

"Heaven"

Heaven! The very word causes us to feel joy and peace and love. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." You won't want to miss today's program; we're talking about heaven.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way! We're here to search God's Word for the Lord's Way. God gives us real answers in His Word, the Bible. He doesn't tease us with empty promises or give us false hope. God tells us what we most need to know to live the best life on earth and to receive an inheritance in heaven. The life that we have in Christ here on earth is indeed an abundant life, and nothing could be sweeter than spending an eternity in heaven with God our Father. We're in the business of helping people find the truth, to be saved, and to go to heaven. We're honored and delighted when we spend this time with you. And we want to be a part of your life each week.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:3 to 5 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." We are born again in this life to a living hope. Our hope is our inheritance in heaven, an inheritance that will never perish, never be defiled, and never fade away.

Our inheritance in heaven is reserved especially for us by the power of God. God will reveal that inheritance to us at the last day when the Lord Jesus returns to take us home with Him. Heaven is eternal, blessed, pure, and filled with joy and love. God will welcome us to that home He prepared for us in the most lavish and wonderful way. Ah, Heaven! What a hope!

Now we're offering a free booklet, entitled After Life. And if you'd like a copy or a CD of our study, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Hebrews 11:13 to 16, and we'll see what the Bible has to say about heaven.

Our reading today comes from the book of Hebrews chapter 11 verses 13 to 16.

All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

What a great promise we have in Christ Jesus. Let's pray together. Oh Father we're thankful that You have prepared a place for us that is imperishable, undefiled and will not fade away. Help us to be prepared to live with You. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Jesus is eagerly waiting for the day that He brings us home! God longs for His children to come home and live with Him forever. Glorious and marvelous describe the day when God's children come home to heaven. The Lord Jesus said shortly before His death in John 14:1 to 3 "Let not your hearts be

troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am (there) you may be also."

Jesus is now preparing your place. It's greater and grander than anything that you've known in this life. The Bible says in Ephesians 2 verses 4 to 7, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

We really can't envision how great, how glorious, how majestic, and how wonderful our home in heaven will be! The apostles got excited about miracles, but you remember, Jesus said in Luke 10 verses 19 to 20, "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." No blessing, no event, can compare with the joy that we'll have in heaven!

Heaven is a grand place, but the joy of heaven isn't the physical part. It's God and His people! Heaven is where the redeemed go. Heaven is precious because of who is there! All of God's people will be in heaven, all of the righteous, everyone whose name is written in the Lamb's book of life.

I want to go to heaven just to see God my Father, who created me and blessed me every day of my life. Just to be in His presence will be a great blessing. I get to meet the One who rules the universe and the One who hears my every prayer. I want to see Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. I want to tell Him face to face, "Thank You for bearing the cross to atone for my sins. Thank you for investing your blood to redeem my soul." I want to see the Holy Spirit. My body has been the temple of the Holy Spirit, and I want to know more about Him. I want to see the myriads of myriads of angels, and the cherubim and the seraphim.

I want to visit with those that I've studied about in the Bible: Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Peter, Andrew, James, and John, Stephen, Paul, Timothy, Esther, Ruth, Mary, Mary Magdalene, Dorcas, and many others. I want to see my Christian loved ones, family, teachers, and friends. I want to meet the innocent who died as infants and small children. Heaven will be full of glory. The Bible says in Revelation 21:24, "By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it."

We'll be surprised at who's there, for God's grace is wondrous. We'll also be surprised at who is not there, for people have secret sins. Well whoever is there, I want to love them. The Bible says the leaves on the tree of life are for the "healing" of the nations (Revelation 22 and verse 2). And we all need healing. Whatever pain or hurt or bitterness we've known in this life will be past in the next life. God will remove all the things that cause us anguish or frustration.

The Bible says in Revelation 21 verses 4 to 5 that God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." And God is giving us a true paradise, a place where every need is met and every sorrow erased. It'll be a place devoted to utter joy and devotion to God. I want a home like that!

Since Jackie and I married, we've lived in seven houses. Well now each place was special and had lots of love. Jackie and I speak of "home," and sometimes we mean one place and sometimes another. One day we expect to inherit a permanent home "with the Lord" in our Father's house. We expect to live there forever.

Peter said in 1 Peter 1 and verse 4 that we'll receive an inheritance "that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading." Now houses may burn or be destroyed by a disaster here, but our home in heaven is indestructible. We must constantly clean and repair our houses here, but that dwelling place will never have a defect or flaw. It'll never be unclean. Things fade and wither here on earth, but they will be forever new in heaven.

Heaven will be a place of refuge, a sanctuary. Rev. 22:1 through 5 says, "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 street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. (And) The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, 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 his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever."

This life is full of trouble, but heaven will have no trouble. Here we have crime, war, disease, death, immorality, and lies. We'll be free from that in heaven. Here we can expect pain and suffering. We are imperfect people living in an imperfect world, but heaven is different.

