



Our Journey to Heaven!

Isaiah 25:6-9; 65:17-19 Rev. 21:1-8 John 14:1-6

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You are on a **journey**.

It's a journey from Baptism to Heaven.

In **Holy Baptism**, the Lord rescued you from the sinful, corrupt, and collapsing world and brought you into **His Kingdom**. In **Baptism**, God forgave your sins and gave you His **Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit guides you through the **Word of God** as you make your way through this world.

Jesus has taught us that the way to Heaven is narrow, and it is full of danger. The Lord's mighty power enables us to be **faithful**, **repentant**, and **patiently endure** as we make our way to Heaven.

**Heaven is our goal:
to be with the Lord forever!**

The Book of Revelation provides a plethora of visions of Heaven to encourage, strengthen, and even comfort you. Here is a sampling:

- † Heaven is a **great multitude** from every nation, tribe, people and language wearing white robes and holding palm branches as they sing their praises to the Lord Rev 7:9
- † Heaven is a place where there will be **no sin** and no effects of sin Rev 7:16
- † Heaven is following the **Jesus the Good Shepherd** to eternally green pastures and living under His care in a perfectly peaceful environment Rev 7:17
- † Heaven is revealed as the **Temple of God**, the place where God dwells, where we will be in the immediate presence of the Lord. Rev 11:19
- † Heaven is pictured as the **Lamb's Book of Life** – where God has written your name in that eternal book. The **Book of Life** is a figurative “list” of those whom God has chosen to live with Him in Heaven forever. Rev 13:8

- † In Heaven, we will sing a **New Song of Salvation**, like the Israelites did in the Old Testament when God rescued them from the Egyptians at the Red Sea. We will live in purity and truthfulness in God's presence forever. Rev 14:3-5
- † Heaven is shown as a **Sea of Glass** – everything is perfectly peaceful as God's people rejoice in their salvation; there will never again be temptation, sin, nor guilt. Rev 15:2
- † Heaven is portrayed as a great multitude shouting **Hallelujah!** because the Lord Jesus has defeated all our enemies and cast them into the Lake of Fire. We **Praise the Lord** for His mighty work of saving us. Rev 19:1ff
- † Heaven is depicted as a wedding between Christ and His Church. You will eat at the **Wedding banquet** – a table where we eat with the victorious Lord Jesus. Holy Communion is *foreshadow* of the Heavenly Communion we will have with Christ! Rev 19:7
- † Heaven is seen as the **New Jerusalem**; the holy and royal city of God where He dwells with His people. It's a pure and holy city with “streets of gold” and “pearly gates” – every single believer in Christ is safe and sound and accounted for in the New Jerusalem. Rev 21:2ff
- † And finally, *perhaps the most symbolic of all*, Heaven is pictured as the new **Garden of Eden**, where God's People live in paradise in the immediate presence of God. The Bible ends where it began: in the **Garden of Eden**.
 - Remember that Adam was expelled from the **Garden of Eden** because of his sin; Christ renews us and takes us back to a **Garden of Eden** through His death and resurrection. Sin corrupted the **Garden** in the original creation; Christ makes everything new and holy in the New Heavens and the New Earth . . . including the **New Garden of Eden**. Rev 22:1ff

The Book of Revelation provides a plethora of visions of Heaven to encourage, strengthen, and even comfort you.

When you put all these images, visions, and descriptions of Heaven together, a couple of things stand out and rise to the top:

1. In Heaven, you are in the **IMMEDIATE PRESENCE OF GOD**. In Heaven, we will no longer walk by faith; we will walk by sight. In theology, this is called the *Beatific Vision*: you will see the Lord Jesus with your very own eyes! Your sin no longer separates you from God; you are righteous and holy and can stand in His presence because of Jesus' work of salvation for you. Jesus' holy and sinless life is credited to

you, and God considers you holy and sinless. Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross took all your sin and guilt away; there is no sin held against you, because it was all held against Christ when He died. In His Resurrection from the dead, you are now declared righteous (= justification, "not guilty!" verdict) and you can stand in the IMMEDIATE PRESENCE OF GOD!

2. In Heaven, there is no sin, no evil, no pain, no suffering, no sorrow, no danger; there is **NOTHING TO HURT YOU**, there is nothing for you to worry about. Sin and its consequences are completely gone. Christ has defeated and destroyed the devil and all evil. The word "**BLISS**" is used to try to capture this idea. Heaven is holy, pure, and beautiful; there is no trace of sin or evil at all. Heaven is "**BLISS!**"

3. Because of the **Beatific Vision** and the heavenly **BLISS**, you will have complete **JOY**. The joy of heaven is seen in *praise and thanksgiving*; it is seen in the songs, the multitudes, the feasting images, the palm branches, the white robes, and the harps. *We will join with the angels, the archangels, and with all the company heaven to laud and magnify His glorious name forever and ever!* We will join with the entire Holy Christian Church of all times and all places in praising and thanking God for His mighty work of salvation. Heaven is unending **JOY!**

**All of this -- the Beatific Vision, the Bliss, the joy ---
all of this is our HOPE.**

Hope is **confident faith** in God's Promises to us. Hope is unshakeable trust in the promises of the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting. We are **looking forward** to Heaven and being in the presence of God with no trace of sin. This hope gives you **strength** as you live your life; it is an **anchor** that holds you close to God and His Promises. The **Hope of Heaven** gives you the strength to *patiently endure* whatever suffering, troubles, and pain you may have to go through.

In the Book of Revelation, the last 2 chapters are visions on heaven, and right in the middle are **strong and final warnings about sin!** These warnings are reminders of the importance of repentance and remaining faithful to the Lord throughout your life.

The cowardly, the unfaithful, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars— they will be consigned to the **Lake of Fire**. **THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH.**"

REVELATION 21:8

Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. REVELATION 22:15

You don't want to be left “**outside**” and cast into the “**Lake of Fire**”. If you are unrepentant; these verses are speaking directly to you. *If you think that you can believe in Jesus and at the same time live a rebellious and immoral life, then you are deceiving yourself.* You will be left “**outside**” and you will be cast into the “**Lake of Fire.**”

Verses like this call each of us to check our lives and make sure that we are not living in rebellion and immorality. If you are, then repent, confess it to God, and trust in His forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ. These verses, *at the end of the Bible*; and *in the middle of the visions of Heaven*, are strong warnings about how seriously God takes sin; and how He will not tolerate it in His presence.

Finally, one other thing.

In the middle of these final visions of heaven in the Book of Revelation, Jesus promises 4 times that **He is coming soon!** Jesus teaches us to be ever ready for his return; He creates an urgency within us so that we do not get lazy or apathetic in our faith.

Four times Jesus tells us He is returning soon!

Be alert!
Stay awake!
Be on your guard!
The time is near!
Repent of your sins!
Patiently endure your hardships!
Reach out to your neighbor while there is still time!

Jesus repeatedly tells us He is returning soon!

He creates an urgency within us so that we do not get lazy or apathetic in our faith

As we wrap up this series on the Book of Revelation, we are reminded that we are on a **journey**.

It's a journey from Baptism to Heaven.

What God started for you in Holy Baptism will be completed in Heaven. So until then, don't get lost; rather, faithfully walk with Jesus throughout your life! Amen!