

Is Heaven the Reward of the Saved?

Many are confused about the reward of the saved. In this article, we are not speaking about salvation given to all who believe. Salvation comes by faith through God's grace when we accept the sacrifice Jesus Christ made to cover all our sins. Salvation is a gift (Rom. 6:23) and does not speak to our inheritance.

The questions for us today are, "Where will we be spending this salvation and what will we be doing?"

Have you ever taken the time to prove for yourself if heaven really is the reward of the saved? It seems when a person dies, he or she is described as a good person that is now in heaven.

What will you do in heaven? Does the Bible prove you go to heaven? You may be surprised at what you find as you search the pages of your own Bible for the truth.

The Apostle Peter understood much about your inheritance and the reward of the saved. He said you can look forward, "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, **reserved in heaven for you**" (I Pet. 1:4). Does this mean you are going to heaven?

If I were to reserve for you an inheritance in the Bank of America, does that mean you would have to spend the rest of your life in the Bank of America to enjoy your inheritance? No! The key words in Peter's statement are "reserved in heaven for you." Your inheritance, as a Christian, is reserved for you in heaven, but this doesn't mean you have to go to heaven to receive it!

On the day of Pentecost, as Peter was preaching, he gave us part of the answer to our question of "Is heaven the reward of the saved?" Speaking of Jesus, Peter said, "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? **This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven**" (Acts 1:9-11).

It is Jesus Himself who told you about your inheritance, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 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 14:1-3 NKJV).

Then this same Jesus, our savior, went on to say in Revelation 22:12, "And, behold, I come quickly; and **My reward is with Me**, to give every man according as his work shall

be.” If Jesus is coming again and our reward is brought with Him then, wherever Jesus is, there is where our reward will be!

Have you noticed that Salvation is a gift, but our reward in the Kingdom of God will be based on our works? Read the parable of the talents in Luke 19:12-27.

So we see Jesus has gone to heaven. He said He was going to prepare a place for us with the promise of coming again so that we could be with Him where He will be. The big question for us now is, where will Jesus be? We will examine more about this question in a moment.

Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews, also wondered about these spiritual things, so he went to Jesus. **This is what every human being should do!** He asked the Master about salvation and heavenly things. This was Christ’ answer, “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you *of* heavenly things? **And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven**” (John 3:12-13).

The problem Nicodemus had was that he had difficulty believing Jesus! How about you? Are you able to believe Jesus if He tells you about earthly and heavenly things? **Can you trust Jesus if He tells you nobody has gone to heaven? Do you believe Jesus?** “...Without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).

Where does this leave us today? Christ’s statement means Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not in heaven! It means Enoch, who walked with God, is not in heaven! This means Elijah, who was taken up by a chariot in a whirlwind, is not in heaven! And it shows that David, a man after God’s own heart (see Acts 13:22), is not in heaven! As a matter of fact, Peter spoke of this when he said, “Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day” (Acts 2:29).

If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not in heaven, if Enoch is not in heaven, if Elijah is not in heaven, and David is not in heaven, why do we think we are better than they? Why should we receive our reward before them by going to heaven as soon as we die? We will not receive our reward before Abraham and all the righteous people who have gone before us. The apostle Paul made this very clear.

When and where will the saints be reunited with Jesus and receive their reward? The apostle Paul adds to our understanding about this very important topic, “**But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep [many are still ignorant about the state of the dead today]**, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if [or because] we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that **we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no**

means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (I Thess. 4:13-17 NKJV).

Paul said by the authority of the Lord that we, who are alive and remain, will not get to be with the Lord before those who have died. This is proof that there will be no secret rapture of the living to heaven before the resurrection of the dead!

Paul was speaking here of a resurrection of the dead and an instantaneous change to a spirit body for those Christians, who will be alive at Christ’s return to this earth. The saints will rise to meet Christ in “the clouds.” These clouds are part of “the air” which is also part of this earth. The prophecy in Zechariah 14 explains where the saints will again descend to this earth. Zechariah begins to explain the events surrounding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in verses 4 and 5, “And His [Jesus’] feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east... **And the LORD my God shall come, *and* all the saints with Thee.**”

There you have it! **The saints will be resurrected from the dead, will rise to meet Christ in the air (still part of this earth), and will return to Jerusalem and set their feet, along with Christ’s, on the Mount of Olives!**

So where do religious people get the idea of going to heaven when Jesus Himself said, “No man has ascended up to heaven”? In contrast, the teachings of the New Testament clearly reveal to us about the resurrection of the dead!

