

CHAPTER 13

Heaven, Our Eternal Home

In the last chapter we learned about the place where the unsaved will spend eternity (HELL). In this chapter we want to learn about the place where saved people will live forever (HEAVEN). Where will you spend ETERNITY?

How Long is Eternity?

Just how long is forever? It is hard for our little minds to understand eternity and how long it is. But here is one illustration that might help:

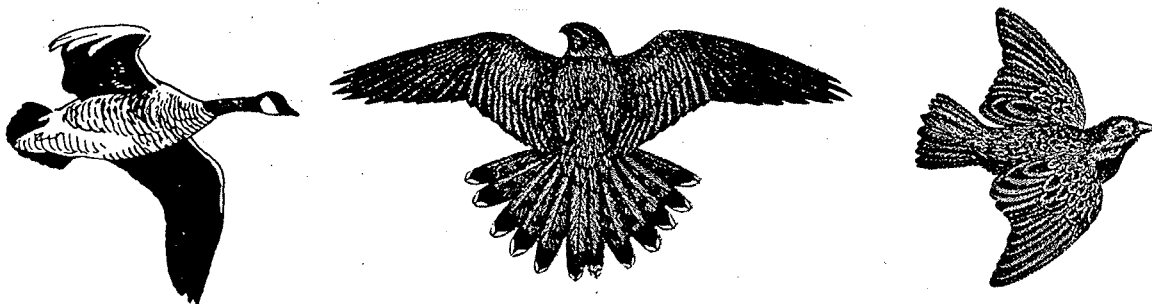
Suppose that once every 1,000,000,000,000 years (every trillion years) a little robin flew from Jupiter to planet Earth, picked up in his beak one grain of sand, flew back to Jupiter, and deposited it on that planet. Try to imagine how long it would take that robin to deposit the deserts and seashores of the earth upon Jupiter. And when that little bird had completed his not-so-tiny task, eternity would not be one second older than when he first began!

Yes, the question "**Where am I going to spend eternity?**" is a very important one! And we do not have all of eternity to answer this question. We must make our decision NOW during the years that we spend upon this earth. Those who decide to put their full trust in Jesus Christ will spend eternity in HEAVEN (John 3:18,36; Acts 16:31).

The Three Heavens

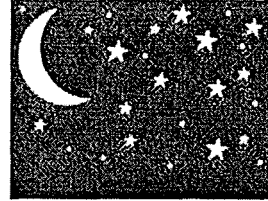
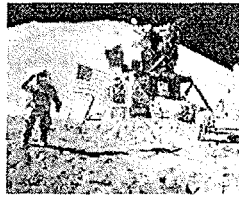
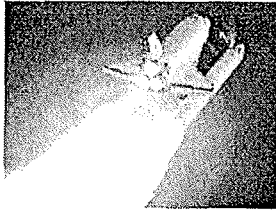
The Bible indicates that there are three heavens. In 2 Corinthians 12:2 we learn that Paul was "caught up to the _____ heaven." If there is a THIRD heaven, then there must also be a FIRST and SECOND heaven:

1) **THE FIRST HEAVEN** is that which can be seen in the daytime, where the birds fly and the clouds go by! This is the atmospheric heaven. Jesus said in Matthew 6:26, "Behold the _____ (birds) of the _____ (heaven)." See also Psalm 8:8 ("the fowl of the heaven").



2) **THE SECOND HEAVEN** is that which can be seen at night--the stars, the moon and the planets. This is the stellar universe with all of its billions of stars and galaxies! David referred to the second

heaven in Psalm 8:3, "When I consider thy _____, the work of thy fingers, the _____ and the _____ which thou hast ordained."



3) **THE THIRD HEAVEN** cannot be seen by human eyes at all. The third heaven can only be seen through the eyes of *faith*. God describes this heaven to us in His Word and we *believe* what God says about this place, even though we have never seen it. The third heaven is the place where God the Father manifests His presence in a special way (see Matthew 6:9). The Lord Jesus is in the third heaven today (Hebrews 8:1; 9:24). Paul once visited the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2). This is the place where believers go when they die. The third heaven is also called "the heaven of _____" (Nehemiah 9:6). It is also called "P _____" (2 Corinthians **12:4** and compare verse 2). The third heaven is the H _____ (Luke 2:14) of all the heavens. In this chapter we want to study the third heaven, and when we use the word "heaven" we are thinking about the third heaven.

