

'Heaven is real'

Through a precious friend of mine, who was in the last stages of cancer, I was led to ponder on the next stage of her eternal journey. It occurred to me that before we make a life changing journey in this life, we research our destination, where we're going and what it will be like. I felt led to gather Scripture Verses, quotes and information relating to Heaven. This proved to be a great source of joy and comfort in her last days on this earth.

"In Heaven the blessedness of the righteous consists in the possession of 'life everlasting', 'an eternal weight of glory' (2 Cor 4:17), an exemption from all sufferings for ever, a deliverance from all evils (2 Cor 5:1 2 Cor 5:2) and from the society of the wicked (2 Tim 4:18), bliss without termination, the 'fullness of joy' for ever (Luke 20:36, Luke 4:16, Luke 4:18, 1 Peter 1:4 and 5:10, 1 John 3:2). The believer's Heaven is not only a state of everlasting blessedness but also a 'place', a place 'prepared' for them (John 14:2)."
(Easton's Bible Dictionary, Heaven, Biblestudytools.com)

When we go to Heaven we will be more alive than we are here on earth and as the old hymn says 'this world is not my own, I'm only passing through.' Our lives change but do not end. We will be given *new glorified bodies and we will be clothed in righteousness. We will be glorious living stones; pillars in the eternal temple of God* (I Cor 15:52; 1 Peter 2:5; Rev 3:12)

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There are over 750 references to Heaven in the bible, 500 of which refer to the natural Heavens (stars etc.) and 250 refer to the Heavens where God abides. In the book of Matthew alone Jesus refers to Heaven around 70 times.

Jesus has gone before us to prepare the way.

In Heaven we will be reunited with our loved ones. The biblical writers in the Old Testament stated that when a person died they were '*gathered to his people*' or '*gathered to their fathers*' (Gen. 25:17, 35:29, 49:29, 49:33, Num. 20:24, Judg. 2:10 Deut. 31:16, 32:50, 34:6)

In 2 Samuel 12, when David's infant son died, David boldly said, "*I shall go to him but he shall not return to me*" (v. 23). David evidently expected to see his son again but not in his life time on earth.

Revelation 21:4 '*Everything in Heaven is made perfect by God, no more death, mourning, crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away.*' In Heaven there isn't any sickness, worry or fear, (Rev 21:25)

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MEDITATION BY ST AUGUSTINE

If you love me, do not cry!

If only you knew the gift of Heaven which God has given me

If only from your world you could see me in the ranks of the angels

And hear their glorious singing

If only you could see unfolding before you

The eternal fields of Paradise

And the new paths on which I walk

If only for one brief moment

You could stand with me in contemplation

Of God's infinite goodness and beauty

For, my dear one, you have seen me

And have loved me in the world, a land of shadows,

You are not able yet to see and love me

In the joy of everlasting eternity

Yet, believe me, that on a day known to God

And fixed in time by him,

When death shall come to break the chains that hold you,

And bring your soul to Heaven; I shall be waiting for you.

For on that day you will see again the one who loved you in his life

And who loves you still with all his heart in Paradise.

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From the moment we are born the dying process and the fight against it begins. Death reduces all of us to the same rank; it strips the rich of their millions and the poor of their rags. Death knows no age limits and no partiality.

Ecclesiastes 12:7. When a person dies; the body gives up the ravages of age and disease to decay but the spirit and soul return to its maker. Dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Catholic Prayer of the rite for burial of adults:

Come in haste to assist him (her), you saints of God;

Come in haste to meet him (her), you angels of the Lord.

Enfold in your arms this soul and take your burden Heaven-wards to
the sight of the Most High.

May Christ receive you, for it was He who called you; and may
angels carry you unto Abraham's bosom.

The only thing you are sure of in this life is death but there is nothing to fear I can assure you. (Through my own personal experience of visiting to Heaven when I was 'Baptised in the Holy Spirit' 25 years ago) To the believer, *death is merely the gateway*

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to eternal life where underneath are the everlasting arms.

Deut.33:27

2 Cor 5:6-8 *to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.* In other words when we pass from this life in an instant we will be present with God in Heaven.

The main distinguishing factor between Heaven and earth is that this world is contaminated by sin. Heaven is not. The sin of man stains the earth and God's glory perfects Heaven. The natural atmosphere of earth is air but the natural atmosphere of Heaven is Glory.

The bible tells us that joy will be the mood of Heaven in Romans 14:17 *'for the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit'*. This theme is referenced in scriptures nearly 200 times. Joy will therefore exceed what we can comprehend (Jude 1:24) *"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present [you] faultless before the presence of His Glory with exceeding joy,"* Heaven will be beautiful beyond our imagination.

Isaiah 61:7 *'My people will receive a double portion and everlasting joy will be theirs'*.

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My experience of Heaven (when I was baptised in the Holy Spirit) is that Heaven is an awesome place and human words could never do it justice. How I felt, what I saw and experienced were out of this world; such peace and joy were beyond human description. I remember a group of people being present and I thought, 'I know you, yet I don't know where I know you from' but my spirit knew and recognised them.

1 Cor 2:9 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him'

One night in my sleep the audible voice came to me and said: 'The biggest mansion on earth is like a pigeon hut compared to what I have for you in Heaven'.

On another occasion I was with Bernie a good friend of mine, who's a mighty woman of God and a beautiful person, she works tirelessly doing good work for others. Bernie likes to wear bling jewellery and she had on her finger a fake diamond ring, as I looked at her hand I felt the Lord say to me: 'I have real diamonds for her when she comes home to Heaven'. As I told her what was revealed to me we wept because we could feel the tangible presence of the Lord in the room, confirming what was said.

Rom 1:19 'Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of

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the world God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse'.

The bible doesn't tell us everything we would like to know about Heaven but it does tell us everything we need to know! We have a very assuring verse in 2 Cor 5:1 *'Which tells us that if this earthly tent (body) we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God an eternal house in Heaven, not built by human hands'* - what a promise!

We should rejoice because our names are written in Heaven and Heaven is the place where God dwells! We pray Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed by thy name, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Rev 4:8-11 *'And the four beasts had each of them six wings about [him]; and [they were] full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who lives forever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created'*

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John describes Heaven in the book of Revelation 21: *18 The wall was built of jasper, while the city [itself was of] pure gold, clear and transparent like glass. 19 The foundation [stones] of the wall of the city were ornamented with all of the precious stones. The first foundation [stone] was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony (or white agate), the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each separate gate being built of one solid pearl. And the main street of the city was of gold as pure and translucent as glass. 22 I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Omnipotent [Himself] and the Lamb [Himself] are its temple. 23 And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to give light to it, for the splendour and radiance (Glory) of God illuminate it, and the Lamb is its lamp. 24 The nations shall walk by its light and the rulers and leaders of the earth shall bring into it their Glory. 25 And its gates shall never be closed by day, and there shall be no night there. 26 They shall bring the glory (the splendour and majesty) and the honour of the nations into it. 27 But nothing that defiles or profanes or is unwashed shall ever enter it, nor anyone who commits abominations (unclean, detestable, morally repugnant things) or practices falsehood, but only those whose names are recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

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Revelation 22:1-5 *'Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.'*

Vision of Heaven in Daniel 7:9 *"As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.*

Vision of Heaven in Isaiah 6:1 *'In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3And they were*

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calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; The whole earth is full of his glory." 4At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." 6 Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." 8Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" 9He said, "Go and tell this people'.

And one final thought, the last breath we take on earth will be preceded by the first breath we take in Heaven.....BLISS