

FIRST WEDNESDAY || New Hope Church

What Does the Bible Say About Heaven?

What Do We Know About Heaven?

- ▶ Heaven is the dwelling place of God and His angels (Deut. 26:15; Matt. 6:9; Luke 2:15; Matt. 28:2).
- ▶ Heaven is the dwelling place of God's saints from earth who have died and now live there in his presence (Rev. 4-5; Luke 16:22, 25; Heb. 12:23).
- ▶ Heaven is described as a city (Heb. 11:16; 12:22; 13:14; Rev. 21:12). The normal understanding of a "city" is a place of many residences in near proximity, the inhabitants of which are subject to a common government.
- ▶ Heaven is also referred to as a country (Heb. 11:16) and a kingdom (Matt. 13:24-52).
- ▶ Heaven contains a permanent inheritance, a place specifically reserved for believers. (1 Pet. 1:4).
- ▶ Heaven will deliver us from the present conditions of material decay and corruption (Matt. 6:20).
- ▶ Heaven will deliver us from the current sinful human condition (Rom. 7:24).
- ▶ The redeemed in heaven are described as wearing "white robes," indicating their moral purity and righteousness (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43; Rev. 3:4; 6:11).
- ▶ Heaven is a place of great joy and pleasures for the redeemed (Psalm 16:11).
- ▶ Heaven's central draw is our anticipation of being with Christ (Phil. 1:23).
- ▶ Another draw of heaven is our anticipation of continued life, and ultimate reunion with Christian loved ones who've gone before us and will come after us (1 Thes. 4:14-18).
- ▶ Heaven has not remained the same since its creation but has undergone several phases.
 - Pre-sin heaven, before Satan fell (Is. 14:12-15), apparently taking a third of the angels with him (Rev. 12:4).
 - There is the current heaven [Intermediate Heaven; Paradise], where believers now come directly into his presence at death (Eph. 4:8-10; 2 Cor. 5:8).
 - There is the Heaven still to come after the final judgment, the New Jerusalem in the new heavens and new earth [Eternal State] (Rev. 21-22).
- ▶ The resurrection of believers has not yet occurred, and will not until just prior to the new heavens and earth (Rev. 20:12-15). Though the present heaven we enter at death is a wonderful place, it is not yet complete.
- ▶ The physical creation will be renewed and we will continue to exist and live in it (Rom 8:19-21; Rev 21:1)
- ▶ The new creation will not be "timeless" but will include hours and months (Rev 8:1; Rev 22:2)
- ▶ Christ promised his followers they would live with him in heaven (John 12:26; 13:36; 14:2-3).
- ▶ Jesus described heaven as having many rooms or dwellings, and promised that he himself would go there and prepare a place there for us (John 14:2-3).
- ▶ When we are in heaven, it may be possible for us to welcome others into our dwelling places. (Luke 16:9).

What Do We Know About Our Experience in Heaven?

- ▶ At death, the spirit leaves the body (Ec. 12:7) and goes either to heaven or hell (Luke 16:22ff).
- ▶ There is immediate conscious existence after death, both in heaven and hell (Luke 16:22ff.; Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Rev. 6:9-11; Phil. 1:23).
- ▶ There is no “soul sleep” or period of unawareness preceding heaven. (“Fallen asleep” in 1 Thes. 4:13 is a euphemism for death, describing the spirit’s departure from the body, ending our conscious existence on earth.)
- ▶ The names of Christ’s redeemed are written in heaven (Luke 10:20; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 20:15).
- ▶ When in his presence, Christ will give new names to the righteous, known only between him and them (Rev. 2:17). This implies some level of privacy.
- ▶ The wicked, those whose sins remain uncleansed by the blood of Christ, will be excluded from heaven (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 22:15).
- ▶ Christ’s resurrection body appears to be the prototype for our own heavenly bodies (1 Cor. 15:20, 48-49; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2).
- ▶ After his resurrection, Jesus emphasized he was not a “ghost,” a disembodied spirit, but had a physical body (Luke 24:37-39.)
- ▶ In our resurrected state we will have real “spiritual” bodies with physical substance (1 Cor. 15:42-44). We will be capable of talking, walking, touching, and being touched (Luke 24; John 20-21).
- ▶ Christ ate food in his resurrection body, and he and we will eat and drink in heaven (Luke 14:15; 22:18). Yet there will be no hunger or thirst in heaven (Rev. 7:16).
- ▶ At death the believer is ushered into heaven by angels (Luke 16:22).
- ▶ Some angels are assigned to children and have special continuous access to God (Matt. 18:10).

