

Grace to You :: esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time

The Promise of Heaven

Scripture: Psalm 16:11; Matthew 5:20; Matthew 5:48; Matthew 11:28; Matthew 19:25–26; 1 Corinthians 13:12; James 2:10; Revelation 22:17

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What will heaven be like?

Heaven is a place more wonderful than we can ever begin to imagine. It is a place of joy and beauty, of peace and happiness that will never end.

Why? Because heaven is also a place where there will be no sin or suffering, no sorrow or pain. It's a place where there will be no quarrels or disagreements, no disappointments or weeping—because there will be nothing there to make us sad. And in heaven we will never do anything to displease God.

We will then know perfect joy. Psalm 16:11 says, "In Thy presence is fullness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forever." Everything that now makes us groan will finally be done away with, and we will find ourselves in the very presence of God, where the purest and truest kind of joy is possible.

In heaven we will also have perfect knowledge. The Bible says, "Then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12). We will have no more unanswered questions, no confusion, no ignorance, and no more need to walk by faith rather than by sight.

We will live in perfect comfort. We will love God perfectly and will be loved perfectly by Him. His love will engulf us forever.

Stated simply, heaven is a place of perfect joy forever.

Think of it! We will be perfectly free from evil forever. We will be set free from captivity to sin, and finally able to do that which is absolutely righteous, holy, and perfect before God. With sin and its effects erased forever, the promise of heaven is an everlasting life of unimaginable blessing!

How good do I have to be to go to heaven?

Most people understand that doing evil can keep us out of heaven. But few realize the Bible also teaches that doing good cannot get us in.

None of us could ever gain enough merit to deserve heaven. We are sinful, and God's standard is utter perfection. Jesus said, "Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). He added, "You are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Who then can go to heaven? Who can be saved?

Jesus' disciples asked Him this same question (Matthew 19:25). His answer? "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). In other words, being saved so that we can go to heaven is not something we can accomplish. It is something God must do for us.

What if I stopped sinning now and never sinned again?

No matter how hard we try, we could never stop sinning because we are hopelessly in bondage to sin. The Bible tells us even our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). In other words, we are sinful to the core. Furthermore, even a single sin would be enough to destroy us forever: "Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all" (James 2:10). But even if we never sinned from now on, we would still be guilty of our past sins. And as the Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

But the good news is that God has provided a way to free us from the guilt of sin!

What has God done for me to take away my sin so I can go to heaven?

When God forgives, He cannot merely overlook sin. Full payment (atonement) must be made for our sin. Christ's death made full atonement for those who trust Him. If we believe in Him, His dying counts in our stead, paying for our sins in full. The Bible says, "The blood of Jesus... cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). It is only through the blood of Christ that we can ever be cleansed from the terrible guilt of sin.

But that only erases the guilt of our sin; we still need perfect righteousness in order to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20).

Where do we get that perfect righteousness?

If you truly believe in Him, the full merit of Jesus' own righteousness is credited (imputed) to you—to all those who trust Him alone for salvation.

The Bible teaches that God "justifies the ungodly" by reckoning (or crediting) Christ's righteousness to them (Romans 4:5). Believers are clothed in His righteousness, and God accepts them solely and exclusively on that basis. That's why the Apostle Paul was willing to discard all his own efforts to earn God's favor, preferring instead to stand before God robed in a righteousness that was not his own (Philippians 3:8-9).

If you are not a Christian, you need to lay hold of this truth by faith: the sin that will keep you out of heaven has no cure but the blood of Christ. If you are weary of your sin and exhausted from the load of your guilt, He tenderly holds forth the offer of life and forgiveness and eternal rest to you: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

How can I be sure Christ will save me?

The Bible promises that no one who believes in Christ will be turned away: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). In the closing words of the Bible, Christ invites all to come to Him and receive the promise of heaven: "... Let him that heareth... come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17b).

If you would like to know Jesus Christ as your Savior and have the promise of heaven, we would encourage you to receive Him right now wherever you are. Simply pray:

Dear Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I know that You died for me to pay for my sins. Please forgive me and make me one of Your own, that I may live in Heaven with You for all eternity.

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