

508 What Is Heaven Like
God's Answers to Life's Questions
Phil Sanders

"If God hath made this world so fair where sin and death abound, how beautiful beyond compare Will paradise be found." (James S. Montgomery) Heaven is that place everyone wants to go, but what do we know about heaven? TV and popular thinking makes heaven full of clouds and wings. Movies talk of ball fields and jokes tell about tests at the gate. Is that really what heaven is about?

Jesus said, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 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. 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." (John 14:1-3) Heaven is the place where Jesus is right now. He went there to prepare a place for you and for me, so that we can be with Him forever.

As a place, heaven is perfect; it doesn't have all the flaws of our homes on earth. (1 Pet. 1:3-5) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Who is going to be in heaven is an important matter.

God, the Father, the one we have been praying to all these years will be there. Jesus, the Son and our Savior, who died for our sins will be there. The Holy Spirit, who gave us the Bible and dwells in us, will be there. Angels, heavenly hosts, cherubim and seraphim, will all be there. Great saints will be there: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, the prophets, Ruth and Esther. The apostles and prophets of Jesus will be there, Christians who loved the Lord and served him.

Every faithful child of God will be there, every person who has been washed in the blood of Jesus and whose name is in the Lamb's book of life.

But some people won't be there. "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8) Some religious people won't be in heaven. (Matthew 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*. 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?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'" One cannot ignore the teaching of Jesus and expect to enter heaven one day. Most people think almost everyone's going

to heaven but Jesus said in 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. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." You see, no one stumbles by accident into heaven. Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people. You must enter that narrow gate.

What will we do in heaven?

1. We will be praising God.

Rev. 4:9-11 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created." People who love God and love worshipping Him will love heaven. Worship at church prepares us for heaven. Psalm 16:11 says, "In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever."

2. *It is a time of rest.* Rev. 14:13 says:

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them." In this world we have struggles and labors, but there we have glory and comfort. 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." Phil. 1:21-23 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if *I am* to live *on* in the flesh, this *will mean* fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better." 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, 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." All the heartaches, diseases, hurts, problems we face in this life will be absent in heaven. We could not dream or imagine how wonderful it will be to be in God's presence.

3. *It will be a time of service.* Rev. 22:3-5

"His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads. And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever." The word for serve refers to those who serve in worship. We don't know all the things we'll do there, but we know there will be a place and a task suited to us as we serve around the throne. When you love someone, you want to serve and

please the One you love. Heaven will give us that opportunity. In Matthew 25 those who used their talents were given greater roles of service in the kingdom. Service implies a kind of worship that glorifies God. If you do not enjoy serving down here, you probably will not enjoy heaven, for it is a place where serving God will be pure joy and overflowing!

The Tree of Life

Rev. 22:1-5 “Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” The tree of life was back in the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve was thrust out of the garden for their sin of eating the fruit.

Gen. 3:22-24 Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life. What mankind lost by that sin, they regained in heaven—perfect fellowship, perfect life with God.

God wants to bless you eternally.

Eph. 2:4-7 “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” Just as any parent wants to bless His children, so God wants to bless us with surpassing kindness.

Hebrews 11:13-16 All these [Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob] died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

Our home is not here, but in heaven with God. We long to hear God’s welcome.

Matt. 25:21 “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’”

2 Tim. 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Phil. 3:20-21 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

If you could live in perfect health forever, with never a need or problem, never a sorrow or hurt, with only good people who love you, what would that be worth to you?

That’s heaven! The way to heaven is in Jesus.

A Californian was driving down the road in his bright red convertible BMW when suddenly an earthquake hit and split the road he was driving on. The sports car was swallowed into the ground. The man jumped out in time to save his life, but before he could get completely away the car rolled over and cut off his left arm. As he stood on the ground looking into the pit, he cried, “Oh no, my car! My car!” A man passing by stopped and said, “How can you be crying about your car? You just lost your arm!” In shock, the man looked down where his arm should be and said, “Oh no, my Rolex! My Rolex!”

Many people get their priorities so mixed up. One day the things of this life will all be gone. The Scriptures teach that the earth and its works will be burned up (2 Pet 3:10). What will be left is your soul and your eternal destiny.

Nothing else will matter. Rev. 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

People wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. That takes place when people trust in the Lord, repent of sins, and are baptized into the *death* of Christ, where His blood is shed. God cleanses us the blood in baptism (Rom. 6:3-7), giving us new life and hope for heaven. God’s heart is big enough for everyone, but not everyone has a place in their hearts for God. *Don’t let anyone, anything, or any circumstance rob you of your place in heaven.*

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8221 Concord Rd.

Brentwood, Tennessee 37027

phil@God-answers.org

www.God-answers.org

1-877-226-5747