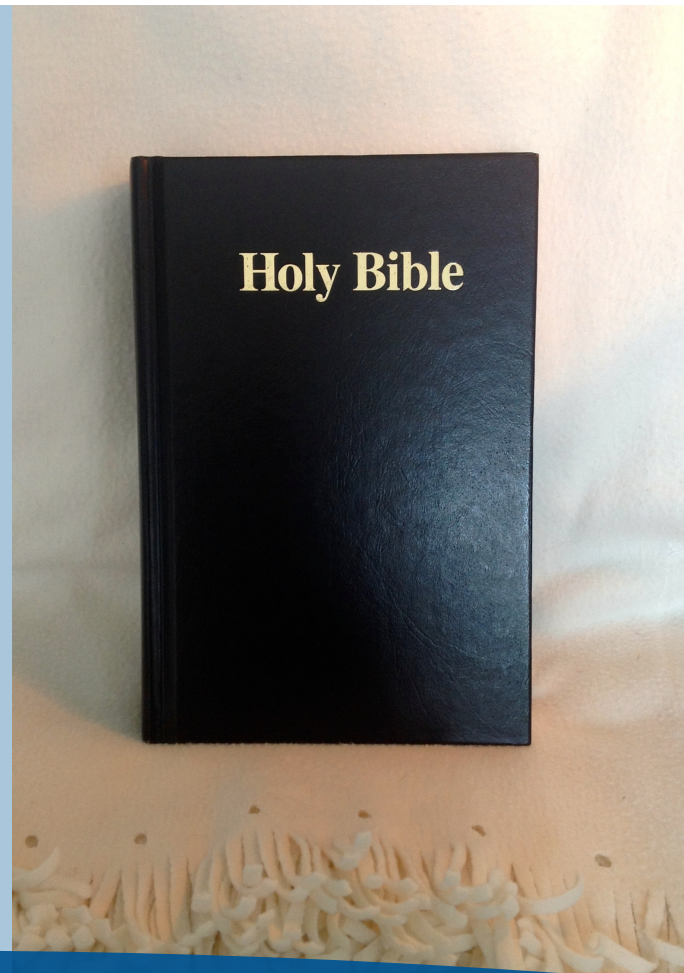


*Unlock the passages of the Bible for yourself*

# Learn to Read the Bible More Effectively

EXPLORING  
WHAT THE  
BIBLE SAYS  
ABOUT  
HEAVEN



Page 1

# HEAVEN

- Sky
- Starry heaven
- God's abode
- Figurative or political heaven

We shall begin by looking at the above 4 aspects of the word Heaven in the bible

## Sky

### Gen 1:

**1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

**2** And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

**8** And God **called the firmament Heaven**. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

**“called the firmament Heaven”** The firmament was a separation made between “the deep” or sea, and the dense mists “darkness” of verse 2. In effect God was creating the atmosphere, that is the sky, and He called this “heaven” (verse 8)

So sometimes the word is applied to the sky. It is also used to refer to the:-

## Starry heaven

### Psalm 8:

**3** When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

**4** What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

“Heaven” can also refer to:-

## God's abode

### 1Kings 8:39

Then hear thou in **heaven thy dwelling place**, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)

Sometimes “Heaven” is used in a figurative sense, for the ruling dignitaries, Kings, princes, officials, political ‘Stars’ who rule over the commoners like the Sun, Moon and stars shine on the earth.

# Figurative or political heaven

This concept is based on terminology such as:-

## **Gen 1:**

**16** And God made two great lights; **the greater light to rule the day**, and the lesser light **to rule the night**: he made the stars also.

**17** And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

**18** And **to rule** over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

Lets consider an example of this figure being used to signify political heavens:

## **Matthew 24:**

**29** Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

If we consider the context of the above, Jesus is referring to the coming destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in AD 70, when the ruling bodies and jewish authorities, were swept from their prominent positions, e.g.. The High priest, and the jewish court the Sanhedrin etc.

God has never promised Heaven to the faithful, but rather the earth was created for man, both now, and (for the faithful) for ever, in the life to come, as:-

## **Psalms 115:**

**15** Ye are blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth.

**16** The heaven, even **the heavens, are the LORD'S**: but **the earth hath he given to the children of men.**

**17** The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.

**18** But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.”  
[Heb. hallelujah]

Verses 16-18 of the above is a prophecy of what the resurrected faithful will say in that day. Also this is emphasised still further in:-

## **Psalms 37:**

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

**10** For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

**11** But **the meek shall inherit the earth**; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

These Psalms (and much else in the Old Testament) formed the basis of the Gospel preached by Jesus and the apostles. Verse 11 of Psalm 37 (above) is quoted by Jesus as a main point of the 'Sermon of the Mount'.

