

by David Nelson

Pastor of Discipleship

### Heaven? I Can't Wait!!!

Heaven gets a bad rap. Well, maybe not a bad rap, but *heaven* is one of the least accurately understood Christian truths. *Is heaven a place of unending church services? Is it a realm of disembodied spirits, clouds, and eternal harp strumming?* Not according to scripture.

The Bible says a lot about heaven and what it reports doesn't match the mental images of heaven most people hold in their minds. Scripture describes heaven as a bright, vibrant, and physical *New Earth*. It's a place where God's presence will be everywhere fully known; it's a place free from sin, suffering, and death. In heaven, we'll be amazed by incredible natural beauty and the richness of holy human culture.



Heaven is a physical place where people will live in close relationship with God and each other. There will be trees, rivers, roads, and buildings. There will be food, drink, work, play, travel, worship, and a host of things we got a taste of on this *old* earth.

Don't believe me? Consider John's words from Revelation 21 and 22.

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God...*

*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. 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."*

*He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making **everything** new!"*

*The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it... No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city.*

excerpts from Revelation 21:1-5,26-27, and 22:3

If you really want to be wowed, read the whole passage from Revelation 21:1 to 22:5 or so.

A more contemporary description of heaven is provided by C. S. Lewis in the last paragraphs of the last book of his famous *Chronicles of Narnia* books. For those who don't know, Aslan - the lion, represents Jesus Christ throughout this story. Leading up to this, the Pevensy family has just been in a train wreck.

*"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 Shadow-Lands - 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 for ever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.*

C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*, pp 183-184.

So, as you think about the Christian hope of heaven, realize it's a lot more than you think it is and it's way, way, way better than you ever imagined!!

## Upcoming Youth Events

### Summer Happenings

#### Children's Ministry

See Summer Schedule on back!

#### Youth Group

Middle & High School  
Stanley Square Youth Nights  
May 13th, 20th, & 27th  
6:30 - 8:00pm

#### Youth Baseball / Softball

June 13 - August 16, 2009  
Ages 5 - 16, evenings

#### Summer Sports Camp

June 22 - June 26, 2009  
Ages 6 - 12  
9:00am - 12:15pm  
Soccer, Basketball & Cheer

#### Vacation Bible School

July 26 - July 30, 2009  
Ages 3 - 6th grade  
6:30pm - 8:30pm  
Mark your calendars!

## Kids ask tough questions...

At a recent skills clinic, players were given an "Open Mike" opportunity to ask our pastors a question. Here's one answered by Pastor Dave.



### Q. How can God see us all at once all around the world?

I don't know how He does it; but, God sees all around the world (and the entire universe) at the same time. One of my favorite hymns begins, "All seeing and all hearing God..." and indeed He can and is all seeing and all hearing!

The apostle Matthew wrote, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' (Matthew 10:29-30) If God knows about every bird that dies and the number of hairs on each person's head, He obviously can see everywhere at the same time.

## Soccer News

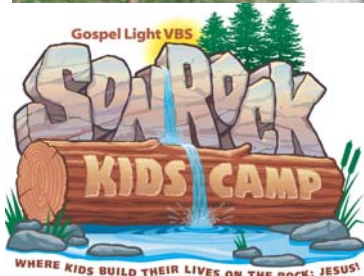
Finale Schedule — June 6th

**Division I** Sat., June 6th 9:30 - 11am

**Division II & III** Sat., June 6th 1:30 - 3pm



Courtesy of Bill Ward  
Ace Sports & Action Photography  
[www.bwasap.com](http://www.bwasap.com)



The Children's Ministry Team at FPC is excited to announce summer plans for Pre-School (ages 3-5) and School Age (rising 1st grade through 6th grade). Information and Registration forms will be available at the Finale on June 6th. Bring your children for games, snacks, activities and to learn that they are accepted by Jesus!

	<u>Camp Session</u>	<u>Pre-School Age</u>	<u>School Age</u>
Sat., June 20	"Jesus Chooses Peter"	3:30 - 5:00pm	1:00 - 3:00pm
Tues., June 23	"Jesus Walks On Water"	4:00 - 5:30pm	6:30 - 8:30pm
Tues., June 30	Dan Nicholas Park Trip	Day trip	Day trip
Sat., July 18	"Peter's Confession of Christ"	3:30 - 5:00pm	1:00 - 3:00pm
Tues., July 21	"Peter Denies Jesus"	10:00 - 11:30am	1:00 - 3:00pm
Sun., July 26 - Thurs., July 30	Vacation Bible School	6:30 - 8:30pm	6:30 - 8:30pm
Tues., Aug 4	Pool Party	tbd	tbd
Tues., Aug 11	"Peter Helps A Lame Man"	10:00 - 11:30am	1:00 - 3:00pm



Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ

Morning Service

8:30 Worship Service

9:45 Sunday School

11:00 Worship Service

Evening Service

*Beginning in June*  
6:30 Family Worship

On the first Sunday night each month, we'll have a family meal at 6pm & worship at 7pm

Call us at 704.263.4275

Visit us online at

[www.fpcstanley.org](http://www.fpcstanley.org)

Team Rosters

Game Schedule