



The Pillar and Ground of Truth

“What Life is Like in Heaven”

Revelation 7:9-17

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In John 14:2-3, Jesus said He was going back to His Father’s House to prepare a place for those who receive Him as their Savior and Lord, and that He would come again and receive them unto Himself, that where He was, they would be also.

- In Matthew 6, Jesus said we are to address God as **“Our Father in heaven,”** which should be understood as an actual place.
- The word “heaven” occurs 276 times in the New Testament alone, and when it is not used symbolically, it usually refers to one of three realms.
 - **Our Atmosphere** – that space immediately above us, from which we get the air we breathe.
 - **The Celestial realm** – where the sun, moon, and stars reside.
 - **The abode of God** – while God cannot be limited to any one geographical place, heaven is called the presence of God.
- Therefore, heaven is a beautiful place where those who receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord will experience the fullness of perfect love, perfect joy, and perfect peace in the very presence of God.
- **“For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”**

However, knowing that truth in our minds doesn't always satisfy that emptiness in our hearts when we think of our loved ones who are now in heaven and we wonder what life is like for them.

- Are they really alive or in some state of unconsciousness? Do they really have new bodies? Do they communicate with God and others? What are they doing every day? Are they really looking down on us and aware of what is happening on earth? Can they hear us talking to them the same way God hears our prayers? Are they longing to see us as much as we long to see them, and will we know each other when we meet again? Are they aware of time or distance or the separation between us? Are the streets really made of gold and the gates made of pearl?
- Sadly, many songwriters, poets, and pastors have so humanized what life is like in heaven, it may be difficult for us to grasp the truth.
- While we will not be sitting on a cloud and strumming a harp for eternity, there will be work for us to do. However, it will be work without exhaustion, worship without distraction, fellowship without fear, learning without fatigue, and eternal rest without boredom.

The doorway into heaven is death. In Hebrews 9:27, the Bible says, ***"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."***

- Many people view death as going from the land of the living to the land of the dying. But, for those who receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, death is their deliverance from the land of the dying into the land of the living.
- As Paul taught in 1 Thessalonians 4, and 1 Corinthians 15, on the day of the Rapture, our corrupt bodies will put on incorruption, our natural bodies will become supernatural, our temporal bodies will become eternal bodies, and in the twinkling of an eye, we will be face to face with Jesus at that glorious meeting in the sky, and we shall reign with Him forever and ever, Amen!
- Arriving at our eternal home in heaven should be our all-consuming passion. In Colossians 3:1-4, the Apostle Paul said: ***"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."***
- The question for today's generation is this: **If you had all the earthly pleasures you desired in heaven, could you be satisfied if Jesus was not there?**

Doctrinally and theologically, our eternal salvation is broken down into three phases.

- **Justification** – we were redeemed from the penalty of sin by our expressed faith in the death of Jesus Christ.
- **Sanctification** – the Holy Spirit is removing everything from our lives that is unholy and filling us with everything that is holy. We are being delivered from the power of sin.
- **Glorification** – the moment when we will be removed from this earth, either by the Rapture or our death, and delivered from the very presence of sin.

The specific context of Revelation 7:9-17 refers to the result of that final evangelistic harvest of souls during the seven-year tribulation.

- The fact that multitudes of people from every tongue, tribe, and nation will be saved could indicate that this will be when the Great Commission will be fulfilled. (Matthew 24:14)
- But notice what the multitude are doing:

- They are before the throne of God – *intimate communion*.
 - They serve God in His temple – *privileged service*.
 - He who sits on the throne dwells among them – *unlimited access*.
 - They no longer suffer – *the Lamb (the Lord Jesus) protects them and provides for them*.
 - God Himself wipes away every tear from their eyes.
- Apart from the Rapture, the only entrance into that unrestricted access to God the Father is through our physical death. ***“It is appointed unto man, (and I might add, every man) once to die, and then comes the judgment.”*** (Hebrews 9:27)
 - However, Jesus’ death paid the penalty for the sins of those who will receive Him as their Savior and Lord. ***“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** (1 Corinthians 15:55-57)
 - When God creates a living soul, that soul is eternal. When a person’s physical body dies it eventually returns to dust. However, the soul goes into eternity and remains in whatever spiritual condition it was in when the person died. (Revelation 22:11)
 - The soul of those who die in their sins will immediately go to hell/hades, which is described as a place of torment and anguish.
 - At the end of the millennium, their bodies will be raised to stand before the Great White Throne Judgment and eventually be cast into the Lake of Fire, which is the second death.
 - The soul of those who die, having received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, will immediately go to be with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8), and so shall they ever be with the Lord.
 - This truth refutes the idea of “soul sleep” or “purgatory.”
 - In Luke 23:39-43, when the repentant criminal asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom, Jesus said, ***“Truly, I say to you, TODAY you will be with Me in paradise.”***
 - That is why, in Philippians 1:21, Paul said, ***“For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”*** Paul was not bragging about the depth of his commitment to Christ. He was just saying, knowing what he knew about the futility of this world, the vanity of this life, and the glories of heaven that God had revealed to him, **he would rather die and be with Christ, for that would be much better for him.**

At this moment, heaven is filled with the souls of those who expressed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and hell is filled with the souls of those who did not.

- However, in John 5:28-29, the Apostle said, ***“The hour is coming in which all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come forth. Those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.”***
- The Bible doesn’t give a description of the body of the unrighteous, but in Philippians 3:21, Paul said Jesus will ***“transform our former physical bodies so they would be conformed to His glorious resurrection body.”***
- Then, the resurrection will take place in four phases, the first of which has already occurred:
 - **The physical resurrection of Jesus Christ** – the “firstfruits” of those who sleep.
 - **The rapture of the Church** – the instant removal from this earth of all those who received Jesus Christ as their Savior during the Church Age, both living and dead – that is the next event on God’s prophetic calendar.
 - **The resurrection of the Old Testament Saints and the Tribulation Saints** – which will happen at the end of the

Great Tribulation.

- **The resurrection of ALL of the unbelievers of ALL the ages** – at the end of the Millennium, to stand before God at the Great White Throne Judgement, and then, along with Satan, and those who rebelled against God, to be cast into the Lake of Fire which will burn forever.