

LIFE'S DEEP THOUGHTS

Contemplating the Spiritual Aspects of Life's Circumstances

[Previous Posts: <http://LifesDeepThoughts.com>]

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THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE 'HOME'

Once in a while, it is nice to get away from home to enjoy other venues, experience other cultures, and just relax and get refreshed while being pampered by hotel staff in a luxurious, up-to-date room. However, is there a 'HOME' that one will never want to leave because it has everything one would ever want?

INTRODUCTION

After work, a business trip, or a vacation, people head “home,” and the word “home” means many things to different people. For most, home means a place where one feels secure and protected. It is a place of ‘attachment’, which pertains to a set of feelings about a geographic location that emotionally binds a person to that place as a function of its role as a setting for experience. It has also been defined as a space loaded with a complex range of symbolic ‘meanings’—the emotional, psychological, social significance, and ‘feeling’ of place. Home is used to signify feelings of security and comfort—a metaphor for experiences of joy, protection, comfort, and belonging.



<https://youtu.be/NFWMBE-mQEc?t=17>

[VIDEO: “The Wizard of Oz” - “There’s No Place Like Home” clip]

Home is a familiar ‘surrounding’ and a place of identity. There seems to be an interactive relationship between one’s home and one’s personal identity—as an attachment to a place that develops most directly from life experiences and associated notions of what has been important in one’s life and who one is in the world.

Even though there are countless types of houses, there are certain ‘elements’ that are present in a ‘home’. A ‘home’ creates shelter. It is where people have their possessions and where traditions are created within the family—sometimes even ‘linked’ to specific rooms that the family gathered to experience the tradition (i.e., a Christmas tree in a certain corner of the living room). A certain ‘smell’ can even bring back memories of years past at ‘home’.

Home also helps us ‘organize’ our day. A place for sleeping, bathing, eating,

relaxing, entertainment, and just spending time with each other. 'Home' is also located cognitively in our memories

The term 'home' can mean different things and each person's experience of home and family life will influence this greatly. Our perceptions of home are so important in everyday life.

Writer Bonnie Collins said it well with her poem, "There Is No Place Like Home":

*"Home is where your heart lies
even if it is not a palace of
glittering golden staircase
bronzed with the ivory of
the banner in which you hold*

*Time can take away from us
a part of life in which we all
once knew, but it never can really
erase the memory of where we
called our home*

*Traveling throughout the world
with all its splendor, and seeing
the hills of each of its vallies, can
take you to the wonders that
nature can provide hidden beneath
the walls of her beauty, showering
us with hues of different colors that
translate into images formed in our mind*

*To see our life, and feel all the fortune
that has bestowed upon us, and for
the wealth of our given health, all of these
are commodities of our life, but none can
compare to the walls of our heats where
the comfort of home once shadowed its
harbor of security that has left us with the
impression of there is no place like home."*

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NOTE: Link for this PDF of Post: [https://www.spiritedesign.com/Lifes_Deep_Thoughts-FEB'23_\(v288\)-There's_No_Place_Like_'Home'.pdf](https://www.spiritedesign.com/Lifes_Deep_Thoughts-FEB'23_(v288)-There's_No_Place_Like_'Home'.pdf)

<<< SUMMARY >>>

The following is a **collection of ‘snippets’** from the post that aims to give you the overall ‘gist’ of this post. [10-15 Minute Read].

“THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME”

In the last scene of the film “The Wizard of Oz,” Dorothy wakes up in her bed to find herself surrounded by her family. She looks around to see the faces of the people she loves and says, “There’s no place like home.” Dorothy’s trancelike repetition of the phrase “There’s no place like home” condenses the meaning of what home means for each of us.

Home is a place we associate with familiarity, love, a safe place, and a place of origin. When her Kansas home is uprooted by a violent tornado, Dorothy is terrified. She is ‘transported’ to Oz, a wonderful ‘place’ in her dreams. Oz is, in fact, Dorothy’s home, since she never ‘physically’ left home. Throughout the film, she is surrounded by people and things she knows, but all of which have changed to reveal hidden secrets and emotions—creating a sense of unease, and the uncanny. Although Oz is not real, it is both like home, and yet very unlike her home. It is no place like home.

For a place that is so familiar, “home” is peculiarly difficult to define. Based on an extended review of recent literature about the subject, articles show that there is no place like ‘home’ because people construct its image in memory and imagination. Home, it is argued, is ‘imaged’ on many different levels.

At a ‘surface’ level, home is known in terms of its location, fabric, decoration, furnishing, and amenity—it is a place that is known intimately. At a ‘deeper’ level, home is defined in terms of the kinds of relationships people have—or would like to have—with others inside and outside of their physical home. Deeper still, home is a representation of cultural identity and provides a collective sense of social permanency and security.

People rarely think about home at this level unless reappraisal is forced upon them by a significant life event like migration between cultures or because of cultural invasion from without.

THE MEANING OF ‘HOME’

So, ask yourself, “What does home mean to me?” What came to mind? Do you think your answer to that question has changed as your life and circumstances have changed?

I wonder how many people remember learning to write out their name, street address, town or city, state, perhaps a zip code, and country when they were little because they want to send a letter to a loved one—usually a Grandma or Grandpa.

So, what is it about this ‘urge’ to situate ourselves in space—in a geographic location—especially one centered on our earliest memories of where we lived? Well, the following are four ways psychologists define “home”:

- Environmental Cues
- Hierarchy of Needs
- Emotional Attachment
- A Sense of Identity

Home is also a place of familiarity, family, connections, roots, and belonging.
[more...]

“PLACE ATTACHMENT”

The psychology of “Place Attachment” confirms the cognitive-emotional bond that humans, since early times, have had with a specific place. A material place is not only shaped physically and psychologically/spiritually by its inhabitants, but it in turn also shapes them, as it mediates the meanings ascribed to it through its presence, experiences of memory, belonging, positive emotions, privacy, and reflection, comfort and security, entertainment and aesthetics.

Leila Scannel and Robert Gifford in their book, “The Experienced Psychological Benefits of Place Attachment,” have developed a multidimensional model to explain how place attachment is realized. They refer to it as the “person-place-process” tripartite framework where “person” indicates who is attached (molded by individual-/collective-based meanings), “place” indicates what is the attachment (both social and physical qualities of place), and “process” refers to the psychological process how attachment is realized and expressed (through affect, cognition, and behavior).

[more...]

“HOMESICKNESS”

“There’s no place like home,” said Dorothy in the 1939 classic film “The Wizard of Oz” as she clicked her heels and hoped for the return to the comforts of her own bed and her beloved Auntie Em and Uncle Henry. Today, we call it “homesickness,” and it is an emotion shared by children and adults alike—particularly when kids are away at summer camp or preparing to head off to

college for the first time.

'CAUSES' OF HOMESICKNESS

They suggest that a “disruption of lifestyle,” some “cultural distance,” “a difficulty adapting,” and “feelings of not belonging” cause homesickness:

'AFFECTS' OF HOMESICKNESS

WebMD then suggested that the ‘affects’ of homesickness were “depression,” “grief,” “productivity,” and a variety of “physical symptoms”:

HOW TO 'DEAL WITH' HOMESICKNESS

They then concluded by suggesting some ways of how to ‘deal with’ homesickness:

Fortunately, homesickness is usually a short-term issue. However, if it lingers past a few months and you find that you are beginning to think pessimistically, develop marked changes in sleeping or eating habits, have prolonged crying spells, have concentration difficulties, or have suicidal thoughts, the problem may not be homesickness, but depression or anxiety. These problems can be helped by professional treatment.

'UNDERSTANDING' HOMESICKNESS

Much of the homesickness reported happens when a young person goes off to college for the first time—especially if they go to a college many hours or states away from their parents’ home.

The “W-Curve” model was developed by William J. Zeller and Robert Mosier (in 1993 as part of their “Culture Shock and the First-Year Experience” study), at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for the incoming Freshman students to help them with the “culture shock” and possible “homesickness” they may feel in the first few months on campus.

The study was done to help students to understand that their integration to the campus community is part of a ‘journey’ that is not without its ups and downs, and the “5 Stages of Culture Shock” may help them feel better about their transition to college life:

[W-Curve Chart]

'TREATING' HOMESICKNESS

Whether you have gone away to college, moved to a new city, or even just traveled for vacation, homesickness is a common emotional experience. Longing

for home is the subject of books, songs, and films. Many sports stars and celebrities have opened up about feeling homesick, and many people have shared their tips for overcoming it.

So then, what exactly are we feeling when we experience homesickness and why do we feel it so deeply—in a way that sometimes manifests physically?

'NORMALIZING' HOMESICKNESS

A key way to deal with homesickness is to 'normalize' it. Chansky says for one to "Tell yourself it's "OK" and normal to feel this way. These bad feelings are 'temporary', and this is part of how change happens. It sounds simple, but that sends a message to the body that we don't need the 'fire trucks'. Nothing is actually wrong. Normalizing it helps the negative feeling go away faster."

It also helps to recognize that the homesick feelings will come and go in 'waves', so you can anticipate them and realize you won't feel that way forever. Although homesickness tends to be most prominent at the beginning of a transition, Klapow noted that it often returns after you have settled in and the reality kicks in that you will be there for a while.

"At first, it's 'This is not what I'm used to,'" he said. "Then we adapt and get used to it. But we go back and say, 'Wow, I'm used to this and comfortable with this,' and start thinking about the old days, which can trigger a homesickness experience as well."

[more...]

HOMESICK FOR A 'FOREVER' HOME

How many of you have ever been camping in a tent? Camping may be fun for a while but it gets old fairly quickly. We get tired of roughing it and we start to desire the comforts of our 'real' home. Would you want to live in a tent all of the time? Of course not.

Well, in the Bible, the Apostle Paul (who was a tentmaker and undoubtedly lived in tents from time to time) compares our human body to a 'tent'—that the body is the 'temporary housing' for one's spirit. One's tent may get old, its appearance change (and may not be able to handle the 'weather' like it did years ago), but Paul makes it clear that the believer moves from this tent to one's 'real' home in Heaven after their lives end here on earth.

Human life is a lot like camping. It is the 'roughing it' part of following Jesus. This earthly is not the believer's permanent place to live. Just like you wouldn't be satisfied with living in a tent all of the time, believers aren't satisfied with living

here on earth. We trade our earthly tent for God's eternal mansion.

The thing is, when a believer's mortal existence is removed, they are 'SET FREE' from the trials, difficulties, pains, and the cares of this world!

[more...]

ALIENS AND STRANGERS

Now, the more home-like that Heaven becomes, the more you feel like a 'foreigner' and exile on this earth (1 Peter 2:11). Maybe some people shop for top-of-the-line Porsches, but that only reveals that, "Their mind is set on earthly things. The believer's citizenship is in Heaven" (Philippians 3:19-20).

Now, I am not talking spiritual 'snobbery' here, and I have no beef against nice things. It is simply a matter of 'focus': "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" [Matthew 6:21].

The writer of Hebrews definitely had this in mind when he wrote, "People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one" [Hebrews 11:14-16].

[more...]

A BETTER 'COUNTRY'

With Google Earth/Maps, one can 'travel' to most places in the world and zoom in to see that the place looks like—and sometimes see the town from the street level and 'visit' popular destinations.

All of us, I would guess, dream about visiting a distant country. Those far-away places with strange-sounding names. All of us dream about going somewhere distant, somewhere different. We dream about this not just because we would like to travel but because we want a measure of excitement in our lives, we want to be something more than what we are now, and we suppose that out there, somewhere, there is something more fulfilling than what we have here.

Educated as an architect—and relishing home design—I enjoy watching a BBC show called "Escape To The Country," where a realtor helps potential home buyers look for their dream home in the rural portions of Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, or England, by viewing three houses (including a "mystery property") in the designated area the couple is focusing on. Then, after they inspect each house, the host/realtor asks the buyers to guess the seller's asking

price before revealing it.

Episodes also feature information regarding the counties, towns, and villages presented, for example, local industry and history. In each episode, the buyers undertake an activity in the local area, often tailored to their interests, such as baking, gardening, or sailing. The presenter also experiences an activity, which is often associated with the area in question, such as cheese making. At the end of each episode, the buyers are asked whether they will make an offer on one of the houses, with updates sometimes available at the end of the episode.

[more...]

CONTEMPLATING A HEAVENLY 'DWELLING'

Each of us probably already have an idea about what Heaven might be like. The chances are, though, they are culturally influenced conceptions that are woefully inadequate to capture the full glory and splendor of what truly awaits the believer in the afterlife.

This brings to mind a story of an unbeliever, who, seeking to comfort a dying Christian, said to him, "My poor friend, how, sorry I am that you have to leave the land of the living!" But, the dying man, utterly radiant, replied, "You are wrong. I am leaving the land of the dying to go to the country of the living!" (Rene Pache). Here was a man that was looking for that better country—a heavenly one—and I want you to be like him!

The Bible begins with 'Paradise lost' (the Garden of Eden), at which time pain, suffering, and death first enter the human race. The Bible then ends with 'Paradise regained' (Heaven), at which time pain, suffering, and death will be a thing of the past!

Once believers are in Heaven, the sufferings they experienced during their time on earth—even 'extreme' suffering—will be viewed as a momentary bother! Theologian John Wenham commented that, "Not only is it certain that this life will end, but it is certain that from the perspective of eternity, it will be seen to have passed in a flash. The toils which seem so endless will be seen to have been quite transitory and abundantly worthwhile." It is with this in mind that Christian writer Philip Yancey commented: "Earth is a proving ground, a dot in eternity."

This "dot in eternity" is quickly passing away. It will soon be over. The believer's destiny in Heaven, by contrast, is an eternal destiny. They will live there forever, and it will be a pain-free and death-free environment. I'm thinking that is something to look forward to!

So then, what does the Bible teach about heaven, the believer's 'house'? Well, Jesus told a story about Lazarus in the Rich Man (Luke 16:19-31) that presents seven important biblical teachings about Heaven:

Like Moody, the Apostle Paul had GREAT 'CONFIDENCE' concerning eternity (which is probably where Moody got his confidence from!) He declared that when the believer leaves their earthly body, there is an eternal body waiting for them in Heaven. The thing is, they have more than a "tent" (temporary dwelling place) waiting for them, they have a "house" (permanent abode) made by God Himself!

There are several words that illustrate Paul's confidence concerning eternity. He said, "we know," not "we think." He said, "we have," not "we hope." He said, "we are always confident," not "we are fairly sure most of the time." Then, he shared one of the greatest guarantees in the Word of God. He said that, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" [2 Corinthians 5:8].

[more...]

LONGING FOR 'HOME'

Scripture reveals three important aspects about Heaven that the believers look forward to: Heavenly reservations; Heavenly rewards; and Heavenly riches.

[more...]

BELIEVER'S TRUE IDENTITY

Only in Heaven—the birthplace of our 'identity'—will the believer find out who they truly are. Actually, they won't find out so much as they will 'receive' it.

This is beautifully symbolized in Revelation 2:17: "To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it."

The believer's true identity will unfold with the new name that God will give them. (a 'secret' between God and them). Just think about that! In Heaven, you will not only find what was irretrievably lost, but when you receive it—your new name, your true identity—you will be a thousand times more yourself than the sum total of all those nuances, gestures, and inside subtleties that defined the earthbound "you"! On earth, you may think you fully blossomed, but Heaven will reveal that you have barely 'budded'!

We pilgrims walk the 'tightrope' between earth and Heaven, feeling trapped in time, yet with eternity beating in our 'hearts'. Our unsatisfied sense of exile is not to be solved or fixed while we are here on earth. Our pain and longings make sure

that we will never be content—but that’s good! It is to our benefit that we do not grow comfortable in a world destined for decay!

So, onward we pilgrims tread through this world of time and death, forever seeking the Son, Jesus. We do not go backward, but “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, [we] press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called [us] heavenward in Christ Jesus” [Philippians 3:13-14].

‘HOPE’ OF HEAVEN

In his book “Mere Christianity,” C. S. Lewis commended that a hope of Heaven is right and good: “This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do.”

For the believer, death is not only the great ‘separator’, but being ‘in’ Jesus, death is the great ‘uniter’. When the believer gets to Heaven, they will not only be reunited with those close ‘friends’ who when on to Heaven before them, but they will be ‘united’ with those who may have helped bring them to faith. “For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy” [1 Thessalonians 2:19-20].

NO PLACE LIKE ‘HOME’!

Dorothy in the “Wizard of Oz” said, “There’s no place like home.” So, why is that line so iconic? As soon as you hear it, you see Dorothy in your ‘mind’s eye’ holding Toto, clicking the heels of her ruby red slippers three times, and uttering the words “There’s no place like home”... almost like a ‘prayer’. She REALLY wanted to ‘travel’ home ASAP!

I love to travel and experience new places. I have been to Canada, Mexico, and France—and probably half of the states in the U.S. I love seeing new places, new people, new cultures, but I also love coming home and to familiar landmarks and sights, to shared customs and language, to my home, to my own bed, my own refrigerator, and TV. You know what I mean?

So, how does one know when they have found that ‘special place’ they can call “home”? Well, some will say, “Home is where the heart is.” It is where one can be to cherish the life, the people, and culture of a given place. In that sense, probably all of us can think of an earthly place of ‘belonging’, where we would rather not leave.

YET, God tells us about a different kind of ‘belonging’. As I have mentioned previously, “Our citizenship is in heaven,” we are strangers in this world,” and “are

looking for the city that is to come.”

The point is, they say that home is where the heart is. So where is your ‘heart’? Here on earth or ‘in’ Heaven?

[more...]

‘PREPARING’ A PLACE

God has planned an incredible eternal experience for every believer. We were created for eternity and redeemed for eternity. But, life has a way of focusing our attention on our immediate cares and not our ultimate goal.

We are easily caught up in our daily tasks that take most of our time and attention away from the ultimate purpose for which we were created. The Bible reminds us that, while God has “made everything beautiful in its time,” he has also “put eternity in our hearts” [Ecclesiastes 3:11]. No matter how hard we try, we are never satisfied with anything less than that which is eternal. Pastor Joe Stowell said that, “Life is most disappointing, most despairing when it is lived as though this world is all we have.”

God has planned an amazing future for every believer. The Bible reminds us that, “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”—the things God has prepared for those who love Him” [1 Corinthians 2:9].

[more...]

WHEN WE ‘ARRIVE’

The Bible often talks about Heaven as the “Father’s House.” As mentioned, the thing is, many believers know very little about Heaven. Many ask, “What will it be like?,” “Who will be there?,” and “What will we be doing there?”

Well, Jesus gives us some answers. He was with His disciples in the upper room on the night before His death, when He said:

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going”

[John 14:1-4].

[more...]

JUST IMAGINE

Just imagine what a special place this must be. As beautiful as the earthly paradise was in the Garden of Eden, it pales in comparison to what is being prepared by Jesus! (John 14:3).

Former pastor James S. Hewett shared an illustration with his congregation that did some 'imagining' about Heaven:

[more...]

A PLACE LIKE NO OTHER!

Like an exciting movie trailer, God's Word previews this place and our future, 'whetting' our desire for the real thing. Though what we are told is limited—with some of the details shrouded in prophetic language—these four things that the Bible says we can have certainty about:

- This is a place like no other place
- We have so much to anticipate
- Heaven's blessings will never end
- Every aspect of the place will be characterized by joy

[more...]

WHAT HEAVEN WILL BE LIKE

The writer of Ecclesiastes said that the day of our death is better than the day of our birth (Ecclesiastes 7:1). He was merely being cynical about the meaninglessness and futility of this earthly life, but there is a valid sense for the believer in which it is true, that our death ushers the believer into an infinitely greater glory than their birth ever had. This earthly life "Is few of days inn full of trouble" [Job 14:1]. The confidence that Heaven awaits the believer should fill them with a GLORIOUS 'HOPE'! The Apostle Paul said that, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" [Philippians 1:21]. The prospect of Heaven made him joyful, even in the face of death!

[more...]

WHAT 'WILL BE' IN HEAVEN

So, as the last disciple of Jesus, the Romans wanted to stop the Apostle John from preaching about Jesus, so the Christian doctrine would spread no more. So, they banished him to the Isle of Patmos. The thing is, his exile turned out to be a 'blessing', since Jesus revealed a glimpse of what would happen in the End Times and a bit about what Heaven would be like. What a privilege!

There are specific things that were revealed to him that related to Heaven. Primarily, there will be no more sin and death—and all that comes from them: "He

will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” [Revelation 21:4].
[more...]

WHAT ‘WILL NOT BE’ IN HEAVEN

Heaven is a perfect place for people who have been made perfect. Perfection is the goal of God’s sanctifying work in the believer. He is not merely making them better than they were, He is conforming them into the image of His Son, Jesus. He is making them fit to dwell in His presence forever. The utter perfection of Heaven is the confirmation of our salvation. It is the purpose for which God chose them before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4).

As believers, our highest satisfaction will come when we see our God and His Son, Jesus, and when we stand before them in perfect righteousness.

Heaven will provide us with the unclouded, undiminished, uninterrupted sight of God’s infinite glory and beauty, bringing us infinite and eternal delight. We can begin to understand why the Apostle Peter, after seeing only a faint glimpse of that glory, wanted to make a camp on the Mount of Transfiguration, and stay there permanently (Matthew 17:4). “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them, and be there God” [Revelation 21:3].

The following are the primary things that we WILL experience in Heaven:
[more...]

‘WHO’ WILL BE IN HEAVEN

Heaven will offer an infinite variety of things to ‘do’—which will be exciting—but, as is said here on earth, the only ‘things’ that we can take with us to Heaven is ‘people’. The Apostle Paul said that, “For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when He comes? Is it not you?” PEOPLE are the most important ‘TREASURES’ to God, and He warns us not to emphasize the collection of material possessions on earth (Matthew 6:19-20), because, number one, we can’t bring them with us, and number two, He is going to burn everything up and ‘remake’ everything anyway (2 Peter 3:7; Malachi 4:1).
[more...]

A ‘NEW’ HOME IS WAITING FOR YOU!

When one is getting ready to move, and are relocating to a new home, they usually want to know something about the physical area around their new house,

the road system, the grocery store locations, and what the neighbors are like.

They are also going to have to make some changes, like their address, utilities, Internet provider, driver's license, car and home insurance, getting new doctors, dentists, and maybe even a new vet—to name a few. They want to get their lives 'in order' as soon as they can.

Well, this is similar to what the believer sees before they go to their new 'eternal' home, Heaven. They need to get their lives 'in order' here, so they know, for sure, that their new 'address' will be Heaven rather than Hell! Do you know, for sure, which 'address' you will be going to after you die?

If we don't make the proper address change here, then there's another destination that we will end up at. It's called "Hell"!

Everything the Bible says about Heaven is all 'good' stuff and everything it says about Hell is nothing but 'bad' stuff! It's your choice to which 'address' you will make one to when you die. The thing is, you HAVE to make that decision here on earth while you are alive!

I pray you do your 'due diligence' ASAP and choose Heaven!

[NOTE: Details on the specifics of 'what' needs to be done will be discussed below.]

[more...]

A BELIEVER'S HEART'S 'DESIRE'

Take a minute to consider a time when you were actually homesick for your earthly home. Remember the 'ache'? The sense of feeling like a 'stranger' in your surroundings? This is because home is where your 'heart' is!

Now, what makes home is really not the 'physical' place, but 'who' lives there. You feel at home when your heart is nestled near the one(s) you love. However, sometimes, when you least expect it, even the people who make up home are not enough. Sometimes when you are all 'tucked in' with your own pillow and blanket, with the one you love close by, another kind of homesickness—a deeper kind—sneaks up on you.

[more...]

IN THE 'HEART' OF GOD

God is the only One that can provide the healing for an old 'ache'. That's why Heaven has to be more than a place. It must be much, much more. It must be a

Person.

If you need a bit more convincing, then take this test that Saint Augustine gave his students centuries ago:

Jesus continued to tell His disciples that “I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me.” ***Jesus is the ONLY way to get to the heart of God. Do you ‘know’ Jesus?***

[more...]

HEAVENLY ‘REWARDS’

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught that one should “rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven” [Matthew 5:12a]. In the same sermon, Jesus addresses something more specific than rewards:

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”

[Mathew 6:19-21].

In another portion of Scripture, Jesus says that he will “repay each one for what he has done” (Revelation 22:12). ***The question is, will He ‘catch you’ working when He comes back?***

We shall be also given “crowns.” The Apostle Paul said, “Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing” [2 Timothy 4:8].

[more...]

TOO ‘HEAVENLY-MINDED’?

There is a saying that says, “Some people are so earthly-minded that they are no heavenly good.” However, for me, I think it is rather, “Some people are so earthly-minded that they are no heavenly good!” While we think pursuing our earthly lives is the most important thing to bring peace and prosperity to the planet, God is ‘telling’ us that we need to pursue heavenly priorities in order to do the most earthly good.

A focus on Heaven IS very ‘practical’, and perhaps the most practical focus a believer can have. An earthly can only take us so far. I think ‘eternal’ things are more important—which gives much hope peace, and comfort.

[more...]

HOW TO 'PREPARE'

Jesus is preparing a 'home' for the believer in Heaven. So, how can one 'prepare' for their meeting with Jesus? Well, Pastor A.W. Pink described one important way one can prepare for their heavenly dwelling—living with eager 'anticipation':

"Today the average 'home' is little more than a boarding-house—a place to eat and sleep in. But "home" used to mean, and still means to a few, the place where we are loved for our own sakes; the place where we are always welcome; the place whither we can retire from the strife of the world and enjoy rest and peace, the place where loved ones are together. Such will Heaven be. Believers are now in a strange country, yea, in an enemy's land; in the life to come, they will be at Home!"

[more...]

WHY IS HEAVEN 'NEGLECTED'?

One obvious reason why many of us do not reflect on Heaven nearly as much as we should, is that we are too preoccupied with this present world. We are surrounded by what we can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. If one takes a coin in their hand and holds it close to their eye, it will block out the sun—and they will see nothing, but that small, shiny coin. Now, the sun is bigger than the coin, but because the coin is close it blocks out there, say something incomparably greater in size.

The daily realities of life may be either big, nor ultimately, important, but they are 'close' to us, so they impinge upon us. The danger is that the very closeness of this world blocks out the infinitely far-reaching prospect of the glorious world which is to come.

Another reason for neglecting Heaven is that, at least in the Western world, is that we are too 'comfortable'. For the most part, we are comparatively rich, reasonably healthy, and tolerably happy. Life is sweet and, without realizing it, we are 'drugged' by well-being and prosperity. Tragedy stabs us awake and makes a suddenly and poignantly aware of Heaven and Hell. A loved one becomes seriously ill, and we find, in an instant, that Heaven is no longer theoretical or far away. It is very real, and we long to find out more about it. But, for much of the time, we are content as we are.

Finally, we neglect Heaven because it is a reality too awesome for our limited minds to grasp—too transcendent, too glorious. Our little brains cannot manage it. Paul wrote, "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” [1 Corinthians 2:9]. It seems that it is simply beyond our comprehension, and for those reasons —among others—Heaven is a neglected doctrine.
[more...]

NOT ‘GUESSWORK’

Going to Heaven is NOT a matter of ‘guesswork’ or hope! (“I hope I’m going to make it to Heaven. I have done a lot of good things.”) Nope, Jesus did the ‘GOOD’ THING. He went to the Cross and died in our place. He took the wrath of God against us. When He rose from the dead, He gave us the ‘gift’ of eternal life. Everyone that wants to go to Heaven just needs to ‘authentically’ put their faith and trust in what He did. The Bible tells us that whoever will call on the name of the Lord WILL be saved (Romans 10:13).

There are many things that demand our attention in life, and there are many ‘voices’ calling to us, BUT none is greater than the ‘voice’ of God. As time marches on, one thing is certain—that we will face death at some point. That is the great ‘equalizer’. It makes no difference ‘who’ we are. When we face death, we are facing an impartial ‘Judge’. The Bible reminds us that, “All have sinned” (Romans 3:23) and that the “wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). So, when death comes knocking on one’s ‘door’, all that really matters is that they are ready to face it, have put their trust ‘in’ Jesus as their Savior.

SO, if you want to make that decision today, I encourage you to ‘call’ on Him RIGHT ‘NOW’!

“TOP DOWN PERSPECTIVE”

Gary R Habermas and JP Moreland have come up with a term, the “top down perspective.” That is precisely what the believer needs during their earthly pilgrimage on earth as they sojourn toward their heavenly country:
[more...]

HEAVENLY ‘PERSPECTIVE’

Those who live with a heavenly perspective discover abundant life as God intended it here on earth. Ironically, those who pursue earthly comforts are really the most uncomfortable people on earth. As the Puritan theologian Richard Baxter wrote, “A heavenly mind is a joyful mind; this is the nearest and truest way to live a life of comfort, and without this you must need be uncomfortable. Can a man be at a fire and not be warm; or in the sunshine and not have light? Can your heart be in heaven, and not have comfort? [On the other hand,] what could make such frozen, uncomfortable Christians but living so far as they do from Heaven?... O Christian, get above. Believe it, that region is warmer than this below.”

Baxter went on to write that, “There is no man so highly honoureth God, as he who hath his conversation in heaven; and without this we deeply dishonor Him... He holds for the sceptre, if they will but enter.”

[more...]

YOUR FUTURE MATTERS ‘TODAY’!!!

The choices we make today determine what happens to us in the future, and God has a wonderful plan for our eternal destiny. The Apostle Paul said confidently: “If God is for us, who can be against us?” [Romans 8:31].

Author and Bible teacher Grant Jeffrey wrote something similar:

“The greatest adventure of man’s history lies before us if we will only turn from our sin and accept God’s offer of eternal life. The word of God tells us that, ‘the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Romans 6:23). We do not have to wait until we die to receive eternal life. The moment we accept Christ pardon, we are transformed from spiritual death to eternal life.”

[more...]

WHY HEAVEN ‘MATTERS’

The afterlife is common to all humanity. God, we are told, “has put eternity in their hearts” (Ecclesiastes 3:11), and human beings seem to know instinctively that there is another life behind this one.

In the pyramids of Egypt, the embalmed bodies had maps beside them as a guide for the future world. The Greeks and the Romans believed in a spirit world into which the dead would enter. Native Americans, buried bows and arrows in their tribal graves for use in the happy hunting ground in the future. Today, we hear of women asking for their make-up bag to be buried with them. So, it seems that belief in a life to come is a constant element in human culture.

[more...]

SET YOUR ‘HEART’ ON THINGS ABOVE

So, I think there is a solution. It may take effort, and it will require commitment, but it can be solved: “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” [Colossians 3:1]. The believer’s ‘heart’ is the seat of all kinds of appetites and affections.

Now, to ‘hunger’ is human, but to satiate oneself on God is to ‘send’ their heart ahead to Heaven. If one ‘feeds’ on God with all their heart, they will be yanking that foot out of the ‘mud’ and stepping closer to eternity.

[more...]

SET YOUR 'MIND' ON THINGS ABOVE

Now, the verse right after setting one's heart on things above is "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" [Colossians 3:2]. The original Greek of this passage is intense: "diligently, actively, single-mindedly, pursue the things above." It is also a present tense, carrying the idea, "Perpetually keeping on seeking the things above," making it an 'ongoing' process.

So, when you think about it, setting our minds on things above makes good sense. After all, the earth is temporal—it is passing away. Heaven is eternal, and it will last forever. Then, knowing this, why set our minds on that which is fleeting? It is such an unwise thing to do, and yet so many believers today seem focused only on the things this world has to offer.

[more...]

HOPE THAT 'FUELS' FAITH

Our hope in the future glory of the afterlife uses our faith in the present. Hope and faith—these are closely tied to each other in the pages of Scripture. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that faith involves "being sure of what we hope for" (Hebrews 11:1).

In his classic tomb, "Institutes of the Christian Religion," John Calvin delineates for us how hope relates to faith: "Hope, refreshes faith, that it may not become weary. It sustains faith to the final goal, that it may not fail in mid-course, or even at the starting gate. In short, by unremitting, renewing and restoring, it invigorates faith again, and again with perseverance."

[more...]

'STORING UP' TREASURES

The desire of human beings is that we want to make sure we have something that is going to last, and that we have enough for the future. So, Jesus says, "Okay, let Me tell you how to get all that and be really happy: Store up treasures in Heaven!" Jesus is never against the human impulse for treasure. He is against the 'fool' who thinks that earthly treasure really satisfies or really lasts.

There's an old joke that you will never see a hearse pulling a U-Haul because you can't take it with you. So, Jesus says that if you want to be safe, secure, have enough, have a mansion, stock that never depreciates, a retirement account that never loses value, then store up treasure in Heaven, because there's no 'rust' there, there are no 'moths' there, and there's no downturn in the economy there. So, think about what really matters.

[more...]

THIS WORLD IS NOT MY HOME!

There is a tendency for most of us to hold tightly to this world because it is all that we know. It is familiar to us. All our deepest relationships are built here. We too easily think of it as 'home'. So, we become 'captive' to this life.

However, notice that the Apostle Paul says that he would rather be "at home" with the Lord. That is precisely what the Greek expression in the original text signifies. It is a form of the verb "endemeo," which translates "to be at home." We are most truly "at home" only when we are finally with the Lord. Paul understood this. The knowledge that he 'belongs' in Heaven, was the very thing that helped him endure all the struggles he experienced in his life.

[more...]

GOING THERE 'BEFORE' YOU DIE

Jesus promised that He would come again to this earth to take His believers to Heaven with Him, and this is called the "Blessed Hope" for believers—and it's no ordinary hope.

Believers don't hope for it as they hope for sunshine on the day of a picnic, or for their home team to win the Super Bowl. No, believers are actually **QUITE CERTAIN** of Jesus' return. The Apostle Paul made it clear:

[more...]

IN A 'TWINKLING OF AN EYE'

As I just mentioned, I—and many biblical scholars—believe that the next 'event' on the prophetic calendar is the "Rapture"—that moment when believers are "caught up in the air to meet the Lord"—in their new, resurrected bodies, to be reunited with loved ones who have gone before them. The thing is, "in the fullness of time"—and no one knows that day and time—the living believers will be taken in the "twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52).

End-time prophecy expert, Pastor Mark Hitchcock, in his book "Could The Rapture Happen Today," said that, "The Rapture of the church is that future event when Jesus Christ will descend from heaven to resurrect the bodies of departed believers and to transform and translate the bodies of living believers immediately into His glorious presence in a moment of time and then escort them to heaven to live with Him forever" (refers to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Now, **EVERYONE** has an 'appointment' with God when one's life on this earth has ended, and they enter eternity—to either Heaven or Hell! **So, everyone *MUST be***

ready! Are you?

[FYI: For more details about becoming “born again,” view this previous “Life’s Deep Thoughts” post:

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/developing-ones-character-v283/>].

So, does the prospect of Jesus’ coming suddenly and unexpectedly thrill you or scare you? Remember, the believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and the unbelievers will be left on this earth. It is as simple as that.

So, if you want that ‘door’ open for you in Heaven, ***you have to get right with God now, before you die, so that you are not ‘left behind’ and end up in Hell for eternity!***

[more...]

WRAP-UP

Dorothy was spot-on: “There’s no place like home.” As we journey through life—dodging the occasional wicked witch—it is comforting to know that a cozy bed, loving arms, and perhaps even a Munchkin or two await, just across the threshold. The following are some quotes about what “home” means to them:

[more...]

‘ETERNAL’ HOME

Deep within the ‘core’ of our bodies lies our heart, central to life itself. With every beat, our hearts have a need to be filled—filled with oxygen necessary for survival.

However, when we talk of “hearts,” there is another definition other than just a vital organ. Our ‘heart’ lies at the center of our soul, and just like our physical hearts, they are desperate to be filled with something. They cannot remain empty, and often the things one chooses are where our ‘hearts’ lie.

The Bible says that God has “set eternity in the human heart [Ecclesiastes 3:11]. In every human soul is a God-given awareness that there is “something more” than this transient world, and with that awareness, comes a hope that one can, one day, find a fulfillment not afforded by the “vanity” in this world.

[more...]

GOD ‘WANTS’ EVERYONE TO COME HOME!

According to a 2007 Gallup poll, 81% of adult Americans said they believed in Heaven. Nearly 80% of those questioned also said that they believed that they will be admitted into Heaven when they die. So, almost everybody who believes in

Heaven expects to go there in the afterlife.

Now, it is true that God “desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” [1 Timothy 2:4], and He doesn’t want “anyone to perish, but they come to repentance” [2 Peter 3:9d]. HOWEVER, He has some ‘requirements’ for that to happen.

God wants VERY ‘MUCH’ for everyone to be in Heaven, and He devised a ‘way’ to make that happen: He sent His Son, Jesus, to the earth to “seek and save the lost” [Luke 19:10b]. God also promises that He will give wisdom, generously and without reprimand, to anyone who asks (James 1:5),

SO, let me encourage ANYONE who wants to go to Heaven to ***ASK NOW for God to lead them in the way they should go!*** (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).

LOOKING ‘FORWARD’ TO HEAVEN?

So, are you looking forward to Heaven? Well, the great Puritan preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards, spoke of Heaven a lot of the time. He said once: “It becomes us to spend this life only as a journey toward Heaven... to which we should subordinate all other concerns of life. Why should we labor for or set our hearts on anything else, but that which is our proper end and true happiness?”

Edwards was so serious about Heaven, in his early twenties, he composed a set of life resolutions (70 of them that expressed Edwards’ earnest desire to be faithful in the spiritual disciplines of reading Scripture and prayer). One read: “Resolved, to endeavor to obtain for myself as much happiness, in the other world, as I possibly can.”

Do you have that kind of ‘robust’ desire for Heaven? Well, tragically, in fact, many people find no joy at all when they think about Heaven! They think it will be terribly boring, nothing to do but float around on a cloud and strum a harp.

[CARTOON: “Far Side” by Gary Larson]

Some even say that Heaven doesn’t sound much better than Hell, and that Hell actually sounds like it would be much more fun. I read of a skeptic that said, “I would rather be in Hell with all my friends than all those ‘church people’ in Heaven. They will be a lot more fun to be around.”

Well, such an attitude betrays a tragic lack of regard for the horrors of Hell! More than that, it grossly underestimates the blessedness of Heaven!

This deep-seated suspicion—and misconception—that Heaven may be an eternal bore, reflects the sinful thinking of fallen humanity. As sinners, we are naturally prone to think a little sin is surely more enjoyable than perfect righteousness. It is hard for us to imagine a realm, holy devoid of sin, and yet filled with pure and endless pleasures.

Actually, the Bible says that there will be beautiful gardens, rivers, and mountains—and we will experience untold adventures throughout eternity!

Nineteenth-century British theologian J. C. Ryle said, “I pity the man who never thinks about Heaven.” I would ‘refine’ that quote a bit and say, “I pity the man who never thinks ‘accurately’ about Heaven.” It is our ‘inaccurate’ thinking, I believe, that causes us to choose to think so little about Heaven.

Because Satan hates the believer, he is determined to rob them of the joy they would have if they believed what God tells them about the magnificent world to come. Satan tries to tell the ‘world’ that there really isn’t a place that is described in the Bible as “Heaven.”

Sometimes we humans are like Lewis’ characters. We succumb to assumptions that what we see is real and what we don’t see is not real. So, we conclude, because we can’t ‘see’ Heaven, it can’t be real.

HOWEVER, again, we must recognize our ‘blindness’. The blind must take by faith that there are stars in the sky. If they depend on their ability to see, they will conclude there are no stars.

We must work to resist this bewitching ‘spell’. Sitting here in a ‘dark’ world, we must remind ourselves what Scripture tells us about Heaven. The believer will one day be delivered from the blindness that separates them from the real world. They will realize then the stupefying bewitchment they have lived under, and by God’s grace, believers can ‘stomp out’ the bewitching lies of Satan—so that they may clearly see the liberating truth about Heaven!

Heaven IS ‘REAL’ and it will be MAGNIFICENT!

HEAVEN IS ‘INDESCRIBABLE’!

When Marco Polo returned to Italy from the court of Kublai Khan, he described a world to his audience that they had never seen—one that could not be understood without the ‘eyes’ of imagination. Not that China was an imaginary realm, but it was just very different from Italy. Yet, as two locations on planet Earth inhabited by human beings, they had much in common. The reference points of Italy allowed a

basis for understanding China, and the differences could be spelled out from there.

The writers of Scripture present Heaven in many ways, including as a garden, a city, and a kingdom. Because gardens, cities, and kingdoms are familiar to us, they afford us a 'bridge' to understanding Heaven. However, many people make the mistake of assuming that these are merely analogies with no actual correspondence to the reality of Heaven (which would make them poor analogies). Analogies can be pressed too far, but because Scripture makes it clear that Jesus is preparing a place for us, and God's Kingdom will come to Earth, and a physical resurrection awaits us, there is no reason to spiritualize or allegorize all earthly descriptions of Heaven. Indeed, some of them may be simple, factual statements.

So, ***what have you been doing daily to set your mind on things above, to seek Heaven?*** Should you be doing anything differently?

The band "Mercy Me" wrote a song that says that we can only 'imagine' what Heaven will be like:

For all of this earth's splendor and beauty, the beautiful things of this world 'PALE' in comparison to Heaven! Heaven will be a place of UNPARALLELED beauty!

One example of this beauty will be the streets of Heaven: "The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass" [Revelation 21:21]. So, what is scarce on earth is abundant in Heaven, and another vivid reminder that what we frequently pursue and consider to be of greatest value is nothing more than 'pocket change' to God.

In addition to that, the gold that John saw in heaven was of such quality that it appears to be transparent in order to reflect the pure light of God's blazing glory. God's ability to purify is not confined only to gold; God has purified all who will enter His heaven through the blood of Jesus Christ. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Not only is God's holy city one of purity by His design, so are the 'citizens' of that city—the believer!

Heaven is going to be an absolutely beautiful place!

A PLACE IS BEING 'PREPARED'

Heaven IS a real place! However, is it YOUR 'PLACE'? The thing is, you CAN

know for sure if it is!

When winter starts to come, the remarkable Golden Plover bird leaves its breeding ground in the Aleutian Islands and flies more than 2,000 miles to Hawaii. This bird, at the start of his journey, weighs only about seven ounces. Its tiny, precise wings flap continuously for the 88-hour flight, with no stopovers! The bird has no GPS. Instead, it has an unerring homing instinct and seems divinely built for the incredible journey. Unbelievable, right?

Well, the same is true for the believer! God has given them a 'homing instinct' for a place they have never been. They have been created and 'specifically' built for Heaven. The little Plover has never been to Hawaii, yet somehow it arrives there. ***So, do you know how to get Heaven?***

Jesus, the only one who came down 'from' Heaven, is also the way 'to' Heaven. However, only for those who have made Him their Lord and Savior. ***Have you made Jesus your Lord and Savior?***

I don't know about you but I am REALLY 'EXCITED' and LOOKING 'FORWARD' to Heaven... A LOT!

Heaven is being prepared. Are you ready? As the old proverb goes, "Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people."

JESUS IS THE ONLY 'WAY' TO HEAVEN

So then, how does one get to Heaven? Well, it might seem a bit 'narrow', but the Bible says it is ONLY 'through' Jesus Christ. There is NO OTHER 'WAY'! Jesus Himself emphasized this by saying, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" [John 14:6].

Now, many people say that they can follow their own individual 'path' to Heaven, and that "all roads lead to Heaven." Well, on the authority of the Bible—and Jesus Himself—the only path that your own path will take you is straight into Hell! ***So, are you on THIS 'aberrant' path?***

So, based on what Jesus has said, are you on your way to Heaven? If you are, you have reason to REJOICE this morning! For the unbeliever, evangelist D. L. Moody told a story—and made a comment—that might help:

Another illustration might help you understand that a homecoming day is coming, and ONE NEEDS TO BE 'READY':

ENTRANCE 'REQUIREMENTS'

Those who have traveled to a foreign country know the importance of a passport. Regardless of your status or charisma, that document is what qualifies you for entry and acceptance among the people in a different land.

Similarly, we all need a 'passport' to get into Heaven—if that is the 'country' where one wishes to go.

Now, the Bible says that you shouldn't imagine for a moment that you will get into Heaven without the right 'credentials'. You will not be there because your spouse has the right to enter, or because your parents are already there. No, this is an individual matter, and only those with the right 'passport' will be allowed to enter.

Heaven IS real but you can't get in without a 'reservation'. HOWEVER, if you don't already have one, YOU 'CAN' GET ONE!

Just remember that there's NO 'PLACE' like Heaven!!!

HOMeward 'BOUND'!

"Homeward Bound" reminds me of the secular song of the same name by the Simon and Garfunkel. Even though he is not referring to Heaven as his homeward bound destination, the chorus of his song resonates for me of a believer's desire to be with God in Heaven some day:

The concept of being homeward bound is also portrayed in that last scene of "The Wizard of Oz," when Dorothy wakes up in her bed to find herself surrounded by her family. She looks round to see the faces of the people she loves and says, "There's no place like home".

Dorothy's trancelike repetition of the phrase "There's no place like home" condenses the meaning of what home means for many of us. Home is a place we associate with familiarity, love, safety, and a 'place' of origin.

When her Kansas home is uprooted by a violent tornado, Dorothy is terrified and is 'transported' to Oz. It is a wonderful place that is not her home, so she continues to yearn to return to her 'real' home.

This is the dialog of the last scene:

Some would consider Dorothy's incessant need to return to the comforts of her own bed and her beloved Auntie Em and Uncle Henry as "homesickness." It is an

emotion shared by children and adults alike, particularly when kids are away at summer camp or preparing to head off to college for the first time.

What is it about home and family that makes it so difficult to leave? Well, experts say that it stems from our instinctive need for love, protection and security—feelings and qualities usually ‘associated’ with home. When these qualities aren’t present in a new environment, we begin to long for them—and hence home. You literally are just missing what is ‘normal’ and ‘routine’—because those are the things that help us survive.

The thing is, however wonderful that feeling is, it will NEVER ‘MATCH’ the feeling that one will have when they arrive in Heaven, since ***God uniquely designed it to be a place where believers will live together in perfect unity and enjoy Him forever!***

‘HOMESICK’

I am REALLY ‘HOMESICK’ for Heaven and READY TO ‘GO’! What about you? Are you looking forward to that wonderful place? Do you know for sure that you are going there? Have you made preparations for eternity?

If you are also ‘homesick’ for Heaven, be absolutely sure that you are going! Consider what Jesus said about getting there—since He’s kind of an ‘expert’, since He came from there!

‘SEIZE THE DAY’!

I truly believe that we are in the ‘twilight’ of our hardships on earth, as well as in the twilight of the world’s history. I believe that the time is VERY SHORT for getting that ‘passport’ to go to Heaven! I believe ***Jesus is ‘calling’ for those who want to COME ‘HOME’!***

About 15 years ago, “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” was a very popular ‘Reality TV’ show, and at the end of each show, the host Ty Pennington concluded the show with “*Well, I guess there’s just one thing left to say... Welcome home (family’s last name) family, welcome home.*”

VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLxRFZraz5o&t=2467s>
[“Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” - Grys Family]

Now, this was something REALLY ‘WONDERFUL’ for the family that was made over—helping them to start a new life. However, as nice as the house was, it exists here on this planet and will ‘deteriorate’ in the future.

The thing is, ***there COULD BE a ‘home’ that you are ‘welcomed’ into for ETERNITY—by the Creator of the universe, Jesus, that will NEVER ‘DETERIORATE’, that you will NEVER experience HOMESICKNESS over, and will have EVERYTHING you could EVER DREAM OF!***

QUESTION: Are you sure that you will hear Jesus say, “Welcome home (your name here), welcome Home?”

If not, why not?

<<< END OF SUMMARY >>>

ALL THE ‘DETAILS’

The following is a ***comprehensive presentation*** of the topic that follows the ‘headings’ laid out in the Summary.

“THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME”

In the last scene of the film “The Wizard of Oz,” Dorothy wakes up in her bed to find herself surrounded by her family. She looks around to see the faces of the people she loves and says, “There’s no place like home.” Dorothy’s trancelike repetition of the phrase “There’s no place like home” condenses the meaning of what home means for each of us.

Home is a place we associate with familiarity, love, a safe place, and a place of origin. When her Kansas home is uprooted by a violent tornado, Dorothy is terrified. She is ‘transported’ to Oz, a wonderful ‘place’ in her dreams. Oz is, in fact, Dorothy’s home, since she never ‘physically’ left home. Throughout the film, she is surrounded by people and things she knows, but all of which have changed to reveal hidden secrets and emotions—creating a sense of unease, and the uncanny. Although Oz is not real, it is both like home, and yet very unlike her home. It is no place like home.

So, what is the origin of the phrase “There’s no place like home”? Well, it seems to be ‘inspired’ by the 1823 song “Home, Sweet Home,” (words by John Payne and music by Sir Henry Bishop). The song begins with these lines:

*“Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home;
A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, has ne’er met me elsewhere.*

*Home! Home! Sweet, sweet home!
There’s no place like home!
There’s no place like home!*

*An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain,
Oh! give me my lowly thatched cottage again;
The birds singing gaily, that came at my call;
Give me them, with that peace of mind, dearer than all.*

*Home! Home! Sweet, sweet home!
There’s no place like home!
There’s no place like home!”*

[Note: A proverb had been widely used in England for many years before it appeared in the song. As an example of its use, this from the English newspaper “The Bath Chronicle,” in September 1781: “But this maxim mind / No place like Home / For safety will you find.”]

For a place that is so familiar, “home” is peculiarly difficult to define. Based on an extended review of recent literature about the subject, articles show that there is no place like ‘home’ because people construct its image in memory and imagination. Home, it is argued, is ‘imaged’ on many different levels.

At a ‘surface’ level, home is known in terms of its location, fabric, decoration, furnishing, and amenity—it is a place that is known intimately. At a ‘deeper’ level, home is defined in terms of the kinds of relationships people have—or would like to have—with others inside and outside of their physical home. Deeper still, home is a representation of cultural identity and provides a collective sense of social permanency and security.

People rarely think about home at this level unless reappraisal is forced upon them by a significant life event like migration between cultures or because of cultural invasion from without.

THE MEANING OF 'HOME'

So, ask yourself, "What does home mean to me?" What came to mind? Do you think your answer to that question has changed as your life and circumstances have changed?

