

Heaven: The Life Beyond

“Keep seeking the things above where Christ is seated...Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” – Paul 60 A.D.

Part 5 “Myths & Misconceptions About Heaven”

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2.19; James 2.14; Luke 10.17-22

Subject: The subject of Heaven is one of extreme importance to all believers. It is our eternal home that was purchased for us by the blood of Christ and offered as a free gift, which is received totally by faith. The very word Heaven is one that soothes and comforts. The sound of it drenches us with joy. Yet, we know so little about it. We might assume some things, but are those assumptions correct? We may believe certain things about Heaven, but can we be certain that they are accurate? Our ideas about Heaven may span from the absurd to the sublime. Many have given up to know what Heaven is like and simply hope for the best. Others say, “I cannot imagine what Heaven will be like.” Therefore, the following will help all of us understand and more fully believe with greater confidence:

1. The appreciation of the biblical view of Heaven (John 14.1-6).
2. The assurance that we will be there (I John 5.13).
3. The anticipation for our final destination (Colossians 3.1-2).

Imagination is the ability to visualize things and places that one has never seen previously. God is our Creator and has given us the ability to imagine. Because of our sin nature one can imagine evil (Jeremiah 23.16; Proverbs 18.11). Every sinful act began in the heart or the imagination of a person. However, we can use our imagination to visualize the good in life (Philippians 4.8). With a healthy imagination and the facts from the Bible about Heaven, we can partially visualize our future home. Maybe we will not be able to fully visualize it, but we should make every endeavor to think and meditate about our future. “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know in full just as I also have been fully known” (1 Corinthians 13.12).

Substance:

1. Myths That Mislead The Masses About The Real Heaven:

- A. There are as many myths about Heaven as there are religious thinking people. There are those who have some factual basis while others have none. To understand Heaven properly, we must separate fact from fiction.
 1. **Myth:** Heaven is a dreamy place in the sky surrounded by clouds. We will be as angels, complete with wings and harps. **Truth:** The Bible never speaks of the redeemed of the Lord having wings or any appearance of an angel. Nor is there any reference to believers strumming harps. Revelation 15.2 and 14.2 states that those who overcame the Beast held the harps of God. We cannot make the assumption that all believers will be musicians in Heaven. However, it is clear that there will be music in abundance in Heaven!
 2. **Myth:** Heaven is a place for the spirit of man where there is little consciousness. **Truth:** The Bible clearly teaches that those in Heaven are fully aware of everything they are experiencing (1 Corinthians 13.12).
 3. **Myth:** Heaven is reached by default. Heaven is for all good people. **Truth:** It is sad to know that so many believe they are going to Heaven apart from an actual acceptance of Christ as Savior. The only way to Heaven is through a personal relationship to Christ (John 14.6; Ephesians 2.9).
 4. **Myth:** There is inadequate information in the Bible regarding Heaven so the details are sketchy at best. **Truth:** There are several hundred references to eternal life in Scripture. Anyone who is willing to spend the time to search the Scripture will find an abundance of facts about Heaven and the life beyond death.
 5. **Myth:** No one can be sure that there is a Heaven or that they are going there. **Truth:** This is simply untrue. The Bible assures all true believers of eternal life (John 3.16, 36; 1 John 5.13).
 6. **Myth:** Heaven does not exist. **Truth:** The Bible is clear on the existence of Heaven (John 14.2-3). It does, however, have to be taken by faith. It is faith in what God says that pleases Him. While I have not seen Heaven I still believe because of God has promised it and His Word is completely reliable. I have not seen God, but I believe in Him. Peter stated, “And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Peter 1.8).

7. **Myth:** All those who have claimed to have gone to heaven and returned are legitimate experiences. **Truth:** The stories of those who claim that they have gone to Heaven and returned are highly questionable for many reasons. In recent years scores of books have been published by both believers and non-believers about their death or near death experiences of going to heaven. Most of these experiences take place in hospitals while the individual is under heavy sedation or anesthesia. The mind is greatly affected by these powerful drugs and can cause true-to-life dreams or have a hallucinogenic effect. A careful examination of their testimonies will reveal a conflict between what they claimed to have experienced and what the Scripture actually teaches about Heaven. For example, one individual gave her testimony without one mention of Jesus Christ. Another from a non-Christian perspective did not give any indication that Jesus was in his experience. The Internet is full of articles of “going to heaven and back.” Let the Scripture speak for itself and base your belief only on what the Scripture says, rather than to build an idea or faith based on the paranormal experiences of another person (Luke 16.31; Romans 10.17; Luke 16.29, 31; Luke 10.20). Final word: The only dependable descriptive source of what Heaven is like is the Scripture. Remember it is not our responsibility to explain the experiences of others. We are to give a biblical reason for the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3.15).
8. **Myth:** Heaven must be a boring place—it is a negative desire or an alternative to eternal punishment. **Truth:** Nothing in the life of Jesus was ever boring. It is reasonable to believe that many only see heaven as a better alternative to hell. But the true believer fully anticipates being with the Lord and enjoying the fellowship of all who are there (Titus 2.13). “Looking and hastening the coming of the day of God”(2 Peter 3.12; Revelation 22.20).

2. The Bible Teaches Us To Study Heaven And Become More Heavenly Minded:

- A. The Bible gives us clear direction to pursue an understanding of the realm beyond this life.
 - “Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking** the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Colossians 3.1-2).
 - “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God” (1 Corinthians 2.12).
- B. Heaven will be our eternal home; therefore, we are entitled to know as much about it as possible.
 - “And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him” (Romans 8.17).
- C. We are instructed by Scripture to know why we are believers. We are to give a testimony to unbelievers of our anticipation of eternal life.
 - “But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3.15).

3. Christ Prayed For Us To Join Him In Heaven!

- A. John 17.24 “Father, I desire that they also whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My Glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” Almost two thousand years ago Jesus prayed this prayer just before His arrest in Gethsemane. John recorded the prayer for our benefit and encouragement. It was a prayer for all believers and future believers. In this one verse, Jesus prays for every future believer. Jesus said, “I ask on their behalf” (17.9). “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their (the disciples) word” (17.20).

Jesus prayed three things for us to experience:

1. That we would see God’s Glory.
 - “So that in the ages to come (eternity) He might show the surpassing riches (wealth of His Glory) of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2.7).
2. That we would see and experience God’s Love for Christ and His Bride.
 - “And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21.2).
3. That we would be with Him where He is, which is Heaven.
 - “God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people and God Himself will be among them” (Revelation 21.3).