



## **Heaven Wins: The Truth about God's Love and the Fate of Mankind**

### ***Part #1: Preoccupied With Heaven***

---

Everyone is preoccupied with the theological debate of "**What happens when I die?**" Some believe that you simply cease to exist while others believe that every single person will go to some version of heaven. The average sample of beliefs on this subject are shown below.

Since 1997, belief in heaven has ranged between 72% and 83%. According to Gallup's most recent May 2004 Values and Beliefs poll\*, 81% of Americans currently say they believe in heaven, 10% are unsure, and 8% do not believe. As expected, regular churchgoers are more likely than others to say they believe: Virtually all (98%) of those who attend church weekly do so versus 89% who attend "nearly weekly" and 64% of those who say they attend church seldom or never.<sup>1</sup>

76% of American adults believe that Heaven exists, while 71% said that there is such a thing as Hell...Those who believe in Heaven were divided between describing Heaven as "a state of eternal existence in God's presence" (46%) and those who said it is "an actual place of rest and reward where souls go after death" (30%). Other Americans claimed that Heaven is just "symbolic" (14%), that there is no such thing as life after death (5%), or that they are not sure (5%).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Gallup Poll, "Eternal Destinations: Americans Believe in Heaven, Hell." May 25, 2004. Downloaded on September 30, 2014 from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/11770/Eternal-Destinations-Americans-Believe-Heaven-Hell.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Barna Group, "Americans Describe Their Views About Life After Death." October 21, 2003. Downloaded on September 30, 2014 from <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/128-americans-describe-their-views-about-life-after-death?q=heaven+hell#.VCwr9vldX9o>

The range of beliefs on this subject was strongly debated in 2011 with the arrival of Rob Bell's book "Love Wins." Since that time, the evangelical world has sought to answer the major questions people are asking today such as the ones that follow,

- **Will all people go to heaven when they die?**
- **How can I earn my spot in heaven?**
- **Is Jesus really the only way to heaven?**
- **What does the Bible really say about heaven?**

This topic created such a buzz among the media that Larry King pulled together a panel of religious leaders from all different religious backgrounds to share their view on this subject.

This can be seen in first 6:25 timeframe in the video clip attached,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GP3AwOj9Aw>

Yes, every single person has a specific view of the afterlife and the world is preoccupied with this topic. This study examines the Biblical truth about heaven and the eternal destiny of those who choose to follow Jesus Christ versus those who reject Him. We will study the following topics through the course of this study and the Biblical response to the subject of heaven.

<b>Heaven Wins: A Biblical Study on Heaven</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>October 01, 2014</b>	<b>Preoccupied With Heaven</b>	This lesson will examine the preoccupation that our culture has with the subject of the afterlife. It will examine the importance of recognizing the truth about heaven and hell as well as the importance of living your life with eternity in mind.
<b>October 08, 2014</b>	<b>What Will Heaven Be Like?</b>	This lesson will answer the question that many have when reflecting on the subject of heaven, What will it be like? We will examine major features that the Bible declares about heaven.
<b>October 15, 2014</b>	<b>Facts versus Fables About Heaven</b>	This lesson will examine the modern day myths that we encounter when dealing with the subject of heaven as well as give you ways to answer these myths.
<b>October 22, 2014</b>	<b>What Will We Be Like in Heaven?</b>	This lesson will answer the question, "What will we be like in heaven?" We will examine the Biblical truths on this subject.
<b>November 05, 2014</b>	<b>The Heavenly Host</b>	This lesson will examine the role, characteristics, and nature of the heavenly hosts in heaven.
<b>November 12, 2014</b>	<b>More Heavenly Questions Answered</b>	This lesson will answer several more questions that many encounter when studying the subject of heaven.
<b>November 19, 2014</b>	<b>Living in Light of Heaven</b>	This lesson will address the importance of living this life in light of heaven. We will examine what it means to live for the eternal prize and the glory of God.

