



# HEAVEN: BEYOND THE CHUBBY CHERUBS

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## SESSION 1: A DEFINITION

The subject of heaven is one that is often neglected among the Christian community for a variety of reasons. Whatever the reason, the topic of heaven should be one of thrill and excitement for the believer, and not ignorance. We should be jubilant to see what he is doing for us while we wait for his return.

Heaven is not a place of endless tedium, a congregation of people sitting on clouds singing forever, or related to people gaining wings, harps, and becoming poorly clothed, chubby little beings. The Bible is not silent regarding heaven, the Christian's eternal home. The difficulty is that most Christians do not pay attention to what the Bible says about it.

This study is designed to briefly survey the Biblical content written on heaven, to dispel misunderstanding of heaven's description, and educate the Christian of the future benefits, possible disappointments, and a glimpse heaven's economy.

### QUESTION 1: WHAT IS HEAVEN?

1. Heaven is the dwelling place of God the Father (Matthew 6:9), Jesus (Acts 7:55; Hebrews 9:24), and the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26; Psalm 139:7-8).
2. Heaven is the dwelling place of the people of God in the past (2 Kings 2:2; Job 19:26-27; Psalm 23:4,6) present (2 Corinthians 5:8), and future (Revelation 3:21).
3. Heaven is a literal place and not an ascension, higher form of existence, or the next great adventure (John 14:3; Matthew 19:28; Acts 3:20-21).
4. Heaven is also known as the Tabernacle of God (Revelation 21:3), Jerusalem (Galatians 4:26), the Holy City (Revelation 21:1), the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1).

### QUESTION 2: HOW MANY HEAVENS ARE THERE?

1. The First Heaven is a reference to the Earth's atmosphere or sky (Genesis 1:1,14; 2:19; 7:11-12; Psalm 78:23).



2. The Second Heaven is a reference to outer space or the starry heavens (Psalm 19:4,6; Deuteronomy 17:3; Jeremiah 8:2; Matthew 24:29).
3. The Third Heaven is where God, holy angels, and the souls of just men live. It is also called the “Heaven of heavens” (Deuteronomy 10:14; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 2:4; 2 Corinthians 12:1-4).

## QUESTION 3: WHERE IS HEAVEN?

1. Heaven is up (John 3:13; Luke 24:51; Revelation 4:1; 21:1-2).
2. Which way is up (Psalm 75:1-7; Ezekiel 1:4)?
3. Is Heaven behind the empty space behind the North Star (Job 26:7)?
4. Heaven may be in another dimension (John 18:36)?

### POINT TO PONDER

The farthest star man has been able to locate through his most powerful telescopes is 500 million light years away. Light travels a little more than 186,000 miles per second. That means if you could go 186,000 miles per second, it would take 500 million years to reach that star. Even with all of man’s great science, he has yet to find heaven, but the Bible says that it is just one step away.

## QUESTION 4: WHO IS IN HEAVEN?


1. God is in heaven (See Question 1).
2. Created spirit beings and creatures are in heaven.
  - 🕒 The Cherubim (guardians) are in heaven (Ezekiel 1:5-12; 10:15–20; Genesis 3:24; Exodus 37:7-9).
  - 🕒 The Seraphim (burning ones) are in heaven (Isaiah 6:1-7; Revelation 4:8).





- 👤 The Archangel (Michael) is in Heaven (Jude 1:9; Daniel 10:13; 12:1; Revelation 12:7-9; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).
- 👤 The Messengers (angels) are in Heaven (Psalm 91:11; Hebrews 1:14; Gabriel in Luke 1:19; 26-38).
- 👤 The Host of Heaven (Genesis 2:1; Colossians 1:16; Luke 2:13-14).
- 3. The souls of men who died in faith believing that the Messiah **would** pay the penalty for sin are in Heaven (Matthew 8:11; John 3:18; Acts 2:10; John 14:6; Hebrews 11; 13:8).
- 4. The souls of men who died or are taken alive in faith believing that the Messiah **did** pay the penalty for sin are in Heaven (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Luke 23:42-43).

## QUESTION 5: HOW DO I GAIN ENTRANCE?

1. Ascension from earth to heaven without death is not allowable (John 3:13; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54).
2. The Bible defines death as separation.
  - 👤 Death is when the soul separates from the body (Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastes 12:7). This is physical death.
  - 👤 Death is separation from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). This is spiritual death. 
3. Death is a result of sin. Sin brought physical and spiritual death (Genesis 3:19; Romans 6:23).
4. Death is certain, even more so than taxes (Ezekiel 18:20; Hebrews 9:27).



