



A Traveler's Guide to the Afterlife

A Bible Literacy Study Guide on the Eternal Destiny of the Individual

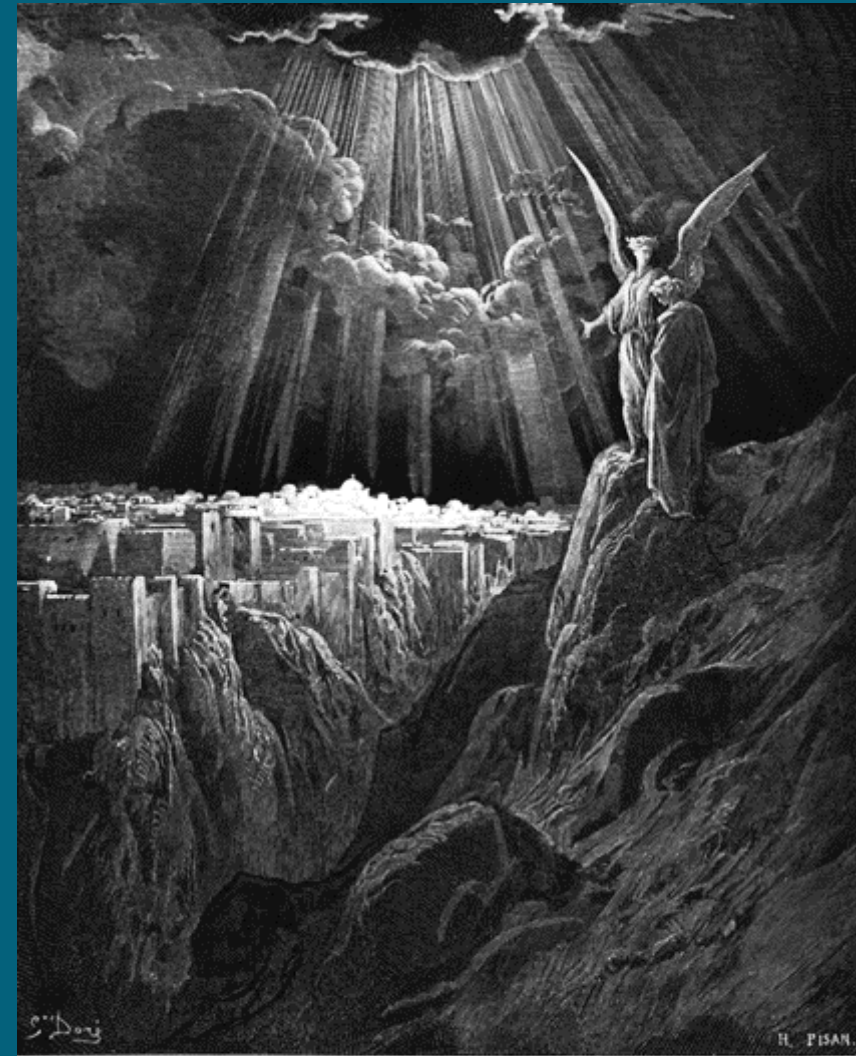
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Heaven and Eternal Life

Heaven and Eternal Life



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THE NEW JERUSALEM

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. . . . (Revelation 21: 2)

The Afterlife

Hades (NT)

Paradise

New Heaven & New Earth
(Rev. 21:27)



Body Dies
(Eccl. 12:7)

Spirit →

→ *Spirit*

Paradise

Lazarus, Jesus, thief on cross, OT righteous dead



Great Gulf

(Luke 16:26)

Tartarus

rich man, angels who sinned, OT wicked dead



Sheol (OT)

Eph. 4:8-9

1 Thess. 4:13-18

2nd Coming & Resurrection

2nd Coming & Resurrection

Judgment

2 Cor. 5:10

Mt. 25:46

Mt. 25:41

Hell
(Rev. 21:8)



Relevant Scriptures

- Matthew 25:21—*His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'*
- John 3:16, 36—*16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*
- John 14:2-3—*2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*
- 1 John 5:13—*I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.*



Relevant Scriptures

“...No **eye** has seen,
no **ear** has heard,
no **mind** has imagined
what God has prepared
for those who love him.”
1 Cor 2:9

