in this book, certainly not my own, are authoritative. Everything else of value in this book is derivative of and secondary to what God has done for us and promised us.

Quoting Scripture about Heaven and the New Earth raises an important issue and brings to mind a Christian leader who was visiting my office in 2003. He looked at the dozens of books and extensive notes scattered around the room and asked what I was writing. "A big book on Heaven," I said. He wrinkled his brow. "Well," he replied, "since Scripture says, 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him,' what will you be talking about? Obviously, we can't know what God has prepared for us in Heaven." (He was referring to 1 Corinthians 2:9.)

I said to him what I always say: "You didn't complete the sentence. You also have to read verse 10. Here's how the complete sentence reads: 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him—but *God has revealed it to us by his Spirit*'" (emphasis added). The context makes it clear that this revelation is God's Word (verse 13), which tells us what God has prepared for us. What we otherwise could not have known about Heaven, because we're unable to see it, God says *he has revealed to us through his Spirit*. This means that God has explained to us what Heaven and the New Earth are like. Not exhaustively, but accurately. God tells us about Heaven and the New Earth in his Word, not so we can shrug our shoulders and remain ignorant, but because he wants us to understand and anticipate what awaits us!

We cannot anticipate or desire what we cannot imagine. That's why, I believe, God has given us glimpses of Heaven in the Bible—to fire up our imaginations and kindle a desire for Heaven in our hearts.

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And that's why Satan will always discourage our imaginations—or misdirect them to ethereal or misguided notions that violate Scripture. As long as the resurrected universe remains either undesirable or unimaginable to us, Satan succeeds in sabotaging our love for Heaven, which makes us more desperately attached to our current existence and more vulnerable to embracing a shortsighted rather than an eternal perspective.

Scripture provides us with a substantial amount of information, direct and indirect, about the world to come, with enough detail to help us envision it, but not so much as to make us think we can completely wrap our minds around it. I believe that God expects us to use our imaginations, even as we recognize their limitations and flaws. If God didn't want us to imagine what Heaven will be like, he wouldn't have told us as much about it as he has (or, conversely, he would have told us everything there was to know).

Rather than ignore our imaginations, I believe we should fuel them with Scripture, allowing them to step through the doors that Scripture opens. I did not come to the Bible with the same view of Heaven that I came away with. On the contrary, as a young Christian, and even as a young pastor, I viewed Heaven in many of the same stereotypical ways I now reject. It was only through years of scriptural study, meditation, and research on the subject that I came to the view of Heaven I now embrace.

Discussions of Heaven tend to be either hyper-imaginative or utterly unimaginative. Bible believers have tended toward the latter, yet both approaches are potentially dangerous. What we need are biblically inspired imaginations. Yes, there are things Scripture has not directly told us. As C. S. Lewis wrote, "Guesses, of course, only guesses. If they are not true, something better will be."² But there are many things God has told us in Scripture that do not require guesswork on our part. He has told us so we don't have to guess, but so we can imagine, in our mind's eye, what he has revealed to be true.

One of the distinctives of this book of quotations reflects my own personal convictions about a vital biblical doctrine that Bible-believing Christians have ignored—that of the New Earth and our eternal future

as resurrected people living in a resurrected physical universe. If you're familiar with my books, you know the emphasis I put on this. You will find in this book perhaps a few hundred references to this exciting biblical teaching that you may never have seen before.

All the quotations I cite, of course, are subject to biblical scrutiny. I chose them because I found them inspirational, educational, or both. But apart from the Scripture itself, nothing in this book is authoritative. I encourage you to hold what I say up to God's Word to test it, as the book of Acts describes: "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11).

The apostle Paul himself, under God's inspiration, wrote, "Test everything. Hold on to the good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

You will notice that I do not quote from any books involving near-death experiences or visions, in which people claim to have gone to Heaven or to Hell and personally observed it. The reason for this is simple—neither I nor this book's readers can be certain about those experiences. There just isn't any objective way to verify them.