# HEAVEN: BEYOND THE CHUBBY CHERUBS

5. Every person inherits death from Adam because all are sinners (Romans 5:12; Romans 3:10; 23; Psalm 14:3).
6. Jesus is the judge of whether a soul enters Heaven (2 Thessalonians 1:5-9).
7. Jesus set a standard of what must be done to enter heaven (John 14:6; 11:25; 6:40; Romans 10:13).
8. Jesus died on the cross so that man can avoid Hell at death. Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection acts as a substitute for all sinners who put their faith in him as Lord and Savior (2 Corinthians 5:21).
9. Entrance into heaven upon death is assured because it is a gift of God through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9).

## THE GOSPEL

All men who are born after Adam are sinners. The penalty for this sin is spiritual death and physical death. Upon physical birth, all men are spiritually dead and in need of spiritual life. Spiritual life can only happen through faith in Jesus death, burial, and resurrection. Upon physical death, entrance into Heaven is only secured because of the choice to accept Jesus' death as the substitution for sin while alive on this earth.

## QUESTION 6: WHAT IS ON THE ENTRANCE EXAM?

We will not cover the Judgement (Bema) Seat of Christ in great detail for the purpose of this study. For a further, in depth study, please see *The Christian's Final Exam* by Pastor Laurence D. Brown.

1. The Church shall attend the Judgement Seat of Christ. The Bible addresses this judgment at least four times (Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; Revelation 3:11-12).

3. Jesus will be examining our works on whether our labor, activity, and deeds matched his instructions (1 Corinthians 3:12-15; Ephesians 2:10).
4. Jesus will examine our motivations, which lay hidden from the view of others (Luke 13:30; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
5. Jesus will examine our faithfulness, consistency, reliability, and obedience (Luke 19:17; Hebrews 11:36-39; 1 Corinthians 4:2). Faithfulness cannot be faked, and it cannot be crammed (Revelation 2:10b).



## QUESTION 7: WHAT IS THE INHERITANCE OF HEAVEN?

The very word *inheritance* evokes the thought of material gain or property passed down through generations from a parent or relative. The heir is given the full benefits of ownership to whatever he inherits.

1. Christians are heirs as the Bride of Christ.
  - 🎧 Jesus has been appointed as heir of all things as God's Son (Hebrews 1:2; Matthew 28:18).
  - 🎧 The church is the bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7-10; Ephesians 5:22-23).
  - 🎧 A purified church will be presented to God the Father in a purified and holy condition. As the bride, she receives God's inheritance (Ephesians 5:27; 2 Corinthians 11:2).
  - 🎧 The Bride of Christ will be crowned with Christ's glory (John 17:22-24; Ephesians 1:17-18).
2. Christians are heirs as the sons of God.
  - 🎧 All believers receive an inheritance based upon their adoption (1 John 3:1; Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:5-7; John 1:12).
  - 🎧 Adoption and inheritance is only gained through salvation, and not good works (Ephesians 1:12-14).
  - 🎧 The sons of God will inherit all of God's glorious things (Revelation 21:7).
  - 🎧 The inheritance of the sons of God is guaranteed (1 Peter 1:3-4; 2 Peter 1:3-4).
  - 🎧 The inheritance of the sons of God is full and not partial (Hebrews 1:2).
3. Christians are heirs with Christ.
  - 🎧 The sons of God share in Christ's inheritance (Romans 8:17-21).

- 🕒 Jesus shares his glory with the sons of God (John 17:22).
- 🕒 Jesus shares his joy with the sons of God (John 15:11).
- 🕒 The sons of God are equal to each other in Christ (Galatians 3:27-29).

## QUESTION 8: WHAT ARE THE REWARDS OF HEAVEN?

Rewards are not inheritance. In its most general sense, “reward” (Greek, *misthos*) is the appropriate consequence of a course of action. Sometimes it is rendered as “wages” (Matt. 20:8; Luke 10:7; John 4:36). Negatively, Judas’s blood money is called “the reward of his wickedness” (Acts 1:18). Jesus will give us what we have earned! Those who are found to be more faithful by Jesus at the Bema, will receive more rewards. These rewards are not self-glorifications.