I wonder how many people remember learning to write out their name, street address, town or city, state, perhaps a zip code, and country when they were little because they want to send a letter to a loved one—usually a Grandma or Grandpa.

So, what is it about this 'urge' to situate ourselves in space—in a geographic location—especially one centered on our earliest memories of where we lived? Well, the following are four ways psychologists define "home":

- Environmental Cues
- Hierarchy of Needs
- Emotional Attachment
- A Sense of Identity

Environmental Cues

Person–environment relationships include the 'spaces' where people dwell, the 'qualities' to which homes expose people (like noise levels, toxins, emotional climates, crowding), and their impact on all aspects of 'experience' (like biological, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social). People yearn to be in a situation that is safe and comfortable.

Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs comes to mind as we examine what people are searching for: greater attention to meeting survival needs for shelter, nutrition, hygiene, safety, work and play, and interpersonal needs for contact, communication, companionship, and belonging.

Emotional Attachment

People see 'home' as the center for forging and nourishing human attachment bonds. Home usually includes the primary 'locations' where early memories and

their emotions resulted in attachment scripts and their consequences—primarily, a sense of belonging securely.

A Sense of Identity

From a personality perspective, we craft an identity from internal experiences like temperament, needs, and desires, as well as through our relationships with others and with the larger social and cultural systems in which we are embedded. Our own imagination creates what has been labeled “possible selves,” imagery of who we might become. From this perspective, “home” is one context in which such creation can take place in which people use or construct boundaries, connections, and communications. It represents how a small group of related individuals expresses values and their implementation. It can become an expression of personal choices and aspirations, as well as history.

Italian philosophy professor Emanuele Coccia well said that the home is the “museum of our ego.” Everything that is ‘meaningful’ to people is in their home.

After a long day at work, a weekend getaway, a summer vacation, a business trip, or a stay abroad—no matter how enjoyable a holiday trip was—people always desire to return home. It is a reliable ‘shelter’ that allows them to ‘move out’ into the world in the first place. People travel away from home, but there is always this ‘pull’ of the ‘familiar’ that awaits them at home.

However, it is said that, primarily, home is where the ‘love’ is. Love is the most beautiful and ‘powerful’ of all human feelings, which is precisely why it has its place in the home. Coccia wrote that, “Love is lived, cherished, and celebrated in the home. It is the domestic secret par excellence.”

It is a “secret” since we are the only ones to know what it really looks like in our private space—like a spouse’s quirky habits or the sweatpants they would never wear outside but wear all the time at home—everything is ‘out in the open’ at home. Home is where one’s loved ones are.

Home is also a place of familiarity, family, connections, roots, and belonging.

Familiarity

One of the main reasons why there is no place like home is that staying where you grew up or in your home country gives you a sense of familiarity. You know how everything works, what the culture is like, and you don’t feel confused by

cultural differences. Familiarity can be very comforting.

One also knows how everything ‘works’. This knowledge can make life a lot easier than the difficulties associated with dealing with unknown ‘environments’.

Family

If you are emotionally close to your family, then that is a pretty good argument for believing that home is best. If you are also close to them geographically, you can make the most of that close relationship and see them as often as you want. Just enjoying their company.

Connections

When you have lived in the same place for a long time, you build up a lot of connections, which gives people a sense of ‘belonging’ and the comfort of having help in times of need from those they know, like, and trust.

Roots

Having your ‘roots’ in a particular area can have great significance for someone—they feel a strong connection to their hometown, and moving away to another city would feel like a great loss to them.

Belonging

Humans are social creatures, and they all like to feel that they ‘belong’ somewhere. One’s identity can be very firmly linked to the area in which they grew up in and where their family still resides.

I tend to think that humans naturally crave a sense of ‘belonging’, somewhere, somehow. I can recall a lesson from one of my psychology courses in college a lesson about “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.” At the base of the pyramid, our physiological needs are expressed—food, water, shelter, rest. But as one ascends the triangle, basic human needs take on a psychological component—humans need security and safety. Then, higher up on the pyramid are psychological needs—the need for love and belongingness, where we establish intimacy among friends and forge meaningful connections with one another. (This is the part of his hierarchy that reaches a critical peak.) This is where one’s sense for belonging—our sense of ‘home’—is highlighted. (After this pyramid level, there is the need for esteem, and finally, a need for self-actualization, where our full potential can flourish.)

Maslow’s basic premise was that we human beings cannot rise above the fulfillment of lower needs. For example, a person’s primary needs are for sufficient

air, water, food, sleep, and shelter. Deprivation in any one of these areas will become an all-consuming need in the person's life, and little else will matter. Once the basic physiological needs are met, the next concern is then for personal safety—and so on.

It is helpful to recognize where you might be on Maslow's hierarchy of human need, and even to recognize 'why' you are there so that you might focus on what is truly important and not become frustrated with what once was. It is also important to recognize that meeting the need is what counts.

[NOTE: Communications expert, Katrina Razavi developed the "Pyramid to Fulfillment" (similar to Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs"). However, Katrina is focusing on "fulfillment."

At the bottom—or the foundation—is "Safety and Security" (food and shelter). Then the next 'level' up, on top of the foundation, is "Mental Strength" (inner voice). Building upon that is then "Human Connection" (part of the 'in-group'); then "Growth" ("if you're not growing, you're dying"); then "Confidence" (comfortable with who you are); and then, finishing at the top, there is "Self Extension" (extending beyond yourself).]

[Click on this link to download a detailed explanation of the "Pyramid of Fulfillment":

<https://www.realmenrealstyle.com/how-to-be-fulfilled/>].

"PLACE ATTACHMENT"

The psychology of "Place Attachment" confirms the cognitive-emotional bond that humans, since early times, have had with a specific place. A material place is not only shaped physically and psychologically/spiritually by its inhabitants, but it in turn also shapes them, as it mediates the meanings ascribed to it through its presence, experiences of memory, belonging, positive emotions, privacy, and reflection, comfort and security, entertainment and aesthetics.

Leila Scannel and Robert Gifford in their book, "The Experienced Psychological Benefits of Place Attachment," have developed a multidimensional model to explain how place attachment is realized. They refer to it as the "person-place-process" tripartite framework where "person" indicates who is attached (molded by individual-/collective-based meanings), "place" indicates what is the attachment

(both social and physical qualities of place), and “process” refers to the psychological process how attachment is realized and expressed (through affect, cognition, and behavior).

Person

This refers first to the ‘INDIVIDUAL’ who holds a place dear because of fond memories, positive emotional experiences, and cultural meanings of a specific place that have become internalized. Many personal factors can play a role that strengthens the bond with a place. For example, much time spent in a home continuing the ancestral lineage (e.g., a family farm) can lead to a stronger attachment than only a brief visit by a tourist. “Congruence” is the fit or resonance of a specific place for a specific purpose that complies with the needs of the person, can lead to a bond other than much time spent there—and extensive traveling even for long periods of time away, do not sever ties with a place, and people ‘upkeep’ these ties with “homesickness.” Ownership of a place can also be a positive factor, although ‘renters’ can have similar strong bonds with a place.

Age differences can influence attachment. For instance, parents with children needing others and likewise the aged their peers, but also places that enhance their memories and self-reflection.

Culture and ethnic factors can create collective ‘meanings’ about a place that embraces and determines the bond they have with a particular place. (These include genealogy, links through family lineage or ethnic association where places, for instance, to carry on family names.)

[One of the theories distinguishable from place attachment—but incorporated by Scannel and Gifford under collective ownership—is “Place Identity.”]

The second in the tripartite framework, “place,” refers first to ‘SOCIAL’ features that a place provides to forge social ties of different kinds. Human beings are social persons and cannot live without social interactions with others (family, friends, neighbors, fellow inhabitants of a town/province/country). Regular social interactions lead to social capital, advantages such as practical (e.g., tool sharing), informational (e.g., strategic information on resources), safety (e.g., extra pair of eyes to watch your house when away), and emotional support (e.g., empathy after a great loss).

“Place” refers to a setting’s physicality, its geographical scale (types of places), and also aesthetic features. Scannel and Gifford identify six types of spaces:

- A Manipulable Item
- A Non-manipulable Item
- Environmental
- Geographic
- Panoramic
- Map Space

“Process,” the third focus of the tripartite framework, and has to do with the ‘PSYCHOLOGICAL’ process of how attachment becomes realized and expressed. “Cognition” plays a role that includes knowledge (mental representations), memories, and beliefs that provide meaning about place. “Emotions” obviously strengthen the bond with a particular place and (positive) “behavior” usually signifies this bond. Expanding on their 2010 study, Scannel and Gifford identified thirteen psychological benefits that “place bonded” people experience, encapsulating cognition, emotions, and behavior (in descending order of importance):

- Memories
- Belonging
- Relaxation
- Positive Emotions
- Activity Support
- Comfort and Security
- Personal Growth
- Freedom
- Entertainment
- Practical Benefits
- Privacy
- Aesthetics

Positive “behavior,” unlike cognition and emotion that are clear in the mentioned thirteen benefits, does not feature conspicuously but is implied. If someone has a deep affection for a place, they will certainly be moved to care for it. Scannel and Gifford describe this caring attitude as “stewardship” and it is noticeable, especially in those with a pro-environmental attitude.

[This brief explication of what “place attachment” comprises. For more details, click on the following link to view the entire article, and an explanation of how it ‘connects’ with Psalm 128 in the Bible: http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1010-99192019000200009].

“HOMESICKNESS”

“There’s no place like home,” said Dorothy in the 1939 classic film “The Wizard of Oz” as she clicked her heels and hoped for the return to the comforts of her own bed and her beloved Auntie Em and Uncle Henry. Today, we call it “homesickness,” and it is an emotion shared by children and adults alike—particularly when kids are away at summer camp or preparing to head off to college for the first time.

Homesickness is nothing new. It is mentioned in the Bible’s Old Testament book of Exodus and Homer’s “Odyssey,” and happens to just about anyone away from “home.”

“Homesickness” is defined as the “distress and functional impairment caused by an actual or anticipated separation from home and attachment objects such as parents.” Those who suffer from the condition feel some form of anxiety, sadness and nervousness, and most distinctly, obsessive preoccupation with thoughts of “home.”

Now, homesickness is not necessarily about home, and neither is it exactly an illness, experts say.

Instead, it stems from our instinctive need for love, protection and security—feelings and qualities usually ‘associated’ with home. When these qualities are not present in a new environment, one begins to long for them—and hence ‘home’. One is literally just missing what is ‘normal’ and ‘routine’—because those are the things that help them survive.

People get homesick because “there are things that we love,” said clinical psychologist Dr. Chris A. Thurber. He continued: “It’s the byproduct of the strength of our attachment. If there were nothing in the world we were attached to, then we wouldn’t miss them when we’re away.”

The editorial contributors at WebMD (reviewed by Dr. Dan Brennan) mention that homesickness is the “feeling of emotional distress when you’re away from home and in a new and unfamiliar environment. It affects those who’ve moved both temporarily and permanently, such as students, migrants, refugees, and those in the military. It is estimated that 50% to 75% of the general population have felt

homesick at least once in their life.” Nearly everyone misses something about home when they are away. However, some people tend to feel it a bit more severely than others.

‘CAUSES’ OF HOMESICKNESS

They suggest that a “disruption of lifestyle,” some “cultural distance,” “a difficulty adapting,” and “feelings of not belonging” cause homesickness:

Disruption of Lifestyle

Moving away from home means one’s routines and lifestyle are interrupted, which can lead to anxiety and distress. One’s usual habits and routines cannot be depended on for comfort in their new situation, especially if the environment is culturally different from what one is used to.

Cultural Distance

Researchers found that the greater the difference between cultures and cultural values, the more difficult the adjustment, which leads to homesickness. This can lead to a lack of interest in one’s new surroundings.

Difficulty Adapting

A new situation requires adjustment, but not everyone finds it easy to adapt. In a study of those who had recently entered the military, those who felt homesick tended to be those who were more rigid in their behavior. They clung to their old habits and avoided situations that required them to adapt.

Feelings of Not Belonging

In a study of people from other countries living in the Netherlands, homesickness was more common among employees aged 30-39 who had stayed in the Netherlands for 6-8 years. A possible explanation for the increased level of homesickness after a few years is that while the surroundings were now familiar, the foreigners still felt like ‘outsiders’. Also, some of them may wonder where they and their children belong. Do they belong in their current country or their country of origin?

‘AFFECTS’ OF HOMESICKNESS

WebMD then suggested that the ‘affects’ of homesickness were “depression,” “grief,” “productivity,” and a variety of “physical symptoms”:

Depression

Depression, also known as major depressive disorder, is an illness that involves a constant feeling of sadness and loss of interest or pleasure. Doctors say that homesickness can have symptoms that are similar to depression, such as

frequent crying, sleeping problems, difficulty concentrating, and withdrawal from society. In some cases, homesickness can even turn into depression itself.

Grief

While migrant workers and other foreigners may have moved away from home for a better job or better pay, they feel grief for the loss of the comforts of home, and for the place they felt that they belonged.

Productivity

The overwhelming feeling of being in a new environment and away from the familiar can lead to performance issues at work and school. Intense homesick feelings can also result in difficulty focusing on topics that are not related to home.

Physical

Homesickness can also lead to physical symptoms such as lack of appetite, stomach problems, lack of sleep, headaches, and fatigue.

HOW TO 'DEAL WITH' HOMESICKNESS

They then concluded by suggesting some ways of how to 'deal with' homesickness:

Know That It Is Normal

Being in a new place and missing your home, family, friends, and pets, is completely normal. It means that you have a healthy attachment to your loved ones. It will take a while to adjust to your new surroundings.

Attend Events or Take Classes

Some companies or universities organize events for international employees or students, and this may encourage you to learn more about your new place of residence, and meet new people.

Be Active

Taking part in sports and physical activities can help you take your mind off your homesickness and boost your mood. Team sports can also help you make new social connections and find social support.

Find a new "favorite" place. This could be a particular cafe for coffee, a specific table at the library, a shady tree to sit under. It establishes a familiar space where you might start to feel more at home.

Make Friends With Locals

It may help you adjust more easily to your new place if you get to know some

locals, especially if you're from somewhere that's very different. A study of African students in the U.S. found that those who spent time with American students had fewer problems adjusting to their new life.

Keep In Touch

Write regular letters, emails, or call or text your friends and family back home. In a study of people from other countries working in London, England, those who kept in regular contact with friends and family back home were less homesick than those who didn't. But daily phone calls may make you feel even more homesick. Maybe call home once or twice a week instead of every day.

Gratitude Journal

Journaling can help with your feelings of homesickness. Every night, try writing down three things you're grateful for and three things you're looking forward to the next day.

Fortunately, homesickness is usually a short-term issue. However, if it lingers past a few months and you find that you are beginning to think pessimistically, develop marked changes in sleeping or eating habits, have prolonged crying spells, have concentration difficulties, or have suicidal thoughts, the problem may not be homesickness, but depression or anxiety. These problems can be helped by professional treatment.

[FYI: For more details about depression and anxiety, consider viewing these past "Life's Deep Thoughts" posts:

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/mad-at-the-world-v280/>

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/realistic-expectations-v281/>

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/achieving-contentment-v282/>

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/developing-ones-character-v283/>

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/being-thankful-v285/>].

'UNDERSTANDING' HOMESICKNESS

Much of the homesickness reported happens when a young person goes off to college for the first time—especially if they go to a college many hours or states away from their parents' home.

The "W-Curve" model was developed by William J. Zeller and Robert Mosier (in 1993 as part of their "Culture Shock and the First-Year Experience" study), at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for the incoming Freshman students to help them with the "culture shock" and possible "homesickness" they may feel in the

first few months on campus.

The study was done to help students to understand that their integration to the campus community is part of a 'journey' that is not without its ups and downs, and the "5 Stages of Culture Shock" may help them feel better about their transition to college life:

Honeymoon Stage

Typically occurs when you first arrive on campus. You may be nervous but excited to start on your journey. The campus community is fun and welcoming. You may be a little homesick, but there are enough fun things to do that keep you feeling positive.

Cultural Shock Stage

After a while, the excitement wears off, and you start to deal with all of the adjustments of college life, such as coping with roommates, eating in the dining hall, and going to classes. You may really miss home and all of the things you are most familiar with, and may feel sad, down, or lonely.

Initial Adjustment Stage

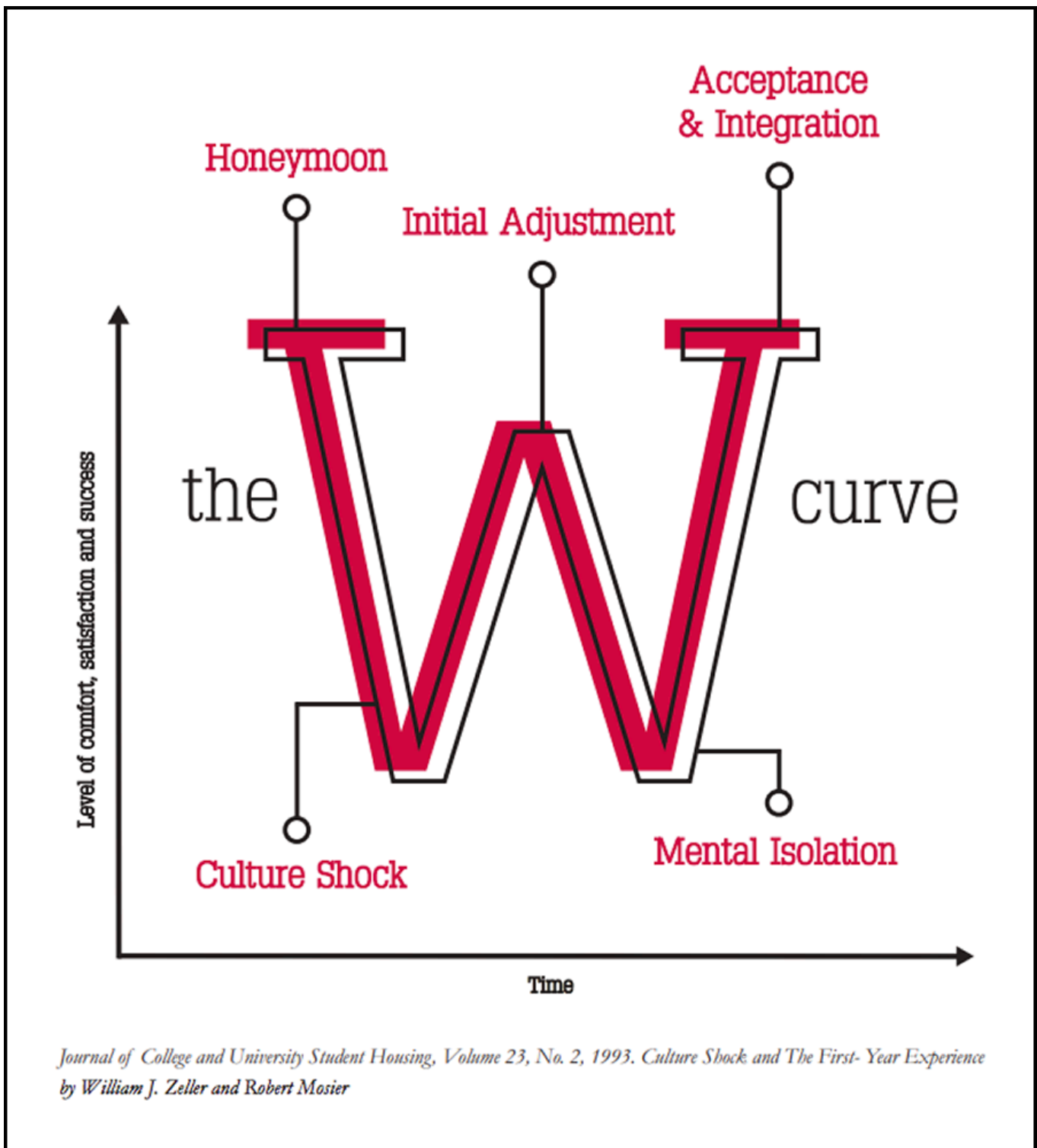
After a while, you start to get into a routine and college life isn't as scary as it once was. You may still miss home, but you start to feel that you can manage yourself as a college student.

Mental Isolation Stage

You feel stuck between two worlds. Home is not as familiar as it once was, but you don't feel 100% integrated in college life. This commonly occurs after students go home for a longer break

Acceptance and Integration Stage

You start feeling connected to your campus community. You may have a solid group of friends and start feeling like the university is your home. You have successfully adapted to college life.



["W-Curve" developed by William J. Zeller and Robert Mosier (1993)]

'TREATING' HOMESICKNESS

Whether you have gone away to college, moved to a new city, or even just traveled for vacation, homesickness is a common emotional experience. Longing

for home is the subject of books, songs, and films. Many sports stars and celebrities have opened up about feeling homesick, and many people have shared their tips for overcoming it.

So then, what exactly are we feeling when we experience homesickness and why do we feel it so deeply—in a way that sometimes manifests physically?

Well, clinical psychologist Dr. Joshua C. Klapow says that, “Homesickness has everything to do with attachment. When we feel homesick, we’re feeling insecure or uncomfortable with where we are, physically and emotionally. We’re longing for something that in our minds is known, predictable, consistent and stable.”

Klapow also noted that the feeling has little to do with the specifics of one’s past situation or their current circumstances. In other words, a person can have a less-than-ideal home life, perhaps struggling with poverty, violence or other challenges, but still feel homesick after arriving at a beautiful, peaceful college campus.

Psychologist Tamar Chansky also emphasizes that homesickness is a very normal part of the human experience and is about a period of ‘adjustment’ and adaptation. “Homesickness is part of a process, and there are things we can do to move through that adjustment curve and feel more in control. If we keep doing things to explore that transition, we find our roots anew and get connected and committed to those things and feel at home,” she said. “We are successful as humans by adjusting to our circumstances and making connections to people. That’s the bread and butter of our emotional well-being.”

Now, of course, different people experience homesickness in different ways. Klapow said he generally categorizes its physical manifestation in two different ‘buckets’—anxiety and sadness: “One is more of an anxiety bucket. You feel it in your stomach—it’s an unease in which you feel uncomfortable, nervous, anxious, stressed, tense because you’re in a place or situation that’s not familiar, that triggers your fight-or-flight response,” he said. “It’s an evolutionary, adaptive thing that wires us to protect ourselves from danger when something is unknown. When we think about home, we know that the sense of unknown and potential danger is not happening there, so we want to return.”

The other ‘bucket’ is more about grief, longing and sadness. Klapow said that, “The comfort of home becomes like a person you’ve lost and missed. You may have some obsessive preoccupation with home and what you’re missing,

comparing everything in your day to your experience back home, and that can create a lot of sadness.”

Feelings of nostalgia can also play into homesickness. Klapow then explained that, “When we’re homesick, we tend to paint a picture of what we’re missing in a way that is idealized. We don’t say ‘I miss the smog’ or ‘I miss my mom yelling at me.’ Instead, it’s ‘I miss the comfort of my room,’ ‘I miss my old friends’ or ‘I miss the feeling of my neighborhood.’”

Chansky also noted that homesickness in an unfamiliar situation can trigger the body’s ‘fight-or-flight’ alarm system. “Some people will feel an upset stomach, some people will feel shaky, some people will feel tearful,” she said. “The body is saying, ‘Something’s wrong,’ and that produces more of that fear and negativity.”

Although homesickness is not a clinical condition like anxiety or depression, having those disorders can exacerbate a person’s longing for home. Chansky mentions that, “If people are already feeling anxious or depressed, they may have more anxiety going into these situations than someone else might. Negative emotions are only going to be amplified in those circumstances.”

‘NORMALIZING’ HOMESICKNESS

A key way to deal with homesickness is to ‘normalize’ it. Chansky says for one to “Tell yourself it’s “OK” and normal to feel this way. These bad feelings are ‘temporary’, and this is part of how change happens. It sounds simple, but that sends a message to the body that we don’t need the ‘fire trucks’. Nothing is actually wrong. Normalizing it helps the negative feeling go away faster.”

It also helps to recognize that the homesick feelings will come and go in ‘waves’, so you can anticipate them and realize you won’t feel that way forever. Although homesickness tends to be most prominent at the beginning of a transition, Klapow noted that it often returns after you have settled in and the reality kicks in that you will be there for a while.

“At first, it’s ‘This is not what I’m used to,’” he said. “Then we adapt and get used to it. But we go back and say, ‘Wow, I’m used to this and comfortable with this,’ and start thinking about the old days, which can trigger a homesickness experience as well.”

Once you have accepted homesickness as a temporary part of the transition process, the best thing you can do is make ‘connections’ with your new

environment.

“There are small things you can do to feel more connected to where you are or you can lean into the things that make you feel most at home,” said Chansky, who listed simple steps like having more conversations with people at work or out in public or exploring your new surroundings. “You want to build up your home underneath where you are,” she added. “That way, you can still miss home, but you don’t feel so bereft because you have more of what you need where you are.”

Making new connections involves getting engaged with your new environment. Klapow mentions that, “Instead of the proverbial ‘stay busy,’ I say ‘stay engaged’—whether that’s with school, your job, other people, the gym, your church or synagogue.” He noted that people tend to feel homesick in the morning and at night when their minds are not focused on other things. “When you’re doing an activity, it distracts you, but you’re also creating a new normality, a new predictability.” Klapow also suggested creating a daily routine to give yourself further stability and predictability.

On an emotional level, it’s important to confront your feelings. Chansky said that , “Instead of saying ‘I just don’t want to think about that because I’m going to get too upset,’ you could ask yourself, ‘If you were feeling more rooted where you were, what would be different?’” Ask yourself the question, ‘If things were better, what would it be like?’”

The answer to that question can help you create a to-do list of things you want to pursue. Maybe it is performing in a band, making more friends or volunteering in the community.

Confronting your feelings can also involve sharing them with other people. It’s OK to talk about feeling homesick, Klapow stressed. “A lot of times we bottle it up, or the only people we’re sharing it with are people at home.” That creates a vicious loop because we’re telling home how much we miss home, and we’re getting all of these signals from home about how bad everyone feels about how much we miss home.”

So, instead, one should try to share their feelings with some people in their new environment, whether they are fellow students, co-workers they have developed a rapport with, clergy, or others. Klapow said, “People will be compassionate with you and say, ‘Oh, that’s terrible. I remember when I was homesick. It’s gonna be OK.’” Once you feel compassion from other people in the same place, you tend to

feel less homesick.”

Ricks Warren, an associate professor in the department of psychiatry at the University of Michigan added that self-compassion is also key. “People who are self-compassionate are less likely to be homesick and lonely. If you’re self-compassionate, you’ve always got yourself. You’re like your best friend. But if you’re really hard on yourself, you don’t have that.”

SO, with some time, self-care, and support of caring people around you, homesickness WILL pass!

HOMESICK FOR A ‘FOREVER’ HOME

How many of you have ever been camping in a tent? Camping may be fun for a while but it gets old fairly quickly. We get tired of roughing it and we start to desire the comforts of our ‘real’ home. Would you want to live in a tent all of the time? Of course not.

Well, in the Bible, the Apostle Paul (who was a tentmaker and undoubtedly lived in tents from time to time) compares our human body to a ‘tent’—that the body is the ‘temporary housing’ for one’s spirit. One’s tent may get old, its appearance change (and may not be able to handle the ‘weather’ like it did years ago), but Paul makes it clear that the believer moves from this tent to one’s ‘real’ home in Heaven after their lives end here on earth.

Human life is a lot like camping. It is the ‘roughing it’ part of following Jesus. This earthly is not the believer’s permanent place to live. Just like you wouldn’t be satisfied with living in a tent all of the time, believers aren’t satisfied with living here on earth. We trade our earthly tent for God’s eternal mansion.

The thing is, when a believer’s mortal existence is removed, they are ‘SET FREE’ from the trials, difficulties, pains, and the cares of this world!

The author of the “Narnia” series, C. S. Lewis captured the essence of this in his book “Mere Christianity.” He said: “Has this world been so kind to you that you should leave with regret? There are better things ahead than any we leave behind.”

The Apostle Paul said it far better than I ever could: “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” [1 Corinthians 13:12].

American theologian and prophecy expert Thomas Ice put it this way:

“Heaven is more than a mystical notion, imaginary dreamland, or philosophical concept. It is a real and present place in which God, the Creator of all things lives. It is a place spoken of throughout the Bible. It is the true home of all Christians. It is where Jesus came from at the incarnation, where He ascended after the resurrection, and from whence He will come again to receive all those who truly follow Him. It is the place which the writer of Hebrews calls a ‘distant country’ and for which those in his ‘hall of faith’ longed (Hebrews 11:13-16).”

ALIENS AND STRANGERS

Now, the more home-like that Heaven becomes, the more you feel like a ‘foreigner’ and exile on this earth (1 Peter 2:11). Maybe some people shop for top-of-the-line Porsches, but that only reveals that, “Their mind is set on earthly things. The believer’s citizenship is in Heaven” (Philippians 3:19-20).

Now, I am not talking spiritual ‘snobbery’ here, and I have no beef against nice things. It is simply a matter of ‘focus’: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” [Matthew 6:21].

The writer of Hebrews definitely had this in mind when he wrote, “People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one” [Hebrews 11:14-16].

Arthur Bennett, the Canon at St. Albans Cathedral, cited the following Puritan prayer describes that exile is simply feeling a fact:

*“O Lord,
I live here as a fish in a vessel of water,
only enough to keep me alive,
but in heaven I shall swim in the ocean.
Here I have a little air in me to keep me breathing,
but there I shall have sweet and fresh gales;*

*Here I have a beam of sun to lighten my darkness,
a warm ray to keep me from freezing;
yonder I shall live in light and warmth for ever.”*

At times in our lives, we all have a sense of “not belonging.” The Apostle Paul said that, “For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless, to remain in the flesh is more needful for you” [Philippians 1:23-24]. Why? Well, because we have a heavenly “citizenship.” Then in the same letter Paul says: “For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” [Philippians 3:20].

The believer is just a ‘traveler’ passing through this world, “pilgrims in progress to Heaven.” In King David’s prayer of praise to God, he acknowledged, “For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow”) [1 Chronicles 29:15].

God understands that the believer can become “homesick,” so that is why He gives them a ‘purpose’—“The Great Commission”—showing the way ‘home’ to those who don’t know how to get there yet. The believer has been called to encourage, exhort, comfort, evangelize, and disciple.

So, if you have never felt homesick, then might I suggest that perhaps you may have never authentically ‘committed’ your life to Jesus and you may want to make that commitment this VERY MOMENT—since no one knows when they will die—to ‘ensure’ that you will have a home in Heaven! You see, as a believer, it is natural for them to be ‘homesick’—if they are ‘homesick’ for Heaven! They are just travelers in a ‘foreign land’.

Elsewhere in the Bible, Jesus spoke of His disciples as “aliens” in this world, noting that, “They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world” [John 17:16]. Jesus was a ‘citizen’ of His Father’s ‘house’ in Heaven and likewise, He noted that His followers were citizens of this Kingdom as well. Even today, believers in Jesus have become citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, and they live now in anticipation their true eternal home!

A BETTER ‘COUNTRY’

With Google Earth/Maps, one can ‘travel’ to most places in the world and zoom in to see that the place looks like—and sometimes see the town from the street level and ‘visit’ popular destinations.

All of us, I would guess, dream about visiting a distant country. Those far-away places with strange-sounding names. All of us dream about going somewhere distant, somewhere different. We dream about this not just because we would like to travel but because we want a measure of excitement in our lives, we want to be something more than what we are now, and we suppose that out there, somewhere, there is something more fulfilling than what we have here.

Educated as an architect—and relishing home design—I enjoy watching a BBC show called “Escape To The Country,” where a realtor helps potential home buyers look for their dream home in the rural portions of Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, or England, by viewing three houses (including a “mystery property”) in the designated area the couple is focusing on. Then, after they inspect each house, the host/realtor asks the buyers to guess the seller’s asking price before revealing it.

Episodes also feature information regarding the counties, towns, and villages presented, for example, local industry and history. In each episode, the buyers undertake an activity in the local area, often tailored to their interests, such as baking, gardening, or sailing. The presenter also experiences an activity, which is often associated with the area in question, such as cheese making. At the end of each episode, the buyers are asked whether they will make an offer on one of the houses, with updates sometimes available at the end of the episode.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLaCVkjGOW6j5bpCaLzDosqeiU-t0soB8>
[VIDEO: Playlist of “Escape To The Country,” Season 23]

I would LOVE to visit the UK, even possibly doing an Airbnb in one of these “character” houses for a couple of months and enjoying the lush, green country. Now, as nice as a “holiday” in the UK would be, what God is preparing for believers who want to ‘escape’ this world for another “country”—and all its pleasures—I imagine will be ‘out-of-this-world’ in comparison to even the absolutely gorgeous countryside of the UK is!

In the Shakespearean play “Hamlet,” death—and what lies beyond death’s door—is metaphorically described as “the undiscovered country.” It seems an

appropriate way of describing something that human beings know so very little about.

The Scriptures use the word “country” to speak of the blissful realm of Heaven, where all the believers will dwell for all eternity!

Now, eternity is a big concept. We read in the pages of the Bible that God has “set eternity in the hearts of men” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). This inspiring verse lead the Bible commentator William MacDonald to reflect that, “Though living in a world of time, man has intimations of eternity. Instinctively, he thinks of ‘forever’, and though he cannot understand the concept, he realizes that beyond this life there is a possibility of a shoreless ocean of time.” It is wondrous to even think about this!

It is in this sense of eternity that pastor Mark Buchanan suggested that:

“We’re heaven-bent. I mean by that a number of things: that our hearts have an inner tilt upward, that the grain of our souls leans heavenward, that in Christ we have a sure destination, which powers larger than ourselves carry us toward. I mean it in contrast to being hell-bent. But before any of that, I mean that we’re all cockeyed, bent out of shape, with missing heaven. And we miss it in both senses of the word: We wish for it, yet go astray of it. We have a hunger for things above, but our skill for filling that hunger has atrophied. We’re like a lap cat—still with the instinct for catching mice, but lacking the reflexes—whose pampered existence has made it slow and lazy, inept at stalking, clumsy at pouncing. It rarely catches its prey, if even it stirs to notice the prey in its midst. We’re like that with heaven: We long for it, but we’ve lost the tautness and alertness, the agility and quickness, to satisfy the longing. We’ve grown lethargic. We’ve become so earthly-minded we’re of no heavenly good.”

So, how is it with you? Are you interested in visiting a “better country” in the afterlife? A “heavenly country”? Do you ever spend time pondering what Heaven might be like? If not, hopefully, I can encourage you to keep reading to accumulate some more knowledge about it!

CONTEMPLATING A HEAVENLY ‘DWELLING’

Each of us probably already have an idea about what Heaven might be like. The chances are, though, they are culturally influenced conceptions that are woefully inadequate to capture the full glory and splendor of what truly awaits the believer in the afterlife.

This brings to mind a story of an unbeliever, who, seeking to comfort a dying Christian, said to him, “My poor friend, how, sorry I am that you have to leave the land of the living!” But, the dying man, utterly radiant, replied, “You are wrong. I am leaving the land of the dying to go to the country of the living!” (Rene Pache). Here was a man that was looking for that better country—a heavenly one—and I want you to be like him!

The Bible begins with ‘Paradise lost’ (the Garden of Eden), at which time pain, suffering, and death first enter the human race. The Bible then ends with ‘Paradise regained’ (Heaven), at which time pain, suffering, and death will be a thing of the past!

Once believers are in Heaven, the sufferings they experienced during their time on earth—even ‘extreme’ suffering—will be viewed as a momentary bother! Theologian John Wenham commented that, “Not only is it certain that this life will end, but it is certain that from the perspective of eternity, it will be seen to have passed in a flash. The toils which seem so endless will be seen to have been quite transitory and abundantly worthwhile.” It is with this in mind that Christian writer Philip Yancey commented: “Earth is a proving ground, a dot in eternity.”

This “dot in eternity” is quickly passing away. It will soon be over. The believer’s destiny in Heaven, by contrast, is an eternal destiny. They will live there forever, and it will be a pain-free and death-free environment. I’m thinking that is something to look forward to!

So then, what does the Bible teach about heaven, the believer’s ‘house’? Well, Jesus told a story about Lazarus in the Rich Man (Luke 16:19-31) that presents seven important biblical teachings about Heaven:

– Celebration In Heaven

Jesus promised, “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied” [Luke 6:21]. Jesus then said, “So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom” [Luke 16:22]. There is no doubt where Lazarus traveled into the presence of God after death. He was with God in Heaven.

– Instantaneous Transition

Another important insight is the time involved between the end of this life and entering the presence of God. Jesus described this transition as instantaneous. There was no gap in time between the death of Lazarus and his continuing his

eternal life in the presence of Jesus.

The Apostle Paul described a similar view: “Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord” [2 Corinthians 5:8]. (Paul DID NOT mention a ‘waiting period’, such as “Purgatory,” or soul sleep, as some have erroneously taught.) Instead, believers close their eyes in this life to “be with Jesus” in the next. Author and theologian Ron Rhodes commented: “The moment a Christian dies, then, he or she is immediately with Christ in heaven. We are not just in the presence of the Lord, we are intimately present with the Lord.”

A related passage can be found when the thief on the cross asked Jesus to remember him in His Kingdom. Jesus answered, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” [Luke 23:43]. This man had no opportunity to live a changed life or even to be baptized. However, Jesus accepted the man’s simple, sincere faith, and assured him of eternity in Heaven THAT DAY!

– Fellowship With Believers

One of the joys a believer looks forward to in Heaven is the ability to be reunited with their loved ones who went to Heaven before them. Billy Graham, commenting on this, said:

“Yes, I have every confidence that we will be reunited with our loved ones who have gone to Heaven before us. Heaven is a place of perfect happiness—and one of its greatest joys will be our reunion with those we love. God loves us, and He will not withhold that joy from us!”

Puritan minister Richard Baxter wrote: “The Christian will not be so singular as to be solitary. Though heaven is proper to the saints only, yet is it common to all the saints, for what is it but an association of blessed spirits in God; a corporation of perfected saints, whereof Christ is the head; the communion of saints completed?”

– Joyful Experience

Heaven will not only include joy in the future—there is much joy there now. Joy is heightened among the angels every time a new person comes to faith in Jesus. If this is the joy that takes place over the answered prayers of one sinner turning to Jesus, just imagine the joy spread throughout the Father’s House. We need not worry about whether Heaven will be ‘fun’. We will enjoy every moment in the Lord’s presence more than we could ever imagine!

– Blissful Comfort

In the “Rich Man and Lazarus” story, it is mentioned that the Rich Man endured suffering while Lazarus experienced comfort (Luke 16:25). These words are especially powerful for believers who have endured much suffering in this life. Many believers live in poverty and/or under intense persecution. They have been rejected by family and friends, opposed by coworkers, or scorned by their own leaders. Yet one day, this discomfort will be replaced with the perfect comfort of living with the heavenly Father, enjoying perfect fellowship with Him and His ‘children’.

– Eternal Memories

The Apostle Paul noted that, “Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known” [1 Corinthians 13:12]. This means that we will know more in Heaven, understanding everything from God’s perspective.

Pastor W. A. Criswell taught that, “I’ll be the same person then that I am now—only with all the imperfections and limitations of sin finally removed. This is a wonderful thought—that the essence of who we are will remain throughout eternity—yet vastly improved by God’s grace.”

– Eternal State

Once this life ends, we will no longer be able to make any decisions that will move us from Hell to Heaven or Heaven to Hell. There are only these two options. One’s decision on trusting ‘in’ Jesus as Savior in this life WILL ‘DETERMINE’ one’s eternal destiny in the next life!

The Apostle Paul emphasized that after the believer’s ‘tent’ has been destroyed, they will be “at home” with Jesus instantaneously and for ever!:

“For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile, we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”

“Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So, we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body

or away from it.”

[2 Corinthians 5:1-9].

With the same kind of confidence, laser Dwight L. Moody, as he approached the end of his life, viewed Heaven as something to anticipate. Moody wrote:

“Some day you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody of East Northfield, is dead. Don’t you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now; I shall have gone up higher, that is all, out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal—a body that death cannot touch, that sin cannot taint; a body fashioned like unto His glorious body. I was born of the flesh in 1837. I was born of the Spirit in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die. That which is born of the Spirit will live forever.”

Every believer that has invested their life in eternity can share that same attitude toward Heaven as Moody did!

Like Moody, the Apostle Paul had GREAT ‘CONFIDENCE’ concerning eternity (which is probably where Moody got his confidence from!) He declared that when the believer leaves their earthly body, there is an eternal body waiting for them in Heaven. The thing is, they have more than a “tent” (temporary dwelling place) waiting for them, they have a “house” (permanent abode) made by God Himself!

There are several words that illustrate Paul’s confidence concerning eternity. He said, “we know,” not “we think.” He said, “we have,” not “we hope.” He said, “we are always confident,” not “we are fairly sure most of the time.” Then, he shared one of the greatest guarantees in the Word of God. He said that, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” [2 Corinthians 5:8].

This verse gives the believer the great assurance that when they draw their last breath they will be immediately ushered into the presence of the Lord—with a new body and a new life awaiting them in Heaven!

Paul emphasized this truth when he continued: “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth

us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” [1 Corinthians 15:53-57].

President of the Princeton Seminary between 1878 and 1886, Dr. A. A. Hodge made it clear that the believer WILL BE VERY ‘SATISFIED’ with Heaven:

“Heaven, as the eternal home of the divine man and the redeemed member of the human race, must necessarily be thoroughly human in its structure, conditions, and activities. Its joys and occupations must all be rational, moral, emotional, voluntary, and active. There must be the exercise of all the faculties, the gratification of all tastes, the expression of all talents, the realization of all ideals... the intellectual curiosity, the aesthetic instincts, the holy affections, the social affinities, the inexhaustible resources of strength and power native to the human soul, must all find in Heaven exercise and satisfaction.”

One thing I am excited for is that we will be able to have fellowship with all the great ‘saints’ that passed before us. We will be able to talk—at length, since we will be living ‘in’ eternity—with Adam, Eve, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Esau, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Samuel, Ruth, Boaz, David, Solomon, Job, Jonah, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Daniel, Esther, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Andrew, Phillip, Nathanael, Thomas, Stephen, Ananias, and Paul—or any, and all of the saints we had an ‘affinity’ for from Scripture!

We will not only be reunited with our families, and loved ones, but with the people of God from ALL ‘AGES’! In Heaven, we will all be one loving ‘family’, and there will be ample opportunity to develop close relationships with everyone, with our eternity being spent in rich, ‘intimate’ fellowship!

Theologian A.A. Hodge wrote, *“Heaven, as the eternal home of the divine man, and of all the redeemed members... Must all find in Heaven, exercise and satisfaction.”*

If you are worried about feeling ‘out of place’ in Heaven, don’t be. Heaven will seem more like home than the residence you call your home on earth is to you right now! It is uniquely designed by a tender, loving Savior to be the place where the believer will live together, enjoying Him forever—in the fullness of our glorified humanity!

LONGING FOR 'HOME'

Scripture reveals three important aspects about Heaven that the believers look forward to: Heavenly reservations; Heavenly rewards; and Heavenly riches.

Heavenly 'Reservations'

Jesus promises that every believer has their name listed in the Lamb's Book of Life: "Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in Heaven" [Luke 10:20]. This reservation is far more important than a reservation at any exclusive high-end restaurant or hotel. This reservation should cause a believer to rejoice daily as they anticipate their eternal home.

Every believer's name is in the "Book of Life." Revelation refers to this book on seven occasions, noting how important it is regarding the certainty of their 'citizenship' in Heaven.

– "Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven"
[Revelation 3:5]

– "All who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain"
[Revelation 13:8]

– "The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come"
[Revelation 17:8]

– "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books"
[Revelation 20:12]

– "Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire."
[Revelation 20:15]

– "Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life"

[Revelation 21:27]

– “And if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book”

[Revelation 22:19]

Doesn’t this console you to think that Heaven’s marvels defy description—that the writers of the Bible—and we—have limited words to describe it?

HOWEVER, there are a few ‘for sure’ things that we ARE ‘EXPLICITLY’ TOLD about Heaven that we CAN ‘UNDERSTAND’ what it will be like:

- NO More Sorrow
- NO More Crying
- NO More Pain
- NO More Sin
- NO More Death

Just imagine these things! Heaven will be the undoing of all the bad things we know as God will wipe every ‘tear’ away and closes the ‘curtain’ on pain and disappointment!

The Apostle Paul said it well:

“I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those He called—His holy people who are His rich and glorious inheritance”

[Ephesians 1:18].

BELIEVER’S TRUE IDENTITY

Only in Heaven—the birthplace of our ‘identity’—will the believer find out who they truly are. Actually, they won’t find out so much as they will ‘receive’ it.

This is beautifully symbolized in Revelation 2:17: “To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.”

The believer’s true identity will unfold with the new name that God will give them.

(a 'secret' between God and them). Just think about that! In Heaven, you will not only find what was irretrievably lost, but when you receive it—your new name, your true identity—you will be a thousand times more yourself than the sum total of all those nuances, gestures, and inside subtleties that defined the earthbound "you"! On earth, you may think you fully blossomed, but Heaven will reveal that you have barely 'budded'!

We pilgrims walk the 'tightrope' between earth and Heaven, feeling trapped in time, yet with eternity beating in our 'hearts'. Our unsatisfied sense of exile is not to be solved or fixed while we are here on earth. Our pain and longings make sure that we will never be content—but that's good! It is to our benefit that we do not grow comfortable in a world destined for decay!

So, onward we pilgrims tread through this world of time and death, forever seeking the Son, Jesus. We do not go backward, but "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, [we] press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called [us] heavenward in Christ Jesus" [Philippians 3:13-14].

'HOPE' OF HEAVEN

In his book "Mere Christianity," C. S. Lewis commended that a hope of Heaven is right and good: "This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do."

For the believer, death is not only the great 'separator', but being 'in' Jesus, death is the great 'uniter'. When the believer gets to Heaven, they will not only be reunited with those close 'friends' who when on to Heaven before them, but they will be 'united' with those who may have helped bring them to faith. "For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy" [1 Thessalonians 2:19-20].

NO PLACE LIKE 'HOME'!

Dorothy in the "Wizard of Oz" said, "There's no place like home." So, why is that line so iconic? As soon as you hear it, you see Dorothy in your 'mind's eye' holding Toto, clicking the heels of her ruby red slippers three times, and uttering the words "There's no place like home"... almost like a 'prayer'. She REALLY wanted to 'travel' home ASAP!

I love to travel and experience new places. I have been to Canada, Mexico, and France—and probably half of the states in the U.S. I love seeing new places, new people, new cultures, but I also love coming home and to familiar landmarks and sights, to shared customs and language, to my home, to my own bed, my own refrigerator, and TV. You know what I mean?

You don't have to leave the country or even the state or county to know what I am talking about. Just coming home after spending a weekend 'at the lake' or even just coming home at the end of the day, you come around the corner or you pull into the street and see the place where you live. You walk into the house and immediately try to settle into a 'routine'. Your pet may greet you at the door, then you look for the spouse and the kids to give a hug. You then drop or hang your keys in their designated spot (so that you can find them again) and open the frig to get a refreshing drink. You may ask if there is anything you can do to help with dinner or the kids' homework. You might plug your phone into the charger, change into your most comfortable loungewear, and try to let the 'weight' of the day dissipate. After dinner, you might plop down on the sofa—or your favorite chair—with your spouse and kids and take in a favorite show or movie.

So, how does one know when they have found that 'special place' they can call "home"? Well, some will say, "Home is where the heart is." It is where one can be to cherish the life, the people, and the culture of a given place. In that sense, probably all of us can think of an earthly place of 'belonging', where we would rather not leave.

YET, God tells us about a different kind of 'belonging'. As I have mentioned previously, "Our citizenship is in heaven," we are strangers in this world," and "are looking for the city that is to come."

The point is, they say that home is where the heart is. So where is your 'heart'? Here on earth or 'in' Heaven?

In the "Wizard of Oz," Dorothy was locked in the witch's castle and could not get out. She just wished that she could just go home.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umLFFWbz77Y&t=183s>
[VIDEO: "The Wizard of Oz" - Dorothy locked up in the witch's castle]

Dorothy was in a 'predicament', wasn't she? I wonder how many of you today can look in the mirror and see yourself as a 'Dorothy'. Do you feel like you're just locked up in the 'castle' and you can't get home?

The truth is, there really is NO 'PLACE' on this earth that is like the place someday soon believers all will gather in that glorious City of God. There's no place like THAT home!

'PREPARING' A PLACE

God has planned an incredible eternal experience for every believer. We were created for eternity and redeemed for eternity. But, life has a way of focusing our attention on our immediate cares and not our ultimate goal.

We are easily caught up in our daily tasks that take most of our time and attention away from the ultimate purpose for which we were created. The Bible reminds us that, while God has "made everything beautiful in its time," he has also "put eternity in our hearts" [Ecclesiastes 3:11]. No matter how hard we try, we are never satisfied with anything less than that which is eternal. Pastor Joe Stowell said that, "Life is most disappointing, most despairing when it is lived as though this world is all we have."

God has planned an amazing future for every believer. The Bible reminds us that, "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"—the things God has prepared for those who love Him" [1 Corinthians 2:9].

There is a joke told about a married couple in their fifties. They were in terrible health and ate all the wrong things. Finally, the wife became convinced of their ways and told her husband, "We have to start a really serious diet or we are not going to live much longer."

She put him on a strict diet of water, kale, bananas, and not much else! Sure enough, they lost weight and looked and felt great.

About 10 years later they were tragically killed in a car accident. As they arrived in Heaven, they discovered it was more phenomenal than they could have ever imagined. It was more beautiful than they have ever dreamed. There was food everywhere! You can eat all you wanted and never gained any weight. There were golf courses and swimming pools everywhere. It was unbelievable!

The wife looked at her husband and said, “Isn’t this just wonderful?” He looked at her and answered, “Absolutely! And if it wasn’t for you and that awful diet and all that health food, we could have been here 10 years ago!” ;^D

Now, I’m not saying that you should go out and eat all the junk food that you can get your hands on, but I do want to remind you that all believers are on a ‘journey’ that has two destinations. One is Heaven and one is Hell!

This world is NOT all there is, and it REALLY matters that one makes the ‘RIGHT’ DECISIONS here on earth—before they pass away—to determine, for sure, that they will be going to Heaven!

