

## **Tough Questions of Faith**

### **Volume 2, Heaven**

*What is Heaven like?*

If hell is the absence of God and eternal punishment, then Heaven, as its opposite, is the full presence of God for eternity in a perfect state of bliss. Author Max Lucado describes it as, “A perfect place of perfected people overseen by our Perfect Lord.”

*How does God describe Heaven?*

*“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In My Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going,” John 14:1-3.*

The Bible clearly portrays Heaven as a physical place where you live with God forever. The splendor of Heaven is vividly described in Revelation 21 with “streets of gold, gates of pearls” and many more marvelous qualities. In the beginning of the chapter, God also describes it as a new heaven and new earth! This coincides with other biblical teaching that God will create a new place for our eternal dwelling following the return of Christ, judgment day, and destruction of this earth. Our eternal life will be immeasurably better than this world, where Heaven will have no tears, death, mourning, crying, no pain or sin (Revelation 21:4).

*What will our life be like in Heaven?*

We will live in a spiritual resurrected body (I Corinthians 15:42-44). It will be a new body, most likely similar to Jesus’ resurrected body where He was recognizable as a person, but looked different than before His death. There is no marriage in Heaven, as Jesus taught in Matthew 22:30, but it does seem like we will be able to recognize loved ones as shown in II Samuel 12:22-23 where King David speaks of his deceased child, “I will go to him, but he will not return to me.”

*What will we do in Heaven?*

One of the primary pictures we see of Heaven is people and angels worshipping God. As we see Him face to face, worship will be a natural response. You will be able to worship in whatever language and form you choose and in hymns, praise songs, drums and organs, and because there is no sin, there will be no arguments over worship styles or music, we’ll just worship. If there is a new heaven and new earth together, then it seems likely that many of the natural wonders, along with the animals which we enjoy here, will be continued and enhanced there (Revelation 22:1-4, Romans 8:18-22).

*Will we receive different rewards in Heaven?*

The Bible does teach that while we are saved by grace, we will be rewarded for what we do on this earth to serve God. The nature of the rewards is unclear, but it seems to indicate that our devotion to Christ here increases our capacity to enjoy the blessings of Heaven (I Corinthians 3:10-15, Matthew 25:21). For someone without God in their life, their existence on earth now will be the best it will ever be. For the Christian, his present life on earth is the worst it will ever be. The glory and blessings of heaven will truly be unimaginable.

***A question for reflection: If there is no Heaven, then how do you explain the hundreds of people who have been brought back from the brink of death who describe a heaven-type experience? Also, what hope could you ever hold out to the terminally ill and the great suffering so many endure in this life?***