

The Apostles' Creed



The Apostles' Creed

- *Intro to the Creed Itself*
- *God the Father*
- *God the Son*
 - *Christ's Birth*
 - *Christ's Crucifixion and Death*
 - *Christ's Death and Resurrection*
 - *Christ in Heaven*



Jesus in Heaven

- “We believe in... Jesus Christ... Who ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty...”
 - Okay, before we go too far on this, let's stop and define another important “afterlife term”
 - We can't just assume that we all assume the same thing when we hear that word...



Jesus in Heaven



Funky little teaching moment...

- So what exactly is “Heaven” then?
 - Remember what we talked about last time—
 - The Greeks and Romans thought that the good side of the afterlife—the Elysian Fields—were calm (“where life is easiest for men. No snow is there, nor heavy storm, nor ever rain, but ever does ocean send up blasts of the shrill-blowing West Wind that they may give cooling to men”—from Homer's *Odyssey*)”



Jesus in Heaven



Funky little teaching moment...

- So what exactly is “Heaven” then?
 - Remember what we talked about last time—
 - The Greeks and Romans thought that the good side of the afterlife—the Elysian Fields—were calm
 - To the Vikings, Valhalla was daily, epic battle against evil, followed by epic partying in a divine mead hall (which tells us a lot about the Vikings, doesn't it?)



Jesus in Heaven



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 - The Greeks and Romans thought that the good side of the afterlife—the Elysian Fields—were calm
 - To the Vikings, Valhalla was daily, epic battle against evil, followed by epic partying in a divine mead hall
 - Hey, to the Muslims, “جنة” or “*Jannah*” is a garden of delights, filled with “flowing springs... every fruit... furnishings lined with rich brocade...” and “maidens with gorgeous eyes, reserved in pavilions, who no human or jinn has ever touched before”

(note that another Islamic term for “Heaven” is “فردوس” or “*Firdaus*”—which itself comes from the Old Persian “𐎱𐎠𐎼𐎿𐎡𐎹” or “*Paridaidam*” (i.e.; a “walled enclosure”)—which was also translated into Hebrew as “פָּרְדֵּס” or “*Pardēs*” and into Greek as “παράδεισος” or “*Parádeisos*”—from whence we derive the English word “Paradise”)
(so in Islam, the afterlife of “Paradise” is literally a protected garden of perfected earthly delights)



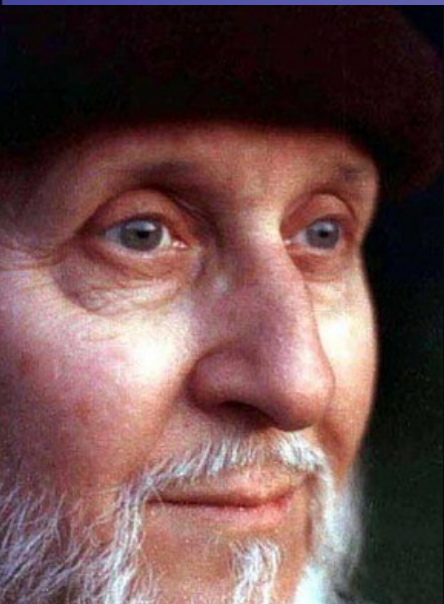
Jesus in Heaven



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 - So is “Heaven” just... whatever you want it to be...?

(note that David Berg was a cult leader, so let's consider his theology... suspect...)



Heaven is a place where you can get
all you want of whatever you like.
Heaven is not the end: it's only the
beginning.

— David Berg —



Jesus in Heaven



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 - So is “Heaven” just... whatever you *want* it to be...?
 - Or is “Heaven” more like “whatever you *expected* it to be” (as in movies like “*What Deams May Come*”) (i.e.; for good or for ill)



Jesus in Heaven



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 - So is “Heaven” just... whatever you *want* it to be...?
 - Or is “Heaven” more like “whatever you *expected* it to be” (as in movies like “*What Dreams May Come*”)
 - Note that *none* of these was where God (or the gods) actually hung out
(that would be with Zeus on Mount Olympus, or in the halls of Oðinn in Asgarðr, etc.—places way up high in the sky, like on the tallest mountain or over the rainbow)



Jesus in Heaven



Funky little teaching moment...