[NOTE: Information about how one can be assured of their heavenly ‘destination’ will be addressed a bit later in the post.]

WHEN WE ‘ARRIVE’

The Bible often talks about Heaven as the “Father’s House.” As mentioned, the thing is, many believers know very little about Heaven. Many ask, “What will it be like?” “Who will be there?” and “What will we be doing there?”

Well, Jesus gives us some answers. He was with His disciples in the upper room on the night before His death, when He said:

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going”

[John 14:1-4].

Several details can be observed in this passage and its following verses: the ‘LOCATION’ of the Father’s house, its ‘RESIDENTS’, its ‘PREPARATIONS’, and His future ‘FAMILY’.

Heaven is the location where the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—‘dwells’. The Bible says that this is clearly the Father’s eternal home. It also says that Jesus, the Son, came from Heaven and has ascended back to the Father in Heaven. It also says that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for the

believer in Heaven (Romans 8:26-27).

In addition to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Heaven also includes the heavenly angels and God's 'children'. Far from being empty or sparse in a population, the father's house will be full. This understanding closely reflects the parable of the great supper when Jesus said, "Then the master said to servant, 'go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled'" [Luke 14:23].

So, what 'preparations' are being made for the believer in their heavenly home? Well, pastor John MacArthur suggests:

"In ancient times, fathers had a house and their children were raised in the house. And when they got married, they build an addition on the house, and the father's house kept getting larger and larger and larger and larger and larger as apartments were built for every married child in that family, and the father's house got larger and larger and larger. And the heavenly Father's house is very large and there are many, many dwelling places."

JUST IMAGINE

Just imagine what a special place this must be. As beautiful as the earthly paradise was in the Garden of Eden, it pales in comparison to what is being prepared by Jesus! (John 14:3).

Former pastor James S. Hewett shared an illustration with his congregation that did some 'imagining' about Heaven:

"A bus driver and a minister were standing in line to get into heaven. The bus driver approached the gate and St. Peter said, 'Welcome, I understand you were a bus driver. Since I'm in charge of housing, I believe I have found the perfect place for you. See that mansion over the hilltop? It's yours.'

The minister heard all this and began to stand a little taller. He said to himself, 'If a bus driver got a place like that, just think what I'll get.'

The minister approached the gate and St. Peter said, 'Welcome, I understand you were a minister. See that shack in the valley?'

St. Peter had hardly gotten the words out of his mouth when the irate minister said, 'I was a minister, I preached the gospel, I helped teach people about God. Why does that bus driver get a mansion, and I get a shack?'

Sadly St. Peter responded, 'Well, it seems when you preached, people slept. When the bus driver drove, people prayed'."

The first few verses of the song "This world is not my home," does a good job of expressing what many believer—including me—feel on a daily basis:

*"This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.*

*The angels beckon me from heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.*

*Oh Lord, you know I have no friend like you
If heaven's not my home then Lord, what will I do?*

*The angels beckon me from heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore."*

One of the 'themes' of the movie "I Can Only Imagine" addresses the thought of imagining what Heaven will be like when the believer goes 'home'. It will be like—as it said in the theme song, "Will I be able to speak at all?"—because there will be NO MORE...

Hunger... Thirst... Pain... Crying... Cancer... Temptation... Grief... Regret...
Wrinkles... Surgeries... Cavities... Racism... Traffic... Anger... Rage... Foul
language... Cigarette smoke... Calories... Weight gain... Abortions... Funerals...
Drunk drivers... Ambulances... Police chases... Mortgage payments... Family
feuds... Arguing... Lying... Alarm systems... Drownings... Snake bites... Dog bites...
Mosquito bites... Fear... Anxiety... Boredom... or Brokenness! (to name a few).

In Heaven, everything will be new every day, God will be near, satisfaction will be abundant and everything will be holy.

A PLACE LIKE NO OTHER!

Like an exciting movie trailer, God's Word previews this place and our future, 'whetting' our desire for the real thing. Though what we are told is limited—with some of the details shrouded in prophetic language—these four things that the

Bible says we can have certainty about:

- This is a place like no other place
- We have so much to anticipate
- Heaven’s blessings will never end
- Every aspect of the place will be characterized by joy

In fact, the Unicorn in the final book of the “Chronicles of Narnia” said it well: “The reason why we loved the old Narnia is that it sometimes looked a little like this, the New Narnia.”

Everything in Heaven will be new and glimmering. HOWEVER, the MOST IMPORTANT ‘thing’ there will be God in His throne: “At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder” [Revelation 4:2-5].

God’s glory illuminates Heaven with an indescribable brilliance: “It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal” [Revelation 21:11], and “The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp” [Revelation 21:23]. “There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light” [Revelation 22:5]. INCREDIBLE!

The other REALLY IMPORTANT ‘thing’ will be that there “No longer will there be any curse” [Revelation 22:3]. Every byproduct of the ‘Fall’ will no longer exist! Everyone will be fully satisfied and content. With evil defeated, Heaven will experience no corruption or immorality. It will not have to suffer with con men and their deceptions. or criminals and the fear they provoke. The absence of sin means that nothing will enter Heaven that will defile, contaminate, or pollute the land and/or its inhabitants. Everything in Heaven will reflect the perfections of God: “Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful” [Revelation 21:27]. WOO-HOO!!!

WHAT HEAVEN WILL BE LIKE

The writer of Ecclesiastes said that the day of our death is better than the day of our birth (Ecclesiastes 7:1). He was merely being cynical about the meaninglessness and futility of this earthly life, but there is a valid sense for the believer in which it is true, that our death ushers the believer into an infinitely greater glory than their birth ever had. This earthly life “Is few of days inn full of trouble” [Job 14:1]. The confidence that Heaven awaits the believer should fill them with a GLORIOUS ‘HOPE’! The Apostle Paul said that, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” [Philippians 1:21]. The prospect of Heaven made him joyful, even in the face of death!

The Apostle Paul also said that he “Would rather be away from the body, and at home with the Lord“ [2 Corinthians 5:8]. Now, this was not a morbid death wish on Paul’s part. He was expressing his confidence that earthly existence is not the end of life at all for the believer. Death immediately ‘ushers’ the believer into a fuller, higher realm of more abundant life—into the very presence of God!

If you are a believer, someone, trusting Jesus alone for your salvation—Scripture promises, that the moment you leave this earth, you WILL arrive in Heaven. The righteous man who dies is taken away from calamity and he enters into peace (Isaiah 57:1-2). The Bible also says that, “‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord’... and ‘They rest from their labors, for their deeds will follow them’” [Revelation, 14:13]. Indeed, to live is Christ and today is gain! (Philippians 1:21).

So, let me encourage the believer to have the heart of the Apostle Paul—to exchange this ‘transient’ world for ‘eternal’ joy! (1 Corinthians 15:53).

WHAT ‘WILL NOT BE’ IN HEAVEN

So, as the last disciple of Jesus, the Romans wanted to stop the Apostle John from preaching about Jesus, so the Christian doctrine would spread no more. So, they banished him to the Isle of Patmos. The thing is, his exile turned out to be a ‘blessing’, since Jesus revealed a glimpse of what would happen in the End Times and a bit about what Heaven would be like. What a privilege!

There are specific things that were revealed to him that related to Heaven. Primarily, there will be no more sin and death—and all that comes from them: “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” [Revelation 21:4].

– No More Death

What an awesome blessing this is: There will be no more death—no more fatal accidents, no more incurable diseases, no more funeral services, and no more final farewells. Death will be gone and done with, never again to be faced by those who dwell in Heaven.

– No More Sorrow/Mourning

This world is filled with trouble, there are disappointments on every hand, we face circumstances and situations that bring great sorrow into our lives, but in Heaven there will be no more sorrow. Everything that brings heartache and heartbreak will be eliminated from Heaven.

– No More Suffering/Crying/Pain/Tears

This life is filled with suffering, but in Heaven, we will never sit in a hospital room and watch our parents suffer. We will not have to watch people that we love fight for one more breath. Never again will we see our children hurt and struggle. We will not have to stand beside a casket and shed a tear at the loss of a loved one. There will be no more bad news from the doctor, and there will be no more hospitals, nursing homes or funeral homes. In Heaven, we will never suffer again!

– No More Sin

It is great to know that sin cannot follow us to that wonderful place. The reason for the problems and sorrow that we face in this life can be traced back to sin. But praise God in Heaven, there will be no more sin! Revelation 21:27 states: “Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful.”

– No More Satan

When we get to Heaven, never again will we have to deal with Satan. We can have confidence in this fact because of what the Bible says in - Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Scripture also points out some things that we will never do in Heaven throughout all eternity.

Pastor and prophecy expert Mark Hitchcock says that, “We will never sin, never make mistakes, never need to confess, never have to repair or replace things (no

leaky faucets, no changing lightbulbs, no car repairs). We will never have to... defend ourselves, apologized, experience guilt, battle with Satan or demons... or experience... rehabilitation, loneliness, depression, or fatigue.”

Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards put it this way: “There shall be no pollution or deformation or offensive defect of any kind, seen in any person or thing; but everyone shall be perfectly pure, and perfectly lovely in Heaven.”

The absence of all these negative things will contribute immensely to our sense of joy and well-being in heaven. Indeed, Anglican bishop and theologian J.C. Ryle said that, “Heaven is the eternal presence of everything that can make a safe happy, and the eternal absence of everything that can cause sorrow.”

Never again will we have to deal with or even think about sickness, pain, disease, death, poverty, misunderstanding, slander, lying, strife, contention, quarrels, envies, jealousies, bad tempers, infidelity, skepticism, wars, fighting, bloodshed, murderers, or lawsuits (to name just a few).

WHAT ‘WILL BE’ IN HEAVEN

Heaven is a perfect place for people who have been made perfect. Perfection is the goal of God’s sanctifying work in the believer. He is not merely making them better than they were, He is conforming them into the image of His Son, Jesus. He is making them fit to dwell in His presence forever. The utter perfection of Heaven is the confirmation of our salvation. It is the purpose for which God chose them before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4).

As believers, our highest satisfaction will come when we see our God and His Son, Jesus, and when we stand before them in perfect righteousness.

The 19th-century songwriter, Fanny Crosby expressed the hope of every believer in a well-loved gospel song entitled, “My Savior First of All”:

*“When my lifework is ended and I cross the swelling tide,
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see;
I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.”*

Those words have special significance since Crosby was blind from birth. She knew that literally the first Person she would ever see would be Jesus!

Heaven will provide us with the unclouded, undiminished, uninterrupted sight of God's infinite glory and beauty, bringing us infinite and eternal delight. We can begin to understand why the Apostle Peter, after seeing only a faint glimpse of that glory, wanted to make a camp on the Mount of Transfiguration, and stay there permanently (Matthew 17:4). "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them, and be there God" [Revelation 21:3].

The following are the primary things that we WILL experience in Heaven:

– New Body

As I have already discussed, Heaven is not merely a state of mind, it IS a 'real' place, where the redeemed will have real bodies, exactly like the resurrection body of Jesus.

Our 'lowly' bodies that we have here on earth will be like Jesus' glorious body. We will NOT be spirit bodies floating around like angels who have no 'physical' bodies. The believer shall be gloriously perfected. The whole person—body and soul—will be made completely new, and flawless. As the Apostle John wrote, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is" [1 John 3:2].

Trying to understand what our bodies will be like in Heaven is much like expecting an acorn to understand its destiny as a tree.

– New 'Heart'

The human heart was created to mirror God's own heart (Genesis 1:27; James 3:9). We were designed to love Him, love righteousness, and walk in harmony with God and others (Micah 6:8). We will become like Jesus in Heaven when God rids us of our old, hardened 'hearts' and give us new ones.

– New Mind

We will have the mind of Christ! Only good things will come to our mind. Our thought processes will no longer 'connive' things, we will no longer devise nasty words or wicked schemes. We won't battle against idle daydreams or lustful fantasies. Rather, our thoughts will be gloriously elevated for "When He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" [1 John 3:2]. Think of perfect obedience and never a hurtful thought: No jealousy, no adultery; no coveting, and no lying!

Quadriplegic Joni Eareckson Tada wrote a poem about being grateful that she will get a new heart, and new mind, and a new body:

*“Our risen heart, sin-free will be
pure passion poured
purely
Adore!
He will give us this heart free
to love for the first time again.
Our risen body, light, bright
clothed with righteousness,
blessed with glowing flesh
that feels, really feels, for the first time again.
But now we wait
wait
wait for our Risen Lord,
who will reward we who weep,
yet still seek Him above all
so . . .
stand we tall together
for the first time ever,
then fall, please, on grateful knees . . .
Eternity is ours.”*

– Reunion With Christian Loved Ones

One of the most glorious aspects of our life in heaven is that we will be reunited with Christian loved ones—and yes, they will recognize each other in the eternal state.

– Fellowship With Believers We Have Never Met

We will get to spend quality time with Adam, Eve, Job, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Esther, Elijah, Elisha, Ezekiel, Daniel, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Mary, Paul, Peter, and all the other notable believers of biblical times! We will also get to ask them about some of their biblical ‘moments’, such as when Moses parted the sea, or when David slew Goliath, or when Peter sank when trying to walk on water, or when the thief on the cross was promised paradise by Jesus—to name just a few.

We will also get to spend time with courageous believers like Polycarp, Augustine, William Tyndale, John Wycliffe, Huldrych Zwingli, Jan Hus, Philipp Melancthon,

Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, George Whitfield, Matthew Henry, John Bunyan, Richard Baxter, John Owen, John Newton, Charles Wesley, J.C. Ryle, C. S. Lewis, Dwight L. Moody, D. Martin Lloyd Jones, B.B. Warfield, William Carey, A.W. Tozer, William Wilberforce, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Billy Graham, and R.C. Sproul (and MANY others).

– Satisfaction Of All Needs

In the eternal state, God will abundantly meet each and every need of the redeemed. “Never again, will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” [Revelation 7:16-17].

– Serene Rest

The Scriptures indicate that a key feature of heavenly life is rest (Revelation 14:13). No more deadlines to work toward. No more overtime work in or to make ends meet. No more back-breaking work. Just rest—sweet, serene, rest. A rest that will be especially sweet since it is ultimately the rest in the very presence of God, who meets our every need. Heaven will be a place of total bliss, total happiness, total peace, and total serenity.

– Sharing In Christ’s Glory

“If we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God, and co-heirs with Jesus [Romans 8:17a].

– Intimate Fellowship With God and Jesus

Without question, the most marvelous thing of all about heaven—heaven’s supreme delight. Delight—will be that we get to have unbroken fellowship with God Himself! Surely there can be no greater joy or exhilarating thrill for the creature than to look upon the face of the divine creator and fellowship with Him forever. He “who alone is a mortal and who lives in unapproachable light“ [1 Timothy 6:16] shall reside intimately among his own, and “they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them” [Revelation 21:3].

To fellowship with God is the essence of heavenly life, the found in the source of all blessing: “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” [Psalm 16:11].

The Apostle Paul wrote that, “Now we see a mirror dimly, but then, face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known” [1 Corinthians 13:12]. He is talking about our fellowship with God. In Heaven, our fellowship with God will be perfect, unhindered, and unclouded by any sin or

'darkness'!

The presence of Jesus is what makes Heaven 'heaven'. "The glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the lamb" [Revelation 21:23]. Perfect fellowship with God is the very essence of Heaven.

– Praising And Worshiping God And Jesus

Revelation 19:6-9 portrays a great multitude of the believers shouting out hallelujahs before God's throne. This is one activity that redeemed human beings and angels will do together.

– Serving God And Jesus

There will be NO boredom in Heaven since we will be serving God with an endless variety of tasks to perform. The prospect of heaven is entrancingly attractive to me!

There will be no purposeless inactivity in Heaven. Scripture portrays believers as being involved in meaningful service throughout eternity.

– Learning More About Our Incomparable God

Apparently, we will be able to grow in knowledge in our heavenly existence. Throughout future ages, believers will be shown "the incomparable riches of His grace" (Ephesians 2:17). Though our capacity for knowledge and our actual intelligence will be greatly increased, we will not be omniscient. Only God is omniscient. We will always maintain our capacity to learn.

So, this means that we will never get bored in Heaven. God is infinite—with matchless perfections that are beyond us in every way—and we will never come to the end of exploring Him and His marvelous riches.

– The Infinite Possibilities of Heaven Forever!

Can you imagine the wonderful conversations you will have in Heaven when you can meet all the great historical and biblical characters? What countries and places would you visit with your loved ones if time and money did not restrict you? Would you like to talk to Jesus about the unanswered questions of life when you have the joy of sitting at his feet? One will have an infinite number of things to experience, forever!

The following is what pastor and bible teacher John Barnett imagined the perfect Garden of Eden was like before Adam and Eve sinned. I am putting it here to give you just a 'glimpse' of what the Bible says Heaven will look like, since God said

He would 'remake' the earth to be like it was when He originally created it.

"Think with me of life as a perfect human. Picture of yourself at the dawn of creation as Adam or eve, perfect and sinless. Your first memory is that of waking up in gods garden, Eden. You live in a comfortable world with no extremes of hot and cold, no storms, no disasters to fear. Your home is secure; there are no pestering bugs, poisonous snakes, or deadly spiders. There is just the continual beauty of fragrant and color-filled flowering orchids hanging from the verdant green trees and blooms that never fall off, never yellow, or wilt. Full, juicy fruit hang ripe on the branches, but never fall off and rot.

Even more, you have a body that never aches, a digestive system that never rebels, eyesight that needs no correction, and ears that hear the sweet sounds of life all around. No pains; never sorrow; no weariness; not even a fear—just peace-filled living.

God's perfect garden is a paradise. Every day is an adventure of new colors, new fragrances, and new symmetry in flowers, butterflies, and all the wonders of a perfect animal world. There are no predators, no scavengers, and no carnivores. Only placid and magnificent creatures reflecting the majesty of God live in the garden. And around every corner of towering and graceful trees, each perfectly planted by God, are flax, herds, and gatherings of exquisite living animals that God has created and brought to life.

But the best of everything is the sweet sound of the voice of your creator, God the Son, Jesus Christ. About supper time each day a gentle breeze whispers by, and then you hear His voice. The Gardener and Planter of the universe soon walks with you in the cool of the day. He seeks fellowship with you, His best friend, whom He has made to look just like Him. And your ears hear the sweetest sound of all—the voice of Jesus who created you!"

WOW! Woo-hoo!

Now, even though this is just one 'expert' bible teacher's imaginings, I just CAN'T WAIT to experience ALL what God has planned for me and His 'children' for all of eternity!!!

'WHO' WILL BE IN HEAVEN

Heaven will offer an infinite variety of things to 'do'—which will be exciting—but, as is said here on earth, the only 'things' that we can take with us to Heaven is

'people'. The Apostle Paul said that, "For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when He comes? Is it not you?" PEOPLE are the most important 'TREASURES' to God, and He warns us not to emphasize the collection of material possessions on earth (Matthew 6:19-20), because, number one, we can't bring them with us, and number two, He is going to burn everything up and 'remake' everything anyway (2 Peter 3:7; Malachi 4:1).

– Our Loved Ones

One day we will experience a reunion that words simply cannot describe. Our loved ones who died as believers are already in His presence. One of the toughest things we will ever do in this life is to say goodbye to those that we love. And one of the greatest joys of Heaven will be seeing them again. Not only will we see them there, we will never have to say goodbye again.

Although our bodies will be transformed, we will still retain our human characteristics that will make us recognizable to those who have known us on earth. Our recognizable personalities and physical uniqueness, will transition the finite limits of the short life on earth.

– Angels

"Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!'" [Revelation 5:11-12].

Joni Eareckson Tada, in her book "Heaven," believes that we will know the angels by name, fellowship with them personally, and worship God alongside them. "And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen'" [Revelation 7:11-12].

– The 24 Elders

"Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads" [Revelation 4:4]. The fact that they sit on thrones indicates that they reign with Jesus.

– Jesus

Of course, even GREATER than our loved ones, the angels, and the Elders put together, JESUS WILL BE THERE (the 'physical' representation of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit).

We are assured that one day we will see our Savior face to face!: "For we shall see Him as He is" [1 John 3:2].

When we see Him, we will humbly bow before the throne and cry "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" [Revelation 4:8].

We will cry "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" [Revelation 4:11].

I think author Randy Alcorn does a pretty good job in describing what it will be like to meet Jesus face to face in Heaven in his novel "Deadline," using one of the characters, "Finney":

"At the back of the crowd stood one being glowing with a soft light that did not blind, but attracted and captivated the eyes. He smiled at Finney, who trembled with joy at the immediate realization of who it was.

This was the ageless one, the Ancient of Days, who is eternally young. He stepped forward... He who had spun the galaxies into being with a single snap of his finger, he who could uncreate all that existed with no more than a thought, extended his hand to Finney, as if the hand he extended was that of a plain ordinary carpenter... For the moment, it was impossible to look elsewhere, and no one in his right mind would have wanted to.

"Welcome, my son! Enter the kingdom prepared for you, by virtue of a work done by another, a work you could not do. Here you shall receive reward for those works you did in my name, works you were created to do."

And then, with a smile that communicated more than any smile Finney had ever seen, the Great One looked into his eyes and said with obvious pride, "Well done my good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord!"

As the crowd broke out in cheers, Finney felt overwhelmed, and dropped to his knees, then flat on the ground, face down, as if the knees were still too lofty a position before the Lord of Heaven."

A 'NEW' HOME IS WAITING FOR YOU!

When one is getting ready to move, and are relocating to a new home, they usually want to know something about the physical area around their new house, the road system, the grocery store locations, and what the neighbors are like.

They are also going to have to make some changes, like their address, utilities, Internet provider, driver's license, car and home insurance, getting new doctors, dentists, and maybe even a new vet—to name a few. They want to get their lives 'in order' as soon as they can.

Well, this is similar to what the believer sees before they go to their new 'eternal' home, Heaven. They need to get their lives 'in order' here, so they know, for sure, that their new 'address' will be Heaven rather than Hell! Do you know, for sure, which 'address' you will be going to after you die?

If we don't make the proper address change here...then there's another destination that we will end up at. It's called "Hell"!

Now, let's consider which one you might prefer. In Heaven, there is going to be streets of gold, walls of Jasper, gates of pearl, an ever-flowing river of life, and a 'mansion' awaiting you. There will also be fellowship with God the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and all the 'saints' that got there before us.

There will be a life of rest, growth, and there will be no more tears, mourning, or death!

However, on the other hand, the Bible says there is a 'literal' place called Hell, where those going there will be cast into outer darkness, and will be there ALL 'ALONE'!

There will also be weeping and gnashing of teeth, where the "worm does not die and the fire is not quenched"!

I'm thinking that this is NOT the 'neighborhood' you want to relocate to—Right?

Everything the Bible says about Heaven is all 'good' stuff and everything it says about Hell is nothing but 'bad' stuff! It's your choice to which 'address' you will m

one to when you die. The thing is, you HAVE to make that decision here on earth while you are alive!

I pray you do your 'due diligence' ASAP and choose Heaven!

[NOTE: Details on the specifics of 'what' needs to be done will be discussed below.]

A BELIEVER'S HEART'S 'DESIRE'

Take a minute to consider a time when you were actually homesick for your earthly home. Remember the 'ache'? The sense of feeling like a 'stranger' in your surroundings? This is because home is where your 'heart' is!

Now, what makes home is really not the 'physical' place, but 'who' lives there. You feel at home when your heart is nestled near the one(s) you love. However, sometimes, when you least expect it, even the people who make up home are not enough. Sometimes when you are all 'tucked in' with your own pillow and blanket, with the one you love close by, another kind of homesickness—a deeper kind—sneaks up on you.

When people approached Jesus with a need, it is curious that He often responded, "What do you want?" I have always thought this was an odd thing to say since, first, He could read their minds, and second, their need was often obvious—like Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, for one. However, Jesus has His reasons for asking. He urges one to explore their heart's list of wants because He knows we desire something deeper than getting a few 'surface' needs satisfied. Then, when it comes to Heaven, He knows we desire something more fundamental than pleasure, prosperity, or power. Our heart thinks it is desperate to get back to the garden, or, if not there, then someplace where our innocence and identity are sequestered. C. S. Lewis said this:

"Our lifelong nostalgia, our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off, to be on the inside of some door which we have always seen from the outside, is no mere neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real situation. And to be at last summoned inside would be both glory and honour and also the healing of that old ache."

So, when it comes to attempting to heal that old ache, the human heart has had lots of experience. It is restless and raging, trying this and that, hoping to find

fulfillment, to possess something that will give us innocence, identity, and Heaven. Our poor 'bruised' heart, though, does not really want 'to' possess Heaven so much as to be possessed 'by' it. It desires not so much pleasure since pleasure can be exhausted. After we experience it, it is over. Our heart wants something that 'lasts'... forever—and that is 'ECSTASY'.

Ecstasy is that marvelous euphoria in which we totally forget ourselves and yet find ourselves. The dictionary describes it as a state of "overpowering emotion or exaltation," and a sidebar explains that in the Greek, ecstasy means "to stand outside oneself." However, a powerful experience like this cannot be defined by a dictionary. To appreciate its meaning, it needs to be 'experienced'!

It is a rapturous delight, intense joy, and pure passion—and when it relates to Heaven, we just want to be overpowered and caught up in something grand and wonderful 'outside' ourselves. We want to be swept up and wrapped up in a joy that weaves itself through every nerve and fiber of our body. A joy that makes time stand still, and lose all sense of time—and therefore disappointment.

THIS is what our 'heart' wants—and it will be TOTALLY 'FULFILLED' when we experience Heaven!

IN THE 'HEART' OF GOD

God is the only One that can provide the healing for an old 'ache'. That's why Heaven has to be more than a place. It must be much, much more. It must be a Person.

If you need a bit more convincing, then take this test that Saint Augustine gave his students centuries ago:

"Imagine that God appeared to you and said, 'You want heaven? I'll make a deal with you. I'll give you anything and everything you ask. Nothing will be a sin; nothing will be forbidden; and nothing will be impossible for you. You will never be bored, and you will never die. Only... you shall never see my face.'"

Hmmm. Do you feel a 'chill' in your soul? Did your heart and mind 'recoil' at all? Is your desire to want God more than anything else in the world? As Augustine said, "Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee."

The thing is, God has placed within you a 'yearning' for Himself, a desire to know

Him and understand what He is like. Every soul feels the void and the emptiness until it connects with its Maker. Maybe this portion of the poem “Each In His Own Tongue” by William Herbert Carruth will help:

*“Like tides on a crescent sea-beach,
When the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts high yearnings
Come welling and surging in—
Come from the mystic ocean,
Whose rim no foot has trod—
Some of us call it Longing,
And others call it God.”*

Pleasures and treasures on earth may be sought and not found, but only God comes with the ‘guarantee’ that He will be found: “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, ‘and will bring you back from captivity’” [Jeremiah 29:13-14]. Woo-hoo! No more exile! No more strangers in a strange land! God assures us that, “I will be found by you.”

More specifically, He will be found ‘in’ and ‘through’ Jesus! “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” [John 14:6]. Then He said: “If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen Him” [John 14:7].

Jesus continued to tell His disciples that “I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me.” ***Jesus is the ONLY way to get to the heart of God. Do you ‘know’ Jesus?***

HEAVENLY ‘REWARDS’

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught that one should “rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven” [Matthew 5:12a]. In the same sermon, Jesus addresses something more specific than rewards:

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”

[Mathew 6:19-21].

The author of the book “Heaven,” Randy Alcorn, says that, “Jesus invites us to choose our treasury. Will we invest our treasures on earth and lose them when we die? Or will we invest our treasures in Heaven, where they will be ours for eternity?”

The Apostle Paul said of this: “Each one’s work will become manifest, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward” [1 Corinthians 3:13-14].

Paul essentially says that any work done on the ‘foundation’—Jesus—will not only survive, but will be rewarded. However, any work that is done for ‘selfish’ motives will be “burned up.” So, the attitude is most important. We should not expect the reward if our heart is corrupt, even if we “do all the right things.” So, as one works, they need to keep in mind that God is their ultimate reward. If we were to receive no other rewards, HE WOULD BE ‘ENOUGH’!

It seems clear that part of God’s reward to the believer is a ‘proportional’ gift of responsibility in administering His new Creation. Work, therefore, is not a punishment, but a gift, one we begin here but continue there. The parable of the ten minas (Luke 19:12-26) seems to suggest that one will have heavenly responsibilities commensurate with their earthly faithfulness (having responsibility over “cities”).

Yes, we will indeed rest in Heaven, but we will also work, and it will be fulfilling, energizing, exciting, and satisfying. There will be no more working “by the sweat of one’s brow” in Heaven!

In another portion of Scripture, Jesus says that he will “repay each one for what he has done” (Revelation 22:12). ***The question is, will He ‘catch you’ working when He comes back?***

We shall be also given “crowns.” The Apostle Paul said, “Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing” [2 Timothy 4:8].

King David gives us a hint as to what kind of crown God means: “For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory” [Psalm 149:4]. Aha! God probably doesn’t mean a ‘literal’ crown, because victory isn’t something you put on your head. Heavenly crowns must represent something He does, something He gives, as when He crowns us with victory—with His salvation. The thing is, this will probably be more resplendent and illustrious than any old hunk of platinum with a lot of sparkly things attached to it!

There are also a few other “crowns” mentioned in Scripture: The crown of life (James 1:12), reserved for those who persevere under trial; the crown of rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19), given to believers who introduce others to Christ; the eternal, incorruptible crown (1 Corinthians 9:25,) presented to those who are found pure and blameless on the Judgment Day; the crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4), reserved for Christian leaders who have guided others; and my favorite, the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8) for those who are itching to have Jesus come back.

Start doing the ‘works’ of God so you can humbly cast your crowns at His feet! (Revelation 4:10-11).

TOO ‘HEAVENLY-MINDED’?

There is a saying that says, “Some people are so earthly-minded that they are no heavenly good.” However, for me, I think it is rather, “Some people are so earthly-minded that they are no heavenly good!” While we think pursuing our earthly lives is the most important thing to bring peace and prosperity to the planet, God is ‘telling’ us that we need to pursue heavenly priorities in order to do the most earthly good.

A focus on Heaven IS very ‘practical’, and perhaps the most practical focus a believer can have. An earthly can only take us so far. I think ‘eternal’ things are more important—which gives much hope peace, and comfort.

The thing is, when believers realize that their citizenship is in Heaven, they begin acting as ‘responsible’ citizens of earth. They invest wisely in relationships because they know they are eternal. Their conversations, goals, and motives become pure and honest because they realize these will have a bearing on an everlasting reward. They give generously of time, money, and talent because they are laying up treasures for eternity. They spread the Good News of Jesus because they long to fill Heaven’s ranks with their friends and neighbors. All this

serves the pilgrims well, not only in Heaven, but on earth, for it serves everyone around them.

In Revelation 2 and 3, God unfolds the rewards He has reserved in heaven for you and me, His 'overcomers'. Margaret Clarkson took a 'stab' at describing each reward:

“The fruit of the tree of life, the hidden manna—what food that will be for souls that hunger and thirst for God! The white stone, with the new and secret name known only to God and the soul that receives it—what infinite value our God must set on individuality of personality to know each one of His overcomers so personally and so intimately! The white raiment, forever spotless—what a joy after this life of soiling and defeat! The pillar eternally erect—what a strength after this pilgrimage of weakness and failure! To receive the morning star, sweet synonym for the Savior’s own person; to be given the holy name of God Himself and the name of His city and the new name of the Lamb—only a God like ours could have designed rewards such as these! And only the Head that was crowned with thorns could fashion such crowns of life, righteousness, and glory... What can we do but fall down before Him who sits upon the throne and worship Him for ever and ever?”

HOW TO 'PREPARE'

Jesus is preparing a 'home' for the believer in Heaven. So, how can one 'prepare' for their meeting with Jesus? Well, Pastor A.W. Pink described one important way one can prepare for their heavenly dwelling—living with eager 'anticipation':

“Today the average 'home' is little more than a boarding-house—a place to eat and sleep in. But "home" used to mean, and still means to a few, the place where we are loved for our own sakes; the place where we are always welcome; the place whither we can retire from the strife of the world and enjoy rest and peace, the place where loved ones are together. Such will Heaven be. Believers are now in a strange country, yea, in an enemy’s land; in the life to come, they will be at Home!”

God provides many insights into our future life in the His 'House'. Yet, many of us fail to see the next life as better than what we enjoy today. Perhaps Pastor Erwin Lutzer described it best when he said:

“The fact that we don’t view death with optimism just might be because we think of death as taking us from our home rather than bringing us to our home! Unlike Paul,

we have become so attached to our tent that we just don't want to move."

This is especially true today in an age of materialism, prosperity, and success. We have much to 'hold' us to this earth. As a result, we often lose sight of our eternal destination. It is not that we resist Heaven because of the appeal of Hell, but because of the love of earth. This is why the Bible reminds us that the things of this world alone WILL 'NEVER' SATISFY the deepest longings of the human 'heart'. We are all made for something better than this!

Author C. S. Lewis said, "If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world."

WHY IS HEAVEN 'NEGLECTED'?

One obvious reason why many of us do not reflect on Heaven nearly as much as we should, is that we are too preoccupied with this present world. We are surrounded by what we can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. If one takes a coin in their hand and holds it close to their eye, it will block out the sun—and they will see nothing, but that small, shiny coin. Now, the sun is bigger than the coin, but because the coin is close it blocks out there, say something incomparably greater in size.

The daily realities of life may be either big, nor ultimately, important, but they are 'close' to us, so they impinge upon us. The danger is that the very closeness of this world blocks out the infinitely far-reaching prospect of the glorious world which is to come.

Another reason for neglecting Heaven is that, at least in the Western world, is that we are too 'comfortable'. For the most part, we are comparatively rich, reasonably healthy, and tolerably happy. Life is sweet and, without realizing it, we are 'drugged' by well-being and prosperity. Tragedy stabs us awake and makes a suddenly and poignantly aware of Heaven and Hell. A loved one becomes seriously ill, and we find, in an instant, that Heaven is no longer theoretical or far away. It is very real, and we long to find out more about it. But, for much of the time, we are content as we are.

Other generations of believers had more of the 'pilgrim' spirit. They sang "This world is not my home" and "I'm just passing through." They described themselves as "pilgrims through this barren land." But, our world is a rich one, a pleasant one,

and we have put down roots. We have traded the “sweet by and by” for the prosperous here and now. This is an era of instant gratification, and there is so much to enjoy. In the present society, it offers us a dazzling array of experiences: from the new technologies of interactive entertainment to evermore, exotic foreign vacations. The very comfort of this world makes Heaven less inviting.

We also neglect Heaven because we see it as nothing more than the end-of-it-all next ‘stage’ in our existence. This is certainly how unbelievers think. However, many professing Christians have a similar view. They believe in Heaven, and believe that it will happen in the future. So, when it does, they will no doubt enjoy it—but, in the meantime, why waste time wondering about it? How will daydreams help us today? Heaven will come when it comes. There will be time enough to think about it then.

Believer can also be curiously apathetic about Heaven, and they are clumsy at understanding or communicating its beauty. Literary critics have commented on a difference between John Milton’s two great poems, “Paradise Lost,” and “Paradise Regained.” Paradise Lost is a superior, work, more vivid, colorful, and gripping, while Paradise Regained, is that times, bland and rather lifeless.

Milton seemed to find it easier to write about Hell than he did about Heaven. In some ways, Heaven is not attractive to us. There is truth, as well as tragic humor in the story of a woman who was asked about a friend who died, and who answered, rather impatiently, “Well, I suppose she is enjoying eternal bliss, but I don’t want to talk about such an unpleasant subject.” What?!

Christians are sometimes ‘brainwashed’ into neglecting Heaven. They can be too eager to please those outside the church, anxiously asking them what they expect from the Church, and assuring the unbeliever that they will try to provide it. [The Christian Church’s ‘main’ mission is to make disciples (educate the believer).]

The ‘world’ claims to want what is obviously relevant: “If you have nothing practical to teach us, we don’t want to listen to you. We need help for the here and now, for today, and tomorrow. What concrete benefit will your message bring me now? How can I put it to use right now? Don’t talk to me about ‘pie in the sky’. I’m not interested in any fairy tale future world.”

The thing is, too often the Church has capitulated to that thinking, and has neglected the glory to come—Heaven. What are the most damaging slogans of

Satan has been the criticism that Christians are to “heavenly-minded to be of any earthly good.” Well, we want to be useful on earth, of course, but we think the ‘compromise’ is to be less heavenly-minded. However, on the contrary, it is ONLY those who are heavenly-minded, who are ultimately of much earthly good at all!

This accusation has been a master stroke of the Devil. His influence is behind much of our neglect of Heaven. For it is in his interest to cause us to neglect it, to blind our minds to this glorious possibility, and to focus our attention short-sightedly on the immediate present.

Finally, we neglect Heaven because it is a reality too awesome for our limited minds to grasp—too transcendent, too glorious. Our little brains cannot manage it. Paul wrote, “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” [1 Corinthians 2:9]. It seems that it is simply beyond our comprehension, and for those reasons—among others—Heaven is a neglected doctrine.

So, does it matter that we don’t think of Heaven as often as we should? Well, I think it matters profoundly!

It matters first, because many people who take it for granted that they are going to Heaven, are NOT GOING! There is no evidence in their lives (“fruit”), that they are ‘joined’ to Jesus. They are nurturing a false hope.

We hear the flippant comments that are past when famous people die. Someone says that they are looking down from above, pleasantly surprised by the large and impressive attendance at the funeral. We hear about how golfers are enjoying playing the best courses and the fisherman are ‘bagging’ the largest catches ever!

They may have shown little interest in the things of God, while they are on earth, they may never have professed faith in Jesus, but it is taken for granted that Heaven is where they will end up. To suggest otherwise is to be branded a demonic bigot. Many who assume that they are going to Heaven have no good reason for their careless assumption. The thing is, they WILL face a most appalling shock! Their neglect of Heaven WILL BE ‘LETHAL’!

Again, it really matters because many of the current popular ideas about the life to come are grotesquely inaccurate. Most of the current best sellers about Heaven

are a toxic mixture of misquoted Bible verses, New Age philosophy, the occult, empty, sentiment, and superstition. This hodgepodge of confusion and falsehood is deluding people, not all of whom, sadly, are outside the Church! Their minds are being 'poisoned'. It is said that, "Nature abhors a vacuum," and if the truth of the Bible is not taught, error will replace it!

Lastly, it matters for the spiritual growth of the believer, and their effectiveness in service. By neglecting what the Bible says about Heaven, they leave themselves much poorer, weaker, and in more 'trouble' than they need to be. Most of the teaching about Heaven in Scripture is not for evangelism, but for pastoring the people of God. God explains Heaven primarily for the believer's sake—to help and comfort them, to encourage and strengthen them, to make them more holy, and to fill them with joy.

The doctrine of Heaven is revealed to shine light on a believer's life in the here and now—to enable them to be better people today and tomorrow. They cheat themselves if they do not make use of this wonderful teaching. It is an ENORMOUS 'BLESSING' to know about Heaven, and does not need to be left in the 'dark' about it!

While heaven is too great for unbelievers to understand, too magnificent to be grasped by unaided human reason, God has revealed these things to the believer by His Holy Spirit so the believer will neglect it no longer!

NOT 'GUESSWORK'

Going to Heaven is NOT a matter of 'guesswork' or hope! ("I hope I'm going to make it to Heaven. I have done a lot of good things.") Nope, Jesus did the 'GOOD' THING. He went to the Cross and died in our place. He took the wrath of God against us. When He rose from the dead, He gave us the 'gift' of eternal life. Everyone that wants to go to Heaven just needs to 'authentically' put their faith and trust in what He did. The Bible tells us that whoever will call on the name of the Lord WILL be saved (Romans 10:13).

There are many things that demand our attention in life, and there are many 'voices' calling to us, BUT none is greater than the 'voice' of God. As time marches on, one thing is certain—that we will face death at some point. That is the great 'equalizer'. It makes no difference 'who' we are. When we face death, we are facing an impartial 'Judge'. The Bible reminds us that, "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23) and that the "wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). So,

when death comes knocking on one's 'door', all that really matters is that they are ready to face it, have put their trust 'in' Jesus as their Savior.

SO, if you want to make that decision today, I encourage you to 'call' on Him RIGHT 'NOW'!

[You can pray the Reconciliation Prayer below, or just tell Jesus, in your own words, that you repent of your sins, believe that He has atoned for those sins by His death, and you will obey everything He said in the Bible, making Him your Lord and Savior.]

“TOP DOWN PERSPECTIVE”

Gary R Habermas and JP Moreland have come up with a term, the “top down perspective.” That is precisely what the believer needs during their earthly pilgrimage on earth as they sojourn toward their heavenly country:

“The God of the universe invites us to view life and death from his eternal vantage point. And if we do, we will see how readily it can revolutionize our lives: daily anxieties, emotional hurts, tragedies, our responses and responsibilities to others, possessions, wealth, and even physical pain and death. All of this and much more can be informed and influenced by the truths of heaven. The repeated witness of the New Testament is that believers should view all problems, indeed, their entire existence, from what we call the “top down perspective”: God and his kingdom first, Followed by various aspects of our earthly existence.”

Heavenly-mindedness can help us keep our heads ‘screwed on straight’ as believers. Pastor Mark Buchanan put it like this: “Heavenly-mindedness is sanity. It is the best regimen for keeping our hearts whole, our minds clear... it allows us to indoor lights agonies without despair.”

It can also motivate the believer to engage in the work that really matters. Indeed, Buchanan says, “those who have cultivated a genuine heaven-mindedness—who have named and nurtured the human longing for ‘elsewhere’ and ‘otherwise’—have been people who have worked and prayed the most passionately, courageously, tirelessly, and unswervingly for the kingdom to come on earth as it is in Heaven.

J Oswald Sanders agrees, noting: “A study of history, both secular and sacred, reveals the Christians who have affected the most significant social change have

been those who have been gripped by ‘the powers of the coming age’ (Hebrews 6:5).”

Certainly, a top-down perspective comes in handy when life throws us a ‘punch’. Author Randy Alcorn said that, “Anticipating Heaven doesn’t illuminate pain, but it lessens it and puts it in perspective. It reminds us that suffering and death are temporary conditions.” He is spot on in his assessment that, “the biblical doctrine of Heaven is about the future, but it has tremendous benefits here and now. If we grasp it, it will shift our center of gravity and radically change our perspective on life.”

A top-down perspective also helps us to have a balanced perspective on money and wealth. Pastor John MacArthur is correct when he says our goals “should not include the accumulation of possessions here. Are real wealth—our eternal reward—is in Heaven (Matthew 5:12).” So why, then, do so many believers spend a lifetime staying busier than a bee, seeking to accumulate material wealth? They often do so to the detriment of spending quality time with significant others. We must be cautious not to be deceived by the enticing allurements of the world which are PASSING ‘AWAY’!

A key Bible verse that supports the top down perspective is Matthew 6:19–34. Here, Jesus informs us that anxiety will not change anything. Certainly, it will not increase the length of our lives (verse 27). The believer’s goal, therefore, should be to store up treasures in Heaven. This will help rid their lives of anxiety. Make note of this principle: “Our hearts will coincide with the placement of our treasures.”

If the believer is anxious over temporal problems, their hearts are not centered on what should be their first love. If we have perpetual anxiety, we are more occupied with transient realities than Jesus intended. So, in Matthew 6:19–34, We have a ready-made test by which we can assess the depth of our beliefs.

Our goal, then, should be to maintain a top down perspective but to concentrate our concerns on the eternal, not on the temporal (2 Corinthians 4:18).

This perspective is a radical love of God that places is Him first and foremost in every aspect of our lives. “Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things” [Colossians 3:2]. Then, when we do this, God has promised to meet all our earthly needs as part of the ‘package’ (Matthew 6:33). What could be better?!

HEAVENLY 'PERSPECTIVE'

Those who live with a heavenly perspective discover abundant life as God intended it here on earth. Ironically, those who pursue earthly comforts are really the most uncomfortable people on earth. As the Puritan theologian Richard Baxter wrote, "A heavenly mind is a joyful mind; this is the nearest and truest way to live a life of comfort, and without this, you must need be uncomfortable. Can a man be at a fire and not be warm; or in the sunshine and not have light? Can your heart be in heaven, and not have comfort? [On the other hand,] what could make such frozen, uncomfortable Christians but living so far as they do from Heaven?... O Christian, get above. Believe it, that region is warmer than this below."

Baxter went on to write that, "There is no man so highly honoureth God, as he who hath his conversation in heaven; and without this we deeply dishonor Him... He holds for the sceptre, if they will but enter."

God has given us a 'down payment' on Heaven. He has transferred our citizenship there. We "are no longer strangers and aliens, but... Our fellow citizens, with the saints and members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). We therefore cannot ignore Heaven's glory, as if it had no significance. In Baxter's words, "There is nothing else that is worth setting our hearts on."

I know few truths in Scripture that are more liberating to the soul than this: "Our citizenship is in Heaven, and from it, we await our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself" [Philippians 3:20-21].

That is where our 'hearts' should be. The cares of this world are nothing but a snare and a deadly 'pit'. "The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things" as unholy diversions that quote, enter in and show the word, and it proves unfruitful" [Mark 4:19]. Similarly, the Apostle John wrote, "All that is in the world—the desires of the flesh, and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the father, but is from the world" [1 John 2:16].

Now, best of all, we can live in the 'glow' of Heaven, glory in the here and now, with our hearts already in Heaven. This is to say that the Christian life is meant to be a 'foretaste' of Heaven, on earth. Believers can daily partake of the sweet, satisfying benefits of the same Heaven, to which, someday they will go to dwell forever. Praising and loving God with all their being, adoring Jesus, pursuing holiness, cherishing fellowship of the other saints—are just some of the elements

of the heavenly life believer believers already savor in this world. Those same pursuits and privileges will occupy them forever, but, as they see the fruit of the Holy Spirit come to maturity in their lives, they should begin to enjoy and treasure of the goodness of Heaven, in a very full sense even now on earth.

YOUR FUTURE MATTERS ‘TODAY’!!!

The choices we make today determine what happens to us in the future, and God has a wonderful plan for our eternal destiny. The Apostle Paul said confidently: “If God is for us, who can be against us?” [Romans 8:31].

Author and Bible teacher Grant Jeffrey wrote something similar:

“The greatest adventure of man’s history lies before us if we will only turn from our sin and accept God’s offer of eternal life. The word of God tells us that, ‘the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Romans 6:23). We do not have to wait until we die to receive eternal life. The moment we accept Christ pardon, we are transformed from spiritual death to eternal life.”

We are living in the most incredible times the world has ever known. Live reports via satellite beam the latest events from around the globe into our ‘living’ rooms every day. For the first time in human history, technology has allowed us to watch global development of great significance as they unfold before our eyes. Everything from political crises to international conflicts and global pandemics come to us live as they are happening around the world.

Many people believe that we are living in the End Times (as I do)—an era when the world will be plunged into a series of cataclysmic disasters. Despite incredible medical, scientific, and technological advances, only an ignorant person quit thinking that humans are clever enough to avoid a final confrontation of disastrous consequences. We may dodge the apocalyptic ‘bullet’ a few more times, but sooner or later, we will have to face the final moment of history.

In light of this, the Bible has much to say about our eternal future. Whereas unbelievers face the hopelessness of eternity without God, believers have much to hope for. They know that one day Jesus will come to take them to the Father’s ‘House’! (John 14:1-3).

WHY HEAVEN 'MATTERS'

The afterlife is common to all humanity. God, we are told, “has put eternity in their hearts” (Ecclesiastes 3:11), and human beings seem to know instinctively that there is another life behind this one.

In the pyramids of Egypt, the embalmed bodies had maps beside them as a guide for the future world. The Greeks and the Romans believed in a spirit world into which the dead would enter. Native Americans, buried bows and arrows in their tribal graves for use in the happy hunting ground in the future. Today, we hear of women asking for their make-up bag to be buried with them. So, it seems that belief in a life to come is a constant element in human culture.

Yet, there is a paradox in all of this. Many people say they believe in Heaven, but their interest in it is ‘superficial’. This belief does not seem to make any difference in the way they live. It has no practical impact on their behavior. To all intents and purposes, they ignore that future which they hope to experience and enjoy.

More perplexingly still, we find within Christianity itself less interest in Heaven than at almost any time in history. Few valuable modern books have been written on this topic.

One of the great textbooks of reform theology is Louis Berkoff’s “Systematic Theology.” Yet, Berkoff strangely devotes only one of his 784 pages to the subject of Heaven! It is not often preached about and Christians, when they meet together, rarely discuss the life to come and the prospect of glory!

We may also be surprised that unbelievers are so unaffected by thoughts of Heaven, in which they say they believe. It sure is baffling that believers, who through faith in Christ have a good reason to anticipate going to Heaven and being there forever, devote to it so little time or attention.

SET YOUR 'HEART' ON THINGS ABOVE

So, I think there is a solution. It may take effort, and it will require commitment, but it can be solved: “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” [Colossians 3:1]. The believer’s ‘heart’ is the seat of all kinds of appetites and affections.

Now, to ‘hunger’ is human, but to satiate oneself on God is to ‘send’ their heart ahead to Heaven. If one ‘feeds’ on God with all their heart, they will be yanking that foot out of the ‘mud’ and stepping closer to eternity.

I'll admit it is a constant struggle to set our hearts on things above. We always want more 'stuff'. Where we place our citizenship—whether in Heaven or on earth—is revealed by those things we passionately desire. If we desire the 'sensual' things of earth, our souls reflect that. However, if our desires rise to find fulfillment in the exalted, in the noble, in the pure, and in the praiseworthy, then and only then will we find satisfaction, rich and pleasurable.

The 'great' in the Kingdom of Heaven will simply be those who set their hearts on Jesus and loved Him as much as they could muster. The great will be those who, having received a "You're off course!" warning from the heart's 'homing detector', simply get back on track.

So, focus on Jesus, not on your heart's list of desires. "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart" [Psalm 37:4]. Yes, I realize that curbing the appetites of my heart will heighten my desires on earth. However, I am convinced that I am destined for unlimited pleasure at the deepest level in Heaven—very soon!

