

HEAVEN

Approach to scriptures

- ▣ Heaven: will it be a never ending service.
- ▣ Think Bible says little – actually it says a lot.
- ▣ Reasonable, logical, & common sense.
- ▣ Why shouldn't it mean what it says.
- ▣ Heaven and Hell are both in the Bible.
- ▣ E.g. – sing a 'new' song; or a 'new' car.
- ▣ It shows that there is no reason to fear death.

Set your minds on things above

Col3 v1 “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your *hearts* on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your *minds* on things above, not on earthly things.”

‘*zeteo*’ = to seek passionately, all consuming, single mindedly.

Phillipians 3, v20

“But our citizenship is in heaven...”



“Do not add to, or take away”

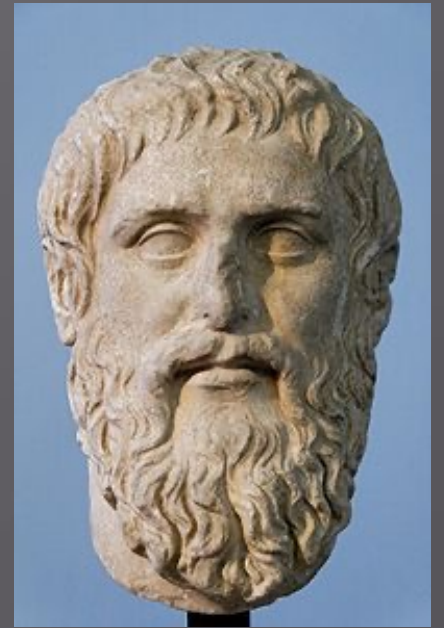
Rev 22, v18: “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

“Do not add to, or take away”

- ▣ Theologians have mystified things.
- ▣ But theology is for people, to make God simple, not to separate Him from us.
- ▣ Heaven is our eternal HOPE – how can that be if we don't know what it is.
- ▣ Some think heaven outside time – that's not necessary.
- ▣ We need to rescue heaven back in our thinking.

Platonism

- ▣ Plato: Greek philosopher, lived 428-348BC.
- ▣ He was very influential in Roman and Greek thinking
- ▣ Taught that 'physical and spiritual things could never be together. To be truly spiritual must separate from material things (carnal)'.
- ▣ Early church fathers found it hard to shake off this old idea.



Platonism

Luke 24: Jesus appears to the disciples.

³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?' ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! **Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.'**

Daniel 12, v2-3

² Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

- ▣ Jews generally believe in a bodily resurrection.
- ▣ Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection.
- ▣ Jesus rebuked them for it saying they were in error because they didn't know the scriptures or the power of God.

Matt 22²⁹

⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendour of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendour of the earthly bodies is another. ⁴¹ The sun has one kind of splendour, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendour.

⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

1 Cor 15⁴⁰⁻⁴⁴

Bodily Resurrection

- ▣ The women clasped Jesus' feet. Matt28⁹
- ▣ "Touch me... flesh and bones" Luke24³⁹
- ▣ He ate a piece of fish with them. Luke24⁴³
- ▣ "Do not hold on to me." John 20¹⁷
- ▣ "...put your finger here..." John 20²⁷
- ▣ He called out to them. John 21⁵
- ▣ ...we shall be like Him... 1John 3¹⁻²

Bodily Resurrection

- ▣ Daniel 12, v2-3: sleep in dust will awake.
- ▣ 1 Cor 15, v40-44: resurrection of body.
- ▣ Jesus ascended in a physical body.
- ▣ Enoch did not die; he walked with God.
- ▣ Elijah taken to heaven in a chariot.
- ▣ Moses couldn't be found.
- ▣ At resurrection many people appeared (Matthew 27 v52-53).

How old will I be ?

Philippians 3

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, **will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.**

How old will I be ?

Matthew 17 The transfiguration

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² **There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.** ³ Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

How old will I be ?

- ▣ Our bodies will be in their prime.
- ▣ Maybe in our 20's, the best we've looked.
- ▣ We will be recognisable.

