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Heaven in the Old and New Testament.

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Heaven in the Old and New Testament.

- Heaven Old Testament.
 - Heaven in the New Testament.
 - The Kingdom of heaven and the Kingdom of God.
 - Heaven in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
 - Various Scriptures using the word heaven.
 - Heaven in the book of Revelation.
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NOTE: the purpose of this study is not to do an in-depth study on each topic, but simply to discover if any verse using the word heaven teaches that people are in heaven or go to heaven immediately upon death. The following is all the verses in the Old Testament that use the word heaven.

HEAVEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The following verses show that heaven can refer to the sky:

- The LORD rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of *heaven* (Gen. 19:24).
- The land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of *heaven* (Deut. 11:11).
- The LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the *heaven* that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit you (Deut. 11:17).
- Remember Abraham thy servant to whom thou saidst I will multiply your seed as the stars of *heaven* (Exodus 32:13).
- All the bright lights of *heaven* will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD (Ezek. 32:8).
- The sun stood still in the midst of *heaven* (Joshua 10:13).
- Thy *heaven* over thy head shall be brass (Deut. 28:23).
- A great evil under the whole *heaven* hath been done upon Jerusalem (Dan. 9:12).
- When *heaven* is shut up and there is no rain (1 Kings 8:35).

Heaven in these verses refers to the sky that we see.

THE HOST OF HEAVEN AND IDOLS OF HEAVEN

- Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto *heaven*, and when thou seest the sun, the moon, the stars, even all the *host of heaven* shouldest worship them (Deut. 4:19).
- Josiah commanded the priests to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the high places and for all the *host of heaven*. He burned them and he put down the priests, that burned incense unto Baal and to the sun, the moon and the planets and to all the *host of heaven* (2 Kings 23:4-5).
- Manasseh built high places and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the *host of heaven* and served them. He built altars for all the *host of heaven* in the house of the LORD (2 Chron. 33:1-5).

- Thou shalt not make any image of anything that is in *heaven* above (Deut. 5:8).
- They have gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the *host of heaven* (Deut. 17:3).
- I will consume those who worship the *host of heaven* (Zeph. 1:3-5).
- All the *host of heaven* shall be dissolved, and the *heavens* shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling *fig* from the fig tree (Isaiah 34:4).
- They shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves and spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the *host of heaven* (Jer. 8:1-3).
- Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of *heaven* for the heathen are dismayed at them (Jer. 10:2).
- They have burned incense to all the *host of heaven* and have poured out drink offerings to other gods (Jer. 19:13).

The host of heaven can refer to four things:

1. The sun, moon, planets and stars.
2. Idols made to represent the host of heaven.
3. Pagan gods the pagans worshipped and believed in.
4. Kings, authorities, nobles and their armies.

The host of heaven shall be dissolved the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll and all their host shall fall down is a biblical term used to highlight the extreme destruction to come upon the Kings, the nobles, authorities and their armies including all their idols and gods on earth. It is a phrase used to express the greatness of the destruction to the kings and kingdoms of the nations because of their worship of idols and pagan gods and their worship of the sun, moon, planets and stars. All these are called the host of heaven when the expression the host of heaven is used negatively.

BIRDS OF HEAVEN

- The fowls of the *heaven* sing among branches (Psalm 104:12).
- The carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the *heaven* (Jer. 7:33).
- The stork in the *heaven* knows her appointed times (Jer. 8:7).
- I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the *heaven* (Zeph. 1:3).
- Their carcases will be meat for the fowls of the *heaven* (Jer. 19:7).

GOD AND ANGELS OF HEAVEN

The following verses show that heaven is God's and the Angels dwelling place:

- The angel of God called to Hagar out of *heaven* (Gen 21:17).
- The angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of *heaven* (Gen. 22:11-15).
- I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of *heaven* (Gen. 24:3).

- Ye have seen that I have talked with you from *heaven* (Exod. 20:22).
- The LORD is God in *heaven* above, and on earth there is none else (Deut. 4:39).

GOD DWELLS IN HEAVEN

- There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the *heaven* in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky (Deut. 33:26).
- The LORD heard them from *heaven* according to thy manifold mercies (Neh. 9:27).
- The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in *heaven* (Psalm 11:4).
- The LORD saveth his anointed; he hears him from his holy *heaven* (Psalm 20:6).
- He shall send from *heaven* and save me (Psalm 57:2-3).
- Forever, O LORD, thy word is settled in *heaven* (Psalm 119:89).
- The *heaven* is my throne, and the earth is my footstool (Isaiah 66:1).
- Do not I fill *heaven* and earth? saith the LORD (Jer. 23:24).
- The LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in *heaven* (1 Kings 8:23).
- The *heaven* and *heaven* of *heaven* cannot contain thee (1 Kings 8:27).
- Listen in *heaven* your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive (1 Kings 8:30)
- Hear thou in *heaven* and do, and judge thy servants (1 Kings 8:32).
- Hear thou in *heaven* and forgive the sin of thy people Israel (1 Kings 8:34).
- Hear thou in *heaven*, and forgive the sin of thy servants (1 Kings 8:36).
- Hear thou in *heaven* thy dwelling place, and forgive (1 Kings 8:39).

From these verses we learn that God dwells in heaven, there is no God like Him and He is the God of heaven. Heaven is holy, there is a temple and throne in the midst of heaven and God's word is settled in heaven. The Angel of the Lord and God Himself speaks out of heaven and God listens from heaven and hears from heaven. God sends mercy, truth and help from heaven and even though God dwells in heaven it cannot contain Him. He fills heaven and earth, heaven is His throne, and earth, His footstool.

NOTE: All of the above verses show that heaven is God's dwelling place, but none of them teach people go to heaven.

HEAVEN IN GENESIS

GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN

- **Genesis 1:1:** In the beginning God created the *heaven* and the earth. The heaven God created at Genesis cannot be where God lives because he existed before it was created.

The Almighty, shall Bless thee with Blessings of Heaven.

- **Genesis 49:25:** Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of *heaven* above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb.

Blessings of heaven mean the same as the blessings of God. In this context it means God will give barren woman healthy children and good things.

UNGODLY CITIES ARE GREAT AND WALLED UP TO HEAVEN

- **Deuteronomy: 1:28:** Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities (these are ungodly cities) are great and walled up to *heaven* and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there.

Ungodly cities do not reach to heaven, this is biblical lofty language used to express the authority and power that these earthly cities have obtained and how fortified they are. The people of the Anakims are described as a people great, and many, and tall (Deut. 2:21) and were also accounted as giants (Deut. 2:11). This is the reason their cities are described as being walled up to heaven.

I CALL HEAVEN AND EARTH TO WITNESS AGAINST YOU

- **Deuteronomy: 4:25-26:** When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: ²⁶I call *heaven* and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days, but shall utterly be destroyed.

Moses in these verses is sealing an oath that he is making against Israel should they turn from God to worship pagan gods. The words, I call heaven against you is the same as saying I call God against you.

UNGODLY CITIES GREAT AND FENCED UP TO HEAVEN

- **Deuteronomy: 9:1-2:** Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to *heaven* (ungodly cities) ²A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak!

Ungodly cities do not reach to heaven, this is biblical lofty language used to express the authority and power that these earthly cities have obtained. The people of the Anakims are described as a people great, and many, and tall (Deut. 2:21) and were also accounted as giants (Deut. 2:11) thus the reason they are described as being walled up to heaven.

WHO HAS ASCENDED UP TO HEAVEN?

- **Deuteronomy: 30:16:** For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in *heaven* that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to *heaven* and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.

Moses tells Israel not to say, who will ascend to heaven for them and bring the Law of heaven to them so that they could hear it and do it? (Moses is pre-empting the way Israel may be thinking) he recognises Israel could be looking for something or someone more spiritual or heavenly than Moses to bring the word of the LORD to them, so he tells Israel the word of heaven (the commandments he has given them) (v16) is not beyond the sea that they should say:

- Who will go over the sea for them and bring the commandments he has given them that they could hear it and do it? Because it is very near them, it is in their mouth and in their heart, so that they can do it.”

Moses has just spent all of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy teaching Israel the word of heaven which is also called the word of the LORD and the word of the Covenant (i.e., all God’s laws, rules and statutes). Now he is telling Israel that the, word of God and the commandment of heaven (or of the LORD) that he has been teaching and commanding Israel is not too hard for them and neither is it far off (they know it because Moses has continually taught it to them). Moses tells Israel this day he is setting before them life and good death and evil, if they obey the commandments of the LORD that Moses commands them. If they love the LORD by keeping his commandments, statutes and rules, then the LORD will bless Israel in the Promised Land and they will multiply and live.

But if their heart turns away from the LORD and they are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, they would not live long in the Promised Land that they are going over the Jordan to enter, they will surely perish. Moses calls heaven and earth to witness against Israel that day saying, that he has set before Israel life and death, blessing and curse then tells Israel to choose life so that they and their offspring would live. Choosing life is keeping the word of Heaven also called the word of the LORD and the word of the Covenant (i.e., the LORD'S commandments, statutes and rules). Moses tells Israel to love the LORD their God and obey His voice and hold fast to him because he is their life and length of days, then they would dwell in the land that the LORD swore to their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Loving the LORD is keeping His commandments, statutes and rules.

HEAVEN IN JUDGES

KINGS FOUGHT FROM HEAVEN

- **Judges 5:19-20:** the kings came *and* fought, (and) then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money. ²⁰They fought from *heaven* the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.

Kings do not fight from heaven. The expression they fought from heaven is a figurative way of saying they fought with God on their side. When Israel marched, it can be written when the LORD marched (Judges 5:4) (Judges 5:19-20).

HEAVEN IN KINGS

SOLOMON SPREAD HIS HANDS TOWARD HEAVEN

- **1 Kings 8:22:** Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward *heaven*.

Solomon has finished building the temple of the LORD the priests take the ark of the covenant of the LORD into the Most Holy Place and place it underneath the wings of the cherubim. The priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud fills the house of the LORD so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, because the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD. Then Solomon lifted his hands toward heaven and prays.