I've read most of these books, and I realize that a number of these accounts come from sincere followers of Christ. But some of them contradict the others, and more seriously, they sometimes contradict Scripture itself. Now God can certainly give people experiences and visions without consulting me. But when someone says he or she died and went to Heaven and saw a rainbow-colored horse, for instance, though it may be interesting and that person is certain this really happened, I can't be so sure. So while I do not mean to dismiss all these accounts, and I know some readers might have wished me to include them, it seemed inappropriate to cite them in a book of this sort.

Counting the biblical passages, this book contains more than 1,500 quotations about Heaven and the New Earth. I encourage you to ask God's help in removing the blinders of preconceived ideas and becoming open to what Scripture teaches. Paul said, "Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this" (2 Timothy 2:7). I encourage you to pray, "Open my eyes that I may

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see wonderful things in your law” (Psalm 119:18). What Scripture actually teaches us is far more wonderful than the tired stereotypes of Heaven that have long dominated not only popular culture but even the church.

For God’s children, I pray that what you find in this book will help you draw closer to the Person who made you for himself and will deepen your desire for the place he is making for you. If you are not yet a child of God, I pray that what you find in this book will prompt you to turn to the Savior, who said, “This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

Adventure: New Opportunities and Abilities

All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth. Obviously people who say such things are looking forward to a country they can call their own. If they had longed for the country they came from, they could have gone back. But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

HEBREWS 11:13-16, NLT

The nations will fear the name of the LORD,
all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.

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For the LORD will rebuild Zion
and appear in his glory.

PSALM 102:15-16

They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner
for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his
place of rest will be glorious.

ISAIAH 11:9-10

I suspect that every saved soul in heaven is a great wonder, and that heaven is a vast museum of wonders of grace and mercy—a palace of miracles, in which everything will surprise everyone who gets there.³

Charles Spurgeon, “Feeble Faith Appealing to a Strong Savior”

Everyone raised his hand to pick the fruit he best liked the look of, and then everyone paused for a second. This fruit was so beautiful that each felt, “It can’t be meant for me . . . surely we’re not allowed to pluck it.”

“It’s all right,” said Peter. “. . . I’ve a feeling we’ve got to the country where everything is allowed.”⁴

C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*

Aslan turned to them and said, “You do not yet look so happy as I mean you to be.”

Lucy said, “We’re so afraid of being sent away, Aslan. And you have sent us back into our own world so often.”

“No fear of that,” said Aslan. “Have you not guessed?”

Their hearts leaped and a wild hope rose within them.

“There was a *real* railway accident,” said Aslan softly. “Your father and mother and all of you are—as you used to call it in the ShadowLands—dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended: this is the morning.”

And as he spoke he no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. 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.⁵

C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*

Something better awaits and beckons us all. We shall be “like the angels,” which means not neutered, anaemic spirits, but full, free and liberated persons in whom all the possibilities of our God-given humanity will burst forth in undreamed-of fulfillment.⁶

Bruce Milne, *The Message of Heaven and Hell*

In the glimpses afforded of [Jesus’] life beyond resurrection we find . . . freedoms even further enhanced. At the physical level he can appear, disappear and then reappear at will (cf. John 20:19, 26; Luke 24:15, 31, 36, 51); at the moral and spiritual level there is a freedom from the awful burden of responsibility for the completion of his mission; at the relational level there is a new freedom to indwell and personally identify with all who belong to him. Such is the promise of the heavenly life—an existence of boundless freedoms.⁷

Bruce Milne, *The Message of Heaven and Hell*

We are partly “Heaven-blind” because the worldview our culture has adopted has made it hard to *see* supernatural colors.⁸

Daniel Brown, *What the Bible Reveals about Heaven*

Their souls being on fire with holy love, shall not be like a fire pent up, but like a flame uncovered and at liberty. Their spirits, being winged with love, shall have no weight upon them to hinder their flight. There shall be no lack of strength or activity, nor any lack of words with which to praise the Object of their affection. Nothing shall hinder them from communing with God, and praising and serving Him just as their love inclines them to do. Love naturally desires to express itself; and in heaven the love of the saints shall be at full liberty to express itself as it desires, whether it be towards God or to created beings.⁹

Jonathan Edwards, *Heaven: A World of Love*

In Heaven, as on earth, *each* of us will be or do something no one else will be or do as well. No one will be superfluous.¹⁰