I also know that nothing now quite meets the standards of my yearning heart, and this quiet but throbbing ache drives me to anticipate heavenly glories above. So, for me, true contentment on earth means asking less of this life, because MUCH MORE is coming in the next!

Godly contentment is great gain—heavenly gain. Because God has created the appetites in your heart, it stands to reason that He must be the consummation of that hunger. Yes, Heaven will 'galvanize' your heart if you focus your faith, not on a place of glittery mansions, but on the Person, Jesus, who 'MAKES' Heaven a home!

SET YOUR 'MIND' ON THINGS ABOVE

Now, the verse right after setting one's heart on things above is "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" [Colossians 3:2]. The original Greek of this passage is intense: "diligently, actively, single-mindedly, pursue the things above." It is also a present tense, carrying the idea, "Perpetually keeping on seeking the things above," making it an 'ongoing' process.

So, when you think about it, setting our minds on things above makes good sense. After all, the earth is temporal—it is passing away. Heaven is eternal, and it will last forever. Then, knowing this, why set our minds on that which is fleeting? It is such an unwise thing to do, and yet so many believers today seem focused

only on the things this world has to offer.

Well, one of the reasons that we should set our minds on things above is that this is where the believer's true 'citizenship' is: "Our citizenship is in Heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ" [Philippians 3:20].

This is where they truly belong, and where they are ultimately headed. Believers are "strangers and exiles on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13), and pilgrims en route to the heavenly country (Hebrews 11:16). This, in itself, should be a source of strength when life gets tough.

Biblical scholar Arnold Fruchtenbaum urges:

"What that means practically is that all trials and tribulations in this life do not need to be taken to the point of defeat or to the point of the point of depression. Rather, believers can't look upon down and say, 'This, too, will pass; I am only a temporary resident on this earth, in this land. This, too, will pass. My citizenship is in heaven. I will someday know the full joy of the Lord.'"

The believer should be continually contemplating about Jesus, and thinking "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable" [Philippians 4:8].

HOPE THAT 'FUELS' FAITH

Our hope in the future glory of the afterlife uses our faith in the present. Hope and faith—these are closely tied to each other in the pages of Scripture. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that faith involves "being sure of what we hope for" (Hebrews 11:1).

In his classic work, "Institutes of the Christian Religion," John Calvin delineates for us how hope relates to faith: "Hope, refreshes faith, that it may not become weary. It sustains faith to the final goal, that it may not fail in mid-course, or even at the starting gate. In short, by unremitting, renewing and restoring, it invigorates faith again, and again with perseverance."

Truly, the believer's faith enables them to perceive the eternal. Theologian John Wesley had great insight on the subject:

“True Christian faith fulfills man’s desires to perceive the eternal. It gives him a more extensive knowledge of all things invisible. Living Faith introduces him to what the eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, nor the heart conceived in the clearest light, with the fullest certainty and evidence. Knowing these benefits, who would not wish for such a fate? With Faith comes not only this awareness, but also the fulfillment of the promise of holiness and happiness.”

The “Prince of preachers” Charles Spurgeon once said, “A little faith will bring your soul to Heaven; a great faith will bring heaven to your soul.” Such faith rests in the assurance that regardless of what happens on this ‘speck’ of a planet, our destiny is the heavenly country in the very presence of Jesus!

So, because of a believer’s personal relationship with God, they no longer need to fear death—it has been conquered! As King David said, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod, and your staff, they comfort me [Psalm 23:4].

Therefore, when believers pass-through death’s ‘door’, neither pain nor death will ever be experienced by them again, for God “Will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning, or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” [Revelation 21:4].

[FYI: For more details on how the believer can no longer fear death, view last month’s “Life’s Deep Thoughts” post:
<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/greatest-fear-v287/>].

‘STORING UP’ TREASURES

The desire of human beings is that we want to make sure we have something that is going to last, and that we have enough for the future. So, Jesus says, “Okay, let Me tell you how to get all that and be really happy: Store up treasures in Heaven!” Jesus is never against the human impulse for treasure. He is against the ‘fool’ who thinks that earthly treasure really satisfies or really lasts.

There’s an old joke that you will never see a hearse pulling a U-Haul because you can’t take it with you. So, Jesus says that if you want to be safe, secure, have enough, have a mansion, stock that never depreciates, a retirement account that never loses value, then store up treasure in Heaven, because there’s no ‘rust’ there, there are no ‘moths’ there, and there’s no downturn in the economy there.

So, think about what really matters.

The desire for security is not bad. The desire for possessions is not bad. The desire for joy is not bad. Jesus says just don't be a 'fool' about it. There is "an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade, and is kept in Heaven for you!" (1 Peter 1:4). Jesus 'PROMISES' that if one puts their faith in Him, 'walks' with Him in faith and repentance, then all this—and MORE—will be waiting for them in Heaven!

The thing is, the believer gets the Holy Spirit as their 'down payment' on this unimaginably rich inheritance to come, and then, know what you have coming, it becomes much easier to share now what really isn't yours!

THIS WORLD IS NOT MY HOME!

There is a tendency for most of us to hold tightly to this world because it is all that we know. It is familiar to us. All our deepest relationships are built here. We too easily think of it as 'home'. So, we become 'captive' to this life.

However, notice that the Apostle Paul says that he would rather be "at home" with the Lord. That is precisely what the Greek expression in the original text signifies. It is a form of the verb "endemeo," which translates "to be at home." We are most truly "at home" only when we are finally with the Lord. Paul understood this. The knowledge that he 'belongs' in Heaven, was the very thing that helped him endure all the struggles he experienced in his life.

The believer should also look forward to being absent from the body and present with the Lord. They should become more preoccupied with the glories of eternity than they are with the 'affections' of earth.

When Jesus was asked by the rich young ruler, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" [Luke 18:18], Jesus said to keep the Commandments. The rich young ruler said that he had kept all of them since he was a boy.

Well, not knowing him, I can't absolutely say that he didn't do this—but since he was a human, I can say absolutely he didn't—Jesus went for the 'juggler' by asking the ruler to give up his 'idol'—his riches. However, since he "was wealthy," he could not do that and turned away without believing. Sadly, Jesus said, "How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God!" [Luke 18:24].

When a person ‘trusts’ Jesus, that person is saved, inherits eternal life, and enters into the Kingdom of God. Believers come under God’s rule and authority, and the influence of Jesus is extended to them.

So, while the believer doesn’t yet live physically in Heaven, they do have their ‘spiritual’ citizenship in the heavenly realm and, therefore, they should be preoccupied with heavenly things!

GOING THERE ‘BEFORE’ YOU DIE

Jesus promised that He would come again to this earth to take His believers to Heaven with Him, and this is called the “Blessed Hope” for believers—and it’s no ordinary hope.

Believers don’t hope for it as they hope for sunshine on the day of a picnic, or for their home team to win the Super Bowl. No, believers are actually **QUITE CERTAIN** of Jesus’ return. The Apostle Paul made it clear:

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good works”

[Titus 2:11-14].

So, believers are to be actively, anxiously, eagerly, and continually looking for this “Blessed Hope,” which most Bible commentators feel is the event described as the “Rapture” [The Greek word used here, “harpazo,” means “caught up” and “snatched away,” whereas it’s the Latin word “Rapere” that we get the “Rapture” from.] Again, the Apostle Paul gives the believer hope:

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will

be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord"

[1 Thessalonians 4:13-17].

Now, an important aspect of all this is that there is nothing that must be prophetically fulfilled before this happens. The Rapture is a 'signless' event, in contrast to the "Second Coming," which has seven years of 'signs' beforehand. It's no wonder that the Apostle Paul said, "The hour has come for you to wake from sleep for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed" [Romans 13:11-12]. James also said that, "The coming of the Lord is at hand" [James 5:8]. The fact that the Rapture can occur any moment should spur all believers on to live righteously, right now!

The great preacher Charles Spurgeon said that, "The coming of the Lord lies the great hope of the believer, his great stimulus to overcome evil, his main incentive to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord."

Spurgeon related this passage to a section of "The Pilgrim's Progress" (which he read through every year!): "We hurry through this Vanity Fair: before us lies the Celestial City and the coming of the Lord who is its King. Just as voyagers cross the Atlantic, and so pass from shore to shore, so do we speed over the waves of this ever-changing world to the glory-land of the bright appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

To me, it seems that the evidence is overwhelming (Biblical scholars call it "convergence"). We are living in the days when all of these things have even been possible in the past 2,000 years, let alone actually happening concurrently. It seems to me that God is 'shouting' from the heavens, "Jesus is coming soon!"

IN A 'TWINKLING OF AN EYE'

As I just mentioned, I—and many biblical scholars—believe that the next 'event' on the prophetic calendar is the "Rapture"—that moment when believers are "caught up in the air to meet the Lord"—in their new, resurrected bodies, to be reunited with loved ones who have gone before them. The thing is, "in the fullness of time"—and no one knows that day and time—the living believers will be taken in the "twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52).

End-time prophecy expert, Pastor Mark Hitchcock, in his book "Could The Rapture Happen Today," said that, "The Rapture of the church is that future event

when Jesus Christ will descend from heaven to resurrect the bodies of departed believers and to transform and translate the bodies of living believers immediately into His glorious presence in a moment of time and then escort them to heaven to live with Him forever” (refers to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Now, as I mentioned previously, no one on earth knows the day or the hour of the Rapture—and there is nothing that needs to happen prophetically for it to happen. So, it can happen at ANY TIME now. (As far as I am concerned, it could happen before you finish reading is post.)

The Apostle Paul wrote of the unfathomable speed that it will happen: “Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed” [1 Corinthians 15:51-52].

Wikipedia says that the “twinkling of an eye” is about one-six-billionth of a second. One moment one is going through life and the next moment they are gone!

The thing is, if you don’t die before the Rapture, you WANT to be raptured, because sometime after the Rapture, there will be a time called the "Tribulation," which will be ‘HORRENDOUS’!

[FYI: For more details on the Tribulation, view this previous “Life’s Deep Thoughts” post:
<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/final-tribulation-v246/>].

Now, EVERYONE has an ‘appointment’ with God when one’s life on this earth has ended, and they enter eternity—to either Heaven or Hell! **So, everyone MUST be ready! Are you?**

[FYI: For more details about becoming “born again,” view this previous “Life’s Deep Thoughts” post:
<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/developing-ones-character-v283/>].

So, does the prospect of Jesus’ coming suddenly and unexpectedly thrill you or scare you? Remember, the believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and the unbelievers will be left on this earth. It is as simple as that.

So, if you want that ‘door’ open for you in Heaven, ***you have to get right with God now, before you die, so that you are not ‘left behind’ and end up in Hell for eternity!***

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_z9oMPc07Ns

[VIDEO: “Pilgrim’s Progress: Journey To Heaven” - Thrown Into Hell From Heaven’s Gate]

The writer to the Hebrews makes it very clear that one needs to be ‘reconciled’ to God BEFORE they die: “Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment [Hebrews 9:27], and the Apostle Paul urges one to DO IT NOW (since no one knows the date of their death): “Behold, now is the day of salvation” [2 Corinthians 6:2].

WRAP-UP

Dorothy was spot-on: “There’s no place like home.” As we journey through life—dodging the occasional wicked witch—it is comforting to know that a cozy bed, loving arms, and perhaps even a Munchkin or two await, just across the threshold. The following are some quotes about what “home” means to them:

– *“A warm bed that you can’t get out of in the morning, a tiny pink toothbrush in the bathroom, and the sound of my husband’s key in the door at the end of the day.” [D. Nilsen]*

– *“The sensation of peace on a cozy, rainy Sunday; the feeling of relief when you pull into the driveway after a long trip; a quiet kiss on the head of a baby asleep in my lap; and the warmth of my husband’s arms. Home has been many places for me over the years, but its comforts are defined by simple, blissful moments like these.” [S. Bernard]*

– *“Home is a place you can feel comfortable cooking breakfast in your pajamas.” [D. Halloran]*

– *“Anywhere my husband is. ‘You’re My Home’ is an old Billy Joel song, and that is what is engraved on the inside of his wedding band. The lyrics are ‘I’ll never be a stranger, and I’ll never be alone. Wherever we’re together, that’s my home.’ After 12 years and two kids, it’s still true.” [J. Rook]*

- *“Home isn’t a place; it’s a feeling.” [W. Skelton]*
- *“Whether I’m in my husband’s warm arms or smelling the sweet smell of my newborn baby, home means always having someone to nuzzle with before drifting off to sleep.” [N. Plummer]*
- *“Home is being around people who can drive you absolutely crazy one moment and make you feel like a million dollars the next. It’s knowing that no matter how hard times get, someone is there for you.” [L. Williams]*
- *“Home means sanctuary.” [B. Keenan]*
- *“A place that evokes a sigh of relief as I walk in the door.” [C. Golden]*
- *“Home is my soft place to land.” [M. Hicks]*
- *“As the saying goes, home is where the mom is.” [V. Warner]*
- *“A good man, a good chair, and a good wine.” [D. Sullivan]*
- *“I know I’m home when I feel loved and secure and the clutter is all mine.” [B. Santoro]*

Now, a more ‘official’ definition comes from the ‘experts’, Merriam-Webster, where they define “home” as “one’s place of residence; domicile; house.” But there’s another kind of home. It is the intangible ‘feeling’ one experiences: a sense of peace, joy from loved ones or an environment where everyone knows they are welcome. So, “home” isn’t easy to define, however, it’s amazing that one knows when they are ‘there’.

A few subjects come up when trying to ‘compartmentalize’ what home means. they include comfort, safety, where one is welcome, where one puts down ‘roots’, and sometimes where one’s dreams become reality.

Feeling secure at home is often where one can retreat when times are tough and where they depend on family and the familiar to restore our sense of peace. People say that, “Home to me is where I feel safe, secure, loved and accepted,” is a place where “the hugs abound and peace is found.” Others have defined it as “where the heart can laugh without shyness,” and “where the heart’s tears can dry at their own pace.” The science fiction author Pierce Brown defines it as “Home

isn't where you're from, it's where you find light when all grows dark."

Now, no matter where life takes us, many of us see home as the place where we are always 'wanted' and 'welcomed'. It is where one can be their true selves. author and speaker Mary DeMuth said, "I want my home to be that kind of place—a place of sustenance, a place of invitation, a place of welcome."

There is an Irish proverb that says: "May you always have walls for the winds, a roof for the rain, tea beside the fire, laughter to cheer you, those you love near you and all your heart may desire. May joy and peace surround you, contentment latches your door, and happiness be with you now and bless you evermore." I think that says it well.

Home is not 'static'. It could be where we grew up, but it can just as easily be where one feels 'settled'. In regard to putting down 'roots', people comment that the home is a "backdrop for our childhood memories," they are "more than financial assets, and have deep emotional meaning." Some consider it their "retreat where they have planted roots," which they continue mentioning that they would "have a really hard time leaving."

Author Robert Frost said that, "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

When we are safe at home, we are free to imagine the possibilities that lay ahead. For some people, is where their future begins and their dreams become reality. People say that "Just like memories, home is also where your hopes and dreams are," and "Home is the base where everything begins."

Actor David Soul commented that his home is his "castle," but it is also his "identity and your possibility to be open to others."

So, as the saying goes, if "home is where the heart is," then by its most literal definition, one's home is wherever they 'physically' are as well as where one's 'heart' feels what the eyes can't see. As previously mentioned, Bonnie Collins said it well with her poem, "There Is No Place Like Home" that, "*Home is where your heart lies.*"

'ETERNAL' HOME

Deep within the 'core' of our bodies lies our heart, central to life itself. With every beat, our hearts have a need to be filled—filled with oxygen necessary for survival.

However, when we talk of “hearts,” there is another definition other than just a vital organ. Our 'heart' lies at the center of our soul, and just like our physical hearts, they are desperate to be filled with something. They cannot remain empty, and often the things one chooses are where our 'hearts' lie.

The Bible says that God has “set eternity in the human heart [Ecclesiastes 3:11]. In every human soul is a God-given awareness that there is “something more” than this transient world, and with that awareness, comes a hope that one can, one day, find a fulfillment not afforded by the “vanity” in this world.

The word “olam” refers to God’s placing an eternal longing or sense of eternity in the human heart, and Solomon affirms the idea that humans operate in a different way than other forms of life. They have a ‘sense’ of eternity in their lives, possessing an innate knowledge that there is something more to life than what they can see and experience in the here and now.

It seems that one innately knows that there is ‘something’ beyond this life. We have a divinely implanted awareness that the soul lives forever, and this world is not our ‘home’.

The Bible says that Heaven IS the believer’s “eternal home.” Jesus spoke of leaving His disciples to build a “dwelling place” for them in the world beyond: “In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also” [John 14:1-3]. Heaven is “home” for the believer since it is where God planned for them to ‘belong’!

The first verse of the lyrics of the old song “This world is Not My Home” says this well:

*“This world is not my home,
I’m just a-passing through.*

*My treasures are laid up
Somewhere beyond the blue.”*

Worldly experiences, people, and memories are wonderful, albeit temporary, a blessing from the hand of God as the believer journeys to their ultimate Home. These things can't ultimately satisfy us, of course, but they can point us to their ultimate satisfaction. C. S. Lewis called the feeling we get when we consider these things, the sense that wells up in our inner being, “an inconsolable longing.” He said that, “There have been times when I think we do not desire Heaven, but more often I find myself wondering whether, in our heart of hearts, we have ever desired anything else... It is the secret signature of each soul, the incommunicable and unappeasable want.”

The seemingly “unfair” things in our lives will be resolved. Pain will be replaced by comfort. Tears will be replaced by joy and laughter. In Heaven, all of your losses will be more than compensated for:

“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal”
[2 Corinthians 4:17-18].

Author of the book series “The Lord of the Rings” J. R. R. Tolkien (a good friend of C. S. Lewis) wrote, “Frodo heard hey sweet singing running in his mind: a song that seemed to come like a pale light behind a gray rain-curtain, and growing stronger to turn the veil all to glass and silver, until at last it was rolled back, and a fire green country open before him under a swift sunrise.” All believers are looking forward to an eternal sunrise!

This contrast between heaven and earth should quicken the believers' pulse enlighten their step. Heaven is not “pie in the sky.” It is a feast they can begin to taste right now if their spiritual palate has been prepared. Methodist pastor E. M. Bounds wrote:

“Heaven ought to draw and engage us. Heaven ought to so fill our hearts and hands, our conversations, our character, and our features, that all would see that we are foreigners, strangers to this world. The very atmosphere of this world would be chilling to us and noxious, it's suns eclipsed and its companionship dull and insipid. Heaven is our native land and home to us, and death to us is not the

dying hour, but the birth hour!”

Bounds also wrote that, “Heaven is the place out of the region of all fancy it is taken and put into the realm of the actual, the local... Heaven does not float around. It is not made air, thin air. It is real, a country, a clime, a home’s sacred affinities drawn to the spot.”

Scripture uses different words to describe this eternal home called “Heaven.” The Apostle Paul described it as a “paradise” (2 Corinthians 12:4). This is the same word Jesus used when He told a thief on the cross, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” [Luke 23:43]. Heaven is a place that FAR ‘SURPASSES’ anything we could ever experience or even imagine on earth!

[Note: First off, the people claiming who have died, went to Heaven, and then returned to tell about it are absolutely unbiblical. Secondly, if they really were in Heaven they WOULD NOT have returned to the earth!]

GOD ‘WANTS’ EVERYONE TO COME HOME!

According to a 2007 Gallup poll, 81% of adult Americans said they believed in Heaven. Nearly 80% of those questioned also said that they believed that they will be admitted into Heaven when they die. So, almost everybody who believes in Heaven expects to go there in the afterlife.

Now, it is true that God “desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” [1 Timothy 2:4], and He doesn’t want “anyone to perish, but they come to repentance” [2 Peter 3:9d]. HOWEVER, He has some ‘requirements’ for that to happen.

Karin Collins captured this sentiment well in her poem “It’s Time To Come Home”:

*“It’s time to come home,
You’ve been gone long enough,
I know that it’s hard,
But you have to be tough.*

*“The war that you wage,
Is not about me,
And if you come home,
I’ll help you to see.*

*“That the life we have planned,
Is good and it’s true,
It’s just been caught up,
In the war that is you.*

*“The demons you harbor,
Are killing you slow,
But there is one thing,
That they don’t know.*

*“I’m here to support you,
I’ll fight to the death,
I’ll never desert you,
Till my very last breath.*

*“You’ve simply forgotten,
What lies in your heart,
But this war we can’t conquer,
If we stand apart.*

*“So just as I promised,
Some years ago,
With my love to support you,
I’m not letting go.*

*“So find your way home,
Where together we’re strong,
I am here waiting,
It’s been far too long.”*

The thing is, God has made it pretty easy for one to be reconciled to Him—repent of one’s sins, believe that Jesus has atoned for their sins, put their faith ‘in’ Jesus as their Savior, and commit to be a ‘follower’ of Jesus’ the rest of their days on earth. God is offering people salvation as a FREE ‘GIFT’ and all one has to do is ‘accept’ it!

However, the truth is, practically everyone—including the hardened atheist—thinks that they are going to Heaven because of their ‘good works’. The thing is, God’s requirements to enter Heaven is perfection, and no human—save Jesus—

can do that (that's what Jesus' pure white robe of righteousness accomplishes for the repentant sinner). The believer is 'imputed' this righteousness by God's grace! Amazing grace!

The believer is not righteous in themselves, rather, they possess Jesus' righteousness applied to their 'account'. It is not their perfection but Jesus' that God sees when He brings the believer into fellowship with Himself. They are still sinners in practice, but the grace of God has declared them to have a righteous standing before the Law.

Jesus was on a mission when He became a man—He had the Father's work to do. If we are to come home to Him, we must come in humility trusting that He must seek and save us for we are incapable of doing it ourselves. Consider what a sacrifice it was for Him to leave the grandeur of Heaven, where everything praised Him, to come to earth to be ridiculed and rejected by those He came to save.

God wants VERY 'MUCH' for everyone to be in Heaven, and He devised a 'way' to make that happen: He sent His Son, Jesus, to the earth to "seek and save the lost" [Luke 19:10b]. God also promises that He will give wisdom, generously and without reprimand, to anyone who asks (James 1:5),

SO, let me encourage ANYONE who wants to go to Heaven to ***ASK NOW for God to lead them in the way they should go!*** (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).

LOOKING 'FORWARD' TO HEAVEN?

So, are you looking forward to Heaven? Well, the great Puritan preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards, spoke of Heaven a lot of the time. He said once: "It becomes us to spend this life only as a journey toward Heaven... to which we should subordinate all other concerns of life. Why should we labor for or set our hearts on anything else, but that which is our proper end and true happiness?"

Edwards was so serious about Heaven, in his early twenties, he composed a set of life resolutions (70 of them that expressed Edwards' earnest desire to be faithful in the spiritual disciplines of reading Scripture and prayer). One read: "Resolved, to endeavor to obtain for myself as much happiness, in the other world, as I possibly can."

Do you have that kind of 'robust' desire for Heaven? Well, tragically, in fact, many people find no joy at all when they think about Heaven! They think it will be terribly boring, with nothing to do but float around on a cloud and strum a harp.



[CARTOON: "Far Side" by Gary Larson]

Some even say that Heaven doesn't sound much better than Hell, and that Hell actually sounds like it would be much more fun. I read of a skeptic that said, "I would rather be in Hell with all my friends than all those 'church people' in Heaven. They will be a lot more fun to be around."

Well, such an attitude betrays a tragic lack of regard for the horrors of Hell! More than that, it grossly underestimates the blessedness of Heaven!

This deep-seated suspicion—and misconception—that Heaven may be an eternal bore, reflects the sinful thinking of fallen humanity. As sinners, we are naturally prone to think a little sin is surely more enjoyable than perfect righteousness. It is hard for us to imagine a realm, holy devoid of sin, and yet filled with pure and endless pleasures.

Actually, the Bible says that there will be beautiful gardens, rivers, and mountains—and we will experience untold adventures throughout eternity!

Nineteenth-century British theologian J. C. Ryle said, “I pity the man who never thinks about Heaven.” I would ‘refine’ that quote a bit and say, “I pity the man who never thinks ‘accurately’ about Heaven.” It is our ‘inaccurate’ thinking, I believe, that causes us to choose to think so little about Heaven.

According to a Barna Research Group poll, “An overwhelming majority of Americans continue to believe that there is life after death and that Heaven and Hell exist.” Okay, that’s good. However, they continued: “They’re cutting and pasting religious views from a variety of different sources—television, movies, conversations with their friends.” The result is a highly subjective theology of the afterlife, disconnected from the biblical doctrine of Heaven. That’s NOT good!

Imagine you are part of a NASA team preparing for a five-year mission to Mars. After a period of extensive training, the launch date finally arrives. As the rocket lifts off, one of your fellow astronauts says to you, “What do you know about Mars?” Imagine shrugging your shoulders and saying, “Well, not much. We never talked about it. I guess we will find out when we get there.” It’s unthinkable, isn’t it? It is inconceivable that your training would not have included extensive study of and preparation for your ultimate destination! Right?

Many Christians who have gone to church all their adult lives are told that it is a “better destination than Hell,” but were, sadly, taught remarkably little about the ‘specifics’ of Heaven itself!

Well, let me mention what I believe is the ‘central’ explanation for why believers

have such a vague, negative, and uninspired view of Heaven: SATAN.

Jesus said of the Devil, “When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” [John 8:44], and some of Satan’s favorite lies are about Heaven. The believer’s ‘enemy’ slanders three things: God’s person, God’s people, and God’s place—namely, Heaven.

After being forcibly evicted from Heaven (Isaiah 14:12-15), Satan became bitter not only toward God, but toward Heaven itself, the place that was no longer his. It must be maddening for him that humans are now entitled to the home he was kicked out of. So then, what better way for him and his demons to attack the believer than to whisper lies about the very place which God tells us to “set our hearts and minds on.” Right?

In H. G. Well’s book “The Country of the Blind,” he writes of a tribe in a remote valley deep in a towering mountain range. During a terrible epidemic, all the villagers lose their sight. Eventually, entire generations grow up having no awareness of sight or the world they are unable to see. Because of their handicap, they do not know their true condition, nor can they understand what their world looks like. They cannot imagine what realms might lie beyond their valley.

Spiritually speaking, we all live in the ‘Country of the Blind’. The ‘disease’ of sin has ‘blinded’ us to God and Heaven, which are real yet unseen. Fortunately, Jesus has come to our ‘valley’ from Heaven to tell us about His Father and the world to come. If we listen to Him—which will require a concerted effort not to listen to the lies of the Devil—we will never be the same. Nor will we ever want to be!

[FYI: For more details about being spiritually ‘blind’, view this previous “Life’s Deep Thoughts” post:
<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/are-you-blind-v252/>].

Because Satan hates the believer, he is determined to rob them of the joy they would have if they believed what God tells them about the magnificent world to come. Satan tries to tell the ‘world’ that there really isn’t a place that is described in the Bible as “Heaven.”

In his “Narnia” series, C. S. Lewis depicts some sources of our misconceptions about Heaven. In “The Silver Chair,” Puddleglum, Jill, and Eustace are captured in

a sunless underground world by an evil witch who calls herself the Queen of the Underworld. The witch claims that her prisoners' memories of the Overworld, Narnia, are but figments of their imagination. She laughs condescendingly at their child's game of "pretending" that there's a world above and a great ruler of that world.

When they speak of the sun that's visible in the world above, she asks them what a sun is. Groping for words, they compare it to a giant lamp. She replies, "When you try to think out clearly what this sun must be, you cannot tell me. You can only tell me it is like the lamp. Your sun is a dream; and there is nothing in that dream that was not copied from the lamp."

When they speak of Aslan the lion, king of Narnia, she says they have seen cats and have merely projected those images into the make-believe notion of a giant cat. They begin to waver.

The queen, who hates Aslan and wishes to conquer Narnia, tries to deceive them into thinking that whatever they cannot perceive with their senses must be imaginary—which is the essence of naturalism. The longer they are unable to see the world they remember, the more they lose sight of it.

She says to them, hypnotically, "There never was any world but mine." They then repeat after her—abandoning reason—parroting her deceptions. Then she coos softly, "There is no Narnia, no Overworld, no sky, no sun, no Aslan." This illustrates Satan's power to mold our weak minds as we are trapped in a dark, fallen world. We are prone to deny the great realities of God and Heaven, which we can no longer see because of the Curse of sin.

Finally, when it appears, they have succumbed to the queen's lies, Puddleglum breaks the spell and says to the enraged queen, "Suppose we have only dreamed, or made up, all those things—trees and grass and sun and moon and stars and Aslan himself. Suppose we have. Then all I can say is that... the made-up things seem a good deal more important than the real ones. Suppose this black pit of a kingdom of yours is the only world. Well, it strikes me as a pretty poor one. And that's a funny thing, when you come to think of it. We're just babies making up a game, if you're right. But four babies playing a game can make a play-world which licks your real world hollow." BOOM!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaw3S-wqLY0&t=8255s>

[VIDEO: "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Silver Chair" - Puddleglum responds to the Queen]

The thing is, the truth is exactly the OPPOSITE! In fact, the dark world's 'lamps' are copies of the sun, and its 'cats' are copies of Aslan. Heaven isn't an extrapolation of earthly thinking. Earth is an 'extension' of Heaven, made by the Creator King. The realm Puddleglum and the children believe in, Narnia and its sun and its universe, IS 'REAL', and the witch's world—which she tempts them to believe is the only real world—is, in fact, a lesser realm, corrupted and in bondage!

When the queen's lies are exposed, she metamorphoses into the serpent she really is, whereupon Rilian, the human king and Aslan's appointed ruler of Narnia, slays her. The despondent slaves who had lived in darkness are delivered. Light floods in, and their home below becomes a joyous place again because they realize there is indeed a bright world above and Aslan truly rules the universe. They laugh and celebrate, turning cartwheels and popping firecrackers.

Sometimes we humans are like Lewis' characters. We succumb to assumptions that what we see is real and what we don't see is not real. So, we conclude, because we can't 'see' Heaven, it can't be real.

HOWEVER, again, we must recognize our 'blindness'. The blind must take by faith that there are stars in the sky. If they depend on their ability to see, they will conclude there are no stars.

We must work to resist this bewitching 'spell'. Sitting here in a 'dark' world, we must remind ourselves what Scripture tells us about Heaven. The believer will one day be delivered from the blindness that separates them from the real world. They will realize then the stupefying bewitchment they have lived under, and by God's grace, believers can 'stomp out' the bewitching lies of Satan—so that they may clearly see the liberating truth about Heaven!

Maybe an illustration will help here:

"A Baptist minister, Charles E. Fuller, once announced that he would be speaking the following Sunday on "Heaven." During that week a beautiful letter was received from an old man who was very ill. The following is part of his letter:

Next Sunday you are to talk about Heaven. I am interested in that land, because I have held a clear title to a bit of property there for over fifty-five years. I did not buy it. It was given to me without money and without price. But the Donor purchased it for me at tremendous sacrifice. I am not holding it for speculation

since the title is not transferable. It is not a vacant lot.

For more than half a century I have been sending materials out of which the greatest Architect and Builder of the Universe has been building a home for me which will never need to be remodeled nor repaired because it will suit me perfectly, individually, and will never grow old.

Termites can never undermine its foundations for they rest on the Rock of Ages. Fire cannot destroy it. Floods cannot wash it away. No locks or bolts will ever be placed upon its doors, for no vicious person can ever enter that land where my dwelling stands, now almost completed and almost ready for me to enter in and abide in peace eternally, without fear of being ejected.

There is a valley of deep shadow between the place where I live in California and that to which I shall journey in a very short time. I cannot reach my home in that City of Gold without passing through this dark valley of shadows. But I am not afraid because the best Friend I ever had went through the same valley long, long ago and drove away all its gloom. He has stuck by me through thick and thin, since we first became acquainted fifty-five years ago, and I hold His promise in printed form, never to forsake me or leave me alone. He will be with me as I walk through the valley of shadows, and I shall not lose my way when He is with me.

I hope to hear your sermon on Heaven next Sunday from my home in Los Angeles, California, but I have no assurance that I shall be able to do so. My ticket to Heaven has no date marked for the journey—no return coupon—and no permit for baggage. Yes, I am all ready to go and I may not be here while you are talking next Sunday evening, but I shall meet you there some day.”

Heaven IS ‘REAL’ and it will be MAGNIFICENT!

HEAVEN IS ‘INDESCRIBABLE’!

When Marco Polo returned to Italy from the court of Kublai Khan, he described a world to his audience that they had never seen—one that could not be understood without the ‘eyes’ of imagination. Not that China was an imaginary realm, but it was just very different from Italy. Yet, as two locations on planet Earth inhabited by human beings, they had much in common. The reference points of Italy allowed a basis for understanding China, and the differences could be spelled out from there.

The writers of Scripture present Heaven in many ways, including as a garden, a

city, and a kingdom. Because gardens, cities, and kingdoms are familiar to us, they afford us a 'bridge' to understanding Heaven. However, many people make the mistake of assuming that these are merely analogies with no actual correspondence to the reality of Heaven (which would make them poor analogies). Analogies can be pressed too far, but because Scripture makes it clear that Jesus is preparing a place for us, and God's Kingdom will come to Earth, and a physical resurrection awaits us, there is no reason to spiritualize or allegorize all earthly descriptions of Heaven. Indeed, some of them may be simple, factual statements.

Too often we have been taught that Heaven is a non-physical realm, which cannot have real gardens, cities, kingdoms, buildings, banquets, or bodies. So, we fail to take seriously what Scripture tells us about Heaven as a familiar, physical, 'TANGIBLE' place.

As human beings, we are not designed to live in a non-physical realm, nor are we even incapable of imagining such a place. We are not, as Plato supposed, "merely spiritual beings temporarily encased in bodies." We are as much physical beings as we are spiritual beings. That is why the bodily resurrection of the believer is essential to endow them with eternal righteous humanity, setting us free from sin, the Curse, and death.

[FYI: For more details about sin and death, view last month's "Life's Deep Thoughts" post:

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/greatest-fear-v287/>].

The thing is, we cannot anticipate or desire what we cannot imagine. That is why God has given us 'glimpses' of Heaven in the Bible, to 'fire up' our imagination and kindle a desire for Heaven in our hearts—and that is why Satan will always discourage our imagination—or misdirect it to 'notions' that are not mentioned in the Bible. Scripture provides us with a substantial amount of information, direct and indirect, about the world to come, with enough detail to help us envision it, but not so much as to make us think we can completely wrap our minds around it. I believe that God expects us to use our imagination, even as we recognize its limitations and flaws. (If God didn't want us to imagine what Heaven will be like, He would not have told us as much about it as He has.)

So, one should ask for God's help to remove the 'blindness' of their preconceived ideas about Heaven. The Apostle Paul said, "Reflect on what I am saying, for the

Lord will give you insight into all this” [2 Timothy 2:7]. King David prayed that God “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law” [Psalm 119:18].

I can only imagine that our first glimpse of Heaven will cause us to similarly gasp in amazement and delight, followed by many more as we continually encounter new sights in that endlessly wonderful place. Blossoming flowers, soft, green grass, and a clear blue sky without any pollution, crystal-clean rivers with ending in beautiful waterfalls, impressive mountains with picturesque snow drifts atop them (to image just a few things). All of this while experiencing a very ‘powerful’ body that is stronger than those of a gold-medal-winning Olympic decathlete!

At last, you are in the ‘place’ that you were made for! Everywhere you go there will be new people and places to enjoy, new things to discover. There will be much exploration and work to be done—and you can’t wait to get started!

Certainly, not everything the Bible says about Heaven can be easily envisioned. Consider Ezekiel’s description of the living creatures and their wheels, and the manifestation of God’s glory that leaves the prophet groping for words (Ezekiel 1:4-28). Still, there are MANY other passages concerning Heaven that are much easier to grasp. We should just accept that the Creator God that made everything perfect—in the beginning—will have countless surprises in store for us (and make it all perfect again in the future)!

As I mentioned previously, the Apostle Paul wants the believer to “Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God” [Colossians 3:1]. Then, to make sure we don’t miss the importance of a heaven-centered life, he says in the next verse, “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things” [Colossians 3:2]. God ‘commands’ us to set our hearts and minds on Heaven.

The Greek word translated “set your hearts on” is “zeteo,” which “denotes man’s general philosophical search or quest.” The same word is used in the Gospels to describe how “the Son of Man came to seek... what was lost” (Luke 19:10, emphasis added). It is also used for how a shepherd looks for his lost sheep (Matthew 18:12), a woman searches for a lost coin (Luke 15:8), and a merchant searches for a fine pearl (Matthew 13:45).

these allow us to understand Paul’s admonition in Colossians 3:1: “Diligently, actively, single-mindedly pursue the things above”—in a word, Heaven.

Note that the verb “zeteo” is in the present tense, suggesting an ‘ongoing’ process: “Keep seeking Heaven.” Since you will spend the next lifetime living in Heaven, why not spend this lifetime seeking all you can about it, so you can eagerly anticipate and prepare for it?

So, *what have you been doing daily to set your mind on things above, to seek Heaven?* Should you be doing anything differently?

Perhaps you are afraid of becoming “so heavenly-minded you are of no earthly good.” Relax! You have nothing to worry about! On the contrary, many of us are so earthly minded we are of no heavenly or earthly good. C. S. Lewis observed:

“If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth ‘thrown in’: aim at earth and you will get neither.”

So, ‘fuel’ your imagination from God’s revealed truth about Heaven. As C. S. Lewis said, “While reason is the natural organ of truth, imagination is the organ of meaning.” In the words of theologian Francis Schaeffer, “The Christian is the really free man—he is free to have imagination. This too is our heritage. The Christian is the one whose imagination should fly beyond the stars.” Schaeffer always exhorted the believer to let that truth fuel their imagination, but not fly ‘away’ from the truth but fly ‘upon’ the truth.

For the believer, there is a new ‘home’ being prepared for them, and ‘moving day’ is coming soon (relative to eternity)! As C. S. Lewis described it, the “dark winter is about to be magically transformed into spring.” One day soon, the believer WILL BE ‘home’—for the first time!

So, until then, might I encourage the believer to meditate on the Bible’s truths about Heaven, and may their imagination soar and their heart rejoice about what is to come—and for the unbeliever to ‘honestly’ consider the claims of what the Bible says about a “paradise” that one CAN experience for ETERNITY!

Every time I want to visualize just how dynamic and definite heaven is, I flip through the pages of C. S. Lewis' "The Great Divorce," a fantasy in which unredeemed people take a day excursion by bus to the bright borders of Heaven. Listen to their words when they take an amazing peek at Heaven:

"It was the light, the grass, the trees that were different; made of some different substance, so much solidier than things in our country... Long after that, I saw people coming to meet us. Because they were bright I saw them while they were still very distant... The earth shook under their tread as their strong feet sank into the wet turf. A tiny haze and a sweet smell went up where they had crushed the grass and scattered the dew... and the robes did not disguise the massive grandeur of muscle and the radiant smoothness of flesh... No one in that company struck me as being of any particular age. One gets glimpses, even in our country, of that which is ageless—heavy thought in the face of an infant, and frolic childhood in that of a very old man. Here it was all like that."

The band "Mercy Me" wrote a song that says that we can only 'imagine' what Heaven will be like:

"I can only imagine what it will be like, when I walk by Your side... I can only imagine, what my eyes will see, when Your Face is before me! I can only imagine. Surrounded by Your Glory, what will my heart feel? Will I dance for you, Jesus? Or in awe of You, be still? Will I stand in Your presence, or to my knees will I fall? Will I sing 'Hallelujah!'? Will I be able to speak at all? I can only imagine! I can only imagine, when that day comes, when I find myself standing in the Son! I can only imagine, when all I will do, is forever, forever worship You! I can only imagine! I can only imagine!"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xwzltqYmII>
[VIDEO: "I Can Only Imagine" - Mercy Me]

There is much about Heaven that we don't know and we can only imagine what it is going to be like. Imagine the best thing you can think about, the most beautiful place in the world, the most wonderful peace you have ever felt. Now, that won't even scratch the surface of what Heaven is going to be like! "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" [1 Corinthians 2:9].

Maybe an illustration will help here:

“There is an old legend of a swan and a crane. A beautiful swan alighted by the banks of the water in which a crane was wading about seeking snails. For a few moments the crane viewed the swan in stupid wonder and then inquired:

‘Where do you come from?’

‘I come from heaven!’ replied the swan.

‘And where is heaven?’ asked the crane.

‘Heaven!’ said the swan, ‘Heaven! Have you never heard of heaven?’ And the beautiful bird went on to describe the grandeur of the Eternal City. She told of streets of gold, and the gates and walls made of precious stones; of the river of life, pure as crystal, upon whose banks is the tree whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations. In eloquent terms the swan sought to describe the hosts who live in the other world, but without arousing the slightest interest on the part of the crane.

Finally, the crane asked: ‘Are there any snails there?’”

‘Snails!’ repeated the swan; ‘No! Of course, there are not.’

‘Then,’ said the crane, as it continued its search along the slimy banks of the pool, ‘you can have your heaven. I want snails!’”

This fable has a deep truth underlying it. How many people have turned their back upon God and searched for ‘snails’ (or any other ‘idol’)! How many people will sacrifice Heaven for ‘trinkets’ here on earth!

The Bible does give us a little ‘glimpse’ of what Heaven will be like. One of the most exciting and exhilarating aspects of the description is the realization that there will not be heavy ‘hearts’ in Heaven. “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” [Revelation 21:4].

Sin will be out of the picture and there will only be eternal bliss! There will also be no death there since “Death is swallowed up in victory” [1 Corinthians 15:54d].

For all of this earth's splendor and beauty, the beautiful things of this world 'PALE' in comparison to Heaven! Heaven will be a place of UNPARALLELED beauty!

One example of this beauty will be the streets of Heaven: "The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass" [Revelation 21:21]. So, what is scarce on earth is abundant in Heaven, and another vivid reminder that what we frequently pursue and consider to be of greatest value is nothing more than 'pocket change' to God.

In addition to that, the gold that John saw in heaven was of such quality that it appears to be transparent in order to reflect the pure light of God's blazing glory. God's ability to purify is not confined only to gold; God has purified all who will enter His heaven through the blood of Jesus Christ. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Not only is God's holy city one of purity by His design, so are the 'citizens' of that city—the believer!

Heaven is going to be an absolutely beautiful place!

A PLACE IS BEING 'PREPARED'

Heaven IS a real place! However, is it YOUR 'PLACE'? The thing is, you CAN know for sure if it is!

When winter starts to come, the remarkable Golden Plover bird leaves its breeding ground in the Aleutian Islands and flies more than 2,000 miles to Hawaii. This bird, at the start of his journey, weighs only about seven ounces. Its tiny, precise wings flap continuously for the 88-hour flight, with no stopovers! The bird has no GPS. Instead, it has an unerring homing instinct and seems divinely built for the incredible journey. Unbelievable, right?

Well, the same is true for the believer! God has given them a 'homing instinct' for a place they have never been. They have been created and 'specifically' built for Heaven. The little Plover has never been to Hawaii, yet somehow it arrives there.
So, do you know how to get Heaven?

Before Jesus was going to return to Heaven, the disciples were scared, and understandably so. They were in the midst of a hostile world, uncertain of their future. In that, they were much like the rest of us—they didn't want Jesus to leave!

“Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way, in the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” [John 14:6].

Jesus, the only one who came down ‘from’ Heaven, is also the way ‘to’ Heaven. However, only for those who have made Him their Lord and Savior. ***Have you made Jesus your Lord and Savior?***

Jesus is, right now, ‘preparing’ this place for those who have given their hearts and lives to Him! “I go to prepare a place for you” [John 14:2].

Now, before Jesus announces His plan to do this, He explains that the disciples’ hearts should not be troubled and that they should believe in Him (John 14:1). Jesus then reminds the disciples that the Father had many rooms or dwellings—this would increase their confidence and calm their troubled hearts. But, Jesus didn’t stop with providing them general truths about Heaven and their future.

Earlier, He had explained that the disciples would not be able to follow Him where He was going (John 13:36), but when He did leave, He wouldn’t be leaving them for no purpose. They still were disturbed that they wouldn’t be able to be with Him, and He comforts them by explaining how one day they would be with Him.

Since Jesus is the One who created the Universe, He has no problem in preparing a place for His saints. The Apostle Paul wrote, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him” [Colossians 1:16].

I don’t know about you but I am REALLY ‘EXCITED’ and LOOKING ‘FORWARD’ to Heaven... A LOT!

Heaven is being prepared. Are you ready? As the old proverb goes, “Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.”

JESUS IS THE ONLY ‘WAY’ TO HEAVEN

So then, how does one get to Heaven? Well, it might seem a bit ‘narrow’, but the Bible says it is ONLY ‘through’ Jesus Christ. There is NO OTHER ‘WAY’! Jesus Himself emphasized this by saying, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” [John 14:6].

Now, many people say that they can follow their own individual 'path' to Heaven, and that "all roads lead to Heaven." Well, on the authority of the Bible—and Jesus Himself—the only path that your own path will take you is straight into Hell! **So, are you on THIS 'aberrant' path?**

Well, I am told that an Indiana cemetery has a tombstone (more than a hundred years old) which bears the following epitaph:

*"Pause Stranger, when you pass me by,
As you are now, so once was I.
As I am now, so you will be,
So prepare for death and follow me."*

To be more specific, an unknown passerby read those words and underneath scratched this reply:

*"To follow you I'm not content,
Until I know which way you went."*

Here is another one. His name was Solomon Pease and on his tombstone these words are written:

*"Here lies the body of Solomon peas
Under the grass and under the trees
But Pease is not here only the Pod
Pease shelled out and went to God."*

Now, both of these focus on being very 'SPECIFIC'! The pathway to Heaven is straight and it is narrow, but it leads to life everlasting! Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few" [Matthew 7:13-14].

The life of which He speaks is undoubtedly eternal life. So, what He is saying is that the path He describes is the ONLY way to Heaven. While the 'gate' is small, it is nonetheless open to ALL!

The fact that the way is narrow could also indicate that we must come alone and bring nothing with us. There have been commentators who have suggested that a turnstile should represent the idea of the narrow gate. When you come through a turnstile, you come alone and cannot carry baggage with you. This is the way we must enter the Kingdom. We enter, not in groups, but as individuals.

This gate and way is narrow because it focuses on God's truth. Truth IS 'narrow'. Either a thing is true, or it is not—and a thing is true regardless of how one feels about it. Your opinion of truth does not determine truth. Whether you believe in the law of gravity doesn't change the fact that when you jump off a building you will no doubt fall to your death! (It makes no difference whether you 'like' the truth of God, it is still the truth!)

A final characteristic of this way is that it is the way of the 'few'. Jesus said that few are those who find it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8aBCoyaFXc>
[VIDEO: "Pilgrim's Progress: Journey To Heaven" - Christian Decides to Find the Small Gate]

Perhaps there are few who find this gate because there are few who seek this gate. After all, Jesus told us that if we would seek, we would find. Perhaps it is because there are so many people seeking so many other things that more do not find this way. But, the fact that this way is only found by the minority does not lessen the truth that only those who find this way will be given entrance into Heaven. Make no mistake about it, the reason why there are few who enter by this gate is that there are few who are willing to acknowledge that Jesus is the only way to Heaven and that they will live their lives for Him. This, of course, is why Jesus exhorts us to enter by the narrow gate.

So, based on what Jesus has said, are you on your way to Heaven? If you are, you have reason to REJOICE this morning! For the unbeliever, evangelist D. L. Moody told a story—and made a comment—that might help:

"It is a story about two men who, under the influence of liquor, found their way to the dock where their boat was tied. The two men wanted to return home, so they got in the boat and began to row. Though they rowed hard all night, they did not reach the other side of the bay. When the gray dawn of the morning broke, they were in exactly the same spot from which they started. They had neglected to

loosen the mooring-line and raise the anchor!

Moody used this story as an analogy of the way in which many people are thwarted in their striving for heaven because they are tied to this world. He would admonish people to “Cut the cord! Cut the cord! Set yourself free from the clogging weight of earthly things, and you will be headed toward Heaven.”

Now, perhaps you may need to cut the ‘cord’ to sin and this world, and ‘set sail’ to follow Jesus. If you do, you can be assured that one day your reward will be Heaven!

Another illustration might help you understand that a homecoming day is coming, and ONE NEEDS TO BE ‘READY!’:

“Samuel Morrison was a faithful missionary who served twenty-five years in Africa. In failing health, Morrison returned to the United States. Also traveling home on the same ocean liner was President Teddy Roosevelt who had been in Africa for a three-week hunting expedition. As the large ship pulled into New York harbor, it looked as though the entire city had come out to welcome the President. Music filled the air, banners wafted in the wind, balloons flew to the sky, flashbulbs were popping, and confetti streamed down like snow. As Roosevelt stepped into sight, the crowd exploded in applause and cheers. It was truly a reception fit for a king. While all of the eyes were on the President, Morrison quietly disembarked and slipped through the crowd. None of the applause was for him and nobody was there to welcome him home. His heart began to ache as he prayed, ‘Lord, the President has been in Africa for three weeks, killing animals, and the whole world turns out to welcome him home. I’ve given twenty-five years of my life in Africa, serving you, and no one has greeted me or even knows I’m here.’” He then felt the gentle touch of God and sensed the Spirit say, “But my dear child, you are not home yet!”

What a joyous thought to realize that presidential receptions pale in comparison to the heavenly homecoming that awaits every child of God!

ENTRANCE ‘REQUIREMENTS’

Those who have traveled to a foreign country know the importance of a passport. Regardless of your status or charisma, that document is what qualifies you for entry and acceptance among the people in a different land.

Similarly, we all need a 'passport' to get into Heaven—if that is the 'country' where one wishes to go.

Now, the Bible says that you shouldn't imagine for a moment that you will get into Heaven without the right 'credentials'. You will not be there because your spouse has the right to enter, or because your parents are already there. No, this is an individual matter, and only those with the right 'passport' will be allowed to enter.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_z9oMPc07Ns&t=38s

[VIDEO: "Pilgrim's Progress: Journey To Heaven" - Thrown Into Hell From Heaven's Gate]

No one can enter into Heaven without God's specific approval. As mentioned previously, the problem is, He will not accept us as we are. We cannot go through Heaven's gate hoping for leniency. We cannot come pleading for special favors once we have slipped through the parted 'curtain'—death. 'Passports'—or "certificates"—are not available on the other side of the 'border'!

