

This File Contains The Following Articles:

OUR EVERLASTING HOME

HEAVEN - Your Future Home?

OUR EVERLASTING HOME

Do you believe in heaven and hell, or do you believe that death itself is the ultimate end and that there is nothing beyond earthly death? If heaven and hell are real places, are you prepared and looking forward to heaven or are you prepared to accept the consequences of an eternal life in hell? If you do not believe or you are not sure if you are ready to go yet, don't you think you should at least find out what heaven and hell are supposed to be like and how to get there? The Bible paints beautiful pictures of heaven which are full of hope, peace, love, and contentment. Equally impressive are the warnings of hell's existence. I hope the following information will convince you to put your faith in Jesus as your savior so you can reap the rewards of heaven and avoid the torment of hell.

Hell

In Henry M. Morris and Martin E. Clark's book "The Bible Has the Answer" they state that Gehenna, also called "the Lake of Fire", will be an eternal abode where the unsaved will experience a conscious existence utterly separated from God and His love. (Answers p312 & 316) Since while on earth they preferred independence from God, ignoring His way and going their own way, they will now receive only that which they desired and deserved - eternal separation from God. (Answers p314)

This "Lake of Fire" is the ultimate and eternal hell, everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. It will not be on this present earth, but will be somewhere far removed from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. The flames of the fiery lake will burn without light, because it is the place of outer darkness. It will be a place of unending corruption and wickedness, and a place where rest is impossible. The resurrected bodies of the unsaved, though presumably subject to pain, will not be consumed by this vast furnace of fire. It is possible that the lake of fire will be some far-distant, massive body of burning gases at the edge of the universe. (Answers p314) As terrible as hell sounds to us, it is said that unbelievers will actually be less miserable in hell than if they were forced to go to heaven, since they have shown that they do not want Lord Jesus' presence or authority in their lives. (Answers p346)

Heaven

Now that all evil has been sent to eternal hell and removed from earth and God's presence, God is ready to destroy all signs of the old wicked world. When it became wicked in Noah's days God destroyed the earth by water, but this time He will purge it with a world-wide fire. Afterwards God will recreate a new heaven, new earth and new Jerusalem. In "World Aflame" by Billy Graham, he states that everything in respect to heaven will be new. It is described as a new creation in which we shall move in new bodies, possessed of new names, singing new songs, living in a new city, governed by a new form of government, and challenged by new prospects of eternity. The paradise that man lost will be regained, but it will be much more. It will be a new paradise, not the old one repaired and made over. (WA p233) Finally the ancient separation of heaven and earth (caused by Adam's sin) will be no more, for "the dwelling of God [will be] with men" again (Rev. 21:3).

God's first creation took six days, but when Jesus ascended into heaven 2000 years ago, He said He was going in order to prepare a place for us, a place with many mansions which could

mean many homes, or possibly even many planets to visit. (WA p234) Billy Graham states that “When we get to heaven we will not be limited to one particular place. The universe will be our empire. And what is true of space is true of what we now call time, for time will be succeeded by eternity, and we will move on into the endless eons of the future, exploring the endless reaches of the universe. Heaven will be as expansive as the universe itself. It will be as wonderful and beautiful as only the creator God can make it. Everything for your personal happiness and enjoyment is being prepared. Every longing and every desire will have perfect fulfillment.” (WA p236) Heaven will have many opportunities for endless adventure and abundant creative living. (WA p234)

Hank Hanegraaff, in his book “The Bible Answer Book”, says that heaven will be a place of continuous learning, growth, and development. He also states that we will never come to an end of exploring the Creator’s creative handiwork. The universe literally will be our playground. Even if we were capable of exhausting the “new heaven and new earth” (Rev. 21:1), God could create brand new vistas for us to explore. He also asks, Will heaven be perfect? Absolutely. Will it be boring? Absolutely not! Far from being dead and dull, heaven will be an exhilarating, exciting experience that will never come to an end.

