



WHAT AND WHERE IS HEAVEN

DOES HEAVEN EXIST?

TRY JESUS COURSE BOOK 14

“I can’t prove it of course, but on good grounds I’d stake my life on it, that beyond death will be another great adventure.”

- Michael Wenham, The Guardian , 17 May, 2011



IMAGINE THERE IS NO HEAVEN

14 – WHAT AND WHERE IS HEAVEN?

In his song “Imagine,” **John Lennon** sings:

Imagine there’s no heaven
it’s easy if you try, no
hell below us above us only
sky.

Imagine all the people
living for today... Imagine
there’s no countries it
isn’t hard to do, nothing
to kill or die for and no
religion too.

Voted number one in the UK, it’s an Eastern concept where ultimate reality is Brahman for Hindus and Nirvana for Buddhists. John and the Beatles were influenced by Eastern gurus, such as Swami Prabhupada, the founder of the Hare Krishna movement.

Ultimate reality is, in the words of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, “nothingness.” “When you become absorbed in a cosmic nothingness, you have arrived,” he said. “We shouldn’t be afraid of nothingness.” Sounds a bit bleak!

Stephen Hawking, Britain’s most eminent scientist, diagnosed at 21 with motor neurone disease

(MND), has lived with the prospect of an early death for 49 years. In an interview with Ian Sample of *The*

*Guardian**, Hawking says: "I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. THERE IS NO HEAVEN or afterlife for broken down computers. That is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark."

Hawking believes life happened by chance and has no purpose, yet he says we should seek the greatest value for our actions. He's willing to speculate on multi-universes, but not willing to accept the possibility there is a God.

As another MND sufferer, **Michael Wenham**, says, one may wish to dismiss heaven as a "fairy story", but, "until one has examined the evidence... that's a premature judgment."

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What does the Bible say about heaven?

(*15 May, 2011)

Heaven Will Be a Real Place

1. What did Christ promise He would prepare for His followers? John 14:1-4 (page 763 in NIV Bible: International Bible Society, 00195)

In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to a for you. And if I go and prepare a for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

This promise of Jesus has sustained and encouraged His followers down through the centuries.

2. Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation. He is also called the father of those who believe in Jesus (Galatians 3:7, page 824). Who is the architect and builder of the place for which Abraham looked? Hebrews 11:8-10 (page 851)

3. What did the faithful Jews admit that they were on earth? What is the place they were looking for? Hebrews 11:13-16 (page 852)

And they admitted that they were and on earth... They were longing for a - a . Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a for them.

4. What three NEW things does John see? Revelation 21:1, 2 (page 878)

(1) a new , (2) a new , (3) the new

The Bible starts with a new heaven and new earth and ends that way. The disobedience of Adam and Eve, which brought sin and its consequences, is recorded in the third chapter of Genesis (Guides 3 & 4). The record of the eradication of sin and its effects is recorded in the third last chapter in the Bible (Guide 13). God's original plan for this planet, interrupted by the devil's rebellion, will be ultimately realised when God eradicates the problem of evil and makes this world new again.

5. Who did Jesus say would occupy the new earth? Matthew 5:5 (page 683)

Blessed are the , for they will inherit the

At the end of the 1000 years, after the world is cleansed by fire, heaven is actually going to come down to this earth! This familiar planet, restored to its original Edenic beauty, will thus become God's "tabernacle" or "dwelling-place", and the eternal home of God's people (Revelation 21:3, 5, page 878).

Fiske Planetarium (University of Colorado) needed money, so its director dreamed up a gimmick. He printed brochures offering 1000-acre lots on the planet Mars for only \$20. "This land still features pink skies, unlimited rock gardens, and not one but two moons." And "at one-sixth the gravity of Earth, your golf game will improve immensely." The gag was surprisingly successful. People across the country sent in their \$20 for a deed, for space flight insurance, and for a simulated sample of red Martian soil.

If this story catches your imagination, then think about the ultimate real estate - heaven. God has promised it, not to make money, but to express His love for all who trust Jesus as their Saviour. God will live and dwell with us!

We Will Be Real People

6. Will we have real bodies in heaven? Philippians 3:20, 21 (page 832)

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will _____ our lowly bodies so that they will be _____ his glorious body.

The apostle Paul, writing to the Roman Christians, says, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for ... the redemption of our bodies." (Romans 8:22, 23, page 800)

7. What took place that showed Jesus' resurrected body was real? Luke 24:36-43 (page 749)

Look at my _____ and my _____. It is I myself! _____ me and see; a ghost does not have _____, as you see I have.

They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and _____ it in their presence.

8. Will we recognise each other in heaven? 1 Corinthians 13:12 (page 813)

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 _____, even as I am _____.

Mary at the tomb recognised the resurrected Jesus by His voice when He spoke to her. The two disciples at Emmaus, at first, were kept from recognising Jesus, but later did so by His mannerisms when "he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them." Likewise Jesus' disciples recognised Him in His resurrected body by His familiar features (John 20:14-16; Luke 24:13-34; 24:36-43, pages 769, 749).

Evil Will Never Rise Again

9. Speaking about the New Jerusalem, what does the apostle John say will not be there?

Nothing IMPURE will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is SHAMEFUL or DECEITFUL, but only those whose NAMES are WRITTEN in the Lamb's book of life. _____ (Revelation 21:27, page 879)

10. What are some other things that won't be in heaven or the new earth? Revelation 21:4 (page 878)

water death trees mourning flowers crying pain animals

Heaven is described by what won't be there, because our minds can't comprehend what it will really be like. How do you tell an Eskimo from Greenland about a tropical island? How do you describe the sand and the warm sea, the palm trees and flowers, the tropical fruits and colourful birds? They wouldn't understand you! Mostly you would tell them what won't be there—no cold, no ice, no snow!