One must be perfect to enter into Heaven. The thing is, we humans will not ever be perfect on our own. That's what Jesus did on the Cross—He became the atoning sacrifice for sinners which God has accepted (God made Jesus legally guilty for all our sins and, in turn, we receive Jesus' righteousness and are 'made perfect' by His sacrifice!)

So, if you want to spend eternity in Heaven, the following can aid you in admitting you sin, believing what Jesus did for you, and committing to follow Him the rest of your days on earth.

– Admit The Fact That You Have Sinned

This shouldn't be too hard for all of us, we have all gotten off target in our lives at one point or another

– Believe That Jesus Died For You And Lives Again

Jesus died for us while we were far away from God. Jesus came near to us, so we could come near to God. Our nearness to God was bridged by the cruelty of a Roman cross. The means of us knowing God came through the death of Jesus and our hope after death flows from the resurrection.

– Commit To Follow Jesus As Lord

It is not enough to just believe that Jesus died and rose again. Each day we make

the choice to follow Jesus. Living each day with Jesus as your Lord is a conscious and consistent act.

The truth is that sin is what keeps us from becoming what God desires us to be. Sin also keeps us from His presence both now and in eternity. The most common word for sin in the New Testament means to “miss the mark.”

[FYI: For more details on the concept of ‘missing the mark’, view this previous “Life’s Deep Thoughts” post:
<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/missing-the-mark-v222/>].

Heaven IS real but you can’t get in without a ‘reservation’. HOWEVER, if you don’t already have one, YOU ‘CAN’ GET ONE!

Just remember that there’s NO ‘PLACE’ like Heaven!!!

HOMeward ‘BOUND’!

“Homeward Bound” reminds me of the secular song of the same name by the Simon and Garfunkel. Even though he is not referring to Heaven as his homeward bound destination, the chorus of his song resonates for me of a believer’s desire to be with God in Heaven some day:

*“Homeward bound
I wish I was
Homeward bound
Home, where my thought’s escapin’
Home, where my music’s playin’
Home, where my love lies waitin’
Silently for me,
Silently for me.”*

The concept of being homeward bound is also portrayed in that last scene of “The Wizard of Oz,” when Dorothy wakes up in her bed to find herself surrounded by her family. She looks round to see the faces of the people she loves and says, “There’s no place like home”.

Dorothy’s trancelike repetition of the phrase “There’s no place like home” condenses the meaning of what home means for many of us. Home is a place we

associate with familiarity, love, safety, and a 'place' of origin.

When her Kansas home is uprooted by a violent tornado, Dorothy is terrified and is 'transported' to Oz. It is a wonderful place that is not her home, so she continues to yearn to return to her 'real' home.

This is the dialog of the last scene:

GLINDA, THE GOOD WITCH

*"Then close your eyes
And tap your heels together
Three times.
And think to yourself.
There's no place like home.
There's no place like home."*

DOROTHY AND GLINDA

"There's no place like home."

DOROTHY

*"There's no place like home
There's no place like home
There's no place like home*

*There's no place like home
There's no place like home
There's no place like home
There's no place..."*

AUNTIE EM

"Wake up, honey."

DOROTHY

*"There's no place like home.
There's no place like home.
There's no place..."*

AUNTIE EM

*"Dorothy. Dorothy, dear
It's Aunt Em, darling."*

DOROTHY

“Oh, Auntie Em, it’s you!”

AUNTIE EM

“Yes, darling.”

.
. .
.

DOROTHY

“But it wasn’t a dream.

It was a place.

And you, and you, and you,

And you were there!””

Some would consider Dorothy’s incessant need to return to the comforts of her own bed and her beloved Auntie Em and Uncle Henry as “homesickness.” It is an emotion shared by children and adults alike, particularly when kids are away at summer camp or preparing to head off to college for the first time.

What is it about home and family that makes it so difficult to leave? Well, experts say that it stems from our instinctive need for love, protection and security—feelings and qualities usually ‘associated’ with home. When these qualities aren’t present in a new environment, we begin to long for them—and hence home. You literally are just missing what is ‘normal’ and ‘routine’—because those are the things that help us survive.

Clinical psychologist Dr. Chris A. Thurber says that we get homesick because “It’s the byproduct of the strength of our attachment. If there were nothing in the world we were attached to, then we wouldn’t miss them when we’re away.”

Studies have shown that an estimated 50% to 75% of the general population have felt homesick at least once in their lifetime, and nearly everyone misses something about home when they are away. However, some people tend to feel it a bit more severely than others.

The studies suggested that a “disruption of lifestyle,” some “cultural distance,” a “difficulty adapting,” and “feelings of not belonging” cause homesickness. The studies go one to suggest that a few of the ‘affects’ of homesickness were

“depression,” “grief,” “productivity,” and a variety of “physical symptoms”:

They then concluded by suggesting some ways of how to ‘deal with’ homesickness:

- Know That It Is Normal
- Attend Events or Take Classes
- Be More Active Socially
- Make New Friends
- Keep In Touch With Old Friends
- Create a Gratitude Journal

Fortunately, homesickness is usually a short-term issue. However, if it lingers past a few months and you find that you are beginning to think pessimistically, develop marked changes in sleeping or eating habits, have prolonged crying spells, have concentration difficulties, or have suicidal thoughts, the problem may not be homesickness, but depression or anxiety. These problems can be helped by professional treatment.

Well, Dorothy seemed to be reasonably ‘well-adjusted’, she just wanted the comfortable, safe, peaceful, and loving environment that she remembered being available from Auntie Em and Uncle Henry—which, I’ve got to believe, we all desire!

The thing is, however wonderful that feeling is, it will NEVER ‘MATCH’ the feeling that one will have when they arrive in Heaven, since ***God uniquely designed it to be a place where believers will live together in perfect unity and enjoy Him forever!***

‘HOMESICK’

I am REALLY ‘HOMESICK’ for Heaven and READY TO ‘GO’! What about you?

Are you looking forward to that wonderful place? Do you know for sure that you are going there? Have you made preparations for eternity?

[FYI: For more details about becoming ‘prepared’ to go to Heaven, view these previous “Life’s Deep Thoughts” posts:

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/preparing-for-the-future-v286/>

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/are-you-prepared-v210/>].

Jesus said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3)

[FYI: For more details about becoming “born again,” view this previous “Life’s Deep Thoughts” post:
<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/developing-ones-character-v283/>].

He also said that, “He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and no one comes to the Father except through Him” [John 14:6].

[FYI: For more details about Jesus being the ONLY ‘WAY’ to Heaven, view this previous “Life’s Deep thoughts” post:
<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/two-choices-one-way-v254/>].

If you are also ‘homesick’ for Heaven, be absolutely sure that you are going! Consider what Jesus said about getting there—since He’s kind of an ‘expert’, since He came from there!

‘SEIZE THE DAY’!

I truly believe that we are in the ‘twilight’ of our hardships on earth, as well as in the twilight of the world’s history. I believe that the time is VERY SHORT for getting that ‘passport’ to go to Heaven! I believe **Jesus is ‘calling’ for those who want to COME ‘HOME’!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ck58d3BMBX0>

[VIDEO: “Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”]

*“Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling
Calling for you and for me
See, on your portals He’s waiting and watching
Watching for you and for me*

*Come home, come home
Ye who are weary come home
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling
Calling O sinner come home*

*Oh! For the wonderful love He has promised
Promised for you and for me
Tho' we have sinned He has mercy and pardon
Pardon for you and for me*

*Come home, come home
Ye who are weary come home
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling
Calling O sinner come home*

*Gently He leads those who carry their young ones
Shepherd for you and for me
Surely His goodness and mercy will follow
Ever with you and with me*

*Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling
Calling O sinner come home."*

About 15 years ago, "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" was a very popular 'Reality TV' show, and at the end of each show, the host Ty Pennington concluded the show with ***"Well, I guess there's just one thing left to say... Welcome home (family's last name) family, welcome home."***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLxRFZraz5o&t=2467s>
[VIDEO: "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" - Grys Family]

Now, this was something REALLY 'WONDERFUL' for the family that was made over—helping them to start a new life. However, as nice as the house was, it exists here on this planet and will 'deteriorate' in the future.

The thing is, ***there COULD BE a 'home' that you are 'welcomed' into for ETERNITY—by the Creator of the universe, Jesus, that will NEVER 'DETERIORATE', that you will NEVER experience HOMESICKNESS over, and will have EVERYTHING you could EVER DREAM OF!***

QUESTION: Are you sure that you will hear Jesus say, "Welcome home (your name here), welcome Home?"

If not, why not?

[Excerpts by: Bonnie Collins; Roni Beth Tower; Christine Lehen; Derrick Ho; Hendrik Viviers; WebMD; Dan Brennan, MD; Caroline Bologna; Johnny A. Palmer Jr.; Greg Laurie; Joni Eareckson Tada; Ron Rhodes; David Dewitt; Jon Earls; Kevin L. Jones; Mark Evans; K. Edward Skidmore; Reuben Bredenhof; Kevin DeYoung; Davon Huss; John McCurry; Doug Lyon; Schlage; Joseph Smith; Becky Richards; Real Simple Editors; Randy Alcorn; Gordon Pike]

RELATED POSTS:

“Greatest ‘Fear’”:

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/greatest-fear-v287/>

“Preparing For The ‘Future’”:

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/preparing-for-the-future-v286/>

“‘WHEN’ Will Something Important Happen”:

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/when-will-something-important-happen-v274/>

“‘WHERE You Return To”:

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/where-you-return-to-v273/>

“A Sense Of ‘Urgency’”:

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/a-sense-of-urgency-v269/>

“A ‘Place’ To Retire”:

<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/a-place-to-retire-v221/>

‘PRAYER’ OF REPENTANCE

In the Bible, there is a parable that Jesus told about a Pharisee and a tax collector praying the Temple. He notes that the tax collector didn’t even dare to lift his eyes toward Heaven as he prayed. Instead he “beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner’”—and Jesus said that the tax collector “went home justified,” he had been “born again” and ‘reconciled’ by God. (Luke 18:9-14).

If you are ‘sensing’ something like that right now, let me strongly encourage you to

HUMBLE YOURSELF, CRY OUT to God, and PLEAD for Him to mercifully ‘SAVE’ YOU! None of us have a ‘claim’ on our salvation, nor do we have any ‘works’ that would cause us to deserve it or earn it—it is purely a gift of Divine grace—and all any of us can do is ask. So, CONFESS YOUR SINS and acknowledge to God that you have no hope for Heaven apart from what He provides through Jesus. [See Psalm 51].

There is no ‘formula’ or certain words for this. So just talk to God, in your own words—He knows your ‘heart’. If you are genuinely sincere, and God does respond to your plea, one will usually have a sense of joy and peace.

Jesus said, “He that comes to Me, I will not cast out” [John 6:37].

[FYI: This is a great sermon on the “Call to Repentance” by John MacArthur from his book “The Gospel According to Jesus”: <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/90-22/the-call-to-repentance> (Transcript: [http://www.spiritedesign.com/TheCallToRepentance-JohnMacArthur\(Jul-27-2019\).pdf](http://www.spiritedesign.com/TheCallToRepentance-JohnMacArthur(Jul-27-2019).pdf))].

[NOTE: If you have ‘tasted the kindness of the Lord’, please e-mail me—I would love to CELEBRATE with you, and help you get started on your ‘journey’ with Jesus!].

RESOURCES

“Homesickness: An American History”

By: Susan J. Matt

Homesickness today is dismissed as a sign of immaturity, what children feel at summer camp, but in the nineteenth century it was recognized as a powerful emotion. When gold miners in California heard the tune “Home, Sweet Home,” they sobbed. When Civil War soldiers became homesick, army doctors sent them home, lest they die. Such images don’t fit with our national mythology, which celebrates the restless individualism of colonists, explorers, pioneers, soldiers,

and immigrants who supposedly left home and never looked back.

<https://www.amazon.com/Homesickness-American-Susan-J-Matt/dp/0199314608>

“The Story of Home: God at Work in the Bible’s Tales of Home”

By: Caroline Saunders

No one makes a home like God!

The Bible is filled with stories about homes, from the Garden of Eden to the Promised Land, from the tabernacle in the desert to the temple in Jerusalem. But what do these stories have in common? What is God showing us through them? Enter The Story of Home and discover God’s perfect plan to build the homiest of homes through Jesus. Learn how Jesus welcomes all who are homesick to be part of His family and live happily with Him forever!

Filled with stunning illustrations

Traces the theme of home throughout the Bible

A perfect house-warming gift for a family

Can also encourage those who are homesick, lonely, or without a permanent home

<https://www.amazon.com/Story-Home-Work-Bibles-Tales/dp/1087756693/>

“Come On Home: Healing the Homesickness of the Soul”

By: James W. Moore

Drawing on Scripture and his own stories, Moore explores how to embrace the New Testament theme that happiness is the by-product of being in “right” relationships, of being “at home” with God and with others. More than once, Jesus reminds us that the Great Commandment is to love God and to love other people. And that is what Matthew 6:33 is all about: “But seek first God’s kingdom and his righteousness and everything else will fall into place for you.”

<https://www.amazon.com/Come-Home-Healing-Homesickness-Soul/dp/1426753292/>

“The Glory of Heaven: The Truth about Heaven, Angels, and Eternal Life”

by John MacArthur

If you're going to call it "home" for eternity, don't you want to know what it's like?

Our pictures of heaven range from comical to curious, mystical to fictitious, with bits of biblical truth thrown in. But if heaven is our future, and we are to be living with an eternal mind-set in the present, a Hollywood scriptwriter's interpretation of the afterlife just won't suffice. Quite simply, we need to know more about what lies ahead for the sake of what lies in front of us today.

In this newly updated and expanded edition, pastor John MacArthur takes us through the pages of Scripture, exploring the wonders of heaven and the truth about angels and eternal life while addressing current debates and issues. Come along with this best-selling author for an in-depth look at every Christian's future—heaven, our eternal home.

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1433538687/>

"50 Things You Need to Know About Heaven"

By: Dr. John Hart

Moody Bible Professor Dr. John Hart provides brief, straightforward answers directly from the Bible to fifty of the most commonly asked questions about heaven.

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764211668/>

"Heaven: Your Real Home...From a Higher Perspective"

By: Joni Eareckson Tada

Gain a fresh perspective on heaven from someone who has endured more than her share of earthly challenges for over fifty years--quadriplegia, cancer, and chronic pain.

Joni Eareckson Tada's bestseller Heaven has inspired us to live well on earth even as we long for eternity, but as Joni tells us in this updated and expanded edition of Heaven, the longer you journey with your eyes on heaven, the more you begin to see.

A quadriplegic for over fifty years, Joni has also endured cancer and extreme ongoing pain, and she doesn't speak lightly when she reminds us that, "God

knows the precise tools to use in your life to cut, facet, cleanse, and refine the diamond that is your eternal soul . . . Every good thing that God has ever given you will last for all eternity--including the best part of every affliction."

It is from this vantage point that Joni now speaks about how we can live for Jesus as we look forward to our real home in heaven. Drawing on Scripture, Joni answers the deepest questions of our hearts, including:

What will heaven be like?

Who will we be in heaven?

How can we get ready for heaven?

Join Joni as she invites you on this journey of looking back on God's faithfulness, discovering how we got to where we are, and looking forward to our real home.

Praise for Heaven:

"Joni is a friend of mine who has been leading people with love and courage for decades. God uses the most unlikely guides to take us up the rugged terrain in our faith. God's plan is pretty simple. He wants us to spend forever with Him. This life is just practicing for eternity. Will we face difficulties and setbacks? You bet. In this updated book, Joni has taken us once again to the high places, and she's done so from her chair."

--Bob Goff, author of the New York Times bestsellers *Love Does* and *Everybody Always*

<https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-Your-Real-Higher-Perspective/dp/031035305X/>

"Heaven Your Real Home"

By: Joni Eareckson Tada

Step back a moment, focus your eyes of faith, and then come with Joni into a world you've heard about from your youth but have never seen: heaven. You just might discover that heaven is closer--and more real--than you've ever thought. In this joyful best-seller, Joni Eareckson Tada paints a shining portrait of our heart's true home. Joni talks about what heaven will be like, what we'll do, and whom we'll see. She shows how heaven will be the satisfaction of all that our hearts cry for, something more real than anything this side of eternity. And Joni tells how we can prepare now for the reality of heaven. With hope for today and vision for those who struggle in life, Heaven invites us to a refreshing and faith-filled picture of our glorious destination. Once you've caught a glimpse of heaven, you'll see earth in

a whole new light.

<https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-Your-Real-Home-Eareckson/dp/0529166615/>

“Heaven: What Will It Be Like?”

By: Joni Eareckson Tada

<https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-What-Will-be-Like/dp/0551031794/>

“Heaven: My Father's House”

By: Anne Graham Lotz

Now with 250K copies in print! Revised and Updated Edition. Anne affirms that Heaven truly is the home of your dreams: a home of lasting value that's fully paid for and filled with family, where you will be wanted and welcomed. Best of all, Heaven is a home you are invited to claim as your own.

With over 40 percent new and revised content, Anne Graham Lotz has updated her classic book on Heaven for a whole new generation of readers, and also for herself. With her father, mother, and husband now gone, Lotz beautifully adds her own vulnerability and stories to the journey contained in Heaven: My Father's House.

Jesus promised us, "In My Father's house are many rooms...I am going there to prepare a place for you." Amid the turbulence of today's world, we cling to the hope of a heavenly home where we will be welcomed into eternal peace and safety. Anne affirms that Heaven truly is the home of your dreams: a home of lasting value that's fully paid for and filled with family, where you will be wanted and welcomed. Best of all, Heaven is a home you are invited to claim as your own.

<https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-Fathers-Anne-Graham-Lotz/dp/0785227423/>

“A Place Called Heaven”

By: E. M. Bounds

If heaven is truly a paradise where God dwells, we should desire it more than anything on this frail, fleeting earth. The trials and difficulties of life should each be seen in light of the coming glory of heaven. Unfortunately, we rarely view things

from this perspective. Our schedules are filled with the present, allowing no time for contemplating or desiring eternity. Our incorrect perspective makes us spend our time on the least important things while ignoring those things that are most crucial.

Take a break from the present and let E. M. Bounds help you discover A Place Called Heaven. Examining virtually all the Scriptures that pertain to heaven, Bounds masterfully explains the nature of heaven and our purpose in it. Get a taste of heaven here on earth, learn a true Christian attitude toward eternity, and discover a purer, truer life.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0883689588>

“Heaven: A Place, A City, A Home”

By: Edward M. Bounds

Heaven is for real! And Christ has gone there to prepare for you a place before he returns again. In this compelling read, E. M. Bounds explores a number of verses that pertain to our future, celestial home and reveals how we can look forward with great anticipation to a permanent residence in heaven—a place where we will be reunited with loved ones and with Jesus for all eternity.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1502485575>

“Heaven: Priceless Encouragements on the Way to our Eternal Home”

By: J. C. Ryle

John Charles Ryle (1816-1900) was a prolific writer, a faithful pastor, and a dynamic preacher. This collection of sermons and tracts come from a variety of sources some of which are not quickly accessible. Some of the chapters in this book have been published as tracts. These are rare, short "Helmingham Series" tracts were first published about the middle of the last century, while J. C. Ryle was a Rector at Helmingham, Suffolk. Some of these chapters are sermons on the topic of Heaven. J.C. Ryle offers very practical counsel that is helpful in our pilgrim journey. Most of these sermons were written after losing a loved one. J.C. Ryle was widowed three times (Matilda died in 1847; Jessie died in 1860; Henrietta died in 1889) May the Lord use these sermons and tracts for the comfort of God's people. Personally I have found them helpful for those who are nearing the end of their earthly pilgrimage.

<https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-Priceless-Encouragements-Eternal-Home/dp/>

1495260143/

“Heaven and Hell”

By: Edward A. Donnelly

'This book, approached in the right spirit, will produce both depth of solemnity and elevated, pure joy. It will cause us to meditate more frequently on eternity, and how needful it is that Christians should be men and women whose minds are lifted up beyond today's immediate concerns.' — PAUL YEULETT

What comes after death?

Heaven and Hell concerns both the most popular and the most unpopular of all Christian teachings- heaven on the one hand, and hell on the other. Yet the two belong together, and the Bible, and Christian teaching through the ages, have always done what Ted Donnelly does in this series of addresses- held the two together, and not allowed either reality to be emphasized to the neglect of the other.

In this outstanding work, Donnelly first paints in the sombre background of the biblical teaching on hell, so that we may be warned to flee from it, and so that the glorious reality of heaven may shine all the brighter, and attract us all the more strongly.

Like the author's earlier work published by the Trust, Peter: Eyewitness of His Majesty, the book excels in biblical realism and pastoral warmth.

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0851518117/>

“Heaven: A Comprehensive Guide to Everything the Bible Says About Our Eternal Home”

By: Randy Alcorn

Enjoy a great reading experience when you buy the Kindle edition of this book. Learn more about Great on Kindle, available in select categories.

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Over 1 Million Copies Sold!

Have you ever wondered . . . ?

What is Heaven really going to be like?

What will we look like?

What will we do every day?

Won't Heaven get boring after a while?

We all have questions about what Heaven will be like, and after twenty-five years of extensive research, Dr. Randy Alcorn has the answers.

In the most comprehensive and definitive book on Heaven to date, Randy invites you to picture Heaven the way Scripture describes it—a bright, vibrant, and physical New Earth, free from sin, suffering, and death, and brimming with Christ's presence, wondrous natural beauty, and the richness of human culture as God intended it.

This is a book about real people with real bodies enjoying close relationships with God and each other, eating, drinking, working, playing, traveling, worshiping, and discovering on a New Earth. Earth as God created it. Earth as he intended it to be.

The next time you hear someone say, "We can't begin to image what Heaven will be like," you'll be able to tell them, "I can."

"Other than the Bible itself, this may well be the single most life-changing book you'll ever read." —Stu Weber

"This is the best book on Heaven I've ever read." —Rick Warren

"Randy Alcorn's thorough mind and careful pen have produced a treasury about Heaven that will inform my own writing for years to come." —Jerry B. Jenkins

"Randy does an awesome job of answering people's toughest questions about what lies on the other side of death." —Joni Eareckson Tada

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0842379428/>

"Heaven: Better by Far- Answers to Questions About the Believer's Final Hope"

By: J. Oswald Sanders

Sanders combs the Scripture to learn about the Christian's final home: 'So incredibly glorious is heaven that we are compelled to express it in...symbols of grandeur and majesty.'

<https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-Better-Answers-Questions-Believers/dp/0929239725/>

“Heaven”

By: W. A. Criswell and Paige Patterson

You will be surprised at the wealth of information the Bible contains about Heaven. You will find out that the activity of heaven is far more than walking golden streets and listening to angelic choirs. The authors respond to questions about the doctrinal basis for heaven. Included are hymns and poems relating to the subject.

<https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-W-Criswell/dp/0842313192/>

“Things Unseen: Living in Light of Forever”

By: Mark Buchanan

Blending pastoral warmth, philosophical depth, storytelling skill, and literary craft, Mark Buchanan encourages Christians to make heaven, literally, our "fixation" -- filling our vision, gripping our heart, and anchoring our hope. Only then, says Buchanan, can we become truly fearless on this earth, free from the fear of losing our life, property, status, title, or comfort; free from the threat of tyrants, the power of armies, and the day of trouble. Buchanan reawakens the instinctive yearning for things above, showing that only the heavenly minded are of much earthly good.

<https://www.amazon.com/Things-Unseen-Living-Light-Forever/dp/1590528832>

“Heaven: The Undiscovered Country: Exploring the Wonder of the Afterlife”

By: Ron Rhodes

Every person who has ever lived has wondered about that place beyond mortality- Shakespeare called it the undiscovered country. People have longed to uncover the secrets that shroud death and the afterlife . . . asking questions such as: What actually happens at the moment of death? Will we know our loved ones in heaven? What will we do in eternity? What happens to babies and toddlers when they die? Will we interact with the angels in heaven? Because God wrote the Bible for the sole purpose of helping men and women prepare for eternity, there's no better place to go for trustworthy answers. Bible expert Ron Rhodes takes us

to the Scripture to provide an incredibly clear and inspirational picture of the next life. Explore the wonder of heaven and the afterlife. Anticipate what is to come on the other side of eternity . . . in 'Heaven: The Undiscovered Country'

<https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-Undiscovered-Country-Exploring-Afterlife/dp/1592442102/>

“The Wonder of Heaven: A Biblical Tour of Our Eternal Home”

By: Ron Rhodes

Increasing economic and cultural instability is leading North Americans to wonder more and more about existence beyond death. Many sources--some trustworthy, some not--are offering opinion, conjecture, and comforting words.

Noted Bible teacher Ron Rhodes, bestselling author of *Angels Among Us*, goes to the Scriptures, God's gift to help us live on earth in a way that prepares us for heaven. He tackles the important questions:

What is the moment-of-death transition actually like?

In what state will believers exist? Will they know loved ones?

What will God's people do in eternity? What will it be like to live with God forever?

The Wonder of Heaven punctures the notion of a harp-strumming, do-nothing eternity. After glimpsing their home with God--and with people as God meant them to be--Christians will be filled with an anticipation that makes their lives brighter, stronger, and more effective today.

Includes some material from the book *Heaven: The Undiscovered Country*.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0736924566>

“What Happens After Life?: 21 Amazing Revelations About Heaven and Hell”

By: Ron Rhodes

Do you wonder what happens when you die? If so, you'll love these short, inspirational explanations of the Bible's most encouraging teachings about heaven. Trusted Bible teacher Ron Rhodes combines his rock-solid scriptural insight with illustrations from leaders throughout church history.

Each chapter is short enough to read in one sitting and zeroes in on a single encouraging truth. You will quickly find your fears and doubts replaced with

confidence in these truths:

Death is a transition into a wonderful life, not a fearful end.

You will enjoy eternity in a wonderful new body.

You will be reunited with Christian loved ones.

Sin, sorrow, sickness, and pain will be no more.

Best of all, you will enjoy face-to-face fellowship with God.

Bypassing philosophical arguments and contentious debates, this reassuring look at the clear teaching of the Bible will empower you to embrace the future with hope and joy.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0736951385>

“Future Glory: Living in the Hope of the Rapture, Heaven, and Eternity”

By: Ed Hindson

Glimpse the Splendor That Awaits You

Despite today’s hardships, the Bible promises a glorious new era is rapidly approaching. God’s plan for what’s ahead includes our rapture, our rewards, our participation in Jesus’ triumphal return, and our eternal glory in heaven. As a believer, you can trust that a wonderful future awaits you.

In Future Glory, prophecy expert Dr. Ed Hindson helps you explore the Bible’s seven unique promises that outline what’s in store for every Christian. You’ll gain a better understanding of

- the timeline for the rapture, Christ’s return, the millennium, and the creation of a new heaven and earth

- the awe-inspiring details of what life will be like in Christ’s kingdom

- your place in heaven and what it means to live with an eternal perspective

Written with attention to biblical details, Christ-minded wisdom, and a gracious compassion for our all-too-human tendency to be absorbed with the here and now, Future Glory will take you on an incredible journey into your prophetic future and the everlasting destiny God has prepared for you.

<https://www.amazon.com/Future-Glory-Living-Rapture-Eternity/dp/0736983503/>

“After Life: A Glimpse of Eternity Beyond Death's Door”

By: F. LaGard Smith

Answers the questions for all religions on what happens after death.

<https://www.amazon.com/After-Life-Glimpse-Eternity-Beyond/dp/0966006046/>

“The Happiness of Heaven”

By: F. J. Boudreaux

The Happiness of Heaven was written by Father F. J. Boudreaux. This is a book based on Catholic Theology, and what that theology teaches about heaven. It gives us clearly and easily understood knowledge of Heaven, the eternal City of God, with all its beauty, using citations, and references within footnotes.

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<https://www.amazon.com/Happiness-Heaven-F-J-Boudreaux/dp/B0B3KLNG1W/>

“The Biblical Doctrine of Heaven”

By: Wilbur Moorehead Smith

Biblical Teachings about Heaven and what the bible has to say about heaven. What am I to do with this life, What happens after this life, Where do we go after we die, are ll questions that one may ponder within themselves. Take a closer look into the bible and find wonderful truths that opens your heart and your mind to Beautiful Expectations of what is available to you.

<https://www.amazon.com/Biblical-Doctrine-Heaven-Wilbur-Moorehead/dp/0802407056/>

“Answers to Common Questions About Heaven & Eternity”

By: Timothy J. Demy and Thomas Ice

What Christians believe about heaven and eternity has eternal consequences. Almost everyone has some ideas about these issues, but not all are biblical. For those readers wanting to know what the Bible says, the Answers to Common Questions series offers concise, yet thorough answers to all of their questions. Heaven is very real, but often misinterpreted. In Answers to Common Question About Heaven & Eternity, authors Timothy Demy and Thomas Ice discuss such queries as: -What will heaven be like? -Does everyone go to heaven? -What do other religions teach about heaven?

Written in question-and-answer format for easy reading, this quick reference provides brief summaries of important biblical doctrines so Christians can confidently and honestly discuss their beliefs with family, friends, and neighbors.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/082542657X>

“Heaven: The Mystery of Angels”

By: Grant R. Jeffrey

Learn the Answers to All Your Questions about God

What role do angels play in our lives?
Where and how will we live?

What will we be doing in heaven?
Will I know my family and friends?
What happens to departed children?
What will our new bodies be like?

Explore the Bible's heavenly promises where all your hopes and dreams will be fulfilled. If you have lost a loved one, you need this book to help you understand the truth about Heaven—the greatest promise ever made. Many who have read through these pages have forever lost their fear of death.

<https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-Mystery-Grant-R-Jeffrey/dp/0921714262/>

“Heaven and the Afterlife: The Truth about Tomorrow and What it Means for Today”

By: Erwin Lutzer

Get ready for life after death.

Combining three books that together have sold nearly 1 million copies, Heaven and the Afterlife gives you Erwin Lutzer's best reflections on eternity and what it means for you today.

The trilogy includes:

One Minute After You Die. A simple and moving explanation of what the Bible teaches about death, this book makes you consider a sobering truth: one minute after you die, your life will not be over. Rather, it will be just beginning—in a place of unimaginable bliss or indescribable gloom. Are you ready for that moment?
How You Can Be Sure You Will Spend Eternity with God summarizes the Bible's teaching on salvation, answering questions like, “What role do I play in my own salvation? Can I lose my salvation if I commit a serious sin? What if I doubt that I'm saved?”

Your Eternal Reward. This book explores the often-overlooked Scriptures about reward and judgment for Christians, answering questions like, “How will believers be judged? Do rewards for faithfulness vary? If heaven is perfect, why do rewards even matter?”

Together these books will help you live faithfully today, readying you for that final hour when you meet your Maker.

<https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-Afterlife-Truth-about-Tomorrow/dp/0802414362/>

“Heavenly Rewards: Living with Eternity in Sight”

By: Mark Hitchcock

Are You Living in Light of Eternity?

It's difficult to imagine eternal life. But when you've got only one life and you know there is coming a day when you will stand before God, it's important to consider whether you're living each day like your life depends on it.

If you're a Christian, the good news is God's judgment isn't about determining your salvation—it's about rewarding your faithfulness. Salvation cannot be earned—it's already yours.

In Heavenly Rewards you will uncover fascinating truths about how the life you live today determines your life in eternity. You will...

learn tangible ways you can please the Lord in your everyday living
discover that your labor and sacrifices are never in vain—God is a faithful
rewarder

see the benefits of living faithfully and enduring through even the most difficult
times

Yes, your faithfulness will be rewarded. God knows the smallest details of your
days, and He wants to acknowledge your every act you've done for Him.

Living well with an eternal perspective really can change your life—for good.

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0736976531/>

“As It Is in Heaven: How Eternity Brings Focus to What Really Matters”

By: Greg Laurie

Our lives here are so often cluttered with the “cares of this world” that we fail to consider heavenly priorities and how they should be reflected in our earthly ones. At the beginning of Jesus' most famous prayer, He teaches us to pray that God's will “be done on earth as it is in heaven”. What heaven is up to is critical for us to understand if we're going to live biblically. Pastor Greg Laurie explains that heaven is anything but a long, boring church service. People in heaven know about the time and place of ongoing events on earth. They are rational and recall everything from their earthly days, but most importantly for us, they have a unique

perspective from which we can learn a great deal.

In this rich and relevant study, Greg sheds scriptural light on the sensational books and stories about people going to heaven and coming back, answers the nagging questions we are all dying to ask, and guides us to focus—right now—on what really matters.

<https://www.amazon.com/As-Heaven-Eternity-Brings-Matters/dp/1612915698/>

“Heaven Observed: Glimpses of Transcendence in Everyday Life”

By: Barry L. Morrow

Gallup surveys, public opinion, and Hollywood films indicate that the hope of Heaven has never been more relevant to our society. Yet despite the popularity of this subject, post-Christian culture gives little credence to biblical teaching on Heaven. As a result, the unchurched and evangelicals alike miss out on the transforming, biblical hope of Heaven. In *Heaven Observed*, author Barry Morrow brings readers back to this crucial hope, offering answers to their questions about the afterlife, insights into the inconsolable longings of their hearts, and sound encouragement for their spiritual journey.

<https://www.amazon.com/Heaven-Observed-Glimpses-Transcendence-Everyday/dp/1576832325/>

“Beyond Death's Door”

By: Gerald Wheeler

Death is a part of life . . .

People have been trying to comprehend death for millennia-nearly every culture known to humanity has put forth some theory of what happens to a person after life. But who knows what really happens? Not one of us alive today has experience death firsthand.

Although the Bible has much to say on the subject of death, there are several conflicting views of the afterlife. Which one is actually biblical? And which view does science support?

Beyond Death's Door examines the Bible and science for the truth about the afterlife--and discovers that one of the first lies told humanity has been taught as

gospel truth for thousands of years."

<https://www.amazon.com/Beyond-Deaths-Door-Hope-Reunion/dp/082802474X/>

"Made in Heaven"

By: Ray Comfort and Jeffrey Seto

Science shamelessly steals from God's creation, yet refuses to give God the glory!

How the glow of a cat's eyes innovates road reflectors

The naturally sticky inspirations for Velcro and barbed wire

A fly's ear, the lizard's foot, the moth's eye, and other natural examples are inspiring improvements and new technologies in our lives

Engineers and inventors have long examined God's creation to understand and copy complex, proven mechanics of design in the science known as biomimicry. Much of this inspiration is increasingly drawn from amazing aspects of nature, including insects to plants to man in search of wisdom and insight. We are surrounded daily by scientific advancements that have become everyday items, simply because man is copying from God's incredible creation, without acknowledging the Creator.

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0890516693/>

"A Place Called Heaven: 10 Surprising Truths about Your Eternal Home"

By: Dr. Robert Jeffress

If any of us learned we were going to move to a foreign country, we'd do everything we could to learn about that place so that we'd be prepared when moving day arrived. As Christians, we know some day we will leave our familiar country and be united with God in heaven. And yet many of us know very little about this place called heaven.

In this enlightening book, bestselling author Dr. Robert Jeffress opens the Scriptures to unpack ten surprising truths about heaven and explain who we will see there and how we can prepare to go there someday. Perfect for believers or skeptics who are curious about heaven.

<https://www.amazon.com/Place-Called-Heaven-Surprising-Eternal/dp/0801018943>

“The Other Side of Death”

By: Sidlow J. Baxter

In *The Other Side of Death*, preacher and theologian Dr. J. Sidlow Baxter examines what the Bible says about heaven, hell, and life beyond death. Beginning with a fascinating word study of hades and gehenna, Dr. Baxter proceeds with an exploration of infant death, the place of loved ones in heaven, and the doctrine of purgatory. The book concludes with a discussion of where heaven is and a helpful review of how other religions view life after death. *The Other Side of Death* not only makes for intriguing study but also offers substantial comfort and reassurance to those who seek insight into God’s plan for them after life on earth. Dr. J. Sidlow Baxter is recognized as one of the world’s best-known preachers and authors. A master expositor of the Bible, he has written nearly two dozen books, including *Master Theme of the Bible* and *The Hidden Hand* (Tyndale). He was educated at Spurgeon’s College in England and holds a D.D. degree from Central Baptist Seminary in Toronto, Ontario.

<https://www.amazon.com/Other-Side-Death-Sidlow-Baxter/dp/0842347798>

“The Great Divorce”

By: C. S. Lewis

C.S. Lewis’ *The Great Divorce* is a classic Christian allegorical tale about a bus ride from hell to heaven. An extraordinary meditation upon good and evil, grace and judgment, Lewis’s revolutionary idea in *The Great Divorce* is that the gates of Hell are locked from the inside. Using his extraordinary descriptive powers, Lewis’ *The Great Divorce* will change the way we think about good and evil.

<https://www.amazon.com/Great-Divorce-C-S-Lewis/dp/0060652950>

“C.S. Lewis Goes to Heaven: A Reader's Guide to The Great Divorce”

By: David G Clark

C.S. Lewis’ novel, *The Great Divorce*, about a man who takes a bus trip from Hell to Heaven, is full of fascinating characters and conversations. *C.S. Lewis Goes to Heaven* is the first book dedicated to exploring this story, revealing many important secrets that have gone undetected since its publication in 1946.

Discover how leaving a train station in the wrong direction provided Lewis a model for Hell. Learn the real names of an Impressionist painter and a famous detective writer that Lewis placed (anonymously) in Hell. With considerable detective work of his own, David Clark carefully expands ideas found in *The Great Divorce* using supporting references from Lewis' personal correspondence and other books, particularly *Mere Christianity*, *The Screwtape Letters*, *Surprised by Joy* and *Letters to Malcolm*. * * * Clark looks at the story through three different lenses. First, he introduces the characters and their interactions chapter by chapter, including a brief narrative so readers new to Lewis will feel at home. Second, he reveals how even the book's landscapes convey the theology of Lewis. Then the author comes "alongside" Lewis, explaining his theological ideas and insights, showing their far-reaching implications, and providing scriptural references. By these three approaches, the astonishing grasp of Lewis' theology is revealed in accessible language. The book concludes with three appendices, including 40 pages of historical character sketches, literary references, and concepts. * * * Considering that Lewis himself thought it surpassed his classic book, *The Screwtape Letters*, it's regrettable that *The Great Divorce* has been neglected for so long. Now for the first time, there is a comprehensive guide to help readers appreciate this profound and entertaining novel, and be awestruck by the grace of God it reveals. * * * "If you want a great guide to *The Great Divorce*, you can't do better than David Clark, who introduces readers to a host of fascinating historical and literary characters - illuminating this popular novel with theological insight and devotional delight. Clark's tour of C. S. Lewis' version of Heaven and Hell provides a truly refreshing holiday." * * * Terry Lindvall, author of *Surprised by Laughter: The Comic World of C.S. Lewis*

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1936294095/>

"The Saints' Everlasting Rest"

By: Richard Baxter

"There remaineth therefore a rest unto the people of God."--Hebrews, 4:9.

PREFATORY NOTICE

Mr. RICHARD BAXTER, the author of the *Saints' Rest*; so well known to the world by this and many other excellent and useful writings, was a learned, laborious, and eminently holy divine of the last age. [more...]

PDF: https://www.eternallifeministries.org/rb_saintsrest.pdf

"Pilgrim's Progress – Journey To Heaven" (2008 Movie)

STORYLINE:

An allegory of the life of a Christian believer on a journey from the “City of Destruction” (this ‘world’) to the “Celestial City” (Heaven).

SYNOPSIS:

“Pilgrim’s Progress, Journey to Heaven” is a modern adaptation of John Bunyan’s beloved classic. It is the #1 Children’s fantasy of all time. The novel has been heralded as a literary masterpiece around the world, as it has been published in over 100 languages and is the most read book other than the Bible.

Amazing visual effects, beautiful locations, and a wonderful cast bring to life the story that has inspired each generation for hundreds of years. Follow Christian and his companions on a great Journey from the City of Destruction to the gates of Heaven as they face obstacles large and small, man-made and demon spawned.

Beyond the gripping drama, Bunyan’s powerful allegory teaches us all the hazards and hopes of the Christian life, and it features the triumphant glory that awaits all who faithfully follow the King of kings!

Produced by DRC FILMS (Danny R. Carrales) in 2008, in my opinion, is the most ‘faithful’ rendition of part one of John Bunyan’s classic “Pilgrim’s Progress” book (even including the new 2019 animated version by Revelation Media).

For more information about this movie, and to buy the DVD, visit their website:

<https://reelchristian.com/products/pilgrims-progress-journey-to-heaven-christian-movie-dvd>

[NOTE (Editor, Mark): In my opinion, this is the most ‘faithful’ rendition of “The Pilgrims Progress” book by John Bunyan I have ever seen].

MOVIE TRAILER:

TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMxtoCydNDY>

TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0bD6YxWw5E>

TRAILER: <https://vimeo.com/165117487>

PURCHASE:

WEBSITE: <https://reelchristian.com/product/pilgrims-progress/>

WEBSITE: <https://www.christianbook.com/pilgrims-progress-journey-to-heaven/pd/000491>

WEBSITE: <https://www.amazon.com/Pilgrims-Progress-Journey-Daniel-Kruse/dp/B001AYJ2Y0>

Wikipedia Page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrim%27s_Progress:_Journey_to_Heaven

“Previous Resources About ‘Heaven’”

NOTE: For additional resources about the subject of “Heaven,” view this previous "Life's Deep Thoughts" post that focused on Heaven:
<https://markbesh.wordpress.com/a-place-to-retire-v221/>

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

SPECIAL ‘GENERAL’ RESOURCE

“ApologetiX Songbook”
(An interactive PDF)

It features the lyrics to every song on every CD and every “download” from 1992-2022

At last, the new digital interactive ApologetiX Songbook (1992-2022) is here. And It's almost 1200 pages long!

Special features:

- Indexed by original song title, original artist, and year original was a hit
- Indexed by parody title, topics it pertains to, and Bible verses covered

- Each song's page has icons showing what albums it appears on
- Each song's page has a commentary from lyricist J. Jackson
- Each album's page includes liner notes and track listing
- J.'s original handwritten rough lyrics to 40 ApX classics
- Print any pages you like or use for slides in church
- Photos from ApologetiX's first and last concerts
- List of ApX parodies most likely to be redone
- List of the first ApX concerts in each state
- Discography of out-of-print cassettes
- DVD discography and synopses
- Downloadable in PDF format

New features in this edition:

- 1,186 pages long (184 more pages than previous edition)
- Over 95 new parodies and journal entries
- Three new full-length feature articles
- Never-before-seen rare photos
- Lyrics for 802 parodies

Interactive features:

- Click on any page number in indexes or TOC to go to that page
- Click on any album icon to go to its liner notes and track listings
- Click on any song title on an album page to go to that song

Note: This e-book is a download only (380 MB) and doesn't include sheet music.

The songbook is available **for a donation of \$50 or more**. After we receive your donation, we'll send you a follow-up email with the link.

Get the Songbook for a donation:

<http://www.apologetix.com/store/store.php#songbook>

Songbook Demo Video: <https://rumble.com/vfazhl-apologetix-songbook-2020-demo.html>

“THE SEARCH FOR MEANING” WEBSITE

This site presents discussions on the 12 most commonly asked questions about the Christian faith.

The 12 discussions are accessed by the “tabs” at the bottom of the page. The tabs are numbered 1-12. Roll your mouse over them and you will see the question displayed at the right. Click on the number to select that question.

Within each question (i.e. tabs 1-12), there are subtopics (or dialogues) to select that appear as smaller tabs underneath the numbered tabs. Roll your mouse over them and the title of these topics is also displayed to the right. Click on the open rectangle to select that dialogue.

For each question (1-12), a link to related resources and an optional flowchart is provided. To access this material, click on the respective words, “Related Resources” or “Options Flowchart.”

To play a more detailed discussion of the subject, between two people, select the desired dialogue and click on “Play Audio Dialogue.”

In the upper right-hand corner of the page, there is an icon that looks like binoculars looking at a question mark. Click on this icon to return to the homepage.

In the upper right-hand corner of a “Related Resources” page, there is an icon that looks like some books. Click on this icon to get to an “overview” page that has links to all of the resources for all of the questions. There also are additional “appendices” for most of the questions.

In the upper right-hand corner of a “Flowchart” page, there is an icon that looks like an Org chart. Click on this icon to get to an “overview” page that has links to all of the flowcharts.

http://4vis.com/sfm/sfm_pres/sp_q1_d1_1of10.html

[Content by: Bill Kraftson and Lamar Smith; Website by Mark Besh]

“FRUITS OF THE BEATITUDES” WEBSITE

(The ATTITUDES of Jesus that produce the CHARACTER of Jesus)

CLICK ON THE LINK to view:

<http://fruitsofthebeatitudes.org/>

FACEBOOK PAGE:

<https://www.facebook.com/FruitsOfTheBeatitudes/>

[Mark Besh]

[P.S.: If you would like to investigate further about what it really means to “believe,” visit the following link:

http://4vis.com/sfm/sfm_pres/sp_q10_d1_1of10.html].

ARTICLES

“There Is No Place Like Home - The Wizard Of Oz”

(Musical play rendition)

[Cheer]

WIZARD

*“This is positively
the finest exhibition ever to be shown
Well, uh, uh, be that as it may.
I, your Wizard, par adua alta,
Am about to embark on a hazardous
And technically unexplainable journey
Into the outer stratosphere.”*

PEOPLE OF OZ

[Cheer]

WIZARD

*"To confer, converse
And otherwise hob-nob
With my brother wizards.
And I hereby decree
That until what time,
If any, that I return,
The Scarecrow by virtue
Of his highly superior brains,
Shall rule in my stead,
Assisted by the Tin Man,
By virtue of his magnificent heart,
And the Lion by virtue of his courage!
Obey them as you would me.
Thank you."*

TOTO

[Growls and jumps out of Dorothy's arms]

CAT

[Meows]

TOTO

[Growls]

DOROTHY

*"Oh, Toto come back!
Toto! Toto!
Oh, don't go without me
I'll be be right with ya!"*

TIN MAN

"Get that dog!"

WIZARD

*"This is a highy irregular procedure!
Absolutely unprecedented!"*

Ruined my exit!"

DOROTHY

[Screams]

*"Come back, come back
Don't go without me!
Please come back!"*

WIZARD

*"I can't come back!
I don't know how it works!
Goodbye, folks!"*

PEOPLE OF OZ

"Goodbye! Goodbye! Goodbye!"

DOROTHY

"Oh, now I'll never get home!"

LION

*"Stay with us, then, Dorothy.
We all love you.
We don't want you to go."*

DOROTHY [through tears]

*"Oh, that's very kind of you,
But this could never be like Kansas.
Auntie Em must have stopped wondering
What happened to me by now.
Oh, Scarecrow, what am I going to do?"*

SCARECROW

"Look! Here's someone who can help you."

DOROTHY

"Oh, will you help me? Can you help me?"

GLINDA

*"You don't need to be helped any longer.
You've always had the power
To go back to Kansas."*

DOROTHY

"I have?"

SCARECROW

"Then why didn't you tell her before?"

GLINDA

*"Because she wouldn't have believed me.
She had to learn it for herself."*

TIN MAN

"What have you learned, Dorothy?"

DOROTHY

*"Well,
I think that it,
That it wasn't enough
Just to want to see
Uncle Henry and Auntie Em.
And that it's that...
If I ever go looking
For my heart's desire again,
I won't look any further
than my own backyard,
Because if it isn't there,
I never really lost it to begin with
Is that right?"*

GLINDA

"That's all it is!"

SCARECROW

*"But that's so easy!
I should have thought of it for you."*

TIN MAN

"I should have felt it in my heart."

GLINDA

*"No, she had to find it out for herself.
Now those magic slippers
Will take you home in two seconds!"*

DOROTHY
"Oh! Toto, too?"

GLINDA
"Toto, too."

DOROTHY
"Oh, now?"

GLINDA
"Whenever you wish."

DOROTHY [through tears]
*"Oh, dear,
that's too wonderful to be true!
Oh, it's, it's going to be so hard
to say goodbye.
I love you all, too.
Goodbye, Tin Man.
Oh, don't cry.
You rust so dreadfully.
Here, here's your oil can.
Goodbye."*

TIN MAN
*"Now I know I've got a heart,
'cause it's breaking."*

DOROTHY
*"Oh. Goodbye, Lion.
You know, I know it isn't right,
But I'm gonna miss the way
You used to holler for help
Before you found your courage."*

LION
*"I would never've found it
If it hadn't been for you."*

DOROTHY
"I think I'll miss you most of all."

GLINDA

"Are you ready now?"

DOROTHY

"Yes.

Say goodbye, Toto.

Yes, I'm ready now."

GLINDA

"Then close your eyes

And tap your heels together

Three times.

And think to yourself.

There's no place like home.

There's no place like home."

DOROTHY AND GLINDA

"There's no place like home."

DOROTHY

"There's no place like home

There's no place like home

There's no place like home

There's no place like home

There's no place like home

There's no place like home

There's no place..."

AUNTIE EM

"Wake up, honey."

DOROTHY

"There's no place like home.

There's no place like home.

There's no place..."

AUNTIE EM

"Dorothy. Dorothy, dear

It's Aunt Em, darling."

DOROTHY

"Oh, Auntie Em, it's you!"

AUNTIE EM

"Yes, darling."

PROFESSOR

*"Hello, there! Anybody home?
I, uh, just dropped by
because I heard the little girl
Got caught in the big...
Well, she seems all right now."*

UNCLE HENRY

*"Yes.
She got quite a bump on the head.
We kind of thought there for a minute
She was gonna leave us."*

PROFESSOR

"Oh."

DOROTHY

*"But I did leave you, Uncle Henry.
That's just the trouble.
And I tried to get back
For days and days."*

AUNTIE EM

*"There, there, lie quiet now.
You just had a bad dream."*

HUNK

"Sure. Remember me, your old pal, Hunk?"

DOROTHY

"Oh."

HICKORY

"And me, Hickory?"

ZEKE

"You couldn't forget my face, could you?"

DOROTHY

*"No. But it wasn't a dream.
It was a place.
And you, and you, and you,
And you were there!"*

PROFESSOR

"Oh sure!"

DOROTHY

"But you couldn't have been, could you?"