- So what exactly is “Heaven” then?
 - Remember what we talked about last time
 - What's the *Biblical* “Heaven” like?
 - Do we mean the afterlife where Christians live forever or the place where God dwells now?
 - This is another one of those instances where we kinda smush all of that together in our heads— sorta for good and sorta for ill



Jesus in Heaven



Funky little teaching moment...

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 - Remember what we talked about last time
 - What's the *Biblical* “Heaven” like?
 - Do we mean the afterlife where Christians live forever or the place where God dwells now?
 - The place where God dwells now (the “throne room of God”) we often think of as being “in the clouds”
 - Read Matthew 24:30
 - Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
 - So if Jesus is appearing from Heaven in the clouds and we're meeting Him in the clouds, then Heaven must be in the clouds, right?



Jesus in Heaven



Crazy deep dive into Biblical words...

- There are three main words in the Bible uses to speak about “Heaven” (i.e.; the place where God dwells now)—
 - “שָׁמַיִם” or “šāmayim”
 - Read Genesis 1:1
 - Read Psalm 103:11 and 19
 - “οὐρανός” or “ouranos”
 - Read Revelation 4:2
 - Read 1 Peter 1:12

(note that both of these words literally just mean “sky”)
(go back and re-read those verses, inserting “sky” for “Heaven”)

- Do you see it in Genesis 1:14?
- Or in Genesis 27:28?

(so on one level, “Heaven” isn't really *in* the clouds
—“Heaven” *is* the clouds)
(but it's not quite that simple)



Jesus in Heaven



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- In Jewish cosmology, there were three “skies”
 - The first “sky” (or “first Heaven”)—the blue spread where the birds and the clouds are



Jesus in Heaven



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- In Jewish cosmology, there were three “skies”
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 - The second “sky” (or “second Heaven”)—the black void where the stars, sun, and moon are



Jesus in Heaven



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- In Jewish cosmology, there were three “skies”
 - The first “sky” (or “first Heaven”)
 - The second “sky” (or “second Heaven”)
 - The third “sky” (or “third Heaven”)—beyond anything else, where YAHWEH has His throneroom
(Does that help explain what Paul is talking about in 2 Corinthians 12:2?)



Jesus in Heaven



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 - The second “sky” (or “second Heaven”)
 - The third “sky” (or “third Heaven”)—beyond anything else, where YAHWEH has His throneroom
 - *This “Heaven” is not so much in the clouds as it is above all of the rest of everything*
 - Read Psalm 108:4-5
 - Read Psalm 113:4-6
 - Read Psalm 115:16
 - What did God say in Deuteronomy 10:14?
 - What did Solomon say in 1 Kings 8:27?



Jesus in Heaven



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- This “Heaven” is not so much *in the clouds* as it is *above* all of the rest of *everything*
- So when the angels proclaimed “Glory to God in the highest!” to the shepherds in Luke 2:14 or the people shouted “Hosanna in the highest!” in the streets in Matthew 21:9 they were speaking of the highest... *what?*
- How does that nuance our understanding?



Jesus in Heaven



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 - The first “sky” (or “first Heaven”)
 - The second “sky” (or “second Heaven”)
 - The third “sky” (or “third Heaven”)—beyond anything else, where YAHWEH has His throneroom
 - Or re-consider these verses—
 - Read Revelation 3:12
 - So is this verse talking about a new Jerusalem coming down from out of (the third) “Heaven” or from out of the (the first) sky?



