

Introduction

- ▶ I don't think it's a very controversial statement to say that there has never been a thought which has thrilled (or terrified) the human soul more deeply, more abundantly, or more often than that of **the afterlife**.
 - ✘ As one commentator said, the earlier chapters of the book of **Revelation** are often as clean as when that Bible was first purchased, "but *the last two chapters are worn from constant reading—and perhaps stained with tears.*"¹
- ▶ The request was made for us to take a look at the jaw-dropping, heart-rending, tear-jerking concept of the *afterlife*:
 - ✘ Last week we asked specifically: *What does the Bible teach about where we go the moment we die?*
 - ✘ Today, the more "general": *What does the Bible teach about life after life—i.e., in **eternity**?*

Heaven

- ▶ The word "**heaven**" is in Bible ≈**534 times** (280 OT; 254 NT [75 in Matthew]).
 - ✘ However, not even **50%** of NT occurrences actually ref. to the *other-worldly abode of God*—the place where His people will be allowed to live with Him in eternity (cf. **Matt. 25:31-46**; **Jn. 14:2,3**; **1 Thess. 4:15-18**; et al.).
- ▶ Overall, the word usually refers to **the sky** or "**outer space**" (cf. **Gen. 1:8**; **Deut. 4:19**; **Josh. 8:20**; **Judg. 13:20**; **2 Sam. 22:14**; **1 Kgs. 8:35**; **2 Kgs. 7:2**; **1 Chron. 21:16**; **2 Chron. 2:12**; **Neh. 9:6**; **Job 2:12**; **Psa. 115:15**; **Prov. 23:5**; **Isa. 34:4**; **Jer. 8:2**; **Ezek. 32:8**; **Dan. 7:13**; **Zech. 5:9**; **Matt. 24:35**; **Lk. 17:29**; **Acts 1:10,11**; **Heb. 11:12**; **Jas. 5:18**; **Rev. 10:6**; et al.).
 - ✘ And of those times when it does refer to the eternal abode of God, it is mentioned in passing, as simply a place that exists, and as place where people can have the chance to live.
- ▶ Because of this, we have very limited information about this place.
 - ✘ But what we're going to do for the next few minutes is look at what we do find in the Bible—esp. NT—about this place called "**the third heaven**" (**2 Cor. 12:2**), or "**the heaven of heavens**" (**1 Kgs. 8:27**).

I. HEAVEN IS WHERE THE **FATHER** IS.

- A. **JOB 16:19**—"Even now, behold, my Witness is **in heaven**. And He that voucheth for me is **on high**."
- B. **PSA. 11:4**—"Jehovah is in **his holy temple**; Jehovah, **his throne is in heaven**; His eyes behold...the children of men."
- C. **ECC. 5:2**—"...let not your heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for **God is in heaven**, and you upon **earth**..."
- D. **LAM. 3:41**—"Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto **God in heaven**."
- E. **DAN. 2:28**—"...but **there is a God in heaven** that revealeth secrets..."
- F. **MATT. 5:16**—"your Father **who is in heaven**" (cf. **5:45**; **6:1,9**; **7:11,21**; **10:32,33**; **12:50**; **16:17**; **18:10,14,19**; **23:9**).
- G. **EPH. 6:9**—"Masters, do the same..., knowing that **He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven**..." (cp. **Col. 4:1**).
- H. **1 KGS. 8:22-53**—"And hearken thou to...thy servant, and of thy people Israel, **when they shall pray toward this place: ...hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place**; and when thou hearest, forgive" (30; cf. **32,34,36,39,43,45,49**).
 - 1. This is extremely significant, for, just before this prayer, Solomon said to Jehovah, "I have surely built thee a house of habitation, **a place for thee to dwell in for ever**" (13; cf. **2 Chron. 6:2**).
 - 2. Yet Solomon understood that that is not where Jehovah *actually resided*—for His abode is **Heaven**.

¹ Roper, David L. *Truth for Today Commentary: Revelation 12-22*. Searcy: Resource Publications, 2010. p. 356. Print.

- a) "And the house which I build is great; for great is our God above all gods. But *who is able to build Him a house*, seeing **heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him**? Who am I then, that I should build Him a house, save only to burn incense before Him?" (2 Chron. 2:5,6).
- b) "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!" (18).