AUNTIE EM

*"Oh, we dream lots
Of silly things when we..."*

DOROTHY

*"No, Aunt Em, this was a real,
truly live place.
And I remember that some of it
Wasn't very nice,
But most of it was beautiful.
But just the same,
All I kept saying to everybody was,
'I want to go home!'
And they sent me home."*

[MEN ALL LAUGH]

"Doesn't anybody believe me?"

UNCLE HENRY

"Of course we believe you, Dorothy."

DOROTHY

*"Oh, but anyway, Toto, we're home! Home!
And this is my room and you're all here!
And I'm not going to leave here ever,
Ever again, because I love you all!
And...oh, Auntie Em,*

There's no place like home!"

[Random Harvest - PEOPLE OF OZ]

MUSICAL AUDIO: https://www.smule.com/recording/the-wizard-of-oz-there-is-no-place-like-home/128583146_4580214266

"Land of Oz - The American Fairyland"

Contents

- 1 The Magical Land of Oz: So Much More Than a Kansas Dream...
- 2 Oz: Climate, Landscape & Scenery
- 3 Crossing Deadly Deserts
- 4 Mermaids & Fairies in Oz?
- 5 GeOZgraphy:
- 6 Magic Items in Oz
 - 6.1 Magic Footwear
 - 6.2 Powder of Life
 - 6.3 Magic Belt
 - 6.4 Magic Picture
 - 6.5 Great Book of Records
- 7 Oz History-Fairy Queens & Mortal Kings
 - 7.1 Other Oz Beliefs/Versions
- 8 Ozian Culture
- 9 Dominant colors
- 10 Sub-Kingdoms
- 11 Background
- 12 References

[Oz Wiki]

WEB PAGE: https://oz.fandom.com/wiki/Land_of_Oz

"Dorothy Proclaims That "There's No Place Like Home," But is that the Message of the Wizard of OZ?"

It seems that the whole message of The Wizard of Oz comes from Dorothy's famous line 'There's no place like home,' but it could be argued that the film following Dorothy from dull and dreary Kansas into the spectacular world of OZ

does not convince us that this is true. In this essay I will be looking at whether or not the film The Wizard of Oz gives us good evidence to support the message. I will be looking at the film as a whole, focusing on the characters, the techniques used to create the film and its social context and how this all adds to the message of the film.

In Kansas Dorothy and her family live on a farm in the middle of nowhere and even though her family and friends are caring and loving Dorothy is clearly bored there. Dorothy and Toto, her dog and seemingly her best friend, are constantly getting into trouble with their neighbour Mrs Gulch and this just seems to be one of Dorothy's multiple problems in Kansas. The song Dorothy sings 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow,' truly shows her desire of escape, this also reflects the immigrant experience of the time, the desire to go somewhere else better, the dream of a better life somewhere far away from where are, your home. [more...]

[Drapes and Squares]

ARTICLE: <https://drapesandsquares.wordpress.com/2012/06/02/dorothy-proclaims-that-theres-no-place-like-home-but-is-that-the-message-of-the-wizard-of-oz-please-incorporate-detailed-reference-to-the-film-in-your-answer/>

"List of Oz Characters"

This is a list of characters in the original Oz books by American author L. Frank Baum. The majority of characters listed here unless noted otherwise have appeared in multiple books under various plotlines. Oz is made up of four divisions that surround the Emerald City in the center. The country as a whole was originally enchanted by a character named Queen Lurline, who is described in the Oz backstory. Additional characters were added in regions surrounding The Land of Oz (beyond the deserts) as the series progressed.

Aside from the immigrant humans and Dorothy's and Betsy's pets, the characters here are each listed under what division they are most associated with in the storyline or storylines.

[Wikipedia]

WIKI: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Oz_characters_\(created_by_Baum\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Oz_characters_(created_by_Baum))

"THE REAL MEANING OF THESE WIZARD OF OZ CHARACTERS"

L. Frank Baum wrote 14 Wizard of Oz books, but his biggest home run was 1900's The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, which MGM turned into a wonderful Wizard of Oz movie. Both versions tell the story of Dorothy Gale and her adorable dog Toto getting stranded in a fantastical land by a tornado, and both include the iconic characters of the Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion, Tin Man, Glinda the Good Witch, and the wizard of fraud, Oz. But unlike the movie, the book features creatures like a giant lion-eating spider and tiny people made of china. Moreover, Dorothy's shoes aren't ruby, and the journey isn't a dream despite nightmarish sequences. [more...]

[GRUNGE]

ARTICLE: <https://www.grunge.com/165193/the-real-meaning-of-these-wizard-of-oz-characters/>

“The Wizard of Oz”

Andrew Lloyd Webber's new production of The Wizard of Oz is an enchanting adaptation of the all-time classic, totally reconceived for the stage by the award-winning creative team that recently delighted Toronto audiences of all ages with the revival of The Sound of Music.

Developed from the ever popular MGM screenplay, this new production contains all the beloved songs from the Oscar®-winning movie score, all the favourite characters and iconic moments, plus a few surprises along the way, including new songs by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber.

Click your heels together and join Scarecrow, Tin Man, Lion, Dorothy and her little dog Toto, as they journey through the magical land of Oz to meet the Wizard and obtain their hearts' desires. Watch out for the Wicked Witch of the West and her winged monkeys as you rediscover the real story of Oz in this fantastic musical treat for all the family.

[Andrew Lloyd Webber]

INTERVIEW: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3FDBadbMfl>

“There's No Place Like Home”

Authors:
Tony Chapman
Durham University

Abstract

For a place that is so familiar, home is peculiarly difficult to define and to research. Based on an extended review of recent literature on home, the article shows that there is no place like 'home' because people construct its image in memory and imagination. Home, it is argued, is imaged on many different levels. At a surface level, home is known in terms of its location, fabric, decoration, furnishing and amenity - it is a place that is known intimately. At a deeper level, home is defined in terms of the kinds of relationships people have, or would like to have, with others inside and outside of the home. Deeper still, home is a representation of cultural identity and provides a collective sense of social permanency and security. People rarely think about home at this level, it is argued, unless reappraisal is forced upon them by a significant life event like migration between cultures or because of cultural invasion from without. The article argues for an intensification of research that starts from the domestic sphere in order to explore how home life both shapes and reflects wider social continuities and changes.

PDF REQUEST: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258191999_There's_No_Place_Like_Home

"What to Know About Homesickness and Mental Health"
Medically Reviewed by Dan Brennan, MD on October 25, 2021

What Causes Homesickness?
Effects of Homesickness

How to Deal with Homesickness

Homesickness is the feeling of emotional distress when you're away from home and in a new and unfamiliar environment. It affects those who've moved both temporarily and permanently, such as students, migrants, refugees, and those in the military. It's estimated that 50% to 75% of the general population have felt homesick at least once in their life.

What Causes Homesickness?

Nearly everyone misses something about home when they're away. But some people might feel more severely homesick than others. These are some of the causes of homesickness:

Disruption of lifestyle. Moving away from home means your routines and lifestyle are interrupted, which can lead to anxiety and distress. Your usual habits and routines can't be depended on for comfort in your new situation, especially if the environment is culturally different from what you're used to.

Cultural distance. Researchers found that the greater the difference between cultures and cultural values, the more difficult the adjustment, which leads to homesickness. This can lead to a lack of interest in your new surroundings.

Difficulty adapting. A new situation requires adjustment, but not everyone finds it easy to adapt. In a study of those who had recently entered the military, those who felt homesick tended to be those who were more rigid in their behavior. They clung to their old habits and avoided situations that required them to adapt.

Feelings of Not Belonging. In a study of people from other countries living in the Netherlands, homesickness was more common among employees aged 30 to 39 who had stayed in the Netherlands for 6 to 8 years. A possible explanation for the increased level of homesickness after a few years is that while the surroundings were now familiar, the foreigners still felt like outsiders. Also, some of them may wonder where they and their children belong. Do they belong in their current country or their country of origin?

Effects of Homesickness

Depression. Depression, also known as major depressive disorder, is an illness that involves a constant feeling of sadness and loss of interest or pleasure. Doctors say that homesickness can have symptoms that are similar to depression, such as frequent crying, sleeping problems, difficulty concentrating, and withdrawal from society. In some cases, homesickness can even turn into depression itself.

Grief. While migrant workers and other foreigners may have moved away from home for a better job or better pay, they feel grief for the loss of the comforts of home, and for the place they felt that they belonged.

Affects productivity. The overwhelming feeling of being in a new environment and away from the familiar can lead to performance issues at work and school. Intense homesick feelings can also result in difficulty focusing on topics that are not related to home.

Physical effects. Homesickness can also lead to physical symptoms such as lack

of appetite, stomach problems, lack of sleep, headaches, and fatigue.

How to Deal with Homesickness

Know that it's normal. Being in a new place and missing your home, family, friends, and pets, is completely normal. It means that you have a healthy attachment to your loved ones. It will take a while to adjust to your new surroundings.

Attend events or take classes. Some companies or universities organize events for international employees or students, and this may encourage you to learn more about your new place of residence, and meet new people.

Be active. Taking part in sports and physical activities can help you take your mind off your homesickness and boost your mood. Team sports can also help you make new social connections and find social support.

Find a new "favorite" place. This could be a particular cafe for coffee, a specific table at the library, a shady tree to sit under. It establishes a familiar space where you might start to feel more at home.

Make friends with locals. It may help you adjust more easily to your new place if you get to know some locals, especially if you're from somewhere that's very different. A study of African students in the U.S. found that those who spent time with American students had fewer problems adjusting to their new life.

Keep in touch. Write regular letters, emails, or call or text your friends and family back home. In a study of people from other countries working in London, England, those who kept in regular contact with friends and family back home were less homesick than those who didn't. But daily phone calls may make you feel even more homesick. Maybe call home once or twice a week instead of every day.

Gratitude journal. Journaling can help with your feelings of homesickness. Every night, try writing down three things you're grateful for and three things you're looking forward to the next day.

[WebMD Editorial Contributors]

"Dealing with Homesickness"

Most of us, at one time or another, have missed home – the familiar, predictable

atmosphere where we have generally spent the first eighteen years of our lives. Entering college is an exciting step—a passage to adulthood and independence. But, what should you do when that feeling of “Oh, I wish I were back at home—this is miserable” begins to set in?

First of all, realize that missing home is absolutely normal.

Missing home, the place (your house), the people (your family and friends), and the pets (the cat, the dog, or the guppies) is absolutely normal. Adjustments of learning how to cope in a new environment take time to develop. Once you figure it out, that skill can provide you with practice and experience in coping with moves or transitions later in life.

Look at this time as an exciting opportunity.

Developing an action plan and looking at this separation from home as an opportunity to develop new skills or interests can help you develop skills in coping with challenges.

Schedule visits home.

Set a definite date for a visit home or to see your parents, but first allow yourself enough time to acclimate to this new environment. If you go home every weekend, you might deprive yourself of having a full college experience.

Stay in touch by phone and email.

Daily phone calls can just reinforce a person’s sense of homesickness or isolation. Calling less frequently, once or twice a week, may actually help to reduce feelings of homesickness. Encourage your parents to write or email you on a regular basis; these can be saved and reread. A subscription to a favorite magazine or hometown newspaper can also help counter the vacant feeling of an empty mailbox.

Observe your own patterns.

At times, a little self-analysis is in order. Note if there is a special time of the day or week that is particularly difficult and try to figure out why. Try to develop a routine of your own for days that go slowly such as having a leisurely breakfast, reading the newspaper, or visiting with a friend.

Get out of your comfort zone.

Developing new friendships means taking risks. Sit with someone you don’t know at lunch. Invite someone to have coffee with you. Start a conversation with someone you don’t know at the bus stop or the elevator.

Plan time to feel homesick.

Missing familiar people and things from home is common. Plan some time to reflect on those feelings and to accept them. Taking charge of your feelings in this way often helps to work through them.

Notice your new patterns.

New patterns often develop gradually. Step back and mentally walk through your days, noting weekends particularly. Being aware of your new patterns and

preferences will be helpful when you make your first visit home. Comparing the old routines you had at home with your new routines at college will help you realize how you are changing and becoming more independent. This will help lessen the shock when your parents wake you at the crack of eight when you are used to sleeping until noon on Saturday.

Things to remember when coping with homesickness

Home will still be there. Unlike the house in the Russian fairy tales of Baba Yaga – a witch whose house had chicken legs and was inclined to wander, your house will still be there when your return. However, try not to take it personally if your room gets transformed into a sewing room or den. Parents need something to keep them busy while you're away at college.

While difficult for them, your parents will manage to cope without you. The crucial task is how you will learn to survive without them. This is a big step, but you will develop independent coping skills.

Try to keep your checkbook balanced. When you call home, parents often ask about finances. It's nice to be prepared for these questions.

Develop healthy habits of coping such as talking, journaling, and exercising.

Spending Saturday recovering from a Friday night hangover does not help the problem.

Remember to eat healthy foods. It is very easy with a busy college schedule to forget that you need good food to keep functioning at your best.

Don't be afraid to let other people know that you are having a hard time of it.

Feeling homesick, shy, lonely, and confused are very common for college students. Others may not look like they have had similar problems, but chances are they have; they just look more experienced and at ease now because they've been through it before and have survived.

Seek support if you are truly unhappy and are having difficulties coping. The staff of Counseling and Psychological Services is available to assist you. We consult with many students every day and we are here to help you create your KU home.

When things are too overwhelming

If you find that you are beginning to think pessimistically, develop marked changes in sleeping or eating habits, have prolonged crying spells, have concentration difficulties, or have suicidal thoughts, the problem may not be homesickness, but depression or anxiety. Depression and anxiety are the two most common complaints of college students when they visit counseling centers. These problems can be helped by professional treatment.

[University of Kansas - Counseling and Psychological Services]

“TEN TRANSITIONAL STAGES OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS”

The following phases are typical of a new student's adjustment to college. Stages may not occur in the sequence described, and students may not experience all of the phases. However, this information can serve as a useful guideline to the challenges your students might face during their first year.

1 Post-high school satisfaction/Pre-college elation

At this phase, students experience much excitement over the prospect of attending college. Expectations then prove to be unrealistic and are based on brief glimpses of college life from campus visits or the movies.

2 Early separation anxiety

As they begin to pack and prepare for college, students realize that they are actually leaving behind the support systems of family and friends.

3 Acute separation anxiety

As students actually leave home, they experience emotional moments with loved ones. They realize that they do not know the unwritten rules of this new campus culture. At this stage, it is especially critical to meet experienced older students, such as resident advisors and peer leaders, who can assist with the adjustment process.

4 The honeymoon

This is a time of euphoria as students anticipate intellectual excitement and a satisfying social life. Students feel ready to experience all that campus life has to offer

5 The end of the honeymoon

After the frantic rush of orientation and Wisconsin Welcome activities subside, students realize that college life consists of hard work, frustration, and disappointment. Normal events such as long lines and class schedule changes may be unsettling to a new student. Initial grades may be lower than expected, which can come as a shock to the students who "coasted" through high school. Students may work harder than ever before, only to earn lower grades. At this point, students often experience feelings of homesickness. Students should realize that this is normal and they are not alone.

6 The grass is always greener

Midway through the first year, students often think they can solve their problems by transferring to another institution. At this point, students should be encouraged to give the college they are attending at least a full year's try. Students should be reminded that they might have had a worse experience at another school and situations that seem impossible in the first semester often disappear altogether later in the year.

7 You can't go home again

A first visit home is often traumatic due to a sense that things have changed. Siblings are curious about college life and reunited high school friends tend to exaggerate college success. At this time, students may realize that they themselves have changed and may long to return to campus.

8 Learning to cope

Students have learned their way around campus and are expanding their circle of friends. Their self-confidence increases, they participate in more activities, and enjoy campus life.

9 Fear of failure

Students often panic around the time of exams as they fully appreciate the amount of work involved. Students should be reminded that course preparation is the best way to ensure a good grade. Warning signs which indicate trouble are panic attacks, procrastination, sleeping over 12 hours a day, and avoiding all academic responsibilities.

10 Putting it all together

By the middle of the second semester, students notice their classes and co-curricular activities have come together into a well-integrated lifestyle. Students are more confident, better able to make decisions, and are aware of opportunities for personal and intellectual growth.

[University of Wisconsin-Madison]

“KNOW THE SIGNS OF STUDENT DISTRESS”

Faculty and other staff who interact a great deal with students may become aware of students who are experiencing emotional distress. This is not uncommon as

student experience normal stress due to their academic experience. However, sometimes the problem is or becomes pervasive or severe, affecting the ability of the student to function successfully. Some examples are:

- Serious academic performance issues, particularly if there is a change from past performance.
- Student appears depressed or manic.
- Student makes statements about death or that are suicidal in nature.
- There is a marked change in personal hygiene, dress, or appearance.
- Rambling, incoherent speech, or disjointed thoughts.
- Irrational suspiciousness or claims of persecution.
- Behavior that is bizarre or inappropriate to the situation.

Troubled/distressed students should be referred to the Counseling and Consultation Office at 333 East Campus Mall, 7th floor. There is no appointment needed, students can “drop in” during business hours M-F.

See uhs.wisc.edu/services/counseling/ for details.

Crisis Services & Consultation

If you are ever concerned about a student who seems particularly depressed or distressed, please feel free to call Counseling and Consultation Services, University Health Services (UHS) for consultation. Our staff is available during business hours, and the mental health crisis intervention services are also available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to students and to people concerned about students’ mental health: 608-265-5600 (select option 9).

[From the Dean of Students Office and Health Services at University of Wisconsin-Madison]

"10 ways to deal with homesickness"

No matter how excited you are to start university, it's natural to feel a bit homesick sometimes. We've got some great tips on what to do when you're missing home.

Moving away for university is a big transition, whether you've come from the other side of the world or half an hour down the road. If you're suffering from homesickness, just remember you're definitely not the only one.

Feeling homesick is really normal, especially in the first few months of university. Those around you are probably feeling the burn too, but are just keeping schtum.

To give you a helping hand, we've put together our top tips for getting over homesickness, so you can concentrate on making the most of your uni years.
[more...]

[Jake Butler]

ARTICLE: <https://www.savethestudent.org/international-students/tips-to-deal-with-home-sickness.html>

“5 things you should do if you’re feeling homesick”

Whether you just started college or transferred to CU Boulder from another university, adjusting to a new town and campus can be challenging. Here are a few tips to help you overcome homesickness this semester.

1. Homesickness is normal and temporary

While it may not always be obvious, many students feel homesick when they start college or transfer to a new school. Remember that it’s normal to experience homesickness when we get separated from the people, places and things that have given us a sense of belonging.

It’s also important to keep in mind that homesickness is temporary. Chances are that feelings of loneliness or homesickness will lessen as you get more familiar with campus life and the people at CU.

2. Stay in touch

While you navigate life on campus and meet new people, it’s important to keep in touch with your friends and family back home. Even if your friends are attending different colleges or living in different cities, checking in and catching up can help you feel more connected. If you’re struggling, reach out to someone you trust and talk through it. Staying in contact with people we love can help us feel like we’re not alone, and it can remind us that we have people we can rely on in tough times.

3. Establish a routine

Adapting to a new campus and class schedule may require us to change up our normal routines. In fact, creating routines can help ease anxiety and uncertainty because we have more predictability in our day-to-day lives.

Don’t worry, you don’t need to create a minute-by-minute schedule—a rough plan will do. For instance, consider taking the same route to and from your classes,

schedule time for physical movement, plan out your meals (on and off campus) and make time for regular social activities. Creating a routine, no matter how small it may be, can help you feel more in control of your day.

4. Put yourself out there (even if it's hard)

Stepping outside of your comfort zone can be challenging, especially if you're introverted or don't know anyone yet. Try to ease into it by starting small. For instance, it may be easier to get to know your roommates, neighbors or classmates first. Make plans to hang out in small groups, study together or spend time having fun.

You can also get involved and meet new people by:

- Attending free events on campus
- Joining a student organization
- Signing up for an Intramural or Club sport team
- Volunteering for causes you care about
- Apply for a job on campus
- Sign up for an Alternative Break experience

Try experimenting with different activities and groups to find what feels like the best fit for you. It's also important to keep in mind that many people may be struggling right now. Being inviting and inclusive can go a long way. If it looks like someone is uncomfortable in a group, help to break the ice by getting to know them and introducing them to others.

5. Get connected with resources

If you're feeling overwhelmed or struggling, you're not alone. There are plenty of resources on campus that can help.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis or needs urgent, same-day support, please call Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) at 303-492-2277. You can also visit the Emergency & Crisis Care page for additional resources and support.

Campus resources

Transfer Buffs

Find resources, events and opportunities to build community with your fellow Transfer Buffs on campus.

Peer Wellness Coaching

Peer wellness coaches are trained students who can help you make friends on

campus, explore resources, set goals and make the most of your time at CU Boulder.

Let's Talk

Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) provides free drop-in services through Let's Talk. Counselors are available in person and online to help provide insight, solutions and information about additional resources related to anxiety, relationships, academics and more.

AcademicLiveCare (ALC)

ALC is a telehealth platform that allows you to schedule medical and mental health appointments virtually. Through this program, you can see board-certified healthcare professionals from home, campus or anywhere you go. All you need is a smartphone, computer, tablet or other mobile device.

Process therapy groups

Process therapy groups emphasize relationships, interpersonal skills, feedback and strategies to feel more connected with others.

Peer mentors

Several colleges and schools at CU Boulder offer peer mentoring programs that provide students with the opportunity to connect with current and former students of their major.

Program of Exploratory Studies (PES)

Chemical and Biological Engineering
College of Engineering & Applied Sciences
Embedded liaisons

All colleges and schools have a team of embedded liaisons that can provide clinical and non-clinical support for students. Liaisons can help students navigate campus life, mental health concerns, traumatic experiences as well as on-campus resources and activities.

Feel Better Fast workshop

This three-part series is designed to help you make positive changes in your life and manage distressing thoughts or emotions. You will learn how to make balanced decisions, self-soothe, take a step back from racing thoughts and live by your true values.

General resources

Meet Buffs with similar hobbies

Check out ways that you can connect with fellow Buffs based on your hobbies and interests.

Where to find food on campus

Campus Dining Services has 15 locations across campus. Learn where to grab a snack or meal, no matter where you are on campus.

Tips for living with roommates on and off campus

Living with roommates is a normal part of college and young adulthood. Here are some tips to help you have a more successful roommate experience, whether you're living on or off campus.

4 things everyone should know about hazing

College comes with a lot of social pressures. Sometimes, in our efforts to make fast friends or join a particular group, we can find ourselves in uncomfortable or dangerous situations. Here are a few things everyone should know about hazing.

6 tips for making friends on campus

If you're feeling isolated or are struggling to cultivate new friendships on campus, you're not alone. Here are some tips that can help you make meaningful connections now, throughout college and into the future.

4 self-care questions to ask yourself this semester

Sometimes it can be hard to pinpoint exactly where we need to prioritize our time or energy. Here are a few questions to ask yourself to help you understand your relationship with self-care, what works for you right now and where to go from here.

ARTICLE: <https://www.colorado.edu/health/homesick>

[University of Colorado Boulder]

"The adults who suffer extreme homesickness"

Footballer Jesus Navas, who is moving from Seville to Manchester City, has had a career shaped by homesickness so severe it stopped him playing for Spain. It's a condition that affects a surprising number of adults.

For years Jesus Navas was a staple of football gossip columns. Newspaper websites would link the jinking winger to a big money move to the Premiership. But a knowing reader would always point out that Navas was going nowhere. His

homesickness would surely stop him.

For years Navas suffered so severely from homesickness that he could spend no great time away from Seville, itself less than 19 miles from his birthplace of Los Palacios y Villafranca. Anxiety attacks forced him out of training camps and pre-season tours.

Now it is said he has overcome his homesickness through counselling. But in an age of globalised working, there are many adults still struggling. [more...]

[Tom Heyden - BBC News]

ARTICLE: <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22764986>

"The experienced psychological benefits of place attachment"

Abstract

Place attachment, the cognitive-emotional bond that forms between individuals and their important settings, is a common human experience with implications for their well-being. It has often been described and defined, but few studies have examined the range of psychological benefits it provides. This study investigated the experienced psychological benefits of place attachment by content analyzing community members' descriptions of places to which they consider themselves attached. Using an inductive approach, their responses were coded for themes of reported psychological benefits. Thirteen categories of benefits were revealed: memories, belonging, relaxation, positive emotions, activity support, comfort-security, personal growth, freedom, entertainment, connection to nature, practical benefits, privacy, and aesthetics. Variations in the reported benefits were explored as a function of place type, geographical scale, and demographic characteristics. This study provides heuristic insights into the experienced psychological benefits of place attachment.

Section snippets

The experienced psychological benefits of place attachment

Place attachment, the cognitive-emotional bond to a meaningful setting (e.g., Low & Altman, 1992), is a common phenomenon that has been observed across cultures, place types, and eras (Lewicka, 2011, Low, 1992, Lutwack, 1984, Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 2004). Although much of the research on it has focused on describing and defining the multidimensional nature of place attachment (e.g., Low and Altman, 1992, Scannell and Gifford, 2010a), and distinguishing it from related constructs such as place

Recruitment

A diverse sample of participants was recruited through Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a website hosted by Amazon.com that allows individuals from any country to either post or complete tasks online for small amounts of money. In general, investigations have concluded that MTurk is a promising method of recruiting participants for behavioral research (Buhrmester et al., 2011, Goodman et al., 2013, Paolacci et al., 2010, Rand, 2011). Participants received \$1 for completing the 20–30-min survey, which

Discussion

Despite growing research interest in the benefits of place attachment (López-Mosquera and Sánchez, 2013, Scannell and Gifford, 2010a, Scannell and Gifford, 2016), and related concepts such as landscape values (Brown, 2005, Brown and Raymond, 2007) and motivations for place use (Kyle, Mowen, et al., 2004), research has generally examined concepts in the context of one place type (e.g., parks or neighborhoods) rather than across places, and the range of benefits discussed has been narrow, even in

Conclusion

Given the steadily increasing interest in place attachment, that the range of psychological benefits of the bond has not yet been examined is somewhat surprising. This study is a first step in determining those experienced benefits, and sets the stage for future inquiries. Through a two-phase content analysis, 13 benefits were identified. This provides useful insight into how place attachment bonds interact with psychological functioning. This is not to say that place attachment is required for

Acknowledgements

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[Leila Scannell and Robert Gifford]

“Homesick for Heaven”

Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home

in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:6-8, AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION)

Well, where is this home, and what is this home like? We are going to stand on the fringe and peer over the wall into a vast domain; we are going to look out upon the rolling waves of a seemingly endless sea concerning this subject of heaven. We're told here that we are to be "at home with the Lord." This is one of the lovely expressions — and Scripture is filled with these lovely expressions — that speak of the eternal state of the believer, "at home with the Lord." [more...]

[Dr. J. Vernon McGee]

ARTICLE: https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mcgee_j_vernon/eBooks/homesick-for-heaven.cfm

"The Shepherd Boy"

A shepherd boy gives a wise answer to any question asked. Will he also be able to answer the questions of the king?

The Shepherd Boy is a Brothers Grimm fairy tale about a shepherd boy who gives wise answers to any question asked. The king promises him riches when he can answer three questions. He answers them all in a wise way and is invited to come and live with the king.

Once upon a time, there was a shepherd boy whose fame spread far and wide, because of the wise answers which he gave to every question.

The king of the country also heard of it, but did not believe it, and sent for the boy.

He said to him, "If you can give me an answer to three questions which I will ask you, I will look at you as my own child, and you shall dwell with me in my royal palace."

The boy said, "What are the three questions?"

How many drops of water are there in the ocean?

The king said, "The first is, how many drops of water are there in the ocean?"

The shepherd boy answered, "Lord king, if you will have all the rivers on earth dammed up so that not a single drop runs from them into the sea until I have counted it, I will tell you how many drops there are in the sea."

How many stars are there in the sky?

The king said, "The next question is, how many stars are there in the sky?"

The shepherd boy said, "Give me a great sheet of white paper," and then he made so many fine points on it with a pen that they could scarcely be seen. It was all but impossible to count them; anyone who looked at them would have lost his sight.

Then he said, "There are as many stars in the sky as there are points on the paper; just count them." But no one was able to do it.

How many seconds of time are there in eternity?

The king said, "The third question is, how many seconds of time are there in eternity."

Then the shepherd boy said, "In Lower Pomerania is the Diamond Mountain, which is two miles and a half high, two miles and a half wide, and two miles and a half in depth. Every hundred years a little bird comes and sharpens its beak on it, and when the whole mountain is worn away by this, then the first second of eternity will be over."

The king said, "You have answered the three questions like a wise man, and shall from now on dwell with me in my royal palace. I will regard you as my own child."

[Brothers Grimm]

AUDIO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybilljxDDJY>

"Which Way to Heaven?"

The biggest question that will ever be answered is the question which way to heaven the most important decision that anybody will ever make is the decision that they make regarding their eternal destiny life here says the Bible is a vapor that appears for a little time and vanishes away it is like steam off a cup of coffee nothing more compared to eternity everyone will live somewhere forever without end where you live forever is absolutely critical there are two options hell and eternal punishment or heaven and eternal joy question then is which way to heaven

Matthew 7:13 and 14 here are the words of Jesus enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction and many are those who enter by it for the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life and few are those who find it was only one narrow gate you must enter this gate it is a definite gate it is the narrow gate the Old Testament talks about ways that seem right to a man that are the ways of death Jesus says I am the way the truth and the life no man comes to the Father but by me Jesus says I am the door if any man tries to come in any other way he is a thief and a robber in acts 4:12 it says there is no salvation in any other name for there's no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved there's only one way to be saved there's only one person who is the Savior and faith in that person is required for salvation

listen to first Timothy 2:5 there is one God one mediator also between God and men the man Christ Jesus no other mediator no other Savior no other way faith saving faith demands Romans 10:17 says hearing with faith the message of Christ faith comes by hearing the message concerning Christ Christ and Christ alone is the gate no Christ no salvation no Christ no heaven this is the word of the Living God you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ savingly and you enter you do not and you will not enter there is no other way in all other ways though marked heaven end up in hell any deviation from the person of Jesus Christ the work of Jesus Christ or the gospel of Jesus Christ by faith and grace alone will lead you to hell you must enter you must make a commitment to come to christ and this is the only way verse 13 begins with a command enter by the narrow gate it is an absolute command given by Jesus Christ enter the narrow gate the gospel itself is a command repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ the gospel always comes as a command to be obeyed or disobeyed it is not enough to listen to preaching about the narrow gate it is not enough to study the narrow gate to admire the structure of the narrow gate to admire the wisdom of gospel means it must be entered and the world is full of people who admire the gospel they admire if you will the narrow gate they admire the work of Christ on the cross and even admire the work accomplished in his conquering death in his resurrection and they admire the ethics of Jesus and they admire the virtues of Jesus and a lot of those things but hell is going to be literally filled with people who admired Jesus who admired his teaching and his ethics and who maybe particularly admired the Sermon on the Mount you must enter you must go beyond the admiration of the gospel you must go beyond being fascinated with the work of Jesus Christ and admiring him you must enter the gate of salvation through faith in Him.

[This video is an excerpt of "The Only Way to Heaven" sermon given by John MacArthur]

John MacArthur

SERMON: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogzpMpY7R8g>

“Fear Not! - Ligon Duncan - After Death”

The Christian hope is the hope that not only controls are present living, but also our anticipation of what will come to be beyond this life.

The Westminster shorter catechism 37 is instructive here:

"What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and due immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, due rest in their graves till the resurrection."

So, what happens to believers in the second they shuffle off this mortal coil? What happens to believers the nano second our final breath has left our bodies and our brains and our hearts fail us? What happens instantaneously for the believer at death?

Definitive difference

The way I believer approaches death is fundamentally different from that of an unbeliever. Thomas Boston wants said:

"All men must die, but as men's lives are very different, so there account in death is, also. To an ungodly man, death is lost, the greatest loss; but to the believer, it is gained, the greatest gain."

Why is that? Why is death totally different for the believer in not for the unbeliever? Richard Baxter hopefully elaborate on this point:

"There is a great deal of difference between the desires of heaven in a sanctified man and in an unsanctified one. The believer prizes heaven above the earth, and had rather be with God then here, though death stands in the way and may possibly have harder thoughts from him. But for the ungodly, there is nothing that seems more desirable than this world, and therefore he only chooses Heaven over Hell, but not over death; and therefore shall not have it upon such a choice."

Baxter is saying that nobody in his right mind would choose hell. In contrast, the mark of a Christian approaching death is a desire for heaven over earth, heaven over this life. The Christian desires of Jesus over the things that are most precious in this world, and not simply an existence that is more attractive than the torments of an eternity in Hell.

Therefore, as we contemplate their deaths, whoever they may be, we can rest assured that they have received these four things immediately upon dying:

- when believers die, they are immediately with Christ, whom they prized more than all things (2 Corinthians 5:8)
- when believers die, they are immediately perfected in holiness (Hebrews 12:22-24)
- when believers die, they pass immediately into glory (Philippians 1:23)
- when believers die, their bodies remain united to Christ, resting in the grave, awaiting the resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Although believers are united to Christ and our addressed when they die, the Bible also teaches that unbelievers are eternally separated from Christ. Unbelievers are sealed in their imperfection and are in a state of condemnation, permanently separated from Christ, never again to know peace and rest.

Jesus said that hell is a place of weeping, but it is also a place of gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:12). When you get mad and you just want to hit somebody, and your teeth just start clenching down, you are gnashing your teeth. In hell, people are gnashing their teeth that God! There is no repentance there. There is no one saying "I wish I were with you, God." There is no one in hell who wants to be in heaven. They have repudiated God in this life, and so they forgo him forever.

What happens after death for those who do not rest and trust in Jesus? They get to know Jesus, which means no enjoyment, no fellowship, and no love. They get eternal separation from Jesus. It is the most solemn thing possible.

[Ligon Duncan]

“What Is Heaven?”

Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." Heaven is, therefore, a locality. In just what part of the universe it is located, we do not know. Astronomers say that all the stars and planets seem to be revolving around a great distant center. That center may be heaven. It is not this earth, for then Jesus would have said, "I remain to prepare a place for you." When He said, "I go," He meant that He would leave the earth for some other place.

It is a cosmopolitan place. "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, kindreds, people and tongues." Every tribe of earth shall have representatives there. Jesus, a Son of Man, is suited to all nationalities. The cultured Greek, the sturdy Roman, the religious Jew, the conservative Chinaman, the aggressive Japanese, the wild Indian, the superstitious African, find in Jesus Christ just what they need.

Christ Enthroned.

Heaven is a place where Christ as Savior is enthroned. The great multitude "stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." In another place we are told that they saw "the Lamb as it had been slain, in the midst of the throne." The victim of Calvary is king of heaven. His pierced hand holds the scepter; the brow that was pricked by the crown of thorns wears the crown of glory. God as Creator sits upon the throne of the universe; He rules in the realm of law, and it is a glorious reign. But to the glory of creation is added the glory of redemption. The heavens declare the glory of God, but the prints of the nails in the hands and feet of our Saviour have a lustre which outshines the stars. The angels and redeemed saints in heaven seem to forget the greatness of creation, while they gaze at the glory of redemption. There has been formed in this country an order which is called "the Order of the Crown." No one can join except those that can trace their ancestry back to some king. Every Christian already belongs to the Order of the Crown. He can trace his ancestry back to the King of Glory. He has been "born from above," and has become a partaker of the Divine nature. The Saviour who sits crowned, sceptered and enthroned in heaven, is his elder brother.

Purity.

Again heaven is a place of purity. The inhabitants are "clothed with white robes." "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "Tribulation" is suggestive; it comes from a word which means a flail, and with the flail, you know, the chaff is separated from the wheat. The blood washes white, and never white-washes. It is genuine purity, and day by day, year by year, the process of removing the chaff

from the wheat, and the dross from the gold continues. There are kinds of impurity that cannot be washed out; they must be flailed out or burned out. You cannot wash dross out of gold; it requires the furnace. Geologists tell us that the white carrara marble was once a black mass, but under the influence of heat and pressure it became liquid and crystallized; in the process of crystallization the black particles were transmuted into pure white. There is an alchemy of grace which under the pressure of burden, and in the furnace of affliction, transforms character, until in heaven we see the perfect product.

Peace Through Victory.

Heaven is also a place of peace. The white-robed throng have "palms in their hands," and the palm is a symbol of peace through victory. Through Jesus Christ they have been reconciled to God and gained victory over sin. There is no discordant note in their natures. They love God's will and way. They do His pleasure. The music from the celestial harps is not sweeter than this harmony of soul. No hatred, envy, jealousy, or selfish ambition. Peace reigns like a queen, because every one does the will of the King.

Worship.

And heaven is a place of worship. "They fell before the throne on their faces and worshiped God, saying, Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." They begin their worship in heaven with "Amen." It is the "Amen" of acquiescence in God's will. They close their worship with the "Amen" of praise. And unless we begin our prayer with the "Amen" of submission to God, we shall not close with the "Amen" of praise. You will note that they are not begging for blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power. They are giving these things to God. There is more blessing in blessing God than in begging for a blessing from Him. There is more glory in glorifying God than in asking glory from Him.

Service.

Heaven is a place of spiritual service. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." We draw this distinction between the secular and the sacred. We have our secular days and our sacred days, secular places and sacred places, temples of worship and stores for business. In heaven it is all temple. The temple, you know, is a house completely consecrated to God; every part of it is His and He fills it. All heaven is His temple. There is no secular service there; it is all sacred. There are no secular places there; every street and home and place of business is sacred. There are some who contend that there should be no distinction between the sacred and the secular, while they strive to make everything secular. Instead of making every day as holy as the

Sabbath, they would drag the Sabbath down to the level of every other day; instead of making every place as sacred as a church, they would drag the church down to the level of all other places. The heavenly spirit considers every garment a vestment, every meal a sacrament and every house a temple of God. To the merchant the ledger should be a sacred book; he should keep it before the Lord. The counter should be a sacred desk, and he should trade before the Lord. The tools of the mechanic should be sacred implements used for the glory of God. The pen of the author should be a sacred instrument through which he writes his thoughts for God. In proportion as we make of earth the temple of God, every part of it consecrated to His service, we have a foretaste of heaven.

Social.

Heaven is a social place. A city indicates that. The highest form of civilization and social life is in the city. Sad to say, in the cities of earth the social nature is degraded, and gives also the very lowest form of degradation, but in the City of Light where there is no sin, social life will reach its perfection. Lazarus reclining on the bosom of Abraham is a picture of loving sociability. The family of God will forever enjoy each other's company, and what is better than all, Jesus Himself shall dwell with them. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." You, doubtless, we have many friends who, if they knew you were in sorrow, would write you a letter of condolence giving you good cheer, or press your hand in sympathy, but there are few friends who are intimate enough and familiar enough, if they should see you weeping, to approach and with their own hand tenderly wipe away the falling tear. But that is what God does. Blessed intimacy! Holy familiarity! Precious nearness! It is worth while to shed tears from a broken heart to have God come near enough to wipe them away; and before we enter heaven this part of heaven may come to us. Jesus now with His pierced hand wipes away our tears.

Treasures.

Finally, heaven is the great treasure city of the universe. It is God's capital, and into the capital city the treasures of art, of music, of learning, and of wealth are apt to pour. Jesus commands us to lay up treasure in heaven where it will be safe forever. Hoarding upon earth will make the miser miserable; hoarding in heaven will make the Christian forever happy. And this does not mean that only millionaires can lay up treasures in heaven. The widow with her two mites, the seamstress with her meager income, the working man with his small wages, the child who saves from its weekly allowance may, by sacrificing for Jesus, lay up treasure in heaven. Indeed, wherever we fill the spheres in which God has placed us, doing the work faithfully that comes to hand, we are laying up treasure in heaven.

In the farming district of Germany there lived the wife of a poor man, her name Johanna Ambrosius. By a simple mechanical contrivance she utilized the stream near her cottage, and made it rock the cradle of her baby while she worked in the field. She knew little of the great world without, but with hope in God she had thoughts in her world, and wrote them down, some of them in poetry. She sympathized with nature and with struggling humanity about her. Her mother's heart with its sorrows and joy she put into her poetry, and by some means it found its way into print. The empress of Germany read one of her little poems, and was so impressed by its simple beauty that she made inquiry about the author, and when she found how poor and needy she was, in the kindness of her heart she supplied all her wants, giving her and her family a pension for life. As with Johanna Ambrosius and the empress, so with every humble Christian and the Lord Jesus.

We need not be anxious about the reward; sooner or later it will come. Do what lies nearest to hand, and you may be assured that the King whom you serve will not forget it. The pension will come by and by. You do not go into the piano manufactory to hear music. There you will hear the clang of hammer and the rasp of file and the clatter of machinery. This clang and rasp and clatter are necessary to make the music which you will hear after a while in the parlor or the church.

A traveler in Amsterdam, when he heard the sweet chimes from the tower filling the air with melody, said to himself, I would like to see how that music is made. The next day at the hour for the chime ringing, he was admitted into a room where a musician played upon the chimes, but in this room he could hear no music, only the thump and clatter of the rough keys. The music floated out upon the city from the tower, but the thump and bang of the keys was necessary to make it. The musician himself could not hear it. So we down here may hear only the thump and bang of the keys. But God and the angels hear the music in heaven, and if we are faithful in time, the harmonies will ring out in eternity. No note in the melody will be lost.

This gives us good cheer. There may be darkness in the present, but there is light ahead. We can see through the tunnel, and therefore do not fear to enter. Our faces are toward the East, and we are expecting the sunrise. However deep the shadows, we are in the twilight of the morning.

But what practical effect will all this have upon our lives? Some time ago a finely dressed, wealthy lady came to an orphan asylum to adopt a little girl named Jane. The other children were in quite a flutter of excitement over the good fortune of Jane, but Jane was serious and thoughtful. After the finely dressed lady and the little orphan were seated in the carriage, the woman said to her, "Are you glad to

go with me?” Jane replied, “I do not know.” “What, are you not glad that you will have dolls to play with, and fine dresses to wear, and a good home to live in, and everything to make you happy?” “I do not know,” replied Jane. “But,” continued the woman, “we will ride out through the park in the carriage every day, and you can have every thing that you want. Now are you not glad to go with me?” “Yes,” replied Jane, “but what am I to do for all this?” The rich woman reached out her arms and pressed the dear girl to her heart, as she said, “Only love me and be my child.” Can we say that to God? There is a heaven of beauty, peace, purity, plenty and glory ahead. What are we to do for all this? God replies, “Only love me, and be my obedient, faithful child.”

[Moody Church Media - A.C. Dixon]

"A Sermon About Heaven"

A Sermon About Heaven poster

I was walking down to the Depot Church in Philadelphia one night when a friend said to me, “Moody, what are you going to preach about to-night?” I said I thought I would try and preach about heaven. I noticed a little scowl came over his face at that, so I said, “What is the matter?”

“O!” said he, “why don’t you give us something practical? Nobody knows anything about heaven; it is all guess-work to preach about that.”

“Well,” said I, “if the Lord didn’t mean us to talk about heaven He wouldn’t have talked so much about it Himself.” We are told that all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, and we find that a good deal of the Scripture is on the subject of heaven. Stephen had a glimpse of it, and John had a great revelation of it. [more...]

[Dwight L. Moody]

SERMON: <https://www.moodymedia.org/articles/sermon-about-heaven/>

"UNDERSTANDING THE NARROW PATH – HOW TO GET TO HEAVEN"

The New Testament is filled with information on what it means to be a Christ follower, with Jesus beautifully detailing and describing “the narrow path.” This path can be summarized as: embracing Jesus’ sacrifice for mankind, believing he died for our sins and living life for him.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV) and Luke 13:23-24 (NIV) that “narrow is the gate” and “narrow is the way.” We’ll unpack these statements and truths, but the general take-away is that the Christian way is not one that everyone will follow. In fact, only “a few will find it.” [more...]

[Billy Hallowell]

ARTICLE: <https://insider.pureflix.com/prayer-faith/understanding-the-narrow-path-how-to-get-to-heaven>

“Travelers Passing Through – Are You Homeward Bound?”

As aliens and exiles here on earth, we are homeward bound for heaven. We have no permanent citizenship in this world. Though I hold an official passport that declares me a citizen of the United States, the reality is that, as a Christian, my citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). As the author of the letter to the Hebrews tells us,

“Here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come”.

(Hebrews 13:14)

Pilgrims passing through

A letter to Diognetus written at the end of the fourth century and still read today in the Liturgy of the Hours, plainly describes our status:

“Christians are indistinguishable from other men either by nationality, language or customs. They do not inhabit separate cities of their own, or speak a strange dialect, or follow some outlandish way of life With regard to dress, food and manner of life in general, they follow the customs of whatever city they happen to be living in, whether it is Greek or foreign.

“And yet there is something extraordinary about their lives. They live in their own countries as though they were only passing through. They play their full role as citizens, but labor under all the disabilities of aliens. Any country can be their homeland, but for them their homeland, wherever it may be, is a foreign country They pass their days upon earth, but they are citizens of heaven.”

Scripture, the early Church Fathers and later spiritual writers often liken our earthly life to a journey, urging us to keep our eyes fixed on heaven as our final goal. As Saint Augustine wrote: “We are but travelers on a journey without as yet a fixed abode; we are on our way, not yet in our native land; we are in a state of

longing, but not yet of enjoyment. But let us continue on our way, and continue without sloth or respite, so that we may ultimately arrive at our destination.”

Our home is heaven

Or again, as John Vianney, the beloved curé of Ars, so simply expressed it, “Our home is – Heaven. On earth we are like travelers staying in a hotel. When one is away, one is always thinking of going home.”

With no permanent citizenship in this world, we are “pilgrims” simply “passing through” en route to our true homeland. The word “pilgrim” comes from the Latin peregrinus, meaning stranger. Etymologically, the word has as its root per ager: one who goes through a field or across a frontier. In doing so, the traveler becomes a stranger, a pilgrim, leaving behind familiar territory, headed towards a new land.

A pilgrim may be a stranger, but in entering a new realm he is not without purpose or destination. The pilgrim has a specific point of departure, a route to travel by, and an anticipated point of arrival. Thus, making a pilgrimage is quite different than meandering. To “meander,” that is, to aimlessly wander, usually in a circuitous or winding course, takes its meaning from the Menderes, a winding river in Asia Minor, and from the Latin root maeander.

Advent preparations for the journey ahead

Advent is a season in which we especially recall this reality of our being a “pilgrim people.” It is a “communal pilgrimage” in which we “travel” in one another’s company toward Christmas, the yearly commemoration of Christ’s birth. The four weeks of Advent serve as a journey toward Bethlehem, and along the way we make spiritual preparations to welcome the new-born King. An Advent sermon by the noted homilist and writer Ronald Knox develops this idea of journeying with expectant hope and longing towards an encounter with Christ, the promised Messiah:

“Everybody knows, even those of us who have lived most unadventurously, what it is to plod on for miles, it seems, eagerly straining your eyes towards the lights that, somehow, mean home. How difficult it is, when you are doing that to judge distances! In pitch darkness, it might be a couple of miles to your destination, it might be a few hundred yards. So it was, I think, with the Hebrew prophets, as they looked forward to the redemption of their people. They could not have told you, within a hundred years, within five hundred years, when it was the deliverance would come. They only knew that, some time, the stock of David would burgeon anew; some time, a key would be found to fit the door of their prison house; some time, the light that only showed, now, like a will-o'-the-wisp on

the horizon would broaden out, at last, into the perfect day.

“This attitude of expectation is one which the Church wants to encourage in us, her children, permanently. She sees it as an essential part of our Christian drill that we should still be looking forward; getting on for two thousand years, now, since the first Christmas Day came and went, and we must still be looking forward. So she encourages us, during Advent, to take the shepherd-folk for our guides, and imagine ourselves traveling along with them, at dead of night, straining our eyes towards that chink of light which streams out, we know, from the cave at Bethlehem.”

A time for thinking of going home

Equally importantly, Advent is a time for “thinking of going home,” a time of longing for that “other world” for which we have been made. We are reminded during this season that Christ came to us not only once in the past as the Word-made-flesh who lived in our midst, but that he will come again to take us with him to heaven. These weeks are a special stretch of the road in our life-long journey, the continual pilgrimage to reach our real home. During these days we are to take stock of our spiritual fitness and make preparation for the next leg of journey that lies before us in our day-to-day lives.

The readings for the First Sunday of Advent set the tone for the whole four weeks of Advent and particularly highlight the theme that we will reflect on this month in our daily reading guide. The first three days of December we will read texts from that liturgy as an orientation – a sort of road map – to the theme of being pilgrims and travelers.

Throughout the rest of the month we will read a selection of passages which progress chronologically through the Old and New Testament, presenting and unfolding different aspects of being a pilgrim people, a people “on the way.” We will recall the origin of our exile here on earth in Adam and Eve’s exile from the garden of Eden and follow Abraham as he set out in obedience to God’s call. We will accompany the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land to exile in Babylon and back again to Jerusalem.

And we will follow the paths of Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the Magi to the manger in Bethlehem, and Jesus’ way from there to the cross. In all these events and people we can also find portraits of ourselves – exiles, aliens, sojourners, pilgrims, refugees, seekers, travelers, disciples –homeward bound for heaven.

As I wrote this theme issue, I found much inspiration and help from the words of

other writers – “fellow pilgrims, my companions in eternity,” as Mechtild of Magdeburg named them. I have leaned upon them as upon a pilgrim’ staff, and found nourishment like wayfarer’s bread from their words, which I frequently incorporated into the daily meditations and especially into the article “The Hope of Heaven.” May you, too, get to know these fellow pilgrims and enjoy them as companions in eternity!

This article originally appeared in God’s Word Today, December 1998. Used by permission of the author.

Top image of a traveler carrying a Bible © Lightstock.com , stock image subscription from Lightstock.com.

[Jeanne Kun]

"How do we KNOW Heaven Exists? Lee Strobel has the Answer"

How do we know heaven exists? Lee Strobel has the answer. His new book is “The Case for Heaven: A Journalist Investigates the Evidence for Life After Death.” Don't miss this insightful interview!

[Mike Huckabee]

INTERVIEW: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSyfvQGG230>

"How is going to heaven like going home?"

