

John 14:1-6 | Your Forever Home Pt. II

Congregational Reading.

Peter's Confession of Christ.

Matt. 16:13-20 'when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ."

Prayer.

Responsive Reading.

Q13: Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly?

A13: Since the fall, no mere human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly, but consistently breaks it in thought, word, and deed. (Rom. 3:10-12)

Q14: Did God create us unable to keep His law?

A14: No, but because of the disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, all of creation is fallen; we are all born in sin and guilt, corrupt in our nature and unable to keep God's law. (Rom. 5:12)

Q15:

Since no one can keep the law, what is its purpose? A15: That we may know the holy nature and will of God, and the sinful nature and disobedience of our hearts; and thus our need for a Savior. The law also teaches and exhorts us to live a life worthy of our Savior. (Rom. 3:20)

Prayer.

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"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going. Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Intro: Review Last week. **5 reasons** Jesus gives to not let your heart be troubled. Pick up on last 3 reasons. 'My Father's house' 'dwelling places' 'preparing a place for you' 'knowing the way' 'Thomas' lack of understanding' and **Jesus' definitive claim** of the way to Heaven.

Heaven is not an equal opportunity employer. Heaven is not inclusive. Heaven is filled with different people that all had the same problem. Heaven is filled with different people that all found the same solution.

The church is meant to be an example of heaven on earth. An example of the Kingdom of God. **Matt. 5-7. Kingdom Manifesto.** Sermon on the Mount.

The church, this church, is supposed to represent an expression of God's love, God's truth, God's wisdom, God's justice, God's mercy, God's grace, and God's forgiveness. The full counsel of God. The fullness of God. All of that is supposed to be an expression of heaven, at the local church.

It is a spiritual expression of Heaven through behavior that results in tangible, physical expressions.

Things opposite the kingdom of Heaven. Deeds of the flesh.

Divisions, factions, political powerplays. Are all symptoms of walking in the flesh. Unregenerate behavior.

BUT, unity, peace, love, joy these are all symptoms of Walking in the Spirit. Demonstrations of Divine Behavior. Demonstrations of an active work of the Holy Spirit.

A church that is bound for Heaven is **bound up in living like** the represent Heaven here and now.

In that, there is **one definite foundation** that every church, every true church, must build; that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

That is an exclusive message. It is a true message. It is an exclusive Gospel. That builds and exclusive belief system, that when that exclusivity loses its exclusive nature it loses its salt and its light.

When that **message loses its exclusivity it loses its power.** It's spiritual power. That's why it must be defended, protected, preserved, proclaimed, prayed, professed, confessed.

There is a reason why; that exclusive message is what secured a place in heaven for an individual. To compromise the exclusive nature of that truth is to compromise the navigation, the way point, the road sign, the gas mileage, and all the snacks and pitstops along the way.

Jesus tells us in this passage that He is the way to Heaven. He is the truth about Heaven. He is the life given from Heaven.

Jesus is the prince of Heaven. **Heaven is a place** of Peace and Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Jesus along with God, govern all world events from the proper local of Heaven.

Heaven is a place that alludes our understanding at many times. Heaven is a difficult place for us to fix our attention for a number of reasons.

We struggle to focus on heaven because of **1.** our limited understanding **2.** demands of this current world **3.** the effects of sin on our thinking.

Heaven is a place without sin. It is described in the Bible as paradise. Streets of gold, gates of pearls, rainbows that outline the throne of heavens leadership. A place where time and distance seem to have no limit on ability. A place without emotional turmoil.

Heaven is a place and that is difficult for us to estimate. This is a place that is difficult for us to think about. BUT, make no mistake **it is A PLACE.**

It is a literal place, with a literal location. It is a place just like Seattle. Well, it's not just like Seattle, but it is in the sense that it is a literal, place of locale. A geographic destination. It is a place that can be defined, arrived at, and therefore needs navigation to.

Heaven is a literal place. It's not a myth. It's not mythology. It's not best defined by Hollywood, or movies. It's best explained by the Bible.