Peter Kreeft, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Heaven*

If it brings glory to God and increases our knowledge of Him, you will indeed be able to engage in some form of time travel.¹¹

Larry Dick, *A Taste of Heaven*

We want to serve God more, but we have to sleep. We want to pray and study the Bible, but we grow weary. In Heaven, bodies will do whatever we want them to do. We will possess boundless energy with which to serve God.¹²

Steven J. Lawson, *Heaven Help Us!*

Actually, we will do many of the same things in Heaven that we did here on the earth—just perfectly.¹³

Steven J. Lawson, *Heaven Help Us!*

Look at the pictures of your deceased parents on your bedroom wall. Do you ever wonder, especially on their birthdays, where they are, and what they're doing?¹⁴

Arthur Roberts, *Exploring Heaven*

This voice of joy [in Heaven] is not like our old complaints, our impatient groans and sighs; nor this melodious praise like the scoffs and revilings, or the oaths and curses which we heard on earth. This body is not like that we had, nor this soul like the soul we had, nor this life like the life we lived. We have changed our place and state, our clothes and thoughts, our looks, language and company.

Before, a saint was weak and despised; so proud and peevish we could often scarce discern his graces; but now, how glorious is a saint! Where is now their body of sin, which wearied themselves and those about them? Where are now our different judgments, reproachful names, divided spirits, exasperated passions, strange looks, uncharitable censures? Now we are all of one judgment, of one name, of one heart, house and glory. O sweet reconciliation! Happy union! Now the Gospel shall no more be dishonored through our folly.

No more, my soul, shalt thou lament the sufferings of the saints or the church's ruins; nor mourn thy suffering friends, nor weep over their dying beds or their graves. Thou shalt never suffer thy old temptations from Satan, the world or thy own flesh. Thy pains and sickness are all cured; thy body shall no more burden thee with weakness and weariness; thy aching head and heart, thy hunger and thirst, thy sleep and labor are all gone.

O what a mighty change is this! from the dunghill to the throne! from persecuting sinners to praising saints! from a vile body to this which "shines as the brightness of the firmament!" from a sense of God's displeasure to the perfect enjoyment of him in love! from all my doubts and fears to this possession which puts me out of doubt! from all my fearful thoughts of death to this joyful life! Blessed change! Farewell sin and sorrow for ever; farewell my rocky, proud, unbelieving heart; my worldly, sensual, carnal heart; and welcome now my most holy, heavenly nature. Farewell repentance, faith and hope; and welcome love, and joy, and praise.¹⁵

Richard Baxter, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*

Heaven is not a dream. Heaven is absolute reality. It is objective reality to us, not subjective. We don't make Heaven what it is, God does.

It is stable and very real. It unfolds with an orderly, yet spontaneous perfection. We do not skip frantically from one reality to another, back and forth, in and out, up and down as in a nightmare.

If the setting of a boat in water or a train is needed to fulfill God's desired experience, then it is so. In whatever setting God wishes to express Himself, there are no limitations to whatever He may choose.¹⁶

Drake Whitchurch, *Waking from Earth*

I do live expecting great things in the life that is ripening for me and all mine—when we shall have all the universe for our own, and be good merry helpful children in the great house of our father. . . . When we are all just as loving and unselfish as Jesus; when like him, our one thought of delight is that God is, and is what he is, . . . then, darling, you and I and all will have grand liberty wherewith Christ makes free—opening his hand to send us out like white doves to range the universe.¹⁷

George MacDonald, letter to his dying daughter

I haven't been cheated out of being a complete person—I'm just going through a forty-year delay, and God is with me even through that. Being "glorified"—I know the meaning of that now. It's the time, after my death here, when I'll be on my feet dancing.¹⁸

Joni Eareckson Tada

If Jesus' resurrected body is a clue, along with accounts of angels appearing to a host of other biblical worthies, I surmise that we will transport ourselves not only across but also through space—and with what by earth standards would seem incredible speed. Anyone who has envied a hawk's ability to soar or a whale's to dive can get enthusiastic about heavenly release from present limitations of mobility.¹⁹

