

Is there a real place called Heaven and if so, who is going to be residents there?

July 17, 2016

There are many different theories about the place called “heaven” and those who have definite opinions believe that they have the answers to what takes place when the soul departs from the body and for the first time experiences death. The Bible gives glimpses of the place where believers will spend eternity and that is what I want to share with you this morning. There are many books that have been written about this subject as people have a curiosity and a hope that everyone will be there at some point, but the Scriptures are very specific as to who will inhabit the place where God dwells.

In Psalms 15, there are some Scriptures that answer the question, “LORD who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? The answer follows and those who fit in this category will never be moved. The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, and he speaks the truth in his heart. He utters no slander and does no wrong to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor. He condemns a vile person but honors those who fear the LORD. He keeps his word even when it hurts and refuses to change his mind. He lends money to the poor without charging them interest. He doesn’t accept bribes to condemn an innocent person. Whoever does these things will never be shaken.

When you consider the Scripture that commands us to love the LORD with all our heart, soul, and mind and to love our neighbor as ourselves, we can connect the meaning of the commandments that draw us close to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

If you look at Luke 10:27, an expert in the law asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asked him a question of “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” The man answered with the above statement of loving God and loving your neighbor. Jesus told him that he was correct and if he did this, he would live. The man did just what many people do when they want to avoid doing what is right; they ask questions that skirt around the issue at hand. He asked “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus told the story of “The Good Samaritan” and when he had finished he asked the man, “Which of the three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in law replied, “The one who showed mercy on him.” The Lord told him to go and do likewise. Our neighbor is the person that we come in contact with who needs a helping hand. As we show love and compassion to others, we are ministering to our Lord.

Jesus often spoke of “living water” that springs up into everlasting life. He offered that water to the woman at the well whose life was in such a mess that she was ashamed to face people who lived around her. She hid facts about her condition for she was burdened by her past. Jesus said to her, “If you knew who was speaking to you, you would ask and I would give you living water.” John 4:10. The woman had a longing in her heart to know God and before the end of the conversation, Jesus had revealed to her that He is the Messiah and she was brought to an understanding of how to have eternal life. We can also

have the same blessing as she received by believing on Jesus Christ and accepting him into our hearts. That living water will spring up into our souls and cause us to desire to live a holy life and be an imitator of Jesus Christ. We must believe, ask and receive!

In John 14, Jesus told his disciples not to allow their hearts to be troubled. They believed in God; believe also in him. He went on to tell them that in his Father's house are many mansions and he was going there to prepare a place for them. He said, "If it were not so, I would have told you." The words of Jesus are true and he never speaks words that lead people astray or to deceive them. When Thomas said that he didn't know where Jesus was going and how was he supposed to know the way, Jesus responded with these words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father except by me." He is in heaven preparing a place for those who love him. Jesus promised them that if he went away, he would return for them that where He is, there they would also be. Are you looking forward to being with Jesus in heavenly places for eternity? In Philippians 3:20, it tells us that our citizenship is in heaven and we eagerly await the coming of the LORD Jesus Christ who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body, This world is a dressing room and a place to prepare us for our eternal destination. Paul speaks about those who are heading for destruction because their god is their belly; their glory is in their shame. Their minds are set on earthly things they are enemies of the cross of Christ. John 7:38 tells us to believe on Jesus as the Scriptures say from within you shall flow rivers of living water. Jesus was referring to the Holy Spirit that was first experienced by the 120 believers in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:38.

The Holy Spirit will lead and guide believers into all truth. He is there to give us the words to speak when faced with persecution. The Holy Spirit within the soul of a believer is the spirit that will raise us from the dead when the trump of God shall sound.

1 Thessalonians 4:16. Verse 17 declares that those who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord and so shall they ever be with the LORD.

In Luke 10:20, Jesus admonished his disciples not to rejoice because evil spirits were subject unto them, but to rejoice because their names were written in heaven.

To be accepted in the heavenly realm with Christ, your name must be registered in the Lamb's Book of Life. Look at Revelation chapter 21. John saw a new heaven and a new earth where only righteousness dwelled. The first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea. John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of the heavens prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

The tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them; they shall be his people and he shall be their God. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, there will be no more death, and neither sorrow, nor crying, no more pain and the former things are passed away. He that sat upon the throne says, "Behold I make all things new." He instructed John to write what he showed him for these words are true and faithful." Jesus

is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. He promises to give to him that is thirsty of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcomes shall inherit all things. He will be his God and he shall be God's son.

The walls of the city are made of precious stones and the 12 gates are made of 12 pearls. The names of the 12 tribes of Israel are written on the gates. The 12 foundations have the names of the 12 Apostles written in them. The streets are pure gold as transparent glass. There is no temple in the city for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb is the temple in it. The city has no need of a sun or moon to shine in it for the glory of God is the light for it. The Lamb is the light. The nations of those which are saved shall walk in the light of it. The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor to it. They shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. There is no night there. Nothing impure will ever enter there. No one will enter who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

In 2 Timothy 4, Paul knows that he will soon be killed for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. He looks back over his life and declares that he has fought a good fight, he has finished the race and he has kept the faith. Now there is in store for him a crown of righteousness that the Lord, the righteous judge will award to him on that Day but he mentions that it is not just for him alone, but for everyone who long for Christ' appearing. If you look at Revelation 21:8, you will notice those who will be excluded from entering into the holy city of God. Those who are fearful and unbelieving, the vile, murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars –they will be consigned to the fiery lake of fire which is the second death.

We must be determined to finish the race of life strong. Those who follow the world system and the wide paths that lead to destruction will miss out on the greatest blessing that God has in store for those who follow his commandments and love him. Satan will deceive those who desire to find their own way through life and in the end they will regret their choice.

The Bible says "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and lose his soul?"

"What will you give in exchange for your soul?" Matthew 16:26.

In Proverbs 13:22, it says that a good man leaves an inheritance to his children and grandchildren. The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just. Those who steal from the poor to add to their wealth and those who are wicked in their character, will forfeit their treasures upon their death. They have to leave it on this side of life for they cannot take earthly possessions into eternity with them. That wealth will be distributed to the children of God for this is his promise.