

10 Answers to Your Questions About Heaven

from The Heaven Answer Book



BILLY GRAHAM

What is Heaven?



Heaven is the place where God dwells—it is God's holy habitation. He created it, He lives there, and, some day, so shall all believers.

Moses prayed that God would “look down from heaven, your holy dwelling place” (Deuteronomy 26:15). Solomon, the wisest king to ever live, prayed: “O LORD my God. . . . hear from heaven, your dwelling place” (1 Kings 8:28, 30). Abram said, “God Most High, Creator of heaven” (Genesis 14:22). Nehemiah prayed to “the God of heaven” (Nehemiah 2:4); King Nebuchadnezzar praised the King of Heaven (Daniel 4:37); and Jesus opened our hearts to the reality of Heaven when He lifted His eyes and prayed, “Our Father which art in heaven” (Matthew 6:9 KJV). Heaven is occupied by the presence of Almighty God. This makes Heaven the supreme destination for those who long to worship Him as their Creator, God, Lord, King, Father, and Savior.



This is admittedly hard for us to comprehend; after all, the Bible tells us God is a spirit and is infinite, so how can He be confined to one place? In spite of this mystery, the Bible assures us that His presence fills all of Heaven, and in Heaven we will be safely in His care forever.

The apostle Paul wrote, “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Heaven *is* the Father’s house (John 14:2). Heaven *is* the dwelling place of Jesus Christ His Son (1 Peter 3:21–22). Heaven *is* the city of the living God and the redeemed (Hebrews 12:22–23). If this does not fill your heart with hope and a desire for that better country, I urge you to examine where you stand before God, and turn from doubt to belief. If you love Jesus Christ, you will want to follow Him all the way to that place called Heaven. “Many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction . . . Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we

eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:18–20). Paul urges others to follow Him.

Listen with your ears to the voice of God (Ecclesiastes 5:1). *Answer* Christ’s knock on your heart’s door (Revelation 3:20). *Enter* into fellowship with the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:9).

This is Heaven.



Why do most people believe in some kind of life after death, even if they aren't particularly religious or don't think about it very much?



God has put within each of us an inner sense that life on earth is not all there is. The Bible answers this so clearly: “[God] has also set eternity in the hearts of men” (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

People may suppress this truth or deny it, but our conscience still speaks. The “still small voice” of God tells us—down deep—that it is still true (1 Kings 19:12). We must never ignore that inner voice—but rather, check what we believe it is saying alongside Scripture, where He reveals these truths.

The apostle Paul wrote about this danger of denying God’s truth: “What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.



For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen . . . so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:19–20).

The reason we have this inner conviction that death is not the end—and that Heaven exists—is because we were created in the image of God. We aren't simply physical beings; we also have a soul (or spirit), and we bear within us the likeness of our Creator. That likeness has been marred and distorted by sin—but it is still there. And just as God is eternal, so we sense in our hearts that we too must be eternal. The Bible says that God lives forever (Isaiah 57:15). Just as God lives forever, we who are made in His likeness will also live forever.

“There is a time for everything . . . under heaven. . . . a time to search and a time to give up” (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 6). My prayer is that you will exercise your God-given right to search the Scripture and to seek the One who died for you. Don't give up on God. Instead, give up running *from* God—He hasn't given up on you.



What does the resurrection of Jesus have to do with Heaven?



Believing in Heaven has no value if we don't believe in the resurrection of the One who created Heaven and opened its gates to all who will enter. Many people find it easier to believe in Heaven because they've heard about someone's alleged vision, yet they'll doubt that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and lives in Heaven today. God's Word is our true guide, for it alone points us to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man" (John 3:12–13).

Why is Jesus' resurrection so important? Not only does it prove He was the Son of God and that there is



life after death, but it assures us that death—our final enemy—has been defeated. The Bible summarizes this great truth in these words: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

A remarkable illustration in Scripture is the resurrection of Jesus’ friend Lazarus which took place in Bethany where Jesus was also anointed before His death. The Lord gives evidence of His power over the grave of others—and His own grave as well. After Lazarus had been in the grave four days, Jesus demonstrated His resurrection power by raising Lazarus from the dead. When He arrived at the tomb, He called with a loud voice: “Lazarus, come forth!” and Lazarus emerged from the grave and stood before the crowd (John 11:43 NKJV). This proved Jesus’ power over death—and also the truth of His promise to us: “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (vv. 25–26).

Heaven comes to life for us because of Christ’s



resurrection power. If you will sincerely search for Him, you will find new life in Christ. The resurrection is the fulfillment of the Word of God, and that fact authenticates Heaven!