HEAVEN IN JOB

THE HEAVEN SHALL REVEAL THE WICKED MAN’S INIQUITY

- **Job 20:27-29:** The *heaven* shall reveal his (the wicked mans) iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him. ²⁸The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his (Gods) wrath. ²⁹This *is* the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.

Heaven is God's and the angels dwelling place, in biblical language, heaven is often used for the name of God. Jews were afraid to use God's name so they would often replace His name with heaven. Matthew in his letter writes, "The Kingdom of heaven" whereas Luke and Mark say, "The Kingdom of God." The title, 'The Kingdom of Heaven' does not mean that the Kingdom of God' is in heaven. The Kingdom of heaven or of God is at this present time a spiritual and faith Kingdom established in the heart and mind of every believer by faith in Christ it is manifested imperfectly through a Christian's life and collectively through the church.

The literal Kingdom of God and of heaven will be perfectly manifested on earth when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice joy and peace on earth.

For further information see the title:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).

HEAVEN IN PSALMS

IF DAVID ASCENDED UP TO HEAVEN

- **Psalms 139:8:** If I (David) ascend up into *heaven* thou *art* there.

David is not saying he will go to heaven the entire context of David's prayer is focused on God's awareness of every aspect of David's life. David is speaking in hyperboles to express the point that once a person has a knowledge of God there is no place, they can go to escape Him. He is saying, "If he could ascend to heaven or descend to the grave, if he was able to go to the deepest depths of the sea God would know it. The Scripture is not teaching that people will go to heaven, but making the point that God is everywhere and that there is no place in this universe that man can hide from God.

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HEAVEN IN PROVERBS

WHO SHALL GO UP FOR US TO HEAVEN?

- **Proverbs 30:4:** Agur says, Who hath ascended up into *heaven* or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what *is* his name, and what *is* his son's name, if thou canst tell?

Agur is not saying that people can ascend up to heaven he is making the point that he does not have the understanding or wisdom of God. Agur is stating that neither he nor any other man has ascended up to heaven that they should have knowledge of God. He is saying if there is any man that has ascended to heaven, tell him God's name and his Sons name.

HEAVEN IN ISAIAH

LUCIFER FALLEN FROM HEAVEN

- **Isaiah 14:12:** How art thou fallen from *heaven* O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

The entire focus of this chapter is the king of Babylon. Lucifer in the language of heaven means a lofty place or place of great authority and power and the meaning of Lucifer is a shining or bright thing. Isaiah uses it in this chapter to describe the great pride glory, authority and power of the King of Babylon. The phrase, "Lucifer fell from heaven" is biblical lofty language to describe the enormous pride and glory of Babylon and the fall of the King of Babylon from his great place of pride, glory, authority and power. For further information see the title:

- Lucifer.
- Satan.

In, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

THE HEAVEN SHALL BE DISSOLVED, THE HEAVENS SHALL BE ROLLED TOGETHER

- **Isaiah 34:1-4:** Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. ²For the indignation of the LORD *is* upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. ³Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. ⁴All the host of *heaven* shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree.

The earth does not hear and mountains do not melt with blood. This is biblical lofty language to depict the awesomeness and horror of what Isaiah is saying and to highlight, exaggerate and color the battle since the focus is the LORD'S fury upon the nations and His destruction upon their armies and their gods. The words, "The mountains shall be melted with their blood" in this context means the armies of the nations will be utterly defeated in battle and the words, "All the host of heaven shall rot away" in this context means all their idols and gods will be utterly destroyed.

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GOD'S SWORD SHALL BE BATHED IN HEAVEN

- **Isaiah 34:5:** My sword shall be bathed in *heaven* behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

The entire chapter is focused on the total and utter destruction of the land of Idumea. Swords are not bathed in heaven this is figurative language for the judgment of God upon the nation of Idumea.

HEAVEN IN JEREMIAH

QUEEN OF HEAVEN

- **Jeremiah 7:18:** The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the *queen of heaven* and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.

There is no queen in God's heaven she is called the queen of heaven not because there is a real queen of heaven but because those who believed in her believed there was a queen of heaven. If people are worshipping an imaginary god created in their imagination by their strong belief in her, this fantasy god is referred to as being in heaven not because there is a queen in heaven, but because those who believed in her believed there was. It is a biblical expression that refers to an imaginary god

created in the mind by a strong belief of that god. The gods they are giving drink offerings to are not real gods, but gods that are created in the mind by the person's belief in them. Nevertheless, though they are not real gods they are very real to the people worshipping them since the image of them on the imagination of their mind will affect their nervous system, their emotions and their behaviour accordingly. For further information on this principal of gods and the imagination see: "Demons," in: Satan and his Family.

THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

- **Jeremiah 44:17:** But we (Israel) will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the *queen of heaven*, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem.
- Israel vowed, to burn incense to the *queen of heaven* (Jer. 44:25).

God does not have a queen of heaven with Him a literal queen of heaven does not exist. The queen of heaven only exists in minds and imaginations of those who believe in her as do all other gods. The power of belief creates the reality of the image upon the imagination of the mind of whatever a person believes in. If the belief and image is strong enough it will affect the nervous system, the emotions and a person's behavior accordingly. For further information on this principle see the title: "Demons," in: Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

BABYLON MOUNTS UP TO HEAVEN

- **Jeremiah 51:53:** Though Babylon should mount up to *heaven* and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD.

A nation does not reach up to heaven. The expression Babylon mounts up to heaven is Biblical lofty language depicting how great Babylon had become amongst the nations. Babylon become so great in the earth that her Kingdom, power, strength and authority were above all other nations on the earth and her beauty and glory surpassed all kingdoms (Jer. 51:53). This is why Jeremiah says, "Babylon should mount up to heaven from God spoilers will come."

HEAVEN IN LAMENTATIONS

ISRAEL'S BEAUTY CAST DOWN FROM HEAVEN

- **Lamentations 2:1:** How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from *heaven* unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger!

Israel's beauty is cast down from heaven is biblical lofty language, to depict God's anger toward Israel. It means that God has withdrawn his favour and has cast off Israel and left them in ruin (Lam. 2:1). Notice Israel is pictured as God's footstool, in this context it is as though the LORD has kicked his footstool away.

HEAVEN IN DANIEL

THE FOUR WINDS OF HEAVEN

- **Daniel 7:2:** Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the *four winds of the heaven* strove upon the great sea.

The four winds are four great and powerful nations. This is a majestic and stunning chapter full of brilliant prophecies concerning the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. For further information see:

- Daniel 7 in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Four winds of Heaven and a King who grew to the Host of Heaven.

- **Daniel 8:8-10:** Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn (King) was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the *four winds of heaven*. ⁹And out of one of them came forth a little horn (King) which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. ¹⁰And it waxed great, even to the *host of heaven* and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

Four winds of heaven: Daniel has a vision of a mighty king who became exceedingly strong, but was eventually destroyed and four other Kings came up in his place and spread out toward the four winds of heaven. Wind blows wherever it will and affects the earth wherever it blows, the four winds of heaven in the context of these verses means two things:

1. The total expanse of the sky.
2. The influence of the four kings across the entire surface of the earth.

Host of heaven: after these four kings another king arose who Daniel says grew so great, even to the host of heaven. The host of heaven in this context can mean that he had extreme pride, or that he conquered God's people Israel it most likely embraces both.

Four Winds of Heaven.

- **Daniel 11:4:** And when he (the King) shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the *four winds of heaven* and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

Four winds of heaven in this context means the vast expanse of the sky, this great king's kingdom will be broken up and spread across the face of the earth, under the vast expanse of the sky. Divided toward the four winds of heaven simply means that he will not be able to contain and keep his kingdom under his control any longer.

HEAVEN IN AMOS

THEY CLIMB UP TO HEAVEN

- **Amos 9:2:** Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to *heaven*, thence will I bring them down.

No-one climbs up to heaven. Israel had become so corrupt God is saying they can hide themselves in the top of Mount Carmel, hide themselves on the bottom of the sea, go into captivity before their enemies or climb up to heaven, but the LORD will sieve them out. The entire context of the chapter is focused on the truth no-one can hide from the LORD.

HEAVEN IN NAHUM

THE STARS OF HEAVEN

- **Nahum 3:16:** Thou (Nineveh) hast multiplied thy merchants above the *stars of heaven* the cankerworm spoileth, and flieth away.

Nahum is speaking to Nineveh and calls it the blood city; he says the people of Nineveh have increased their merchants and multiplied their material riches and wealth like the grasshopper and more than the stars of the heavens. The stars of heaven in this context are literal stars they are used by Nahum to give some idea of the extreme material wealth Nineveh has acquired.

HEAVEN IN MALACHI

I WILL OPEN THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN

- **Malachi 3:10:** Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of *heaven* and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

The people were not bringing Israel commanded tithe (10%) into the temple and when they did the priests were taking the best of it for themselves rather than offer it to God. The LORD is saying if Israel will do the right thing God will cause the sun and the rain to increase their crops, their farms and their cattle and sheep. This ten percent tithe was the only tax God required the nation of Israel to pay (no doubt kings later increased it).

This ten percent tithe (tax) supported the Priesthood and the poor in the land of Israel.

NOTE: this ten percent tithe (tax) is not applicable to New Testament churches. For further information concerning tithing see, the title:

- Tithing (ON WEBSITE MENU).

SUMMARY OF HEAVEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

There are other verses in the Old Testament that use the word heaven, but the above covers every context the word heaven is used in. Sometimes heaven is seen as the literal place where God and the angels' dwell, but because biblical writers often uses extreme exaggeration and lofty colorful language to highlight a thing the word, heaven is not limited to this meaning only. Often heaven is used figuratively in the following ways, Babylon mounts up to heaven and Israel's beauty is cast down from heaven in this context heaven is used as a biblical expression to highlight the glory, authority, power and greatness that earthly kings and their kingdoms have obtained.