This clip is from our series entitled "What Happens One Minute After You Die" With Dr. Erwin Lutzer and Dr. John Ankerberg

[John Ankerberg]

INTERVIEW: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrjnjQM11lw>

"Tough-Minded About Heaven"

Often, people tell me, when they know that we're gonna be talking about this subject or even after they've been here to hear the teaching on it, that perhaps we are not really being very practical. The way they say it is usually something like

this: "You know, Pastor, we shouldn't be so concerned about heaven. After all, when we get to heaven, there'll be plenty of time to be worried about heaven. We need to be spendin' our energies and our time here. Will we not have all eternity to worry about heaven? And aren't people who are heavenly minded usually no earthly good"? I've actually had people tell me that.

Now, if we didn't have the New Testament, we might be able to reason like that, but one of the most consistent truths of the New Testament is this: What you think about heaven determines how you live today. The future is like an anchor that has been cast ahead of us, and it is pulling us into the future. In his 2nd epistle, Peter ends his letter with a question. After describing the renovation of the earth at the end of the age, and you all know about that because we studied it, how the earth is going to be renovated and made new.

At the end of his discussion of the renovation of the earth, Peter, in verse 11, of chapter 3, of 2 Peter, says this: "Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be"? Not "What manner of persons ought you to be in the future"? but "What manner of persons ought you to be now"? His question is at the very heart of our discussion today. What difference does it make now that we know about heaven and God's future plans for us? How should we live now in light of what we know about the future? In the next verses of this chapter, the apostle tells us in straightforward language what kind of people we ought to be. [more...]

[David Jeremiah]

ARTICLE: <https://sermons.love/david-jeremiah/6492-david-jeremiah-tough-minded-about-heaven.html>

"Coming Home"

Scripture: John 15:1-14:6

Denomination: Baptist

Summary: What a wonderful thing coming home is! After a 15 mo. deployment in Iraq, this sermon was timely, with Jesus telling us about His home, the hope we can have to go there and how to get there.

Preached during "Reintegration" after a 15 mo. deployment of troops to Iraq from our military community.

June 2008

The “Top Ten Reasons Heaven Will Be A Blast” under point I. are adapted from Steve Malones sermon by that title at <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/top-ten-reasons-why-heaven-is-going-to-be-a-blast-steve-malone-sermon-on-heaven-36334.asp?page=0>). One or two other sources contributed to this message, but I somehow failed to record them. My apologies if you see an idea of yours in this message. I’d appreciate your contacting me so I can properly attribute.

TEXT: Please turn in your Bibles to John 14 (TO BE READ LATER)

INTRODUCTION

What a wonderful thing coming home is! Many of you were away for fifteen months from home (except for your R&R time)—away from your spouse, from your children, from your church, from your belongings—from everything that has meaning to you and gives your life purpose. What did you do?—You longed for your loved ones, your home, and your things.

And what a thrill coming home was! What a blessing that you were able to come home safe and sound. What a joy to have your loved ones meet you and run to you and for you to be able to hold them in your arms and kiss and hug them in real life—not through videocam! [more...]

[Chuck Sligh]

ARTICLE: <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/coming-home-chuck-sligh-sermon-on-heaven-156407>

"Distant Country, Better Country"

Scripture: Luke 15:11-24, Hebrews 11:16

Denomination: Baptist

Summary: Funeral message for Michael Keys, age 36, whose parents requested a message from the parable of the Prodigal Son

In my study there hangs a reproduction of a sixteenth century map. My son gave it to me several years ago. He knows that I have always liked maps. I like to look at

maps, study maps, even sketch maps myself. There is something fulfilling about seeing how things are laid out, how streets and buildings and hills and waterways relate to one another. I just find maps fascinating. I even at one time collected postage stamps that pictured maps. I have a collection of several hundred stamps from various countries, and all of them show maps of one kind or another. I am fascinated with maps.

And of course one reason for that fascination is that maps suggest exciting and interesting places that I have never seen. When I look at a map, I can at least imagine what it must be like in the streets of Paris or in the savannah of South Africa. By looking at the map, I can estimate how much time it might take to cross central Asia on the Trans-Siberian railway or how cold it might be at Little America in the Antarctic. I probably will never actually go to those places; but I am curious about them, and, with the help of a map, I can imagine what it would be like to go there. [more...]

[Joseph Smith]

ARTICLE: <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/distant-country-better-country-joseph-smith-sermon-on-funerals-christian-41406>

"The Christian Pilgrim" or "The True Christian's Life a Journey Toward Heaven"

by Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

Dated September, 1733

"And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country." -- Hebrews 11:13, 14

Subject: This life ought so to be spent by us as to be only a journey towards heaven.

The apostle is here setting forth the excellencies of the grace of faith, by the glorious effects and happy issue of it in the saints of the Old Testament. He had spoken in the preceding part of the chapter particularly, of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob. Having enumerated those instances, he takes notice that "these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers," etc. — In these words the apostle seems to

have a more particular respect to Abraham and Sarah, and their kindred, who came with them from Haran, and from Ur of the Chaldees, as appears by the 15th verse, where the apostle says, “and truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.” [more...]

[Jonathan Edwards]

ARTICLE: <https://www.apuritansmind.com/puritan-favorites/jonathan-edwards/sermons/the-christian-pilgrim/>

"HOMEWARD BOUND: WHY WE KEEP THE DESTINATION IN MIND"

Bev Berrus August 28, 2020 Contemporary Issues, Theology, Suffering
Last year a wildfire made its way into my friends Paul and Sharon’s neighborhood. We Californians know all too well that wildfire season is no joke. Evacuation warnings must be taken seriously.

My friends spent the night before the fire reached their area deciding what to take and what to leave. At 3 am their city issued a mandatory evacuation, and by 4:30 am they had packed up their car and loaded the kids. As they drove away, they saw the hills behind them glowing, ashes falling like snow, neighbors yelling to wake up other neighbors, and cars being backed up. His neighborhood looked like a war zone.

Paul wrote of his experience, “I just imagined, what if we saw someone decorating a Christmas tree while the rest of the neighborhood was evacuating. It was a very sobering reminder to live our lives with eternity in mind.”

It’s wildfire season again here in California. I’m reminded of how the Bible contains the evacuation warning to end all evacuation warnings. Sin’s entry into this world set it on a trajectory course towards destruction. The scriptures blare the sobering message: do not love the world but flee from the wrath that is to come!

But this evacuation warning isn’t all bad news. It comes with a promise.

WARNING: THIS WORLD IS NOT OUR HOME

Like Christian’s family in John Bunyan’s The Pilgrim’s Progress, we too live in the City of Destruction. Trying to make this world our home is the spiritual equivalent of decorating a graveyard for the dead. But there are pilgrims, like Christian, who

will one day find themselves unburdened and safe in the Celestial City.

The journey to heaven can be treacherous, though. It's fraught with real enemies and dangerous temptations that hinder us from finishing the race to life everlasting. We need God's warnings and promises along the way, or else we forget his promises, like the Israelites. Nostalgic for the melon, cucumber, and mint of Egypt, they were forgetful of the cruel enslavement they'd been freed from.

What kinds of warnings and reminders do we need? We need to be warned that this life is not about our comfort, ease, and early retirement. We need to be warned that this place casts a dangerous illusion. It is Satan's candy shop.

MUCH-NEEDED REMINDERS

We need to be reminded that our citizenship is in heaven and we're only here as ambassadors of God's kingdom, freed to bring glory to God. Therefore, we don't get entangled in civilian pursuits, but we aim to please the one who enlisted us (2 Tim. 2:4).

How quickly I forget that I'm a sojourner. I am tempted to build my own personal kingdom filled with fortresses of comfort and towers of self-glorification. It's no wonder the Apostle John told Christians that everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—come not from the Father but from the world. And while the world and its desires pass away, those who do the will of God will live forever (1 John 2:15–17).

And in 1 Corinthians 3:13–15, Paul warns believers about how they spend their lives as he explains the fire of judgment this way:

Each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

But parallel to the call to flee is the promise of a better home—an invitation to find salvation, safety, and, shelter by fleeing to Jesus for refuge.

THE PROMISE OF SOMETHING BETTER

While these warnings are real and necessary, the promises of God are equally so. Evacuation warnings keep us from foolishly making this temporal world our home, but the promises invite us to find everlasting life and joy in obedience to Jesus Christ.

I love how the writer of Hebrews gives a biblical theology of God's people as sojourners, fueled by faith in his promises. In chapter 11 he begins with Abel and works his way through the different characters of the Bible, then says,

All these people . . . did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. . . . If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. (11:13–16)

And at the end of the list of the faithful servants, we have this declaration: “the world was not worthy of them” (Heb. 11:38).

Viewing this world rightly helps us live for the new heavens and the new earth. We can make decisions big and small, without fear and regret, when we remember where home actually is.

I remember my friend Aylin once saying, “Home is a person, and it is the person of Jesus Christ.” Or as Moses puts it in Psalm 90:1, “Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.”

HOMEWARD BOUND

While we're away from Christ, we sense a kind of holy dissatisfaction and a deep longing to be with him. We feel it in our bones when we witness the suffering and brokenness of the world around us. We feel it in the emptiness of worldly ambition which makes us greedy for more, only to satisfy us less and less. We feel it because, as Augustine wrote in his Confessions, God has set eternity in our hearts, and we are restless until we find our rest in him.

Home is a person, and it is the person of Jesus Christ.

So, take this as an encouragement to really live the way God created you to live. Do not seek to find your worth in this world or the things of the world but live eternally minded so that this world is unworthy of you. Take these evacuation warnings and promises to heart, fellow pilgrims.

And remember, it is those who look like Jesus in this world who will have confidence on the day of judgment (1 John 4:16–17).

[Beverly Chao Berrus]

“Psalm 43 TALK: Homeward Bound”
(The Christian Hope of Heaven)

HOMeward BOUND
(THE CHRISTIAN HOPE OF HEAVEN)

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worldwide”.

INTRODUCTION

As you go through life you find you attend gatherings that represent the stage of life you are at. For instance when you're a child you attend birthday parties for various ages. When you turn 18 and or 21 you attend parties that celebrate your entering your independent age. You attend a lot of weddings when you and your contemporaries are entering marriage or baptisms or naming ceremonies when you and your contemporaries are raising a family. I am now beyond 60 so I have sadly started to attend funerals and this will be an on- going feature of life to come. This is because I am approaching my death as well.

Funerals for older people are sad emotional numbing experiences but for young people they are even more emotionally horrific. When I was a Church Youth minister many years ago I remember attending a funeral for a 14-year-old boy who was not a Christian who was tragically killed when riding illegally a motorbike on a local road. The crying and wailing at that funeral by those who attended the funeral was emotionally devastating and many young people asked, “Why would God allow this to happen”? [more...]

[Jim Wenman]

ARTICLE: <https://jimwenman.wordpress.com/2014/03/16/psalm-43-talk-homeward-bound-the-christian-hope-of-heaven/>

“HEAVEN: From Misconceptions to Hope”

Do you have the hope of eternal life in Heaven? Nathan Jones shares what Heaven is like! Presented at Oakwood Christian Church in End, Oklahoma in October 2022.

[Dr. Nathan E. Jones]

PRESENTATION: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnDR1FK0g2k>

"Heaven"

Many people deny the existence of the afterlife, especially the existence of hell. In this series, Dr. John Gerstner reminds us of the biblical truth: hell and heaven are real, and how we live today has eternal consequences. Drawing from the writing and preaching of Jonathan Edwards, he considers the terrors of hell, the treasures of heaven, and the reality that all of us will one day come face to face with God.

[John H. Gerstner]

Part 1: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/hell-and-heaven/heaven-part-1>

Part 2: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/hell-and-heaven/heaven-part-2>

Part 3: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/hell-and-heaven/heaven-part-3>

"The Case for Heaven"

Atheist-turned-Christian Lee Strobel, former award-winning legal editor of "The Chicago Tribune" and best-selling author of more than forty books, including "The Case for Christ" shares a powerful message on how Jesus has flung open the gates of heaven for everyone who wants to enter through receiving his free gift of grace. Hope is waiting.

[Lee Strobel]

PRESENTATION: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1_Rr8e5jac

"What did Jesus mean when He said it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into heaven?"

There are several different schools of thought on what Jesus was referring to in saying it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich

man to gain eternal life (Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25). The Persians expressed the concept of the impossible by saying it would be easier to put an elephant through the eye of a needle. The camel was a Jewish adaptation (the largest animal in Israel was a camel).

Some theorize that the needle Jesus was speaking of was the Needle Gate, supposedly a low and narrow after-hours entrance found in the wall surrounding Jerusalem. It was purposely small for security reasons, and a camel could only go through it by stripping off any saddles or packs and crawling through on its knees. The problem with this theory is there is no evidence such a gate ever existed. Beyond that, what sane camel driver would go through such contortions when larger gates were easily accessible?

Others claim that the word translated “camel” (Greek: kamelos) should actually be “cable” (Greek: kamilos). Then the verse would read that it is easier for a cable (or rope) to go through the eye of a needle. To believe this, however, brings up more problems than it solves, namely casting doubt on the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture.

The most likely explanation is that Jesus was using hyperbole, a figure of speech that exaggerates for emphasis. Jesus used this technique at other times, referring to a “plank” in one’s eye (Matthew 7:3-5) and swallowing a camel (Matthew 23:24).

Jesus’ message is clear—it is impossible for anyone to be saved on his own merits. Since wealth was seen as proof of God’s approval, it was commonly taught by the rabbis that rich people were blessed by God and were, therefore, the most likely candidates for heaven. Jesus destroyed that notion, and along with it, the idea that anyone can earn eternal life. The disciples had the appropriate response to this startling statement. They were utterly amazed and asked, “Who then can be saved?” in the next verse. If the wealthy among them, which included the super-spiritual Pharisees and scribes, were unworthy of heaven, what hope was there for a poor man?

Jesus’ answer is the basis of the gospel: “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God” (Matthew 19:26). Men are saved through God’s gifts of grace, mercy, and faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). Nothing we do earns salvation for us. It is the poor in spirit who inherit the kingdom of God (Matthew 5:3), those who recognize their spiritual poverty and their utter inability to do anything to justify themselves to a holy God. The rich man so often is blind to his spiritual poverty because he is proud of his accomplishments and has contented himself with his wealth. He is as likely to humble himself before God as a camel is

to crawl through the eye of a needle.

[Got Questions]

TEACHING: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Wnva5zIYEU>

"Heaven- A Place Like No Other"

Scripture: Revelation 21:1-27, Revelation 22:1-15

Denomination: Christian/Church Of Christ

Summary: 2 things: 1) Talk more about our eternal home- the actual place 2) Who will be in heaven Material adapted from Chauncey Crandall, MD, book entitled, "Touching Heaven"

Heaven is a wonderful place, filled with glory and grace, I wanna see my Savior's face, cause heaven is a wonderful place, I wanna go there!

Like an exciting movie trailer, God's Word previews this place and our future, whetting our desire for the real thing. And though what we are told is limited- with some of the details shrouded in prophetic language- 4 things we can say with certainty

1) This is a place like no other place

2) We have so much to anticipate

3) Heaven's blessings will never end. "an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade" 1 Peter 1:4, NIV.

4) Every aspect of the place will be characterized by joy. "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." Psalms 16:11, NIV.

Just try to imagine finally getting to be in the moment of the biggest and best experience we have ever had, with the One we have longed to spend it with and enjoying it undiminished

Keep in mind that even those who have died in Christ are awaiting this place. Where are they now? At home with the Lord- 2 Corinthians 5:8- resting from their

labor- Revelation 14:13- but this is not heaven. Paradise is a place of rest for the spirits of the redeemed until they are given their resurrected bodies and take occupancy of the new heaven and earth. [more...]

[Davon Huss]

ARTICLE: <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/heaven-a-place-like-no-other-davon-huss-sermon-on-dimensions-of-heaven-243130>

"The Only Road to Heaven (Matthew 7:13-14)"

The biggest question that will ever be answered is the question, "Which way to heaven?" The most important decision that anybody will ever make is the decision that they make regarding their eternal destiny. Life here, says the Bible, is a vapor that appears for a little time and vanishes away. It is like steam off a cup of coffee, nothing more, compared to eternity. Everyone will live somewhere forever without end. Where you live forever is absolutely critical. There are two options: hell and eternal punishment, or heaven and eternal joy. The question then is, "Which way to heaven?"

Open your Bible to Matthew chapter 7, Matthew chapter 7. The words of Jesus in two verses, verses 13 and 14, familiar words to any student of the Bible, or anyone who has read the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 7:13 and 14, here are the words of Jesus: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it."

In reality, life concentrates on every person standing at a crossroad. This should not surprise us, because this is not only true of the most important decision, that eternal decision, but it's just a way of life lived out every day. We are confronted through all of our lives with decisions from the trivial ones about what we might wear today or what we might eat, to the more important ones about who we might marry or where we might live, or significant purchases we might make, to the greatest of all decisions, the spiritual decisions that affect our eternity far beyond this life. It has always been the function of the servants of God, the ministers of God, the messengers of God to confront people with that most critical of all decisions. [more...]

[John MacArthur]

SERMON: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ls3MCdHFJpA>

"The Way to Heaven"

Enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life and there are few who find it.

[John MacArthur]

SERMON: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KcZibPO6pg>

"Five Minutes After Death"

Death is unavoidable, but it is not the end. Our eternal destiny waits for us five minutes after death. In this message, Adrian Rogers shares what Jesus says about life, death, and destiny, according to Luke 16:19-31.

[Adrian Rogers]

SERMON: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmbPNZy6dhc>

"What HAPPENS when you DIE???"

This is a tough and very intrusive question to ask. It forces us to think about things we don't want to think about but it is tied to a very real subject; eternity!!! Where are you going to spend yours? Are you sure??

[James Kaddis]

TEACHING: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TB5XCHK_D3c

"The Invisible World 8 ; A Glimpse into Heaven"

Revelation 4 gives us a look at the throne room of God. As we read John's description, we see the beauty, grandeur and majesty that awaits us. We will see the centrality of God in the midst of His universe and in the midst of His heaven.

And like the elders and the angels, we will all worship God and praise him ceaselessly because everything we have is derived from the Almighty.

Jesus is going to bring us right before the face of God. We'll see Him unmediated.

Jesus is in an actual place called heaven, a place of glory where God dwells with His angels and redeemed children. In another sense, Jesus is also with us here, in this world. Jesus, being God, has all of the attributes of God, including omnipresence. So, Jesus and the Father and the Holy Spirit are everywhere and not just "in heaven." As Solomon said in 2 Chronicles 2:6, "The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain him."

[Erwin W. Lutzer]

SERMON: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLoU5g7-Ymg>

"The Jewels in Our Heavenly Crown"

Let us draw near and see from the pure fountain of the Scriptures what excellencies the saints' everlasting rest affords. May the Lord hide us in the clefts of the rock and cover us with the hands of indulgent grace while we approach to take this view. And may we put off from our feet the shoes of irreverence and fleshly thoughts while we stand upon this holy ground. These truths are like jewels in the Christian's heavenly crown:

Heaven Is Purchased for Us with Christ's Own Blood

It is a most singular honor and ornament in the style of the saints' heavenly rest to be called the purchased possession; meaning it is the fruit of the blood of the Son of God. Yea, it is the chief fruit—the end and perfection of all the effects and efficacy of that blood.

Surely love is the most precious ingredient in the whole composition; and of all the flowers that grow in the garden of love, can there be brought one more sweet and beautiful to the garland than this blood? Greater love than this there is not—to lay down the life of the lover. And to have our Redeemer ever before our eyes and the liveliest sense and freshest remembrance of that dying, bleeding love upon our souls! Oh, how will it fill our souls with perpetual ravishments to think that we have passed through all, and here arrived safely at the breast of God! We shall behold, as it were, the wounds of love with eyes and hearts of love forever.

With what astonishing apprehensions, then, will the redeemed saints everlastingly behold their Blessed Redeemer! I will not meddle with their vain, audacious question, who must need know whether the glorified body of Christ does yet retain either the wounds or scars. But this is most certain: the memory of it will be as fresh, and the impressions of love as deep, and its working as strong as if His wounds were still in our eyes. [more...]

[Richard Baxter]

ARTICLE: <https://teachingresources.org/2010/01/17/the-jewels-in-our-heavenly-crown-by-richard-baxter/>

"What is Heaven Like?"
Philippians 3:20-21

"Heaven is a place, just as much a place as is New York or Chicago." Charles Ferguson Ball

I begin this sermon with two statements that I believe to be almost universally true: Everyone wants to know about heaven and everyone wants to go there. Recent polls suggest that nearly 80% of all Americans believe there is a place called heaven. I find that statistic encouraging because it tells me that even in this skeptical age there is something deep inside the human heart that cries out, "There's got to be something more. [more...]

[Ray Pritchard]

ARTICLE: <https://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/what-is-heaven-like/>

"Heaven: Our Future Home"

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no long any sea."
—Revelation 21:1

If you are a believer who has trusted Jesus Christ as your Saviour for the purpose of Him forgiving your sins, then your eternal destiny is secure. You have a home at some point in the future in heaven. But what is heaven and where is it located? I will examine in this article the basics concerning the biblical teachings about heaven.

Biblical Uses of Heaven

In English translations of the Bible, there are more than 500 occurrences of the word "heaven." Most of the verses use either the Hebrew word *shamayim*, which is literally translated "the heights," or the Greek word *ouranos*, which is literally translated "that which is raised up." These words are used throughout the Bible to refer to three different locations or realms: the atmosphere, the universe, and the abode of God. These three divisions have been recognized throughout history in Christian sources. While it is the third usage that we are primarily concerned with, all three usages are common in the Bible.

The first category is the atmospheric heavens. Examples of this usage are seen in passages such as Deuteronomy 11:11, 17; 28:12, 24; Joshua 10:11; Psalm 18:13; 147:8; Proverbs 23:5; Zechariah 2:6; 6:5. Verses such as these emphasize the "first heaven" or the atmospheric realm. It is of this realm that Isaiah speaks when he records God's words in Isaiah 55:9-11:

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth, and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

The second category refers to the universe or celestial skies. Examples of this usage are seen in passages such as Genesis 1:14; 15:5; Exodus 20:4; Psalm 33:6; Jeremiah 10:2; Hebrews 1:10. Frequently the celestial skies or heavens are used biblically in a figure of speech such as a hyperbole (Deut. 1:28; Dan. 4:11, 20, 22) or a metonymy which emphasizes totality (Deut. 4:39; 30:19; Mat. 24:31; Col. 1:23). It is in this realm of the celestial skies and the totality of the universe that we read in Deuteronomy 30:19: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse." It is also in this sense that we read of Jesus Christ's authority in Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'"

The third category is as the abode of God. Examples of this usage are the primary focus for our examination of heaven as seen in passages such as Psalm 33:13-14; Isaiah 63:15; Matthew 5:16, 45; 6:1, 9; 7:11, 21; 18:10; Revelation 3:12 and 21:10. It is the abode of God that Jesus speaks of when He stated in Matthew 10:32-33: "Every one therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also

confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." It is the abode of God, the "third heaven," that Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians 12:2. Jesus referred to heaven in this sense many times throughout his ministry. It is also this usage that Paul writes of throughout his letters to the early churches.

Heaven is more than a mystical notion, imaginary dreamland, or philosophical concept. It is a real and present place in which God, the Creator of all things lives. It is a place spoken of throughout the Bible. It is the true home of all Christians. It is where Jesus came from at the incarnation, where He ascended after the resurrection, and from whence He will come again to receive all those who truly follow Him. It is the place which the writer of Hebrews calls a "distant country" and for which those in his "hall of faith" longed (Heb. 11:13-16).

The Eternal Heaven

As Christians, the Apostle Paul tells us in Philippians 3:20 that "our citizenship is in heaven." Heaven is somewhere beyond earth and our universe. Heaven is in existence now and has been the dwelling place of God since eternity past. Heaven is the dwelling place of God, though God is not limited spatially to heaven since He is omnipresent. Scripture gives us some glimpses of heaven as the throne room of God (Isa. 6; Ezek. 1 & 2; Dan. 7:13–16; Rev. 4 & 5). But Scripture indicates that when eternity arrives heaven will be located on the new earth.

According to Revelation 21 and 22, the eternal state will begin at the end of the millennium, the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. From our current point in history, the next event in God's prophetic plan is the rapture of the church, which will be followed by the seven-year tribulation, the second coming of Christ, the millennial kingdom, and finally, the eternal state. Eternity is a distinct from the millennial kingdom.

After the judgments at the end of the millennium, Jerusalem will be destroyed by fire along with the rest of the earth (Mat. 24:35; 2 Pet. 3:10). However, according to Revelation 3:12 and 21-22, there will be a new city, the New Jerusalem, which will replace the destroyed city and which will continue throughout eternity. This New Jerusalem is the "eternal city."

Jesus told his disciples in John 14:2-3 that He was going away to heaven to prepare a place for believers. It appears that this place the He is preparing is the Heavenly Jerusalem.

The New Jerusalem will be a heavenly city throughout eternity in that its origin is heavenly, as opposed to having been built upon this earth. However, it will be

earthly in that it is physical and geographical, and will be the earthly part of the New Heavens and the New Earth that will replace the current heavens and earth after their destruction. This time the new earth will never be tainted by sin and will thus not be cursed. After this present earth has been destroyed by fire (2 Pet. 3:10), then the new city will descend from the heavens.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them." (Rev. 21:1-3)

Revelation 21–22 is very specific and detailed about the city, its inhabitants, and the blessedness of the eternal state. Though there are many questions we may have about eternity, John's vision leaves no doubt that citizens of this New Jerusalem, the Eternal City, will exist in conditions unlike any this world has known.

Heaven is a Wonderful Place

The Bible describes life in heaven as full of joy, purposeful activity, and worship. When we think of eternity, it's easy to wonder if we will get bored in heaven. However, the biblical glimpses are not ones of boredom. The Bible speaks of at least five activities in heaven: worship, service, authority, fellowship, learning, and rest. Heaven upon the New Earth and in the New Jerusalem will be a place just as physical as our current world, but without sin or the pain caused by the curse. This is why we will receive resurrection bodies so that we can live with our Triune God in perfect fellowship in a resurrected new creation. In fact, Scripture says that the streets of the New Jerusalem will be paved with translucent gold (Rev. 21:21).

When we get to heaven there will be clear recognition of others and we will be able to fellowship not only with God Himself, but also with all other believers. In His resurrection body, Jesus was clearly and readily recognized. In this same manner, we will be known and recognized to each other in heaven. We will not be nameless and faceless souls without identities. Rather, we will maintain our present identities, but in resurrected and glorified bodies that have no infirmities or faults.

Angels will be present in heaven and eternity and believers will also interact with that aspect of God's creation. Church age believers will judge them because of our union with Christ. Paul tells the Corinthians, "Do you not know that we shall judge the angels (1 Cor. 6:3)?" We also know from other passages that the fallen

angels who sided with Satan when he rebelled against God will be judged in the future and cast into the Lake of Fire forever with him (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). Thus, heaven will be populated with the Triune God (The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit), elect or non-fallen angels, and all believers throughout history from Adam and Eve to the last person saved during the millennium.

Conclusion

The important thing that you must know is whether or not you are going to heaven. It is a false view to think that everyone goes to heaven. Since we have all sinned and fallen short of God's righteous standard we all deserve to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. However, God sent His Son (Jesus) to die in our place on the cross, which satisfied God's wrath so that anyone who believes that Jesus' sacrifice paid for their sins then they will be given the gift of eternal life and spend eternity in heaven with God. Make sure you have reserved your place in heaven by trusting in God's gracious offer. In fact, after the Book of Revelation concludes with telling us about heaven and the New Heavens and New Earth it provides one last closing invitation to those who have not trusted Christ when it says: "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (Rev. 22:17). Maranatha!

[Thomas Ice]

"Answering Questions About Heaven and the New Earth"

Kirk Cameron sits down with Randy Alcorn in this special full interview for a discussion on heaven and the new earth. What will heaven be like? Will we be married in heaven? What is the difference between the new heaven and new earth? We've got all this and more on today's episode!

[Randy Alcorn]

INTERVIEW: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRizNyX1cMc>

"THE HOPE LAID UP IN HEAVEN"

NO. 1438

A SERMON

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 13, 1878, BY C.H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”

Colossians 1:5.

THREE graces should be always conspicuous in Christians—faith, love and hope. They are each mentioned by Paul in the opening verses of the epistle from which our text is taken. These lovely graces should be so conspicuous in every believer, as to be spoken of, and consequently heard of even by those who have never seen us. These flowers should yield so sweet a perfume that their fragrance may be perceived by those who have never gazed upon them. So was it with the saints at Colosse. Paul says, “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.” May our characters be such as can be reported of without causing us to blush, but that can never be the case if these essential virtues are absent. If these things are in us and abound, we shall not be barren or unfruitful. But if they are lacking, we are as withered branches. We should, therefore, be rich in faith, which is the root of every grace, and to this end we should daily pray, “Lord, increase our faith.” We should strive to be full even to overflowing with love, which is of God and makes us like unto God. And we should also abound in hope, even that heavenly hope which causes a man to purify himself in readiness for the inheritance above. See to it that none of these three divine sisters are strangers to your souls, but let faith, hope and love take up their abode in your hearts.

[more...]

PDF: <https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs1438.pdf>

"What Jesus Said About Life After Death"

How do you know if Jesus' claim about eternal life is true or if it's simply wishful thinking? In this video presentation you'll travel to Jerusalem with host Mart DeHaan and hear from a variety of authorities. Join the discussion as they explore questions about life beyond the grave and examine the words of Jesus. Discover answers to your deepest questions about eternity and find reasons why you can believe what Jesus said.

[Our Daily Bread]

DOCUMENTARY: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLUBRShnBoo>

"What should we learn from the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16?"

What should we learn from the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16?
What is the key truth we are to learn from the rich man and Lazarus?

[Got Questions]

TEACHING: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pzpvqym9whY>

“REVEALING THE MYSTERIES OF HEAVEN”

“What’s Up with Heaven?”

Selected Scriptures January 31, 2010

I. The Prominence of Heaven

II. The Plurality of Heaven A. The First Heaven

Isaiah 55:9-10

Genesis 1:20

B. The Second Heaven

Genesis 1:14-17 C. The Third Heaven

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 Matthew 5:16 Psalm 11:4

III. The Place Called Heaven John 14:1-3

Ephesians 4:10 Acts 1:10-11 Isaiah 14:13

IV. The Preciousness of Heaven

A. Our Redeemer Is in Heaven

Hebrews 9:24

B. Our Relationships Are in Heaven

Hebrews 12:23

C. Our Resources Are in Heaven

1 Peter 1:3-4

D. Our Residence Is in Heaven

Philippians 3:20

E. Our Reward Is in Heaven

Matthew 5:12

F. Our Riches Are in Heaven

Matthew 6:19-21

G. Our Reservation Is in Heaven

Revelation 21:27 Luke 10:20
John 14:6

[Dr. David Jeremiah]

"Was I Too Hard On Him?"

In this video, evangelist Ray Comfort shares the gospel with a man in a one-on-one conversation. Watch as Ray uses his approach to lead the man to a deeper understanding of the love of Jesus and the salvation offered through faith in Him. Whether you're a believer or simply curious about the gospel message, this video is a must-watch for anyone looking to deepen their understanding of the Christian faith. Be inspired as Ray Comfort shares the good news of the gospel with a stranger on the street. Was Ray too hard on him in his encounter? Don't forget to like and subscribe for more inspiring content like this!

[Ray Comfort: Just Witnessing]

INTERVIEW: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wld__CfXjFU&t=98s

"What We Will Do in Heaven"

Essentials: What Every Christian Needs to Know :: Message 8

[Greg Laurie]

SERMON: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_GdtKHfd2I

"Ep 1 | Your First Hour in Glory, What Will Heaven Be Like? | What Happens 1 Minute After You Die Pt2"

Dr. Erwin Lutzer and Dr. John Ankerberg share what the Bible says about your first hour in glory and what heaven will be like.

[John Ankerberg]

INTERVIEW: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbAVKjuJo84>

"The Future Glories of Heaven"

Part 1 of Heaven: What Will It Be Like? with Randy Alcorn and Dr. John Ankerberg.

[John Ankerberg - Interviews Randy Alcorn]

INTERVIEW: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNr6oJWA120>

"Our Existence in Heaven"

As guest Randy Alcorn and Dr. John Ankerberg continue our study, we'll find that the future state of the believer will be one of much excitement and joy. Rather than merely singing songs, believers will be involved in a wide variety of activities in community with other believers and in new, perfect bodies fit for service to the King of kings.

(Part 2 of What's So Exciting About Heaven with Dr. John Ankerberg and Randy Alcorn.)

[John Ankerberg - Interviews Randy Alcorn]

INTERVIEW: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwf1yA_A6cY

"How Can You Be Sure You are Going to Heaven?"

In this session, Dr. Ankerberg and Randy Alcorn discuss what the Bible teaches about salvation as well as how to be saved and to know for certain where you will spend eternity. This confidence can help during even our weakest moments in this life as we look forward to eternity with Christ in the next life.

(Part 3 of Heaven: What Will It Be Like?)

[John Ankerberg - Interviews Randy Alcorn]

INTERVIEW: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yVTi0KLmrl>

"Billy Graham An Extraordinary Journey"

Explore key moments in Billy Graham's journey as a dairy farmer's son who rose to prominence, becoming one of the most influential religious leaders in modern history.

[Franklin Graham]

FUNERAL SERVICES: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0QnD9NazNc&t=3626s>

"The Rich Young Ruler"

(Mark 10:23-31) When Jesus told his disciples that it is difficult for the wealthy to enter the kingdom of God, he pointed to a truth that applies to everyone. Alistair Begg teaches us that unless God changes our hearts, we will never be willing to turn from our selfish interests and follow Christ. From beginning to end, salvation is the work of God alone, and is not based on human achievement.

[Alistair Begg]

SERMON: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcR8AUFs9ow>

"It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven"

[The Visual Bible - The Gospel Of Matthew]

VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXsMPXSyf7I>

The Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:13–22)"

Only Christ can redeem us from the immeasurable debt we incur by our sin. In this sermon, R.C. Sproul continues his series in the gospel of Mark to investigate Jesus' interaction with a rich young man who could not recognize his own spiritual bankruptcy.

[R.C. Sproul]

SERMON: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNxpyreHqpl>

“Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler”

The story of Jesus and the rich young ruler is found in the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 10. Jesus ended the encounter by telling the man:

“You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Mark 10:21-22)

After the rich young ruler left, Jesus said something very interesting to his disciples... he said: It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” (Mark 10:25)

Now there are a few different schools of thought about what Jesus meant by this. One theory is that Jesus was using a figure of speech of the day. Kind of like when you say, “I have a ton of homework” or “that guy is as skinny as dental floss,” or as my old Grand pappy used to say, “When I was a kid we were so broke we couldn’t afford to pay attention.” The ancient Persians even had an expression that it was easier to put an elephant through the eye of a needle. Maybe the camel was the Jewish version.

Another theory is that the “needle” Jesus was speaking of was a specific gate at Jerusalem, called the Needle Gate. It was supposedly a low, narrow, after-hours, entrance found in the wall of the city. The thinking was that a camel could only go through it by stripping off any saddles or packs and crawling through on its knees. The problem with this theory is there is not much evidence that such a gate ever existed in ancient Jerusalem.

The most likely explanation is that Jesus was using hyperbole, a figure of speech that exaggerates, for emphasis. As we’ve seen, Jesus used this technique on other occasions:

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. (Matthew 7:3-5)

Regardless, the message of Jesus is clear in the story of the rich young ruler, and again it centers around this radical new idea of grace—that it’s impossible for anyone to be saved on his or her own merits.

[Dave Stotts - Drive Thru History]

VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huX1P0s3c30>

“The Terminal Generation - Heaven Bound”

I was blessed to be able to attend the 2016 Prophecy Watchers Convention in Colorado Springs a week or so ago. And with some of the top prophecy experts on hand to lend their expertise on the subject of Bible prophecy, it was a mind blowing experience to say the least. I was privileged to listen to Gary Stearman, Derek Gilbert, L.A. Marzulli, Paul McQuire, Avi Lipkin and Joseph Farah just to mention a few. I also met people who had traveled from as far away as the UK, Canada, New York and Hawaii just to be at this conference. And with so much information in such a short period of time my head is still spinning but I wanted to share at least some of it with you. Especially some of the thoughts I have had in the days following this incredible event.

One of the first speakers I had the privilege of listening to was *Gary Stearman on the subject of the final, last or terminal generation. Which posed the question – are we the last generation? All the signs seem to say so but is there any way that we can know for sure?

The Last Generation

Jesus himself used this terminology in his famous discourse from Matthew 24 regarding the signs of the end of the age.

“Even so when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.” Matthew 24: 33,34

As you can see there is a generation that will see the fulfillment of all the things that Jesus spoke of. A generation unlike any other for it will be this generation that sees (in its completion) the second coming of Jesus. And what is more Jesus himself gives us an important clue (actually two) as to when it might be and the time frame in which to look for it -so that when it happens, we will recognize it ... Jesus never intended for us to be clueless or in the dark about something so important as the time of his return.

The Terminal Generation

Thank you to Mr Stearman who pointed out in his presentation “The Prophecy of the Last Generation” that the term “final, last or literally terminal generation” is used 6 times in the Old Testament and is most likely what Jesus was referring to

in his Matthew 24 discourse. Here Jesus uses the term in reference to the generation that would be alive at the time of his second coming a generation that would not pass away until everything that he had spoken of had been fulfilled.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

Image result for fig tree in blossom

As many of you know the key to all of these events, the opening kick off you might say is the restoration of Israel and the Jewish people to the land. This is an unmistakable marker that places us squarely on the road to the second coming of Jesus Christ. Consider these words:

“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree. As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.” Matthew 24:32,33.

The fig tree according to the Bible is representative of national Israel. We find this in Hosea 9:10 and Jeremiah 24:5. Therefore, when Jesus speaks about the fig tree budding again he is speaking of Israel which had been desolate and pretty much dead up until this past century for the past 2,000 years. Which is really no surprise as Jesus had cursed the fig tree in Matthew 21:19 for not bearing fruit.

“Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, ‘May you never bear fruit again! Immediately, the fig tree withered.’”

That may seem strange to us cursing the tree for not bearing fruit but you see every living creature (humans, animals and plants) are all designed to bear fruit. Nations too. And when a nation does not bear fruit God will in due time cut them off. Which should give us Americans great cause for concern for we have squandered the incredible blessings we have been given with scarcely a second thought. But then again, what is a nation but the people within who make it up. A nation is only as righteous as the people inside it.

120 years

In 1897 the first Zionist Congress was held in Basel, Switzerland urging a home for Jews in Palestine. This became the first budding of the fig tree. And the Lord true to promise established his people back in the land with the official birth of Israel in 1948 and the reestablishment of Jerusalem as the capital of the newly born country following the six day war in 1967. Green leaves and buds appearing.

It occurred to me that the push to create a Palestinian state with the division of

Jerusalem as the capital for both is one of the preeminent signs for the second coming of Jesus. And of course, only a fool would believe that should this division actually take place that the Jews would be allowed to live in safety – for the “forces that be” will not be satisfied until the Jewish state is no longer in existence and every Jew is dead. Leaving the nation of Israel “the fig tree” with no possibility of bearing the fruit that God so desires to see. Which is of course their intention.

The Days of Noah

In Matthew 24, Jesus states that in the days before his coming it will be “as in the days of Noah” and while that entails much more than can be contained in this short article, we can easily see that the days of Noah lasted exactly 120 years. We find this in Genesis chapter 6 verse 3 where God says:

My Spirit will not contend with man forever for he is mortal, his days will be a hundred and twenty years”.

Interestingly, this is the exact number of years God gave mankind to repent before he sent the flood. And it continues to be an important number in the count down to end time events for we are at the very end of the 120 years God gave Israel in which to bear fruit. And that time is nearly up. The fruit Jesus so desired to find on the fig tree is not there yet but it is coming.

And the next time Jesus goes to the fig tree to find fruit, be assured.... he will find it.

Stand back and see our God at work! He’s coming soon!

*Thank you to Gary Stearman for his talk on this same subject although the thoughts shared here are my own. Thank you also to Dr. Del Tackett whose awesome teaching on “bearing fruit” in his Christian education series has given me much to think about and most of all to Jesus to whom I owe everything and without whose help I could not pen a word.

20160716_193943 Yours truly and a brother from Hawaii whom I met at the conference. A Pastor at New Hope on Maui this guy traveled all the way from the islands just to be at the conference and I was tickled pink to meet some one from my previous home.

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem they shall prosper who love thee” Psalm 122:6

Watching and waiting with YOU for the soon return of Jesus! Cindy

[Cindy By The Sea]

"DO YOU UNDERSTAND HEAVEN?"

Unleashing The Power of Heaven Into Our Daily Living Revelation 21-22

Here's my message from last Sunday at Calvary.

Early believers survived the DARKEST DAYS because they had an unshakeable hope of HEAVEN.

Heaven was not distant, it was near to their hearts because it was connected to their salvation, their prayers, and most of all their SAVIOR JESUS.

Do YOU understand the power of being connected each day to Heaven?

Prayers go to Heaven.

Forgiveness comes from Heaven.

Our souls are anchored to Heaven.

Jesus is preparing a place for us in Heaven.

We are looking for our Savior to appear soon--COMING FROM HEAVEN!

[John Barnett]

TEACHING: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CBCjGC2zWs>

"The Glory of Heaven"

[Dr Tony Evans]

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vW6AsesiGbQ>

Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufJ_gUIa6NI

"Will Heaven Be Worth It?"

C. S. Lewis was right to say, Scripture and tradition habitually put the joys of heaven into the scale against the sufferings of earth, and no solution of the problem of pain that does not do so can be called a Christian one. But will Heaven

be worth it? One Biola undergrad fought back tears as she confided that she wasn't sure she wanted to go to heaven because she was afraid that eternity would be boring. And sadly, she's not alone. Many suffer from the devil's propaganda that heaven will be lousy. I call this Extreme makeover: metaphysical edition. After all, how can eternity make up for our suffering here if eternity itself must be endured?

2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

This is part 3 of 3 in the series "The 1 On: Defending the Faith".

[Clay Jones]

SERMON: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fCj02IEfw4>

"What's Up With Heaven?"

Dr. Jeremiah explains why the reality of heaven is truly a mystery for those who do not study the Word of God. But for those of us who do, there are many answers to be found.

[David Jeremiah]

SERMON: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCN9EbENoKM>

"What is Heaven Like?"

John Lennon wrote the lyrics, "Imagine there's no heaven." Lennon's song is as popular today as ever. But when people sing this song, they actually recognize the reality of heaven.

But the recognition of Heaven doesn't answer the question of what heaven will be like.

So, what will heaven be like? Can we be sure there is a heaven? What about hell? How does a future in heaven change how we live today?

All of this and more on today's episode of the Hard Questions / Real Answer Podcast with special guest, Author and Professor, Clay Jones.

[Nat Crawford - Interviews Clay Jones]

INTERVIEW: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdnfLROUZ9o>

"DWELLING WITH THE GOD--WHO WENT TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU"

Are you ready to go on an Israel pilgrimage? Take a life-transforming trip with tour leader Tim Moore on the television program, Christ in Prophecy!

[John Barnett]

TEACHING: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHCjWeAqIJc>

"What is Heaven Like?"

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INTERVIEW: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdnfLROUZ9o>

"Is Jesus the only way to Heaven | How to get to Heaven"

Question: "Is Jesus the only way to Heaven?"

In this video, I'll answer that question from a biblical perspective, and afterwards, I'll point you to some helpful resources, so stick around until the end.

Yes, Jesus is the only way to heaven.

Such an exclusive statement may grate on the postmodern ear, but it is true nonetheless.

The Bible teaches that there is no other way to salvation than through Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself says in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

He is not a way, as in one of many; He is the way, as in the one and only.

No one, regardless of reputation, achievement, special knowledge, or personal holiness, can come to God the Father except through Jesus. [more...]

[Got Questions]

TEACHING: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABGfp4jB_ak

"Finding the Narrow Way to Heaven"

Open your Bible to Matthew 7, Matthew 7, and I will read for you a very familiar and very important portion of Scripture. Matthew 7:13 down through 27. Matthew 7:13 to 27.

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the

floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell – and great was its fall.”

The old spiritual said, “Everybody talkin’ ‘bout heaven ain’t goin’ there.” And that, essentially, is drawn from this passage. “Everybody talkin’ ‘bout heaven ain’t goin’ there.” How true that is. [more...]

[John MacArthur]

SERMON: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV_FTsieQw8

"Heaven and the Rapture"

[John MacArthur]

Q&A: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsOVCEEsHb0>

"Is Jesus the Only Way to Heaven?"

How is Christianity different from every other religion in the world? The answer focuses on Jesus Christ, “the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).

Christ means “anointed one.” It is the term for the ancient Hebrew word Messiah—the anointed one whom God would send to save His people. The first believers of the early Christian church recognized Jesus as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. Their period of world history was full of discouragement and despair. The promised Messiah shone as a beacon in the darkness, and His light has never dimmed: “In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ... The true Light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world” (John 1:4, 9).

Today, as world leaders struggle with seemingly insurmountable problems, this darkening and menacing situation accentuates the brightness of the One who proclaimed, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12).

Jesus alone can offer eternal life because He is the only one who lived a sinless

life and provided the perfect sacrifice for our sins by His death on the cross. He lived on earth as man, but was also divine. Because He was divine, He rose again three days after His death—the only one ever to die and come back to life on His own—then ascended into heaven. While the founders of various non-Christian religions of the world have died and been buried, Christ is very much alive!

Jesus was the only one to claim to be God and the only one to prove it. In His words, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

Because the Bible is God’s inspired Word and God cannot lie, it does not contradict itself or teach falsehoods. It is in this very Scripture that Jesus is revealed.

Are you sure of your future in heaven? You can be.

[Billy Graham]

"Is Jesus the only way to Heaven?"

Yes, Jesus is the only way to heaven. Such an exclusive statement may confuse, surprise, or even offend, but it is true nonetheless. The Bible teaches that there is no other way to salvation than through Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself says in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” He is not a way, as in one of many; He is the way, as in the one and only. No one, regardless of reputation, achievement, special knowledge, or personal holiness, can come to God the Father except through Jesus.

Jesus is the only way to heaven for several reasons. Jesus was “chosen by God” to be the Savior (1 Peter 2:4). Jesus is the only One to have come down from heaven and returned there (John 3:13). He is the only person to have lived a perfect human life (Hebrews 4:15). He is the only sacrifice for sin (1 John 2:2; Hebrews 10:26). He alone fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17). He is the only man to have conquered death forever (Hebrews 2:14–15). He is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the only man whom God has “exalted . . . to the highest place” (Philippians 2:9).

Jesus spoke of Himself as the only way to heaven in several places besides John 14:6. He presented Himself as the object of faith in Matthew 7:21–27. He said His words are life (John 6:63). He promised that those who believe in Him will have eternal life (John 3:14–15). He is the gate of the sheep (John 10:7); the bread of

life (John 6:35); and the resurrection (John 11:25). No one else can rightly claim those titles.

The apostles' preaching focused on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Peter, speaking to the Sanhedrin, clearly proclaimed Jesus as the only way to heaven: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Paul, speaking to the synagogue in Antioch, singled out Jesus as the Savior: "I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin" (Acts 13:38–39). John, writing to the church at large, specifies the name of Christ as the basis of our forgiveness: "I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name" (1 John 2:12). No one but Jesus can forgive sin.

Eternal life in heaven is made possible only through Christ. Jesus prayed, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). To receive God's free gift of salvation, we must look to Jesus and Jesus alone. We must trust in Jesus' death on the cross as our payment for sin and in His resurrection. "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (Romans 3:22).

At one point in Jesus' ministry, many of the crowd were turning their backs on Him and leaving in hopes of finding another savior. Jesus asked the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" (John 6:67, ESV). Peter's reply is exactly right: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68–69, ESV). May we all share Peter's faith that eternal life resides only in Jesus Christ.

[Got Questions]

TEACHING: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABGfp4jB_ak

"What Actually Happens When You Make the Transition from Life, to Death, to Heaven?"

Dr. Erwin Lutzer and Dr. John Ankerberg explain what the Bible says will happen one minute after you die.

[John Ankerberg - Interviews Erwin Luther]

INTERVIEW: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TknmF9M7RI0>

“What Kind of Rewards Will Believers Receive in Heaven”

[David Jeremiah]

ARTICLE: <https://davidjeremiah.blog/what-kind-of-rewards-will-believers-receive-in-heaven/>

"Learning to Thrive as Strangers and Aliens In a Post-Christian Era"

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...Oops, someone else used that line.

We do live in difficult times. However, there are opportunities everywhere you turn. Sure, more than 70 percent of Americans reject the church. But that means that the fields are white unto harvest.

Reaching into the harvest won't work using the tools of the past or pretending that our values still dominate. We need to think differently. Flexibility and adaptability within scriptural boundaries actually suggest that these might be the best of times for the church. That may seem a foreign thought to you but it is true. The church prevailed over culture and grew the fastest during times similar to these.

Those early believers had no internet, snail mail, podcasts or even bicycles yet they changed an empire from the inside out. I don't much like thinking of myself as a stranger—worse yet an alien yet that is what we are to the surrounding world. Those are also words describing us in scripture. If we embrace them we'll find some paradigms broken and programs disrupted. We'll also discover fresh wind from the Spirit and a flow of living water long bottled up in a sometimes burdensome program-based approach to our great task.

PODCAST: <https://play.acast.com/s/the-ralph-moore-podcast/ralph-moore-learning-to-thrive-as-strangers-and-aliens-in-a->

"There Is Only One Thing We Can Take With Us To Heaven--Are You Bringing One?"

[Dr. John Barnett]

TEACHING: <https://www.sermonaudio.com/solo/dtbn/sermons/3922100156792/>

"A Prepared Place for a Prepared People"

MY real text is not in the Bible; it is one of those Christian proverbs, which are not inspired in words, but the spirit of which is inspired, "Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people." You have often heard that sentence; it is familiar in your mouths as household words, and well it may be.

Yet I shall have two texts from the Scriptures; the first will be our Saviour's words to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you," from which we learn that "Heaven is a prepared place;" and the second will be Paul's words to the Colossians, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," from which we learn that there is a prepared people, a people made meet to be partakers of the inheritance which Christ has gone to prepare for them.

