

# Heaven

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev J.J.Murray

[ 0 : 00 ] Can we turn to the Gospel according to John, chapter 14, to read verses 1 to 4. The Gospel according to John, chapter 14, verses 1 to 4.

Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you.

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 unto myself. That where I am, there you may be also.

And whither I go you know, and away you know. What or where is your idea of heaven?

There's a heaven and hell quiz in the Scotsman every Saturday, in which a personality is asked to answer questions with regard to heaven and hell.

[ 1 : 11 ] It's something I tremble to read many Saturdays because of the answers that are given there. The carnal man, the carnal mind creates a heaven to his own taste.

It's a culmination of his pleasure-loving outlook here upon earth. That's all he has of heaven. That's his idea of heaven.

Of course, the Marxist view is that man creates a heaven because he has so much wrong here upon earth. It's a compensation, they say, for present wrong.

And if you improve man's condition on earth, then the idea of heaven will no longer be needed. But even professing Christians can have such strange views about heaven.

We can have such airy-fairy views of heaven. We think of it as a place with pearly gates and jasper walls, streets paved with gold, sitting on fleecy clouds, strumming harps, a spiritual pleasure land.

[ 2 : 31 ] And that's many professing Christians' idea of heaven. Well, what is the reality? Well, we have a number of images about heaven in scripture.

Too many for us to study today in one sermon. But we might look at this well-known passage that we have here in John chapter 14, which gives us some idea of what heaven is like.

When we are speaking about heaven, we must keep before us this view that there is a heaven which now is, and there is a heaven which is to come.

In other words, there is a heaven which is the intermediate state where the souls of the departed are now. Those who are in Christ and who have slept in Christ, they are in that place now, in the intermediate state.

And we've also to think about the final state, when Christ will have come again, when there will be the resurrection, and when there will be the final state, after the judgment seat.

[ 3 : 44 ] And sometimes it's not quite clear as to which heaven is being referred to. And perhaps that is so here, where our Lord says, I will take you to myself.

Is he referring to taking the souls of believers into paradise, into the intermediate state? Or is he referring to the final state, the state of glory, when there will be the new heavens and the new earth?

Well, we must remember that when we're thinking about heaven. But I would just like to bring certain facts about heaven before you this morning, as we consider the last things.

And three facts in particular that we find from this passage that our Lord gives us here. The first thing is that heaven is a place.

Many people think of heaven as something in our minds. We can think of heaven as a place in our minds. But it's actually a location.

[ 4 : 47 ] I go to prepare a place for you. Heaven is a location. And we see that in the scriptures. In the Old Testament, it's spoken about as God's dwelling place.

He that sits in heaven shall laugh. That's where God's throne is. Heaven is my throne. Heaven is my throne. Heaven is my throne. Heaven is my throne. And earth is my

footstool. There's a place where God reigns.

And where he reigns in glory. And that's the place from which Christ came when he came to this earth. Remember what he said to Nicodemus.

No one has ascended to heaven. No one has ascended to heaven but he who came down from heaven. That is the Son of Man who is in heaven. There's a place called heaven.

He ascended to heaven when he left this earth. He passed through the heavens. And he went into heaven itself. Now to appear in the presence of God for us.

[ 5 : 55 ] There's the heavens which are the firmament. He passed through these heavens. And now he is in heaven itself. Appearing in the presence of God for us.

When he had by himself purged our sins. He sat down on the right hand of God. That is heaven.

That's the paradise of God. Remember how Jesus said to the thief on the cross. The penitent thief. Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

And remember Paul. That experience he had in 2 Corinthians chapter 12. How he speaks about being taken up into the third heaven.

And he equates that with paradise. He uses both words to describe the place where he was taken. He was taken into the third heaven.

[ 6 : 53 ] And he was taken into paradise. So these are the same place. The same thing. Heaven and paradise. And so it's a place.

It's a location. Where God is dwelling in his glory. Where his throne is. From which Christ came. And to which Christ has gone back.

It's a place. But also it's my father's house. It is my father's house. Says the Lord Jesus Christ. In my father's house.

