

WHAT IS HEAVEN LIKE?

A. Opening Questions

1. Are you sure you are going to heaven? (1 John 5:13).
2. Are you looking forward to going to heaven? (2 Cor. 5:2,4,8; Phil. 1:23).
3. Would you be happy if the Lord came today? (1 Thess. 4:17,18).
4. Is there anything you would very much like to do or complete or accomplish before you finish this present life? (Phil. 1:24; *Little Flock* #46-Appendix).
5. Do you think heaven will be more enjoyable than your present life on earth? How would you rank one's expected enjoyment level in heaven, on earth (now), and in hell?
 - a. (1) Heaven, (2) Earth, (3) Hell?
 - b. (1) Earth, (2) Heaven, (3) Hell?
 - c. (1) Hell, (2) Earth, (3) Heaven?

B. The Three Heavens of Scripture

1. The First Heaven: “The firmament [or expanse] in the midst of the waters,” that is, the atmosphere where the birds “fly above the earth” (Gen. 1:20) was made on the second day of remaking the earth (Gen. 1:6-8) to divide the waters above from the waters below.
2. The Second Heaven: “The firmament [or expanse] of the heavens” where God put the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day (Gen. 1:14-19). Note that there are two firmaments or expanses.
3. The Third Heaven: The place, also called “paradise,” to which the apostle Paul was caught up and heard unspeakable words (2 Cor. 12:1-4); the place of the LORD’s throne (Psa. 11:4); a “holy” place (Psa. 20:6).
4. The Seventh Heaven: The highest of seven heavens according to Judaism and Islam; not found in the Bible.

C. Who Is or Will Be in Heaven?

1. “There is a God in heaven” (Dan. 2:28; Matt. 5:16; Rev. 21:22).
2. “A Lamb [Christ] as though it had been slain” (Rev. 5:6; 21:22).
3. “Twenty-four elders,” perhaps representing both the Old Testament and New Testament believers (Rev. 4:4,10; 5:8; etc.).
4. “Four living creatures” represent the government of God by Christ and His people (Rev. 3:21; 4:4-11). They “sing” the song of the redeemed with the 24 elders (Rev. 5:8-10). Contrast verses 11&12, the angels “say.” In O.T. angels carried on God’s judgment (Gen. 3:24), but not in “the world to come” (Heb. 2:5). His redeemed people will reign with Christ: (Rev. 6:1, 6; 7:11; etc.).
5. “Many angels … ten thousand times ten thousand [or 100 million] and thousands of thousands [or millions]” (Rev. 5:11; Heb. 1:13-14; 12:22).
6. Only “those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life” (Rev. 21:27).
7. Believers redeemed by the blood of Christ “out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9), including “the spirits of just men made perfect” (Old Testament saints; Heb. 12:23), and including “a great multitude … of all nations … who come out of the great tribulation” (Rev. 7:9,14).
8. “Let the little children come unto Me … for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:14; see 2 Sam. 12:23); this might include those who die in childbirth or infancy as well as stillborn and aborted fetuses.

D. Who or What Will Not Be in Heaven?

1. Those “not found in the book of life” (Rev. 20:15; 21:27); “anything that defiles or causes an abomination, or a lie [that is, all unbelievers]” (Rev. 21:27; see also 1 Cor. 15:50; Gal. 5:19-21).
2. “There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying … no more pain” (Rev. 21:4).
3. “No need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it; the Lamb is its light” (Rev. 21:23,25).
4. “They neither marry nor are given in marriage” (Mark 12:25).

E. What Is Heaven Like?

1. Singing “a new song” (Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3; compare 1 Chron. 25:1-7 with Heb. 9:23).
2. Variety of colors and fruits (Rev. 21:19-21; 22:2).
3. Knowledge (Jer. 31:34; 1 Cor. 13:12).
4. Service (Luke 19:17,19; 1 Cor. 6:2,3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 7:15; 22:3).
5. Enjoyment of God’s creation (Isa. 11:6-9; 65:25; 1 Cor. 3:22; Eph. 1:10,11,21-23; Rev. 4:11; 21:7,10; 22:1,2).
6. Holiness, no sin, all like Christ (Isa. 6:3; Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 4:8; 21:8; 22:15).
7. Reconciliation, unity (John 17:21-24; Eph. 4:4-6; Col. 1:21,22).
8. “We shall all be changed” (as a seed is changed into a full-grown and fruitful plant or tree; 1 Cor. 15:35-54).
9. No tears, death, sorrow, pain, night (Rev. 21:4,25).
10. With Christ, seeing His face, hearing His voice, walking and talking with Him (Gen. 3:8; John 17:24; 2 Cor. 12:4; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 1:10-18; 5:6-14).
11. United with Christ as bride with the Bridegroom (Rev. 19:7; 2 Cor. 11:2)

F. Earthly Types and Figures of Heaven

1. Tabernacle—Heaven (Heb. 9:19-24).
2. Husband and wife—Christ and His Church/Bride (Eph. 5:22-27,32).
3. Father and son/daughter—God and His children (Matt. 7:11).

G. Beginning to Enjoy Heaven Now

1. Lay up treasure in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21; 1 Tim. 6:17-19).
2. Make wise and diligent use of all (wealth, possessions, spiritual gifts) that God has entrusted to us (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 16:11,12; 19:11-26; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6,14).
3. Be content (1 Tim. 6:6,8; Heb. 13:5).
4. Seek reconciliation—now! (Matt. 5:23,24; 6:14; 18:15; Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:16).
5. Show love, grace to one another—now! (John 13:34; Eph. 4:29,32; 5:2,25; Col. 4:6; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 4:11).
6. Serve God and one another—now! (Psa. 100:2; John 12:26; 13:14,15; Gal. 5:13; Col. 3:23,24; 1 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 12:28).
7. Be holy and like Christ—now! (Rom. 6:11; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Eph. 5:26; 1 Thess. 4:3,4; 2 Tim. 2:21; Heb. 12:10; 1 Pet. 1:16).

H. Finding Hope through the Truths Concerning Heaven

1. Increasing dangers of war, violence in school and on the streets, catastrophes (Matt. 24:6-8; 2 Cor. 11:23-27; 12:1-10; 2 Tim. 3:1-5,13)
2. Persecution for righteousness' sake and for Christ's sake (Matt. 5:10-12; Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:7; Rev. 2:10).
3. Joblessness, homelessness, poverty, hunger (Matt. 6:25-34).
4. Divorce, abusive parents, without friends, no suitable marriage partner in sight, health problems, emotional problems, depression (Psa. 23:5; 68:5; 102:3-5,12-22; 146:9; Prov. 18:24; John 15:15; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:4,25).