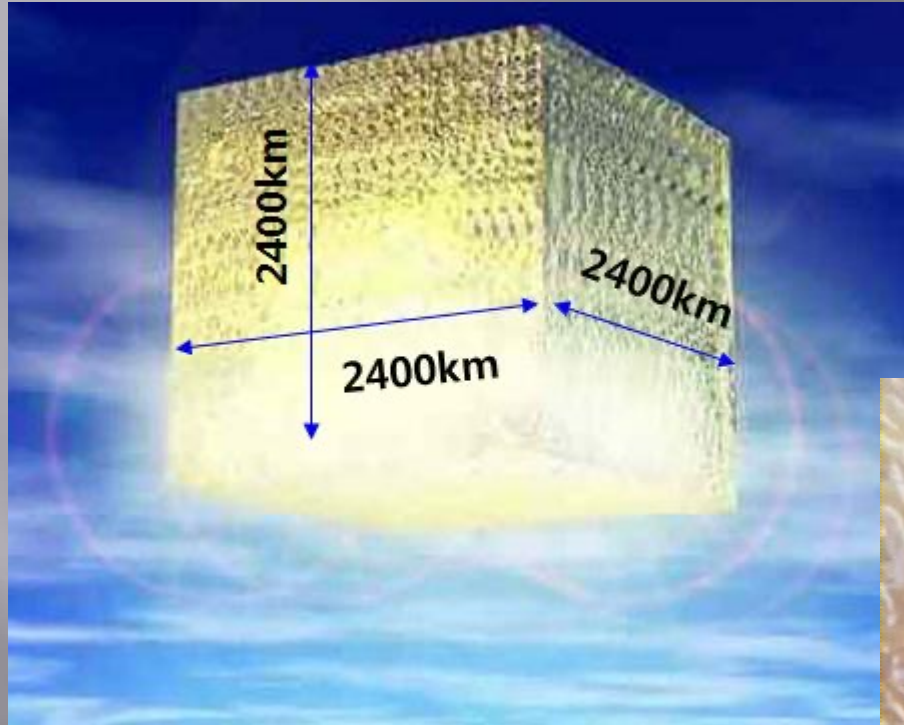
▣ **VIDEO: Heaven is for Real**

Heaven

Rev 21 v1-5 “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, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.....”



Heaven



Heaven

- ▣ Isaiah 65 v17 “Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”
- ▣ Isaiah 66 v22 ‘As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me, declares the LORD, so will your name and descendants endure.’
- ▣ 2 Peter 3 v13 ‘... we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth...’

Heaven

The glory of the Lord will be revealed throughout the whole earth (Isaiah 40⁵, Psalm 85⁹, Ezekiel 43²).

How else will He do this if it is not by recreating the Earth into something even better?



Eden

- ▣ Closest thing to heaven we ever had on earth.
- ▣ Eden had two trees – knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life.
- ▣ Eden not destroyed; guarded; off limits.



Eden



Other attributes: Rev 6, v9-11

⁹When he [the angel] opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" ¹¹Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

Other attributes of heaven

1. Souls – not disembodied spirits,
2. Instant relocation – there was continuity.
3. Same in heaven as on earth – total recall.
4. People in heaven remembered for their life on earth.
5. “Called out” – requires vocal chords.
6. “raised their voices” – expresses emotion.
7. The martyrs are fully conscious.
8. They know what’s happening on earth.

Other attributes of heaven

- ▣ 1 Corinthians 4 v9: “For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession...”
- ▣ Hebrews 12 v1 “Therefore, since we are *surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses*, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

Other attributes of heaven

Luke 15, v10: Jesus says “...there is rejoicing in the *presence* of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”



Heaven is our Home

- ▣ Rev 21 v4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'



Heaven is our Home

Phil 3, v20 “But our citizenship is in heaven”.

- ▣ Why say that, if God doesn't mean that.
- ▣ When we think we need more things, really it's a relationship with Jesus we need, and heaven.
- ▣ Mis-diagnosed homesickness for heaven.
- ▣ C.S. Lewis: “If I find in me something that cannot be satisfied by anything in this world, then maybe I was made for another world.”

Bibliography

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- ▣ Heaven is for Real, by Todd Burpo on Thomas Nelson.
- ▣ Various writings by C.S.Lewis, on Fount Paperback, e.g. Screwtape Letters.
- ▣ Writings of John Milton, Rebecca Springer, and Mitch Albom.

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