Are many mansions. It's the dwelling place. It's the dwelling place of my father. That's what makes heaven heaven. For the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what makes home home. It's where his father is. That's what makes heaven. In my reading for today.

[ 7 : 52 ] I came across. As you can imagine. Quite a number of stories. About heaven. And one of the stories was this. A little boy. Taken away from his home.

Because his mother was ill. And after several weeks. His mother died. And he is taken back to that house. And he is shown the house.

And he goes through every room. And he is very unhappy. And the person who took him back. Says. What's wrong? You are home now. And the little boy says.

It's not home. My mum is not here. And you see that's it. Heaven would not be heaven. If it was not the father's house.

The father's home. In fact. Someone has said. It's surely that. That makes. John chapter 14. So popular. It's read so frequently.

[ 8 : 49 ] At funerals. Heaven is a home. We are homeless. We've lost our home. We need a home. And heaven is our home.

It's our journey's end. It's where we will find rest. And therefore. It's the father's house. You see. God provides.

For his children. Just as a father. Provides for his children. He is not ashamed to be called their God. Why? Because he has prepared for them.

A city. A father makes a home. God makes a home. He provides a dwelling place. For his children. And heaven.

Is my father's home. Jesus said it was. And we. As his people. Can say. It is our father's house.

[ 9 : 44 ] It's home. For us. But then thirdly. It is where Christ is. That's what makes heaven.

Heaven. I will take you.

He says. To myself. I will take you. To myself. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again. And receive you.

And to myself. It is the place. Where Christ is. Where Christ dwells. And heaven. Is to be with Christ.

Paul could say. I have a desire. To depart. And to be with Christ. Which is far better. We shall be absent from the body.

And present with the Lord. So. He says. To comfort the Thessalonians. So. Shall we always. Be with the Lord.

[10:38] That's heaven. And that's the place. Where Christ dwells. The lamb. Is all the glory. Of Emmanuel's land. The lamb.

Says the light of. Says the book of Revelation. Is the light thereof. He is the light of heaven. He is the glory of heaven. Heaven. Heaven is the lamb.

In the midst of the throne. John saw. The throne of God. And of the lamb. That's what heaven is. It is where Christ is.

It's where he is. In all his beauty. And all his glory. Matthew Henry says. Heaven would be an unready place. For a Christian. If Christ were not there.

Heaven would be an unready place. For a Christian. If Christ. If Christ. Were not there. And what makes heaven. Heaven for the Christian.

[11:34] Is that Christ is there. The bride eyes. Not her garment. But her dear bridegroom's face. I will not gaze at glory. But on my king of grace.

Not at the crown he gifted. But on his pierced hand. The lamb is all the glory. Of Emmanuel's land. Says Samuel Rutherford. The bride.

Doesn't look at the glory. The bride. Looks. At the bridegroom. She looks at his face. He is all the glory. Of Emmanuel's land.

And it's where Christ is. That heaven is. That's what a Christian sees. And so there's these three things. That we see about heaven.

Specific things. It's a place. It's the father's house. And it's where Christ is. But then there's four other things. I'd like to say.

[12:31] Or five about heaven. Which helps us to understand. What heaven is. And what heaven will be. For the child of God. And the first of these is this.

That heaven is redemptive. How we need to grasp. This thought. This fact. That heaven is redemptive. You see the key phrase here is.

I go. To prepare. A place for you. You see. That's what gives the lie. To the carnal man's view of heaven. That's what gives the lie to it.

Heaven is not a stage. In a natural process. Paul Helms says. To enter heaven as we are. And for heaven to remain heaven.

In a process. Is a moral impossibility. You see what he's saying is this. Nothing that defiles. Can enter heaven. If a natural man.

[13:31] In a natural state. Enter. Enter heaven. Heaven ceases to be heaven. You see. It's impossible. For us. To get into heaven.

As we are. It's a moral impossibility. Heaven. And you see. Heaven. Is only made possible for us. By the work of Christ.

And that's why we say. Heaven is redemptive. Heaven. Is the home of the saved. Of the redeemed. And we must always remember that.

Heaven is not our personal reward. In fact, heaven is Christ's personal reward. Heaven is the fruit of his work.