What Will Heaven Be Like?

- ▶ In heaven, we will worship God along with the angels and redeemed people from every race and background (Rev. 4:9-11; 5:11-13; 7:9-12).
- ▶ In heaven, we will sing praise songs along with all the rest of God’s creation (Rev. 5:13).
- ▶ Communication, dialogue, corporate worship, and other relationship-building interactions all take place heaven (Rev. 1-22). Apparently saints, angels, and God will all interact together, building and deepening their relationships.
- ▶ In heaven, we will exercise not only intellect but emotions (Rev. 6:10; 7:10). Angels too seem capable of responding with emotion (Rev. 7:11-12; Rev. 18).
- ▶ Heaven is described as a place where there is great rejoicing over what God is accomplishing on earth (Luke 15:7,10).
- ▶ In heaven, we will have eternal rewards, permanent possessions and positions which vary from believer to believer (Matt. 6:19-25; 25:20-21; Luke 19:17-19; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-10).
- ▶ Heavenly rewards are promised to those who endure difficult circumstances out of their trust in God (Heb. 10:34-36), and to those who persevere under persecution for their faith (Luke 6:22-23).
- ▶ A life of godliness (2 Peter 3:11-14) and compassionate obedience (Matthew 25:20, 21) will be richly rewarded by our Lord.

- ▶ When we extend hospitality and give a meal to those too poor or incapacitated to pay us back Christ promises us “although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous” (Luke 14:14).
- ▶ Salvation and rewards are different.
- ▶ Salvation is God’s work for man given as a free gift, to which man can contribute absolutely nothing (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). Rewards, however, are man’s work for God.
- ▶ Salvation is dependent on God’s faithfulness and mercy, while rewards are conditional, contingent as well on man’s faithfulness (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26-28; 3:21).
- ▶ In accord with our service for Christ while on earth, we will reign with Him in heaven (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 3:21; 22:5).
- ▶ We will judge and rule over the world, and we will judge and rule over angels (1 Cor. 6:2-3).

What Is the New Jerusalem?

- ▶ At the center of the future heaven will be the city of New Jerusalem.
- ▶ The exact dimensions of the heavenly city are measured by an angel and reported as a 12,000 stadia (1,400 mile) cubed (Rev. 22:15-17).
- ▶ This base of over 2 million square miles would stretch from the west coast to the Mississippi river, and from the borders of Canada to Mexico, covering 2/3 the entire land mass of the US.
- ▶ More astounding is its 1,400-mile height. By present standards, that would be 740,000 stories. It is apparently within this vast city that we will have personal dwelling places, which Jesus has prepared for us (John 14:2; Luke 16:9; Rev. 21:2).
 - The Size of the New Jerusalem
 - 1,400 mi Wide x 1,400 mi Long
 - 1,960,000 mi²
 - Earths Land Surface
 - 57,510,000 mi²
 - Potential Floors of New Jerusalem
 - 740,000
 - Potential New Jerusalem Land Surface
 - 1,450,400,000,000 mi²
 - The New Jerusalem is Potentially
 - 25,000 times the land mass of the Earth
- ▶ Heaven’s New Jerusalem is filled with magnificent beauty, including streets of gold and buildings of pearls, emeralds and precious stones (Rev. 21:19-21).
- ▶ Heaven has light, water, trees and fruit (Rev. 22:1-2).
- ▶ The heavenly city’s gates are always open, and people will travel in and out, some bringing wonderful things into the city (Rev. 21:24-25; 22:14).
- ▶ Travel outside the city suggests the city is not the whole of heaven, but merely its center.
- ▶ In heaven, we’ll eat and drink at a table with Christ and the redeemed saints from earth, communicating, fellowshiping, and rejoicing with them (Matt. 8:11; Luke 22:29, 30; Rev. 19:9).