

Great Doctrines Of The Bible

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Heaven

Introduction

The thought or fact that heaven exists as an actual place is not a fantasy. It is not a dream or the figment of someone's wild imagination. It is not a myth, legend, or superstition. Heaven is not some spiritual experience or an earthly utopia. Heaven is a real place, occupied by real people, where real activity is constantly in progress. It is the dwelling place of God the Father (John 14:2); the interceding place of God the Son (Hebrews 4:16; 7:25; 1 John 2:1); and the destiny of all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:20). May the study of this precious truth fill your heart with glorious expectation.

Importance of this Lesson

- The secular humanist says that the only heaven you will ever know is here and now – the heaven you make for yourself. Practically all religious cults and all of the great religions of the world offer some form of eternal bliss to their followers. But none of them offers a heaven as a home, where born-again, transformed, translated believers will dwell together with Christ, serving and praising Him throughout eternity.
- The importance of heaven lies in its reality and its remarkable contrast to the vain and empty hopes of other religions.
- Its importance lies also in the fact that it is the fulfillment of every believer's hope (1 Corinthians 15:19), the goal toward which every believer strives (Philippians 3:14), and the place where every believer receives his inheritance (1 Peter 1:4).

THE LESSON

I. SINCE THERE IS A HEAVEN, WHERE IS IT LOCATED?

A. The Bible speaks of three heavens.

1. In Genesis 1:7-8, God divided the water, creating a space between the waters on earth and the waters above the earth. This space, or great expanse, God called the firmament. "And God called the firmament HEAVEN." This space is generally regarded as the FIRST Heaven.
2. In Genesis 1:14-18, God placed the sun, moon, and stars in the upper firmament to give light upon the earth. This is the SECOND Heaven.
3. The THIRD Heaven to which Paul refers is the heaven above the stars where God dwells (Matthew 6:9).

In 2 Corinthians 12:2, the Apostle Paul speaks of being caught up to the third heaven.

- ◆ *One might ask, "Is heaven in outer space?" If by outer space we mean the space beyond the stars, and if the THIRD Heaven is the heaven beyond the stars, then the answer would be, "YES." Up there beyond the stars is God's dwelling place.*

B. In the Bible heaven is spoken of as being in the NORTH.

1. Isaiah 14:13 – Here Lucifer, a mighty angel who became Satan, in his great pride sought to thrust God from His throne and take control of the universe.
Notice what he said, "...I will exalt my throne ABOVE THE STARS OF GOD: (Note: God's throne is *above the stars*.) I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation. (Mount or mountain in the Old Testament usage normally refers to a kingdom.) IN THE SIDES OF THE NORTH: I will ascend above the HEIGHTS OF THE CLOUDS: I will be like the most High."

- ◆ *Here, then, heaven is spoken of as being above the clouds, above the stars, and in "the sides of the north."*

2. Psalm 48:2, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on THE SIDES OF THE NORTH, the city of the great king."

3. One other possible reference is Job 26:7, "He stretcheth out the NORTH over the empty place..."
- ◆ *It is never wise in Bible study to theorize or to speculate beyond what is written. What we can joyfully and assuredly infer from these verses is that there is a PLACE out there, up there, somewhere in an area of outer space God refers to as "the sides of the north"; a PLACE Jesus called "MY FATHER'S HOUSE" (John 14:2).*
- C. Without any speculation, two words are used emphatically to tell us where heaven is:
 1. It is UP.
 - a) Acts 7:55 – Stephen "...looked UP steadfastly INTO HEAVEN, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."
 - b) Acts 1:11 – "...Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing UP into heaven? This same Jesus who is taken UP from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
 - c) 2 Kings 2:11 – "Elijah went UP by a whirlwind into heaven."
 2. It is ABOVE.
 - a) Colossians 3:1 – "...seek those things which are ABOVE, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."
 - b) John 8:23 – "...Ye are from beneath; I am from ABOVE...."
- ◆ *Since heaven is real, and since it is UP and ABOVE us, let us do two things:*
 - 1) "...LOOK UP...for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).
 - 2) "Set your affection on things ABOVE...." (Colossians 3:2).