It is for him and for his redeemed people in him. That's what heaven is for. I will come again and I will take you to myself.

[14:29] I go to prepare a place for you. And he prepared it by his death and by his resurrection and by his ascension. And that's the preparation.

Heaven is prepared by Christ. And when he has prepared it, he says, I will come again and I will take you to myself. We had Dick Lucas speaking at the Banner Conference last year.

And in a course of an exposition of the pastoral epistle, he spoke about an aside about John 14.

And he took from that, what Christ is saying here is, heaven will not be heaven without you.

He's saying to his people, what a marvelous thing this is. Heaven will not be heaven without you. I will take you to myself. You're my redeemed people.

It's Christ and his bride that are going to be together in heaven. And heaven would not be heaven without the people of God. That's a marvelous thought.

[15:38] It's the marriage supper of the Lamb. It's Christ and his people. Heaven is Christ-centered. It's redemptive. It's those who are redeemed who are going to be in heaven and none other.

They are those who love and admire and adore the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the home of the saved. It's the home of the redeemed. It's redemptive.

But then the second thing we have to say is that it is rest. In my Father's house are many mansions. Now a lot has been said about these many mansions.

Many resting places people speak about. But perhaps the thought is that they are dwelling places. They are dwelling places.

Mansions that are many. Mansions that are spacious. Mansions that are spacious enough for many people. Heaven is going to be inhabited by many people.

[16:45] A multitude which no man can number. And there's going to be plenty space. There's going to be many mansions. And there are going to be places of refreshment.

And places of security. And places of rest. And the idea of rest as far as heaven is concerned is this. There's going to be a perfect affinity between the place and the occupants.

No one is going to feel out of place in heaven. There's going to be a perfect affinity between the place and the occupants. They're going to be at rest.

They're one with the place. You see on earth here there's a great conflict going on. And the rest is after the conflict. The rest of heaven is the rest from opposition.

While we're here on earth there's a spiritual warfare. There's this intense activity. It's a battleground. We're not at one with our surroundings.

[17:52] There's conflict going on. But you see the saints enter into rest. They enter into their rest. There remains a rest for the people of God.

But it's not a ceasing some activity. It's the beginning of a new activity. Because you see the work of heaven is to know and serve God.

In that passage in Revelation chapter 7. They will serve him day and night in his temple. Of course there will be no night there. But what it's saying is this.

That they'll be continually serving the Lord. There will be service in heaven. And they'll grow and increase in the knowledge of God. That'll be the great work of heaven.

To grow and increase in the knowledge of God. The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them into living fountains of water.

[18:54] There'll be progress. There'll be increase in heaven. It'll not be static. There'll be growth. There'll be activity. That there'll be a rest from conflict.

A rest from warfare. A rest from opposition. That's the blessedness of heaven. So heaven is redemptive.

Heaven is rest. But heaven is fellowship. Because you see the Lord Jesus Christ says that we are to be with him. I will come again and receive you unto myself.

That where I am, there you may be also. With Christ in fellowship. You see heaven will be the fullest vision of God in Christ.

It will be the fullest realization of his presence. There's that marvelous statement in Revelation which says there is no temple therein.

[19:55] There's no need of a temple. We have temples upon earth. We've got churches upon earth. We've got meeting places to meet with God.

But you see the new heavens and a new earth will be all temple. It will be all God. It will be all a manifestation of God. And we'll be in his presence.

And we'll see his face. There's no need for special meeting places any longer. There'll be no temple therein. Because it will be all temple.

It will all be a place for meeting with God. It will be a place for worshipping God. And for beholding God. And for having fellowship with God. Remember what Jesus said at the end of his prayer.

High priestly prayer. Father I will that they you have given me. Be with me where I am. That they may behold my glory. Which you have given me.

[20:56] To behold my glory. That's what they are there for. To behold the glory of Christ. And to have fellowship with Christ.

The king there in his beauty. Without a veil is seen. Where a well spent journey. So seven deaths lay between. It's a vision of Christ.

Christ in his glory. Christ in his beauty. And the endless exploration. Of the beauty and excellency. Of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fellowship consummated. Fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. With God the Father. And with God the Son. And with God the Holy Spirit. Throughout all eternity.

