

Heaven

Would you get excited about a vacation if no one could tell you where you were going, what you would do there, or how to get there? If we're going to be happy about visiting a new vacation site or moving to a new city, we have to have some basic information.

Christians would be more excited about Heaven if the information they had wasn't so vague. Our lack of enthusiasm for Heaven shows in our low level of spiritual growth. Why strive to go to Heaven or give up earthly pleasures if we don't know what Heaven is all about? Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21). Too many Christians store up their treasures here on earth.

WHAT HEAVEN ISN'T

The popular picture of Heaven is people in white robes, sitting around on fluffy clouds, playing small harps. The Christian picture of Heaven as an eternal church service is even less appealing. Heaven isn't an amusement park or a retirement home; it isn't boring or silly.

People get the wrong idea when they interpret metaphors of Heaven literally. Heaven isn't "up" above the sky. In fact, Heaven doesn't occupy space in the physical universe. Theologian J. Buswell said, "I do not think that Heaven is any great distance away. If it were the will of God, we could see the face of our Lord Jesus Christ at any moment." Heaven lies in the very real, spiritual universe, which God also occupies.

WHAT HEAVEN IS

Heaven is a city (Revelation 22:1-2). Heaven is a busy city where the gates are open and the lights are on twenty-four hours a day (Revelation 21:25; 22:5). Heaven is a secure city-no death; crime, grieving or pain exists inside its walls (Revelation 21:4, 8). Evil and occultism are banished from Heaven (Revelation 21:27; 22:14-15). A pure river flows through the city, and its waters are life giving. Trees with medicinal leaves grow on each bank of the river (Revelation 22:4-5).

We shouldn't think of Heaven as a castle in the clouds; it's solid and real. Though Heaven isn't imaginary, we may use our imagination to fill in some of its inexpressible beauty (2 Corinthians 12:4).

The best news about Heaven is God live there (1 Kings 8:30; Revelation 21:2-3). The inhabitants of Heaven enjoy the pleasure of seeing His face (Revelation 22:4). Heaven has no temple "because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Revelation 21:22). Jesus promised to prepare a place for His followers in Heaven, and then return for them so they could be with Him (John 14:3). Jesus is Heaven's treasure and there we will worship Him with unrestrained joy (Revelation 4:6-14). Even now, every encounter with Jesus is a taste of Heaven.

WHAT WE'LL DO IN HEAVEN

In Heaven we'll be busy doing a lot of the same things we do now. There will be all the activities associated with city life as well as travel, social interactions, and magnificent worship. Imagine the joy of music, singing, feasting, and loving without threat of violence, theft, or broken hearts.

We will have "spiritual bodies" adapted for Heaven and eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:35-49; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10). In the resurrected body of Jesus we have a preview of what our new bodies will be like (Philippians 3:20-21). Jesus ate, held conversations, explained, instructed, and traveled in his glorified body (Matthew 26:29, etc.). He was still interested in relationships, but He wasn't bound by physical restraints. Our life in Heaven won't be completely different from our present life. You will be the same person you are now, and you will still be making progress in your knowledge of Christ (Ephesians 2:4-6).

YOU'RE INVITED

Revelation 22:17 is a universal invitation. "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"...Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life." You're invited to Heaven, but the question is, what does it take to get there?

Jesus Christ provides a "bridge" from death, into life (John 5:24; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 56-57). To get to Heaven, the first thing to do is put your complete faith in Jesus; trust Him to remove the guilt of your sin through His death and strive to know Him. You should do this immediately, because time runs out (Luke 12:16-21; 13:23-30; Isaiah 55:6). As soon as you give your life to Jesus Christ, you become a citizen of Heaven and from that time on "our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

If you have more questions about Heaven or would like someone to pray with you about your spiritual condition, please call us.