People who are selfish, cruel, dishonest, or immoral won't trouble us in heaven. Revelation 21 and verse 8 says, "But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." We'll remain free from crime, and sin and temptation.

Revelation 21 verses 2 to 4 says, "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne 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 (any) mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." Now heaven doesn't need a hospital or a funeral home. We won't need police or a fire department. We don't have to worry about tornadoes or earthquakes.

We'll worship in heaven, singing and praising God eternally. Being able to sing with myriads of myriads of angels about the greatness of our God will be a great joy. Heaven will be a place of service. Revelation 22 and verse 3 says, that "The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him." Now I don't know what the Lord will have us do in heaven, but we'll serve Him like priests in the temple, doing multiple tasks that glorify God. This word "serve" is associated with worship, but it also reflects the daily devotion of obedience and love that we show God.

While we'll serve God; we'll also find heaven is a place of rest. Serving God won't tire us in heaven; it'll bless us. Revelation 14 and verse 13 says, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!'"

The hope of heaven ought to encourage us. No matter what we are going through in this life, heaven will surely be worth it all. Paul said in Romans 8 and verse 18 "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Our heartaches here make us long for heaven where there are no heartaches.

As Christians, we're foreigners here on earth. Peter said in 1 Peter 2 and verse 11, "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul." Well we sing the old hymn, "This world is not my home; I'm just a passing through. My treasures

are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me from heaven's open door, and I can't feel at home in this world anymore." Oh this world is not our home; and our hearts long for what God has prepared for us.

God called Abraham to leave his home. And by faith Abraham obeyed. "He went out, not knowing where he was going." And Hebrews 11 and verse 10 says that Abraham "was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." You won't find a city here on earth like that. Hebrews 13 and verse 14 says, "For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come." Well that city is in heaven.

The apostle Peter said in 2 Peter 3 and verse 13, "But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." Now some think this new heavens and new earth is this earth after it has been purified with fire. They say the righteous will live eternally on a reconstituted earth. But the Bible teaches in 2 Peter 3 and verse 12 that "the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!" Now this word "elements" here refers to the basic components that make up this world: earth and air and fire, and water. This world, as we know it, will be completely destroyed. It will be no more.

Revelation 21 and verse 1 says, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea." Speaking of heaven, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 50, "Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable." The Lord began preparing a place for us, you and me, in the Father's house when He ascended to heaven according to John 14 and verse 2. Heaven is not this earth. God has something better in store for us.

Heaven will be better than anything on earth. Revelation 21 and verse 23 says, "And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb." The earth needs a sun and moon, but the new heavens and new earth have God Himself. It will be a new and different kind of place to live, physically and spiritually. I don't want to live even one hour without the hope of heaven or the promise of God. My friend, are you spiritually right with God? And I ask you will heaven be your home? I hope that that is the case for you. I hope that you will put everything in your heart towards serving God. Who'll give you that home. Let's pray together. Oh Father help us in every way to love You more and more as days go by. And to look forward to the home that we have in heaven with You. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen.

If I miss a ball game, I haven't missed much. If I miss an important appointment, well I'm disappointed and may suffer loss; but you know life will go on. If I miss heaven, however, I've lost everything. Nothing else matters.

Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. And unfortunately, not everyone has a heart for God or wants to be with God. Their hearts are somewhere else, and they don't long for heaven, the heaven that's described in the Bible. And because they haven't prepared themselves for heaven they won't enjoy it. To enjoy heaven, the Bible presupposes that people long to be close to God and to love Him. The Lord said in Matthew 5 and verse 8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Now to be pure in heart means that God and His will are dominant in our thinking and in our behavior. People claim they want to go to heaven, but not everyone is willing to change their hearts and lives to prepare for heaven. Now if you love sin more than you love God, you'll probably feel out of

place in heaven. If you don't know God or enjoy worship here, you're probably not ready in heart for heaven. Don't miss heaven. Don't lose your opportunity to live with God forever.

Become a Christian by placing your trust in the Lord with all your heart. Believe and confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Repent of your sins and turn your heart and life toward the Lord. Live everyday for Him. Be baptized, that is immersed in water, do it in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be washed away. And get involved in church and stay faithful to the Lord. Oh are you ready for heaven? Are you right with God?

Well we hope that today's study about heaven has challenged you to think about your soul. We offer a free booklet called *After Life* or a CD of this month's programs, and we'll happy to send them to you without charge. Mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org.

Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now our programs appear on www.searchtv.org. We offer Bible Correspondence courses to help you learn more about God's will. And we offer free study sheets that go along with our programs. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! And we ask that you subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." Now if you contact us, we won't beg you for money or put you on a list.

We do ask that you please worship with a church of Christ in your area. Now they support our program. And if you're looking for a church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Now Churches of Christ love guests, and you'll be glad that you worshiped with them. So why not go and worship with one of those churches near by and tell your friends about it. Well we'll be back, Lord willing, and we'll be back next week. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.