## Section #1 – Four Truths Observed From Our “Life is Terminal” Lesson

---

The reality that every single human being must face is simple: Life is Terminal. Even if we live to be 100 years old then we understand that our journey in this life will eventually end. This current death rate is 100% and the statistics tell us that 3 people die every second in the world, 180 every minute, almost 11,000 every hour and more than 250,000 people die every day. The Word of God makes it clear that this means 250,000 people come face-to-face with the reality of heaven or hell every day. The Word of God teaches us four important truths that we must wrestle with in understanding that “Life is Terminal.”

### Truth #1 – Your Life on this Earth is Brief

The term **eternity** is one that is unfathomable for many people. The term in the Greek language means “*unlimited duration of time, with particular focus upon the future.*”<sup>3</sup> It is a term used to describe an infinite amount of time yet it is being described by finite human beings. Christians understand according to the Word of God that what we do with this life matters for eternity as we understand that Jesus will come again some day and bring His reward in accordance with the fruit of our life as found in Revelation,

**Revelation 22:12** (NLT) – Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds.

We also observe that Scripture reminds us that “**Life on Earth is Terminal and Brief.**” As we look at this life in the grand scheme of eternity then we understand it is simply a speck on the eternal timeline yet what we do with this life matters for eternity as described in James,

**James 4:14** (ESV) – Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

#### Q U E S T I O N S

What does it look like to live with the end in sight?  
Why must a Christian always remember that “Life is a Mist”?

Life is Terminal and James describes it succinctly as a mist that disappears quickly. Kurt A. Richardson observes,

The metaphor of mist is quantitative rather than qualitative. Mists do not last long in Palestine. Their form is transitory. They appear with the dew and quickly dissipate. But this evaporation is a fitting way to refer to the ephemeral attribute of human life that James has already observed in 1:10–11 in the case of the rich. No one knows the times of his or her own life. Without trust in God, these believers become nearly indistinguishable from the wicked, who take no account of God.<sup>4</sup>

### Truth #2 – You Will Give An Account

The second truth that we examine is discovered as we understand that since this “Life is Terminal” then we must be ready for this life to end. The Word of God reminds us of this truth

---

<sup>3</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 640.

<sup>4</sup> Kurt A. Richardson, *James*, vol. 36, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 199.

as it compels us to consider the fact that each of us must be ready to “Give an Account” of our life. Peter describes it as follows,

**1 Peter 4:5-6** (ESV) – <sup>5</sup>But they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup>For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

#### Q U E S T I O N S

What does it mean for a Christian to give an account of their life?

What will our reward be based on as Christians?

Notice that this text declares that the Lord is in a continual state of readiness to judge the living and dead. The Greek term used for “account” refers to a record of “assets and liabilities.” It refers specifically to a Christian giving an account of the life that he/she has lived as to whether it was for the glory of God or the glory of self. John MacArthur observes that as we give an account then the Lord will repay us accordingly as he states,

Believers’ eternal rewards will be based on their faithfulness in serving Christ in this life. Their works will be tested, and only those with eternal value will survive (1 Cor. 3:9-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-10). The rewards believers enjoy in heaven will be capacities for serving God; the greater their faithfulness in this life, the greater will be their opportunity to serve in heaven (cf. Matt. 25:14-30).<sup>5</sup>

### Truth #3 – God is Sovereign and You Are Not

The third truth examined is simple, “God is Sovereign and You are Not.” Many people live life as if they are in control of their destiny yet we do not even know if we have another hour or even another minute of life. We are reminded of this truth as found in Scripture.

**Isaiah 45:18** (ESV) – For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited! “I am the Lord, and there is no other.”

