



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Death, Glorification, Unification: What happens to our Body, Soul and Spirit?”

Lesson 13 – Heaven is a Place, Not Just a State of Mind

June 18, 2017

I. Lesson Starter:

What is heaven? Is it a physical place or Just a State of Mind? Where will our resurrected bodies live? What will the New Creation be like?

II. What is Heaven?

The place that God dwells is frequently called “Heaven” in scripture. Heaven is the place where God most fully makes known his presence to bless. While God is present everywhere (Omnipresent), the greatest manifestation of God’s presence is in Heaven. This is where is Glory is full know and where angels, other heavenly creatures and the redeemed saints all worship Him.

Isaiah 66:1

¹ “This is what the Lord says: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? ² Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the Lord.

Matthew 6:9-10

⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

1 Peter 3:21-22

²¹ and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

III. Heaven is a Place, Not Just a State of Mind

Logically we may ask ourselves, how can heaven be joined together with earth? Clearly earth is a place that exists at a certain location in our space-time universe, but can heaven also be thought of as a place that can be joined to the earth?

Many people deny the physical existence of Heaven since it cannot be “known” and is only read about through scripture. How can it be proved? What empirical data exists to prove its existence?

The New Testament teaches clearly the idea of a location for heaven. Jesus himself ascended into heaven, “a place” seems to be the entire point of the scriptures.

Acts 1:9-11

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Acts 7:55-56

⁵⁵But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

Stephen did not see mere symbols of a state of existence. It seems that his eyes were opened to see a spiritual dimension of reality which God has hidden from us in this present age. A dimension that really does exist in our space/time universe and within which Jesus now lives in his physical resurrection body. This will also be the place for our physically resurrected body/soul/spirit.

John 14:1-3

¹“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ²My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Heaven existing as “a place” is the easiest sense in which to understand the above scriptures. We must therefore conclude from scripture that Heaven is a physical place. While its location is not currently known to us with our current senses, it will be revealed and made known at the time of the final Judgement and will be joined to a renewed earth as well.

IV. Group Questions:

1. Lesson 12:

- a. Without a full end times discussion, review the timing of our “resurrection/glorification” with the creation of the New Heaven and New Earth, clue: Think of the unbelievers final judgement?
- b. Why did God decide or need to create a “New Heaven and New Earth”?
- c. Most people think of believers “in Heaven” with God for eternity, but what does the “New Earth” part imply about our eternal existence in a resurrected form?
- d. Pick out and list specific actions for believers mentioned in our scriptures in the New Heaven and Earth?

2. Lesson 13:

- a. While we studied the characteristic of Omnipresence in our Characteristics of God Series, Discuss why and how Heaven is the place where He is “Fully known, sensed and His Glory observed”? What is special about Heaven that allows this over all other places?
- b. Discuss that the “New Heaven and New Earth” might actually be required so that they can be one? A place of space and time that cannot be coupled now due to a fallen earth?
- c. How else could you interpret Heaven as referenced in Acts 1:9, John 14:1 or Act 7:55-56? Does this imply to you coupled with our previous study of Jesus resurrected body that everyone saw on Earth that He ascended into a physical place? Discuss why or why not?