Revelation 21:1-4



- *21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.*
- *2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*
- *3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*
- *4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*

Revelation 21:22-27



- *22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.*
- *23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.*
- *24 By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,*
- *25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.*
- *26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.*
- *27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Heaven Defined



- "Heaven" is the created reality beyond earth. "The heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1) circumscribe the entire creation, or what we call the universe.
- God does not need heaven in which to exist. He is self-existent and infinite.
- Place is an accommodation of God to his finite creatures. God transcends not only earth, but heaven as well.
- "Heaven" designates two interrelated and broad concepts-the physical reality beyond the earth and the spiritual reality in which God dwells.
- Frequently, the word "heaven" appears in the plural.
- The nearly exclusive word for heaven in the Old Testament, *shamayim*, is an intensive plural more literally translated "heights" or "high places."
- Jehovah is, therefore, "God most High" (Gen 14:18-20; Ps 18:13).
- Of the 284 occurrences of its New Testament counterpart, *ouranos* (lit. "that which is raised up"), about 1/3 are plural.

Eternal Life Defined



- A person's new and redeemed existence in Jesus Christ which is granted by God as a gift to all believers.
- Eternal life refers to the quality or character of our new existence in Christ as well as the unending character of this life.
- The phrase, everlasting life, is found in the Old Testament only once (Dan 12:2).
- But the idea of eternal life is implied by the prophets in their pictures of the glorious future promised to God's people.
- The majority of references to eternal life in the New Testament are oriented to the future.
- The emphasis, however, is upon the blessed character of the life that will be enjoyed endlessly in the future.

Eternal Life Defined



- Jesus made it clear that eternal life comes only to those who make a total commitment to Him (Matt 19:16-21; Luke 18:18-22).
- Paul's letters seldom refer to eternal life, and again primarily with a future rather than a present orientation (Rom 5:21; 6:22; Gal 6:8).
- The phrase, eternal life, appears most often in the Gospel of John and in 1 John.
- John emphasizes eternal life as the present reality and the present possession of the Christian (John 3:36; 5:24; 1 John 5:13).
- John declares that the Christian believer has already begun to experience the blessings of the future even before their fullest expression: "*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent*" (John 17:3).

The Physical Heavens



- The ancient distinguished between two domains of the physical heaven perceivable by the senses.
- The immediate heaven is the surrounding atmosphere in which the "birds of heaven" fly (1 Kings 21:24).
- The phenomena of weather occur in the atmospheric heaven, including rain (Deut 11:11; Acts 14:17), snow (Isa 55:10), dew (Dan 4:23), frost (Job 38:29), wind (Ps 135:7), clouds (Ps 147:8), thunder (1 Sam 2:10), and hail (Job 38:22).
- Beyond the atmospheric heaven is the celestial heaven, also called the "expanse" or "firmament" (Gen 1:8).
- It includes the heavenly lights-stars having "fixed patterns" (Jer 33:25; Nah 3:16), and the sun and moon (Gen 1:14-16).
- The fixed character of the celestial heaven has evoked figures of speech to describe it. For example, it has windows (2 Kings 7:2), a foundation (2 Sam 22:8), a gate (Gen 28:17), ends (Deut 34:3), a remote part (Neh 1:9), and is like a curtain (Isa 40:22).

The Physical Heavens



- God employs the atmospheric and celestial heavens in his self-revelation to human beings.
- First, the heavens witness that a glorious God exists.
 - "*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands*" (Ps 19:1; Rom 1:19-20).
 - Moreover, the pattern of seasons, yielding life-sustaining food, witness to God before believers.
- Second, heaven contains signs establishing God's promises.
 - The rainbow signifies that God will never destroy the world by a flood again (Gen 9:12-16).
 - The innumerable stars are an object lesson of the abundant way God will fulfill his covenant with Abraham (Gen 22:17; Ex 32:13; Deut 1:10; 1 Chron 27:23; Neh 9:23).