II. HEAVEN IS WHERE **JESUS** IS.

- A. JOHN 1:1,2,14—"In the beginning was the Word, and **the Word was with God**, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning **with God**... And *the Word became flesh*, and dwelt among us..."
- B. JOHN 14:2—"...**I go to** prepare a place for you [in **my Father's house**]... And *you know...where I am going*..."
- C. MARK 16:19—"So then the Lord Jesus...was **taken up into heaven** and sat down **at the right hand of God**."
- D. HEB. 10:12—"But he, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down **at the right hand of God**..."
- E. ACTS 7:55—"But [Stephen] looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw...**Jesus** standing **at the right hand of God**..."

III. HEAVEN IS WHERE THE **HOLY SPIRIT** IS.

- A. GEN. 1:1,2—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and **the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters**."
- B. JOHN 15:26—"But when *the Helper* comes, whom **I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father**, he will bear witness about me."

IV. HEAVEN IS WHERE THE **FAITHFUL DEAD** (INCL. LOVED ONES WHO DIED IN CHRIST) WILL BE.

- A. GEN. 25:8—"Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was **gathered to his people**."
- B. 1 THESS. 4:13-18—"For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, **God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep**... Then [those] who are left...will be **caught up together with them** in the clouds..." (14,17).

V. HEAVEN IS WHERE **I** WANT TO BE.

- A. REVELATION 21:1-22:5
 - 1. "And I saw the holy city...coming down out of heaven from God... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, **the dwelling place of God is with man**...' (21:2,3).
 - 2. "'...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**'" (4).
 - 3. "And the city has **no need of sun or moon** to shine on it, **for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb**... and **its gates will never be shut** by day—and there will be **no night** there" (23,25).
 - 4. "But **nothing unclean** will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is **detestable** or **false**, but **only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life**" (27).
 - 5. "Then the angel showed me **the river of the water of life**, bright as crystal, flowing from **the throne of God and of the Lamb** through the middle...of the city; also, ...the **tree of life** with its twelve kinds of fruit..." (22:1,2).
 - 6. "And there shall be **no curse** any more, but **the throne of God and of the Lamb** will be in it, and his servants will worship him. **They will see his face**... and they will reign **forever and ever**" (3-5).

VI. HEAVEN IS WHERE I CAN BE!

- A. JOHN 14:2,3—"In my Father's house are many rooms...; for *I go [there] to prepare a place for YOU*. And...*I will come again and will receive YOU unto myself, that where I am, there YOU may be also.*"
- B. 1 PET. 1:3,4—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ [who] has caused us to be born again...unto **an inheritance** that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that does not fade away, **reserved in heaven for YOU...**"

Hell

► Whereas "heaven" is in Bible ≈534 times, "hell" is found only **13** times—and majority are *from Jesus*.

I. HELL IS A PLACE OF DESTRUCTION.

- A. MATT. 10:28—"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can **destroy both soul and body in HELL.**"

II. HELL IS A PLACE OF ENDLESS DESTRUCTION.

- A. MARK 9:43,48—"It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to *hell*, to **the unquenchable fire... where their worm dieth not...**"

III. HELL IS A PLACE SATAN & CO. WILL BE.

- A. MATT. 25:41—"...the *eternal fire* which is **prepared for the devil and his angels.**"
- B. 2 PET. 2:4—"...God did not spare *the angels when they sinned*, but...**committed them to pits of darkness to be kept until the judgment...**"

IV. HELL IS A PLACE I CAN BE.

- A. MATT. 25:31-46—"When the Son of Man comes in his glory..., he will sit on his glorious throne... and...**separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats**" (31,32).
 - 1. "Then the King will say *to those on his right*, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, *inherit the kingdom prepared for you* from the foundation of the world...' (34).
 - 2. "Then he will say *to those on his left*, '**Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels...**'" (41).
 - 3. "And **these will go away into eternal punishment**, but the *righteous* into *eternal life*" (46).
- B. 2 THESS. 1:7-9—"...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, **rendering vengeance on those who know not God**, and on **those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus**" (7b,8).
 - 1. "They will suffer the punishment of **eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord** and from the glory of his might..." (9).
- C. 1 COR. 9:26,27—"So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air: but I discipline my body and keep it under control, *lest by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.*"
 - 1. "...*'Lord, Lord! Did we not...?' ... 'I never knew you; depart from me...'*" (Matt. 7:21-23).

Conclusion

► **DON'T GO TO HELL.**

"There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are **IN CHRIST JESUS**" (Rom. 8:1).