

Now and Forever

Heaven, Part 2

Target: Lay up rewards in Heaven!

Key Verses

John 11:25–26a—Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. (26) And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.”

Matthew 6:20–21—Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (21) For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Suggested Bible Reading

- The beginning: Genesis 1–4
- Wonders of God’s creation: Psalm 8, 104, 148

Other Recommended Reading

- Heaven’s Secrets*

Prayer and Praise: “Thank You for Heaven!”

I thank You for revealing to me our ultimate destination, Your Heavenly Kingdom. Thank You for the Heavenly Kingdom that You have prepared for Your children, a place of such beauty and happiness! I lift my hands in adoration and thankfulness that my name is written in Your Book of Life, and that I’ll be with You for eternity. Thank You that all those who love You will never have to say “good-bye,” but only “until then!”

Lord, I know there are many people who don’t have such a bright future to look forward to. Instead of joyful anticipation of what waits beyond this life, they have fear. Please help me to do my part to bring those who do not yet know You closer to Heaven, by showing them the way (John 14:6). Help me to also do my part to bring Heaven closer to them by being a living sample of the love that You embodied. Amen.

Meditation: Onward and Upward

If you want to cross the river, you have to row. If you want to scale a mountain, you have to climb. If you want to explore the bottom of the ocean, you have to dive. If you want to sing, you have to practice. If you want to walk, you have to put one foot out in front of the other—again and again and again.

That’s what life is, a bunch of little steps, a bunch of little decisions to just keep walking, to keep putting the next foot forward. Sometimes it’s involuntary—you do it almost without even thinking about it. But other times you have to put forth extra effort and almost force yourself to keep moving, growing, progressing, and walking.

If you stop and just sit, you'll never get anywhere; you won't make any progress or move closer to the goals you're striving for. So it's important to keep moving and keep taking steps in the right direction, to keep sticking your foot out, even if you can't see the ground it's going to land on. Have no fear; it'll be there to hold you up. Keep going by faith, and the Lord will never let you fall.

Matthew 7:24–25—Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: (25) and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

John 13:17—If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

<To think about> *What is the Lord asking you to do in your life? What goals does He want you to strive for?*

Putting the Word Into Action: Learn About Heaven, Our Eternal Home

What will you be like in Heaven?

- The mystery of the resurrection: 1 Corinthians 15:35–38, 51–52.
- We will be like Jesus when He was resurrected: Philippians 3:20–21; 1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 6:14; Romans 6:4–5.

Some qualities of our new heavenly bodies

- A new body: Luke 24:36–40.
- Recognizable: 1 Corinthians 15:49.
- Powers of movement: John 20:19, 26; Isaiah 60:8.
- Able to eat when we desire: Luke 24:13–32, 42–43.

Our heavenly co-workers

- Heaven is a busy place: Job 1:6a; 2:1a; Hebrews 12:1.
- Heavenly communication: Isaiah 30:31; Zephaniah 3:9.

Getting ready for Heaven

- We don't have to fear death: 1 Corinthians 15:55–57; Romans 7:24–25a; John 11:11, 25; 8:51; Matthew 9:24; 16:28a; Psalm 23:4; Hebrews 2:14b–15.
- Our lives are in the Lord's hands. He'll bring us Home when it is time: Psalm 48:14.
- We can prepare for Heaven by pleasing the Lord: John 6:37b; Revelations 14:13; Matthew 16:27.
- Rewards in Heaven: Matthew 6:19–21; 25:31–40; Psalm 62:12; Jeremiah 17:10; Revelation 22:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Our Heavenly Co-Workers

To benefit the most from this article, look up the verses in your Bible!

From the Scriptures we can see that one of the activities of Heaven's inhabitants is helping those of us still alive here on Earth. Those in Heaven are not only observing our activities, but they are assigned by the Lord to actively assist and sometimes communicate with us on Earth.

Let's look at some of the Scriptures that explain this.

The cloud of witnesses—Hebrews 12:1

Chapter 11 of the New Testament book of Hebrews is an inspiring account of the faith and exploits of many of the most outstanding men and women of God who appear in the Old Testament. Immediately following this listing of heroes and heroines of faith, we are told in the first verse of the next chapter, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1).

Originally, the New Testament was not divided into chapters, so you've got to keep in mind that the preceding chapter (11) defines what "great cloud of witnesses" he's talking about: those who have already gone on to be with the Lord are watching us, praying for us, and trying to help us.

Delivering prophecies

Throughout the Bible, it shows that the Biblical prophets had some spiritual agent or angel or someone helping him. Time and again, when the prophets revealed something, they said the angel of the Lord or someone else was there showing them. So it must have been the angel who was communicating those visions, and the prophet was able to see what God was showing the angel to show to the prophet to pass on to the people. Some examples:

- ❑ Daniel's vision of heavenly helpers visiting him: Daniel 8:15; 8:13a; 9:21–23.
- ❑ Daniel sees and hears two heavenly visitors: Daniel 12:5–7.
- ❑ Ezekiel receives a vision: Ezekiel 40:1–4.
- ❑ Zechariah communicates with angels: Zechariah 1:9; 2:3.
- ❑ An angel speaks to Joseph: Matthew 1:20; 2:13.
- ❑ Zacharias sees an angel: Luke 1:11–13.
- ❑ John (author of Revelation) communicates with angels: Revelation 1:1.