Christ is coming to establish His Kingdom and rulership over the whole earth. Mary was told, “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and **the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end** (Luke 1:31-33).

As we look, through John’s vision into the Kingdom of God, we see the twenty-four elders around the throne, and they are explaining what has happened. Heaven is where God is and part of heaven is coming to this earth in the person of Jesus Christ. These twenty-four elders said of Jesus that He, “...hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and **hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth** (Rev. 5:9-10). Is this clear enough? Is it now understandable?

And again in Revelation 11:15 we read, “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **‘The kingdoms of this world are become *the* kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.’**”

So, we see Jesus coming again, just as He said He would, and He will then go about establishing His Government and Kingdom over the whole earth!

This plan of God was revealed many centuries ago to the Prophet Daniel. Daniel said, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14). We also see in verses 21 and 22 that Satan, through this horn, would make war with the saints, "Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." And then again, in verse 27 we learn that, "...the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

To prove further where our inheritance will be, read the following scriptures:

Psalm 25:12-13, "What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way *that* he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and **his seed shall inherit the earth.**"

Psalm 37:9, "For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, **they shall inherit the earth.**"

Psalm 37:11, "But **the meek shall inherit the earth;** and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

Psalm 37:18, "The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and **their inheritance shall be for ever.**"

Psalm 37:22, "**For such as be blessed of Him shall inherit the earth;** and *they that be* cursed of Him shall be cut off."

Matthew 5:5, "Blessed *are* **the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.**"

Now we are better able to understand the statements made by Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). And then just two verses later we read, "Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." When Jesus was speaking of "the poor in spirit" and "the meek," He was speaking of the same people! Our inheritance is reserved for us in heaven just as Peter said in I Peter 1:4, but we will receive our inheritance here on this earth!

Jesus again reassures us of this promise of our inheritance, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations" (Rev. 2:26).

Jude also showed that, in the days before the flood, God inspired Enoch to prophesy about the kingdom of God that was to come, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, 'Behold, **the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His**

saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jude 14-15).

I am amazed at the amount of unbelief that is present in modern Christianity today. Even when Christians are presented with irrefutable and infallible proofs from the pages of their own Bible, they are still willing to believe the lies they have taken for granted without proving the validity of them. It seems we Christians are some of the most gullible people; we assume that what we have been told is true.

I challenge every Christian to wake up and presume that nothing you have ever been told is true! Then take the time to prove, or disprove, every belief and doctrine you have ever been taught from the Bible. Don't believe the teaching and doctrines of men. Believe God!

Most Christians today are far too lazy to prove anything about their beliefs. How about you? Are you a lazy Christian?

I challenge you personally to prove what you believe! I want you to write me and try to show me how you are going to heaven and attempt to prove it from the Bible! I want you to show me from history how this idea of going to heaven got started in the church. Did it start from the teachings of Jesus? How about the apostles? The Church has, “...been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*” (Eph. 2:20 NKJV). Where, in any of the teachings of Jesus or the Apostles, do you find any statement about going to heaven? I want you to wake up and fight for the truth! I want you to prove, once and for all, truth from error!

There is a very large segment of “the Christian community” that the apostle Paul prophesied about having been influenced by Satan. Satan has been able to infiltrate the Church and promulgate his lies. “Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction. **He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.**”

“Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you? And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes. For **this lawlessness is already at work secretly**, and it will remain secret until the One who is holding it back steps out of the way. Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath of His mouth and destroy him by the splendor of His coming.

“This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. He will **use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.** So **God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies.** Then

they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth” (II Thess. 2:3-12 NLT).

This is the age or era of the Laodicean Church spoken of by Jesus Christ in Revelation 3:14-22. The Christian community is so lazy that most don't know what they believe and couldn't prove any of their beliefs from the pages of the Bible. They simply believe what they are told, having proven none of it for themselves! Jesus said of the Church in this age that, because it is so “lukewarm” spiritually, He is about to spit it out of His mouth.

How about you? Are you a lazy Christian? Or are you on fire with the zeal of the Holy Spirit, and always willing to do the will of the Father? Examine yourself whether you are actually in the Faith!

There are many other scriptures in the Bible teaching us about the Kingdom of God and explaining our reward. However, you need to examine the Word of God for yourself. Check out our website www.thelittlebook.com for a more in-depth study of the Truth.

The question for you today is, will you believe Jesus or are you going to continue to believe lies? Do you just believe anything you were told about Jesus? Come on, get with it! It is later than you think! **Can you believe Jesus if He tells you nobody has gone to heaven?** I Challenge you to believe Jesus! Don't continue to believe those who teach for doctrine the commandments (ideas) of men.