Just because Heaven is a literal place **does not mean** we understand Heaven adequately. We have available to us description from the Bible about Heaven.

The descriptions of Heaven are littered throughout Scripture. But in this specific passage, Jesus isn't giving us specific descriptions about Heaven but He is giving us, a **road map to Heaven.**

Q: Do you understand the way to Heaven? Do you know how to get there? Can you explain to others the way by which you would get to heaven?

Is. 57:15 'God is high and lofty one that inhabits eternity' – Heaven is an eternal place that was Created by God at the beginning of time.

I. 'My Father's house' 'many dwelling places' v. 2

Heaven is the proper location of God's dwelling place.

The Psalmist prays that he would '**dwelt in God's tent forever**' that he would abide under the '**shelter of God's wings**' – Ps. 61

There is a spiritual aspect to understanding dwelling in God's presence. Heaven should be understood as **access to God**. Heaven should be seen as a possession, an inheritance that the Christian has **access to here and now**.

Now, of course, we do not live in a completely Divine state in this world. We live in a fallen world, but at the point of conversion, at the point that a person is born-again, the Holy Spirit of God comes to dwell inside the body of a Christian.

Human Nature in its Four-fold State of Man. Thomas Boston.
Pre-fall man. The Fall of Man. Born-Again Man. Glorified Man.

Like Lazarus who was dead for 4 days, every person who is not born-again is spiritual dead, rigamortus has taken over their spiritual existence and they are susceptible to the occupation and possession of any type of demonic activity the world has to offer.

But when a person is converted to Christ, they are born-again by a new Spirit, the Holy Spirit and they are sealed in the Holy Spirit for eternity. This is NOT temporary, this is NOT something that can be earned, and this is NOT something that can be lost.

If it is temporary, then it is carnal and irrelevant. If it is earned, then it can be lost. BUT, if it is a work of God, as Jesus to Nicodemus states, or as Jesus shows in His miracle of Lazarus' resurrection, THEN salvation is an eternal work.

That eternal work done by God places the Eternal Spirit of God in that person.

DL Moody was once talking to a man who was telling him about how his understanding of Heaven had changed. He once understood heaven, when he was younger as a shining city, with great walls and towers and beauty, with innumerable angels. Then his brother died an early death. And he said, then he saw heaven as a shining city, with great walls and towers and beauty and innumerable angels, but with his brother there.

Then, his mother passed and his father passed. Then friends, and casual acquaintances passed away. The man told Moody that life has gotten to a point where I have more friends and family in heaven than I have on earth.

His family was there, his friends were there and all he could think about was this place of incredible beauty and peace, a Paradise, where all of his family and friends were. His thoughts became fixated on Heaven.

Conceptual Terms of Heaven. Atmospheric. Planetary. 3rd Heaven.

'Our Father's house' God's dwelling place.

a. Atmospheric Heaven. The troposphere.

Gen. 7:11-12 'In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all of the foundations of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights' (People were able to live so long because the earth at this time was covered with a low level of **atmospheric dew**. It had never rained, people did not have direct exposure to UV ray/sunlight. But this is also why nobody believed Noah, **they didn't have evidence of rain**, but Noah took God at His Word.)

Ps. 147:8 the LORD 'covers the heavens with clouds, who provides rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow on the mountains' (We recognize that God works through these natural means, it is a direct expression of the heavenlies; If God controls these heavens why would He not control the others)

Acts 14:17 'He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.' (Paul explaining the power of God as witnessed through the seasons)

God has shown Himself through the Atmospheric heaven. And it is all around us.

b. Planetary Heaven. Second heaven.

Gen. 1:14-17 'God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also. God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good.'

Numb. 10:11 'in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month, the cloud was lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony; and the sons of Israel set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai. Then the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran.' (God shows Himself through the planetary heavens)

Ps. 19:1-4 'The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth and their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun" (God has **established the planetary heavens** for His glory)

Jer. 31:35 'the LORD, who **gives the sun for light by day** and the **fixed order of the moon** and the **stars for light by night**, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar' (**God controls all** of the movement and direction of the planetary heavens) **Q: If God controls the affairs** of the sun and moon, how much more so do you think He is in active involvement in your daily affairs.