The Physical Heavens



- Third, God displays miraculous signs in the heavens.
 - Fire comes down from heaven, both to judge (Gen 19:24; 1 Kings 18:38-39) and to indicate acceptance of a sacrifice (1 Chron 21:26).
 - God provided the Israelites with "bread from heaven" during their wilderness trek (Ex 16:4).
 - God stopped the sun's movement (Josh 10:12-13) and used a star to pinpoint the Messiah's coming (Luke 2:9).
 - He also spoke audibly from heaven on occasion (Gen 21:17; 22:11,15; Acts 11:9).
 - Believers look for the return of Christ in the clouds of heaven (Mark 14:62; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16-17).
- Fourth, the vastness and inaccessibility of heaven are visual reminders of God's transcendence, God's otherworldliness is a spiritual, not a spacial, fact.
 - When Solomon prayed at the dedication of the temple, he acknowledged, "*the heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you*" (1 Kings 8:27).

The Dwelling Place of God



- Heaven most commonly refers to the dwelling-place of God.
- Heaven is where the glory of God is expressed in pristine clarity. The term "glory," therefore, has popularly been used as a synonym for heaven (Rom 8:18).
- Actually, God's glory is above the heavens (Ps 113:4; 148:13) because it is the sum total of his attributes that are expressed wherever he is present (Ex 13:21-22; Ps 108:5; 2 Cor 3:7-18).
- In heaven there is a continual acknowledgment of God's glory (Ps 29:9).
- Various figurative expressions identify God's heavenly abode such as "the highest heaven" (1 Kings 8:27), "the heavens" (Amos 9:6), and "his lofty palace in the heavens" (Amos 9:6).
- Paul speaks of being taken up into "the third heaven" (2 Cor 12:2). Although he does not identify the first two, possible references to the atmospheric and celestial heavens are suggestive.

The Heavenly Perspective



- God invites human beings to adopt his heavenly perspective.
- All blessings, whether natural or supernatural, are from God (James 1:17; see John 3:27), who is Creator and Sustainer of the universe (Rom 11:36).
- Israel rightly regarded rain as a heavenly gift from God (Deut 28:12). Likewise, drought was a sign of God's displeasure (Deut 28:23-24).
- The extent to which earthly blessings evidence heavenly approval needs to be conditioned.
- Job, for example, suffered many things unrelated to his faith and obedience. In Job's suffering, however, God was orchestrating his sovereign and just purposes from heaven (Job 41:11).
- Jesus taught that the span of life on earth is severely limited when considering heavenly blessing.

The Heavenly Perspective



- Nevertheless, *"Our Father who is in heaven"* gives daily bread (Matt 6:11) and *"good gifts to those who ask him"* (Matt 7:11).
- What of those who do not adopt a heavenly perspective?
- Ecclesiastes, with its theme the meaninglessness of life lived "under heaven" (i.e., from a purely earthly perspective), asks readers to consider that *"God is in heaven and you are on the earth"* (5:2).
- Jesus solemnly warned, *"Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt 7:21).
- Also, Paul warns that partiality is forbidden even in the case of a master-to-slave relationship, because *"both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him"* (Eph 6:9).
- When the godly suffer at the hands of the unrighteous, for example, rejoicing is commanded knowing that a great reward in heaven awaits (Matt 5:12).

The Heavenly Perspective



- Those claiming a heavenly inheritance are required to bring the earthly and the heavenly into alignment.
- Jesus linked entrance into the kingdom of heaven to repentance (Matt 4:17), humility (5:3; 18:1-4), witness (5:10,16; 10:32; 16:19), obedience (5:19), righteousness (5:20), compassion (18:10,14; 23:13) and stewardship (19:23).
- Proactively, believers store up treasures (6:20) by being prudent managers of the little and perishable on earth in order to insure the abundant and enduring in heaven (Luke 16:1-13).
- Either the earthly or heavenly value system will prevail.
- So, those who pray, *"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"* (Matt 6:10) are obliged to live from a heavenly vantage point.

The Spirit and Heaven



- The giving of the Holy Spirit is directly tied to Jesus' entrance into heaven (Acts 2:33).
- The Spirit was sent from heaven (1 Peter 1:12).
- He is the heavenly gift (Acts 2:38), a foretaste of the blessings of heaven (John 7:37-39).
- He is also a guarantee of believers' future inheritance (Eph 1:13-14).
- The writer of Hebrews indicates a relationship between "the heavenly gift," the Holy Spirit, and the powers of the age to come (6:3-4).
- When Peter linked the Spirit's coming with Joel 2:28-32 (Acts 2:17-21), he was saying that the eschatological hope of heaven was near. The "last days" had begun.

