

Pastor Robert Rutta

Heaven

John 14:1-3

1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

It is so important that we have a clear understanding of Heaven and Hell. Both are real places.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

But before I jump in, I should make one thing clear:

The only things we can know for certain about heaven are the things revealed in the Bible.

Everything else is just speculation and hearsay – and often heresy.

The Bible tells us everything we need to know.

[Note: There have been many books and articles written in recent years about heaven based on dreams, visions and near-death experiences. The majority of these should be rejected quickly because they contain bad theology.]

I. Where is Heaven?

The most important fact is that heaven is a real place.

Heaven is a place, just as much a place as is Dunedin or Auckland.

Listen to the:

In John 14:1-3 we have the words of Jesus on the night before he was crucified.

Twice in three verses Jesus calls heaven a place.

He means that heaven ("my Father's house") is a real place, as real as any place that we have ever been.

It's a real place filled with real people.

The Bible also tells us that heaven is the dwelling place of God.

His throne is there, the angels are there, and the Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven.

Philippians 3:20 says very plainly that "our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

I can't point you to an exact location, but I can say with certainty that Heaven is a real place and it's where Jesus is right now.

II. What is Heaven Like?

The Bible doesn't give us a great deal of information.

Why didn't God tell us more?

Probably because we wouldn't believe it.

The description that God does give us is beautiful, but many people look at that description and say that God was speaking symbolically.

Here are some biblical facts about heaven. It is ...

- God’s dwelling place (Psalm 33:13).
- Where Christ is today (Acts 1:11).
- Where Christians go when they die (Philippians 1:21-23).
- The Father’s house (John 14:2).
- A city designed and built by God (Hebrews 11:10).
- A better country (Hebrews 11:16).

Revelation 21-22 describes it as a place where the streets are paved with gold, the gates are made of pearl, and the walls made of precious jewels.

Illus.

I love the old story of the rich man who, on his death bed, negotiated with God to allow him to bring his earthly treasures with him when he came to heaven.

God’s reaction was that this was a most unusual request, but since this man had been exceptionally faithful, permission was granted to bring along just one suitcase.

The time arrived, the man presented himself at the pearly gates, suitcase in hand– BOTH hands, actually, since he had stuffed it with as many bars of gold bullion as would fit.

St. Peter said, “Sorry, you know the rules–you can’t take it with you.” But the man protested, “God said I could ... one suitcase.”

St. Peter checked, found out that this one would be an exception, prepared to let the man enter, then said, “OK, but I will have to examine the contents before you pass.”

He took the suitcase, opened it, saw the gold bars and asked quizzically, “You brought PAVEMENT?”

The things we value so highly in this life will be used to pave the roads in heaven.

A City Built By God

Heaven is a real place filled with real people. The Bible pictures it as a great city filled with all of God’s people.

What would such a city look like?

It would be a city with ...

No pollution

No crime or violence

The gates would be made of pearl, the walls of jasper, the streets of gold.

Precious stones would lie on the ground like playthings: emeralds, rubies, diamonds.

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.

There are no eyeglasses, no wheelchairs, no false teeth, no bald heads, no hearing aids, and no crutches.

There are no more hospitals, no more nursing homes, no paramedics. In heaven no one grows old and feeble.

We Will Be Free From Sin

Do you ever get aggravated with yourself? You have the best of intentions in life but so often that is all they are...GOOD INTENTIONS.

Look at some of the things that Paul talked about as he wrestled with sin.

In Romans 7:15, we read, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."

In Romans 7: 21, we read, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil present with me."

In Romans 7: 24, we read, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death."

Do you ever feel like Paul? I sure do.

I find myself doing the things I don't want to do. And not doing the things that I want to do.

This struggle is one more reason why Heaven is going to be wonderful - in Heaven this battle with sin is going to cease!

I'll never feel the pain of letting God down again.