Will earth be an extension of Heaven some day?



Yes, the Bible tells us that God will bring Heaven to earth where He will live among His people at the end of this present age.

In that day, the old will be destroyed, a new earth will be created, and there will truly be Heaven on earth. The apostle Peter wrote, “We are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13).

When God created the world, the first book in the Old Testament tells us He spoke Heaven and earth and the seas into existence (Genesis 1:6–9). In the last book of the New Testament, Christ tells John to write down His revelation of the future. “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City . . . coming down out



of heaven from God. . . . And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them.’ . . . He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’” (Revelation 21:1–3, 5).

Earth cannot promise anything eternal. Earth’s value will plummet when Heaven comes down with the glory of God. Someday the earth as we know it will pass away, but God’s Word will never pass away—and that is why we can say with assurance that earth has no hold on us. The Old Testament saints declared themselves strangers and aliens on earth, and we, too, should hold loosely the things of this world because they will not last. When Heaven comes down, earthly things will fall away and the goodness of God will reign.

Is anything about Heaven imperfect or incomplete?



Heaven isn't only glorious—it is also perfect. You see, sin has no home in Heaven. The Bible says, “Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful” (Revelation 21:27). Human minds cannot conceive such purity because we are a race of fallen creatures plagued with disease, consumed with war, enraged by jealousy, dejected by loneliness, jaded by greed, enticed by temptation, disappointed by others, conflicted within, and demonized by Satan. This describes what the writer of Hebrews said, “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles” (12:1). Those who know and follow Jesus as Lord recognize sin's evil results.

If you've ever traveled through a construction zone, you know it can be perilous. Travelers are relieved when they see a sign posted that says “End of Construction”



and they no longer have to watch for the caution flags or dodge the cones in the way. This is a picture of the Christian life, and we must stay alert as we journey through it. The “potholes” we encounter on this journey jolt us, and the “detours” get us off track, but the Lord uses them to guide and strengthen our faith.

Before my wife, Ruth, died in 2007, she asked that the words “End of Construction: Thank You for Your Patience” be engraved on her grave marker. It brings a smile to everyone who visits her resting place. She recognized an important message in those words. When we reach the end of the journey, our construction is complete on earth and transformation awaits us in Heaven. As the Bible says, “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6).

The apostle James said, “Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:4). We will lack nothing in Heaven. God is patient, knowing that we are imperfect people—but we have a perfect Savior. What a wonderful



promise from God's Word to those of us on earth: "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Once in His presence, we will finally be complete because we will be transformed into His likeness.



Will we recognize and be reunited with our loved ones?



I am often asked this question—and my answer is always a resounding yes. Someday soon, I know I will be reunited with all those in my family who are already in Heaven—including my wife, Ruth.

And when it happens for each believer, we will fellowship around our Father’s throne, finally meeting Him face-to-face. And the family of God—our brothers and sisters in Christ—will be there. This is why it’s so important for us to tell our loved ones about Christ. Nothing is more wonderful than for our families to share in this great hope of being part of the heavenly family.

Jesus in His resurrected body was known to His followers. When Christ was transfigured and His heavenly glory overwhelmed His earthly appearance, Moses and Elijah appeared with Him before Peter, James, and John (Matthew 17:1–3). Though the disciples had never seen



the great prophets, they recognized them, just as they recognized the Lord in His transfigured state. These examples give us great hope that we will know those we knew on earth and even others we've never met.

Often the question is asked if those who die as infants will be in Heaven. I have no doubt that they will be. God is the God of hope and salvation, and we can say as King David said when his infant son died, "Can I bring him back again? I will go to him" (2 Samuel 12:23).

Jesus Himself said, "Many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11). I long to meet not only my loved ones in Heaven, but also the prophets and the apostles and the mother of our Lord. But my greatest expectation is to gaze into the eyes of Jesus, who knows me by name.

The writer of Hebrews wrote: "But we see Jesus . . . bringing many sons to glory . . . Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, 'I will declare your name to my



brothers . . . Here am I, and the children God has given me” (2:9–13).

What a marvelous reunion when the family of God gathers in Heaven to praise His name!

Will there be animals in Heaven?



God's creation story is the first miraculous account in the Bible which includes His creation of animals. While the Bible does not specifically answer this question, no one can miss God's creative work in the animal kingdom. His written Word provides us with a snapshot of His original handiwork: "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle . . . and everything . . . on the earth . . . And God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:24–25 NKJV). All this took place *before* sin entered the world.

