

Why is the concept of heaven so important?

First, **heaven represents the biblical ideas and concepts THAT ACTUALLY EXIST**. Heaven is not a myth, but really exists. Heaven represents our salvation. **It is where the saved go** when they enter eternal life. **It is the gift of God to us**. **To deny heaven's existence (or corrupt it) is to attack the promise that God has given us in our promised salvation**. Secondly, **heaven is the dwelling place of God**, and **it represents his throne and authority**. To deny heaven's existence is also to deny God's existence. **To say heaven is only on Earth, is to deny God's throne and holiness apart and separate from sinful man**. Equally the Bible puts much importance on **describing heaven with redeemed living an actual existence there with physical resurrected bodies** (after the universal resurrection of all people) and **with a life similar to what we had in our earthly life** (eating, communion, resting, doing things, etc). **To deny or reduce this "life" in heaven is to deny the reality of our salvation**.

There are Three Heavens

To clarify, we understand Scripture to teach the reality of "heaven" (actual place, and a place that represents additional Concepts). The concept of heaven has as its base, a place distance or difficult for man to access, full of wonder and glory. But in Scripture, there are actually three "heavens" mentioned or understood. We know this from Paul's reference to the "third heaven" in **2Cor 12:2**. **The first heaven is in the air and space directly over our heads**, and speaks of earthly things but "in the air". So the first heaven is where the clouds are, the rain (**Deu 11:11; 1Ki 18:45; Psal 147:8; Dan 7:13; Mat 24:30; Isa 55:10; Acts 14:17**), the dew is (**Gen 27:39**), lightning is (**1Sam 2:19**), and where the birds fly (**Jer 4:25; Lam 4:19; Job 35:10-11; 1Ki 21:24**).

The second heaven is the home of the sun, moon and stars (**Gen 1:14; Deu 1:10; Joshua 10:13; Deu 4:19; 2Ki 23:5**). It has windows (**2Ki 7:2**), a foundation (**2Sa 22:8**), a door (**Gen 28.17**),

a remote part (**Neh 1:9**), and is as a curtain (**Isa 40:22**). This heaven is also over our heads, **but practically out of our reach**. This heaven is visually observed by man, but really, he does not enter there, nor can he traverse it in reality. **The third heaven is the dwelling place of the God and the unfallen angels, and the redeemed dead** (**Luke 23:39-43; Heb 9:24; Psal 11:4; 1Ki 8:27, 30; 2Chr 7:14; Psal 103:11**). This heaven speaks of **the transcendence of God** (**Isa 55:8-9; Psal 97:9; 108:5**), that He is out of our reach or direct observation, and it speaks of God's superiority over us.

Heaven is where God is.

Truly, **God is omnipresent (everywhere)** (**1Ki 8:27; Jer 23:24; Psal 139:7-8**), so there is no place where God is not. But at the same time, even though God observes, controls, and acts in every place, but the Bible speaks of a "concentration" of his presence at times, means God is being in some specific place. The Bible speaks **of God being "here" or "there"**, of coming and going from a place, **Icabod (1Sam 4:21)** as the place God has abandoned. Heaven is the place where God exists without restrictions, without veiling himself, or in any way limiting his glory, honor, and power. The third heaven is the place where God dwells (**Isa 63:15** "*Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory...*" cp **1Ki 8:30, 39, 43, 49; Mat 23:9**), and it is the dwelling place of the redeemed (**Rev 7:15**). **God the Father is presents as always inhabiting this heaven, and God the Son, "left" this heaven to "come to" earth** (Emmanuel, "*God with us*", **Mat 1:23; Jn 3:13; 6:18; 16:28; Mark 16:19; Acts 2:34; 3:21; Eph 4:10; 1Pe 3:22; Jn 20:17**, etc), and later returned there, **"sending" the Holy Spirit to the earth in his place** (**Jn 1:32; Acts 1:8; 1Pe 1:12**). In a way, **we always have the promise of the constant abiding presence of God/Jesus with us**. (**Mat 28:20; Rev 3:20**), and even in a more intense form when we come together to **worship God (church)** (**Mat 18:20**). So heaven is a concept of a place, but what makes heaven "heaven" is the

presence of God there. Heaven is good or a pleasure because God is there. That makes it a desire in man to be there. The other thing **that makes heaven good is that on an eternity scale, there are only two places, heaven with God, or punishment**.

Heaven is our Promised Home

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.* Those that **have faith in Jesus Christ are saved, and this takes a future form and present hope**, that after physical death (or the rapture) this salvation is granted in the form of us being in this place with God in eternal bliss and happiness. (**Mat 25:34**). In a way, **heaven is synonymous with salvation**. Moreover, this is **our future home**. The concept of home is a pleasant place where we go to when we finish "our work" or course of life. We have the promise of God that when we die, **we "will go home"**, or **"be with the Lord forever"**. **2Cor 5:8**. It is a place with specific people there waiting for us, our "family". In the OT, many times when a dear saint of God faces death, he understood death-salvation as **"going to his fathers"** (**Luke 13:28**). These people are our dear ones, because we love them and they love us.

