

8 Questions and Answers About Heaven

Randy Alcorn, Anne Graham Lotz and others tackle heaven's FAQs

1. Are the streets really paved with gold?

No one is really sure, says James Bradford, general secretary of the Assemblies of God. The language in Revelation and other books may be both figurative and literal, he says, and it depends on the interpretation of certain terminology. But resolving this question need not be so crucial, as he points out: "This picture of a place where the streets are made of gold is such a sharp contrast [to Earth], it doesn't have to be literal to make the point."

2. Will we work in heaven?

Richard Sigmund says we will. He tells in his book *My Time in Heaven* of seeing homes being built, vast universities and activities of all kinds going on. Oral Roberts University theology professor Jeffrey Lamp agrees. He says God designed us to be His co-laborers, working with Him in creation. He thinks those who join God in eternity will continue to work to reflect His glory in the new heavens and earth.

3. Will we be married in heaven?

No. Jesus said resurrected people would not be married (see Matt. 22:30). Still, author Randy Alcorn points out that the Bible makes it clear there will be marriage in heaven—between Christ and His bride, the church. Will we remember our closest relations? The notion that we won't is absurd, Alcorn says. "Our relationships with loved ones will be better than ever," he says. "Heaven is a place of gain, not loss."

4. Why so much talk about playing harps and floating on

clouds?

According to Lamp, the belief stems from historical biblical interpretations that say we will float around heaven as disembodied spirits. He tends to doubt those images, saying that to picture everything physical as bad makes creation look like a big mistake. "I think it's a bad image of the deity to say He has to destroy [Earth] because it's irredeemable."

5. Will we recognize people from the Bible or FROM HISTORY?

Sigmund says he saw the prophet Samuel, composer Johann Sebastian Bach, various missionaries and his grandparents. Anne Graham Lotz points out the Bible says we will have a body like Christ's. After His resurrection, many recognized Jesus. If His followers are like Him, she notes, it makes sense we will meet others who followed Him throughout history.

6. Will we eat? if so, what will be on the menu?

No one knows. Even though Revelation 19:9 refers to the marriage supper of the Lamb, Lamp wonders if that event is best understood for what it represents—dining, which in context is an intimate sign of fellowship and relationship. "Images of the marriage supper have a deeper significance than simply what's on the menu," he says.

7. Will we have bodies in heaven?

Alcorn says we will, using as evidence the fact that after His resurrection Christ fixed breakfast for the disciples and ate it with them. "People ask, 'Are you saying we'll eat and drink in heaven?' I tell them it's not that I'm saying it, it's that Jesus said it and a number of other people said it in Scripture."

8. How do we get to heaven?

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6, NKJV). Some

people protest this for promoting exclusivity. Lotz says God has invited everyone to live with Him in His heavenly home: "So it's a very inclusive invitation," she says, "but you have to RSVP—and the RSVP is at the cross."