

*Answers to your  
questions about*

# HEAVEN

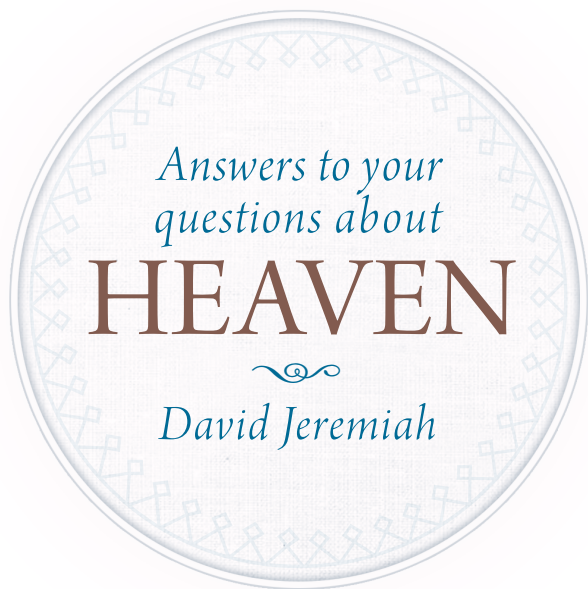


*David Jeremiah*

*Answers to Your Questions about Heaven*







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# Introduction

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What comes to mind when you think of heaven? Clouds and harps? Spires and domes? Most people form their impressions of heaven from television, movies, and their imaginations rather than a careful study of Scripture. But the Bible contains over five hundred references to heaven. It provides a virtual travelogue for God's children, with detailed information about our eternal home. After spending years studying this subject in Scripture, I'm overwhelmed by the comprehensive information God has given. He offers specific answers to our natural questions. In this book I've tried to share these answers as simply, readably, and biblically as possible.

After all, it's strengthening to turn our minds toward home and toward Him. The Bible says, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

During the Second World War, when it was hard for Franklin Roosevelt to travel among the troops because of his disability, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt took his place, and she became a favorite of soldiers around the world. She sent cables and letters back to FDR, becoming his eyes and ears. On one such trip in the Pacific theater she spent an evening talking to a group of soldiers, and later told her husband there was only one thought on all their minds—the desire to finish the battle so they could go home.<sup>1</sup>

That's how God's children feel about heaven. We're deployed on planet Earth, but it's only a temporary assignment. Goodness and mercy will surely follow us all the days of our lives. But what we're really anticipating is dwelling in the house of the Lord forever.

That's what this book is all about!

*David Jeremiah*

SPRING 2015



*What's Up with  
Heaven?*

## WHY SHOULD I STUDY HEAVEN WHILE I'M LIVING ON EARTH?



Did you know that heaven is mentioned more than five hundred times in the Scriptures? Being a prominent teaching in the Bible, heaven ought to also be prominent in our hearts and in our thoughts. As we become more heavenly minded, we actually become of more earthly good!

God has placed within our hearts a hunger for eternity, a hunger for heaven. And if we do not understand that and we do not feed that hunger with the spiritual truth of the Word of God, we will end up trying to satisfy that hunger with vain and tawdry things that will leave us empty and without satisfaction.

The truth is, we can never approximate all that God has prepared for us in our heavenly home. And we cannot recreate heaven on earth. But when we choose to focus on and prepare for the eternal home that awaits

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*We can never approximate all that God has prepared for us in our heavenly home.*

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us, our earthly focus is shifted toward living a life that honors God and leads others to Him.

## IS HEAVEN A REAL, PHYSICAL PLACE?

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Heaven is no figment of the imagination; nor is it a feeling, a state of mind, or the invention of man.

*Heaven is a literal place prepared by Christ for a prepared people.*

Heaven is a literal place prepared by Christ for a prepared people. In John chapter 14, Jesus Himself leaves His disciples with this promise:

In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

JOHN 14:2-3

It is interesting to note that the Greek term translated *place* in this passage is actually the word *topos*, which more specifically refers to a locatable place.

From this promise we can have full confidence that heaven is a real, physical place—a place where believers will one day reside with their Savior!



## HOW MANY LEVELS OF HEAVEN ARE DESCRIBED IN THE BIBLE?



The Bible speaks of three distinct heavens.

1. The first heaven is described in Isaiah 55:9-10 and is the atmosphere surrounding the earth—the domain of the clouds and birds (Genesis 1:20).
2. The second heaven is spoken of in Genesis 1:14-17 as the domain of the heavenly bodies: the sun, moon, stars, planets, and galaxies.
3. Paul described in his second letter to the Corinthians being “caught up to the third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2), which is beyond the first and second levels of heaven and is the dwelling place of God—where we will one day join Christ.

## WHERE IS THE EXACT LOCATION OF HEAVEN?


We do not know precisely, but we know that it is “up.” Ephesians 4:10 says that Christ “ascended far above all the heavens,” meaning heaven is above us.

However, “up” is a different locale depending on where you are located on the earth. Satan, addressing God in Isaiah 14:13, said, “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north,” which would indicate that heaven is located in the north. Even though we do not know the exact location, we know that it is a specific place being prepared for God’s people.


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*Even though we do not know the exact location, we know that heaven is a specific place being prepared for God’s people.*

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*Both the Old and New Testaments depict heaven as a place that is high, lofty, and lifted up. The Old Testament word for heaven is shamayim, which means “the heights.” And in the New Testament, the Greek word ouranos refers to heaven as that which is “raised up or lofty.”*



## IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A CHRISTIAN'S NAME TO BE "BLOTTED OUT" OF THE BOOK OF LIFE?

In order to understand how the Book of Life works, it may be necessary for us to better understand the Roman and Greek practices of the first century.

Cities in John's day had a registry that contained the name of every person who lived within the confines of that city. But if a person defiled his citizenship, he could be called before the tribunal, and his name would be removed from the registry—literally "blotted out" of the city book as a penalty for his actions. He would no longer be considered a citizen of that particular metropolis, and he would be consigned either to live in anonymity or to move elsewhere.

With that concept in mind, I believe the Book of Life is a book originally containing the name of every person born into this world. But if a person dies having rejected God's offer of salvation, his name is blotted out of the Lamb's Book of Life.

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*If a person dies having rejected God's offer of salvation, his name is blotted out of the Lamb's Book of Life.*

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## WHAT IS THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE, AND WILL MY NAME BE IN IT?

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The Bible says that in heaven, there is a book, or a registry, called the Lamb's Book of Life. And the names of all who will be in heaven are recorded in that one book.

William R. Newell, a great Bible scholar, said there are four things to be noted about the Book of Life:

1. It is the absence of one's name, not one's good works, that dooms a person.
2. Evil works are not the issue. Many of earth's greatest sinners' names are recorded in the Book of Life because they accepted God's offer of salvation.
3. Those whose names do not appear in the Book are cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15).
4. All names found in the Book were written before the Judgment Day. There is no record of names being recorded (decisions being made) on that day.<sup>2</sup>

Revelation 21:27 says "there shall by no means enter [into heaven] anything that defiles, or causes an

abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

Christ is the only way to heaven. And one day, Jesus will say to those who rejected Him, "I never knew you; depart from Me" (Matthew 7:23).

We cannot earn our passage to heaven simply by being "good" people or by living "good" lives.

Ultimately, we will not be

granted entrance to heaven unless we repent of our sins and accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior—then we can have full confidence that our names are recorded in the Book of Life.

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*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

—John 14:6

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