I grew up on a farm, and animals have always fascinated me. We know that God gave them to us for a purpose, because in the days of Noah, before the great Flood, God preserved every species—male and female—on the ark so they would inhabit the land again. Animals are among God's many diverse gifts to man. Who doesn't smile while watching chimpanzees mimic one another?



We boast of “man’s best friend” because a faithful dog will protect its owner at all cost. Fish are a source of food, and we love to envision Jesus sharing broiled fish with His disciples (Luke 24:42–43). We marvel to think of Jesus riding the colt of a donkey into Jerusalem—and we wait breathlessly for His appearance on a white horse from Heaven (Revelation 19:11).

Scripture speaks of the future messianic kingdom that captivates our imagination: “The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them” (Isaiah 11:6). In that day, death and evil will be destroyed, perfect peace will reign, and everything that has breath, including animals, will praise Him (Psalm 150:6). What a day that will be!



Will we be judged in Heaven or receive rewards in Heaven?



At the judgment seat of Christ, believers will receive rewards—not the reward of eternal life, for that has already been given to them, but of other blessings God has for us.

The apostle Paul compared this to an athletic contest in which the victor would appear before a judge who would determine his reward, not his punishment. We can understand this when we think of the Olympics. Athletes compete for a prize. Some receive bronze medals; others, silver; and first-place winners receive the gold. This is the thought behind the judgment seat in Heaven.

Believers will not be judged for their sin, for Christ dealt with our sin on the cross at Calvary. Instead, at the judgment seat, our work on earth for Christ's Kingdom



will be evaluated and rewarded according to God's perfect righteousness and justice.

The fact that we can stand before Him at all is a miracle of His grace in our lives. Then, what we do in obedience and by the strength of the Holy Spirit will be evaluated, and "each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:8–9). This is a tremendous incentive to work for the Lord, with the right motive in our hearts. We won't all receive the same rewards. We do not have the same abilities, but we will be judged according to our faithful response to the gifts and opportunities given to us.

And it's not just the work of reaching out to those in need of the gospel, but also how we conduct ourselves in body and mind (2 Peter 3:11). God's rewards are incentives for us to live a holy life of faithful service to Christ—not to others—during our time on earth. These rewards are described as *crowns*, as we see in Paul's letter to Timothy: "I have fought the good fight. . . . There is



laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7–8 NKJV).

Jesus said, "Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:12). Then He gave us a remarkable promise: "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12). The greatest reward of all will be to hear our Lord saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:23).



Do people who have died and gone to Heaven know what is going on down here on earth?



Haven will be glorious. We will meet the saints of old. There we will walk the streets of gold and be reunited with those we love. When we enter Heaven, we will have crossed the finish line to meet the One who will reveal stories yet untold.

Consider the scene in Hebrews 12:1 describing the heroes of the faith who are now in Heaven: “Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses . . . let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” While we aren’t given any detail, the previous chapter in Hebrews gives us examples of that “*great cloud of witnesses*”—the saints of old who ran the race of faith and finished well. We draw strength from their victorious finish on earth, bearing testimony to their faith in God and God’s faithfulness to them.



Absolutely nothing can be hidden from Him. The Bible does not tell us if the souls in God's presence know what is happening on earth. What it does tell us is that God knows what is happening in our lives. Our desire as believers should not be to please men (Galatians 1:10), but to run the race to please God: "My eyes are fixed on you, [O LORD]" (Psalm 141:8). And Jesus Christ watches our every move and knows our every thought. How thankful we should be, for He is our strength: "The eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him" (2 Chronicles 16:9).

Do we welcome the eyes of the Lord? Do we live each day knowing that the Lord of Heaven looks down on us? He is not waiting for us to stumble, but He is there when we do. He is seeking our loyalty to Him: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23–24).

How good do we have to be to get into Heaven?



The answer may shock you—but the truth is that we will never be good enough to go to Heaven on our own.

Why is this? The reason is because God is absolutely pure and holy, and no evil can ever enter *His* home. Just one sin will keep us away from His presence—and no one can claim to be sinless. We are born in sin (Romans 5:12); we are sinners by nature. The Bible says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

God doesn’t take our good deeds and bad deeds and weigh them against each other; if He did, He’d be letting us into Heaven with our sins. God’s standard is nothing less than perfection. We may think we’re good enough—but if so, we are filled with pride, which is a



sin. The Bible says, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). But Jesus preached repentance to receive eternal life in Heaven (Mark 1:15), and it is through His shed blood that our sins are forgiven, covered by His goodness, and this is why those who believe in Him will be received into Heaven.