That's the fellowship of heaven. And fellowship one with another. And then the fourth thing. That we need to say about heaven. And that is this.

[ 21 : 55 ] That heaven is conformity. Heaven is conformity. Blessed are the pure in heart. For they shall see God. They will be perfect conformity in heaven.

God is the firstborn. He is the firstborn. He is the firstborn. Among many brethren. And the believer's entry into heaven. Whether it's his entry into that intermediate state.

Or his entry into the final state. It's a fulfillment of God's plan. And God's purpose. God's election. God's predestination.

What is the end of God's predestination? God's predestination. That they might be conformed to the image of his Son. That's the great purpose that God has for his elect people.

That they might be conformed to the image of his Son. A holy God. A holy place. And now a holy people.

[ 22 : 57 ] That's heaven. I shall be satisfied, says the psalmist, when I wake in his likeness. When I wake in his likeness. That will be heaven.

One will be perfectly conformed to Christ. When all sin shall be done away with. When all effects of sin. No more curse.

No more death. No more sorrow. God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. That's the conformity that is heaven. When everyone will be conformed to the firstborn.

When everyone will be like Christ. Everyone will retain their individual personality. But in holiness, they'll be like Christ.

And people say, shall we know one another in heaven? Shall we know one another when we get to heaven? Well, I think scripture is clear enough on that. They shall come and they shall sit down with Abram and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God.

[ 24 : 05 ] We're going to know Abram and Isaac and Jacob. We're going to know Moses and Elijah. So surely we're going to know one another. Yes, the saints on earth will know one another in heaven.

And there'll be that perfect conformity to Christ in holiness. And yes, there'll be the individual personality. And there'll be the ongoing reward for the works here upon earth.

Well, what do we say by way of application? Well, let us think about the context here in which our Lord is speaking these words.

He says, let not your heart be troubled. You see, the disciples were troubled. There was a prospect of them being left orphans. Of being abandoned by the Lord Jesus Christ.

And what's he saying to them? The cure for your heart trouble. The cure for your sorrow. Is my promised coming. And my promised presence.

[ 25 : 12 ] Do you believe in God? He says, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. You see, your place is guaranteed.

You aren't guaranteed a place here upon earth. Things may go wrong in your life. You may become homeless. Many things may happen to you.

But one thing is guaranteed. You've got a home in heaven. You may have temporary accommodation here upon earth. And everyone has temporary accommodation upon earth.

But you see, there's permanent accommodation in heaven. I go and prepare a place for you. It's guaranteed. A place in heaven.

And not only that, he says, But I will be your escort to that place. I go and prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you unto myself.

[ 26 : 13 ] It's not enough that you be taken to me. No, he says, I will come again. And I will escort you to that place. And there's a destination.

And you will be with myself. He takes us to himself. And you see, that's the comfort he's offering his disciples. As they contemplate that parting with them here upon earth.

He gives them the ultimate comfort. There's a place guaranteed for them in heaven. He is going to escort them to heaven. And he will be their destination in heaven.

They will be with Christ. Wonder, says Samuel Rutherford, That ever a child of God should have a sad heart, Considering what the Lord is preparing for him.

I know not a thing worth the buying, but heaven. Soon shall a cup of blessing Wash down earth's bitterest woes. Soon shall a desert briar Break into Eden's rose.

[ 27 : 22 ] That's a prospect before this child of God. Why should you be sad? Why should you be troubled? Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God.

Believe also in me. And then the second thing we might say is this. Why so little thought of heaven? Someone has said, When did you last hear a Christian testify to homesickness for heaven? When did you last hear a Christian testify to homesickness for heaven? If contentment were here, heaven were not heaven.

You see, it's because we cannot see anything here to satisfy us, That we long for that heaven. And Christ brings the heart to heaven first, And then the person, says Richard Baxter.

And the indication that you're on the way to heaven is, That your heart is there already. That's how we know whether or not we're on the way to heaven. In some measure, our heart must be there already.

[ 28 : 30 ] Because you see, Christ prepares the heart, Before he takes the person to heaven. And therefore, if we're on the way to heaven, Our heart must be there.

