

## Heaven: How Come We Don't Think More About It John 14:3

I have both a personal interest and a pastoral interest in the wonderful place called Heaven. I want to know more about it personally because I am going to spend eternity there. I want to know more about Heaven pastorally that I might declare clearly and Biblically everything the Word of God has to say about it. Polls and opinions expressed regarding the reality of Heaven reveal that there is a great deal of misunderstanding and nonbiblical concepts regarding Heaven.

Jonathan Edwards, the great Puritan preacher often spoke of Heaven. He said, "It becomes us to spend the life only as a journey toward Heaven...to which we should subordinate all other concerns of life. Why should we labor for or set our hearts on anything else, but that which is our proper end and true happiness?"

J.C. Ryle a British theologian said, "I pity the man who never thinks about Heaven." It should also be stated that the man who should be pitied is the man who never thinks 'accurately' about Heaven.

Many today are 'cutting and pasting' fragments of religious views from television, books, movies, conversations, into their thinking of what Heaven actually is and will be like. Most of this is a misconstrued and inaccurate view of life after death.

There is one major reason why we think and talk so little of Heaven and when we do that it is lifeless and luke warm. **IT IS THE WORK OF SATAN.**

John 8:44 "When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

Revelation 13:6 "he opened his mouth to blaspheme God and to slander His name and His 'dwelling place' and those who live in Heaven."

The devil slanders three things: God's person, God's people, and God's place--- namely Heaven.

Satan hates the New Heaven and the New Earth as much as a deposed dictator hates the new nation and the new government that replaces his. Satan wants to rob us of the joy we would have if we believed and understood what God is telling us about this magnificent world to come.

2 Co. 4:18 "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Heaven is referred to in different places in the Bible as a city, a garden, and a kingdom. Because gardens, cities, and kingdoms are familiar to us, they afford us an instrument of understanding regarding Heaven.

Heaven is a physical, tangible, specific, real, place.

God made us both physical and spiritual beings we are not designed to live eternally in a "spirit world" only. We are body and spirit.

Paul said in II Tim. 2:7 "Reflect on what I am saying for the Lord will give you insight in all of this."

Psalms 119:18, "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law."

We should accept that many things about Heaven indeed won't be fully known until we get there and that God has countless surprises in store for us. But for the things God has revealed to us about Heaven those things belong to us and to our children.

I Co. 2:9 "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for those that love Him." BUT DON'T OVERLOOK VERSE 10 "But God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth (revealed) the deep things of God."

Some people have used II Co. 12:2-4 where Paul was caught up to the third heaven and that there in v 4 he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter" as an argument for not delving too deeply into the realm of Heaven.

However though God didn't permit Paul to talk about his visit to Heaven we find also where God COMMANDED the apostle John to talk about his prolonged visit to Heaven, which he did in detail in the Book of Revelation.

C.S. Lewis, "If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought the most of the next world." Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in; aim at earth and you will get neither.

For every American who thinks he is going to hell there are 120 who think they are going to Heaven. Jesus, however, stated the opposite in Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter though the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to life and only a few find it."

Why would most people think they are going to Heaven when they are not? They do not comprehend their own sinfulness and lostness apart from Christ.

Romans 3:23 "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Isaiah 59:2 "Our iniquities have made a separation between us and God and our sins have hidden His face from us so that He does not hear."

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Before we study further about Heaven we need to understand what the Bible says about Hell.

Revelation 20:12-15 "And I saw the dead, great and small standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it; Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

John 5:28-29 "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to

the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”

Matthew 8:12 “the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

C.S. Lewis, “I have met no people who fully disbelieved in Hell and also had a living and life-giving belief in Heaven.”

The Biblical teaching on both destinations stands or falls together.

Randy Alcorn, “If I had a choice, that is if the Scriptures were not so clear and conclusive, I would certainly not believe in Hell. Trust me when I say I do not want to believe in Hell. BUT if I make what I want or what others want the basis for my beliefs, then I am a follower of myself and my culture, not a follower of Christ.”

Consider the absolute amazing aspect of this thought. Christ determined that He would rather go to Hell on our behalf than live in Heaven without us. He so much wants you to go to Heaven that He paid a horrible price on the Cross so we wouldn't have to go there. Praise His Holy Name.

John 1: 10-12 He was in the world and the world knew him not. He came unto His own and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him to those He gave the right to become the Sons of God.”

I John 5:11, 12 “”And this is the record that God hath given unto us eternal life. This life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life and He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”