We Will See God

John 14:3, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

I John 3:2, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

One day we are going to SEE HIM AS HE IS!

I John 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

The fact that I will one day see God should change the way that I live here.

III. Who is in Heaven Right Now?

God is in heaven because heaven is his dwelling place.

The Lord Jesus has been in heaven ever since he ascended from the earth shortly after his resurrection (Acts 1:9-11). (He was there throughout eternity before his incarnation.)

The Bible tells us that angels are in heaven.

And the saints of God who died on this earth are in heaven.

Everyone who has genuinely trusted in Christ Saviour will be there.

The Bible teaches that the moment we die we go directly into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible says in II Corinthians 5:8, "to be absent from the body" is "to be present with the Lord."

There are only two places a Christian can ever be: in the body or with the Lord.

In Philippians 1:23 Paul said, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."

I need to be very clear on this point. Not everyone is in heaven now. Some people won't make it.

The Bible speaks of the saved and the lost.

The saved are those who trust Jesus Christ as their eternal Savior. The lost are those who do not trust Christ as Savior.

This is the great dividing line of humanity-you are either saved or you are lost.

And there is no middle category. You will either spend eternity in heaven or eternity in hell.

But I am sure of this one truth. No one will go to heaven except by the grace of God and through the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ. If a man says “No” to Jesus, he has no hope of heaven.

IV. Will We Know Each Other in Heaven?

This is one of the most frequently asked questions about heaven.

I would like to share an answer given by a Bible teacher of another generation—a man named William Pettingill.

He said, “We may be sure that we shall not know less in heaven than we know here.”

In proof he quotes 1 Corinthians 13:12, “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known..”

How does God know us?

Answer: He knows us completely, intimately, thoroughly, inside and out, with nothing hidden but everything seen as it really is.

When we get to heaven we’ll know each other as God knows us because all the imperfections of this life will be removed.

In this life sin causes us to cover ourselves—not just physically but emotionally and spiritually.

But when sin is finally lifted from us, then we can be ourselves with no shame, no pain, no embarrassment, and no covering up.

I’ll be the same person then that I am now—only with all the imperfections and limitations of sin finally removed.

This is a wonderful thought—that the essence of who we are will remain throughout eternity—yet vastly improved by God’s grace.

Some have said that that in heaven we can eat all we want and not get fat. I certainly hope that is true.

How old will we be in heaven? I once heard a preacher say that we will all be 33 years old because that’s approximately how old Jesus was when he died.

Of course there is no scriptural support for that statement.

The truth is, there won’t be any age in heaven in the sense we speak of age on the earth.

Growing old is a function of the decaying effects of sin.

In heaven we will know each other intimately. That’s why Peter, James and John recognized Moses and Elijah, even though they had been dead for hundreds of years, on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9).

I don’t think they had nametags on. I think there was something about those two men that made Peter, James and John recognize them even though they had never seen them before.

In heaven there will be no strangers.

V. What Will We Do in Heaven?

Again, the Bible doesn’t tell us everything we would like to know, but of this we can be sure: Heaven won’t be boring and it will be more fun than anything you have experienced here.

So what will we do for all eternity?

The answer is, we’re going to help God run the universe – whatever He wants us to do.

Our service will begin in the Millennium and will continue for eternity.

Do you remember the story Jesus told about the nobleman who gave his servants money to invest?

(parable of the pounds in Luke 19)

One servant had doubled his money so the man said, "You will rule over ten cities." The next servant was told that he would Rule over five cities.

I can guarantee you this: No one will be sitting around on a cloud playing a harp and polishing his halo.

No, we'll all be too busy for that.

Here are five things that will occupy us in heaven. We will ...

Worship, Serve, Fellowship, Learn, Rest.

The best part of heaven will be seeing Jesus himself face to face.

We will worship the Son of God and celebrate his great victory over sin for eternity.

Heaven is a wonderful place.

There is only one way to get there, and that is by faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6).