

S T U D Y   G U I D E



# Heaven

by R.C. Sproul



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LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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# Thinking of Home

## MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

Many men and women think that the Christian idea of heaven is nothing more than wishful thinking. This life is all there is, they say, so get what you can while you can. Jesus, however, told His disciples that if there were no heaven, He would have let them know this fact. We have hope for eternal life with God because Jesus promised those who trust in Him that they would have eternal life with God. In this lecture, Dr. Sproul introduces this biblical hope of heaven.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To be able to explain the central importance of the concept of heaven
2. To be able to explain the reason for the hope we have in the existence of heaven

## QUOTATIONS

*Heaven begins where sin ends.*

—Thomas Adams

## LECTURE OUTLINE

### A. Introduction

1. Jonathan Edwards, famous for his preaching on hell, in fact wrote much more about heaven.
2. Most people have wondered what heaven is like.
3. Some have argued that Christianity is a “pie in the sky” religion.
4. Karl Marx popularized the idea that religion is the opiate of the masses.
5. Marx argued that religion was invented and used by the ruling classes to exploit and oppress the poor people of the world.

6. One cannot take Christianity seriously without seeing the central importance of the concept of heaven.

B. Many Mansions

1. John 14 begins with these words from Jesus: "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."
2. This is a call to trust.
3. The fact that it is God who verifies the identity of Jesus is central to the testimony of the New Testament.
4. It is in this context that Jesus makes the statements He makes about heaven.
5. He speaks first of faith in God and in Himself.
6. If there is no God, there is no reason to hope that there is continuity of personal existence that we call life.
7. If God does exist, what would be more ridiculous than to assume that He creates people in His own image who are destined to fall into the abyss of nonexistence?
8. If nonexistence were the ultimate destiny of all men, then the lines from Shakespeare would be correct; life would be "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."
9. Every fiber of our being tells us that death cannot be the final conclusion for human experience.
10. Some would say that such a feeling is explained by an emotional need to believe that life is meaningful.
11. Jesus says to trust Him when He says that there is a heaven.
13. Jesus would not allow His disciples to go through life holding on to a false hope.
14. Everybody longs for reunion with their loved ones who have gone before, but the Christian longs to be with Christ first and foremost.
15. For those who are going to heaven, the bliss that God has stored up for you is unworthy to be compared with any joy or delight that we cling to in this life.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. \_\_\_\_\_ popularized the idea that religion is the opiate of the masses.
  - a. Jonathan Edwards
  - b. Bertrand Russell
  - c. John Milton
  - d. Karl Marx
2. What chapter of the Bible begins with the words, "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"?
  - a. Matthew 14
  - b. Mark 14

- c. Luke 14
- d. John 14

## BIBLE STUDY

1. Read the following passages of Scripture. How do they describe the ultimate destiny of believers?
  - a. Isaiah 65:17
  - b. Isaiah 66:22
  - c. 2 Peter 3:13
  - d. Revelation 21:1
2. Read the following passages of Scripture, and explain how they describe heaven. What is heaven, according to these texts?
  - a. Isaiah 66:1
  - b. Matthew 6:9
  - c. 1 Peter 3:22
3. What main point about heaven is taught in John 14:2-3?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. According to Scripture, there will come a point in time when all creation is renewed. The Bible speaks of this as “a new heaven and a new earth.” How is the biblical idea different from the common popular idea of life after death as an existence of the immaterial soul in some ethereal realm in the clouds? Is this difference important? If so, how?
2. Modern science speaks of reality in terms of different “dimensions.” Is it a help or a hindrance to conceive of heaven as another dimension of reality?
3. Is there any truth in Marx’s contention that religion has been used by the powerful to exploit the poor? Does Marx’s critique apply to biblical Christianity? Why or why not?
4. If individual personal existence ended at the point of the individual’s death, would life be essentially meaningless? Explain.

## APPLICATION

1. Have you ever wondered about life after death or about the nature of heaven? Write down the questions you would most like to explore in the course of this study. As you proceed, write down any biblical passages or other thoughts you have that are relevant to your questions.

2. Do you share Paul's confidence that if you were absent from the body, you would be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8)? If not, turn to Christ in repentance and faith that you may have eternal life and dwell in His presence forever.

#### FOR FURTHER STUDY

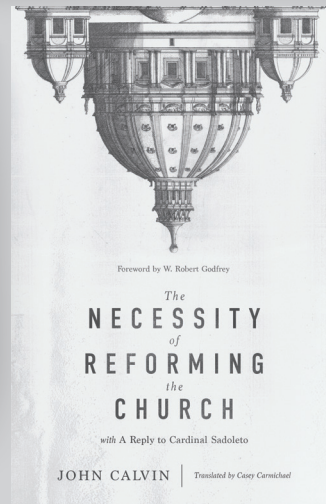
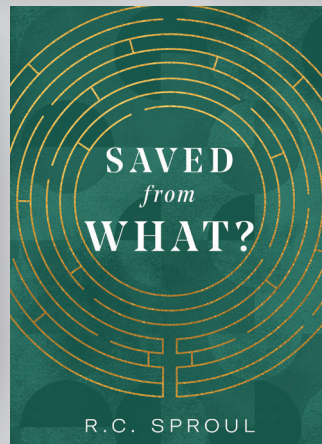
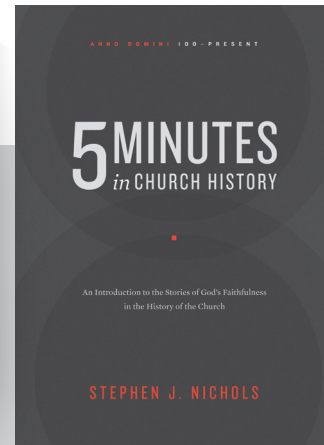
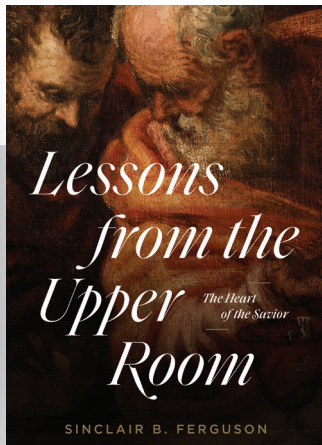
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