

You Asked For It - March 10th - What will heaven be like? - Troy Knight

TALK IT OVER

Key Scriptures from the Message:

Luke 23:42
Revelation 20:13-15
Revelation 21:1-2
Revelation 21:16-18
Isaiah 11:6-9
John 20:14-16
Matthew 22:30
Psalm 16:9-11

Start reading.

Colossians 3:1-4 NLT
"Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory."

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What mental images come to mind when you think about heaven?

Start thinking and sharing. Ask a question to get your group thinking and to create openness.

- Read Luke 23:34-42. What elements of salvation were demonstrated by the thief and Jesus while hanging on the cross?
- Read Hebrews 9:24-28. Jesus died "once for all" and "paid the penalty" for our sins. There are denominations that believe there is some type of temporary holding place where people who have died can be purified and/or prayed for in order to attain heaven. After we die physically, do we get a second chance to attain heaven? Why?
- Read Revelation 20:12-15, Romans 8:37-39, and Philippians 4:3. How do these Scriptures describe hell and what do they say about avoiding hell? How did Troy say you get your name in the book of life?
- Sin is often portrayed as fun and exciting, but does the resulting feeling of pleasure last? Read these verses: Job 20:4-5, Hebrews 11:25, and Ecclesiastes 11:9; 12:1. What does the Bible say. Share personal examples of this in your life.
- David joyfully anticipated heaven in Psalm 16:9-11. These verses and others have described what heaven will be like. What are you anticipating about heaven?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Comfort and encourage one another by reading Revelations 7:16-17 and 21:1-4. What are your thoughts after reading these verses? What do you find to be the most encouraging?
- Read Colossians 3:1-4 from at least 3 Bible versions. During our time on this earth, on what are we to set our affections? What were you setting your affections on in the past? What are you setting your affections on now?

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Pray that we can set our hearts on the joy that is to come and our hopes and affections on eternity in heaven, knowing that there will be no tears, no sin, no trials, no death, and no doubts.

Start digging. For further study.

- Read the article found on the back titled, "5 Important Things the Bible Teaches about Heaven That We Often Forget" by Brittany Rust, Sponsored by Liberty University. Discuss the five points with your group.

5 Important Things the Bible Teaches about Heaven That We Often Forget - What's **Heaven** like?

A question or thought many people have. Some might think we become angels and spend our days playing a harp on a cloud. Or that good deeds get you there on merit. But what does the **Bible** really have to say about Heaven? A lot, actually. Let's explore five of those truths today!

1. God is preparing a place there for us now.

Hebrews 11:16, John 14:1-3

In **John 14**, Jesus is in the upper room with the disciples; it's his final moments with men who will continue his work after his death. Because of the limited time left before he's arrested, Jesus is careful to share thoughts he finds very important to impart one last time.

It's here that Jesus mentions his Father has a place of many rooms and that he himself is going to prepare it. In addition, it's in Hebrews we learn God has prepared a city for us.

It's why we don't feel quite at home on Earth; or at least, we shouldn't. Because this isn't our eternal home. Our country is Heaven and we should long to be there with God. It's a comforting and encouraging thought, in the midst of our restlessness in life, to know that God is preparing a place specifically for those who will get to enjoy it for eternity!

2. Not all will enter.

Matthew 7:21-23

It's important to remember that not everyone will enter Heaven. It's not because God is cruel or unforgiving; in fact, His very nature is the exact opposite! But the truth is, sin cannot live in His presence. As a result, only those who have fully surrendered their life to Christ will enter.

Many might think that as long as you're a good person, you'll go to Heaven. This is a misleading myth in our society and one that will hold many back. In **Matthew 7**, we read that many will stand before God and proclaim they did good; they will believe they should be there based off of their good works. But only those who laid it all down for the glory of Christ will enter.

If this is you—if you're a good person but know you truly lack an intimate relationship with Christ—please know today that only those who have committed their life to Christ will spend eternity in Heaven. Will you commit?

3. Christians should long for it.

Hebrews 11:13-16, 2 Corinthians 5:2

One thing that's important to remember as you live out your life on Earth is to carry with you a longing for Heaven. If you are a believer, your home isn't Earth but is an eternal place in the presence of God.

Our best day on Earth will never compare to a day in Heaven. The Bible makes it clear that this place we are now is temporary and isn't our true home. As you walk through life on this planet, carry with you the knowledge that your home is far superior to this place and long for it!

Some might say that to become focused on Heaven leaves us ineffective on Earth. C.S. Lewis shares, "*It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one.*" In reality, carrying with you this longing—this eternal perspective—will allow you to be more effective while on Earth.

4. It will be a place of learning and working.

1 Corinthians 13:9-10, Revelation 7:15, 22:3

No, you won't spend all day every day playing the harp on some cloud but you will be busy! It's anticipated that Heaven will be a place where we'll still be learning and continue to use our gifts to serve.

In **1 Corinthians 13**, it's mentioned that the angels would give anything to be in on the knowledge, inferring that they don't know all things. In addition, only God is all knowing. In Heaven, we can expect to learn and grow!

Heaven will also be a place where we serve and work. Revelation mentions this a few times; how we will be serving God. Work is good for us all—it's why in the garden God gave us work to do.

Needless to say, Heaven is a fascinating place where we'll never be bored!

5. We'll have heavenly bodies, free from sin.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10, 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

In Heaven we will not be the same as we were here. We will have a renewed body that is imperishable; that is free from the effects of sin and time.

On Earth our bodies face many challenges: physical limitations, sin, time, pain, and defects. But in Heaven we will be free from these elements and enjoy a body for all eternity. And just as our bodies will be physically renewed, so they will be spiritually. We will get to walk in the fullness and outward evidence of the Holy Spirit.

Remember what C.S. Lewis said and know that carrying a heavenly, eternal perspective and longing for Heaven only makes us more effective on Earth!

Brittany Rust Sponsored by Liberty University