Believers and Heaven



- Believers have a present and future heavenly status.
- Presently believers are citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20-21) with a heavenly calling (Heb 3:1); their names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20).
- They groan to be clothed with a resurrection body, *"a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands"* (2 Cor 5:1).
- It will be a body like Christ's. The restoration of the image of God in human beings-from earthly to heavenly-will be complete (1 Cor 15:45-49).
- The eternal inheritance of future blessings promised by God is secure because it is (1 Peter 1:4), and because believers are joint-heirs with Christ who has *"kept in heaven"* already been glorified (Rom 8:17).

Believers and Heaven



- The heavenly future all believers anticipate is the fulfillment of God's purpose in creating the universe.
- It will include worship of the type revealed in the Book of Revelation (7:10; 11:16-18; 15:2-4).
- Worship will involve rehearsing God's glorious acts (19:1-2).
- In addition to ascription of worth, worship will involve service-unspecified works done in obedience to God and for God (22:6).
- Believers are to offer this kind of service to God now (Rom 12:1).
- In contrast to present suffering, God promises believers that they will reign with Christ in heavenly glory (2 Tim 2:12; see Matt 19:28; Rev 20:4,6).
- In heaven believers will have fellowship with God and with each other in a perfect environment (Heb 12:22-23).

The New Jerusalem



- The holy city described by John in Rev 21-22; God's perfect and eternal order of the future.
- This New Jerusalem is not built by human hands; it is a heavenly city-one built and provided by God Himself (Rev 21:2).
- The New Jerusalem and the new Garden of Eden (symbols of righteousness, peace, and prosperity) are the dwelling place of God, Christ, and the church.
- John saw no temple in New Jerusalem, "*for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple*" (Rev 21:22).
- In the Book of Revelation John draws a graphic contrast between the harlot city called "*Babylon the Great*" (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:1-18:24), the earthly and temporal city of man, and the "*New Jerusalem*" (Rev 21:2-22:5), the heavenly and eternal city of God.
- John identifies "**the great city, the holy Jerusalem**" (Rev 21:10) as the church, which he calls "*the bride, the Lamb's wife*" (Rev 21:9).

New Heavens and New Earth



- A term which, when used with new earth, refers to the perfected state of the created universe and the final dwelling place of the righteous.
- The phrase is found in Isa 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13, and in a slightly modified form in Rev 21:1.
- Rooted deep in Jewish thought was the dream of a new heaven and a new earth, a re-creation of the universe that would occur following the Day of the Lord (Isa 13:10-13; Joel 2:1-2,30-31).
- The concept of a re-created universe is closely related to the biblical account of the Creation and the Fall (Gen 1:1) and the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3).

New Heavens and New Earth



- Because of their sin, "the creation was subjected to futility.... [and] the bondage of corruption" (Rom 8:19,21).
- The need for a new heaven and a new earth arises from man's sin and God's judgment, not from some deficiency or evil in the universe (Gen 3:17).
- The apostle Peter referred to the Old Testament doctrine of the Day of the Lord and applied it to the events that will occur at the Second Coming of Christ (2 Peter 3:10,13).
- When Christ returns, this present evil age will give way to the age to come.
- The universe will be purified and cleansed by the power of God.
- This will be reminiscent of the purging of the earth in the days of Noah, but on a universal scale.

New Heavens and New Earth

Restored or New Creation?



- Acts 3:21: Includes the phrase "*until the time comes for God to restore everything*" must be understood in its original context. Peter was most likely referring to a spiritual restoration.
- Psalm 102:25-27—*In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.*
- Isaiah 34:4, 51:6, 65:17—*"all the stars of the heavens will be dissolved," "the heavens will vanish like smoke," and "the former things [the heavens and the earth] will not be remembered nor will they come to mind."*

New Heavens and New Earth

Restored or New Creation?



- 2 Peter 3:7, 10—*"The present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction. . . . The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare"* (or "will be burned up" in some early manuscripts).
- Matthew 24:35—*"heaven and earth will pass away."*
- Revelation 21 describes a new heaven and a new earth that will be the eternal dwelling place of redeemed humans.
 - 21:1—*"the first heaven and the first earth had passed away."*
 - 21:5—*"I [Christ] am making everything new."*
- These statements imply that the new heaven and new earth will replace the present earth and universe. That is, our present planet will not be restored. It will be replaced.