Heaven can mean a place of great authority and power on earth or refer to the sun, moon and the stars and sometimes is used as a title for God. The title the host of heaven can in some contexts be referring to earthly kings, authorities and the nobles with their armies while in other contexts can be referring to the sun, moon, planets and the stars (especially when worshipped) or to the pagan gods and idols people believed in. Elijah taken into heaven can mean he was translated through the sky and stars (i.e., through the air) to a safer or different place on earth, as was Phillip in the New Testament.

People believed in a queen of heaven yet there is no literal queen existing in heaven with God, the queen of heaven only exists in the imagination of those who believe in her. The word cloud when used figuratively with darkness represents confusion, false prophets and people in darkness, but when the word heaven is used with clouds (i.e., heavenly clouds) they then refer to the redeemed and to people with great light and truth. In some contexts, ascended to heaven refers to an angel or Christ who has literally ascended to heaven. When it is used

figuratively it carries the idea that a nation or person has reached their peak or that they are as high as they can go. In colloquial language people would say, "You are at the top" or "It doesn't get any better than this." When the word heaven is used negatively it often means that a kingdom or nation, a king or individual has reached a place of extreme pride.

CONCLUSION OF HEAVEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

We began this study to discover if there are any verses using the word heaven that teaches that people go to heaven immediately upon death. We have now covered every context in the Old Testament that the word heaven is used in and there is not one verse that even hints at people going to heaven immediately upon death or even after death.

HEAVEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Remember: the purpose of this study is not to do an in-depth study on each topic, but simply to discover if any verse using the word heaven teaches that people are in heaven or go to heaven immediately upon death. The following is all the verses in the New Testament that use the word heaven.

HEAVEN IN MATTHEW

REWARDS AND TREASURE STORED IN HEAVEN

- **Matthew 5:12:** Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your *reward in heaven*.
- Lay up, *treasures in heaven* where moth or rust cannot corrupt (Matt. 6:20).
- If thou wilt be perfect give all to the poor and thou shalt have *treasure in heaven* and come follow me (Matt. 19:21).

Rewards and treasure stored in heaven means that they are stored in the eternal mind of God who sees everything under the heavens and will reward faithful brothers and sisters in Christ at the resurrection accordingly. Paul when teaching the brothers and sisters in Christ at Corinth said:

- If anyone builds on the foundation (the Lord Jesus Christ) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw 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, they will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Cor. 3:12-15).

Though we are called to judge and correct gross sinful behaviour in the church no brother or sister in Christ is called to judge the eternal salvation of another because not one of us can see the true motives of the heart and the struggles, battles and hurts that maybe hidden within.

This is why God is the perfect judge His eyes pierce every hidden motive and clearly sees the true condition of what lies deep within, and with mercy and grace will judge accordingly.

TILL HEAVEN AND EARTH PASS AWAY

- **Matthew 5:18:** I say unto you, till *heaven and earth pass* one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

The Bible teaches that the entire earth will be filled with the glory of God. The Scriptures do not teach that earth is going to pass away or become non-existent. The words, "Till heaven and earth pass," can read, "Till heavens influence comes to earth not one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Though the Scriptures do not teach that earth is going to be annihilated out of existence they do teach that it will be gloriously and dramatically changed so that deserts will blossom with life. Rivers will flow with abundance of fresh water, wild animals will not kill, but eat vegetation and the climate will change in such a manner that there will be no natural disasters (i.e., earthquakes, tornados, hail and such like things). For this to happen there will have to be changes in the sun, the moon and the stars. When the earth is changed in such a fashion that becomes like the Eden Adam and Eve lived in, it will be right and proper to say that it is a new earth and new heavens.

CAPERNAUM, WHICH ART EXALTED UNTO HEAVEN

- **Matthew 11:23:** Thou, Capernaum, which art *exalted unto heaven* shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

The expression, exalted to heaven carries the idea of extreme pride it refers to an individual, a city or a nation that is full of tremendous pride, today we would say, "Their pride is so great it reaches up to heaven" or "They are puffed up to heaven."

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A HOUSEHOLDER

- **Matthew 13:52:** Jesus said every scribe which is instructed unto the *kingdom of heaven* is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

The focus of this verse is the Kingdom of heaven existing now on earth (also called the Kingdom of God). Jesus is comparing the teaching of the Scriptures with worldly treasures a person has stored up. Some of it is old and some new it is the same with the Scriptures, Jesus is saying, some teaching is new while some is old (this is the only mention of this parable).

YOU SHALL NOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

- **Matthew 18:1-3:** At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? ²And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, ³And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the *kingdom of heaven*.

Sinners enter the Kingdom of heaven (also called the Kingdom of God) today on earth by repentance and faith and by accepting Jesus Christ as their Saviour. The Kingdom of heaven is established today on earth in the heart and mind of every faithful believer by their faith in Christ. This inward Kingdom is manifested outwardly through a Christian's life by their testimony and a lifestyle that endeavours to honour God and collectively through the church. The Kingdom at this time is not a perfect Kingdom, but will be manifested perfectly on earth when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The following verses show that the kingdom of heaven is the same kingdom as the kingdom of God. They show that Matthew in his letter uses the title the Kingdom of Heaven while Mark and Luke for the same Scriptures in their letters use the title the Kingdom of God clearly showing that the title the Kingdom of Heaven and the title the Kingdom of God refer to the same Kingdom.

Matthew writes:

- Jesus said repent for the *Kingdom of heaven* is at hand. (Matt. 3:2).
- Jesus preached repent: for the *Kingdom of heaven* is at hand. (Matt. 4:17).
- Jesus said preach the *Kingdom of heaven* is at hand. (Matt. 10:7).

Mark and Luke wrote:

- Jesus said, the *Kingdom of God* is at hand: repent and believe the gospel. (Mark 1:15).
- Jesus said, know that the *Kingdom of God* is nigh at hand. (Luke 21:31).

Matthew writes:

- Jesus said to his disciples, Verily I say unto you, a rich man shall hardly enter into the *Kingdom of heaven*. (Matt. 19:22-23).

Mark and Luke wrote:

- Jesus said is better for thee to enter into the *Kingdom of God* with one eye, than to be cast into hell fire. (Mark 9:47).
- Jesus saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the *Kingdom of God!* (Mark 10:23).
- Jesus answered again, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the *Kingdom of God!* (Mark 10:24).
- Jesus said, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the *Kingdom of God*. (Mark 10:25).
- Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the *Kingdom of God!* For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (Luke 18:24-25).

13

Matthew writes:

- Jesus said to his disciples, it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the *Kingdom of heaven* but to them it is not given. (Matt. 13:11).

Luke says:

- Jesus said to his disciples it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the *Kingdom of God* but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. (Luke 8:10).

Matthew writes:

- Jesus said the *Kingdom of heaven* is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field. (Matt. 13:24).

Mark and Luke wrote:

- Jesus said the *Kingdom of God* is likened unto man which cast seed into the ground. (Mark 4:26).
- Jesus went throughout every city preaching the glad tidings of the *Kingdom of God*. (Luke 8:1).

Matthew writes:

- Jesus said the *Kingdom of heaven* is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field. (Matt. 13:31).

Mark and Luke wrote:

- Jesus said with what comparison shall we compare the Kingdom of God? *It is* like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth. (Mark 4:30-31).
- Jesus said what is the *Kingdom of God* like? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden (Luke 13:18-19).

Matthew writes:

- Jesus said the *Kingdom of heaven* is like unto leaven, which a woman took. (Matt. 13:33).

Luke writes:

- Jesus said the *Kingdom of God*? Is like leaven that a woman took (Luke 13:20-21).

SUMMARY OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

All these verses are speaking about the same Kingdom they clearly show that the Kingdom of heaven is the same as the Kingdom of God. Jews were afraid to use God's name in vain so they would often replace His name with the word heaven. Matthew in his letters uses heaven for the name of God, whereas Luke and Mark use God's name for the same verses and John and the author of the book of Acts refer to the Kingdom of heaven as the Kingdom of God both titles simply mean that it is God's Kingdom. The title, the Kingdom of Heaven does not mean that the Kingdom of God is in heaven, but that the Kingdom of heaven is being established today on earth in the heart and mind of every faithful brother and sister who by faith believe in Christ. This present spiritual Kingdom is outwardly manifested (howbeit not perfectly) through a Christian's life and collectively through the worldwide global church. It will be manifested perfectly on earth when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords. On this glorious day all who belong to Christ's Kingdom will be gathered together to rule as kings and priests with Christ to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice joy and peace on earth.

14

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A KING AND HIS SERVANTS

- **Matthew 18:23:** Therefore is the *kingdom of heaven* likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

Jesus is teaching that the faithful who are in the present Kingdom of heaven (also called the Kingdom of God) on earth must forgive. Jesus is highlighting the truth that those who want God to forgive them must forgive the trespasses of others (this is the only mention of this parable).

THE BAPTISM OF JOHN, WHENCE WAS IT? FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN?

- **Matthew 21:25:** The baptism of John, whence was it? from *heaven* or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From *heaven* he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?
- The baptism of John, was *it* from *heaven* or of men? answer me (Mark 11:30).

This is the same as saying, "The baptism of John, whence was it from God or of men?" Jesus is asking the chief priests and the elders was the Baptism of John ordained by God or ordained by men. The words, "Was it from heaven? In this context mean did John's baptism have the blessing and favour of God?

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A KING, WHO MADE A MARRIAGE FOR HIS SON

- **Matthew 22:2:** The *kingdom of heaven* is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.

Jesus is using a parable to show that many have been chosen or given the invitation to the Kingdom, but not all will be accepted. Because certain Jews held God's name in such high esteem, they were afraid to use it for fear of blasphemy so instead of using the name of God they would often replace His name with the word heaven. This maybe one of the reasons Matthew in his letters uses heaven for the name of God, whereas Luke and Mark in their letters use God's name.

Both titles refer to the same Kingdom. In the context of these verses the title, the Kingdom of Heaven refers to the present spiritual Kingdom of God on earth being established in the hearts and minds of those who by faith believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE STARS SHALL FALL FROM HEAVEN

- **Matthew 24:29:** Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the *stars shall fall from heaven* and the powers of the *heavens shall be shaken*.
- The *stars of heaven* shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. (Mark 13:25).

