

Heaven

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The keystone of the sacred arch of Christian theology is the doctrine of Heaven
1. In the English New testament, the words occurs 261 times in some 20 New Testament books.
 2. Matthew quoted the word "Heaven" 70 times from the words of Jesus
 3. The writings of John records it 83 times.
- B. The conception dominates the New Testament. Besides the 261 direct references using the term "Heaven," there are many other passages, including whole sections of the Bible in which it appears under a somewhat different terminology.
1. **Luke 16:9** - "An everlasting home." Another translation renders it: "The eternal tabernacles"
 2. **Matthew 25:34** - "The kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
 3. **2 Peter 1:11** - Peter spoke of "the entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."
 4. Paul's magnificent 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians with its references to putting on "incorruption" and "immortality" is actually a discussion of Heaven.
 5. The same subject was his topic again, when he said in **2 Corinthians 5:1-2** - "For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven."
 6. Jesus referred to Heaven under the figure of His "Father's house" in **John 14:2-3** - "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. And 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."
- C. Likewise the Old Testament reveals the same basic conception of heaven as a place of reward for the righteous who shall lie eternally with God.
1. **Psalms 23:6** - "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."
 2. In **Daniel 12:2**, Daniel spoke of the book of life and of the time of the end, declaring that: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt."

- D. There is no understanding whatever of Jesus except in light of His unique relationship to Heaven.
1. In Heaven He was from the beginning.
 2. From Heaven He came.
 3. Of Heaven He spoke.
 4. To Heaven he pointed the way.
 5. From Heaven angels announced His birth.
 6. From Heaven angels ministered to Him in Gethsemane and in the wilderness.
 7. From Heaven angels came to announce His resurrection.
 8. From Heaven the voice of God declared Him to be the Son of God.
 9. From Heaven angels came to escort Him to Heaven.
 10. To Heaven He ascended.
 11. From Heaven the angels announced His second coming.
 12. In Heaven He sits at the right hand of the majesty on High.
 13. In Heaven He reigns until all enemies shall be put under foot.
 14. In Heaven He intercedes for Christians.
 15. From Heaven He will come to raise the dead and summon all who ever lived to the judgment of the Great White Throne.

HEAVEN WILL FULFILL MAN’S MOST URGENT NEED.

- A. Paul speaks of “the earthly house of our tabernacle” being dissolved. He is speaking of death.
1. How pitiful are the efforts of men to deceive themselves to the contrary.
 - a. The case of Mrs. Winchester.
 1. I have read that Mrs. Winchester, widow of the man who invented the Winchester rifle, left behind a monstrosity of a mansion in Santa Clara, California.
 2. She supposed that as long as she lived and kept adding on to her house, she would not die.
 3. Hundreds of stained glass windows, inverted pillars, blind doors, and almost countless rooms augmented the estate until it covered several acres of floor space.
 4. She slept in a different room each night, so that if death entered the house, it could not find her.
 5. But at last, death came into the blue room where she slept, and all of her striving went for naught.
 - b. The case of Mrs. Mary Baker Patterson Glover Eddy.
 1. Mrs. Mary Baker Patterson Glover Eddy pretended that death would not come.

2. When she could no longer ride in the buggy through the streets, she had her nurse go in her place to keep up the pretense of good health.
3. But in the likeness of all others, death came and her soul departed the body which had nowhere to go but to the grave.
2. In Christ and through Christ we have a bright and beautiful hope of Heaven on the other side of death.
3. No wonder Jesus marveled at the unbelief of those who should have known better.

WHERE IS HEAVEN?

- A. Other than our Lord, the only one who ever went to heaven and came back was the apostle Paul.
1. **2 Corinthians 13:2-4** - “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows-- such a one was caught up to the third heaven.
And I know such a man-- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows--
How he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”
 2. This prohibition enforced upon the apostle Paul could account for the fact that Paul did not speak of Heaven as often as Matthew or John, and yet the few things that he said are abundantly rich in significance.
- B. Paul referred to the “third heaven.”
1. This is why “heavens” in the plural is so frequently used in the Old Testament where one reads repeatedly of “the heaven of heavens.”
 2. The same plural reference also appears in the New testament, as in “Christ is made higher than the heavens” (**Hebrews 7:26**).
 3. The Jews had developed a fantastic theory of seven heavens, but the Word of God speaks of no such thing.
 4. However, the Bible does speak of three heavens.
 - a. First: The earth’s atmosphere as evident in **Jeremiah 15:3** - “. . . The birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth . . . “
 - b. Second: The starry firmament above as mentioned in **Isaiah 13:10** - “. . . The stars of heaven and their constellations . . . “
 - c. Third: The heaven where the throne of God is. **Psalms 11:4** - “The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven . . . ”
 5. Two of these heavens are visible to us with our eyes. The third is visible to us through our faith and the Word of God.
- C. A number of years ago, the ancient Christian cathedrals of the Kasan and St. Isaac’s in Leningrad were plundered and raped by the godless atheistic communists who tore down the high altars and installed in the place of them

the enlarged photographs of the vulgar Russian cosmonauts, Titov and Gagarin, with huge placards in four languages (Russian, German, French, and English) declaring that, “We have searched the heavens, and there is no God!”

1. What an impudent arrogance this is!
2. It is a measure of a man’s rebellion against his Creator that, at a time when he has not explored one billionth part of the second heaven, he has the audacity to proclaim:
 - a. That there is no third!
 - b. That God is not!
 - c. That man is supreme!
3. Friends, there is a God, and that third heaven is real.

WHAT IS HEAVEN?

A. It is the place where the throne of God is.

1. **Revelation 4:2, 8** - “Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne . . . lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”
2. The universe is not directed by blind law, but rather by the One who sits upon the great throne in heaven.

B. It is the place where our hope is.

1. **Hebrews 6:19** - “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil.”

C. It is the place where our treasure is.

1. **Matthew 6:20** - “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”
2. Jesus promised the persecuted, “Great is your reward in heaven.”
Matthew 5:12
3. The apostle Peter spoke of the inheritance “reserved in heaven for you”
1 Peter 1:4

D. It is the place where our citizenship is.

1. **Philippians 3:20-21** - “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body . . .”
2. An illustration may help to illuminate Paul’s words to the Philippians. After the battle of Actium (September 2, 31 B.C.) Augustus Caesar, at last enthroned with absolute power, made Philippi a Roman colony and banished the soldiers of Anthony, his final rival, to live there. Thus, their true citizenship was in Rome, but they lived out their days as strangers in a foreign land.

E. It is the place where our names are written.

1. **Philippians 4:3** - “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.”
2. To the returning seventy, Jesus said in **Luke 10:20** - “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

HEAVEN VIEWED FROM ITS GREAT DIMENSIONS.

- A. **1 Corinthians 2:9** - “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”
- B. Chapters 21 and 22 of the Revelation record God’s description of that beautiful place.
 - 1.