Where is our heart today? That's the question you've got to ask yourself. Where your treasure is, There will your heart be also, Says the Lord Jesus Christ.

If your treasure is upon this earth, In your houses, And in your wealth, And so on, There will your heart be. But if your real treasure is in heaven, If your real riches are in heaven, Then your heart will be there.

And the Lord will make this world feel like a wilderness to you. You'll make it, You'll feel it like a wilderness. And you'll be looking for a place in heaven.

They looked for a city, Which has foundations, Whose maker and builder is God. They confessed, That they were strangers, And pilgrims, Here upon earth.

[ 29 : 35 ] Are we among these people, The people of God of old? They confessed, That they were strangers, And pilgrims. Why? Because they were looking for a city.

They were looking for a resting place. They were looking for a home. And then the final thing is this. Heaven is a prepared place, For a prepared people.

How we must emphasize that. Heaven is a prepared place, For a prepared people. The perfect affinity, Between the people and the place.

You see, To see God, And to a fellowship with God, Presupposes, Community of nature. Now perhaps, We were thinking in our youth, As many of us have done, That heaven must be a terribly boring place.

It would be like a highland Sabbath. Nothing to do, Trying to spend the day, In weariness, And wondering what we can do, And heaven will be something like that.

[ 30 : 41 ] Well you see, Our idea of heaven, Comes from a carnal mind. But you see, If our nature is changed, Then we will know, That heaven will not be boring.

Because heaven, Will be a place, That will suit our nature. The heaven, Of heavens, That glorious place, Where God dwells, Is a place, That will be suited, To our nature.

When our nature is changed, Then heaven, Will be a glorious place. And you see, The enjoyment of heaven, Is related, To what takes place on earth.

Heaven does not merely occur, After earthly life ends, It comes, It comes, On account, Of the earthly life. Heaven comes, On account, Of the earthly life.

Only those, Who are related to Christ, Will find heaven, A congenial place. What a sobering thought that is. Only those, Who are related to Christ, Will find heaven, A congenial place.

[ 31 : 54 ] It all depends, On our relationship, With Christ. You see, If he is all the glory, If the lamb, Is all the glory, Of Emmanuel's land, Then you must know, And love the lamb, Here upon earth.

Otherwise, Heaven, Will mean nothing to you. Heaven will be nothing to you, Unless you know, And love the lamb, Of God, Here upon earth.

You see, That's the glory of heaven. Heaven will be meaningless, Heaven will be dark, To us, Without Christ.

He is the light, And he is the glory. And if we're going to heaven, We must know him, And we must love him, And we must be in him. That's the grand qualification.

And he goes on to say that very thing, In this passage. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, The truth, And the life. No man cometh unto the Father, But by me.

[ 33 : 01 ] You see, There's one way to the destination, And that is, The Lord Jesus Christ. The way we travel, Is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The destination is Christ, The escort is Christ, But also, The way we travel, Is Christ, And Christ alone.

There's only one way to heaven, And he is the way. There's only one truth, And he is the truth. And there's only one life-giving saviour, And he is that life-giving saviour.

And today, You need to be in Christ. But you see, He's calling you, And inviting you, To come to him, And trust him, And commit yourself to him, As the way to the Father, As the way to heaven, And if you come, You shall be on that way, And you shall be blessed eternally.

May God bless to us our meditation. Let us pray. Our gracious and eternal God, We thank thee for the glory, That thou hast revealed. We thank thee for that glory, That is in Christ.

[ 34 : 14 ] And we pray that we might behold, His glory today. The glory of his grace. We thank thee that he is the one, Who has been appointed by thee, Who came down from heaven, To deliver us from our sin, And to bring us to that place.

Oh, we pray that we might, Indeed receive him today, As thy gift, As the one who is able to lift us up, And to bring us into thy presence. May we love the Lord Jesus Christ.

May we have that true preparation for heaven, Resting by faith upon him, Here upon earth, And enter into that final rest, In heaven. We pray that thou open our eyes, To behold him, The way, the truth, and the life, Cleanses from all our sin, For Christ's sake.

Amen. Amen. Amen.