

# Heaven: What's Going On Up There? Pt. 1

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## Introduction

Our church family and the larger community in Middle Tennessee need to hear these words this week. Two young men in the last two weeks have gone to Heaven—Grant Solomon and Evan Snider.

This week is also eleventh anniversary of our Josiah going to Heaven.

Our world needs a word of hope, and there is no greater word of hope than Heaven.

## Revelation 13:6

Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

- The concept and reality of Heaven has been under attack for thousands of years by satanic forces through:
  - Sowing of doubt—is Heaven real?
  - Minimization of Heaven and all of its glory—and Heaven is full of glory and majesty!
  - Cartoon theology—we have fallen prey to cartoon theology (white robes, people in isolation, a COVID heaven, which is not Heaven at all, but Hell!)

**Question**—What's going on up there?

**Answer**—As we will see this morning, we have to think Biblically and think big!

## John 14:1–3

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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

- If Jesus the Creator prepared it, Heaven is going to be incredible!
- If we're going to be where He is, Heaven is not going to be boring!

**SAINTS ALIVE**  
**SAINTS' BODIES**  
**SAINTS SURROUNDING**

## Saints Alive

Saints are alive in Heaven! There is no such thing as soul sleep or our spirits waiting in the ground until Jesus comes back. We pass from life (on earth) to LIFE (in Heaven)!

## 2 Corinthians 5:8

We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

- This verse tells us that when our bodies breathe their last on earth, we immigrate to our true homeland—Heaven—which Jesus has prepared for us!

### Matthew 22:31–33

... But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.

- Is Jesus saying that the dead are living? You better believe it!

### John 11:25–26

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

- It matters what we believe about eternal life and Heaven. It affects how we live our lives now.
  - If we understand that we are going to Heaven one day to be rewarded by Christ for how we lived our lives on earth, it changes how we live now.
  - If we understand that our loved ones are more alive in Heaven than they ever were on earth, it changes how we grieve. We grieve with hope!

**Beloved**—Every time a Christian departs this earth, they are immediately ushered into the presence of the Lord, to their new prepared homeland, where they live for all eternity!

**Saints don't die—  
Jesus said so!**

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## Saints' Bodies

### 1 Corinthians 15:42–44

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

**Our bodies are . . .  
sown in corruption, but raised in incorruption;  
sown in dishonor, but raised in glory;  
sown in weakness, but raised in power;  
sown as a natural body, but raised as a spiritual body.**

**Question—What are our spiritual bodies like?**

**Answer—**

### 1. Revelation 7:9, 16–17

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands . . . They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

- John sees a multitude in Heaven and notices nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues. This means there is diversity in Heaven just as on earth.
- John sees the multitude clothed, wearing robes, with hands and eyes, not starving or thirsting. This means our spiritual bodies have some similarities in appearance with our earthly bodies.

## 2. 1 Corinthians 15:48–49

As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

- In our natural state, we are like the man of dust, Adam, but in our heavenly state, we are like the Heavenly Man, Jesus.

## 3. Philippians 3:20–21

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

- When we get to Heaven, we get to put on a Heavenly body that is like Jesus's glorious body!

## 4. 1 John 3:2

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

- In Heaven we will have same body as Jesus, with the same composition and the same abilities!

## 5. Luke 24:30–31

Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

- Jesus “un-manifested” Himself and disappeared. This is the only usage of this term in the New Testament. Jesus's resurrected, Heavenly body has the ability to vanish instantly from sight.

## 6. Luke 24:36–37

Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “**Peace to you.**” But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

- The disciples are hiding from the Jews after the crucifixion of Jesus, and all of a sudden the Son of God appears in front of them. Just as He is able to vanish, He is able to appear.

## 7. Acts 1:9–11

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

- The Bible tells us that Jesus's resurrected body was taken up from earth—floating, flying—and that He is coming back to earth in like manner!

