



Citizens of Heaven

(Philippians 3:20, 21)

Phil Sanders

How amazing it is that we can become citizens of heaven *now*, in this life! God has prepared a place for us to live after we leave this earth. Jesus said, “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for 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; cf. 1 Peter 1:3, 4).

God is also preparing *us* for that place: “For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, . . . Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge” (2 Corinthians 5:1–5). Those who enter into the prepared place are called “blessed” (Matthew 25:34).

Heaven is a real place that has been reserved for those who follow God’s will, and it is a place that every Christian should know about! First, we should know that no one will stumble into heaven—Christians must intend to go there! Second, we must realize that heaven is a bargain, at whatever the cost to go there (Romans 8:18). The true price has already been paid by Jesus. It was not cheap for Him; He died to provide for our entrance into heaven.

Heaven is the place which God has made to bless mankind. We will not understand some details about heaven in this life. Heaven would hardly be heaven if we could define it. We do know that it will be part of a *new* (in kind and quality) heavens and earth; the old will be *gone* (2 Peter 3:12, 13). What we know about heaven merely suggests what this new home will be like. James S. Montgomery wrote:

If God hath made this world so fair
Where sin and death abound,
How beautiful beyond compare
Will paradise be found.

WHAT WILL NOT BE IN HEAVEN?

Through the Scriptures, we know what will *not* be in heaven. Heaven will have no weeping, no death or separation, and no sorrow

(Revelation 21:2–4). There will be no night, no uncleanness, no sinners (Revelation 21:21–27), no divisions, and no curse (Revelation 22:1–3). Those in heaven will experience no discomforts: “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; . . . and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:16, 17).

WHAT WILL BE IN HEAVEN?

We also know some of what *will* be in heaven. First, there will be joy. One of the joys of heaven will be fellowship. C. S. Lewis has said, “Joy is the serious business of Heaven.” Heaven will not be a place of boredom, monotony, or indifference. Even Christ’s coming will be a time of exceeding joy (1 Peter 4:13).

Heaven will be a place of service. Revelation 22:3, 4 says, “And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.” The Greek verb used in the verse, *latreuo*, means to perform a service of worship. We are God’s bondservants, or slaves. It is inconceivable to think that we would do nothing in heaven. In the parable of the talents those who used their talents well were given greater roles of service in the kingdom (Matthew 25:14–30). Service implies worship, a glorifying of God. If you do not enjoy worshipping on earth, you probably would not enjoy heaven, for it is a place where worshiping God will be overflowing in pure joy!

Our new home will be a place of treasures. Our inheritance is reserved for us there—an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away (1 Peter 1:4). Each day that we live, we should be laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20). There we will enjoy the surpassing riches of

God’s grace (Ephesians 2:7).

WHO WILL BE THERE?

God will be in heaven. To be in His presence will be the best part of heaven, and to be removed from His sight will be the worst part of hell. Jesus Christ will also be in heaven. At last, we will be able to say, “Thank You” to Him face to face. The Holy Spirit, who has been our constant companion in this life, will be in heaven. The angels, the cherubim, the seraphim, and the rest of God’s host will also be there.

Part of what will make heaven so precious is the souls who will be there! It will be a great blessing to be “at home” with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:17). All of God’s people will be at home in heaven—all those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life! Abraham, Noah, Enoch, Moses, Elijah, David, Peter, Paul, Stephen, and the other great prophets, preachers, and women of the Bible will be gathered there.

Our loved ones who are Christians—the people who have blessed our lives on the earth—will be in heaven. Our Christian families will be there. Infants and small children will be there. The saved people from all nations (Revelation 21:24) will be among the blessed in that place. We will have a great fellowship in the kingdom (Luke 13:29).

CONCLUSION

What would you give for a home on earth like that one that awaits you in heaven? What will you give for that home in heaven?

A young soldier on a train bound for his hometown was so excited that he could hardly stay in his seat. He desperately wanted to see his father, his mother, and the other members of his family. Are you anxious to see your Father and your Christian family in heaven?

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