The book of Revelation

In chapter 19 of the book of Revelation, written down by the Apostle John after receiving a glorious revelation of the future from a heavenly being, John writes of the "fellow servant" who visits him:

Revelation 19:9–10—Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

See chapter 22, verses 8–9 for a similar event.

The book of Revelation contains a number of other passages where John records messages he heard from departed saints (Revelation 6:9–11). It is interesting that in this passage John sees and hears the so-called "dead," and identifies these "souls" as "fellow servants" and "brethren"—the same terms applied to the messenger that he fell down to worship in the previously quoted text. It's also noteworthy that these spirits who had already left this life still expressed concern about "them that dwell on the earth."

In Revelation 7:9–14, John describes more astounding sights and sounds he partook of during a spiritual trip to Heaven. Here John beholds an innumerable multitude of people in Heaven, and he then carries on a two-way conversation with one of them, an “elder,” who clearly appears to be a departed believer. In chapter 5, verse 9, these same “elders” proclaim to Jesus, “You have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,” showing that indeed these elders are departed brethren.

Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration

Another outstanding appearance of two renowned departed saints is recounted in three of the four Gospels, in the description of Moses’ and Elijah’s meeting with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. These two prophets had left this life hundreds of years earlier, but held what was no doubt an important conference with the Lord shortly before His crucifixion (Luke 9:28–31).

Reflections: Some of Heaven’s Secrets!

Excerpts from the book Heaven’s Secrets by Peter King

Everyone has his own idea of what Heaven will be like. The Bible tells us that “Eye has not seen, nor has ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). So it seems we can’t really expect to fathom the entirety of the world beyond. Nevertheless, like appetizers before a feast or previews before watching a big screen movie, messages from people who have crossed over into that world, whether we believe them or not, give us a foretaste of possible things to come. They spark our imagination and lift it to heights we had not thought possible before.

Such love!

One of the beauties of Heaven—the power behind the scenes, the peace and aura which makes everything beautiful—is a power which we also have access to here on earth—love! Unfortunately, though, it seems that many of us don’t avail ourselves of this wonderful commodity nearly enough. But apparently the more we use it on earth, the more we prepare ourselves for Heaven, and the greater joy we will have upon our arrival there.



When I arrived here I realized that the air of Heaven is love. It’s everywhere, it’s in everything, it’s a part of all of the heavenly creations. You are loved and you give love throughout eternity. Love is present at all times; it’s not measured out according to your place or job or responsibility. It’s what makes Heaven tick! Love is the central and innermost ingredient of all things. It is the most priceless possession of every heavenly citizen, great or small.



Now that I’ve seen the great importance of love and how powerful it is, it’s helped me to change the ideas that I had about love. While I was there on earth it was very hard for me to think about the possibility of what you would do when I was gone—would you fall in love again, would you have other close friendships and relationships? Just the thought of it terrified me, as I was so afraid of losing you. But now that I am here, my feelings have completely changed, for I’ve seen that the special love we share is forever, and that in giving to others, love is only multiplied.

And so, my precious love, I’m very happy to see that you have fallen in love again. It doesn’t hurt me. Rather, I rejoice to see you so happy, and to see the dear one who is caring for you so tenderly. You may find that amazing, and looking back at how things used to be, I’m quite amazed myself. But I want to reassure you and comfort you that I’m happy for you. Your love for others hasn’t hurt me, rather I am very, very happy! I’m a part of your love and your heart always, and you’re a part of mine—forever! All the love that we share with others becomes a part of the wonderful love we share together.



(Jesus:) One of the great mysteries in Heaven is the mystery of My love. It is a love that is spiritual, but also touches the physical; it is a love that is pure, holy, and yet filled with passion and desire. My love is as the undying devotion of a father for his child, or the deep love of a husband for his wife, yet it is a love that goes beyond what the human mind can fathom, for it is not a human love. Human love is but a taste of My love.



If I were asked to describe Heaven in one short sentence, I would say that it's a place where everything is filled with God's love. Everything is based on love.



I love you, son. I'm very happy here. It's wonderful! There's no more pain or deep sorrow. This world is similar in many ways to earth, believe it or not. It's not so different that things are not recognizable. All the wonderful pleasures of earth exist here, yet it's all perfect, without the problems and complexities that people face on earth. Everything is so much more wonderful here, and you cannot really compare the two. One marvelous thing, however, is that everything here in Heaven is filled with love! There is true, pure, unadulterated, unconditional love for each and every person here. This is the wonder of Heaven! True, unending, never failing, unconditional love emanates all over the place!