The Best Thing About Heaven

11. Where will God's dwelling place be? Revelation 21:3 (page 878)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the _____ of God is _____
_____, and he will _____ with them. They will be his _____, and God himself will be
with them and be their God."

12. Who will we see face to face? Revelation 22:3, 4 (page 879)

No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants
will serve him. They _____, and his name will be on their foreheads.

The good thing about heaven will be the realisation of our greatest aspirations. In this life we only ever achieve a fraction of what we aspire to. The prolific 19th century Christian writer **Ellen White** has described heaven this way:

"There, immortal minds will contemplate with never~failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love... Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realised; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to

call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed." (The Great

Controversy)

God Wants You to Be There

13. Where does the Bible say our citizenship is when we accept Jesus as our Saviour?

But our CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Philippians 3:20-21, page 832)

As the words of a song says:

"This world is
not my home, I'm
just a~passing
through. If
heaven's not my
home, then Lord
what will I do?"



When we accept Jesus as our Saviour and are credited with His righteousness, we become citizens of heaven.

Jesus is our passport to heaven. Then the devil and all of his evil angels cannot stop us from going to heaven.

Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says, **"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household."** (Ephesians 2:19, page 828)

God is interested in us all being with Him in the world made new. Peter says: "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9, page 1224). God wants everyone to accept His great offer now, while there is still time.

14. How do we inherit a place in the new earth? Galatians 3:29 (page 825)

If you _____ to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and _____ according to the promise.

Years ago, Andre Kole, the talented illusionist who travelled all over the world as a representative of a Christian youth organisation, wrote about the death of his wife, Aljeana. She had an incurable brain tumour, and for two years she endured incredible suffering. She gradually lost the use of her arms and legs and couldn't move her head or body. She became totally blind. Day after day she could do nothing but lie helplessly in bed. Kole wrote, "While Aljeana was still able to do some speaking, she always shared a poem that ended with these lines:

'We should not long for heaven, if

earth held only joy'".

No Tears in Heaven

Eric Clapton is considered one of the world's greatest modern guitarists. His song "**Tears in Heaven**", on his Unplugged album, became a hit a few years ago. It's about the death of his four-year-old son **Conor**. He fell to his death from the 53rd floor of the Manhattan apartment building where he was staying with his mother, Italian actress Lori Del Santo. The boy had run through a window left open by the housekeeper. Eric, who was staying in an apartment a few blocks away, got a phone call to come immediately. He arrived to see paramedics gathered on the footpath, around his dead son.

"I just wanted to write sad music," he said. "All this year, that's all I wanted."

In the song, Eric Clapton bares his soul publicly. He shares his grief, in all its rawness and pain, with the whole world. He is to be admired for that. Most men can't show their grief.

Newsweek said: "A year after his son's death he fashions a song out of pure pain."

He sings:

***Would it be the same, if I saw you in heaven?...
Would you hold my hand, if I saw you in heaven?
Would you help me stand, if I saw you in heaven?***

His pain shows through as he cries:

Time can bring you down.

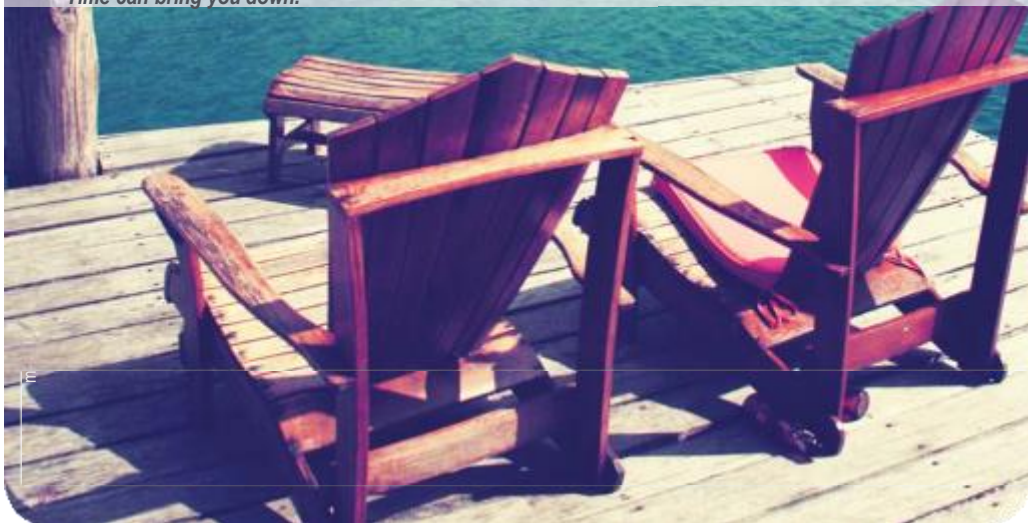
***Time can bend your knees.
Time can break your heart.
Have you begging please,
begging please?***

He is right when he sings:

***Beyond the door, there's peace I'm sure.
And I know there'll be no more tears in heaven.***

This is a reference to Revelation 21:4 where it says about heaven that God will "wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain."

But the saddest part of the song is that he says he must be strong and carry on, because he knows he doesn't belong in heaven.



The truth is that God wants everybody to be there!

Jesus came to this earth to pay the penalty for our sins and mistakes, and He offers to everybody the gift of eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, page 752)

Heaven is for everybody who believes in Jesus! Isn't that great? How would you like to respond to this tremendous offer?

I believe in Jesus and want to be with Him in heaven.

I've found this guide helpful in understanding God's plan for the future.

This topic has given me hope for the future.



The thing I'm most looking forward to in heaven is