Morris and Clark state that “Just as man, when first created, was given responsibility over the earth, so will redeemed men be given the privilege of serving God and ruling over the new creation. It will not be a place of eternal idleness.” (Answers p347) Billy Graham also noted that “Heaven is not all rest. It is labor, adventure, excitement, employment, and engagement. Concerning the people in heaven, the Scripture says that ‘His servants shall serve Him’. It will be much like the present life with labor and leisure, but missing all the imperfections that have destroyed the full and true meaning of life”. (WA p233-234)

“Heaven will be the perfection we have always longed for. All the things that made earth unlovely and tragic will be absent in heaven. There will be no night, no death, no disease, no sorrow, no tears, no ignorance, no disappointment, no war. It will be filled with health, vigor, virility, knowledge, happiness, worship, love, and perfection. Heaven will be more modern and up to date than any of the present-day constructions of man. Heaven will be a place to challenge the creative genius of man.” (WA p237) “In the book of Revelation, John pictures it as having trees, flowing fountains, fruits, robes, palms, music, crowns, precious stones, gold, light, colors of the rainbow, water, knowledge, friendship, love, holiness, and the presence of God and His Son.” (WA 237 & 238)

So are you ready to meet Jesus if He should come today? In many places, the Bible warns us to be ready. Since we cannot know the exact time of His arrival, we must be patient, for it will come to pass. We should wait with anticipation, looking forward to His arrival. (WA p211) To the Christian, the coming of Christ will be a glorious moment. To those outside of Christ, it will be the greatest of all calamities, a tragic separation, an unbelievable disappointment. But to those who are ready, what a glorious consummation. (WA p212) So, are you ready?

So how do you get to heaven? Unfortunately the path is narrow and only a few will make it. But due to God’s love, mercy, and grace anyone who truly desires can make it. “There is only one way to heaven, Jesus says: ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.’” (WA p239-240) As we are seeing, the signs of the end times are upon us, and we never know when we might die, therefore we must be prepared now. So to enter heaven you must sincerely ask God to forgive you of your sins (be honest since He knows your sincerity) then ask that the Holy Spirit come into your heart to guide you, and honestly accept Jesus as your personal savior, and truly try to live by God’s laws. Take time to learn more about God and Jesus - read the Holy Bible, talk to other Christians, and pray daily.

HEAVEN

Your Future Home?

How Beautiful Heaven Must Be

We read of a place that's called heaven,
It's made for the pure and the free;
These truths in God's Word He has given,
How beautiful heaven must be.

In heaven, no drooping nor pining,
No wishing for elsewhere to be;
God's light is forever there shining,
How beautiful heaven must be.

Pure waters of life there are flowing,
And all who will drink may be free;
Rare jewels of splendor are glowing,
How beautiful heaven must be.

The angels so sweetly are singing,
Up there by the beautiful sea;
Sweet chords from their gold harps are ringing,
How beautiful heaven must be.

A.S. Bridgewater

What About Your Future?

Who can think about the future without considering whether there is another existence after this life? Man cannot escape the thoughts of his state after death, but is inclined to put them out of his mind. He busies himself with the things of this life, placing thoughts of death, heaven, and hell into the distant future (Matthew 24:48, Ecclesiastes 8:11). The reality is, however, that a choice must be made. To do nothing will mean being eternally lost.

There are Only Two Destinies

The glories of heaven, and also the everlasting punishment reserved for the evildoers as described in the Bible, convince us that we must make heaven our eternal destiny. There is a choice to be made if we are to realize this reward. No sin will enter

heaven; this is sure. There will be eternal punishment in hell for those who do not find forgiveness for their sins. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46; see also Matthew 7:21-23).

Heaven - The Home for All the Redeemed

To the redeemed, those who have been washed in the blood of Christ, heaven is a special place (Revelation 7:13-14). It is home. Their desire for heaven is like the desire of the psalmist in Psalm 63:1. His soul longed for God in a dry and thirsty land. To the fleshly, earthly mind, heaven seems a distant, far-off place. To the person born of the Holy Spirit of God, heaven is much closer and real. When the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart and life of a child of God, he experiences a foretaste of the eternal home.

The virtues exemplified by Christ, such as truthfulness, humility, purity, and love, are precious stones in the kingdom of heaven. They are precious to the child of God. As God graces the believer's life with love from heaven, he is careful to be honest and humble. In this life he walks the golden streets of virtue. His heart longs for the fullness and purity of these Christian graces in the heavenly home (2 Corinthians 5:1).