Heaven is a Real Place

Heaven is not some imaginary, dreamland that does not really exist. Heaven is a real place. Jesus spoke about this real place in John 14:2: "In my Father's house are many MANSIONS (abiding places): if it were not so, I would have, told you. I go to prepare a _____ for you." Jesus Christ taught His disciples that heaven was a real place!

Heaven is the Dwelling Place of God

Heaven is more than just a place. It is a place where God is: "Our Father, who art in _____" (Matthew 6:9). It is a place where God makes Himself known in a very special way.

In John 14:3 and John 17:24 Jesus describes heaven by using three words: WHERE _____ AM! Heaven is where Jesus is! Jesus wants us to be where He is! Today we are away from the Lord (He is in heaven and we are on earth), but someday believers will be "P _____ with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). The good news that Paul gave to the Thessalonian believers was this: "and so shall we ever (always, at all times) be _____ the _____" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). [Of course we recognize that Christ is with believers and believers are with Christ in a spiritual sense (Hebrew 13:5), and we thank God that He is with us always (Matt. 28:20).]

Heaven is more than just a PLACE. It involves a PERSON. Heaven would not be heaven without Christ. Heaven is where Christ is and we shall someday see Him and be with Him forevermore!

Think about your own home. Your home is more than just a place. Your home is more than just a house built out of wood, brick or stone. A home is a home because of the PEOPLE who live there (your Mom and Dad and sisters and brothers, etc.). Without these people it would not be much of a home. Without Christ heaven would not be heaven.

Jesus Christ will be the Center of Attention

Jesus Christ wants His believers to be with Him in heaven so that "they may _____ my glory" (John 17:24). When we get to heaven Christ will be the center of attention and "we shall _____ Him as He Is" (1 John 3:2).

What Happens When a Believer Dies?

If you were to meet a large bumblebee you might be afraid of it. But if someone were to pull the stinger out of the bumblebee then you would no longer need to fear it. It would be harmless. It would have no power to sting you or harm you in any way. It would be a harmless ball of fuzz.

Death is like that bumblebee. Death was once a very fearful thing because it meant separation from God because of our sins. But the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again in victory. Therefore Christ has removed the "STINGER" from death for every believer: "O death, where is thy _____? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55). For the believer death has no more sting and the grave has no more victory! It is like a harmless bumblebee. It cannot hurt us at all!

What did the Apostle Paul think about death? Did he think that death was some terrible loss or did he think that death was some wonderful gain (Philippians 1:21)? _____ Did Paul have a fear of death or did he have a desire to die (see Philippians 1:23)?

_____ Remember, Paul was a believer and he loved Christ. Paul knew that death simply meant departing and being with _____ (Philippians 1:23). Paul knew that being "absent from the body" meant that he would be "present with the _____" (2 Corinthians 5:8). This is why Paul at the end of his life could say, "For I am now _____ to be offered" (2 Timothy 4:6). He was ready to die! He was ready to go home to heaven! He was ready to be in the presence of His Saviour! Soon Nero, the Roman emperor, would have Paul executed and his head would be cut off. But this did not matter because Paul was ready to go to his heavenly home! He was homesick for heaven!

In Luke chapter 23 verses 39-43 we learn about a criminal who was dying on a cross next to the Lord Jesus. This man knew that he was a guilty sinner (Luke 23:41) but he turned to Jesus in simple faith and said, "Lord, remember me...." (Luke 23:42). Jesus then gave this man a wonderful promise: "_____ shalt thou be _____ Me in paradise." A few hours later this man died (see John 19:32) but the moment he died he went to be *with Jesus*! For the believing sinner, death is not a terrible thing. It is a wonderful thing.

Will We Be On Earth?