Barna Research on Heaven Believers



- 61% believe that they will go to Heaven when they die because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus as their savior.
- 10% believe that they will go to heaven because basically they are a good person.
- 12% do not know what will happen to them after they die.
- 7% believe that they will go to Heaven because God loves all people and will not let them perish.
- 5% believe that when they die they will go to Heaven because they have tried to obey the 10 commandments.
- 2% believe that when they die they will not go to Heaven.

Barna Research on Heaven

General



- There is a tendency to believe that all good people, whether or not they consider Jesus Christ to be their savior, will live in heaven after they die on earth.
- In 2002 the public is decided on the matter: 55% agree, 38% disagree. This represents little change since 1993, when 56% agreed with this notion and 1996 when 54% agree, 38% disagree.
- More than half of all adults (55%) believe that if a person is generally good, or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in Heaven. (2002)

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

Hearts Set on Heaven



- In his classic devotional book titled *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, English Puritan pastor and author Richard Baxter (1615-1691) wrote:
"Why are not our hearts continually set on heaven? Why dwell we not there in constant contemplation?...Bend thy soul to study eternity, busy thyself about the life to come, habituate thyself to such contemplations, and let not those thoughts be seldom and cursory, but bathe thyself in heaven's delights."

Our Daily Bread, July 28, 1997

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

Who Will Be There?



- The abode of God (1 Kings 8:30)
- The abode of the angels (Mark 13:32)
- Believers will be there in due course (1 Pet. 1:4).
- The New Testament uses striking imagery to bring out the wonder and loveliness of heaven (gates of pearl and a street of gold— Rev. 21:21). Heaven means eternal joy in the presence of God.

The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook, Walter A. Elwell, Editor, (Harold Shaw: Wheaton , IL, 1984), p. 351.

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

End of the Journey



- Light after darkness, gain after loss;
Strength after weakness, crown after cross;
Sweet after bitter, hope after fears;
Home after wandering, praise after tears;
- Sheaves after sowing, sun after rain;
Sight after mystery, peace after pain;
Joy after sorrow, calm after blast;
Rest after weariness, sweet rest at last;
- Near after distant, gleam after gloom;
Love after loneliness, life after tomb;
After long agony, rapture of bliss;
Right was the pathway, leading to this.

Source unknown

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

Home in Heaven



- I am home in heaven, dear ones; oh, so happy and so bright.
There is perfect joy and beauty in this everlasting light.
- All the pain and grief is over, Every restless tossing passed.
I am now at peace forever, Safely home in heaven at last.
- Did you wonder I so calmly Trod the valley of the shade?
Oh, but Jesus' love illumined Every dark and fearful glade.
- And He came Himself to meet me In the way so hard to tread;
And with Jesus' arm to lean on Could I have one doubt or dread?
- Then you must not grieve so sorely, For I love you dearly still.
Try to look beyond death's shadows; Pray to trust our Father's will.
- There is work still waiting for you, So you must not idly stand.
Do it now while life remaineth; You shall rest in Jesus' land.
- When that work is all completed, He will gently call you home.
Oh, the rapture of that meeting; Oh, the joy to see you come.

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

Anticipation of Heaven



- Appreciation of heaven is frequently highest among those nearing death. Suffering both increases our desire for heaven and prepares us for it.
- John Bradford (1510-1555), less than five months before his fiery departure from life for preaching the gospel in violent times, wrote to a friend of the glories of heaven he anticipated:

I am assured that though I want here, I have riches there; though I hunger here, I shall have fullness there; though I faint here, I shall be refreshed there; and though I be accounted here as a dead man, I shall there live in perpetual glory.

That is the city promised to the captives whom Christ shall make free; that is the kingdom assured to them whom Christ shall crown; there is the light that shall never go out; there is the health that shall never be impaired; there is the glory that shall never be defaced; there is the life that shall taste no death; and there is the portion that passes all the world's preferment. There is the world that shall never wax worse; there is every want supplied freely without money; there is not danger, but happiness, and honour, and singing, and praise and thanksgiving unto the heavenly Jehovah, "to him that sits on the throne," "to the lamb" that here was led to the slaughter, that now "reigns" with whom I "shall reign" after I have run this comfortless race through this miserable earthly vale.