Heaven - A Place of Light

Life on this earth has many shadows. We often encounter things we do not understand. We attempt to look into the future, but are not able to do so. Even though man has much knowledge, much is unknown. Disappointments are often experienced in our lives. All of this could be described as darkness.

Heaven has only light. It is where God dwells. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). In His light is

perfect understanding. Knowledge will be complete. The past and all events will be totally clear. Those who are saved love light. When men's deeds are evil, they love darkness (John 3:19-21). In this light, there will be full fellowship between the Father and all those who reside with Him.

Heaven is described as "the inheritance of the saints in light" (Colossians 1:12). Attributes of light listed in the Scriptures are knowledge, holiness, and joy. This light is without interruption - forever! There shall be no night there (Revelation 21:25).

Heaven - A Place without Threat or Sin

"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Revelation 21:27). Discouragement, disappointment, temptation, and sin are part of the earthly life. They will never enter that beautiful land.

In Revelation 21:4 we read, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." To the Christian, heaven is the fulfilling rest, the completion of the journey. He knows that even as God has wiped away his tears on earth, even so all sorrow will be taken away in the perfection of heaven.

Immortal State of the Saved

Human relations are important to us here on earth. One another's joys and sorrows touch our emotions. Family ties are meaningful and separation is painful. All of this is a necessary part of our mortal state.

When Jesus returns for judgment, everyone will be transformed. The dead will rise, and the mortal will become immortal. The body that was corrupt, subject to death, will become "like unto his glorious body". "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Philippians 3:21).

In this state, family relationships will no longer carry the same meaning for us. Jesus taught that there will be no marriage relationships in heaven (Matthew 22:30). The emotions of this life will pale in comparison to the joy that will be in the presence of the Lord God. Nothing will blemish the relationship between the saved and the Lamb of God.

The saints shall continually look on things which mortal eyes have never seen; they shall hear things which mortal ears have never heard; and they shall know that which the heart has never thought upon.

Jesus and His Own Will Be Glorified

A day is coming when the Lord Jesus shall appear to all the inhabitants of the earth. Everyone will stand before Him to be judged (Matthew 25:31-34). His true followers, even though they were despised and rejected in their earth life, will be taken into glory (heaven). There they will be able to praise and glorify God without end. There, mortality will give way to immortality. "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54; see also 2 Corinthians 5:1).

In this life the saints have had many trials, temptations, and difficulties. Through grace, those who have trusted in the Deliverer and persevered to the end will be taken to heaven. People from all lands and of all tongues and ages who have kept the faith will be there. This great and innumerable throng, who have been pardoned from sin and sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ, will inhabit heaven (Revelation 7:9-14).

These souls who have been redeemed in this life will be glorified in heaven. How wonderful it will be to experience the marriage of His Church with the Lamb of God. This will be glory beyond compare (Revelation 19:7-9).

Heaven - Beyond Human Understanding

"For now we see through a glass, darkly;

but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

The glory and splendor of heaven cannot be fully understood or described. Our minds understand the things which we can see and feel. While we understand that heaven is the abode of the soul with God, He has chosen not to reveal all the aspects of that eternal home.

A few glimpses of heaven have been recorded in the Scriptures. The first Christian martyr, Stephen, when being stoned for his faith, “looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55). Stephen, being filled with the Holy Ghost, was given a glimpse of his future home.

Even though much about heaven cannot be explained, we know enough that we, like faithful people through the ages, desire to dwell eternally in the city that God has made. Hebrews 11:10 tells us that Abraham by faith “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” (Read also Hebrews 11:13-16).

Will We Be There?

Where will we go when life is over? Will we go to heaven? The Spirit of God gently knocks and reminds us to prepare for our eternal future.

We need to recognize our need of God. Through the fall of man in the beginning, man has forfeited (lost) his favor with God. Repenting of our sins and finding forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ can restore this relationship. God then accepts us as just, and pardons us. We thus become children of God through the power of the Word and Spirit (John 3:5; 1:12). The peace that we experience is a foretaste of the fullness of rest that will be ours in that eternal abode. Every soul can have clear evidence in his heart that a mansion has been prepared for him in heaven (John 14:2-3).

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