

A study of Heaven (3) Who Will NOT Be in Heaven?

The past two weeks we have been engaged in a study of heaven, with a goal of describing it in such a way that we will want to go there. While we have not addressed everything, we have noted some things about what it will be like and last week we noted who will be in heaven – in addition to the triune God, there are numerous “heroes of faith” recorded in scripture, men and women, both Jew and Gentile alike who faithfully served God and in the New Testament, they followed Jesus. We mentioned friends and loved ones who were faithful to God who have gone on before that based upon their lives, we have every reason to hope they will be there. We also noted that in heaven we will see the obedient angels, as well as infants. But we also devoted time by asking, “What about us?” In that we noted it is the one who obeys the gospel and becomes a Christian according to God’s pattern, AND remains faithful throughout his life. The New Testament was written by Christians for Christians and gives us guidance on how to stay in a saved relationship with hope.

But sadly, not all be in heaven. The Bible speaks clearly of the lost. In fact, Jesus was clear that the majority will be lost because they will not follow Him (cf. Matthew 7:13-14, 20:16 – “many are called, but few are chosen”, etc.). In summary, these are the ones who will not be in heaven which is what we want to elaborate upon in this lesson.

I. **The fate of those not in heaven.**

- a. **Not all believe in hell.** Many believe only in heaven and annihilation for the unsaved. A few research of Americans in 2015 noted that approximately 72% believe in heaven, while only 58% believe in hell.¹ And views of these places also vary greatly with many believing hell is merely separation from God (without the Biblical description).
- b. **Hell is also a real place.** While unpleasant, we cannot ignore the reality of it. Matthew 25:46 – Jesus describe “everlasting punishment” and “everlasting life” in the same verse. One is clearly as real as the other.
Jesus dealt with this more than anyone else – Matthew 10:28 He warned, Do not fear him who cannot destroy the body in hell.
2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 speaks of how it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation, vengeance, punishment and everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. against persecutors and such – 2 Peter 2:20-22 – the latter end is worse than the beginning. While much more could be said about this, here I just want it noted that the lost will face God for eternity.
While this lesson is not a detailed study of this subject, when we speaks of those NOT in heaven, according to the Bible, Hell will be their eternal fate. That is why it is important that we consider this subject.
- c. **Satan and his angels** – Matthew 25:41 – hell is described as a place prepared for Satan and his angels. Revelation 20:10, 2 Peter 2:4 speaks of angels who did not keep their proper domain with God being reserved for God’s judgment. But they will not be alone – (Revelation 20:15, 21:8, etc.) as we shall see in this lesson.
- d. **The hall of shame in God’s word** – like scripture records many godly examples of those we anticipate to be in heaven, so it records many whose lives ended with eternal condemnation.
 - i. Cain, who murdered his brother Abel (Genesis 4) and whose ways are condemned in scripture (Jude 11)

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/10/most-americans-believe-in-heaven-and-hell/>

- ii. The wicked of the world in time of Noah – Genesis 6:5-7 – where He saw the wickedness of man was so great, He determined to destroy the world by flood and begin anew with Noah and his family of 8.
- iii. Many of Israel, who having witnessed God’s great deliverance from Egypt, died in the wilderness because of their continued ingratitude and rebellion against God (1 Corinthians 10:5-11, esp. vs. 11 – they happened as examples and were written for our admonition.). Including men like Korah (Numbers 16, Jude 11), the prophet Balaam who sold out Israel (Jude 11).
- iv. King Saul – Israel’s first king, who while he began humble, died bitter and in rebellion against God. (1 Samuel 31)
- v. Ahab and his wife Jezebel – one of the most wicked kings of Israel. Jezebel sought to replace YHWH with the Baals. They became stumbling blocks to Israel.
- vi. Judas Iscariot, who for 30 pieces of silver, betrayed Jesus (Acts 1:16-19, 25 – he by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place)
- vii. The corrupt Jewish leaders – who saw to the death of Jesus, and persecuted the apostles and early Christians, never repenting.
- viii. Pilate – who permitted the execution of Jesus and washed his hands supposing that it would free him of his responsibility (Matthew 27:23-25).
- ix. NOTE: I do not know for sure the fate of these. Perhaps they repented – we can only hope they did! But it is not recorded and there is no indication they did, are secure with God.

