

Fulfilled Prophecies

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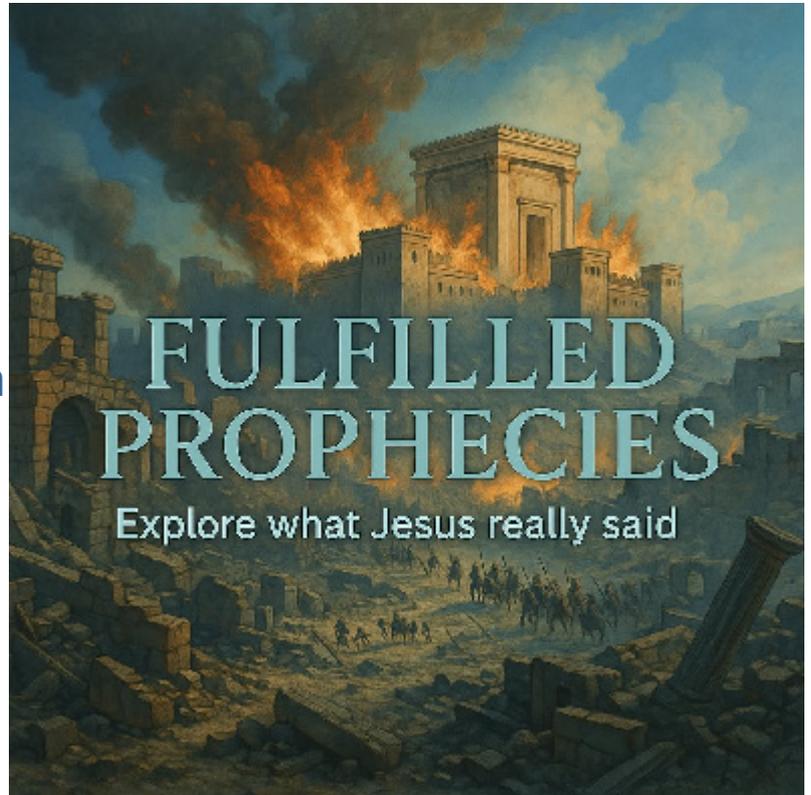
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Heaven - What Is Heaven Like?



By Dan Maines

What Is Heaven Like?

Let's look at what Scripture truly teaches about heaven, the body, and the afterlife from a fulfilled, perspective.

Heaven is a place of rest.

Revelation 14:13 - "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.'"

Heaven is a better existence than this present life in the flesh.

2 Corinthians 5:8 - "But we are of good courage and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord."

Philippians 1:23 - "But I am hard-pressed between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better."

Heaven is different from life on earth.

Ecclesiastes 5:2 - "God is in heaven and you are on the earth."

Matthew 5:11-12, 16:19, John 3:13, 6:38, Philippians 2:10, Colossians 1:20 all speak to the unique nature of heaven as the dwelling place of God.

Heaven is the hope of the believer.

Matthew 5:12 - "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great."

1 Corinthians 15:19 - "If we have hoped in Christ only in this life, we are of all people most to be pitied."

Colossians 1:5 - "Because of the hope reserved for you in heaven."

Titus 1:2 - "In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago."

What Kind of Body Do We Have in Heaven?

We do not enter heaven in our old physical bodies.

1 Corinthians 15 repeatedly calls it a "spiritual body" and says,

1 Corinthians 15:50 - "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."

Jesus said we will be like the angels.

Matthew 22:30 - "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."

We will be recognizable, but in a changed form.

Matthew 17:3 - Moses and Elijah appeared in glory at the Transfiguration. They were not in physical flesh, but they were known.

When Do We Go to Heaven?

The Scriptures teach that we go to our eternal state at death.

Hebrews 9:27 - "And just as it is destined for people to die once, and after this comes judgment."

There is no biblical support for a delay until some future end-of-time event.

Philippians 1:23 and 2 Corinthians 5:8 both show a clear expectation of being with Christ at death.

What Was Hades?

Hades was the temporary realm of the dead, not to be confused with hell.

In the Old Testament, this was called "Sheol."

Hades was emptied and abolished at the end of the Old Covenant system.

Revelation 20:14 - "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire."

Revelation 1:1 and 22:6 remind us these things would happen "soon" and "quickly."

After Hades was abolished in AD 70, the gate to heaven was fully opened.

Revelation 4:1 shows a door standing open in heaven.

Luke 16:19-31 (The Rich Man and Lazarus), Luke 23:43 (Jesus telling the thief, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise"), and 1 Peter 3:18-20 all reference that temporary realm.

Summary

Heaven is the dwelling place of God and the eternal hope of every believer.

Our resurrection is not into a fleshly body, but a spiritual one, imperishable and fit for heaven.

The righteous go to be with the Lord at death.

Hades, once a holding place for the dead, was abolished at the final judgment against old covenant Israel.

This is the fulfilled hope we proclaim. God kept His promises.

The gates of heaven are open. We live now in the new covenant age, awaiting nothing, because the kingdom has come and we are citizens of it.

Revelation 21:3 - "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them."

Are you living like you are already seated with Christ in the heavenly places?

Adapted in part from Charles Meek

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