**Colossians 1:16-17** (ESV) – <sup>16</sup>For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

There is only One true God and He is in control over all things. The Apostle Paul gives three reasons why the Lord is Sovereign as he states,

- God is the Creator
- God is Before All Things
- God Holds All Things Together

When the universe began, God already existed (John 1:1-2; 1 John 1:1). He told the Jews in John 8:58, “Before Abraham was born, I am” (Not “I was”). Not only did Jesus create the universe, He also sustains it. He maintains the delicate balance necessary to life’s existence. He quite literally holds all things together. He is the power behind every consistency in the universe. D. Lee Chesnut describes what this looks like at the level of the nucleus of an atom,

<sup>5</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *Revelation 12–22*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000), 299.

Consider the dilemma of the nuclear physicist when he finally looks in utter amazement at the pattern he had now drawn of the oxygen nucleus.... For here are eight positively charged protons closely associated together within the confines of this tiny nucleus. With them are eight neutrons—a total of sixteen particles—eight positively charged, eight with no charge.

Earlier physicists had discovered that like charges of electricity and like magnetic poles repel each other, and unlike charges or magnetic poles attract each other. And the entire history of electrical phenomena and electrical equipment had been built up on these principles known as Coulomb's law of electrostatic force and the law of magnetism. What was wrong? What holds the nucleus together? Why doesn't it fly apart? And therefore, why do not all atoms fly apart?<sup>6</sup>

## Truth #4 – Earth is Not Your Home

Finally, we observe that within the pages of Scripture it reminds us that “Earth is Not Your Home.” Many live this life as if this is all there is to eternity yet God’s Word has declared the reality that we are yet to arrive to our real home.

**Hebrews 11:13-16** – <sup>11</sup>These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. <sup>14</sup>For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. <sup>15</sup>If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup>But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

**Ephesians 2:19** – So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...

Christians understand that even though “**Life is terminal**,” we have our heart, mind, and soul focused upon an eternal home and reward that awaits us in heaven. We would do well to live for this reward. Jonathan Edwards once observed,

“It becomes us only to spend this life only as a journey toward heaven...to which we should subordinate all other concerns of life. Why should we labor for or set our hearts on anything else, but that which is our proper end and true happiness?”<sup>7</sup>

### QUESTIONS

What does it compel a Christian to do as he understands that earth is not home?

How can you live with eternity in sight?

## Section #2 – Jesus Came to Deliver You from this Terminal Life

The final section that we must observe in this study is the realization that Jesus Christ came to rescue us from this “Terminal Life.” As we read through the pages of Scripture we understand that “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). We also understand that “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) yet our free gift of eternal life is found through Christ alone. Consider these passages as you close out your study this day,

**Romans 6:23** – For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

<sup>6</sup> D. Lee Chestnut, *The Atom Speaks*. (San Diego: Creation Science Research Center, 1973), 31–33.

<sup>7</sup> Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards: Basic Writings* (New York: New American Library, 1966), 142.

**Hebrews 2:14-15** – <sup>14</sup>Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup>and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

**1 Corinthians 15:55-57** – <sup>55</sup>“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”  
<sup>56</sup>The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup>But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are given freedom from the disease of “Terminal Life” only through Christ. There is no other cure nor religion than can offer this same cure for eternity, all other fall short and end in death. R. C. H. Lenski writes,

Death is not merely destroyed so that it cannot do further harm while all of the harm which it has wrought on God's children remains. The tornado is not merely checked so that no additional homes are wrecked while those that were wrecked still lie in ruin. ... Death and all of its apparent victories are undone for God's children. What looks like a victory for death and like a defeat for us when our bodies die and decay shall be utterly reversed so that death dies in absolute defeat and our bodies live again in absolute victory.<sup>8</sup>

What will you do with the Good News this day? As you understand the truth about Life and the reality that all will face death then what does this information compel you to accomplish as a Christian? Live for Jesus Christ and spread the Gospel message today!

#### Q U E S T I O N S

How does victory in Christ compel us to share the Gospel with others?  
How can we share the Gospel today?

---

<sup>8</sup> R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963), 744–45.