

Heaven 102

Heaven is generally thought of as a place to go at a time not yet, the fundamental goal for most people of faith. Perhaps that is a misconception if "heaven" is ultimately understood as being in the presence of God in a covenant relationship. Maybe the place is here and the time is now.

Jesus is in heaven (Acts 3:19-21; Hebrews 9:24; 1 Peter 3:22; et. al.). For his disciples, it is far better to die than to live; to die is to be "with Christ," and so, be in heaven (Philippians 1:21-23). However, to die and be with Christ falls short of being with him in the final resurrection (Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10). There remains that greater glory for every disciple (Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 15).

If that is not enough, those who first die spiritually (Romans 6), are with Christ in heaven even before they die physically! God raises them spiritually and seats them with Christ "in heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:20; 2:4-6). The living faithful are in a covenant relationship and have fellowship with the One who reigns in heaven. Jesus put it in terms of the believer having passed out of death into eternal life, never to die again (John 5:24-25; 11:23-26)! Have you died and been raised with Christ? Is your citizenship in heaven? Have you passed from death to eternal life?