This verse can apply to two things:

1. There will be dramatic changes in the heavens (the sun, moon and stars) that will dramatically affect our climate and result in extreme natural disasters.
2. When the words, "The stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken" are used figuratively they can apply to kings and rulers in high places of power and authority (especially false religious leaders) losing their control their authority and the power that they have over the people they rule and the powers that are in heaven can represent the power and pride of governments on earth.

It is pointless to debate over which of these two Matthew and Mark had in mind since both will apply as we get closer to the Lord Jesus Christ glorious return and both will certainly apply when he does return in glory.

ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN CAME WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN

- **Matthew 24:30:** Then shall appear the Son of man in *heaven*: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the *clouds of heaven* with power and great glory.
- Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the *clouds of heaven*. (Matt. 26:64).
- Yee shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the *clouds of heaven*. (Mark 14:62).
- Is not God in the height of *heaven*? And behold the height of the stars, how high they are! And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the *dark cloud*? *thick clouds* are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of *heaven*. (Job 22:12-14).

- I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the *clouds of heaven* and came to the Ancient of days and they brought him near before him. (Daniel 7:13).

The ancient of days is God and the clouds of heaven in this context are the angels bringing Christ into God's presence at his ascension to the right hand throne of God.

Dark clouds when used figuratively symbolize:

- People and false prophets that lack knowledge of the truth.
- Strength, wrath, destruction and desolation.
- Confusion and spiritual blindness.

Clouds when link to heaven or the Lord Jesus Christ symbolizes:

- People of God who are full of great light and spiritual truth.
- Those that belong to the family of the Lord.

This entire chapter of Daniel chapter seven is a vision written in imagery it is a vision given to Daniel in a dream the beasts are not literal beasts, but kingdoms of the earth, so why should the clouds be literal clouds? The clouds in the context of Daniel chapter seven are symbols of resurrected believers who have died in Christ and have been raised to be with him in eternal glory (Daniel 7:14). The Scripture says the darkness of the clouds not only hides bright light, but also hides God therefore dark clouds are a symbol of God and his truth being hidden by false teaching, by confusion and by deception. But when the word heaven is linked to the word cloud (i.e., clouds of heaven) the word heaven gives the word cloud the meaning of light and truth and when cloud is linked to the Lord Jesus Christ it refers to the redeemed in Christ. When the word cloud is used figuratively the context it is used in determines its meaning.

They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory can mean two things:

1. The heavens around the entire globe could be so breathtakingly spectacular, that the entire world will know that something majestic and glorious is about to happen.
2. Christ's return is televised on global TV, the Internet, mobile phones and everyone around the world sees the event at the same time. There is no doubt that this breathtaking and awesome event would be the biggest news story this world has ever seen.

From Strong's Concordance the words, *with* and *in* can mean *together with* or *amongst* which means that the words, "The Son of man came with the clouds of heaven," can mean the Son of man came *together with* or *amongst* the resurrected redeemed of God. Jesus returns in glory, raises the dead and the faithful who are alive at this time and then descends to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

For further information see the title:

- Clouds.
- In, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

- **Matthew 24:31:** he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of *heaven* to the other.
- His angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the *uttermost part of heaven* (Mark 13:27).
- That hour knoweth no man, no, not the *angels which are in heaven*, neither the Son, but the Father. (Mark 13:32).

Angels shall gather together his elect from one end of heaven to the other means they shall gather them from under the total expanse of the sky. Heaven in this context means the vast expanse of the sky. We know this because the verse also says his angels shall gather the elect from the four winds which is an expression that refers to the entire earth. Matthew is saying angels will gather God's elect from across the entire planet. If there were brothers and sisters in Christ in heaven they would already be fellowshiping and gathered together. This verse does not mean that believers are alive in heaven. Matthew is saying those sleeping in Christ and those alive in Christ (i.e., all those under the vast expanse of the sky, moon, sun and stars) will be gathered together at the coming of Christ. In today's language we would say the angels shall gather the elect from the most remote places on earth including every place under the sun, moon and stars and even in those places that are the furthest away they will be all gathered together

HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY, BUT MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY

- **Matthew 24:35:** Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.
- Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away (Mark 13:31).
- Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away (Luke 21:33).
These verses do not mean that heaven and earth will be totally destroyed, but rather that they will be dramatically changed. The following verses show that the eternal Kingdom of God is on earth:
- Evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the *earth* (Psalm 37:9).
- The meek shall inherit the *earth*; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace (Psalm 37:11).
- For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the *earth* shall be cut off (Psalm 37:22).
- Arise, O God, judge the *earth* for thou shalt inherit all nations (Psalm 82:8).
- They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the *earth* shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9).

Matthew is saying that the sun, moon and stars (the heavens) and earth as we know them shall be dramatically changed for the better so much so that it will seem like a new heaven and 'new earth. The Bible teaches that the entire earth will be filled with the glory of God; it does not teach that the earth is going to be annihilated so that it becomes non-existent; rather this verse is actually teaching when Christ returns to earth everything will change for the better.

In Isaiah chapter twenty-five Isaiah prophesied:

- The Lord will create a new heaven and a new earth.
- Jerusalem will be a joy and gladness to her inhabitants forever.
- God will rejoice in the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

- There will be no more weeping or distress.
- People will build houses and their labour will not be in vain.
- Children will not be born to calamity.
- The wolf and the lamb will graze together
- The lion will eat straw like the ox.
- No one will hurt or destroy on God's Holy Mountain (Isaiah 65:9-25).

This entire chapter is a prophecy concerning the glorious millennial Kingdom age of the Lord Jesus Christ. The LORD through Isaiah says, "On this day the LORD will make a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food for all people and remove the veil that is spread over all nations and swallow up death forever." Isaiah goes on to say, "The LORD God will wipe away tears from all faces and take away the reproach of his people from all the earth. It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isaiah 25:6-9).

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKENED TO TEN VIRGINS

- **Matthew 25:1:** Then shall the *kingdom of heaven* be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

This is teaching that those who want to be accepted by Christ must be prepared at his coming the focus is the return of the Lord. The Kingdom in this context refers to Christ's spiritual Kingdom existing now by faith on earth. Out of this present spiritual Kingdom of faith the Lord will gather those who have been faithful to rule and reign with him when he returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AS A MAN TRAVELLING

- **Matthew 25:14:** For the *kingdom of heaven* is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

Luke when referring to the same verse; wrote:

- A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a Kingdom and to return (Luke 19:12-27).

Luke when speaking of the same parable says that the nobleman went to receive for himself a kingdom Luke does not add the word heaven. This is because the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of heaven is the same thing in the minds of Matthew, Mark, Luke and all other writers of Scripture. The point being made in this parable is that who that want to be accepted by God must not be idle with the gifts God has given them, but rather that they should be continually growing and increasing in the things of the Kingdom. The entire parable is about Christ returning to his spiritual Kingdom existing now on earth by faith and the faithful being separated from the unfaithful when Christ returns in glory.

19

HEAVEN IN LUKE

I BEHELD SATAN AS LIGHTNING FALL FROM HEAVEN

- **Luke 10:18-21:** he said unto them, I beheld *satan as lightning fall from heaven*.

This is a big topic and the focus in this study is not on Satan, but on the question, "Does the Bible teach believers go to heaven?" Or Does God establish His Kingdom on earth with Lord Jesus Christ ruling and reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords when he returns and resurrects those sleeping in Christ and gathers them together with those who are alive at the first resurrection (Rom. 20:5). For further information concerning Satan, see the title:

- Satan in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

REJOICE, BECAUSE YOUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN

- **Luke 10:20:** Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your *names are written in heaven*.

Brothers and sisters in Christ should rejoice because their names are written in heaven meaning they are kept in the eternal mind of God.

FATHER, I HAVE SINNED AGAINST HEAVEN AND BEFORE THEE

- **Luke 15:18-21:** I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have *sinned against heaven* and before thee, ¹⁹And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. ²⁰And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. ²¹And the son said unto him, Father, I have *sinned against heaven* and in thy sight, and am not worthy to be called thy son.

The words of the prodigal son, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee," simply means the son had sinned before his father and against God. The son was aware he had not only sinned against his earthly father, but was also fully aware that he had also sinned against heaven which embraces the angels, God's law, His commandments and all that is holy good, right and proper and of course God Himself.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION

- **Luke 17:20:** when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the *kingdom of God* should come, he answered them and said, The *kingdom of God* cometh not with observation.

Many Jews were afraid to use God's name in vain so instead of using God's name they would use the word heaven. Matthew in his Gospels uses heaven for the name of God he writes the Kingdom of heaven, whereas Luke, Mark and the author of Acts write the Kingdom of God. These are titles for the same Kingdom of God on earth. The title Kingdom of heaven does not mean that the Kingdom of God is in heaven. The Kingdom of heaven or God is established today on earth in the heart of a believer by faith in Christ and is manifested through a Christian's life and collectively through the church (howbeit not perfectly). This present Kingdom will be manifested perfectly on earth when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth during his glorious millennial reign. For further information see the title:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).

LIGHTNING, THAT SHINETH UNTO UNDER HEAVEN

- **Luke 17:24:** For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under *heaven* shineth unto the other part under *heaven* so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

This means when the Son of man returns it will not only be gloriously breathtakingly and majestically awe-inspiring, but will also be very clearly seen.

IT RAINED FIRE AND BRIMSTONE FROM HEAVEN

- **Luke 17:29:** But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained *fire and brimstone from heaven* and destroyed them all.

The words, "God rained fire and brimstone from heaven" simply mean that God poured out his wrath upon those who were grossly wicked and corrupt. Notice God safely removed his people before His wrath came upon the wicked.

