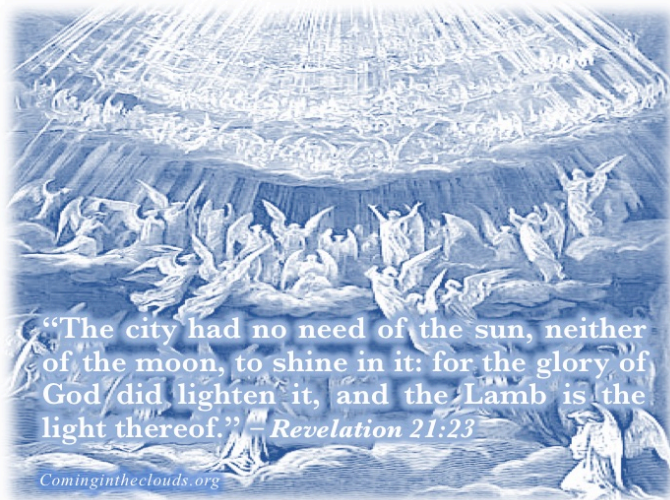


# What The Bible Says About Heaven



## Introduction:

This paper has been written to address the issue of who goes to heaven and what the Bible means when the word *heaven* is mentioned. The word has several meanings throughout the Bible and so when we look at a specific doctrine related to heaven, we must be sure that we are correct about what the word means in the context in which it is being used.

## Which heaven and which earth is going to pass away?

Some religious groups (such as the Jehovahs Witnesses) teach that most people will not end up in heaven but back on the existing earth where peace has been restored. This idea is in direct conflict with scripture:

Revelation 21:1 - "And 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."

This verse does not refer to 'the world system'. If it was referring to a world system versus the literal earth, why would it say 'no more sea' and why would it mention heaven passing away also?

## Would God destroy heaven, His home?

There are people who look at Revelation 21:1 who claim "You can't interpret Revelation 21:1 in a literal or physical sense because it does not make sense that God would destroy heaven, His home." The fact of the matter is, God lives in the third heaven - He is beyond our limitations of time and space in our physical realm. He is not confined to the second heaven or the first heaven[].

## **The first heaven:**

### **The first heaven is the sky above the earth - our atmosphere.**

Genesis 1:1 says: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Does that mean that God had nowhere to live yet? Of course not. Genesis 1:1 is talking about the physical heavens, our atmosphere and outer space□

Psalm 148:4 - "Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens."

Jeremiah 4:25 - "I beheld, and, lo, *there was* no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled."

Jeremiah 9:10 - "For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through *them*; neither can *men* hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone."

Jeremiah 10:13 - "When he uttereth his voice, *there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures."

## **The second heaven:**

### **The second heaven is what most people nowadays refer to as 'outer space.**

Genesis 2:1 - "Thus the the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them."

Psalm 33:6 - "By the word of the LORD were the the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."

1Chronicles 27:23 - "But David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under: because the LORD had said he would increase Israel like to the stars of the heavens."

## **The third heaven:**

The 'third heaven' is that spiritual realm that God inhabits consisting of all the

known universe and that which is beyond time and space and beyond our comprehension. This third heaven was mentioned by Paul:

2 Corinthians 12:2 - "I 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."

## **The physical heavens will be destroyed:**

God is planning to destroy the original two physical heavens (first and second heavens). Job and Isaiah spoke of a time when the heavens would be no more:

Job 14:2 - "So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

Isaiah 13:13 - "Therefore I will shake the the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger."

Isaiah 34:4 - "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the 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 51:6 - "Lift up your eyes to the the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished."

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"

2Peter 3:10,13 - "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. □ Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

## **God specifically says He will create new heavens and a new earth:**

Isaiah 65:17 - "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the

former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”

Isaiah 66:22 - “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.”

## **How many people will be in heaven?**

Revelation 7:9 - “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;”

## **Where is the throne of God that John is talking about?**

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. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.”

## **But what about the 144,000?**

Some people claim that only 144,000 individuals are going to heaven based on their interpretation of Revelation 7:4:

Revelation 7:4 - “And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were sealed* an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”

It is entirely possible that this number refers to something else, especially when we learn that the *great crowd* or *great multitude* of Revelation 7:9 (mentioned above) is situated in heaven.

## **Who sings a new song?**

Revelation 14:3 - “And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and forty and four thousand*, which were redeemed from the earth.”

## The redeemed sing a new song when they become saved:

Psalm 40:3 - "And he hath put a a **new song** in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD."

Psalm 98:1 - "<<A Psalm.>> O sing unto the LORD a **new song**; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory."

Psalm 149:1 - "Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a a new song, *and* his praise in the congregation of saints."

Psalm 71:23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast **redeemed**."

## The great multitude are singing a new song:

Revelation 5:9 - "And they sung a a **new song**, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast **redeemed us** to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;"

## The one hundred and forty four thousand are singing a new song:

Revelation 14:3 - "And they sung as it were a **new song** before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but **the hundred and forty and four thousand**, which were **redeemed** from the earth."

## So perhaps the great multitude and the 144,000 are one and the same.

God uses numbers in the Bible to denote certain things, certain ideas. We can see the number 144 used elsewhere in the Bible:

Revelation 21:17 - "And he measured the wall thereof, an **hundred and forty and four cubits**, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel."

## Is it just coincidental that there were twelve tribes and twelve apostles?

Is it just coincidental that there are to be twelve foundations and twelve gates into the New Jerusalem? Is it not possible that God is using the number 12 for a specific reason and the number 144,000 (12 x 12 x 1000) for a specific reason also? It is quite obvious that God uses numbers symbolically in various other places in the Bible:

**666** = the number of man (Revelation 13:18)

**1000 years** = represents a very long period of time (Psalm 90:4, 2Peter 3:8)

**490** (70x7) = represents the extent to which we should forgive others of their trespasses against us (Matthew 18:22)

## Are people trying to hinder others from going to heaven?

Please note what Jesus said in Matthew 23:13. It is a stern warning to not only the Pharisees of the first century, but to people who claim that they and others cannot go to heaven because everyone who is going to be there has already died, which is what the Jehovah's Witnesses believe. But to people like that, the Bible says:

Matthew 23:13 - "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

## But who else is hindering people from getting to heaven?

The answer is: One very large class of people - All the religious people who are preaching a "works" gospel, who are telling others that getting to heaven involves human effort ... some achievement, sacrifice, prayers, penance, good deeds, merits or offering on the part of the sinner or on the part of some other imperfect human advocate (like a Catholic priest or dead Catholic saints). But God tells us those people don't understand His plan of salvation by His grace alone and by the sacrifice of Christ alone:

Romans 10:3 - "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves

unto the righteousness of God.”

## Summary

Since heaven is the realm of only one king, Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, it has no room for impostors, thieves and liars. And that is how Jesus referred to all the false teachers who teach a man-centered way to heaven. So what that means is, all the heads of all the world religions that do NOT preach salvation by Jesus Christ alone, will be in hell forever, no matter how holy they may appear to their followers.

True salvation, the kind that makes a person fit for heaven - is only obtained by and through the merits of Jesus Christ and his atoning blood sacrifice on behalf of and in the place of all the sinners He came to save.

Acts 4:12 - “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name [other than Jesus Christ] under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

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