II. The wicked described in numerous lists.

- a. NOTE: There are many lists of sins in the New Testament of wicked behaviors and attitudes and describe an eternal fate apart from God for eternity.
- b. **Matthew 25:41-46** – describes those who refused to help others who were in need
- c. **1 Corinthians 6:9-10** – such will not inherit the kingdom of God
- d. **Galatians 5:19-21** – the works of the flesh, and those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- e. **Revelation 21:8** – another list, this one of those who will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where Satan and his angels are.
- f. **Romans 2:5-10** – Paul warns those who hardened their hearts and refused to repent, and who do not obey the truth – they will face the indignation and wrath of God.
- g. Those who live their lives as such will one day regret it for all of eternity. But I want you to know that it was not the sins in themselves that put them there, but their unwillingness to repent!

III. What about those in our times?

- a. **Those who do not obey the gospel** – John 3:5 – Jesus said, “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”, and he will not enter it. 2 Thessalonians 1:8 warns of God’s vengeance against those who do not obey the gospel.
- b. **Those who put off obedience** – associated with the above point, we must understand that good intentions are not enough. Often the gospel invitation was presented with a sense of urgency. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 note this.
 On the day of Pentecost as Peter completed his sermon, many wanted to know what to do. Peter called upon them to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:37-38), but then note vs. 40-41, “And with many other word he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’ THAT DAY, some 3000 souls were baptized, obeying the gospel.
 Acts 22:16, Paul was told, “And no why are you waiting, arise and be baptized...”
 Felix – Acts 24:25, after Paul taught him about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, “Felix was afraid and answered, “Go away for now; when I have a convenient tie I will call for you.”

There is NO indication Felix ever took care of what he knew he needed to do, in fact the next verse shows materialistic motives. UNLESS he later surrendered to Jesus, Felix is not in heaven.

We CANNOT put off obedience and then stand before God and reason, "But I was going to."

- c. **Those who fail to remain faithful** – scripture is clear that becoming a Christian is only the beginning.

When we obey the gospel, we are supposed to put to death the man of sin. God does NOT want us to resurrect him. We now belong to God and He expects us to remain faithful.

Revelation 2:10 calls for us to be faithful unto death.

1 Corinthians 9:27, even Paul expressed concerns about being disqualified.

Galatians 5:4 speaks of one who has "fallen from grace"

2 Peter 2:20-22, (again), notes also one who clearly was a child of God and returned to the world.

We could devote an entire lesson to our need to remain faithful, but in these verses we see sufficiently that God expects us to remain faithful after we become Christians. To fall away comes with consequences.

- d. **Those who refuse to repent** – we have already addressed repentance as associated with becoming a child of God. But it doesn't end there. When we do sin, as we mentioned last week, we need to take care of those sins. That is done by repentance (changing one's mind about the sinful action and acting to correct it). 1 John 1:9 speaks of the one who confesses his sins (I believe this verse is primarily about confessing to God) he will forgive us (again).

If you are struggling with sin – whether it be attitudes or action, we must continually be working to overcome whatever sinful behavior. In the meantime, we need to be turning to God and pleading for His mercy and forgiveness.

We also need to consider this with various actions – sometimes, there is someone who is otherwise a good person, but there is some sin they refuse to let go of – maybe its anger, or greed, or lust. If we want to go to heaven, we better repent of that sin,

- e. **Many who THINK they are saved are not** – Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus was clear that it is not enough to merely acknowledge Him, we must do the will of God in heaven.

There are many today who have not followed God's plan of salvation. They have been taught a false plan and think they are ok. But thinking you are ok has never been enough.

If you eat food with poison in it, but you didn't know it was there (you were ignorant), does that change the effect of the poison?

Paul, thought he was supposed to persecute Christians to serve God – he was wrong! Acts 23:1; 26:9 - before Agrippa and Festus as he retold his life, he said he thought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus. He was wrong.

Friends, we need to continually study God's word to ensure that we are right. 1 John 4:1 calls for us to "test the spirits whether they are of God."

Paul commended the Bereans as more noble minded because they searched the scriptures to see whether what was taught was so (Acts 17:11)

A recurring theme in the New Testament is warning against false teachers who deceive and draw away people from the truth – 2 Peter 2:1-3. The letter to the Galatians was a warning to Christians to NOT follow a "different gospel" (Galatians 1:6-9). Note again, Galatians 5:4

These are some words to consider about who will NOT be in heaven. While not pleasant to think about, it is still the word of God and if we go to heaven that HAS TO mean something. For anyone who does not make it to heaven, it will be tragic. But considering how heaven is described, of necessity such ones cannot be there. But having said all this, ANYONE CAN go to heaven – and that includes you. But as we have seen, you need to do your part – sometimes described by the term faith, and at other times in more detail as obeying the gospel. What about you, are you headed to heaven? If not, let us help you get there. Think about it.