PEACE IN HEAVEN AND GLORY IN THE HIGHEST

- **Luke 19:36-38:** as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, ³⁸saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! *Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!*"

These are the words of praise that the whole multitude of his disciples and all those who had seen Jesus mighty works began to praise God with as he rode on the colt along the road on the way down the Mount of Olives toward Jerusalem. At this time they not only believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah and King that the Old Testament Scriptures and the prophets said was to come, but also believed that God had sent him to Israel to overthrow Rome and establish God's literal Kingdom of God on earth and make Israel the head of all nations. Not even the apostles understood that Jesus would surrender his life to his enemies, be mocked and put to death as a common criminal. The Kingdom they believed Jesus was going to usher in is the Kingdom he will establish when he returns in glory not as the Lamb to be slaughtered, but as King of kings and Lord of lords to reign victorious. The apostles only understood this truth after Jesus death and resurrection when he appeared to them in his eternal, immortal resurrected body.

GREAT SIGNS SHALL BE FROM HEAVEN AND POWERS OF HEAVEN SHALL BE SHAKEN

- **Luke 21:11-27:** great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and *great signs shall there be from heaven* ---- NOW GO TO VERSE ---- ²⁵And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring ²⁶Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the *powers of heaven shall be shaken*. ²⁷And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

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Heaven in this context refers to the climatic effect the sun, the moon and the stars have upon the earth. It means there will be great disasters caused by extreme weather patterns, (i.e., hail, tornadoes, storms, Tsunamis and earthquakes etc.), upon earth as we draw closer to the Lord Jesus Christ's return. The Bible personifies the earth as a pregnant woman trying to give birth to the sons and daughters of God. As a woman gets closer to giving birth the labour pains become stronger and more rapid, this is exactly how the Bible pictures the earth as we draw nearer Christ's return.

JESUS WAS PARTED FROM THEM, AND CARRIED UP INTO HEAVEN

- **Luke 24:51:** it came to pass, while he blessed them (his disciples) he was parted from them, and *carried up into heaven*. ⁵²And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

After Jesus resurrection and his appearing and ministering to the disciples he was parted from them and carried up into heaven to the right-hand side of God his heavenly Father. This verse shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus at this present time is seated at the right-hand side of his heavenly Father in heaven. This truth must surely make those who have been taught the traditional teaching that Jesus is God to question what they have been taught since if this was a true teaching then the words of this Scripture would make no sense at all since it would mean God is sitting next to Himself. Since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to

believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states:

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God the Son will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim:

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God 'and' Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). For further information see the title:

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity) in:
- Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

HEAVEN IN JOHN

MUST BE BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

- **John 3:4-5:** Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the *kingdom of God*.

Jesus is talking to Nicodemus about eternal salvation. The Kingdom of God in this context is the present spiritual Kingdom of God on earth being established in the heart and mind by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is manifested outwardly on earth (howbeit not perfectly) through the individual lives of the faithful who belong by faith to the family of Christ and collectively through the church. This present spiritual Kingdom existing in the heart and mind of the faithful will be literally manifested when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

NO MAN HAS ASCENDED UP TO HEAVEN

- **John 3:13:** Jesus said, *no man hath ascended up to heaven* but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

Jesus himself tells us that no man has ascended up to heaven yet. This means that prior to Jesus resurrection no-one has ascended to heaven. We know this because Paul says that God's Son was the firstborn (resurrected) among many brothers (Rom. 8:29) and in the book of

Colossians he said that Jesus is the beginning, the firstborn (resurrected) from the dead (Col. 1:18). Added to these are the following words of the book of Revelation, "Jesus Christ the faithful witness is the firstborn of the dead" (Rev. 1:5). Obviously if anyone has ascended to heaven prior to Christ then not one of these verses can be believed and Jesus certainly cannot be the first resurrected from the dead to heaven. He who came down from heaven carries the idea that Jesus origin was heavenly (as the context states in John 3:31-32) and that he was born of God by the Holy Spirit and sent from above. At his water baptism God spoke from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son" (Matt. 3:17) and he is the only man God has given all authority to (v35) preparing him for his ministry. Added to all these Jesus teaching was not his own, but his Fathers it is in this sense that Jesus Christ descended or came from above meaning he was born of God and sent by God. For greater detail of this verse see:

- John chapter three in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

NO-ONE CAN RECEIVE ANYTHING EXCEPT IT IS GIVEN THEM FROM HEAVEN

- **John 3:27:** John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be *given him from heaven*.

This is the same as saying, a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from God. Heaven in this context is used as a name for God. Many Jews were afraid to use God's name in vain so instead of using God's name they would use the word heaven instead. Matthew in his letters uses heaven for the name of God, he writes the Kingdom of heaven, whereas Luke, Mark and the author of Acts write the Kingdom of God. These are titles for the same Kingdom of God on earth. The title Kingdom of heaven does not mean that the Kingdom of God is in heaven, the Kingdom of heaven is established today on earth, in the heart and mind of every faithful believer by their faith in Christ it is manifested outwardly through a Christian's life by their testimony and good works and collectively through the church (i.e., the global body of Christ) (howbeit not perfectly). This present spiritual Kingdom will be manifested perfectly on earth when Christ returns in glory.

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BREAD FROM HEAVEN

- **John 6:31-33:** Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them *bread from heaven* to eat. ³²Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that *bread from heaven* but my Father gives you the true *bread from heaven* ³³For the bread of God is he which cometh *down from heaven* and gives life unto the world.
- **John 6:38-41:** For I *came down from heaven* not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. ³⁹The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the *bread which came down from heaven* ⁴⁰And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I *came down from heaven*? ⁴¹This is the *bread which cometh down from heaven* that a man may eat thereof, and not die.
- **John 6:57-58:** As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. ⁵⁸This is that *bread which came down from heaven* not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever.

God fed the Israelites in the wilderness bread (manna) from heaven meaning it fell from the sky, but it was from God. Jesus in these verses is saying that Moses did not give Israel the true bread from heaven, but God has now given the true bread from heaven, meaning God gave (or sent) Jesus. The expression, "God gave from heaven is the same as saying, "God sent from heaven" and the same as saying, "Sent down

from heaven.” Jesus is using this type of language, because he is identifying his appearing, with the manna God gave Israel in the wilderness. Manna was spoken of as being from heaven, it is the same as saying God sent it or gave it. Jesus is identified with the manna God gave to Israel so the language he uses is the same. Jesus came from heaven in the sense he was born of the Father and it was God who sent him.

SUMMARY OF HEAVEN IN THE BOOK OF MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE AND JOHN

The only verse in the entire book of Matthew and Mark that may seem to the unlearned, to be implying that there are believers in heaven is (Matt. 24:31) (Mark 13:27) since they both say, “Angels shall gather together, his elect from one end of heaven to the other,” but heaven in this context means the vast expanse of the sky because it also says he will gather his elect from the four winds. If there were believers in heaven, they would be constantly fellowshiping together they would certainly not need God to send angels to go out and gather them together. These verses do not mean that believers are alive in heaven, but that those sleeping in Christ and those alive in Christ and all who belong to Christ under the vast expanse of the sky, moon, sun and stars will be gathered together at the coming of Christ to be with the Lord for evermore. There are no verses in the book of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John that teach people immediately go to heaven upon death or even after death.

HEAVEN IN ACTS

WORSHIP THE HOST OF HEAVEN.

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- **Acts 7:42:** Then God turned, and gave them (Israel) up to worship the *host of heaven* as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

These words of Stephen are cited from Amos chapter five. Though the expression the host of heaven can refer to the sun, moon, planets and stars, in this context it refers to pagan gods and idols. God gave them up to worship the host of heaven means God gave Israel up to worship idols and pagan gods. Israel had become so grossly corrupt and had turned from God to worship pagan gods so God gave them up. There is a great principal in this that we can all learn and it is this: God will never force Himself upon anyone, He will always allow us to do as we will, if we deliberately and consciously turn from Him and do those things that are a total offense to His character and bring dishonour to His name He will allow us to go our own way.

God invites us into His Kingdom He never imposes His will or forces anyone into it. In a sense the Lord Jesus Christ is the wedding invitation God has sent to all the world. Whoever accepts this invitation will by faith and God’s grace enter into God’s Kingdom and feast at the heavenly wedding banquet. Stephen is saying to the religious leaders of his era just as God gave Israel up in the Old Testament because of their wickedness and worship of other gods, He will give them up because of their pride and hypocrisy and their rejection of God’s Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: Idols and pagan gods are referred to as the host of heaven because they are worshipped as gods and even though they only exist in the imagination and mind of those who believe in them because of their strong belief in such gods they are nevertheless believed to be dwelling in the heavens thus the reason they are referred to as the host of heaven.

For further information concerning this principle and false gods see the title:

- Demons in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

A GREAT SHEET, LET DOWN FROM HEAVEN

- **Acts 11:5-10:** Peter saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from *heaven* by four corners --- NOW GO TO VERSE NINE --- ⁹a voice answered Peter again from *heaven* What God hath cleansed, call not common. ¹⁰And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into *heaven*.

This is a majestic vision that God gave to Peter to show him that God is now accepting Jews and Gentiles into his Kingdom. Prior to this God's focus was the people of Israel. Jews saw themselves as the chosen race with God and the Gentiles as an unclean race without God thus the reason God needed to clearly show Peter that in Christ people from all nations, languages and countries could be saved to eternal life in God's Kingdom through faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

HEAVEN IN ROMANS

WHO SHALL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN AND WHO SHALL DESCEND INTO THE DEEP?

- **Romans 10:6-7:** the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, "*who will ascend into heaven?*" (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

Paul is citing (Deut. 30:12-13). These words of Paul are in the context of the following two things: -

1. The Jews looking to the Law of Moses to earn righteousness that leads to eternal life.
2. Righteousness being by faith and God's grace.

Paul is identifying the New Testament self-righteous Jews attitude toward righteousness that leads to eternal life and being right with God as being the same as the Old Testament Jews attitude.

After Moses had given the nation of Israel God's laws, he said to them, "Do not say who will go up to heaven or beyond the sea to get the law because it is in their mouth and in their hearts." Paul is now saying the same thing to the New Testament Jews who have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge since they are ignorant of God's righteousness that comes by faith and instead go about establishing their own righteousness, by legalistically keeping Moses Law and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping their Jewish religious customs and traditions.