Arthur Roberts, *Exploring Heaven*

These small and perishable bodies we now have were given to us as ponies are given to schoolboys. We must learn to manage: not that we may some day be free of horses altogether but that some day we may ride bare-back, confident and rejoicing, those greater mounts, those winged, shining and world-shaking horses which perhaps even now expect us with impatience, pawing and snorting in the King's stables. Not that the gallop would be of any value unless it were a gallop with the King; but how else—since He has retained His own charger—should we accompany Him?²⁰

C. S. Lewis, *Miracles*

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*²¹

T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"

As our minds expanded, we came to the realization that there were no limitations to that which we might do. Eternity gave us the opportunity to carry forward the grandest enterprises, reach the highest aspirations, and realize our loftiest ambitions. And ever before us there were new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, and fresh objects to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul.²²

Walton Brown, *Home at Last*

Throughout eternity we will live full, truly human lives, exploring and managing God's creation to his glory. Fascinating vistas will unfold before us as we learn to serve God in a renewed universe.²³

Edward Donnelly, *Biblical Teaching on the Doctrines of Heaven and Hell*

What will these glorified human beings be able to do in their transfigured universe, on their transfigured earth? The simplest answer seems

to be: whatever they wish. For according to an old theological dictum heaven will mean the satisfaction of every rational desire. And their transfigured cosmos will obviously be an “extension of heaven,” wide open to whatever use the glorified men will wish to put it. It will be theirs to use and develop into an even better and better universe. There will be no conflicts, no enmities, no hatred, no wars, no property bounds, no segregation, no discrimination. There will be abundant space and abundant opportunity for everyone to do whatever he wishes and wherever he wishes. . . . Their beatific vision will make it impossible for them to be uncharitable, envious, jealous, avaricious, unjust.²⁴

E. J. Fortman, *Everlasting Life after Death*

There will be new planets to develop, new principles to discover, new joys to experience. Every moment of eternity will be an adventure of discovery.²⁵

Ray C. Stedman, “The City of Glory”

Imagine sitting around campfires on the New Earth, wide-eyed at the adventures recounted. Yes, I mean telling real stories around real campfires. Why not? After all, friendship, camaraderie, laughter, stories, and cozy campfires are all good gifts from God.²⁶

Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*

On the New Earth we may experience adventures that make our current mountain climbs, surfing, skydiving, and upside-down roller coaster rides seem tame. Why do I say this? It’s more than wishful thinking. It’s an argument from design. We take pleasure in exhilarating experiences not because of sin but because *God wired us this way*. We weren’t made to sit all day in dark rooms, watching actors pretend to live and athletes do what we can’t.²⁷

Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*

At 2:30 a.m., on November 19, 2002, I stood on our deck gazing up at the night sky. Above me was the Leonid meteor shower, the finest display of celestial fireworks until the year 2096. For someone who has enjoyed meteor showers since he was a kid, this was the celestial event of a lifetime.

There was only one problem: clouds covered the Oregon sky. Of the hundreds of streaking meteors above me, I couldn't see a single one. I felt like a blind man being told, "You're missing the most beautiful sunset of your lifetime. You'll never be able to see another like it."

Was I disappointed? Sure. After searching in vain for small cracks in the cloud cover, I went inside and wrote these paragraphs. I'm disappointed, but not disillusioned. Why? Because I did *not* miss the celestial event of my lifetime.

My lifetime is forever. My residence will be a new universe, with far more spectacular celestial wonders, and I'll have the ability to look through the clouds or rise above them.

During a spectacular meteor shower a few years earlier, I had stood on our deck watching a clear sky. Part of the fun was hearing oohs and aahs in the distance, from neighbors looking upward. Multiply these oohs and aahs by ten thousand times ten thousand, and it'll suggest our thunderous response to what our Father will do in the new heavens as we look upward from the New Earth.²⁸

Randy Alcorn, *50 Days of Heaven*

Heaven will be deeply appreciated by the disabled, who will be liberated from ravaged bodies and minds, and by the sick and elderly who will be free from their pains and restrictions. They will walk and run and see and hear, some for the first time. Hymn writer Fanny Crosby said, "Don't pity me for my blindness, for the first face I ever see will be the face of my Lord Jesus."²⁹

Randy Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*

In Heaven, we will be able to do as we wish and go where we wish, never wondering if our wishes are wrong!

