

# HEAVEN

- I. Some Biblical references to "heaven"
  - A. Hebrew word *shamayim* - "heights"
    - II Chron. 6:18 - "heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Thee"
    - II Chron. 6:30 - "hear Thou from heaven Thy dwelling place"
    - Ps. 14:2 - "the Lord looked down from heaven"
    - Ps. 136:26 - "Give thanks to the God of heaven"
    - Isa. 37:16 - "Thou hast made heaven and earth"
  - B. Greek word *ouranos* - "raised up"
    - Matt. 4:17 - "the kingdom of heaven is at hand"
    - Matt. 5:3 - "theirs is the kingdom of heaven"
    - Matt. 6:9 - "Our Father who art in heaven"
    - Eph. 1:3 - "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places"
    - Col. 1:5 - "hope laid up for you in heaven"
    - I Thess. 4:16 - "the Lord Himself will descend from heaven"
- II. God and "heaven"
  - A. Presence of God in heaven
    - Gen. 24:3 - "the God of heaven"
    - Ps. 33:14 - "the Lord looks from heaven..."
    - Ps. 103:19 - "His throne in the heavens"
  - B. "Heaven" used as equivalence for God.
    - Matt. 21:25 - "baptism of John...from heaven or from men?"
    - Matt. 23:22 - "he who swears by heaven, swears by throne of God"
    - Lk. 15:21 - "I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight"
    - Jn. 3:27 - "unless it has been given to him from heaven"
  - C. Equivalence of "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven"
    - Matt. 13:11 - "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven"
    - Mk. 4:11 - "mystery of the kingdom of God"
    - Lk. 8:10 - "mysteries of the kingdom of God"
- III. Inadequate conceptualizations of "heaven"
  - A. Mental pictures of clouds, harps, angels, pearly gates, etc.
  - B. Concepts that are static, materialistic, space-time oriented.
    - "What will my place of habitation be like?"
    - "How big will my 'mansion' be?"
    - "Will I have more than someone else?"
  - C. Self-oriented concepts
    - "What will *I* be like in heaven?"
    - "What kind of body will *I* have?"
    - "Will *I* be recognizable?"
    - "What will *I* be doing in heaven?"
    - "Will all of *my* desires be fulfilled?"
    - "Will *I* be able to progress, develop or grow in heaven?"
  - D. Exclusively futuristic concepts
    - 1. "Pie in the sky, bye and bye"
    - 2. Escapist concepts
      - a. Avoidance of problems
      - b. "I can't wait till I get to heaven"

#### IV. New Covenant understanding of "heaven"

- A. The "kingdom of heaven" in Jesus Christ
  - Matt. 4:17 - "the kingdom of heaven is at hand"
  - Matt. 5:3,10 - "theirs is the kingdom of heaven"
  - Matt. 16:19 - "the keys of the kingdom of heaven"
- B. Heavenly realities in Jesus Christ
  - Eph. 1:3 - "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places"
  - Heb. 3:1 - "partakers of a heavenly calling"
  - Heb. 6:4 - "tasted of the heavenly gift"
  - Heb. 12:22 - "the heavenly Jerusalem"
- C. Heaven is the presence, the life, the character of God in Christ
  - Jn. 11:25 - "I am the resurrection and the life"
  - Jn. 14:6 - "I am the way, the truth and the life"
  - Col. 3:4 - "Christ is our life"
- D. The continuum of Christ's life
  - 1. Continuity of "eternal life"
    - Jn 11:26 - "everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die"
    - I Cor. 3:21-23 - "things present or things to come, all things belong to you"
    - Eph. 1:3 - "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"
    - Col. 2:10 - "you have been made complete"
  - 2. Discontinuity of the environ of experiencing Christ's life
    - John 17:24 - "they may be where I am, in order that they may behold My glory"
    - Phil. 1:21 - "to die is gain"
    - II Peter 3:13 - "a new heavens and a new earth"