- John Gilmore, *Probing Heaven, Key Questions on the Hereafter*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989, pp. 26-27.

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

Three Wonders in Heaven



- John Newton said that when we get to heaven, there will be three wonders:
 1. Who is there
 2. Who is not there, and
 3. The fact that I'm there!

Source unknown



Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven Unknown Region With a Well-Known Inhabitant

- We know very little about heaven, but I once heard a theologian describe it as “an unknown region with a well-known inhabitant,” and there is not a better way to think of it than that.
- Richard Baxter expresses the thought in these lines:
My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim,
But it’s enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with him.
- To those who have learned to love and trust Jesus, the prospect of meeting him face to face and being with him forever is the hope that keeps us going, no matter what life may throw at us.

Your Father Loves You by James Packer, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986, page for September 23.

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

Gallup Poll



- In 1991 a Gallup poll showed that 78 percent of Americans expect to go to heaven when they die.
- However, many of them hardly ever pray, read the Bible, or attend church.
- They admit that they live to please themselves instead of God.
- I wonder why these people would want to go to heaven.

Source unknown

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

Are We Ready?



- In an article title, "Are We Ready for Heaven?" Maurice R. Irwin points out that only 34 percent of the American people who call themselves Christians attend church at least once a week.
- He says, "We sing, 'When all my labors and trials are o'er, and I am safe on that beautiful shore, just to be near the dear Lord I adore will through the ages be glory for me.'
- However, unless our attitudes toward the Lord and our appreciation of Him change greatly, heaven may be more of a shock than a glory."

Our Daily Bread, July 31, 1992

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

Mysteries of Godliness



- I once led a man to Christ who loved the sunny country of common sense, but he could not put up with the mysteries of godliness. He kept shoving common sense at me, while I kept trying to show him that the mysteries held the meaning of faith. One day he said,
- “Pastor, you know this new eternal life I have—well, I’ve been thinking about it. What are we going to do all day long for eternity?”
- “We’ll praise the Lord,” I said.
- “Forever—for ten million years we’re going to stand around and praise the Lord?”
- “Well, yes,” I said, although heaven was beginning to sound like cable television.
- “For millions and millions of years?” he said. “Couldn’t we just stop now and then and mess around a while?”
- I kidded him about his “dumb questions,” but I have to admit similar questions of my own at times. How meager our understanding of praise—and heaven!

- Calvin Miller

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

Age 120



- A widely respected man known as “Uncle Johnson” died in Michigan at the incredible age of 120. Perhaps his advanced years could be credited in part to the cheerful outlook that characterized his life.
- One day while at work in his garden, he was singing songs of praise to God. His pastor, who was passing by, looked over the fence and called,
- “Uncle Johnson, you seem very happy today.”
- “Yes, I was just thinking,” said the old man.
- “Thinking about what?” questioned his pastor.
- “Oh, I was just thinking that if the crumbs of joy that fall from the Master’s table in this world are so good, what will the great loaf in glory be like! I tell you, sir, there will be enough for everyone and some to spare up there.”

Source unknown

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven Here in This World



- Here in this world,
- He bids us come;
- there in the next,
- He shall bid us welcome.

John Donne

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

What's Heaven Like?



- An unknown author once said, "As a boy, I thought of heaven as a city with domes, spires, and beautiful streets, inhabited by angels.
- By and by my little brother died, and I thought of heaven much as before, but with one inhabitant that I knew.
- Then another died, and then some of my acquaintances, so in time I began to think of heaven as containing several people that I knew.
- But it was not until one of my own little children died that I began to think I had treasure in heaven myself. Afterward another went, and yet another.
- By that time I had so many acquaintances and children in heaven that I no more thought of it as a city merely with streets of gold but as a place full of inhabitants.
- Now there are so many loved ones there I sometimes think I know more people in heaven than I do on earth.