Jesus in Heaven



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 - Or re-consider these verses—
 - Read Revelation 3:12
 - Read 2 Peter 3:13
 - So is this verse talking about a new “third Heaven” or a new “second Heaven” or a new “first Heaven” or all of the above?



Jesus in Heaven



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 - Or re-consider these verses—
 - Read Revelation 3:12
 - Read 2 Peter 3:13
 - Read John 3:31
 - This one is particularly fun because it uses two terms for “Heaven” here —“sky” and “above”



Jesus in Heaven



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 - Read 1 Peter 1:12
 - “ἄνωθεν” or “anōthen”
(lit. “above”)

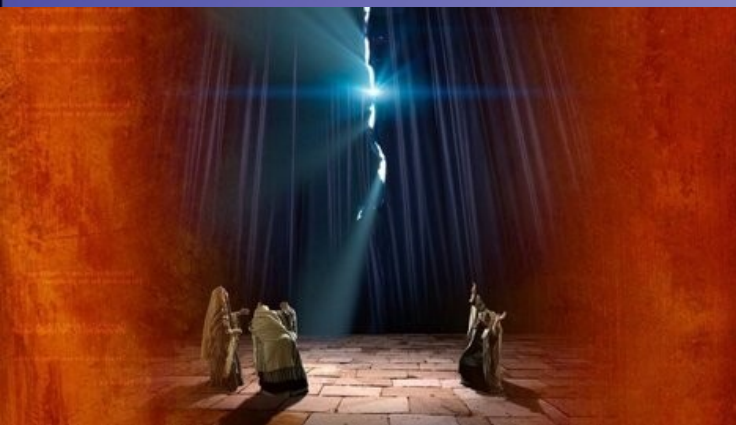


Jesus in Heaven



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 - Read 1 Peter 1:12
 - “ἀνωθεν” or “*anōthen*”
 - Read James 3:15 and 17
 - Read James 1:17 and John 19:11 (all the same word)
 - Now note the wordplay in John 8:23 and Acts 2:19
 - God's power is from “above” (the “third Heaven”) and our impotence is here “below” (on Earth)
 - Given that, note the verbiage used in both Matthew 27:51 and Mark 15:38 (i.e.; that the curtain was torn “from above to below”—the same words)



Jesus in Heaven



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 - Now note the wordplay in John 8:23 and Acts 2:19
 - God's power is from “above” (the “third Heaven”) and our impotence is here “below” (on Earth)
 - Given that, note the verbiage used in both Matthew 27:51 and Mark 15:38—and then note the argument in Hebrews 10:19-22 (i.e.; that the curtain of Christ's body, given for us on the cross, opened up God's presence to us to enter into with confidence and full assurance)



Jesus in Heaven



Funky little teaching moment...

- So what exactly is “Heaven” then?
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 - What's the *Biblical* “Heaven” like?
 - Do we mean the afterlife where Christians live forever or the place where God dwells now?
 - The place where God dwells now (the “throne room of God”) we often think of as being “in the clouds”
 - So that means that when we die and spend eternity in “Heaven” in God's presence, we will rise to the sky?
 - Again, reading 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, yes
 - Except that “Heaven” doesn't stay there...
 - Re-read Revelation 3:12
 - Or better yet, Revelation 21:1-5 *ff*
 - So we will not be “getting our wings” and living in the clouds with Jesus
 - *Angels are angels* (spiritual constructs and servants of God) and *humans are humans* (the family of God, whom Christ died for, to bring us back home to Him) and *one never becomes the other*

There's a new angel in Heaven!



Jesus in Heaven



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 - Again, reading 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, yes
 - Except that “Heaven” doesn't stay there...
 - Re-read Revelation 3:12
 - Or better yet, Revelation 21:1-5 *ff*
 - So we will not be “getting our wings” and living in the clouds with Jesus —instead, we will be living forever with Jesus on a restored Earth, within a restored and perfect Jerusalem
 - There will be no more Earth below, with “three Heavens” far above it —there will be *only Heaven...*