# The 'Sermon' on the Mount

## **Matt 5**

**:3** Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**:4** Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

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

In these verses Jesus is speaking of the reward of the righteous, that they shall be "comforted" when they inherit "the kingdom of heaven" on earth.

The "kingdom of heaven" is to be "OF" i.e. from heaven- not IN heaven. Nowhere in the bible does it ever say 'the kingdom IN heaven'. The elements that will establish the kingdom of God on earth, are reserved in heaven until Christ returns with the power and authority to establish the kingdom of God on earth. And so we are taught to pray:-

## The Lord's Prayer

**Matt 6:10** Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Christ is at the right hand of The Father until the time for the Kingdom to come. Jesus is the only son of man to have ascended to heaven, as recorded in:-

**John 3:13** "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven"

Even King David, a man after God's own heart (Act 13:22) has not ascended into heaven, Jesus alone has:

### **Acts 2:**

**32** This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

**33** For **David is not ascended into the heavens:** but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand

So as we don't ascend to heaven, Jesus must return to earth to bring the kingdom of heaven to the faithful as:

**Matt 8:11** And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

"They shall come" (to the land of Israel, where Jesus was when he said this) from all the points of the compass (which only applies to this earth) and sit down with the rest of the resurrected faithful in the Kingdom to come from heaven.

Earlier we read from the "the sermon on the mount" that the meek "shall inherit **the earth**" (Mat.5:5) Yet a few verses on we read:

**Mat 5:12** Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is **your reward in heaven**: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Is the future reward of the righteous to be on earth or in heaven? Well, rightly understood, the Bible never contradicts itself. We find that the future reward of the righteous, as yet, rests with Christ, who for the present is in heaven, but he has promised to return and bring the fulfilling of the promised reward with him, as we read:

**Rev 22:12** And, behold, **I come** quickly; and **my reward is with me**, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Christ will return “quickly” or suddenly, in the day of the resurrection, as we read:

**Rev 11**

**:18** And the nations **were angry, and thy wrath is come, and** the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst **give reward unto thy servants** the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.

At this point Christ will take control of the earth so that the resurrected “meek” can inherit it, as ver 15 says:

**Rev 11**

**:15** 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.

This will start the Millennium, the 1,000 years reign of “peace on earth”, as we read:

**Rev 20:6** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

To receive this reward and bodily immortality through resurrection, is the hope of the Gospel, as Paul taught:

**2 Tim.4:8** Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

But the right to citizenship in the coming Kingdom of God on earth, is recorded in Heaven with Christ, to become reality when he returns:-

**Philippians 3:**

**20** For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; **from whence** also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

**21** Who shall change our vile body, that it may be the fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

# New Heaven and a New Earth

This term appears a number of times in the bible, and is generally misunderstood. New heavens and earth are always used figuratively for a new order of things on earth; For instance, the great flood by which God destroyed the order of life on earth, and replaced it with a new order derived from Noah and his family, are spoken of in similar terms:

## **2 Peter 3:**

**5** For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

**6** Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

**7** But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

And in verse 13, the term is used as a figure of the future reign of Christ on earth, as:

## **2 Peter 3:**

**13** Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness

At the centre of the New Heavens and Earth, will be Jerusalem and Israel's restored Kingdom, as:

## **Isa 65:**

**17** For, behold, I create **new heavens and a new earth**: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

**18** But be ye glad and **rejoice for ever in that which I create**: for, behold, **I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy**

**22** They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

**24** And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

**25** The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

And the restoration of natural Israel is also spoken of in the next chapter:

## **Isaiah 66:**

**20** And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

**:21** And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD.

**:22** For as **the new heavens and the new earth**, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

To re-cap; the following quotes are taken directly from some of the verses we have read (above):-

- The heavens, are the LORD'S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men. Psalm 115:16
- And no man hath ascended up to heaven John 3:13
- For David is not ascended into the heavens Acts 2:33
- they shall inherit the earth. Psalm 37:11
- and shall reign with him a thousand years. Rev 20:6
- The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign Rev 11:15
- Who shall change our vile body, that it may be the fashioned like unto his glorious body, Philippians 3:21