Matt. 24:29 'the sign of the Son of Man **will appear in the sky**, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man **coming on the clouds of the sky** with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect **from the four winds**, from one end of the sky to the other.' (During the **return of Christ** we will see God's will be penetrated through the planetary heavens)

Matt. 27:50-54 'Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks

were split. The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, 'Truly this was the Son of God!' (God causes an **earthquake to occur** and numerous resurrections at the culminating point of the Crucifixion)

The First Seal- Rider on White Horse -The Sixth Seal – Terror on Earth

Rev. 6:12-17 'Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer... I looked when **He broke the sixth seal**, and there **was a great earthquake**; and the **sun became black** as sackcloth made of hair, and **the whole moon** became like blood; and **the stars of the sky fell** to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by **a great wind**. The **sky was split** apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (There seems to be another dimension that the heavens represent that we are unable to perceive. We live in a world of dimension. Our life experience is restrained by the dimensions we live with in.

We are bound by height, length, width, time and space. This dominates and controls our current existence. We often lack a fathable understanding of spiritual matters. And despite the fact that our physical existence is limited by physical dimensions, OUR life experience is not and should not be limited and disconnected from Spiritual life.

People need to see, **understand and grasp the spiritual aspects** of life. Of course there are always **people who falsify** or are even deceived by false spiritual experiences and false spirit and given over to doctrine of demons. That's concerning.

But what is also concerning is people who claim to be Christian's who are more concerned about having a false spiritual experience and fail to every have any spiritual experience.

I would be far less concerned with making a mistake spiritual, then never making any effort spiritually. Our understanding of God needs to fit within the framework of Biblical truth and when understood rightly it leads to a limitless understanding of an eternal God.

The Atmospheric Heaven is all around us. **The Planetary Heaven** is observable and around us. God is controlling all of the things going on in the Atmospheric and Planetary Heaven. **God is Spirit**. All powerful, all knowing, all presence – God's glory and power is seen through His actions in the atmospheric/planetary heavens.

c. Third Heaven. God's house. His dwelling place.

2 Cor. 12:2-4 'I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a man was caught up to the third heaven. And I know how such a man – whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows – was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.'

Heaven is explained as both “paradise” and a “place that cannot be told, man may not utter”
1 Kings 8:27 'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!'

Ps. 103:9 'He will not always strive with us' (Final Day of Accountability, Great White Throne Judgment, The Flood stood as an important illustration of this Divine Judgment)

Turn to: Rev. 4:1-5 (A scene in Heaven, given after the message to the 7 churches)

Jump to: Rev. 21:5-9, 10 (The New Heaven and the New Earth)

Q: Where is heaven? It's up.

Eph. 4:4-10 'There is one body and one Spirit just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.'

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ

Rev. 3:12

In prayer we are taught by Christ that there is a proper location of God's dwelling.

Matt. 6:9-10 When you pray, 'pray like this: Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'

God is everywhere, but He is not everything. Deists would believe that God is a tree or I moreso see God in the mountains. Well, God is in Heaven. God is everywhere. His effects can be seen everywhere, but His house, His proper dwelling place is in Heaven.

3 expressions of Heaven. Atmospheric. Planetary. 3rd Heaven/Proper location of God.

Q: How far away is heaven? Neptune is known to be the furthest planet from earth. 2.6 billion miles away.

the Voyager 2 spacecraft was launched on **Aug 20, 1977** and it reached Neptune on **Aug 24, 1989**. So, Voyager 2 took about twelve years to reach Neptune. As of the time of updating this article in January 2022, Voyager 2 is the only spacecraft to have visited Neptune.

Traveling at an **average velocity of 42,000 mph**.

We live in the Milky Way Galaxy it is a solar system comprised of various gases, dust, stars, other planets. . **According to the Hubble Telescope** there are over 125 billion other galaxies.

