

So What About? 2.0- Part 6: Heaven
ALL VERSES IN NLT

I. ME

- A. Welcome / Online
- B. Questions / Series
- C. Rules: We can disagree and still be in the same family
 - 1. Open and closed
 - 2. Major and minor
- D. Especially with the question of Heaven
- E. Framework

II. WE

- A. Most (whether JF or not) believe there is more to this world/us than just what we see.
 - 1. The phrase “My Body” implies that there is a “MY” in there somewhere.
- B. So the natural question is... What happens to that ME when my body dies?
- C. 80% of Americans believe in some kind of afterlife with 68% believing in an actual heaven... actually up in the last few decades...
- D. A lot of ideas about what it is or like...
 - 1. We all turn into angels and get harps
 - 2. Every desire is met automatically (like The Good Place)
 - 3. Constant worship service, singing song after song

- E. It can be a fun thing to imagine and speculate about, even philosophize and argue about but at some point it gets personal doesn't it?
 - 1. What happened to my family member when they died?
 - 2. What will happen to me? How do I get there? How can I be sure? Is it even possible to be sure? Who goes to heaven and who doesn't?
- F. There are a lot of questions and opinions and even anxiety about what happens after we die...
 - 1. So since we are in church... let's look at what Jesus and the biblical writers say about it... and what we'll discover is...

2. Heaven isn't what most of us think it is... it's better.

III. GOD

- A. The best way to venture into this topic is to create a framework by looking at the big idea of heaven as presented in the NT writings...
 - 1. A lot of passages...
 - 2. Usually don't trust messages with a lot of scattered verses but this topic requires it.
- B. The view of the NT writers was heaven and earth (spiritual and physical) are basically twin halves of reality...
 - 1. Dimensions might be more helpful
 - 2. Both are very real and both co-exist at the same time.
 - 3. The Xian idea is that when our bodies die... our souls... that essence that is actually US... survive and relocate to the heavenly/spiritual “dimension.”

C. But the point of heaven for Jesus and early Xians wasn't just to get through this life waiting to go to a magical place after death.

1. The idea of heaven is always RELATIONAL

2. The main idea is always about Humanity and God living in and enjoying an eternal relationship together.

3. Much like the idea presented in Genesis of Adam and Eve being in daily relationship with God... God walking through the garden presumably with them.

4. **The hope of the early Xians wasn't simply going to heaven when we die... it was being with God forever...** an ultimate resurrection and restoration.

5. Rev. 21:1-7

6. "He will dwell" (Tabernacle with them)

7. Idea of tabernacle in OT

D. But this wasn't something that would just take place in the future... it was something that has already begun and is happening now...

1. Heaven had already started breaking through to earth and was steadily advancing...

2. The starting point was Jesus... **Jesus is the perfect fusion of heaven and earth**

3. **John 1:14**- Dwelt= Tabernacled.

4. Jesus was the beginning of heaven coming to earth.

5. His resurrection was the first, initiating the last phase of God's plan to restore humanity and all of creation... **1 Cor 15:20-23**

E. So the idea again wasn't to sit around trying to stay out of trouble until we get to go to heaven... **it's so much better**

1. Heaven has already come to earth and is now bringing resurrection and restoring God's creation to what it was designed to be...

2. All of which would culminate in Jesus coming back and bringing a new heaven and earth that were completely together... no more separation.

3. So **the idea of Heaven isn't to escape this world but to begin restoring it now, through Jesus.**

F. QUESTIONS

G. So God will restore everything one day... what about right now? **What happens right after we die?**

1. For those who trust in Jesus that eternal relationship begins the moment you die.

2. Remember it's all about relationship

3. Luke 23:43

4. John 14:2-3

5. Now there is room for differing ideas on what that means...

6. **Rooms** = waiting rooms. **Paradise** = temporary place with Jesus watching and waiting for final restoration

7. **OR**

8. **Immediate** = since God is out of time (always in the eternal present) the spiritual/heavenly is also outside of time, therefore when we die we are already and immediately in the final restoration.

