

3. Some Important Questions about Heaven:

A. Is Heaven real?

“It’s a real place”

John 14:2–3, NASB95 -² *“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. ³ “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.”*

“It’s the real dwelling place of God”

Philippians 3:20, NASB95 -²⁰ *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ....*

Revelation 21-22 discusses who is there (God, the angels, the saints); what happens there (God makes everything new—our bodies, our worship, our lives); what it looks like (how big it is, what’s it’s made of, how many gates it has, etc.); what’s not there (the lost, anything that separates the saved from their saved loved one, death, pain, hurt, tears, night, no remorse, nor regret, the curse of this world—none of them are there); what questions there are (there are none); what the angels do (they work); what the saints do (we worship); and, most importantly: Who brought all this about—Holy God—the Alpha and the Omega, the Aleph and the Tav, (The A and the B)—the Eternal One who is all powerful, all knowing and the ONLY ONE TRUE GOD!

“It’s not as far away as you might think”

Hebrews 12:22–24, NLT -²² *No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. ²³ You have come to the assembly of God’s firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. ²⁴ You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.*

- The writer is comparing Mt. Sinai with Mt. Zion.
- Three times it refers to a word meaning “to come near.”
- We’re not far from the angels, our loved ones, or from Jesus.

B. What is Heaven like?

The Bible doesn’t give us a whole lot of information, except to say that our minds couldn’t understand it, our eyes, couldn’t believe it, our ears couldn’t

comprehend the things of Heaven. (cf., 1 Corinthians 2:9). But, here are a few picture and statements that give us a glimpse into Heaven:

- God’s dwelling place (Psalm 33:13)
- What Christ is today (Acts 1:11)
- Where the Holy Spirit is praying for us right now (Romans 8)
- Perfect (Hebrews 11:16)
- Paradise (Luke 23:43)
- It’s designed and built by God (Hebrews 11:10)

What Would Such a City Look Like?

It would be a city with no pollution for the skies would always be crystal clear. No crime or violence for no criminals would ever enter. No greedy politicians, no drug pushers, no child molesters. No potholes and no power outages either. No storms, no tsunamis, no volcanos, no earthquakes, no floods and no tornados (You get the idea?!?). It would be filled with abundant parks, rivers, rolling meadows, and flowing streams. Lining the streets would be flowers in constant bloom (with no weeds), fruit trees of every kind (with no bugs), every species of plant life growing free from pestilence and disease. The gates would be made of pearl, the walls of jasper, the streets of gold. Precious stones would lie on the ground like rubies, diamonds—all galore. On every hand there would be children laughing, bright conversation, the true worship for God flowing from every direction. In the city that God builds, there are no tears, there is no sorrow ... no regret ... no remorse. Bitterness gone forever, failure left far behind, suffering redeemed and rewarded. Questions? All answered! There are no eyeglasses, no braces, no wheelchairs, no pacemakers, no false teeth, no bald heads, no hearing aids, and no crutches. There are no more hospitals, no more nursing homes, no more funeral homes, no paramedics, no CPR. Doctors have to find a new job, they aren’t needed anymore. Other’s out of work will be all the police, firefighters, EMS, members of the military, lawyers, plumbers, carpenters, bankers, in fact—everyone will be out of work for there will be no work to do except worshipping our great God. Aspirin gone, accidents over, cancer canceled, heart attacks banished, AIDS a distant memory. In heaven, no one grows old and feeble and their memory will be restored. There will be no ambulances screaming down the golden streets; no wreaths hung on mansion doors, no stone chisellers carving epithets above. There we will serve without exhaustion, fellowship without fear and rest without boredom. There is one other thing you won’t find in heaven. There are no cemeteries in the city God builds. Why? There are no funerals ... for in that glad city no one ever dies. If you make it to that city, you live forever, never to die again. If you miss it—you will have made the greatest most cataclysmic blunder and it will all be on you. DON’T MISS HEAVEN! Come to Christ, finds Heaven, and worship Him and give Him His glory forever—for He deserves nothing less.

Heaven is where life will be as God had intended it to be.

C. Who is in Heaven right now?

- God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:9-11, Romans 8, Rev. 20)
- Angels (2 Corinthians 5:7-8; Philippians 1:21-22)
- The saved (Psalms 11:4; Rev. 4:1-5, 16; John 14.3)

D. What will we know in heaven?

We can be sure that we will not know less in heaven than we know here.

1 Corinthians 13:12, NLT -¹² *Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.*

We can also be sure that what grieves us here, will not grieve us there.

Isaiah 65:17, NCV -¹⁷ *“Look, I will make new heavens and a new earth, and people will not remember the past or think about those things.*

E. Other statements about heaven:

- Will we be married in heaven? No (Matthew 22:30ff)
- Will believers be rewarded in heaven? Yes (Matt. 5:12, 6:20)
- Is Heaven really a place of rest? Yes (Deut. 33:27, Luke 16:25ff)
- Will there be temptation in heaven? No (Jer. 31:31, 32.40; Ez. 11:19-20)
- Will we be angels in Heaven? No (2 Cor. 5.8)
- When is the great Wedding Feast of the Lamb? Right after the rapture. (Is. 25:6, Luke 14:15, Matt. 22:2, Rev. 19:7-9; Rev. 21:3, Matt. 8:11-12.)
- Would I truly be grieved if I missed Heaven? Absolutely! (Luke 16:19-31)

F. How can I be sure I am going to Heaven?

Dr. D. James Kennedy: *“Mr. President, suppose you were to die and found yourself standing at the door of heaven. If God were to say, Mr. President, ‘Why should I let you into my Heaven?’ What would you say?”*

Ronald Regan: *“Well, I’d say to God, ‘Holy One, in your Holy Word, O Lord, it says, ‘[That You] so loved the world that [You] gave [Your] only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in You would never perish but have everlasting life.’ And I have done just that—I have believed in You.”*

VERY, VERY, VERY IMPORTANT:

We are saved by grace alone (it’s unmerited); through faith alone (it’s not our works); in Christ alone; for God’s glory alone because of what God’s Word alone says.

“Upon a life I didn’t live, upon a death I didn’t die, I risk my whole eternity.”

-C.T. Studd, a British Christian Missionary to China (circa very early 1900s)

TOUGH QUESTIONS

and Straight Answers by Pastor Joe K. Taylor

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All Scriptures are printed verbatim with translations noted. • Pastor Joe’s email is Joe@southreno.com.

Here’s the **TOUGH QUESTION:**

What is Heaven Really Like?

Here’s the **STRAIGHT ANSWER:**

1. The Short Answer:

Simply Put: *It’s Perfect!*

2. Introduction to the issue:

- A. We must be careful not to “Americanize” our understanding of Heaven.
- B. According to a recent Time/CNN poll (2008)
 - 50% of Americans believe we are living in the “final days” of the earth
 - 22% believe our country will end, as we know it, in their lifetime.
 - 3 out of 5 people in the US believe the earth will end because of a weather event, an “an act of God” (not in a spiritual sense), an act of war or a large-scale terrorist event.
 - An astonishing 69% of Americans believe in Heaven and the vast majority believe they will go there when they die. (When asked “Why would you go to Heaven? The number on answer is “Because I’m American” (34%), Religious Works” (33%), “Because I belong to a church” (19%), or “because all people go there” (12%).
- C. In scripture, Heaven is always referred to as “up” (or, the equivalent) and Hell is always referred to as “down” (or, the equivalent).