

Heaven — How Our Destination Defines Our Identity

If we are headed for heaven we are:

1. **"Sons of God"** (John 1:11-13); "born again" i.e. "born from above" (John 3:3,7). These are "heavenly things" in contrast to earthly things (vs. 8-13).
2. **Citizens of heaven.** The Greek word *policoi* is translated citizenship or "politics." Not only are we going to heaven, but we belong there (Philippians 3:20).
 - a. Our **"home"** is in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:8, NAS).
 - b. Jesus said that His disciples "are not of the world", even as I am not of the world" (John 17:13-17).
 - c. Christ entered "into heaven itself" and is now in the presence of God for us (Hebrews 9:24).
3. A **new creation** (2 Corinthians 5:17). God's workmanship (or poem, Gr. *poiema*), created "in Christ Jesus" unto good works (Ephesians 2:10). No longer going with the world (Ephesians 2:2) and have no authority or the power to regulate or reform the world, but are to be subject to the authorities for they are ordained of God, and love all men (Romans 13:1-8).
4. **Ambassadors** to tell souls in Christ's stead: "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20,21).
5. **Strangers and pilgrims** in this world (Hebrews 11:13). -- (A **stranger** is a person away from home, and a **pilgrim** is on his way home--"traveling to a holy place;" Webster's dictionary.)
 - a. We are to "abstain from fleshly lusts (1 Peter 2:11), showing Christ in our lives doesn't give the flesh an opportunity to act (Romans 13:14).
 - b. An example of "strangers and pilgrims" in this world is in Hebrews 11:10-13. Abraham knew he had not reached the promises of God in Canaan. He:
 - (1) Died clinging to the promises, convinced of them, with no uncertainty about them (v. 13).
 - (2) Confessed they were strangers and pilgrims -- thus showed they sought "their" country (v. 14, JND).
 - (3) Refused to be counted a mighty prince but purchased Sarah's burial place (Genesis 23:3-9).
 - (4) Warning = Hebrews 11:15,16. Set our affections on things above (Colossians 3:2), and we won't turn away from the Lord (John 6:61 & 67).
6. **Soldiers** chosen by Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:4).
 - a. Jesus' kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36).
 - b. May we be "good soldiers"--not deeply involved with things of this life so we can "please Him" (2 Timothy 2:3,4).
 - c. Our weapons are not fleshly, but mighty through God (2 Corinthians 10:4,5).
 - d. We are able to stand against Satan if we put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:11-18).
7. **Called** from above—a **heavenly calling** (Hebrews 3:1-6), Christ over His assembly (Gr. *ekklesia* a called out company) where He leads the praises of His people (Hebrews 2:12). We are:
 - a. Holy priests to "offer up" spiritual sacrifices to God (1 Peter 2:5).
 - b. Royal priests to "show forth" His praises to the world (1 Peter 2:9).
8. Therefore, our destination does define our identity now! Like the apostle Paul, may we be obedient to the **heavenly vision** (Acts 26:12-19).