II. CAN IT BE SHOWN THAT HEAVEN IS AN ACTUAL PLACE, OCCUPIED BY LIVING BEINGS, AND FILLED WITH ACTIVITY?

- A. Heaven is spoken of as being a PREPARED place.
 1. John 14:2 – "...I go to PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU."
 2. Hebrews 11:16 – "But now they desire a better country, that is a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: FOR HE HATH PREPARED FOR THEM A CITY."
 3. Heaven, then, is a specially prepared place for special people – all who have believed on THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.
- B. Heaven is a place from which God the Father:
 1. Hears the prayers ascending from the earth (Psalm 65:2; Matthew 6:9).
 2. Sends forth answers to our prayers (2 Chronicles 7:14).
 3. Views all of man's activities (Psalm 14:2; 2 Chronicles 16:9).
 4. Reveals His wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Romans 1:18).
 5. Opens the windows of heaven and sends forth blessing (Malachi 3:10).
- C. Heaven is a place where the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master in heaven (Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 4:1):
 1. Stands or sits at the right hand of the Father.
 - a) Acts 7:55 – Stephen saw Jesus STANDING on the right hand of God.
 - b) Hebrews 1:3 – After Christ purged our sins He "...SAT DOWN on the right hand of the Majesty on high."
 2. Serves as our intercessor, advocate, and mediator.
 - a) 1 John 2:1 – "...if any man sin, we have an ADVOCATE with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:"
 - b) Hebrews 7:25 – He can save to the uttermost "...seeing He ever liveth to make INTERCESSION for them."
 - c) 1 Timothy 2:5 – "For there is one God, and one MEDIATOR between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 3. IS in His former glory – with the Father.
 - a) Christ had come down from heaven (John 6:51), sent by the Father (John 17:18), and has now returned to the Father.

4. Awaits His return
 - a) To receive His church (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Philippians 3:20).
 - b) To judge and rule the earth (Revelation 19:11).
- D. Heaven is a place where the Bible is eternally preserved.
 1. Psalm 119:89 – “Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven.”
 2. Matthew 24:35 – “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
 - ◆ *The visible heaven and earth, as we see it, will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10-11), but the Word of God is eternally preserved.*
- E. Heaven is the dwelling place of legions of angels.
 1. Matthew 26:53 – Jesus said he could have received from the Father twelve legions of angels.
 2. Luke 15:7,10 – Angels in heaven rejoice in the salvation of sinners.
- F. Heaven is the place in which all the spirits of deceased Christians dwell and where they await the resurrection of their bodies at the coming of the Lord for His church (Philippians 3:21).
 1. 2 Corinthians 5:1 – Saints who die before the coming of Christ are “housed” in a spiritual body.
 - ◆ *The Holy Spirit is a great illustration of the fact that it is possible to have personality without a physical body.*
 2. 2 Corinthians 5:6,8 – When we leave this body we are “with the Lord.”
 3. 1 Thessalonians 4:14, 16-17 – Our spirits return with Christ to be united with our resurrected bodies and changed into Christ’s likeness (1 John 3:2).
 4. It is foolish to think that the millions of believers, now in heaven with the Lord, are idle or inactive.

III. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS MOST OFTEN ASKED ABOUT HEAVEN

- A. Will heaven be occupied by real people?
 1. Revelation 21:3 – “...Behold the Tabernacle of God is with MEN, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his PEOPLE, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.”
 2. Matthew 17:1-3 – Here Moses and Elijah appear with Christ out of heaven and speak with Him. Actual names! Real people!
 3. Matthew 8:11 – “...many shall come...and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven.” Actual people and names.
 4. Revelation 19:14 tells of *the armies of heaven* coming with Christ to smash the power of the Anti-Christ. Verse 8 indicates that these armies are the saints who have been in heaven.
- B. What about names? Will we have new names or will we retain our own names?
 - ◆ *The Bible teaches clearly, that we shall keep the same name in heaven that we had on earth.*
 1. Luke 10:20 – Jesus said, “...rejoice because YOUR NAMES are written in heaven.” Not some strange new name, but THEIR name.
 2. Philippians 4:3 – “...help those women which labored with me in the gospel, ...WHOSE NAMES are in the book of life.,” their SAME names.
 3. Matthew 17:3 – Moses and Elijah did not have new names in heaven.
 4. We are all already known to God by our own names:
 - a) Genesis 22:11 – God called Abraham by name out of heaven.
 - b) Genesis 21:17 – God knew Hagar by name and called out of heaven, “What aileth thee, Hagar?”
 - c) Exodus 33:17 – God said to Moses, “...I know thee by name.”
 - d) Acts 9:4 – God called out of heaven to Paul when he was still Saul of Tarsus, “...Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”
 - ◆ *Search the scriptures for other illustrations of this truth. Indeed, heaven is and will be a place filled with real people who have retained their own names.*