1. One reward that Christ will give out is the authority to rule and reign under Christ in the future (Luke 19:11-27; 2 Timothy 2:11-12; Revelation 2:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; Revelation 20:6). These rewards imply a role of responsibility that other Christians will not have, including several levels of authority.
2. The Bible promises “crowns” as rewards for certain works done for Jesus during this lifetime.
  - 🕒 **The Crown of Righteousness.** Received for loving (longing for) the Lord’s appearing (2 Timothy 4:8).
  - 🕒 **Crown of Victory.** Received for spiritual discipline and self-control (1 Corinthians 9:25-27).
  - 🕒 **Crown of Life.** Received for patiently enduring trials and/or death (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10).
  - 🕒 **Crown of Glory.** Received by faithful pastors who were good examples to their flock (1 Peter 5:2-4; Matthew 5:19).
  - 🕒 **Crown of Rejoicing.** Received for leading others to accept Christ by sharing the Gospel of salvation (1 Thessalonians 2:19; Daniel 12:3; Proverbs 11:30).
3. All of Heaven’s rewards do not have to be documented in Scripture (Matthew 6:19-21).



## SESSION 2: A TOUR

### QUESTION 9: WHAT IS GOD'S THRONE ROOM?



1. Passage #1: Ezekiel 1:1-28

- ☐ What words did the writer use to describe what he saw (1:4)?
- ☐ Who did the writer see (1:5-14)?
- ☐ What did they do (1:15-21)?
- ☐ What else was around these creatures (1:22-25)?
- ☐ How did God appear (1:26-28)?
- ☐ What was the writer's reaction (1:28)?

2. Passage #2: Isaiah 6:1-8

- ☐ What words did the writer use to describe what he saw (6:1)?
- ☐ Who did the writer see (6:2)?
- ☐ What did they do (6:3)?
- ☐ What else was around these creatures (6:4)?
- ☐ What was the writer's reaction (6:5-7)?
- ☐ How did God appear (6:8)?



## 3. Passage #3: Revelation 4-5

- 🎧 What part of Heaven did the writer see (4:1-2)?
- 🎧 What words did the writer use to describe what he saw (4:3)?
- 🎧 Who did the writer see (4:4-8)?
- 🎧 What did they do (4:9-11)?
- 🎧 What else was around these beings (5:1-5)?
- 🎧 How did God appear (5:6-10)?
- 🎧 What was the reaction (5:11-14)?



## QUESTION 10: WHAT IS THE NEW JERUSALEM?

1. A completed (John 14:3) city will come down out of the “the third heaven” meaning that God’s capital city of the eternal realm will enter earth from its heavenly realm (Revelation 21:2).
2. The city will rest upon Mount Zion (Hebrews 12:22-23). Mount Zion is the temple mount in the old Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 3:1). Abraham knew it as Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:2).
3. Jesus Christ is the Crown Jewel of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:5-11).
4. The wall and the gates are glorious (Revelation 21:12-21).
5. The foundation of the city is apostolic (Revelation 21:14, 19-20).
6. The Holy City is massive (Revelation 21:16).



7. God's throne is the focal point of the city (Revelation 21:5).
8. There will be no power outages because God is the source of light and power (Revelation 21:11, 23; 1 John 1:7).
9. The "street" (broad way, or places that are not covered with buildings) is made of gold (Revelation 21:21).
10. The River of Life flows from the throne of God (Revelation 22:1; Zechariah 14:8; Ezekiel 47:9).
11. The Tree of Life will give fruit for the first time since the Garden of Eden was closed (Revelation 22:2; Psalm 1:3).

## QUESTION 11: WHAT ABOUT ME?



1. God's transformation of our eternal bodies starts with the inside at the moment of salvation (Romans 8:29). The change that begins on the inside at salvation will culminate in God's full glory revealed in us (Romans 8:18).
2. Death is the separation of body and soul, not an end to existence. Jesus will resurrect the dead and reunite them with a new body (John 5:28-29). 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 describes the Christian's bodily resurrection/transformation at the Rapture.
3. The Bible says that our bodies will be like Jesus' body (1 Corinthians 15:20, 48-49; 1 John 3:2).
4. Jesus had a resurrected body that allowed him to walk, talk, and eat (John 21:1-14; Luke 24:36-43). His wounds were still visible (John 20:27).
5. Jesus was not a ghost or disembodied spirit (Luke 24:39).
6. The physical appearance for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah did not change (Matthew 17:1-8). They looked human in every regard (Luke 24:13-18).

7. Jesus' body had other-worldly properties. He could pass through solid walls (John 20:19). He could appear suddenly (Luke 24:36). He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9).
8. Our bodies will be transformed (Philippians 3:21).
9. We will have a new set of clothes (Revelation 19:8).
10. Above all, we shall be Christlike (1 Corinthians 15:45-48).