Randy Alcorn, unpublished notes

Think of friends or family members who loved Jesus and are with him now. Picture them with you, walking together in this place. All of you have powerful bodies, stronger than those of an Olympic decathlete. You are laughing, playing, talking, and reminiscing. Now you see someone coming toward you. It's Jesus, with a big smile on his face. You fall to your knees in worship. He pulls you up and embraces you.

At last, you're with the person you were made for, in the place you were made for. Everywhere you go, there will be new people to meet, including Charles Spurgeon and his friends Charles Stanford and Hugh Stowell Brown. There will be new places to enjoy, new things to discover. What's that you smell? A feast? A party's ahead. And you're invited.³⁰

Randy Alcorn, *We Shall See God*

One of the greatest things about Heaven is that we'll no longer have to battle our desires. They'll always be pure, attending to their proper objects. We'll enjoy food without gluttony and eating disorders. We'll express admiration and affection without lust, fornication, or betrayal. Those simply won't exist.³¹

Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*

Do you remember a time when you really felt good about yourself? Not in pride or arrogance, but when you sensed you honored God, helped the needy, were faithful, humble, and servant-hearted, like Jesus? Do you remember when you encouraged someone? when you experienced who you were meant to be? when you were running or swimming or working and felt you were strong enough to go on forever (even though later you could hardly get out of bed)? That was a little taste of who you'll be in Heaven.³²

Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*

I believe the New Earth will offer us opportunities we wished for but never had. God's original plan was that human beings would live happy and fulfilling lives on Earth. If our current lives are our only chances at that, God's plan has been thwarted. Consider the injustice—many honest, faithful people never got to live fulfilling lives, while some dishonest and unfaithful people seemed to fare much better.³³

Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*

Want to see the crossing of the Red Sea? Want to be there when Daniel's three friends emerge from the fiery furnace? It would be simple for God to open the door to the past.

Because God is not limited by time, he may choose to show us past events as if they were presently happening. We may be able to study history from a front-row seat.³⁴

Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*

The term *perfect* is often misused when it describes our state in Heaven. I've heard it said, for instance, "We'll communicate perfectly, so we'll never be at a loss for words." I disagree. I expect we'll sometimes grasp for words to describe the wondrous things we'll experience. I expect I'll stand in speechless wonder at the glory of God. I'll be morally perfect, but that doesn't mean I'll be capable of doing anything and everything. (Adam and Eve were morally perfect, but that didn't mean they could automatically invent nuclear submarines or defy gravity. They were perfect yet finite, just as we will be.)³⁵

Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*

Some people have a deep fear of public speaking, and they imagine that ruling means they'll be miserable, having to be "up front" and speak to groups. But the fear, anxiety, dread, and turmoil we associate with certain activities on the present Earth will be *gone* on the New Earth. If

God wants us to do something, we'll be wired and equipped to do it. Our service will not only bring him glory but also bring us joy.³⁶

Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*

We all have dreams but often don't see them realized. We become discouraged and lose hope. But as Christ's apprentices, we must learn certain disciplines. Apprentices in training must work hard and study hard to prepare for the next test or challenge. Apprentices may wish for three weeks of vacation or more pay to pursue outside interests. But the Master may see that these would not lead to success. He may override his apprentices' desires in order that they might learn perspective and patience, which will serve them well in the future. While the young apprentices experience the death of their dreams, the Master is shaping them to dream greater dreams that they will one day live out on the New Earth with enhanced wisdom, skill, appreciation, and joy.³⁷

Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*

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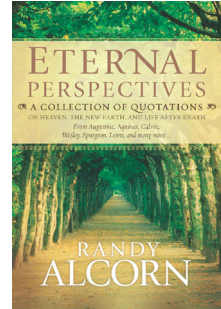
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Randy is the founder and director of Eternal Perspective Ministries and the best-selling author of over 50 books (over nine million in print) including *Heaven*, *The Treasure Principle*, and the Gold Medallion winner *Safely Home*.



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