Paul is saying to these New Testament Jews who have a zeal for God the same as Moses said to the Old Testament Jews, "Do not say who will go up to heaven or beyond the sea to get righteousness that leads to eternal salvation, because it is their mouths and in their hearts." Meaning that righteousness that leads to eternal life does not come by adhering to outward religious works, but by having a right heart attitude toward God (i.e., the righteousness God desires is a matter of the heart and not outward religious works). Paul goes onto to say:

- The Jews being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes because it is based on faith (Romans 10:3-4) (Romans 10:6).

Added to this he says:

- If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved (Rom. 10:6).

HEAVEN IN 2 CORINTHIANS

TO BE CLOTHED UPON WITH OUR HOUSE WHICH IS FROM HEAVEN

- **2 Corinthians 5:2:** For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our *house which is from heaven*.

Paul in this verse is saying that those who belong to the family of Christ not only look forward with excitement to being clothed with their immortal and eternal body which will be given to them from heaven, but also long for it. From heaven in this context is the same as saying from God, because heaven is the dwelling place of God.

ONE CAUGHT UP TO THE THIRD HEAVEN

- **2 Corinthians 12:1-5:** It is not expedient for me (Paul) doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. ²I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one *caught up to the third heaven*. ³And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) ⁴How that *he was caught up into paradise* and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. ⁵Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

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Paul did not physically go to heaven. Heaven in this context is a place or state of a heavenly vision or dream, the vision is so crystal clear that it is spoken of as though Paul was actually there. Many heavenly visions or dreams of the Bible affect the person having them in this way because they are so vivid to the mind that it is as though the event is real. They are similar to a vivid dream that seems to be taking place in reality, until the person having it wakes up.

Heaven is sometimes presented as God's dwelling place and at other times a place or state of a vision or dream concerning God's will and purposes. This is because a vision can relate to a spectacle gazed at by the eyes or a movie played out in the mind. Sometimes the same biblical event or experience is spoken of as an actual and real event, while at other times the same event maybe recorded as a vision (an image or mental experience within the mind).

A biblical vision communicates the God's will or future events and is always under God's control. It can appear as a movie played out on the screen of the imagination of the mind (similar to a dream) or it may appear as a hologram appearing in the air that is actually seen by the eyes of whoever God chooses to give the vision to. Those who have had such a vision tell the vision to the people, sometimes in their own words and at other times in the exact words that God has spoken to them in the vision.

HEAVEN IN GALATIANS

THOUGH AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN, PREACH ANY OTHER GOSPEL

- **Galatians 1:8:** Though we, or an *angel from heaven*, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Paul is using this expression to show that no-matter how important noble, gifted or talented a preacher of religion is or even if they have a global ministry that has been established for many years if they preach any other Gospel than the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ regardless of how much success they have building their religious empire in this world they will be cast out of the eternal Kingdom of God.

HEAVEN IN EPHESIANS

GATHER TOGETHER ALL THINGS IN CHRIST WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH

- **Ephesians 1:10:** That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he (God) might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in *heaven* and which are on earth; even in him.

The things that are in heaven refer to God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the angels, while the things that are on earth are the faithful in Christ and those that are sleeping in Christ, those whose name are written in the Lambs Book of Life and those who are counted worthy at the Great White Throne judgment. Paul is saying in the fullness of time all will be brought together in and by Christ. At the fullness of time the things in heaven are going to descend and dwell with those on earth that belong to the family of the Lord Jesus Christ. John in the Book of Revelation had a vision in which he saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God and heard a loud voice from the throne of God saying:

- Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 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 (Rev. 21:2-4).

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THE WHOLE FAMILY IN HEAVEN

- **Ephesians 3:15:** from whom every family in *heaven* and on earth is named.

The whole family in heaven refers to God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the angels, those who are sleeping in Christ' plus everyone whose name is written in the Lambs Book of Life and those who are judged worthy at the Great White Throne Judgment all these groups will be gathered together in eternity. The whole family in heaven does not mean that there is conscious ghost like spirit families living in heaven waiting to be united with their immortal and eternal body at the resurrection (as some believe). The words, "The whole family in heaven" in this context refers to all those who are saved from the beginning of creation to the final judgment.

Since the faithful who have died in faith are referred to as sleeping in Christ and their names are written in the Lambs Book of Life their resurrection to eternal life is certain since it is based on God's promise and He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). It is because of these truths that they can be spoken of as being in heaven (i.e., in God's eternal mind, God's eternal care and God's eternal protection). All the children of God from the Old Testament, the New Testament, the millennial age and those counted worthy at the Great White Throne judgment will be gathered together with their heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ their perfect elder brother and Saviour in the holy city, new Jerusalem. It is interesting to notice that ETERNITY at the end of the book of Revelation is not pictured as being in heaven but descending down from heaven to earth when God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:27-28).

THE GLORY, SPLENDOUR AND WONDER OF ETERNITY

The book of Revelation states that those who belong to the family of Christ are resurrected and reign with Christ for a thousand years, but the rest of the dead do not come to life until the thousand years are ended. This is the first resurrection whoever shares in the first resurrection is blessed and the second death has no power over them (Rev. 20:4-6). Those who attain to the first resurrection will reign with the Lord during his glorious millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords as priests of God and of Christ. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

When Christ's glorious millennial reign is ended there will be a final battle between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of men, then at the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. God himself will be with them as their God and wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more neither will there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, because the former things have passed away and God who is seated on the throne makes all things new (Rev 21:5). There is no temple in the city because its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb so the city has no need of the sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is Christ so there will be no night there. By its light the nation's walk and the kings of the earth bring their glory and the honour of the nations into the Holy City New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2-27).

This is the splendour, the glory the wonder and the climax of God's promise to Abraham made many thousands of years ago and the inheritance of all who are children of Abraham by faith and brothers and sisters of Christ. Is there any other religion on earth that proclaims such a glorious eternal hope? (This author has not found one). The Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in sharp clearness proclaims that the stunning splendour of this glory is not dependent on our abilities and talents or our lack of them since God in His wisdom has made salvation to eternal life and everlasting glory available to all, not by our own self-effort, but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace can there be any better news than this, "I think not" thus the reason the Gospel of Christ is called the Good News.

NOTE: since it is certain that this is a very difficult concept for a mind that has been indoctrinated into the traditional idea that we all go to Heaven and not that Heaven comes down to us it should be mentioned that having an exact understanding of ETERNITY is not important to being saved to eternal life. The Lord will not reject or cast out those who have been faithful to him simply because they did not understand where they will be in ETERNITY. After Christ's resurrection most New Testament writers simply state: those in Christ will be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life since the criteria to be saved is not dependent on understanding ETERNITY, but upon believing we will be resurrected to it. For further information see the title:

- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment).

- In Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- Sleeping in Christ (at the end of this document).

MASTERS KNOW THAT YOUR MASTER IS IN HEAVEN

- **Ephesians 6:9:** Ye masters, do the same things to them, forbearing threatening: knowing that *your master also is in heaven*.

Prior to this verse Paul has told slaves to serve their earthly masters with a sincere heart and as servants to Christ and in this verse is telling earthly masters to do the same thing and serve the Lord not as people-pleasers, but with a sincere heart rendering their service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this they will receive back from the Lord, whether they are a slave or free. The words, "Knowing that your master also is in heaven, do not just apply to masters of slaves, but to all the faithful in Christ. We should all walk with a conscious awareness that the Lord sees all we do and endeavour to live a life that brings honour to God and a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

HEAVEN IN PHILIPPIANS

OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN

- **Philippians 3:20:** For *our conversation is in heaven* from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our conversation is in heaven, means that our conversation can be heard by God in heaven and that our conversation should be holy and godly

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HEAVEN IN COLOSSIANS

THE HOPE WHICH IS LAID UP FOR YOU IN HEAVEN

- **Colossians 1:5:** For the *hope which is laid up for you in heaven* whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

The hope which is laid up for you in heaven, means that a believer's hope and their eternal inheritance is stored in heaven. This can also be stated in the following way, "The hope which is laid up for you in the eternal the mind of God." When salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie. The apostle Paul wrote; "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:2). The Christian hopes to be resurrected from the grave to be raised up to eternal life and everlasting glory to be made perfectly free from sin; to be everlastingly happy, but it is faith that gives these things a mental reality in the mind and it is under this influence of faith that those in Christ allow these unseen and yet future events to control their mind as if they were a reality now.

HEAVEN IN THESSALONIANS

THE LORD WILL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN

- **1 Thessalonians 4:16:** The Lord himself shall descend from *heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Those who have died with faith in Christ are referred to as sleeping in Christ because their death is only temporary. When the Lord returns, they will be woken by the last trumpet call and at the voice of the archangel and raised to eternal life and everlasting glory and those who belong to the family of Christ and are alive at this time will be caught up to be forever with them and with the Lord.

HEAVEN IN HEBREWS

YOU HAVE IN HEAVEN A BETTER AND AN ENDURING SUBSTANCE

- **Hebrews 10:34:** For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that *ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.*

Here believers had endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those treated in the same manner, but despite the persecution they had compassion on other brothers and sisters in prison (meaning they visited them putting their own lives in danger), because they knew they had a better and enduring life because of their faith in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and were fully confident that they had a better possession and an abiding one (meaning they knew they had a better inheritance than anything this world has to offer).

BELIEVER'S NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN

- **Hebrews 12:23:** To the general assembly and church of the *firstborn, which are written in heaven* and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

Here the author of Hebrews is telling his audience that they have not come to the mountain of darkness and gloom that could not be touched as Israel did at Mount Sinai, but to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant. The author is contrasting Israel coming to God at the dark mountain of gloom that could not be touched to the glorious wonder and light we have in coming to God through Christ. The expression "The firstborn, which are written in heaven" refers to those who have come to God after Christ's death and resurrection. The writer of Hebrews in this chapter is contrasting Israel under the law who could not even touch Mount Sinai when God descended upon it to those under the new Covenant of grace being able to come to God by faith and grace. Notice the writer is saying that it is their names that are written in heaven he is not saying they are actually in heaven.

