



Heaven

What It Is and Why You Want to Go There (Part 1)

“We are very shy nowadays of even mentioning heaven. We are afraid of the jeer about ‘pie in the sky,’ and being told that we are trying to ‘escape from the duty of making a happy world here and now into dreams of a happy world elsewhere.’ But either there is ‘pie in the sky’ or there is not. If there is not, then Christianity is false, for this doctrine is woven into its whole fabric. If there is, then this truth, like any other, must be faced, whether it is useful at political meetings or no” (C. S. Lewis).

What Is Heaven?

- Heaven is a spiritual realm—not a physical one—an existence beyond the limitations of the present cosmos (Matt 6:9; cf. John 4:24a; Luke 24:39; Eph 6:12).
- The Bible describes heaven as the habitation of God, though God is not confined to heaven (Gen 28:17; Deut 26:15; Ps 11:4; 102:19; 103:19; Heb 9:23–24; cf. 8:1–5).
- God has promised to bring his people to dwell with him eternally in heaven (John 14:2–3; Heb 9:27–28; 13:14).

Where Is Heaven?

- The “location” of heaven is unknown as it is not a physical space in the same sense as places here and now.
- However, heaven is a location insofar as it is place into which the resurrected Jesus (re)entered (John 14:2–3; Acts 1:9–11; Col 2:9; 1 Cor 15:20, 23; 1 John 3:2).
- Regardless of its “location,” heaven is where the presence of God is fully experienced (1 Thess 4:17; 2 Thess 1:9–10; Rev 22:1–5; cf. 1 Kgs 18:21; 2 Cor 12:2–4).

Who Will Go to Heaven?

- Not everyone—unlike what our universalist friends tell us—will go to heaven; most people reject God and consequently choose hell (Matt 25:46; cf. 7:13–14).
- Heaven is not a place for “pretty good people,” whether they claim to be Christians or not, or even for everyone who claims to be a Christian (Matt 7:21–23; cf. 13:36–43).
- God will only allow those who do his will to enter and abide in heaven (Matt 7:21b; cf. 1 John 2:17b; Rev 21:27).

When Will People Go to Heaven?

- People seemingly do not go to heaven when they die but to the realm of departed spirits (Acts 2:22–36; 1 Cor 15:20–28; cf. Luke 16:19–31; 23:43; Phil 1:23; Rev 2:7).
- Entrance to heaven will follow the second coming, the resurrection, the destruction of the present cosmos, and the judgment (1 Thess 4:13–18; 2 Pet 3:7–13).
- Since we do not know when Christ will return, we must always be ready (Titus 2:11–13; Matt 24:42–44; cf. 25:13).

“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world” (C. S. Lewis).

“He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from beginning even to the end” (Eccl 3:11b LSB).



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