

#THRIVE2021 HEAVEN?

Bethel Christian Fellowship
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There has always been a sense that mankind will live forever somewhere which has shaped every civilization in human history, no matter what century or continent you lived on. This evidence tells us that God has placed an innate sense of the eternal—that this world is not all there is.

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; . . .” Philippians 1:21-23 (NIV)

“Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. . . We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 5:6, 8 (NIV)

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And 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.” John 14:1-3 (NIV)

God did not give up on his original plan for human beings to dwell on Earth. In fact, the climax of history will be the creation of new heavens and a New Earth, a resurrected universe inhabited by resurrected people living with the resurrected Jesus.

Misconceptions about Afterlife and Heaven

Outside of Christianity, there are many views of the afterlife, non-existence, nirvana or enlightenment, no actual heaven or hell, reincarnation, paradise, and more. Some view heaven as a place they just float around in the clouds strumming a harp or just live in some bliss, a pleasant place of happiness.

In Christianity, there are those who have been taught that eternity is just an unending church service, one great hymn after another, forever and ever, and that’s it? Or that when you die and go to heaven that is where you stay. These all are misconceptions of what heaven is. Some are half right but are not totally correct.

Truth be told, our limited minds cannot conceive all that is awaiting for Jesus’ followers in heaven. *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”* 1 Corinthians 2:9 (NIV) **But the Bible reveals a lot about what heaven is like.**

What We Know for Certain on this Side of Eternity

Our Incurable Disease: Mortality. There is a 100 percent you and everyone else is going to die one day. Unless Christ returns soon.

“Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered—how fleeting my life is. ⁵ You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand. My entire lifetime is just a moment to you; at best, each of us is but a breath.”

Psalm 39:4-5 (NLT)

“Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” James 4:14 (NIV)

What’s the Answer?

If death (*eternal death*) still exists, then there is no hope for life. But there is hope! His name is Jesus!

“Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,” so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.” Hebrews 9:12-13 (NIV)

What is sad is, most people live unprepared for death!

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV)

“He [Jesus] has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2 Timothy 1:9-10 (NIV)

With Jesus in your life, you don’t have to fear death!

“so that by his [Jesus] death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death” Hebrews 2:14-15 (NIV)

“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” 1 Corinthians 15:55 (NIV)

What takes away death’s sting? Only a relationship with Jesus who died on your behalf, the one who has gone ahead to make a place for you to live with him. If you don’t know Jesus, you will fear death and its sting—which you should. Today, is the Day of Salvation! Tomorrow is not guaranteed to you!