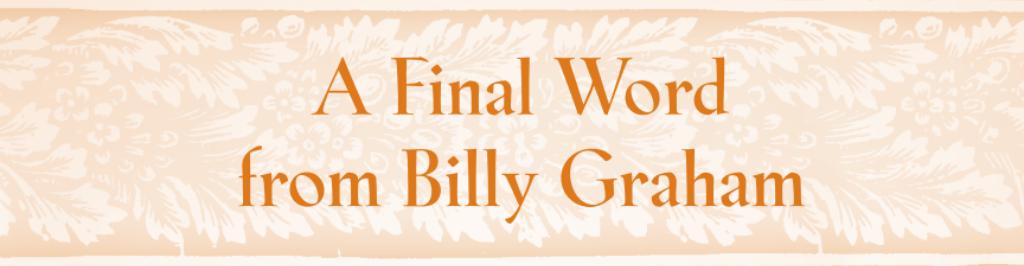
Suppose you had a barrel of water and it had been filtered and distilled until no impurities remained. If someone asked you to drink it, you wouldn’t hesitate. But suppose someone put a drop of raw sewage in it. Would you drink it? Of course not. The same is true with sin.

This is why God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to earth to redeem us by His love and His sacrifice. Jesus was without sin because He was God in human flesh—but on the cross all our sins were transferred to Him, and He took the judgment we deserve.

Don’t trust in yourself and your good works, but turn to Jesus and trust Him alone for your salvation. It



is *the* life-changing decision that will settle once and for all your place in Heaven. Don't miss what the Lord has in store for those who love Him and are willing to let Him be the Master of their lives.



A Final Word from Billy Graham

If you and I could sit together for a few minutes to talk about the subject of Heaven, I would very much want to share the following thought with you.

The Bible has much to say about the brevity of life and the necessity of preparing for eternity. Someday this life will come to an end—but what then? The Bible is clear: ahead of us is eternity, either with God in Heaven or in that place of utter loneliness and despair the Bible calls Hell. But we do not need to fear the future because



God has provided the way for us to be saved and to be with Him throughout all eternity. That way is Jesus Christ, who gave His life for us on the cross, and then conquered sin and death and Hell by His resurrection from the dead.

I am convinced that we will never be prepared to live until we are prepared to die. God has a plan for us right now, and life's greatest joy comes from knowing Him and living for Him every day.

If you have never given your life to Jesus Christ, or if you are unsure of your eternal destiny, I invite you to turn to Him now. By a simple prayer of faith, you can give your life to Him today. Perhaps the following prayer will help you make your commitment:

Oh, God, I know I am a sinner. I am sorry for my sins, and I want to turn from them. I trust Christ alone as my Savior, and I confess Him as my Lord. From this moment on, I want to serve Him and follow Him in the fellowship of His church. In Christ's name, I pray. Amen.

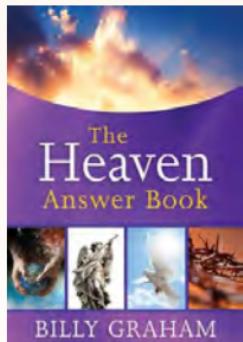
If you sincerely prayed that prayer, God heard you



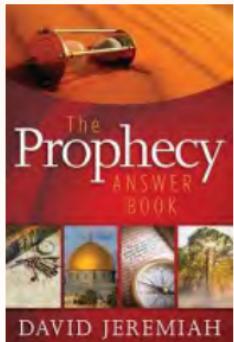
and you are now part of His family forever. Your sins have been forgiven, and His Spirit now lives within you to help you live a new life. And some day He will welcome you into Heaven—your final home.

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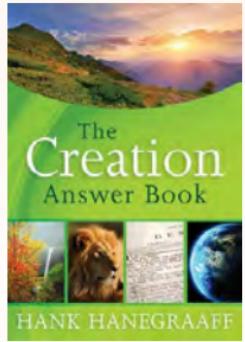
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BILLY GRAHAM



DAVID JEREMIAH

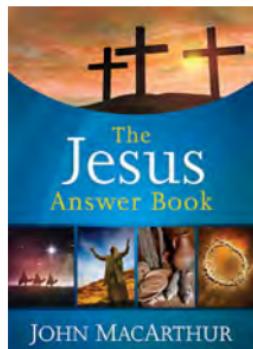


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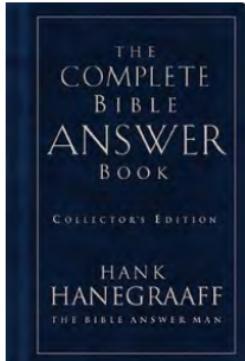
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