- C. What about bodies? Will we have visible, physical bodies in heaven?
1. Consider first of all, that millions of Christians will be alive on the earth and will be “caught up” to be with the Lord at the rapture of the church (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). These Christians never experience physical death but are caught up bodily into heaven. (Note 1 Corinthians 15:51, “...We shall not all sleep,...”)
 2. Some people have already been caught up to heaven in a body. Enoch (Genesis 5:24); Elijah (2 Kings 2:11); Moses (Matthew 17:3; compare with Jude 9); and Jesus (Acts 1:9-10).
- ◆ *If millions are taken up to heaven in bodies without seeing death, and if some have already gone to heaven in a body, should we not be encouraged to believe that we shall have literal and visible bodies in heaven?*
3. What will be the nature of our bodies in heaven?
 - a) It will be a body just like the body of our risen Lord.
 - 1) 1 John 3:2, “...we shall be like him....”
 - 2) Philippians 3:21, “...Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body....”
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:52, “...the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”
- ◆ *We are to be CHANGED, not EXCHANGED – but changed into the likeness of Christ’s body.*
- b) What does this mean?
 - 1) It will be a body of flesh and bones. In Luke 24:39, the risen Christ said, “...a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” Christ was not a “spirit” or a ghost and neither shall we be!
 - 2) It will be a bloodless body. 1 Corinthians 15:50, “...flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God:” *Why not?*
- ◆ *Leviticus 17:11 – “...the life of the FLESH is in the blood...” It is blood shed upon the altar that atones for sin. When Christ died, His blood was spilled on the altar of Calvary for our sins. He arose with the nail prints, but not the blood (Luke 24:39)! Blood is essential for earthly and human existence, but in heaven and eternity we’ll be sustained by that same eternal life which has been Christ’s from the beginning! (Compare with John 1:4; 5:26.)*
4. How will this occur?

Philippians 3:20-21 – “...according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”
- ◆ *Since Christ made the laws that govern us and this universe (Colossians 1:16), then all laws are subject to Him and can be “subdued” by Him. We shall be changed by His almighty power.*
5. YES, we shall have bodies in heaven: bloodless, physical, visible, immortal, incorruptible, eternal, imperishable, glorified, and spiritual bodies. (Read 1 Corinthians 15:41-54 and Philippians 3:21.)
- D. Will we actually know each other in heaven, and, if so, in what relationship?
1. 1 Corinthians 13:12 – “...but then I shall know even as also I am known.” Our names and uniqueness are already known to the Lord (and perhaps, by those who are already in heaven – Hebrews 12:1), and we SHALL KNOW then, even as we are now known.
 2. Matthew 8:11 – We are going to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom. We shall KNOW them.
 3. Matthew 17:1-4 – Peter knew Moses and Elijah immediately without any introductions or previous pictures. In other words, we’ll not only know those we have known, but we shall know all the other saints as well.
 4. Acts 1:11 – *this same Jesus shall come.* In other words, if it is going to be the same Jesus, it will be the same Enoch, the same Elijah, the same Moses, etc. We shall know each other not only because we have retained our rightful names, but our individuality and uniqueness as well! The difference will be that our bodies will be changed into the likeness of His glorified body (Philippians 3:21).

- ◆ *Of all the human beings born on this earth, no two have been exactly alike. We are all unique individuals in the eyes of God.*
- 5. Earthly, human relationships cease (Matthew 22:30), and, like the angels, all as servants of God, dwell with Christ throughout eternity. Sexual and family relationships were designed for this earth (Genesis 1:27-28, and Genesis 2:22-25). While we shall surely know each other in heaven, we shall be “as the angels.” We shall all be sons and servants of God.
- E. What about babies or little children – do they perish or go to heaven?
 1. Note especially 2 Corinthians 5:21. Here, we see that Christ not only bore our sins, but BECAME SIN. Christ became the essence of all the sin in the universe including the sin in the natures of babies and little children. All human beings reach an age of accountability, known only to God, when they become responsible for their actions. Until then, small children are covered by Christ’s precious sacrifice.
 2. Read Matthew 18:1-14. This is the great children’s chapter. In verse 3, Christ says that all sinners must “...become as little children,” before they can be saved.
Verse 10 – Here Christ says that every child has an angel representing him before the Father.
Verse 14 – Here Christ plainly says that it is not God’s will that any little child be lost.
- ◆ *I think it is clear from these verses, that babies and small children are watched over by God the Father and are saved.*
- 3. Read 2 Samuel 12:23. Here a child was born as a result of David’s failure and sin. When they asked David why he did not fast, he made this remarkable statement: “Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”
- ◆ *In spite of failure, David was a “man after God’s own heart.” His faith was in the Lord. He fully anticipated going to heaven – and he fully expected to see his child there!*

IV. WHAT WILL HEAVEN BE LIKE?

- A. It will be a place of infinite beauty. (Read Revelation 21.) Of course, this is a description of the New Jerusalem, the great city, which, after this earth is dissolved (2 Peter 3:10-11), and the new heaven and earth are established (Revelation 21:1), comes down from God to be established on the new earth (Revelation 21:2). Its dimensions and beauty are fully described in this chapter.
- ◆ *I believe this to be the final abode of all who ever put their trust in Christ.*
- B. It will be a place of “many mansions” (John 14:1-2), or, as some translate, “many resting places.” In heaven our battles will have ended and we will lay life’s burdens down.
- C. It will be “...as a bride adorned” (Revelation 21:2). How carefully a bride adorns herself. So God has adorned heaven for us.
- D. There will be *no night there* (Revelation 22:5). No long nights of pain and suffering. No nights of sorrow and loneliness. No nights of crime and fear. In God’s tomorrow there will be no sunset.
- E. A place of music (Revelation 5:9), and joyful service (Psalm 16:11; Revelation 22:3), in the light of the glory of God (Revelation 21:11).