## QUESTION 12: WILL WE HAVE RELATIONSHIPS?

1. Will I be married to the same spouse in heaven?

- 👤 Paul wrote that several things will pass away (*schema*) in 1 Corinthians 7:29-31.
- 👤 Jesus taught that the earthly institution of marriage shall pass away (Matthew 22:23-33).

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. Angels do not marry.
2. Angels do not procreate (every usage of "angel" is masculine).
3. The only thing "not good" at Creation was man's loneliness. In heaven, man will be complete and perfect. Man will not need a helpmeet. Woman will not need a protector.
4. The population of Heaven will be fixed.

- 👤 Disclaimer: This does not mean that the institution of marriage while we are on earth is valueless, nor does it give reason for a married couple to be indifferent to one another. Married couples are heirs of God's grace in this life (1 Peter 3:7).
2. Will we know each other?
- 👤 The Old Testament writers show that when a person died, he was "gathered to his people" (Genesis 25:8; 35:29; 49:49; Numbers 20:24; Judges 2:10).



🕒 David expected to be reunited with his infant child after death, and not a nameless or faceless soul without identity (2 Samuel 12:23).

🕒 Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still have their identity in Heaven (Matthew 8:11).

🕒 Moses and Elijah retained their identity at Jesus' transfiguration (Matthew 17:3).

3. Will we be reunited with friends and family in Heaven?

🕒 Paul described a resurrection and reuniting of the saints of God (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18).

🕒 The church will unite together at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9).

## QUESTION 13: WHAT WE DO FOR ALL ETERNITY?

1. Worship God (Revelation 22:3; 15:4; 21:24; Isaiah 66:22-23).

2. Enjoy paradise (Luke 23:43; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

3. The word Jesus used for "paradise" is *paradeisos* which means "a park, that is, (specifically) an Eden (place of future happiness, paradise)". *Paradeisos* is the Greek word taken from the Hebrew word *pardes* which means "a park, forest, orchard". Jesus said, "Today you shall be with me *en paradeisos*." The point is that Jesus picked and used the word for "a park." Not just any park but "the paradise of God" or park of God (Revelation 2:7) which for us will be a place of future happiness.

4. Keep learning (Ephesians 3:14-19; Revelation 7:9).

5. Eat and drink (Matthew 8:11-12; 26:29; Revelation 22:2).

6. Work. We will work without any of the painful toil that came with the Curse, which shall be lifted forever (Revelation 22:3, 12\*).

7. Administration and governing (Luke 19:11-27; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:26-27).

## 8. Service (Revelation 7:15; 22:3).

- Millennial Responsibilities. Old Testament prophets made it very clear that there will be much work done in the Millennium and some may spill over into Eternity.
- Construction (Isaiah 54:12; 60:10; 61:4; Jeremiah 30:18; Ezekiel 36:10, 33; Amos 9:14).
- Cleanup duties (Isaiah 9:5; Ezekiel 39:14-15).
- Farming (Isaiah 30:23-24; 32:20; 61:5; 62:9; Jeremiah 31:5,12; Ezekiel 36:9, 34; 47:12; 48:19; Amos 9:13).
- Fishing (Ezekiel 47:10).
- Herdsmen (Isa. 30:23-24; 60:6; 7; 61:5; Jeremiah. 31:12).
- Landscaping (Isaiah 60:13).
- Metalworking (Isaiah 2:4; 60:17; Micah 4:3).
- Serving (Isaiah 14:2).
- Vine dressing (Isaiah 25:6; 62:9; Jeremiah 31:12; Amos 9:13).
- General labor (Ezekiel 48:19).
- Cooking, butchering, and baking (Isaiah 25:6).
- Musicians. Although everyone will sing and make merry, it seems there will be a need for specialists as there always has been (Isaiah 35:10; 65:14; Jeremiah 30:19; 31:4).
- Tent making (Isaiah 54:2; Jeremiah 30:18).
- Weaving and tailoring (Ezekiel 44:17-19; Revelation 19:13,14).

### LIFTING OF THE CURSE

If we take a moment to consider the daily lives of Adam and Eve, we discover that they were in no way lazy people who sat around loafing in the Garden of Eden. They tended and cared for it. The Curse certainly did change the labor needed to survive and the physical ability to perform with an unholy body. I believe Heaven will be a restoration of the state of man prior to the Fall. The Curse of sin will be lifted and we will work, labor,