Heaven is Our City

Heb 11:10 *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* In old times, **people made a city for refuge and protection**. The cities were graded by their design and the force of their defenses (**Heb 11:10**), and the power to withstand oppression (**Heb 13:14**), and especially important were they gates (**Rev 21:21**). Heaven is "our city", of which **we are therefore citizens of heaven** (**Phil. 3:20-21**), and of which **we have a part**. As a redeemed, we have a calling to be there (**Heb 3:1**) and our names are written (enscribed) there or are registered in the books of citizens (**Luke 10:20**).

Heaven is our Country.

Heb 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.* When we speak of "our home", it is also **a place to which we belong**. There is where we belong and occupy as a possession and right. Equally it is our country, and heaven is where we wait to arrive and where "we belong" or fit in.

What is not in Heaven?

Heaven is a place of pleasure, designed by God for us. There is no more sin there (**Rev 21:27**). Heaven is the Kingdom of God, where God's will is done (**Matt 6:10** *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*) There is no darkness (**Rev 22:5**), because this represents confusion, sin, and the work of Satan. There is no sin nor any more consequences of sin in heaven. There is no pain, suffering, nor any more death (**Rev 21:4**). There is no heat of the sun (**Rev 7:16**). There are no physical needs, nor hunger (**Rev 7:16-17**). God is who provides all for us, and in heaven God cares and provides for all our needs so that it is again a paradise, a place of pleasure without these problems.

What is in heaven?

1John 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* Above all, heaven is the dwelling place of God, and we will take of his moral character (**Rom 8:29; Phil 3:21; Col 3:4**). This transformation is by understanding God, and by living with Him face to face (**1Cor 13:12; Phil 1:23**). The purpose of heaven is finally **give that prize for**

having believed in Jesus Christ here on earth. So it is a place of pleasures (**Psal 16:11**), of mansions (lit. many dwelling places) **Jn 14:2**, where we rest from our labors (**Rev 14:13**), and where we receive the consolation of God and good things (**Luke 16:25**).

The Activities of Heaven

Service. Above all, heaven is not a boring place. Even though there is neither heat nor sun nor being tired there, there is much activity. **Heaven is a place of constant service to God** **Rev 7:15; 22:3**. Far from being a labor or burdensome, it is a place where **we are happy to work and serve**.

Worship. Moreover, heaven (the home and temple of God) is **a place of constant worship** (**Rev 7:10; 11-16-18; 15:2-4**). Worship is to recognize the moral character and nature of God for what it is.

Praise. Praise is to recount the blessings that God has done for you (**Rev 19:1-2**).

Singing. Biblically, to sing hymns and spiritual songs is to put worship and praise into music (**Rev 5:9; 14:2**). It is a spiritual sacrifice.

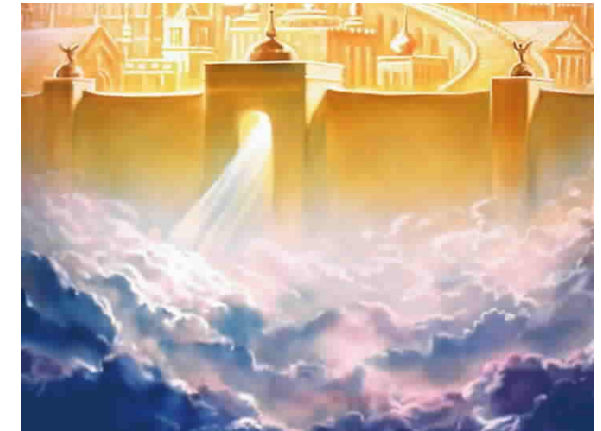
Government. There is the promise of God that if we suffer for Him, then **we will reign with him in heaven** (**2Ti 2:12; Mt 19:28; Rev 20:4, 6**). So there is somehow a government or reigning as a prize for our faith and suffering (**Luke 19:19**). This should go hand in hand with the **grades of glory for the redeemed** (**Mt 25:20-23; Luke 19:12-13; Col 1:16; 1Co 15:41-42**) that correspond to our **prizes for faithfulness and service** considered individually. The more we work and sacrifice, the more we suffer and are persecuted, the more faithful that we are, the more glory God will give us in heaven (**Mt 25:20-23; Luke 19:12-13**). Heaven is **a place of fellowship, as much with God** (**Jn 17:3**) **as with the redeemed** (**Mt 8:11; 1Thes 4:13-18**). In the end, God will destroy heaven and earth, and make a new heavens and earth (on earth), (**Isa 65:17**) and he will move his personal dwelling (heaven) to the earth.

What will heaven be like?

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The Bible certainly declares to us several realities of life: **man lives in sin against God, salvation is only by faith in Jesus Christ, and eternal life is to go to heaven after death and live always with God.** The topic that we present in this tract is "What will heaven be like?" The entire objective of salvation is to go to heaven iafter everything is said and done, but many Christians don't have a good idea of what this entails.

Hollywood, films, the popular concepts, false religions, and many other points of view have affected how people think heaven will be, and they have "tainted" our view of heaven, and contaminated it. Some think it is an endless party with cigarettes, alcohol, dancing, and free sex with beautiful girls. Islam presents it this way. Hollywood has promoted this scandalous view of eternal life, and they depict heaven as boring, no activity, and not interesting, just sitting around for all of eternity.