V. WHO GOES TO HEAVEN AND WHY?

- A. Who goes to heaven?
 1. 1 Peter 1:3 – Those who have been *born again into a living hope.*
 2. Romans 8:17 – Those who are children of God by faith in Christ will be “glorified together” with Him.
 3. 1 John 3:2 – “Sons of God” will be made “like Him.”
- ◆ *Remember, heaven is a prepared place for prepared people (Revelation 5:9), those redeemed by His blood.*
- B. Who does not go?
 1. Revelation 21:8 – “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.”

2. Those who reject Christ as Savior and Lord; a fatal decision.

In John 8:24, Jesus said, "...if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."

If you have received Christ, rejoice for the glorious hope that is set before you.

GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE
EXAM – LESSON 15

Questions to be answered by every student enrolled in the Rogma International Free Bible Study Course

Name _____

Address _____

1. Heaven is important to the believer because it is: (Value 4 points)
 - a. a spiritual experience.
 - b. where every believer receives his inheritance.
 - c. made of gold.
2. When Paul said he was “caught up to the third heaven” he meant he was: (Value 5 points)
 - a. beyond the stars where God lives.
 - b. on the clouds in the sky.
 - c. in a state of happiness.
3. The first heaven is the: (Value 4 points)
 - a. place where God lives.
 - b. firmament.
 - c. place where God put the stars.
4. The direction of heaven is: (Value 4 points)
 - a. South.
 - b. East.
 - c. North.
5. **Mark** the following verse that states heaven is a prepared place. (Open Bible) (Value 5 points)
 - a. John 14:2
 - b. Acts 7:55
 - c. John 8:23
6. **Mark** the **three** things God the Father does for the believer from heaven. (Value 12 points)
 - a. He watches everybody.
 - b. He hears our prayers.
 - c. He judges the earth.
 - d. He waits for the believer to die.
 - e. He opens the windows of heaven to send down His blessings.
7. **Mark** the verse that tells us Christ is in heaven. (Open Bible) (Value 5 points)
 - a. John 12:2
 - b. Matthew 6:9
 - c. Hebrews 1:3
8. Christ serves us in heaven at this time as our: (Value 4 points)
 - a. Intercessor.
 - b. Shield against sin.
 - c. Judge.

9. **Mark** the verse that tells us the Bible will never pass away. (Open Bible) (Value 4 points)
- Matthew 26:53
 - Matthew 24:35
 - Hebrews 1:3
10. A good illustration of the fact that it is possible to be a person without a body is: (Value 4 points)
- Jesus Christ.
 - The Apostle Paul.
 - The Holy Spirit.
11. **Mark** the verse that shows heaven will be occupied with real people. (Open Bible)
(Value 5 points)
- Matthew 17:1-3
 - Luke 10:20
 - Genesis 22:11
12. We know that we will have the same name in heaven as we do here on earth because: (Value 4 points)
- Moses and Elijah had the same names in heaven.
 - we have names on earth.
 - Philip knew Jesus' name when he saw Him.
13. In the rapture of the Church,: (Value 4 points)
- the believer's body will be transformed into a body like unto Christ's.
 - the believer receives eternal life.
 - the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in the believer.
14. **Mark** the verse that tells us we will know each other in heaven. (Open Bible)
(Value 5 points)
- Philippians 3:21
 - I Corinthians 15:50
 - I Corinthians 13:12
15. We know babies go to heaven when they die because: (Value 4 points)
- after David's baby died he said he would go to him one day.
 - Paul said he saw babies in the third heaven.
 - David went to heaven the same time his baby died.
16. **Mark three** answers that describe what heaven will be like. (Value 15 points)
- It will be a beautiful place.
 - It will have many resting places.
 - It will be a dark place.
 - It will be a place with much music.
 - It will be a very quiet place where nobody talks.
17. According to 1 Peter 1:3 and 1 John 3:2, who goes to heaven upon death? (Open Bible) (Value 6 points)
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18. According to Revelation 21:8 and John 8:24, who does not go to heaven? (Open Bible) (Value 6 points)
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DECISION TIME

Knowing that Heaven is a real place and that I am not going there because I have not accepted Christ as my Savior, I accept the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior at this moment, and believing that He is truly God, I repent from my sins and forsake them.

Signed _____ Date _____ 20__

(Doing this will not give you a better grade, but we would like you to tell us about this decision so that we can encourage you.)