Many have the idea that believers will spend eternity in heaven and will have no relationship to the earth. The Bible does not describe the eternal state in such a way. Revelation chapters 21-22 describe the eternal state. "And I saw a new heaven and a _____" (Revelation 21:1). Is the earth also mentioned in Revelation 21:24? _____

In connection with this "new earth" there will be a glorious city called the "_____ J _____" (Revelation 21:2) and "the H _____ J _____" (Revelation 21:10). This city is described in detail in these two chapters.

In Revelation chapters 21-22, can you find the following (give the chapter and verse)?

A street made of gold: _____

A river of water: _____

A tree with twelve different kinds of fruits: _____

To say that the eternal state will have nothing to do with the earth, is not correct. However, the new earth will be far different from the earth that we know today.

The Myth About Heaven

A myth is a made-up story that is not true. There is a myth about heaven which many people believe. Suppose you were to go up to unsaved people and ask them this question: "What kind of person goes to heaven?" What do you think they would say? Many of them would probably give you an answer like this: *Good people go to heaven and bad people go to hell*. Is this really true or is this a myth? Let's think about this carefully:

1) If only good people go to heaven, would there be any hope for sinners? _____ Would there be any hope for the criminal that we learned about in Luke 23:40-43? _____

2) Does the Bible give any hope for sinners (1 Timothy 1:15)? _____

3) If only good people go to heaven, then how many people would go to heaven according to Romans 3:12? _____

4) If bad people go to hell, then how many people would go to hell according to Romans 3:23 and Ecclesiastes 7:20?

5) According to John 3:16-18, who goes to heaven?

_____ According to these same verses, who goes to hell? _____

God is populating heaven with sinners! God is saving sinners by His grace and preparing a place for them in heaven. Heaven will someday be populated with SAVED SINNERS! People do not get to heaven because they are good. People get to heaven because they have a GOOD AND PERFECT SAVIOUR!

How Would You Answer If God Should Ask?

Suppose you were to die and God were to say to you, "WHY SHOULD I LET YOU INTO MY HEAVEN?" What answer would you give? Suppose someone were to say to God, "Lord, You should let me into heaven because I have tried to live a good life and I have tried not to hurt anyone." Would this be a good answer? _____ Suppose someone were to say to God, "Lord, You should let me into heaven because I went to church every Sunday and I prayed and I read my Bible." Is this a good answer? _____ Write out what **your** answer to this question would be:

Who should you thank for being able to go to heaven? Should you thank yourself or should you thank someone else? _____ If God were to give you what you really DESERVE (because of the way you have lived and the things you have done), would He give you HEAVEN? Why or why not?

What (or Who) is the ONLY WAY to heaven (John 14:6)? _____ Who is the ONLY DOOR to heaven (John 10:9)? _____

A Bright Future

In this set of notes we have learned about some of the things that will take place in the future. Some of the things that will happen are not very happy things: WARS, TRIBULATION, THE BEAST, THE FALSE PROPHET, THE DRAGON (Satan), THE FINAL REBELLION and HELL. These things make the future ahead appear very dark (like a big storm coming).

Cheer up! There is good news too! There is one thing that we know for sure! If you are trusting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, then YOUR FUTURE IS BRIGHT. God is your Father, Christ is your Saviour, the Holy Spirit is your Comforter and Heaven is your home! You have a guaranteed future in heaven! You could purchase a ticket and have a reserved seat at a ballgame. You know for sure that when you get to that ballgame there will be a seat for you because you paid for your ticket and you have the ticket as proof! So also the believer has a "ticket" (guaranteed entrance) to heaven that was paid for by Jesus Christ when He died on the cross. This is why Peter said that there is a place "reserved in _____ for _____" (1 Peter 1:4). The written salvation promises found in the Word of God are the proof of this (John 5:24; 6:35-37; 10:28-30, etc.).

Do you have a "ticket" to heaven? Is there a place in heaven reserved for _____? (write your own name)

If you are not sure about this then it is important for you to talk to your Sunday School teacher or your Pastor or to someone else that can help you. They want you to be sure about heaven! They want you to know for sure that you are saved and that you will spend YOUR ETERNITY with the Lord Jesus Christ!

MIGHTY ANCHOR OF SAFETY

