

HEAVEN, THE HOME OF THE SAVED

Heaven, the home of the saved

1. What is heaven?
2. Why you ought to believe in the place called heaven
3. Figures used to give us a conception of heaven
4. Why you ought to want to go there
5. Who's going there?

What is heaven?

- Three distinct uses of the word “heaven”
 - 1) Atmosphere
 - Genesis 1:6-8, 20 – firmament (expanse), sky, where birds fly
 - James 5:18 – clouds give rain
 - 2) Celestial heavens
 - Genesis 1:14-18 – wherein is the sun, moon, stars, planets
 - Both of these will be destroyed one day
 - 2 Peter 3:10-12
 - 3) Where God dwells, where His throne is
 - Psalm 11:4; 14:2
 - “third heaven” – 2 Corinthians 12:2-4
 - Called paradise here and in Revelation 2:7
 - (another paradise – the intermediate state of the righteous dead: Luke 23:43; Acts 2:27)
 - We speak of this heaven

Heaven, where God dwells

- It is a real place, not just a state of mind or a condition
 - John 14:1-3
- Described in physical terms for us, but a realm different from this realm we are used to
 - 1 Corinthians 15:50-53; 1 John 3:2
- We may not have all our questions answered, but we dare not question His answers
 - Deuteronomy 29:29

Why you ought to believe in the place called heaven

- Our soul needs such a place
 - Not made to dwell here forever
 - Psalm 90:10; Hebrews 13:14
 - No lasting satisfaction here
 - Ecclesiastes 2:11
 - Psalm 17:15; 55:6
- The heavens and the earth are appointed for destruction
 - 2 Peter 3:10-12
- Heaven (and hell) a necessary part of God's justice
 - Justice often not found here – Ecclesiastes 3:16-17
 - God is right and just
 - Justice demands a place of punishment for the wicked as well as a place of rest for the righteous
 - 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9
- The Bible tells me so! The Bible speaks of such a place
 - Matthew 6:19; Luke 10:20; Colossians 1:5; 1 Peter 1:4

Figures used to give us conception

- City – Hebrews 11:10
 - Foundations – permanent
 - God – builder and maker
 - Craftsman, designer, and builder
 - Philippians 1:27 – your conduct = behave as a citizen of a city
 - Philippians 3:20
- Building – John 14:1-3
 - The Father's house – stay, remain, lodge, abide, dwell
 - Many mansions – places of residence, lodging places
- Kingdom – Matthew 25:34; 2 Peter 1:11
- Country – Hebrews 11:14
 - Homeland; at home there vs. stranger here

Why you ought to want to go there

- Because it is a place that is eternal – Revelation 22:5
 - Inheritance incorruptible – 1 Peter 1:4
 - Dwell in a body that is eternal – 2 Corinthians 5:1-3
- Because it is a place of righteousness – Revelation 21:27
 - 2 Peter 3:13
 - No temptation, no sin, no wicked – Revelation 22:15
- Because it is a place of rest – Revelation 14:13
 - Rest from labor, from struggle, from fight, from suffering
 - 1 Peter 1:6
 - 2 Thessalonians 1:7
 - But not from serving God – Revelation 22:3

Why you ought to want to go there

- Because of who will be there
 - Our Father in heaven – Matthew 6:9
 - Jesus – Acts 7:56; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
 - The Holy Spirit – 1 John 5:7
 - Angels – Matthew 18:10
 - The redeemed of all the ages
 - Romans 3:25-26; Hebrews 9:15
 - The faithful of the past – Enoch (Genesis 5:24), Elijah (2 Kings 2:2), Moses (Matthew 17:5), Stephen (Acts 7:60), etc.
 - Faithful Christians – Revelation 2:10
 - 2 Timothy 4:6-8 – “all those who have loved His appearing”
 - Prepared for these – John 14:2
 - Reserved for these – 1 Peter 1:4

Why you ought to want to go there

- Because it is a place of unsurpassed beauty – Revelation 21:10, 11, 18-20
 - Excels anything of this world – Psalm 19:1-2
 - Unfailing beauty – 1 Peter 1:4
- Because it is a place of settled happiness – Revelation 21:4
 - Not in this life – Ecclesiastes 3:4
- Because you don't want to go to hell
 - Only one alternative – Matthew 25:34, 41
 - Terrifying and Terrible – Revelation 21:8
 - Unquenchable fire – Mark 9:42-48
 - 2 Corinthians 5:11

Who's going to heaven?

- The atheist says nobody
 - Friedrich Nietzsche (morality determined by individual perspectives) – “in heaven, all the interesting people are missing”
 - Isaac Asimov, former President of the American Humanist Association – “I don't believe in an afterlife, so I don't have to spend my whole life fearing hell, or fearing heaven even more. For whatever the tortures of hell, I think the boredom of heaven would be even worse”
 - Richard Dawkins, famous evolutionist – “The cynic about human nature might say that religious morality is an effective way of keeping people in line. The threat of hell, the reward of heaven, but the rules of the holy books are out of date and often barbaric.”
 - Stephen Hawking, physicist – heaven is a “fairy story for people afraid of the dark”

Who's going to heaven?

- The Jehovah's Witness says only 144,000
- The Calvinist says only the "elect" which to them is the individuals God has unconditionally elected
- The universalist says everyone
- The Bible teaches those who do the will of the Father in heaven
 - Matthew 7:21-23
 - Revelation 19:12,15; 22:14

Are you going to heaven?

- Many want to spend their life living for themselves and then go to heaven when they die
- Some think they can do as little as possible just so long as they miss hell
- Neither of these describe the faithful Christian who is going to heaven
 - Philippians 1:10
 - Titus 2:14
 - 2 Peter 1:10-11
 - Colossians 3:1-2
- You must live with the decisions you make, and you must live with them for eternity
 - 2 Corinthians 5:10