Despite our scientific advancements in line of sight technology and travel through space, not a single person in science has found Heaven. Not a single astronaut has traveled to Heaven.

II. 'Preparing a place for you.' 'come again.' v. 3

The Doctrine of the Rapture. The 2nd Advent of Christ.

Turn to: Matt. 24:1-31 – Followed by the Parable of the Fig Tree (Barren, no fruit cursed), Parable of the Ten Virgins (some ready, some not), Parable of the Talents (faithfulness)

Jump to: 1 Thes. 4:1-18, Paul comes up encouragement by living a sanctified life, quietly, minding your own business, and ultimately hoping in Christ's return.

III. 'Thomas said' 'how do we know?'

Thomas did not know. He did not understand.

IV. 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.' v. 6

The Exclusive Gospel. The way is exclusive. The truth is exclusive. The life experience is exclusive to the Christian.

It is NOT exclusive in the way the world establishes exclusive clubs and societies and prejudices and discriminations.

The exclusive nature of the Christian life, the Christian truth, and the Christian way is the exclusive nature of Christ.

'peace I give to you, not as the world gives, give I unto you'

God is no respecter of persons, but He is a discriminator of His way, His truth, and His life. The Gospel is an exclusive message.

The Gospel is simple but not shallow. The Gospel is for the common, yet so uncommon. The Gospel is low, yet brings you high.

Jesus instructs Thomas and the other 10 that are present, and instructs all of us.

There are **NOT many ways** to God. There are **NOT many truths** of God. There are **not many lifestyles** of God.

There is One way. There is One truth. There is One life. It is Jesus Christ.

Look at Matt. 7:21-23.

There are a lot of **shocking things** that Jesus said, but this might take the cake. This might be the pinnacle of shock value of the Christian faith.

'not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord,

did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

The way is exclusive. The truth is exclusive. The life is exclusive. Jesus Christ is exclusive.

I was at a **Christian conference some years ago** now. And typically at these things I try to just stay quiet and listen. Try to just mind my own business, glean what I can. Chew the meat and spit out the bones. The trouble is at this particular conference there wasn't much meat and the bones were pretty weak.

In this one breakout session, it was a group of mostly lead pastors and at this particular time the wife of a prominent lead pastor was talking through dealing with various problems at church. She shared some examples and then opened it up for an opportunity for people to share the same. Of course, that just turned into a flood gate of criticism, and bitterness, and highlighting various shortcomings among people.

And they kept circulating around problems and its perceptive and subjective. Eventually, they asked me, 'What do you think?' – I just said, you all think you have different problems but you don't. You think your problems are unique, but they're not. The problem that each of you have at your church is that for years now, you have lead a group of people that think that truth is subjective and it is up to their perception and it is up to their determining and it is up to their own perview with what is truth. They have been lead to believe that the truth is inclusive. And you have not corrected their belief.

'it is require of steward to be found faithful' – You have to let you people know the **Exclusivity of the Truth.**

Christianity is the only religion, and the church is the only organization, where people bend what is true to serve their own agenda.

In all of God's creation, mankind is the only creation that rebels against God's determined truth. Animals can't rebel, they don't have a conscious and act on instinct. Plants can't rebel, they operate based off God's natural laws, fixed laws.

But men and women, created with a conscious, created in the image of God, are the only creatures capable of rebellion against God's truth.

Matt. 7:13-14 'enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.'

The way is narrow. The life is narrow. The truth is narrow.

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"Jesus gives us and His disciples instruction for why not to be troubled. In this sermon we look in detail at the reality of Heaven and the return of Christ; the rapture. Follow along while we learn the very instruction Jesus gives to His disciples to bring them comfort and peace."

Small Groups/Kids.

1. What are the 5 reasons Jesus gives that our hearts should not be troubled?

2. What 3 definitions of Heaven does the Bible show?
3. How can we better meditate on the hope of Heaven?
4. What is the rapture and where do we see it defined in the Bible?
5. How do these 5 reasons Jesus gives comfort us in times of trouble?