(Jesus:) Gold medals in My Kingdom are not won through perfection but through love. For love is the key in My Kingdom. Love is the gold that Heaven is made of.



If people could only understand God and what He is like, a lot more people would believe in Him. He is just a very nice, loving ... I don't want to say person, because He's not a person, He is love. Up here love isn't just a principle or an emotion, love is God. It's an energy force and an energy source!

Remember the old saying, "Love makes the world go 'round"¿ Well, I want to tell you something: love makes Heaven go 'round for sure. Love is an energy source up here. You only know a shadow of it down there. You know it feels good; it makes you feel kind of warm and sometimes pretty mushy inside as well. But up here love is the energy source that runs the whole place. Just like electricity and gasoline and all those things are energy sources or types of energy there, love is the energy source, it's the energy itself here! You'll find there are a lot more uses for love here than you would have even imagined down there.



I immediately noticed that the Lord's love fills the air in Heaven. It's everywhere and you can feel it and smell it and hear it and taste it. It soaks into everyone and everything! Everything just glows with the Lord's love, and it's so warm and comforting and fun and fuzzy. It's beautiful and soft. So you can understand why no one would feel left out, because we all just soak up the Lord's love together as we love each other and go about our work and play.



I think the most remarkable thing about Heaven is the love that's manifested here, the love that surrounds everything and everyone. You feel it. It's tangible. Love is the reason for existence, because without love you would only be living for yourself. Everyone would have to live by themselves, and what good would Heaven be if it were like that¿ Love for the Lord and love for others are the factors that motivate our lives and actions.



Up here you're just so full of love, you feel like exploding, overflowing. There's an intense desire to share it, like the desire that flows between a man and a woman in love.



I've seen that in Heaven everybody loves everybody else. We want to see others happy. We experience the true joy of giving. In return we receive love that overflows and fills us up and supplies all that we need. We never lack for love. The reason we have so much is because we don't hold on to it. We let it go, we give it away. Everybody's loving, everybody's kind, and everybody's giving. You give because you truly want to see others happy. You love because you're so full of Jesus' love. That's Heaven in a nutshell—giving, loving, caring.



Sweetheart, we see things so differently up here. It's so easy to see how very important love is, and how shameful it is to be selfish or try to keep it for yourself. All that we do is measured by love—how loving the motives behind it are, how much you give with your heart. Even if things on earth seemed to turn out differently than we had planned, and sometimes it seems that we might not have made the wisest choice, if we were sincerely motivated by love, it's to our credit when we get up here.



Before we could enter [Heaven], we left behind the trappings of hatred and bitterness and the desire to do evil. We've all learned to act in love. For we saw that we could not enter with these things. We had to give them up forever.



Here in Heaven I've seen total freedom, the freedom to love and not to be entangled with hatred, bitterness, jealousy, lust, envy, all the things that work against love and all the things that hurt and destroy. The only way to enter is by having this directional force of love in the center of your spiritual heart.



The people who were my enemies on earth are my friends here in Heaven. The people who I hated with a passion and who I fought against there are my brothers here. On earth there is such a struggle going on—such a struggle for power.

In Heaven there isn't a struggle for power. There is the challenge to build, instruct and produce things of value. In Heaven we do things that are in the interest of creation, in the interest of love, in the interest of life, in the interest of others—things to help our brothers, our neighbors, not things that are for our own self-interest. That's one big difference between Heaven and Earth.



There's no mistaking that the kingdom of Heaven is built on pure outgoing love. It's our foundation here, it's our life's blood—outgoing love one for another.



Life in Heaven is a dream come true. You're not only with Love Himself and constantly feeling the reassurance and support and inspiration of His love, but you continue learning and understanding.



(*Jesus:*) Some will be shocked to arrive here in Heaven, to understand and see and feel the depth of My love, for they have no idea how deep My love runs, how broad My love is, how full My love fills! They have no concept. The puny mind of man cannot encase the broadness and fullness and completeness of My love, for it is not possible.

Food for Thought

Questions to ask yourself at the end of each day:

- What have I done with my life this day?
- What did I do for Jesus?
- What did I do for others?

What We Take

When we die, we leave behind us all that we have, and take with us all that we are.—We are told that when Alexander the Great was on his deathbed, he commanded that when he was carried forth to the grave, his hands should not be wrapped, as was usual, in the cerecloths, but should be left outside the bier, so that all men might see them, and might see that they were empty; that there was nothing in them. Alexander, who had been born to one empire, and conquered another; who during his lifetime had possessed two worlds, the East and the West, and the treasures of both; yet now when he was dead he could not retain even the smallest portion of these treasures. In this matter, the poorest beggar and he were upon equal terms. If we live for this world, we shall go out of it empty-handed, but if we live for the next world we shall depart full-handed, “rich in faith” and soon to enter upon an eternal inheritance.