Source unknown

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

The Master's There



- In one of his books, A. M. Hunter, the New Testament scholar, relates the story of a dying man who asked his Christian doctor to tell him something about the place to which he was going.
- As the doctor fumbled for a reply, he heard a scratching at the door, and he had his answer.
- “Do you hear that?” he asked his patient. “It’s my dog. I left him downstairs, but he has grown impatient, and has come up and hears my voice. He has no notion what is inside this door, but he knows that I am here.
- Isn’t it the same with you? You don’t know what lies beyond the Door, but you know that your Master is there.”

Christian Theology in Plain Language, p. 208

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

The Bright Side of Destiny: Living Forever in the New Creation



- Jesus will make “everything new” (Rev 21:5).
- John’s vision of the New Jerusalem is that of a bride beautifully dressed for her husband (Rev 21:2).
- In this city, Jesus is preparing a place for his followers in His Father’s house that has many dwellings (Jn 14:1-3).
- Our lives will overflow with worship to God (Rev 4:6-13; 19:4-5).
- We will be part of a joyous community where we eat meals together and partake of the Tree of Life (Rev 19:9; 22:2).
- We may undertake projects together as hinted at by the parable of the ten minas (Lk 19:11-27).
- Our focus will be on the joys of the present with no fear of the future (Rev 7:17).
- Believers will live in resurrected glorified bodies just like the one Jesus has (1 Cor 15:17).

Greg Crofford, *The Dark Side of Destiny*

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

Why is the New Creation Better?



- Currently, humans are confined to four space-time dimensions so the human mind cannot conceive of anything involving higher dimensions (Eccl 3:11; 1 Cor 2:9).
- Time as we know it will not exist. However, activities in time such as events, travel, and meaningful relationships will continue in a timeful-eternity. Singing and playing harps are not the only activities for those who fear being bored (Rev 21-22).
- The old order of things has passed away (Rev 21:4-5). This new arrangement means there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. The elimination of these negative experiences implies that the existing laws of physics such as the law of decay (2nd Law of Thermodynamics) will no longer be in effect.
- The spatial dimensions of the New Jerusalem measure 1380 miles as an enormous cubic or pyramid structure. But gravity and mass as we know them, will not exist since these are limitations on our current earth.

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

Why is the New Creation Better?



- There will be no sun, moon, stars, or other forms of illumination as we know them now (Rev 22:5). These forms of illumination are limited to current laws of physics such as thermodynamics, gravity, and electromagnetism. Totally new laws will be in effect. The new creation will be bathed in light from God's glory and the Lamb. There will be no darkness.
- Current physical laws and space dimensions restrict us to the earth's surface within the first 2000 feet in earthly structures. Living space in the New Jerusalem will not be restricted to anything resembling the existing earth. Even with 40 billion residents, each person's apartment would be sufficient to accommodate a surfing beach, a mountain, a zoo, and a 36-hole golf course. Current spatial limitations will no longer separate people.
- There will be no wasted activity or meaningless existence in the new creation. The experience, education, and training we gain in this earthly life will play a part, in some way, in preparing us to fulfill and enjoy these different roles in the new creation.

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven

Why is the New Creation Better?



- The present physical limits on our learning capacity will be lifted in the new creation. With total freedom from sin and decay, learning won't be a burden. It will bring joy. We will have continual access to the Master Teacher. Each of us will receive answers to the countless questions stored up during our earthly lives and the many millions more prompted by this new existence. We will enjoy intellectual, emotional, relational, and spiritual capabilities far beyond the apex of all we can ever experience on this earth.
- All of us will be family in the new creation. Marriage and family relationships as we know them will be replaced by something so much more intimate, pure, and wonderful that we will never miss even the best of what we enjoy here now. Never again will space, time, physics, or the effects of sin keep any of us apart (2 Cor 4:17).

Hugh Ross. *Why the Universe Is the Way It Is.*

Anecdotes and Thoughts of Heaven If You are a Christian...



- "If you are a Christian,
this life is the worst you will experience.
- If you are an atheist,
this life is the best you will experience."

--John Clayton, geologist, science apologist

Questions for Discussion



1. What will the new heaven and earth be like?
2. Who will be in heaven?
3. Why do people want to go to heaven?
4. Why do people not want to go to heaven?
5. Explain what will be unique about heaven?
6. Describe the meaning of the concept of eternal life.

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