SCRIPTURES USING THE WORD ANGELS

The following Scriptures are all the verses in the New Testament that use the word heaven in the context of angels, God and Jesus dwelling in heaven, but have, nothing to do with faithful brothers and sisters in Christ dwelling in heaven or going to heaven.

- God from *heaven* said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Matthew 3:17).
- Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your father which is in *heaven* (Matt. 6:1).
- Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in *heaven*. (Matt. 7:21).

- Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in *heaven* *their angels* do always behold the face of my father which is in *heaven* (Matt. 18:10).
- In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in *heaven*. (Matt. 22:23-32).
- Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of *heaven* but my Father only. (Matthew 24:36).
- The angel of the lord descended from *heaven* and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. (Matt. 28:2).
- They shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in *heaven*. (Mark 12:25).
- Jesus said, I thank thee, O father, lord of *heaven*. (Luke 10:21).
- Jesus is taken up into *heaven* shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into *heaven*. (Acts 1:11).
- Jesus whom the *heaven* must receive until the times of restitution of all things. (Acts 3:21).
- Stephen being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into *heaven* and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. (Acts 7:55).
- *Heaven* is my throne, and earth is my footstool. (Acts 7:49).
- To wait for his son from *heaven*, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. (1 Thess. 1:10)
- The Lord himself shall descend from *heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
- To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from *heaven* with his mighty angels. (2 Thess. 1:7-8).
- Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into *heaven* itself to appear in the presence of God for us. (Heb. 9:24).
- See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth (Moses), much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from *heaven*. (Heb. 12:25).
- There are three that bear record in *heaven* the Father, the word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one. (1 John 5:7).

CONCLUSION OF HEAVEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Heaven in the New Testament (excluding the book of Revelation). We began this study not to do an in-depth study on each topic, but simply to discover if any verse using the word heaven teaches that people are in heaven or go to heaven immediately upon death. So far in the New Testament there has been no Scripture that contain teachings that people go to heaven immediately upon death or even after death.

HEAVEN IN REVELATION

ANGELS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Remember: the purpose of this document is not to do an in-depth study on each topic, but simply to discover if any verse in the Bible using the word heaven teaches that people go to heaven immediately upon death. The following are the remaining verses of the New Testament in the Book of Revelation that use the word heaven.

BEHOLD, A DOOR WAS OPENED IN HEAVEN

- **Revelation 4:1-2:** After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in *heaven* and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. ²And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in *heaven*, and one sat on the throne.

John did not physically go to heaven, the verse says he was in the Spirit meaning that he was caught up in some form of deep but wonderful heavenly trance that the angel of God was able to reveal the vision to his mind so that John through his writing is able to communicate it to our minds. A vision can relate to a spectacle gazed at by the eyes or a movie played out in the mind. Sometimes the same biblical event or experience is spoken of as an actual and real event, while at other times the same event maybe recorded as a vision (an image or mental experience within the mind). A biblical vision communicates the God's will or future events and is always under God's control. It can appear as a movie played out on the screen of the imagination of the mind (similar to a dream) or it may appear as a hologram appearing in the air that is actually seen by the eyes of whoever God chooses to give the vision to. Those who have had such a vision tell the vision to the people, sometimes in their own words and at other times in the exact words that God has spoken to them in the vision.

REVELATION 5

NO MAN IN HEAVEN

- **Revelation 5:3:** Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ²And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" ³And no one in *heaven* or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.

No one in heaven or earth meaning no-one in the entire universe, (i.e., angels, prophets and apostles etc.), could be found worthy to open this book. This is not teaching that there are people in heaven it is emphasizing and highlighting the truth, that there is no one in the entire universe that is worthy to open this heavenly book.

EVERY CREATURE WHICH IS IN HEAVEN

- **Revelation 5:13:** And every creature which is in *heaven* and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne (God) and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.
- Every creature which is in heaven applies to the multitudes of angels that are in heaven.
- To those on the earth applies to all who are alive and belong to Christ.
- Those under the earth applies to those who have died and are sleeping in Christ.

This verse is not saying Christians are in heaven, but that John heard these three groups worshipping God and the Lord Jesus Christ. This can be supported by the fact that John says he heard those under the earth, and in the sea meaning the dead, praising and worshipping God, remember the angel of the Lord is giving John a future vision of the eternal Kingdom.

TWO WITNESSES ASCENDED UP TO HEAVEN

- **Revelation 11:12-13:** they (two witnesses) heard a *great voice from heaven* saying unto them, Come up hither. And they *ascended up to heaven* in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. ¹³And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the *God of heaven*.

These two witnesses are the only two being resurrected, whoever they are and whatever the symbolism (there are many) the vision cannot be used as evidence that Christians go to heaven when they die.

REVELATION 13

THOSE THAT DWELL IN HEAVEN

- **Revelation 13:6:** And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that *dwell in heaven*.

Jesus was the firstfruits of the dead to be resurrected to eternal glory, meaning the first to be raised to eternal life, the rest of the dead are sleeping in Christ until the first resurrection (Rev 5:20) when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. So far, the only ones that are pictured in heaven are God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the angel's there have been no Scriptures that teach the dead in Christ are also in heaven. Those that are dead and sleeping in Christ and those that are alive and belong to Christ, from God's or heavens perspective are seen as being in heaven, because both groups will be gathered together to be with Christ at the resurrection. They are seen or spoken of as being in heaven because, the dead will be raised from the grave and those that are alive at Christ's return will enter into eternal life in the Kingdom of God with the Lord Jesus Christ. God's promise of salvation in Christ is guaranteed, that is why the Bible can refer to those that belong to Christ as already being with God or seated in heavenly places. For further information see the title: "Sleeping in Christ" at the end of this study.

REVELATION 14

I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN

- **Revelation 14:2:** And I heard a *voice from heaven* as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps
- **Revelation 14:5:** And in their (the 144 000) mouth was found no guile: for they are *without fault before the throne of God*.

In this chapter John looked and saw Jesus standing on Zion God's Holy Mountain upon which Jerusalem sits with the firstfruits who have been redeemed for God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he heard a voice from heaven sounding like the roar of many waters and loud like thunder. John says the voice was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. This is a beautiful picture of all the redeemed rejoicing and praising God because they are with Christ. They are without fault before the Throne of God does not mean they are literally in heaven, but that they are seen before God without fault and that God sees them without fault. John sees the resurrected redeemed standing with Christ on Mount Zion on earth singing a new song before the throne of God. This does not mean they are actually in heaven. John is using the same language Christians use when they say they go to worship before to Lord every Sunday or I

kneeled before the throne of God and prayed. It does not mean the person is literally in heaven before God, but carries the idea that they are by faith spiritually before God and his throne, and God sees them as though they are literally kneeling before Him. This vision is contrasting the security and safety of the redeemed who are with Christ on God's Holy Mountain Zion and God's Holy City Jerusalem to those who will suffer God's judgment and wrath that is about to be poured out on earth outside the city of Jerusalem (v20).

REVELATION 18

REJOICE OVER HER (BABYLON) THOU HEAVEN

- **Revelation 18:20:** Rejoice over her (Babylon) *thou heaven*, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

Heaven is told to rejoice over the fall of Babylon, this applies to Jesus and the angel's rejoicing together with every brother and sister in Christ on earth at that time. Christians are seen as being in heaven, in the sense that their mind is set on heavenly or godly things. From God's perspective they are spiritually seated in heaven, even though they dwell on earth. This is because those who belong to Christ are adopted children of God and as such will be resurrected to eternal life and everlasting glory to be with Christ and with God for all ETERNITY.

REVELATION 19

A LOUD VOICE OF A GREAT MULTITUDE IN HEAVEN

- **Revelation 19:1-3:** After these things I heard a loud voice of a *great multitude in heaven*, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honour and power *belong* to the Lord our God! ²For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. ³And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

It is the voices of people on earth ascending to heaven that John heard in heaven. John is not saying the people are in heaven, but that their praises are heard there. It is the praises of people on earth ascending to heaven that John heard in heaven. It is the same principal as prayer, a believer prays while on earth, but the prayer is heard in heaven, congregations' worship together every Sunday on earth, but their praises are heard in heaven it is these voice that John was hearing in heaven.

THE ARMIES, WHICH WERE IN HEAVEN FOLLOWED HIM

- **Revelation 19:12-16:** His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. ¹³And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The word of God. ¹⁴And the *armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses* clothed in fine linen, white and clean ¹⁵And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, *King of Kings, And Lord of Lords*.

NOTICE: the entire army is pictured as being on white horses.

The entire context of these verses is surrounded with extremely symbolic language, the armies that follow Christ can be seen in the following two ways:

1. Those that are sleeping in Christ and those who belong to him and are alive at Christ's return will be gathered together to be with the Lord and rule and reign with him on earth as kings and priest's (Rev 1:5-7) (Rev 5:9-10). They are seen here caught up together with Christ to achieve God's ultimate plans and eternal purposes and promises for the earth.
2. Those who belong to Christ, have their names written in the Lambs Book of Life, meaning they are kept in the eternal mind of God. It is in this sense they can be spoken of as spiritually being with God, or in heaven, sometimes spoken of as being seated in heavenly places.

They are referred to as being in heaven because their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, (kept in the mind of God) awaiting the first resurrection (Revelation 20:5). Those who belong to Christ can be spoken of as being in heaven for two reasons:

1. Earth is bound by time, but God and heaven are not, there is no beginning or end with God, therefore from God's perspective, or a heavenly viewpoint the faithful in Christ can be spoken of as being in heaven or with God, even though in our time they are awaiting the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6).
2. Eternal salvation in Christ is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie. The apostle Paul wrote; "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:2). This is why in prophetic and heavenly language those in Christ can be spoken of as being seated in heaven.

REVELATION 21

NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN

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- **Revelation 21:2-10:** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first *heaven* and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of *heaven* from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a great *voice out of heaven* saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. ---- NOW GO TO VERSE ---- ¹⁰And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the *holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God*.