I. I am not going to have any further preface, but I will begin at once to speak upon THE PREPARATION OF HEAVEN: "I go to prepare a place for you." [more...]

[Charles Spurgeon]

ARTICLE: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/a-prepared-place-for-a-prepared-people/>

SONGS

"Somewhere Over The Rainbow"

Somewhere over the rainbow
Way up high
There's a land that I heard of
Once in a lullaby

Somewhere over the rainbow
Skies are blue
And the dreams that you dare to dream
Really do come true

Someday I'll wish upon a star
And wake up where the clouds are far behind me
Where troubles melt like lemon drops
Away above the chimney tops
That's where you'll find me

Somewhere over the rainbow
Bluebirds fly
Birds fly over the rainbow
Why then, oh, why can't I?

Somewhere over the rainbow
Bluebirds fly
Birds fly over the rainbow
Why then, oh, why can't I?

If happy little bluebirds fly
Beyond the rainbow
Why, oh why can't I?

[Judy Garland - "The Wizard of Oz"]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSZxmZmBfnU>

"Homeward Bound"

I'm sitting in the railway station.
Got a ticket to my destination.
On a tour of one-night stands my suitcase and guitar in hand.
And ev'ry stop is neatly planned for a poet and a one-man band.
Homeward bound,
I wish I was,
Homeward bound,
Home where my thought's escaping,
Home where my music's playing,

Home where my love lies waiting
Silently for me.

Ev'ry day's an endless stream
Of cigarettes and magazines.
And each town looks the same to me, the movies and the factories
And ev'ry stranger's face I see reminds me that I long to be,
Homeward bound,
I wish I was,
Homeward bound,
Home where my thought's escaping,
Home where my music's playing,
Home where my love lies waiting
Silently for me.

Tonight I'll sing my songs again,
I'll play the game and pretend.
But all my words come back to me in shades of mediocrity
Like emptiness in harmony I need someone to comfort me.
Homeward bound,
I wish I was,
Homeward bound,
Home where my thought's escaping,
Home where my music's playing,
Home where my love lies waiting
Silently for me.
Silently for me.

[Simon & Garfunkel - "Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme" album]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZloriMyLqM>

"This World Is Not My Home"

Verse 1:

This world is not my home
Im just a passn through
My treasures and my hope
Is placed beyond the blue
Many friends and kindred
Have gone on before

And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore
Refrain:
O Lord you know
I have no friend like you
If Heavens not my home
O lord what will I do
Angels beckon me
To Heavens open door
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore

Verse 2:
Over in gloryland
They'll be no dyin there
The saints all shouting
Victory
And singing everywhere
I hear the voice of them
Who've gone on before
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore
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Verse 3:
Heavens expecting me
That's one thing I know
I fixed it up with Jesus
A long time ago
He will take me through
Though I am weak and poor
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore

Verse 4:

If you get there before me
Ill be there just the same
Youll hear me when I shout
O glory to his name!
Ill fly away with Him
My savior I adore
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore

[Ricky Skaggs - "Ricky Skaggs Solo Songs My Dad Loved" album]

SONG: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdOOxuQii_s

“There's No Place Like Home”

When the soft snow is falling
Each roof, becomes a dome
Then you'll hear your heart calling
"There's no place like home"

There's no place like home.
That's when you must believe
There's no place like home
Especially Christmas Eve

And the meadows gleam neatly
As though brushed, by a comb
And the night bird sings sweetly
"There's no place like home"

There's no place like home
The song will sweetly say
There's no place like home
Especially Christmas Day

And though good fortune's found you
Wherever you may roam
With your loved ones all around you
There's just no place like home

And a distant bell is ringing
And a choir is softly singing
The gate out front is swinging
And there's no place like home.

[Glen Campbell - "That Christians Feeling" album]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ra768Tr3UWs>

"No Place Like Home"

Well, there's my easy chair just sittin' there
I've spent a lot of time thinkin' of this perfect love
I know is yours and mine

And oh, how I love that old picture on the wall
Of you and me and the kids
My most favorite times in life
I've spent right here where we live

There's no place like home
There's no place like home
It just hit me as I was leaving
There's no place like home

From the bedroom, I smell perfume
My favorite kind you wore
And it brings back memories of all those nights
Behind our bedroom door

And the saddest thing I think I've ever seen
Was my closet all cleaned out
It's sad to think that one must leave
'Cause we can't work things out

There's no place like home
There's no place like home
It just hit me as I was leaving
There's no place like home

So baby say that I can stay for just a day or so
Then maybe I can change your mind and I won't have to go
Just look into these baby blues and tell me it's okay
I love that smile, it drives me wild
No, love won't die today

There's no place like home
There's no place like home

[Randy Travis]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q249uw4q-lc>

“No Place Like Home”

Couldn't wait for Friday, 3PM
You picked me up, we were gone again
Truck tires on a dirt road
Kentucky hills out the window
Didn't stop 'til we got to Wilson farm
We were kings and queens, the world was ours
Running wild through the wheat fields
Thinking this is how free feels
Laughing as we go
There's no place like home

Up to high point mountain we would climb
You'd tell me your dreams, I'd tell you mine
I wonder if you ever knew
How much I was looking up to you
You played me all your favorite songs
Why you let your little sister tag along
I'll never know but I'm glad you did
Wish we were still those kids
Laughing as we go
There's no place like home

The trouble with time is it won't slow down
How I wish it would
The trouble with Earth is I can't bring you back
God I wish I could

But I look up at the stars
When I'm missing you the most
And this aching in my heart is what reminds me
There's no place like home

I still take the same old Friday drive
Pretend you're right there by my side
Climb high point mountain without you
But it ain't the same without you
Preacher talks about a better place
Where all our tears will be wiped away
A healing for this brokenness
No more longing for the ones we miss
But you already know
There's no place like home

I stopped by to talk to you today
And touch the stone where you were laid
Right next to grandpa's barn
But I know that's not where you are
It fills my heart with hope
'Cause there's no place like home

[Anne Wilson - "No Place Like Home" album]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw4J2TqS4JY>

"Homeward Bound"

I will run, I will run this race
And I will do it all for love
Your love compels me forward
Your love controls my heart
And I just can't, I cannot get away

So I will fight, this good fight of faith
And I will do it all for love
You are my great reward
You're so worth fighting for
And I can't wait to see your face

I will run, I will run this race
And I will do it all for love
Your love compels me forward
Your love controls my heart
And I just can't, I cannot get away

So I will fight this good fight of faith
And I will do it all for love
You are my great reward
You're so worth fighting for
And I can't wait to see your face
I can't wait to see your face

Hallelujah, hallelujah
Hallelujah, hallelujah
Hallelujah, hallelujah
Hallelujah, hallelujah

[Kristene DiMarco - "Those Who Dream" album]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EbjGiPJOD0>

"I Can Only Imagine"

I can only imagine
What it will be like
When I walk by Your side
I can only imagine
What my eyes would see
When Your face is before me
I can only imagine
Yeah

Surrounded by Your glory
What will my heart feel?
Will I dance for You Jesus
Or in awe of You be still?
Will I stand in Your presence
Or to my knees, will I fall?
Will I sing hallelujah?
Will I be able to speak at all?

I can only imagine
I can only imagine

I can only imagine
When that day comes
And I find myself
Standing in the Son
I can only imagine
When all I will do
Is forever, forever worship You
I can only imagine, yeah
I can only imagine

Surrounded by Your glory
What will my heart feel?
Will I dance for you Jesus
Or in awe of You be still?
Will I stand in your presence
Or to my knees will I fall?
Will I sing hallelujah?
Will I be able to speak at all?

I can only imagine, yeah
I can only imagine
Surrounded by Your glory
What will my heart feel?
Will I dance for you Jesus
Or in awe of You be still?
Will I stand in your presence
Or to my knees, will I fall?
Will I sing hallelujah?
Will I be able to speak at all?
I can only imagine, yeah
I can only imagine
I can only imagine, yeah-yeah
I can only imagine
I can only imagine
I can only imagine

I can only imagine
When all I will do
Is forever, forever worship You

I can only imagine

[Mercy Me - "Theew Worship Project" album]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xwzltqYmII>

"Joni's Waltz"

Though I spend my mortal lifetime in this chair,
I refuse to waste it living in despair.
And though others may receive
Gifts of healing, I believe
That He has given me a gift beyond compare....

For heaven is nearer to me,
And at times it is all I can see.
Sweet music I hear
Coming down to my ear;
And I know that it's playing for me.

For I am Christ the Savior's own bride,
And redeemed I shall stand by His side.
He will say, "Shall we dance?"
And our endless romance
Will be worth all the tears I have cried.

I rejoice with him whose pain my Savior heals.
And I weep with him who still his anguish feels.
But earthly joys and earthly tears,
Are confined to earthly years.
And a greater good the Word of God reveals.

In this life we have a cross that we must bear;
A tiny part of Jesus' death that we can share.
And one day we'll lay it down,
For He has promised us a crown,
To which our suffering can never be compared

[Nancy Honeytree]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUAAVATWgak>

"Heaven"

[Joni Eareckson Tada]

SONG: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMt4ME_t5VI

"Heaven's Now My Home"

I am sorry that I left you
I know you feel alone
God told me that He needed me
He called me to come home
And what seemed to be an instant...
In the twinkling of a night
An angel gently took my hand
And let me tour the sky

As I ascended into heaven
Beyond the pearly gates
The angels were rejoicing
Then I saw His radiant face
God's eyes shone down upon me
From the glory of His throne
He said " Enter into paradise coz heaven's now your home"

I fought the fight I finished the race
Throughout the trial
I kept my faith no longer do I suffer
My body's been made whole
I am flying with the angels
And heaven's now my home
God told me not to worry
He said you'd be okay
Because eternity is forever
And we'll meet again someday

I fought the fight I finished the race
Throughout the trial kept my faith
No longer do I suffer my body's

Been made whole
I am flying with the angels
And heaven's now my home

I am flying with the angels
And my heaven's now my home.

[Libby Allen]

SONG: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdUY_iVmhVI

“One Day (When We All Get To Heaven)”

One day You'll make everything new, Jesus
One day You will bind every wound
The former things shall all pass away
No more tears

One day You'll make sense of it all, Jesus
One day every question resolved
Every anxious thought left behind
No more fear

When we all get to heaven
What a day of rejoicing that will be
When we all see Jesus
We'll sing and shout the victory

One day we will see face to face, Jesus
Is there a greater vision of grace
And in a moment, we shall be changed
On that day

And one day we'll be free, free indeed, Jesus
One day all this struggle will cease
And we will see Your glory revealed
On that day

[Matt Redman - "One Day (When We All Get To Heaven)"]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGAdaGbmFfs>

“Hymn Of Heaven”

How I long to breathe the air of Heaven
Where pain is gone and mercy fills the streets
To look upon the one who bled to save me
And walk with Him for all eternity

There will be a day
When all will bow before Him
There will be a day
When death will be no more
Standing face to face
With He who died and rose again
Holy holy is the Lord

Every prayer we prayed in desperation
The songs of faith
We sang through doubt and fear
In the end we'll see that it was worth it
When He returns to wipe away our tears

There will be a day
When all will bow before Him
There will be a day
When death will be no more
Standing face to face
With He who died and rose again
Holy holy is the Lord

On that day we join the resurrection
And stand beside the heroes of the faith
With one voice a thousand generations
Sing worthy is the Lamb who was slain

On that day we join the resurrection
And stand beside the heroes of the faith
With one voice a thousand generations
Sing worthy is the Lamb who was slain
Forever He shall reign

So let it be today
We shout the hymn of Heaven
With angels and the Saints
We raise a mighty roar
Glory to our God
Who gave us life beyond the grave
Holy holy is the Lord
Holy holy is the Lord
Holy holy is the Lord

So let it be today
We shout the hymn of Heaven
With angels and the Saints
We raise a mighty roar
Glory to our God
Who gave us life beyond the grave
Holy holy is the Lord
Holy holy is the Lord
Holy holy is the Lord

[Phil Wickham - "Hymn of Heaven"]

SONG: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_baJyIQp_w

"Home, Sweet Home"

"Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home;
A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, has ne'er met me elsewhere.

Home! Home! Sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home!
There's no place like home!

An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain,
Oh! give me my lowly thatched cottage again;
The birds singing gaily, that came at my call;
Give me them, with that peace of mind, dearer than all.

Home! Home! Sweet, sweet home!

There's no place like home!
There's no place like home!"

[Words by John Payne and music by Sir Henry Bishop]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIPIW7q1Mwl>

"O Paradise!"

O paradise! O paradise!
Who doth not crave for rest?
Who would not seek the happy land
Where they that loved are blest.

Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light.
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight?

O paradise! O paradise!
The world is growing old;
Who would not be at rest and free
Where love is never cold.

Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light.
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight?

O paradise! O paradise!
'Tis weary waiting here;
I long to be where Jesus is,
To feel, to see Him near.

Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light.
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight?

O paradise! O paradise!
I want to sin no more,

I want to be as pure on earth
As on thy spotless shore.

Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light.
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight?

O paradise! O paradise!
I greatly long to see
The special place my dearest Lord
In love prepares for me.

Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light.
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight?

O paradise! O paradise!
I shall not wait for long;
e'en now the loving ear may catch
faint fragments of thy song.

Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light.
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight?

Lord Jesu, King of paradise,
O keep me in Thy love,
And guide me to that happy land
Of perfect rest above.

Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light.
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight?"

[Trinity Male Choir - Author: Frederick William Faber]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKQnOgK8Cmk>

“I’m Going Home”

My heavenly home is bright and fair,
Nor pain nor death can enter there;
Its glittering towers the sun outshine,
That heavenly mansion shall be mine.

I’m going home, I’m going home,
I’m going home to die no more,
To die no more, to die no more,
I’m going home to die no more.

My Father’s home is built on high,
Far, far above the starry sky;
When from this earthly prison free,
That heavenly mansion mine shall be.

I’m going home, I’m going home,
I’m going home to die no more,
To die no more, to die no more,
I’m going home to die no more.

Let others seek a home below,
Which flames devour, or waves o’erflow;
Be mine a happier lot to own
A heavenly mansion near the throne.

I’m going home, I’m going home,
I’m going home to die no more,
To die no more, to die no more,
I’m going home to die no more.

Then fail this earth, let stars decline.
And sun and moon refuse to shine,
All nature sink and cease to be,
That heavenly mansion stands for me.

I’m going home, I’m going home,
I’m going home to die no more,
To die no more, to die no more,
I’m going home to die no more.

---Alternative verses---

My Father's house is built on high,
Far, far above the starry sky;
When from this earthly prison free,
That heavenly mansion mine shall be.

I'm going home, I'm going home,
I'm going home to die no more,
To die no more, to die no more,
I'm going home to die no more.

[Gary McLarty - Author: William Hunter]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-sISnnuBjk>

"This World Is Not My Home"

This world is not my home
I'm just a-passing through
My treasures are laid up
Somewhere beyond the blue.

The angels beckon me
From heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore.

Oh Lord, you know
I have no friend like you
If heaven's not my home
Then Lord, what will I do?

The angels beckon me
From heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore.

I have a loving mother
Just up in Gloryland
And I don't expect to stop
Until I shake her hand.

She's waiting now for me
In heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore.

Oh Lord, you know
I have no friend like you
If heaven's not my home
Then Lord, what will I do?

The angels beckon me
From heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore.

Just over in Gloryland
We'll live eternally
The saints on every hand
Are shouting victory.

Their songs of sweetest praise
Drift back from heaven's shore
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore.

Oh Lord, you know
I have no friend like you
If heaven's not my home
Then Lord, what will I do?

The angels beckon me
From heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore.

[Jim Reeves (Written by Albert E. Brumley)]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3eX9prTb7Y>

“In the Sweet By and By”

There's a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar,
For the Father waits over the way
To prepare us a dwelling place there.

Refrain:

In the sweet by and by,
We shall meet on that beautiful shore;
In the sweet by and by,
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

We shall sing on that beautiful shore
The melodious songs of the blest;
And our spirits shall sorrow no more-
Not a sigh for the blessing of rest.

[Refrain]

To our bountiful Father above
We will offer our tribute of praise
For the glorious gift of His love
And the blessings that hallow our days.

[Refrain]

[Author: Sanford Fillmore Bennett; Performed by Gaither Music]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4g4ggVJeO9E>

“What a Day That Will Be”

There is coming a day
When no heartaches shall come
No more clouds in the sky
No more tears to dim the eye
All is peace forever more

On that happy golden shore
What a day, glorious day that will be

What a day that will be
When my Jesus I shall see
When I look upon His face
The One who saved me by His grace
When He takes me by the hand
And leads me to the Promised Land
What a day, glorious day that will be

There'll be no sorrow there
No more burdens to bear
No more sickness no more pain
No more parting over there
And forever I will be
With the One who died for me
What a day, glorious day that will be

What a day that will be
When my Jesus I shall see
When I look upon His face
The One who saved me by His grace
When He takes me by the hand
And leads me through the Promised Land
What a day, glorious day that will be
What a day, glorious day that will be

[Rosemary Siemens]

SONG: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uu4_Xu6amJ0

“There Is a Land of Pure Delight”

There is a land of pure delight,
where saints immortal reign;
infinite day excludes the night,
and pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,
and never-withering flowers;

death, like a narrow sea, divides
that heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
stand dressed in living green;
so to the Jews old Canaan stood,
while Jordan rolled between.

But timorous mortals start and shrink
to cross the narrow sea,
and linger shivering on the brink,
and fear to launch away.

O could we make our doubts remove,
those gloomy doubts that rise,
and see the Canaan that we love
with unclouded eyes;

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
and view the landscape o'er,
not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
should fright us from the shore!

[Red Mountain Music (Author: Issac Watts)]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7FVhG7JocQ>

"The Crowning Day"

Our Lord is now rejected,
And by the world disowned,
By the many still neglected,
And by the few enthroned,
But soon He'll come in glory,
The hour is drawing nigh,
For the crowning day is coming by and by.
Oh, the crowning day is coming,
Is coming by and by,
When our Lord shall come in "power,"
And "glory" from on high,
Oh, the glorious night will gladden,

Each waiting watchful eye,
In the crowning day that's coming by and by.

The heav'ns shall glow with splendor,
But brighter far than they
The saints shall shine in glory,
As Christ shall them array,
The beauty of the Saviour,
Shall dazzle ev'ry eye,
In the crowning day that's coming by and by.
Oh, the crowning day is coming,
Is coming by and by,
When our Lord shall come in "power,"
And "glory" from on high,
Oh, the glorious night will gladden,
Each waiting watchful eye,
In the crowning day that's coming by and by.

Our pain shall then be over,
We'll sin and sigh no more,
Behind us all of sorrow,
And naught but joy before,
A joy in our Redeemer,
As we to Him are nigh,
In the crowning day that's coming by and by.
Oh, the crowning day is coming,
Is coming by and by,
When our Lord shall come in "power,"
And "glory" from on high,
Oh, the glorious night will gladden,
Each waiting watchful eye,
In the crowning day that's coming by and by.

Let all that look for, hasten
The coming joyful day,
By earnest consecration,
To walk the narrow way,
By gath'ring in the lost ones,
For whom our Lord did die,
For the crowning day that's coming by and by.
Oh, the crowning day is coming,
Is coming by and by,

When our Lord shall come in "power,"
And "glory" from on high,
Oh, the glorious night will gladden,
Each waiting watchful eye,
In the crowning day that's coming by and by.

[NYCYPCD - Author: D.W. Whittle]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yvfJ4NTuqQ>

"Homeward Bound"

Out on an ocean all boundless we ride,
We're homeward bound, homeward bound;
Tossed on the waves of a rough, restless tide,
We're homeward bound, etc.
Far from the safe, quiet harbor we've rode,
Seeking our Father's celestial abode,
Promise of which on us each is bestowed,
We're homeward bound, homeward etc.

Wildly the storm sweeps us on as it roars,
We're homeward bound, etc.
Look! yonder lie the bright heavenly shores,
We're homeward bound, etc.
Steady, O pilot! stand firm at the wheel;
Steady, we soon shall outweather the gale;
O, how we fly 'neath the loud-creaking sail!
We're homeward bound, etc.

Into the harbor of heaven now we glide,
We're home at last, home at last;
Softly we drift on its bright silver tide,
We're home at last, home at last.
Glory to God! all our dangers are o'er,
We stand secure on the glorified shore;
Glory to God! we shall shout ever more;
We're home at last, home at last.

[William Fairfield Warren]

“Eternity! Eternity!”

Eternity! Eternity!
How long art thou, Eternity!
And yet to thee Time hastes away,
Like as the warhorse to the fray,
Or swift as couriers homeward go,
Or ship to port, or shaft from bow.
Ponder, O Man, Eternity!

Eternity! Eternity!
How long art thou, Eternity!
For ever as on a perfect sphere
End nor beginning can appear,
Even so, Eternity, in thee
Entrance nor exit can there be.
Ponder, O Man, Eternity!

Eternity! Eternity!
How long art thou, Eternity!
A circle infinite art thou,
Thy centre an Eternal Now,
Never, we name thy outer bound,
For never end therein is found.
Ponder, O Man, Eternity!

Eternity! Eternity!
How long art thou, Eternity!
A little bird with fretting beak
Might wear to nought the loftiest peak,
Though but each thousand years it came,
Yet thou wert then, as now, the same.
Ponder, O Man, Eternity!

Eternity! Eternity!
How long art thou, Eternity!
As long as God is God, so long
Endure the pains of sin and wrong,
So long the joys of heaven remain;
Oh lasting joy, Oh lasting pain!
Ponder, O Man, Eternity!

Eternity! Eternity!
How long art thou, Eternity!
O man, full oft thy thoughts should dwell
Upon the pains of sin and hell,
And on the glories of the pure,
That both beyond all time endure.
Ponder, O Man, Eternity!

Eternity! Eternity!
How long art thou, Eternity!
How terrible art thou in woe,
How fair where joys for ever glow!
God's goodness sheddeth gladness here,
His justice there wakes bitter fear.
Ponder, O Man, Eternity!

Eternity! Eternity!
How long art thou, Eternity!
They who lived poor and naked rest
With God, for ever rich and blest,
And love and praise the Highest Good,
In perfect bliss and gladsome mood.
Ponder, O Man, Eternity!

Eternity! Eternity!
How long art thou, Eternity!
A moment lasts all joy below,
Whereby man sinks to endless woe,
A moment lasts all earthly pain,
Whereby an endless joy we gain.
Ponder, O Man, Eternity!

Eternity! Eternity!
How long art thou, Eternity!
Who ponders oft on thee, is wise,
All fleshly lusts will he despise,
The world finds place with him no more;
The love of vain delights is o'er.
Ponder, O Man, Eternity!

Eternity! Eternity!

How long art thou, Eternity!
Who marks thee well would say to God,
Here judge, burn, smite me with Thy rod,
Here let me all Thy justice bear,
When time of grace is past, then spare!
Ponder, O Man, Eternity!

Eternity! Eternity!
How long art thou, Eternity!
Lo, I, Eternity, warn thee,
O Man, that oft thou think on me,
The sinner's punishment and pain,
To them who love their God, rich gain!
Ponder, O Man, Eternity!

[Daniel Wülfer]

APOLOGETIX SONGS

“Heaven Isn’t Like That”
(Parody of “Shine” by Collective Soul)

Do your good works
And lead a good life
Always go to church
And try to be really nice —really nice
Say a couple prayers
And finally when you die
Go to Saint Peter
Tell him, “Let me come inside — I really tried”

Yeah? Yeah? Yeah?
No! Heaven isn’t like that, child!

No! Heaven isn't like that, pal!
No! Heaven isn't like that, now!
No! Heaven isn't like that, child!

Learn to play the harp
You'll need it while you're there
Get yourself some wings
I'm sure you'll get a lovely pair — a fluffy pair
Reach for a halo
Keep it in your hair
Lead a fairy tale
Eternally with nothing there — but puffy air

Yeah? Yeah? Yeah?

CHORUS

Rock and roll!
Get in God's word
See what you find
Only place to look
To tell you how to get inside — to get inside
Let me tell you now:
You gotta go through Christ
Open up your heart
And tell Him He can dwell inside —dwell insi-i-i-i-i-i-i-ide now

Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!
Yo! Let Him in your life right now! (4X)

You know what Heaven's like?
It hasn't entered your mind
Heaven is the best place that's ever been
You wanna get in? Let Him
Let Him in your life; that's the only way
C'mon insiiiiide — come on i-i-in, i-i-in
C'mon insiiiiide! C'mon inside!

[ApologetiX - "Ticked" album]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udQjLApnlJw>

"Narrow Way To Heaven"

(Parody of "Stairway to Heaven" by Led Zeppelin)

There's a way Jesus showed all us sinners must go
And He called it the narrow way to Heaven
If to get there's your goal -- with a pure heart and soul
In His Word you can get what you came for
Ooooooh and he described it right there in Matthew 7
There've been signs all along but you want to be sure
Cause the road sometimes swerves as you're reading
In the free Bible book, there in John 3:16, come find how all our faults are forgiven
Two ways to ponder -- two ways to ponder
There's a freeway of death and it hooks to the left
And the steering and driving is easy
It is not quite as seems -- see that smoke, feel the heat
Hear the voice of the Lord who stands knockin'
Ooooooh ... it takes you under. Ooooooh ... it really takes you under
And it's His Word that's true -- if we all follow through
Then the Bible will lead us to Jesus
And the true way will dawn -- on those who've read John
Chapter 14 verse 6 and thereafter Ooooooh ...
If there's a possible dead end road -- don't be a lost man
It's best to think before you take it
Yes, there are two paths you can go by -- but there's a wrong one
But there's still time to change the road you're on
Ooooooh ... can it take you up there?
You're headed somewhere but it won't go the place you wanna go
If Christ has called and you avoid Him
The way to Heaven's very narrow, and did you know
It's very wide on the way to Hell? LEAD
Where will you wind up down the road -- a shadow land or street of gold?
There is a Way that we all know -- He shines bright light on words that show
How every man will turn to dust -- but if you let Him in your heart
The Truth will come to you at last -- and our Lord warned us where to go
And He was God -- He ought to know
And He called it the narrow way to Heaven

[ApologetiX - "Jesus Christ Morningstar" album]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jm9PAIYF7Ag>

“Heaven's Gonna Lift You Up”

(Parody of “Never Gonna Give You Up” by Rick Astley)

Ooooooh ooh-ooh oooooh

The world's dangerous to love
You know who rules -- and so do I
I broke Commandments, but I'm -- big enough
To go admit this, though many others lie
I'm just one who fell, but now I'm kneeling
Gonna praise You, Son of Man

Heaven's gonna lift You up (Ooooooh ooh-ooh oooooh)
Heaven's gonna set You down
Heaven's gonna shun their crowns and -- just serve You
Heaven's gonna praise You, Christ (Ooooooh ooh-ooh oooooh)
Heaven's gonna say You're right
Heaven's gonna quell the lies -- that blurred truth (Ooh)

We know the Father -- told the Son
This world needs saving but -- You could die to save it
And Psalm 110 shows what's been goin' on
In Revelation here, 5 explains it
And if they ask me why I'm kneeling
I'll tell them I'm just practicing

Heaven's gonna lift You up (Ooooooh ooh-ooh oooooh)
Heaven's gonna set You down
Heaven's gonna shun their crowns and -- just serve You
Heaven's gonna praise You, Christ (Ooooooh ooh-ooh oooooh)
Heaven's gonna say You're right
Heaven's gonna quell the lies -- that blurred truth (Ooh)

Heaven's gonna lift You up (Ooooooh ooh-ooh oooooh)
Heaven's gonna set You down
Heaven's gonna shun their crowns and -- just serve You
Heaven's gonna praise You, Christ (Ooooooh ooh-ooh oooooh)
Heaven's gonna say You're right
Heaven's gonna quell the lies -- that blurred truth (Ooh)

(Oo-oooooh-ooh-ooh-ooh) (Lift you up)

(Oo-oooooh-oo-oo-oo) (Lift you up)
(Oo-oooooh-oo-oo-oo) Heaven's gonna lift, Heaven's gonna lift (Lift you up)
(Oo-oooooh-oo-oo-oo) Heaven's gonna lift, Heaven's gonna lift (Lift you up)
We know You suffered for so long
Your heart was breaking but -- You still died to save us
And Psalm 2 shows us You're still goin' strong
We know You came and You're -- Son of David
Like 2:10 Philippians now I'm kneeling
Gonna praise You, Son of Man

Heaven's gonna lift You up
Heaven's gonna set You down
Heaven's gonna shun their crowns and -- just serve You
Heaven's gonna praise You, Christ
Heaven's gonna say You're right
Heaven's gonna quell the lies -- that blurred truth (Ooh)

Heaven's gonna lift You up (Ooooooh ooh-oo oooooh)
Heaven's gonna set You down
Heaven's gonna shun their crowns and -- just serve You
Heaven's gonna praise You, Christ (Ooooooh ooh-oo oooooh)
Heaven's gonna say You're right
Heaven's gonna quell the lies -- that blurred truth (Ooh)

Heaven's gonna lift You up (Ooooooh ooh-oo oooooh)
Heaven's gonna set You down
Heaven's gonna shun their crowns and -- just serve You
Heaven's gonna praise You, Christ (Ooooooh ooh-oo oooooh)
Heaven's gonna say You're right
Heaven's gonna quell the lies -- that blurred truth

[ApologetiX – “Kinda Stuffy” album]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5RvCtI0ehY>

“If You Really Wanna Get to Heaven”

(Parody of “If You Wanna Get to Heaven” by The Ozark Mountain Daredevils)

I never read it in a book
I never thought it on my own
But I heard a man from Galilee

Loud and clear make it known

If you wanna please the Father
You've got to let His Son indwell
If you wanna get to Heaven
You've got to save yourself from Hell

I knew that fella's name was Pete
I never dreamt he'd be so bold
But I heard him at the rally
Tryin' to cleanse my rotten soul

If you wanna know a secret
He got me traumatized as well
If you wanna get to Heaven
You've got to save yourself from Hell

I never thought I'd preach 'bout Jesus
I never thought I'd be so blunt
But I turned to Him and now I know
He's God's begotten Son

If you wanna speak to strangers
You've got to find a tale to tell
If you wanna get to Heaven
You've got to save yourself from Hell

Do you wanna get to Heaven?
Do you wanna get to Heaven?
Do you wanna get to Heaven?
Do you wanna get to Heaven?

[ApologetiX - "Come See, Come Saw" album]

SONG: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__d7TE7A6v0

"I Want in That Place"

(Parody of "I Want it That Way" by The Backstreet Boys)

You are much higher – I want inside there
Beneath heav'n I pray – I want in that place

But we are two worlds apart – You speak to my heart
Then You say, “I want in that place”
Tell me why – (You) came knockin’ on my heart today
Tell me why – I’m nothin’ but a disgrace
Tell me why – Why You’d ever come to me and say
I want in that place
Can I soar higher? I want inside there
Yes I know – it’s two-way
But I want in that place
Help me Christ – I’m nothin’ but I’m sorry
Help me Christ – I’m knockin’ but I need grace
Help me Christ – I’m never gonna get it straight
But I want in that place
Now I can see that we’ve fallen so short
From the way we’re supposed to be (Yeah)
No man in existence is righteous enough
I need You inside of me
You are Messiah – You want inside of
My heart – C’mon, c’mon, c’mon!
(C’mon I need you)
(You) came knockin’ on my heart today
Tell me why – I’m nothin’ but a disgrace
Tell me why – in Revelation 3 You say
I want in that place
Help me Christ – I’m nothin’ but I’m sorry
Help me Christ – I’m knockin’ but I need grace
Help me Christ – I hear Heaven’s gonna be great
I want in that place
REPEAT LAST CHORUS
And I want in that place

[ApologetiX – “Spoonfernatural” album]

SONG: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mh_4oaDezM

“I’ll Prepare For You”

(Parody of "I'll Be There for You" by The Rembrandts)

So Jesus told His disciples, I'm gonna go away
But where I go you know. They all cried, Please explain.
He said, You've all been stuck in second grade

If you haven't seen the Way, the Truth, the Life is here in your face ... but
I'll prepare for you ... prepare a place up above
I'll prepare for you ... 'cause I've been there before
I'll prepare for you ... and you prepare for me, too.
I'll send another friend to help you on your way
You'll learn from Him, you'll go far. Please don't be afraid
The Father helped me do the things I did
But you even will do greater works than that if you believe -- that

CHORUS

The world could never know Him -- The world could not receive Him
So you're the only ones who know what it's like to know Him
There'll come a place and day when He'll come to live inside you
Soon when all of this happens you will know the words I said were true.

LEAD

Seems like you've all been stuck in second grade
If you haven't seen the Way, the Truth, the Life is here in your face, but

CHORUS

[ApologetiX - "Jesus Christ Morningstar" album]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pa-TworQD4>

"Heavenly Hill"

(Parody of "Beverly Hills" by Weezer)

Where I come from there's a tall flat place
It's out on a hill where a ski slope's at
My master went for a little walk
With His friends there just to do a retreat
He didn't go with some big group
Just three guys, James and John and me
While we prayed I saw the Son of God talking with the prophets

Heavenly hill — that's where I want to be (John and Jimmy, John and Jimmy)
Living on heavenly hill
Heavenly hill — Moses, Elijah, Jesus, and me (John and Jimmy, John and Jimmy)
Living on heavenly hill

Looking brighter than a star, His clothes so beautiful they gleamed
Don't know how they scrubbed His wardrobe but His face it seemed to beam
I wonder if He'll look like that whenever Jesus Christ is king
Maybe this ain't quite as cool but it's the next best thing

Heavenly hill — that's where I want to be (John and Jimmy, John and Jimmy)
Living on heavenly hill
Heavenly hill — Mark n' Luke 9, Matthew 17 (John and Jimmy, John and Jimmy)
Living on heavenly hill

The truth is ... I can't stand the suspense
There's someplace that I'm more into
And I guess it won't be long
No, it won't, I guess you know that deep down too
And I will always dream of that day
When I will dwell in Paradise, but till that starts, hey

Heavenly hill — that's where I want to be (John and Jimmy, John and Jimmy)
Living on heavenly hill
Heavenly hill — Second Peter verse 1:18 (John and Jimmy, John and Jimmy)
Living on heavenly hill

[ApologetiX – “Wordplay” album]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5DRQkKzIjs>

“Shepherd’s Paradise”
(Parody of “Gangsta’s Paradise” by Coolio)

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
I will not fear for my life — I realize that God's with me
His rod and staff have been with me so long
He's been keepin' me from all the places that I might go wrong
But He's the shepherd, I'm the lamb and dinner He serves me
Lets me eat it right in front of foes who would hurt me
They better not touch, they watch me, but they can't touch me
They do and they know that they'll be fighting with God
He filleth up my cup and it overflows
It's no joke, come see yourself, see my cup is so full
I'm the kind of sheep that's where the grass is always green
Still waters He leads me beside, stayin' there is a sweet life

The Good Shepherd rules my life

I'm givin' Him the thanks for Paradise
You can spend eternal life
Livin' in the Shepherd's Paradise

Look at the declaration that God is makin':
"I will give my own life in exchange for the sheep."
And he's got it written down in the Good Book
Turn the television off a while and take a look
He's a shepherd who is good to everybody in His flock
Chapter 10, verse 11 in the Gospel of John
Yes, the Lord's my shepherd — what could be better?
And my home is a mansion in His house forever (Cool!)
Death ain't nothin', so I'll not be afraid
His lovingkindness will follow us all the way
Psalm 23 tells you all of this but there's plenty more
You may even know it — I don't know

Tell me why is He so kind to His sheep
When we wander away so easily?

An hour is a-coming — coming in a while where
He will make divisions — by His mighty power
Shepherd's gonna come and decide between the sheep and the goats
And we're all gonna listen as final words are spoken
He'll say you goats deserted me when I was poor and needy
A naked, hungry, stranger — how did you treat me?
I guess they failed, I guess they're goats,
I guess they flunked, that's why I know I like it in the sheepfold

The Good Shepherd rules my life
I'm givin' Him the thanks for Paradise You can spend eternal life
Livin' in the Shepherd's Paradise
The Good Shepherd rules my life
I'm givin' Him the thanks for Paradise
You can spend eternal life
Livin' in the Shepherd's Para(dise)
Tell me why is He so kind to
His sheep When we wander away so easily?

Tell me why is He so kind to His sheep

When we wander away so easily?
The Good Shepherd rules my life
I'm givin' Him the thanks for Paradise
You can spend eternal life
Livin' in the Shepherd's Paradise
The Good Shepherd rules my life
I'm givin' Him the thanks for Paradise
You can spend eternal life
Livin' in the Shepherd's Para(dise)
Tell me why is He so kind to
His sheep When we wander away so easily?
Tell me why is He so kind to His sheep

[ApologetiX - "Ticked" album]

SONG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lo1Tc42c45U>

"Good News/Bad News"

This is a Gospel presentation and personal testimony of J. Jackson, lead vocalist of ApologetiX from their 20th-anniversary concert. This is available on the "20:20 Vision" DVD.

VIDEO (audio only): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q21Jnaq-EL8>

DEEP THOUGHTS

*"It's great to be back
after many places we did roam.
no greater truth has been said,
than..theres no place like home.*

*Sacred sanctuary and my familiar bed,
soft blankets and comfy pillows that*

*that mould so knowingly,
to the shape of your head.*

*Food cooked just like I want
rooms set up to my taste,
cupboards for me to rummage in
and stack up neatly, what I purchased.*

*Plants to say hello, too,
flowers to greet me smilingly,
not to forget my darling doggy
who licks me welcomes me so beguilingly.*

*Ah the pleasure and comfort of my home
can not be compared to any other,
the feeling when you enter your home
is like a child being embraced by its mother.*

*Holidays are fun and are required
they serve to remind you well,
after you have had fun and travelled,
its great to be back where you dwell.*

*Though it takes a lot of love and labour
to make a home that that you can be proud
there's no place like home.
I will say it again
I will say it heartfelt and loud."
[Arti Chopra]*

*"May your walls know Joy,
May each room hold laughter,
And may every window
Open to great possibility."
[Mary Ann Radmacher-Hershey]*

*"The comfort of home becomes like a person you've lost and miss."
[Joshua Klapow]*

*"It's the best of all of the lands. It's "lofty" which means high above in elevation
and rank/dignity. He also says it's a good place to raise a family."
[Odysseus]*

"I don't believe in an afterlife, so I don't have to spend my whole life fearing hell, or fearing heaven even more. For whatever the tortures of hell, I think the boredom of heaven would be even worse."

[Isaac Asimov]

"I would love to believe that when I die I will live again, that some thinking, feeling, remembering part of me will continue. But as much as I want to believe that, and despite the ancient and worldwide cultural traditions that assert an afterlife, I know of nothing to suggest that it is more than wishful thinking."

[Carl Sagan]

"There is no heaven or afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark."

[Stephen Hawking]

"Life is eternal; and love is immortal; and death is only a horizon; and a horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight."

[Rossiter W. Raymond]

"Entrance into heaven is not at the hour of death, but at the moment of conversion."

[Benjamin Whichcote]

"There is a great deal of difference between the desires of heaven in a sanctified man and in on sanctified. The believer prizeth it above earth, and have rather be with God then here. But to the ungodly, there is nothing seem more desirable than this world; and therefore he only chooseth heaven before hell, but not before earth; and therefore shall not have it upon such a choice."

[Richard Baxter]

"Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people."

[Lewis Sperry Chaffer]

*"When I shall reach the more excellent glory,
And all my trials are passed,
I shall be like him, oh wonderful story!
I shall be like him and laugh."*

[W. A. Spencer]

"When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me'."

[Erma Bombeck]

“It becomes us to spend this life only as a journey toward heaven... to which we should subordinate all other concerns of life. Why should we labor for or set our hearts on anything else, but that which is our proper end and true happiness?”

[Jonathan Edwards]

“When the followers of Jesus Christ lose their interest in heaven they will no longer be happy Christians, and when they are no longer happy Christians they cannot be a powerful force in a sad and sinful world. It may be said with certainty that Christians who have lost their enthusiasm about the Savior’s promises of heaven-to-come have also stopped being effective in Christian life and witness in this world”

[A. W. Tozer]

“For three things I thank God every day of my life: thanks that he has vouchsafed me knowledge of his works; deep thanks that he has set in my darkness the lamp of faith; deep, deepest thanks that I have another life to look forward to—a life joyous with light and flowers and heavenly song”

[Helen Keller]

“Cultivate, then, your hope, dearly beloved. Make it to shine so plainly in you that your minister may hear of your hopefulness and joy, cause observers to take note of it because you speak of heaven and act as though you really expected to go there. Make the world know that you have a hope of heaven...that you are a believer in eternal glory and that you hope to be where Jesus is.”

[Charles Spurgeon]

“Hope is one of the Theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth ‘thrown in’: aim at earth and you will get neither.”

[C.S. Lewis]

"Oh, to think of heaven, without Christ!... It is a day without the sun, existing without life, feasting without food, seeing without light... It is the sea without water, the Earth, without its fields, the heavens, without their stars. There cannot be a heaven without Christ. He is the sum total of bliss, the fountain from which heaven flows."

[Charles Spurgeon]

"There are two kinds of beauty; there is a beauty which God gives at birth, and which withers as a flower. And there is a beauty which God grants when by His grace men are born again. That kind of beauty never vanishes but blooms eternally"

[Abraham Kuyper]

"Love is perhaps the only glimpse we are permitted of eternity."

[Helen Hayes]

"What we do in life ripples in eternity."

[Marcus Aurelius]

"It gives me a deep comforting sense that Things seen are temporal and things unseen are eternal."

[Helen Keller]

"Death is nothing else but going home to God, the bond of love will be unbroken for all eternity."

[Mother Teresa]

"The thought of Heaven has cheered the soul of many believers. Some say that we are fools to believe in Heaven. But, to deny Heaven is to deny Jesus, for He came from Heaven, it is to place our departed loved ones in the cold dark grave, it is to deprive millions of Christians of the greatest hope they have. To deny Heaven is equal to murder for it kills hope, to thievery for it robs joy, to slander because it calls God a liar."

[D.L. Moody]

"I trust Jesus with all my tomorrows, knowing that He will solve the mystery of life beyond the grave."

[Billy Graham]

"Whatever pleasures we have known here on earth while living under the curse of sin are trivial, paltry diversions compared to the pure delights of heaven."

[John MacArthur]

“The king of terrors, the last enemy, will never be able to breach the pearly gates and disturb the bliss of heaven! No more deathbed vigils or funerals. The hearse will have made its last journey.”

[J. Oswald Sanders]

“The Christians who did the most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next.”

[C. S. Lewis]

“For Christians, death on its earthward side is simply that the tired mortal body falls temporarily to sleep, while on the heavenward side we suddenly find ourselves with our dear Savior-King and with other Christian loved ones in the heavenly home. Why fear that?”

[J. Sidlow Baxter]

“When we get to Heaven, the joy of seeing our loved ones once again is immeasurably increased when we realize that all of us will indeed be perfect! There will be no more disagreements or cross words, hurt feelings or misunderstandings, neglect or busyness, interruptions or rivalry, jealousy or pride, selfishness or sin of any kind!”

[Anne Graham Lotz]

“Heavenly-mindedness is sanity. It is the best regimen for keeping our hearts whole, our minds clear... It allows us to endure life's agonies without despair.”

[Mark Buchanan]

“I want to know one thing: the way to heaven—how to land, safe on that happy, sure. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came from Heaven. He has written it down in a book. Oh, give me that book! At any price, give me that book! I have it—Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book. Here, then, I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone; only God is there. In his presence I open and read his book that I may find the way to heaven.”

[John Wesley]

“Socrates, being asked what countryman he was, answered, 'I am a citizen of the whole world.' But ask a Christian what countryman he is, and he will answer, 'I am a citizen of all Heaven'.”

[William Becker]

“If you should see an idol shut up in a closed room, idolizing a set of lamps

and rejoicing in their light, and you wished to make him truly happy, you will begin by blowing out all of his lamps; and then throw open the shutters to let in the light of Heaven.”

[Samuel Rutherford]

“I would not give one moment of Heaven for all the joy and riches of the world, even if it lasted for thousands and thousands of years.”

[Martin Luther]

“Not only have I read every word of this book—some of these words multiple times—but I felt my spirit lifted in my heart and encourage as I did. By the end, I could not wait to tell my wife and close friends about the partial message of this book. I hope you will do as I have done and read every word and then remind the people you know I love that ‘Heaven rules’.”

[David Jeremiah]

“Death for the Christian is the fall asleep in the arms of Jesus and waking up and finding out that you’re home.”

[Alistair Begg]

*“If God hath made this world so fair
Where sin and death abound,
How beautiful beyond compare
Will paradise be found.”*

[James Montgomery]

*“There is a Heaven, for sure, dad by day,
The upward longing of my soul doth tell me so.”*

[Paul Laurence Dunbar]

“Each day is a step we make towards eternity and we shall continue thus to step from day to day until we take the last step, which will bring us into the presence of God.”

[Catherine McAuley]

“For a person who is dying only eternity counts.”

[Friedrich Durrenmatt]

“Life is hardly more than a fraction of a second. Such a little time to prepare oneself for eternity!”

[Paul Gauguin]

“Resolved, to endeavor to my utmost to act as I can think I should do, if I had already seen the happiness of heaven.”
[Jonathan Edwards]

“Life is eternity’s sunrise.”
[Mark Besh]

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“A quick summary of the Christian “Gospel”:
JESUS’ PROPITIATION made our SINS FORGIVEN and IMPUTED
RIGHTEOUSNESS to us so that we have GOD’S ACCEPTANCE into His Heaven
and receive ETERNAL LIFE.”
[Mark Besh]

Hope you enjoyed some of these insights—share them with your friends and
colleagues—so we can have a larger ‘pool’ to receive from, and more to share
with! Also, remember to include your name as the “source,” if some of this wisdom
is of your doing. I would like to give credit where credit is due!

FOCUS VERSES

*“For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our
days on the earth are like a shadow”).
[1 Chronicles 29:15]*

*“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”
[Psalm 16:11]*

*“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,
for you are with me; your rod, and your staff, they comfort me.”*

[Psalm 23:4]

“Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”
[Psalm 37:4]

“For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory.”
[Psalm 149:4]

“Put eternity in the human heart.”
[Ecclesiastes 3:11]

“‘You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,’ declares the LORD , ‘and will bring you back from captivity’.”
[Jeremiah 29:13-14]

“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven.”
[Matthew 5:12a]

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
[Mathew 6:19-21]

“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”
[Matthew 7:13-14]

“The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things“ as unholy diversions that quote, enter in and show the word, and it proves unfruitful.”
[Mark 4:19]

“Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.”
[Luke 6:21]

“Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in Heaven.”
[Luke 10:20]

“Then the master said to servant, ‘go out into the highways and hedges, and

compel them to come in, that my house maybe filled'."
[Luke 14:23].

"So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom."
[Luke 16:22]

"Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
[Luke 18:18]

"How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God!"
[Luke 18:24]

"Seek and save the lost."
[Luke 19:10b]

"Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."
[Luke 23:43]

"When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."
[John 8:44]

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going."
[John 14:1-4].

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
[John 14:6]

"If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen Him."
[John 14:7]

"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."
[John 17:16]

"If we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God, and co-heirs with Jesus

[Romans 8:17a]

“If God is for us, who can be against us?”

[Romans 8:31]

“The hour has come for you to wake from sleep for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.”

[Romans 13:11-12]

“‘What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived’—the things God has prepared for those who love Him.”

[1 Corinthians 2:9]

“Each one’s work will become manifest, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.”

[1 Corinthians 3:13-14]

“Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

[1 Corinthians 13:12]

“Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.”

[1 Corinthians 15:51-52]

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

[1 Corinthians 15:53-57]

“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

[2 Corinthians 4:17-18]

“For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”

“Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.”

[2 Corinthians 5:1-9]

“Behold, now is the day of salvation.”

[2 Corinthians 6:2]

“I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those He called—His holy people who are His rich and glorious inheritance.”

[Ephesians 1:18]

“For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.”

[Philippians 1:23-24]

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

[Philippians 1:21]

“Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, [we] press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called [us] heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

[Philippians 3:13-14]

“Our citizenship is in Heaven, and from it, we await our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself.”

[Philippians 3:20-21]

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable.”
[*Philippians 4:8*]

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.”
[*Colossians 1:16*]

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”
[*Colossians 3:1*]

“Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things.”
[*Colossians 3:2*]

“For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.” [*1 Thessalonians 2:19-20*]

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.”
[*1 Thessalonians 4:13-17*]

“Desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.”
[*1 Timothy 2:4*]

“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.”
[*2 Timothy 2:7*]

“Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.”
[*2 Timothy 4:8*]

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good works.”

[Titus 2:11-14]

“Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.

[Hebrews 9:27]

*“People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one.”**[Hebrews 11:14-16]*

“The coming of the Lord is at hand.”

[James 5:8]

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

[2 Peter 3:9]

“All that is in the world—the desires of the flesh, and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the father, but is from the world.”

[1 John 2:16]

“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.”

[1 John 3:2]

“Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

[Revelation 3:5]

“At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were

twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder.”

[Revelation 4:2-5]

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

[Revelation 4:11]

“Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!’”

[Revelation 5:11-12]

“And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, ‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen’”

[Revelation 7:11-12]

“Never again, will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

[Revelation 7:16-17]

“All who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.”

[Revelation 13:8]

“‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord’... and ‘They rest from their labors, for their deeds will follow them.’”

[Revelation, 14:13]

“The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come.”

[Revelation 17:8]

“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were

opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.”
[Revelation 20:12]

“Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”
[Revelation 20:15]

“Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them, and be there God”
[Revelation 21:3]

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”
[Revelation 21:4]

“It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.”
[Revelation 21:11]

“The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.”
[Revelation 21:21]

“The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.”
[Revelation 21:23]

“Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”
[Revelation 21:27]

“No longer will there be any curse.”
[Revelation 22:3]

“There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light.”
[Revelation 22:5]

“And if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.”

[Revelation 22:19]

If you have a 'neat' story or some thoughts about an issue or current event that you would like me to try to respond to, I would be glad to give it a try...so, send them to me at: mbesh@comcast.net

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Mark

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