

Thoughts About Heaven

Text : **John 14: 1-6 ; I Peter 1: 3-9**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Where will you be 100 years from now ?

1. If you're old enough to understand the question you will not be on this earth.
 - a. God has appointed a day for every person to die.
Heb. 9: 27 – ... **it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,**
 - b. No matter how long we live on the earth, it most often seems too short.
Gen 47: 9 – **So Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived ...”**
2. Mankind has always recognized that life on earth is temporary, but just as universally, he has also believed in an afterlife. **Dead is also temporary.**
 - a. The Egyptian mummification process was developed out of belief in an afterlife.
 - b. Many cultures burying things with the dead is a preparation for an afterlife.
(*Chinese emperor made model of his kingdom, including a clay army.*)
3. Christians do not believe in burying things with people for the next life.
 - a. We believe that our life on this earth determines what our afterlife will be.
 - b. The good done on this earth is rewarded in the next.
Matt. 6: 19-21 **Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

B. An ABC poll showed that most Americans still believe in an afterlife, in Heaven.

1. Among all Americans 76% believe that there is a Heaven. (**71% believe in hell**)
 - a. 9% aren't sure if there is a heaven.
 - b. 5% believe there is a Heaven, but they won't go there.
2. People's belief in Heaven strengthens with their self described level of faith.
 - a. “Not religious” ... 72% believe ... 77% of believers believe they will go
 - b. “Religious” ... 89% believe ... 85% of believers believe they will go
 - c. “Very religious” ... 98% believe ... 90% of believers believe they will go
3. 60% of believers believe that non-Christians will also go to Heaven.
4. 78% of believers believe that Heaven is purely a spiritual place, NOT tangible.

Therefore, it behooves us to spend time considering the reality of Heaven.

1. Heaven is an eternal, tangible place.
2. Heaven is not an inclusive place.
3. Heaven is a wonderful place.

I. Heaven is a real place.

A. There are different heavens mentioned in the bible. (**II Cor. 12: 2** .. third heaven)

1. The atmosphere is referred to as the heavens.
 - a. **Gen. 1: 20** – Then God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.”
 - b. **Psa. 8: 8** – The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.
(*This verse prompted Cmd Matthew Maury to find trade routes in the sea.*)
2. The solar system is referred to as heaven.
 - a. **Gen. 15: 5** – And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”
 - b. **Deut. 1: 10** – The Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day like the stars of heaven in number.
3. Heaven is the place where God dwells with His holy angels.
 - a. God the Father lives in Heaven.
Psa. 53: 2 – God has looked down from Heaven upon the sons of men To see if there is anyone who understands, Who seeks after God.
 - b. God the Son lives in Heaven.
I Pet. 3: 21-22 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you – not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience – through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who is at the right hand of God, having gone into Heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.
 - c. God the Holy Spirit lives in Heaven.
I Pet. 1: 12 – It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven – things into which angels long to look.
 - d. The holy angels live in Heaven.
Luke 22: 43 – Now an angel from Heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

B. Heaven is not only real, it is tangible. There is a physical location called Heaven.

1. **Rev. 21: 15- 21** ... It is a city so beautiful that it must be described hyperbolically.
 - a. Streets of gold.
 - b. Walls adorned with precious stones.
 - c. The city is 1500 miles square in size.
2. **Rev. 22: 2** ... The tree of life grows in it by a river.
3. Jesus will be there in His resurrected body.
 - a. When Jesus came forth from the grave, He was in His body. **Luke 24: 36-43**
 - b. When Jesus ascended back into Heaven He was still in His body. **Acts 1: 9**
 - c. When Stephen saw Jesus in His body at the right hand of God. **Acts 7: 55-56**
 - * d. **I Thes. 4: 17** – Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

I John 3: 2 – Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

C. Heaven is described as a place with an organized government.

1. It is referred to as “the kingdom of Heaven.”

Matt 7: 21 – Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven will enter
2. God rules it as its King.

I Tim. 1: 17 – Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.
3. Christians are citizens of Heaven.

Phil. 3: 20 – For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

D. Unlike earth, Heaven is an eternal home.

1. This earth will pass away. (Compare : **Mark 13: 31**)

II Pet. 3: 10 – But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.
2. Judgment is eternal. (*Not probationary or a place for prayer and penance.*)

II Thes. 1: 9 – These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

3. Life in Heaven with God is also eternal.
 - a. **II Pet. 1: 10-11** Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.
 - b. **II Cor. 4: 16-18** Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
 - c. **II Cor. 5: 1** – For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

II. Heaven is an exclusive place. (*Contrary to popular belief and to PC culture.*)

A. Heaven invites all, but only receives those who surrender their lives to God.

1. **Matt. 7: 21-23** Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven will enter. ²² "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness
(*Those who took the survey should have read the scriptures.*)
2. **II Thes. 1: 7-9** ... when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ¹⁰ These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,
3. **No one will ever be admitted to Heaven who is not a person of faith.**
Heb. 11: 6 – And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

B. The scripture clearly teach that most people will be lost. (*a motive for evangelism*)

1. The entrance into Heaven is very restricted.
Matt. 7: 13-14 Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴ For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

2. Many of those who enter the church will be rejected.
 - a. **Matt. 22: 1-14** ... Remember the message of the parable of the wedding feast.
 - b. **Vs. 14** – “**For many are called, but few are chosen.**”

C. There will be no illegal immigration in Heaven.

1. The border is sealed and every applicant is screened.
2. **John 14: 6** – Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

III. Whatever man has to sacrifice or endure on this earth, Heaven will be worth it.

A. Heaven cannot be purchased, but what would you give up to get it.

1. Many of the earthly Christians were required to give up everything.

Heb. 10: 34-36 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. **35** Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. **36** For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.
2. **Rom. 8: 18** – For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

B. Heaven is far better than anything man can conceive.

Rev. 21: 3-4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, **4** and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

CONCLUSION :

- A. Jesus died to purchase Heaven for you. Will you accept His gift ?
- B. You must place your full faith and trust in Him as your savior.
- C. You must surrender yourself to His rule in your life and obey Him.
- D. You must obey His gospel.
- E. **Rev. 2: 10** – Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

INVITATION :

Lesson Texts :**John 14: 1-6 ;**

1 “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. **2** “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. **3** “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. **4** “And you know the way where I am going.” **5** Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” **6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

I Peter 1: 3-9

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, **5** who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **6** In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, **7** so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; **8** and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, **9** obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.