Some groups spiritualise this vision and apply it to the picture of the church existing today, but a better understanding is to accept the vision as a heavenly vision of the events to take place after the final Great White Throne judgment. Even though it is symbolic language, it can be seen as a literal city that will come down from God out of heaven and can be understood, as heavenly language depicting the final establishment of God's eternal Kingdom on earth when Christ hands everything over to the Father and God is ALL in ALL. Remember John is seeing everything in very symbolic vision form, in a sense he is seeing into the mind of God. It is as though the Holy City Jerusalem is pictured as descending from heaven or coming out of the mind of God in vision form to John. The final Kingdom of God to be established on earth is at the end of Christ's glorious millennium reign as King of kings and Lord of lords and after the Great White Throne Judgment when the Holy City Jerusalem, descends out of heaven from God to earth and God is ALL in ALL. This interpretation is in harmony with the context of Revelation twenty-one and Old Testament prophecies.

The following verses are all the remaining verses in the book of Revelation that mention the word *heaven*, but in the context, they are in they clearly have nothing to do with believers going to heaven immediately upon death or even after death.

- He that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of God which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of *heaven* from my God (Rev. 3:12).
- The stars of *heaven* fell unto the earth even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind (Rev. 6:13).
- The *heaven* departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places (Rev. 6:14).
- When he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in *heaven* about the space of half an hour (Rev. 8:1).
- The fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from *heaven* unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit (Rev. 9:1).
- I saw another mighty angel come down from *heaven* clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire (Rev. 10:1).
- When the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from *heaven* saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not (Rev. 10:4).
- The angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to *heaven* (Rev. 10:5)
- And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created *heaven* and the things that therein are (Rev. 10:6).
- The voice which I heard from *heaven* spake unto me again (Rev. 10:8).
- These (two witnesses) have power to shut *heaven*, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy (Rev. 11:6).
- Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in *heaven* saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).
- The temple of god was opened in *heaven* and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail (Rev. 11:19).
- There appeared a great wonder in *heaven* a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars (Rev. 12:1).
- There appeared another wonder in *heaven* and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads (Rev. 12:3).
- His tail drew the third part of the stars of *heaven* and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born (Rev. 12:4).
- There was war in *heaven* Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels (Rev. 12:7).
- Neither was their (a dragon and the stars) found any more in *heaven* (Rev. 12:8).
- I heard a loud voice saying in *heaven* Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night (Rev. 12:10).
- He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from *heaven* on the earth in the sight of men (Rev. 13:13).

- I saw another angel fly in the midst of *heaven*, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made *heaven* and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (Rev. 14:6).
- I heard a voice from *heaven* saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them (Rev. 14:13).
- An angel came out of the temple which is in *heaven* having a sharp sickle (Rev. 14).
- I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in *heaven* was opened (Rev. 15:5).
- And blasphemed the god of *heaven* because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds (Rev. 16:11).
- The seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of *heaven*, from the throne, saying, It is done (Rev. 16:17).
- After these things I saw another angel come down from *heaven* having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory (Rev. 18:1).
- I heard another voice from *heaven* saying, Come out of her (Babylon) my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues (Rev. 18:4).
- For her (Babylon) sins have reached unto *heaven* and God hath remembered her iniquities (Rev. 18:5).
- I saw *heaven* opened, and behold a white horse and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war (Rev. 19:11).
- I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of *heaven*, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God (Rev. 19:17).
- I saw an angel come down from *heaven* having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. (Rev. 20:1).
- They went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of *heaven* and devoured them (Rev 20:9).
- I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the *heaven* fled away (Rev. 20:11-15).
- I saw a new *heaven* and a new earth for the first *heaven* and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea (Rev. 21:1).

This is the end of every verse in the book of Revelation that uses the word heaven.

SUMMARY OF HEAVEN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

We began this study to discover if any verse using the word heaven in the Old or New Testament teaches that people go to heaven immediately upon death or even after death. We have seen that the word heaven is often used in some contexts, to represent political or religious authorities and powers.

Stars: figuratively speak of people on earth in high places of authority and power and of those who have great control or influence over a vast amount of people on earth, especially religious leaders. Stars falling from heaven speak of people in positions of great power, influence and authority (especially false religious leaders) on earth losing their power and control.

A star falling from heaven: John in his vision saw a star fall from heaven to the earth then John says that to him (the star) was given evil and destructive power. This star represents an evil powerful king ruling on earth falling from his high position of authority and power on earth.

Silence in heaven: when multitudes have been killed in war those that survive will often stand in silence to remember them, when people are struck with some great crisis they can go into shock and silence, when people are in panic or fear they are often unable to speak and when people are in awe they are spoken of as having no words to say, which means that silence in heaven speaks of some great event that either shocks fear into people or excites people with tremendous awe and joy, it refers to some event that is so overwhelming that it stuns or excites people into silence.

Dragons in heaven: dragons do not have seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon their heads this is a vision of a very great and powerful evil king and his kingdom on earth. It is a picture of the battle between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of men on earth. The tail of the dragon is symbolic of the kingdoms or nations that are aligned with this very powerful evil king and his kingdom on earth.

War in heaven: heaven is often used in some contexts, to represent political or religious authorities and powers. Heaven is the dwelling place of God and the angels; there is no war where God dwells, who could make war with God Almighty? He created all things and has the awesome power to totally destroy all things. This is a heavenly or spiritual vision picturing a war using heaven and symbolic language to describe the intensity of the battle happening on earth. The battle is on earth and it is between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of men (i.e., paganism and Christianity). This battle is symbolically pictured as a dragon aggressively pursuing a woman on earth. The woman is clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet. The great red dragon is pictured with seven heads and ten horns with the dragon's tail casting down a third of the stars to the earth and Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon and defeating it. There is no woman in heaven clothed with the sun and the moon nor do dragons have seven heads and a tail that can cast down stars. This is biblical lofty and symbolic language used in John's vision to depict, the enormity of a battle between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of men. . It is a heavenly and spiritual vision picturing the victory of Christ over the unbelieving world. John is using heavenly symbolic language to show that the Kingdom of men has no more power over the Kingdom of God.

NOTICE: the last few verses state that God descends to earth on a great white throne and there is a new heaven and a new earth which has no more sea. This means the climate of the earth will be dramatically changed in such a manner that the weather patterns will not only never again do anything harmful, but will cause every part of the earth's surface to blossom and produce. The heavens and the earth will not be destroyed, but they will be changed in such a dramatic fashion that life on earth will be totally unlike the life we live today in this fallen, corrupt world full of sorrow and troubles. These changes will be so glorious that it will be right and proper to refer to earth as a new earth and a new heaven. (Rev. 20:11-15) (Rev. 21:1-20) (Rev 21:1). The statement there will be no more sea may simply mean that the sea will be crystal clear fresh water that brings life in contrast to salty water or it may mean that instead of vast expanses of water there will be multitudes of streams and rivers with fresh water.

SLEEPING IN CHRIST

When a person who belongs to Christ dies, the Bible says, that they have no knowledge and know nothing, they are totally unaware of it and are therefore in a perfect state of peace, this state is called sleeping in Christ and because they have no consciousness there, is no time. It is very

similar to someone in a deep sleep there is no awareness of time, when the person wakes, they have no idea of whether four, seven or twelve hours have passed. Likewise, because there is no time in death the moment a Christian dies is the moment they are in the Kingdom of God and with the LORD, for them it is instant, even though many years may have passed by in our world's time. David died thousands of years ago, but the moment he is resurrected will be like the moment he breathed his last breath, because for him there is no awareness of time, so it is for every Christian from death to Christ is instant.

Death to the Christian is similar to a person in a coma: a person in a coma has no consciousness of time, time does not exist to them, when they wake, they often think only a day or so has gone by, when in actual fact several years may have passed yet they think they are waking up, the same day, or next day after they went to sleep. The person in the coma or in death is totally unaware of any time that they have spent in the coma or being dead. Death to those who belong to Christ is much the same as the person in the coma, the dead or those who are sleeping in Christ have absolutely no consciousness of time so for them, the moment they die, is the moment they are instantly with the Lord, even though many years may have passed during the time they have been dead (i.e., sleeping in Christ).

It is the same principal as a person who goes into hospital for an operation: the patient is given an anaesthetic and put to sleep, surgeons cut them up and take bits out, over the next few hours, yet the patient is totally unaware of it they wake up and have absolutely no idea of the time that has passed, therefore when Paul says:

- We are of good courage, and we would rather be away (absent in the KJV) from the body and at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

It is a true statement, even though he may have spent years sleeping in Christ.

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NOTE: a second reason a Christians death is called sleeping in Christ is because their death is only temporary, being asleep in Christ means everyone who dies in Christ is kept in the eternal mind and memory of God.

Jesus said:

- Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them falls to the ground without the father knowing it and even the hairs of our head are all numbered therefore we should not fear death because we are of more value than many sparrows (Matthew 10:29-31).

The entire person, (i.e., body, spirit, mind and consciousness) remains sleeping in Christ, until the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5) when all who are asleep in the Lord are woken up at the blast of the angels trumpet and raised from the dead to everlasting glory and clothed with an eternal and immortal body.

NOTE: some people find it difficult to comprehend God raising the dead, but think of it this way: we have super computers today that have in their memories literally trillions of bits of information and at the touch of a key any one of those bits is resurrected to us on a brightly coloured screen (soon it is most likely they will simply appear in the air), then with another touch of the key it all vanishes into the super memory and is gone, until we resurrect it again. Knowing that God has given his creation a mortal mind and finite memory to be able to build such amazing computers should make it very easy to understand how God keeps us all in His immortal mind and eternal memory waiting for the right time to touch the supernatural keyboard of heaven and raise us once again to life. Added to this very few Christians have any trouble believing God created the universe that we live in so raising the dead in comparison is not such a difficult task for such an awesome, powerful and majestic God (Heb. 11:3).

For further information see the titles:

- Revelation chapter 12.
- Elijah taken into heaven.

Both titles are in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

- Before the LORD in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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