**It takes a heavenly body to do all of these things,  
and we get one!**

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## Saints Surrounding

### Hebrews 12:1, 22–23

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us . . . But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect.

**Application**—*The saints in Heaven surround us. We are encircled by a cloud of witnesses who inhabit Heaven but are also very close to us. Another term for this cloud of witnesses is general assembly, which means universal companions. So, let's lay aside every weight and run this race with endurance. Our universal companions are watching and cheering us on!*

### **Matthew 17:1–3**

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

- If you don't understand the spiritual body that looks similar to our natural bodies but has supernatural abilities, you will never understand this passage of Scripture.
- Something supernatural happens when Jesus is transfigured. Moses appears after 1,500 years in Heaven and Elijah appears after 800 years in Heaven, talking to Jesus. How can they have done so? Because they have spiritual bodies!

### **Luke 9:30–31**

And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

- Moses and Elijah had glorious, spiritual bodies, and they came to speak of Jesus's decease. The word "decease" in the Greek more closely translates to "exodus," or Jesus's departure from this world.
- In our spiritual bodies, we will have heavenly knowledge. Moses and Elijah knew things from heaven that were soon to happen on earth, and they appeared in that moment to encourage Jesus.

"Moses and Elijah talk with him about this; the nature, manner, use, and near approach of it; and to which they might encourage him, as man."<sup>1</sup>—**John Gill, English Theologian, 1697–1771**

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## **Conclusion**

"Shall we stop at that poor line, the grave, which all our Christianity is always trying to wipe out, and make nothing of, and which we always insist on widening into a great gulf? Shall we not stretch our thoughts beyond and feel the life-blood of this holy church, this living body of Christ, pulsing out into the saints who are living there and coming back throbbing with tidings of their glorious and sympathetic life."<sup>2</sup>—**Rt. Rev. Phillips Brooks, D.D., American Theologian, 1835–1893**

**Application**—*Christian truth is always trying to wipe out and make nothing of the grave. Why do we try to widen the gulf between us and those who are in Heaven?*

*We must stretch our thoughts beyond and feel the life-pulse of the saints who are alive in Heaven with new supernatural bodies, who surround us. And as God allows, we must receive encouragement, comfort, and strength to continue, because they are watching and encouraging and cheering us on to finish the race with endurance. Hear them say, "Keep going! It's worth it!"*

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<sup>1</sup> Gill, John. *An Exposition of the New Testament*. Vol. 1–3. 1746–1748.

<sup>2</sup> Brooks, Phillip, Rt. Rev. *The Purpose and Use of Comfort, and Other Sermons*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1910.

**Saints are alive in Heaven.  
They have new bodies with extraordinary abilities.  
They surround us; they are our universal companions.  
They watch and encourage us to fulfill our destiny  
and run our race until we reach the finish line.  
Jesus wins, and so do I, in Jesus's Name!**

If you aren't sure if you are going to Heaven, Jesus is waiting for you today. All you need to do is the following:

**Repent.** Turn from your sin; choose to leave behind your old life of sin and separation from God.

**Believe.** Believe in the good news that Jesus loves you, right now, in whatever state you are in. He died for you, and He rose again in victory. Jesus wants to give you Heaven instead of Hell!

**Receive.** Receive Him through an act of faith by saying, "Jesus, I want you!"

**Confess.** Say out loud, "I belong to Jesus and He belongs to me. I believe in Him. I have settled this issue in my heart, and I believe in Jesus."

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## Discussion Questions

1. What lies have you believed about Heaven?
2. Why does what we believe about Heaven matter for how we live right now?
3. How does the knowledge that Heaven has been prepared specifically for you by Jesus impact you?
4. Discuss the various attributes of our heavenly bodies as described by Scripture. Which do you find most exciting? Do you find any hard to believe? If so, why do you think that is?
5. How does knowing that we are surrounded by our universal companions encourage you? Challenge you?
6. In what ways have you widened the gulf between Heaven and earth? How can you change that? Why is it important to do so?

## NOTES