

# THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Session Ten

February 5, 2020

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## LET'S TALK ABOUT HEAVEN....

1. IS HEAVEN EVEN A REAL PLACE? OR JUST SOMETHING IN YOUR IMAGINATION?

John 14:2

*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare **a place for you.***

On the day before His crucifixion, Jesus told His followers that He was leaving to prepare **A PLACE** for them. Heaven is a very real place with very real people in it.

Heaven is the eternal abode of God, created by Him and for Him and His followers. So I am not terribly interested in the opinion of skeptics; what does HE say about the place?

Where is it? Satan knew because he had been there before being thrown out of it. He wanted God's position and said:

Isaiah 14:13

*For thou hast said in thine heart, I will **ascend** into heaven, I will exalt my throne **above** the stars of God: I will sit also **upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:***

So apparently Heaven is "up."

1 In my young days, church congregations used to sing a lot of songs  
2 about Heaven - and about going there. Very few talk about going there or  
3 how to get there. Do you remember some of these great old hymns?  
4

5 1. "He the pearly gates will open."

6 2. "I'll meet you in the morning..."

7 3. "Looking for a city."

8 4. "My Savior first of all"

9 5. "No tears in heaven"

10 6. "Oh, I want to see Him"

11 7. "We're marching to Zion"

12 8. "What a day that will be"

13 9. "Won't it be wonderful there?"  
14

15 With the omission of Heaven as a subject in pulpits and song books, no  
16 wonder people start to wonder if the place even exists.  
17

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20 2. WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO CLAIM THEY HAVE BEEN  
21 "CAUGHT UP" TO HEAVEN AND HAVE RETURNED TO  
22 TELL ABOUT IT?

23

24 We know of two Godly men who have been caught up to Heaven but  
25 only one returned to talk about it:  
26  
27  
28

1 2 Cor. 12:2-6

2 *I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the*  
3 *body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God*  
4 *knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. [3] And I knew*  
5 *such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God*  
6 *knoweth;) [4] How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard*  
7 *unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. [5] Of*  
8 *such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine*  
9 *infirmities. [6] For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool;*  
10 *for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of*  
11 *me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.*

12

13 It is my personal feeling that by the time Paul arrived in Corinth, Greece,  
14 he was a wounded warrior – beaten, rejected and pushed down. So God  
15 gave him the vision of Heaven – BUT NOT PERMISSION TO TALK  
16 ABOUT IT.

17

18 On the other hand, John the Apostle was ordered by God to make known  
19 his vision of eternity:

20

21 Rev. 1:9-11

22 *I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and*  
23 *in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is*  
24 *called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus*  
25 *Christ. [10] I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me*  
26 *a great voice, as of a trumpet, [11] Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the*  
27 *first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it*  
28 *unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto*  
29 *Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and*  
30 *unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.*

31

32 Our eternal guide is not some precocious kid with a boundless  
33 imagination whose parents have made a ton off their child's writings.  
34 Especially when those writings are opposed to the Bible.

1 Deut. 29:29

2 ***The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things***  
3 ***which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we***  
4 ***may do all the words of this law.***

5

6 Furthermore, Scripture calls us to study the inerrant Word of God, not  
7 the fantasies of some productive modern novelist.

8

9 Col. 3:2

10 ***Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.***

11

12 “But... but what if the writers of these books truly believe what they  
13 have written?”

14

15 John MacArthur warns:

16 *“Here we learn that the Apostle Paul who had been called to one of the*  
17 *most apostolic roles in the early church, regarded the details of what he*  
18 *saw and heard in his heavenly vision unlawful things to recount. How*  
19 *does that compare with people today who fill up books reporting what*  
20 *they supposedly saw and heard on their trips to heaven?”*

21 THE GLORY OF HEAVEN / MACARTHUR / PAGE 40 / CROSSWAY BOOKS

22

23 I have read some these fanciful books in which the authors have even  
24 attempted to describe Christ’s wardrobe in Heaven) which, it seems to  
25 this pastor, approaches perilously close to blasphemy.

26

27

28 3. DO CHRISTIANS IMMEDIATELY GO TO HEAVEN WHEN  
29 THEY DIE?

30

31 2 Cor. 5:6-8

32 ***Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at***  
33 ***home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: [7] (For we walk by***  
34 ***faith, not by sight:) [8] We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be***  
35 ***absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.***

1 Do you ever think about your demise? You should, because you get  
2 closer to it every single day! The famous actor Jack Nicholson said, "*I*  
3 *used to live so freely. The mantra for my generation was 'Be your own*  
4 *man!' I always said, 'Hey, you can have whatever rules you want – I'm*  
5 *going to have mine. I'll accept the guilt. I'll pay the check. I'll do the*  
6 *time.'* I chose my own way. That was my philosophical position well in to  
7 my 50's. As I've grown older, I've had to adjust.... We all want to go on  
8 forever, don't we? We fear the unknown. Everybody goes to the wall, yet  
9 nobody knows what's on the other side. That's why we fear death."

10  
11 Ah, but Jack... the Christian, the true follower of Jesus, does NOT fear  
12 death at all. Why? Because for that person death is not the terminus. It is  
13 rather THE TRANSITION. The fact of your death is not debatable. It's  
14 WHERE YOU ARE GOING when it happens that's the issue.

15  
16 The case of the dying crucified thief who was perishing near Jesus is a  
17 help to us. We believe that in those closing moments he reached for the  
18 Savior. And Jesus promised him:

19  
20 Luke 23:43  
21 ***And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be***  
22 ***with me in paradise.***

23  
24 What was Paul's faith?

25  
26 Philippians 1:23  
27 ***For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be***  
28 ***with Christ; which is far better:***

29  
30 Do these utterances sound like a place called "purgatory" to you?  
31 Certainly not! Purgatory is a theory championed by most Roman  
32 Catholics as it originated with their some of their early leaders, while  
33 most Protestants deny such a place as it cannot be found in the Word  
34 of God.

1 The first known martyr is a help to us. When stones were battering his  
2 earthly life away, he knew he was about to meet his Savior face to face.

3

4 Acts 7:59

5 *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus,*  
6 *receive my spirit.*

7

8 2 Cor. 5:6-8

9 *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at*  
10 *home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: [7] (For we walk by*  
11 *faith, not by sight:) [8] We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be*  
12 *absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*