9. My thoughts... Waiting and watching.

H. Are there pets in heaven?

1. Don't know.
2. New Creation... 1st had animals so probably... but not snakes

I. What are we like in heaven?

1. Do we become angels? Much better than that... **we stay us, but the best versions of us**
 - a. Death is the relocation of the same person from one place to another.
2. How old? I don't know... 23 ½

3. 1 Cor 15:35-38; 42-44

J. Will we know each other in heaven?

1. We were created for eternal relationships with God and with each other.
2. JF's are beginning relationships that will last forever... no real good byes.
3. Marriage? No... but better.
 - a. Being in perfect relationship... nothing to hide or prove.
4. Sex? Probably not, but you can hope.

K. What will we actually do in heaven?

1. Just walk around having whatever we want?
2. Sounds good at first but do that for a million years... boring.
3. **First**... no matter what it is... the point is being with God
 - a. The relationship makes the difference... yes (if it is having everything new want) it would end up hell except for the fact that God is there an eternally fulfilling relationship
4. If it is restoring creation to its original design... we're going to have jobs to do.
 - a. Adam and Eve worked the garden.
 - b. Work is worship
 - c. I imagine being able to hone skills, and crafts, etc. as worship
5. One thing for sure... there will be a party
 - a. Promises a feast and wine

L. Do babies go to heaven?

1. Very personal
2. Not 100% clear
3. However, tradition from the very beginning **Age of Accountability** (For Jews it was 13)
4. Jesus definitely has a soft spot for children
5. People are responsible for what they decide based on what they know/can understand.
6. **We are responsible to act on what we know, not what we don't know.**
 - a. **John 9:40-41**
7. God is fair and just

M. What about hell?

1. You thought I would skip it huh?
2. **Rev 21:8**
3. Hell is real. Jesus said it was.
4. I don't like the idea... I wish we could just avoid it
5. But just b/c we don't like something doesn't mean it isn't true.
6. If heaven is about enjoying perfect relationships... hell is the opposite.
7. **Hell is the absence of a relationship with God.**
8. What exactly is that like? Don't know... don't want to.

N. How good do you have to be to get into heaven?

1. Can you be a good person but not a xian?
2. How good do you have to be?
3. Just have faith in something?
4. **Romans 3:23**
5. I'm sure you're a great person
6. But No one can earn it. We have all sinned. All fallen short...
7. Trying to jump to Hawaii... some might get closer to others but no one can make it on their own.
8. You know it and I know it.

M. After all I've done can I still earn my place?

1. No. You can't.
2. **Romans 3:24-26**
3. You don't earn it.
4. He makes us right... relationship
5. Our access to heaven is through Jesus.

O. So what about people who have never heard of Jesus?

1. **Romans 1:20**
2. Firmly believe everyone has a chance to hear in some way
3. Credible stories of Muslims seeing Jesus
4. You have heard...

P. What about Purgatory?

1. Nothing in the NT or OT writings mention anything about a place to earn off your sins.
2. **What we choose to trust now is what will determine our relationship then.**
3. There's no evidence of do-overs.

IV. YOU

- A. My question to you... In light of everything we've said today and the last few weeks... **Will you trust Jesus for this life and the next?**
- B. He is the only one who predicted he would die and come back and actually died and came back... shouldn't we trust what he says about what happens when we die?
- C. Should we believe him when he tells us what our choices are... and what it takes to get there?
- D. See **the one who judges who experiences heaven is the same one who died to secure your place in heaven.**
- E. He wants to enjoy a relationship with you that can start now and last forever.
- F. Will you trust him to give it to you?

V. WE

- A. If we know we have this relationship forever... what is there to be afraid of?
- B. Reputation? Loss of money? Momentary pain? A killer virus?
- C. Will you trust him for this life and the next?
- D. **When you know who secures your future you can experience true life now.**
- E. You can know for sure... **1 John 5:13**