

Lesson 11: Where is heaven?

Jn 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

How many of you have an idea of what heaven is going to be like?

Man's ideas about heaven fail because of the source of their information. Well, I am so glad God wrote a book, the Bible. It is Just like God, the same yesterday, today and forever. The Bible says that the universe didn't start with a "Big bang" but it will end with one. Here is a verse for you to mark in your Bible:

*Ecclesiastes 3:11 ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. **He has also set eternity in the hearts of men;** yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*

In spite of the efforts of education, philosophy, governments, science and cultural drift to the contrary; more people believe in **Heaven** today that at any time where statistics were gathered. Heaven is in but God is out. The same group increasingly does not believe in God.

Where is heaven?

The bible teaches that there are three heavens. First of all, there is the **atmospheric** heaven, which is immediately above us; where the **birds fly**. There are the **planetary** heavens; where the sun and the Moon and the stars live day in and day out. And then There is what the bible calls "the **third heaven**, or the place where God dwells. Paul Said in 2 Cor, 12, "he was caught up by the spirit into the third heaven." this is where God lives.

Someone has said that we see the first heaven by **day**. We see the second heaven by **night**. We see the third heaven by **faith**.

That is a start but that is not good enough. I should probably do a series on Heaven because I can't cover the subject in a single session. Tonight I

just want to talk about *where Heaven is* and *where Heaven will be*. What? Isn't heaven always going to be in the same place? Well there is a thought!

Some general statements to begin:

- Before Christ was raised from the dead the idea of heaven as an abode of the righteous was called **paradise**. Paradise was one side of *Sheol* or the place of the **dead**. When Jesus told the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16.19-31 this place of the dead was featured.
- When Christ was raised from the dead the saints were led from this place of **comfort** into the presence of God. Those in hades remained there. *Eph 4:7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. & Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."* Also 1 Peter 3.18-19.
- Today, when a believer dies they go into the presence of the Lord. *2 Co 5:8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.* To go into the Lord's presence means to go to heaven.

Heaven, more than anything else, is the **dwelling place** of God.

These references all come from the Sermon on the Mount.

- *Mt 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*
- *Mt 5:34 But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;*
- *Mt 5:44 But I say to you, love your enemies, ...45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*
- *Mt 6:1 "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.*
- *Mt 6:9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.*
- *Mt 7:11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your*

children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

- *Mt 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*

Heaven is a **place** not a state of mind. From time to time people will say heaven is just a state of mind or it is a spiritual existence and has no substance.

- *Is 57:15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place,*
- *Is 63:15 Look down from heaven, And see from Your habitation, holy and glorious. Where are Your zeal and Your strength, The yearning of Your heart and Your mercies toward me? Are they restrained?*
- *Ps 33:13 The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. 14 From the place of His dwelling He looks On all the inhabitants of the earth;*
- *Jn 6:38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*

I could go on for hours pointing out that heaven is a place.

Okay so Heaven is a **place**; Heaven is the **abode** of God; Heaven is the **home** of saints who sleep in death (The body sleeps waiting the resurrection but the spirit goes into God's presence with a spiritual body.).

All right what is left to discuss? The heaven of today is not the Heaven of **eternity**.

Let's look at three facts from scripture. Again I could talk till midnight on this showing numerous passages but I simply want to answer the question, "Where is Heaven?" but I want to tell the whole story.

1. God is going to create a **new** heaven and earth.
 - a. *Ps 102:25 Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. 26 They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, And they will be changed. (Quoted in Heb 1 about Jesus – thus offering proof the Jesus is Divine).*

- b. *Is 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy.*
 - c. Why is God going to create a new heaven and a new earth? What is wrong with the Heaven of God? Gen 1.1 says that God created the heavens and the earth indicating the entire universe. He made it very good but something very bad happened in it. **Sin** happened.
 - i. *Ro 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God...21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. God is going to make it all afresh.*
2. God is going to **destroy** the present heaven and earth first. The two verses above indicate that it will be, "out with the old and in with the new". These verses add to the weight for a totally new creation.
- a. *Is 34:4 All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree.*
 - b. *Is 66:22 "For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain.*
 - c. The passage that speaks most clearly is 2 Peter 3. Let's go there. Notice.
 - i. Scoffers **abounded** and abound v.3.
 1. Where is the promise of His coming? v.4.
 2. Everything continues the same from the beginning. There are no interruptions from some god v.4
 3. They with willful ignorance deny that God made

- the world v.5.
4. They deny the evidence that shows that God destroyed the world [mention the movie: Is Genesis History?]. v.6
- ii. The world by the word of God's power is **preserved** v.7.
 - iii. **Time** is inconsequential to God v.8.
 - iv. God's patience is due to his compassion not his inaction v.9.
 - v. The heavens will pass away along with the elements of the earth **melting** with fervent heat and being burned up even dissolved v.10-11.
 - vi. Again the heavens and the elements will **melt** with fervent heat and be dissolved v.12.
 - vii. We look and long for a **new** heavens and a **new** earth v.13.
3. The new heaven and the new earth will allow for us to dwell in **God's presence**. There will be a **joining** of heaven and earth in the new creation and there we will live in the presence of God. What? A joining of heaven and earth? Let's go to the definitive and most exhaustive passage on heaven, the New Jerusalem and the eternal state in the Bible – Rev 21.
- a. A completely **new** heaven and earth v.1
 - b. No more **sea** – separation [no division- all together] v.1
 - c. A new Jerusalem coming down from God in Heaven v.2
 - d. A beautiful indescribable city so well adorned that only a bride's glorious appearance can describe it v.2
 - e. God will tabernacle (**dwell**) with us.
 - f. Our purpose is not to describe or illustrate heaven tonight only to specify where it is. After He comes and makes all things new it will be the union of God's creation where Heaven and earth are linked by the New Jerusalem.

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