

# REVIVAL NEWS

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## HEAVEN

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### Popular views

When we say the word *heaven* many ideas can come to mind. For many, *heaven* is thought of as another geographical location; a place to experience when we die; a place to have a mansion and all other things we wished we had in this life.

The evangelical gospel of the twentieth century majored on seeing people “saved to go to heaven”. But is that really the gospel? What is heaven? What do the Scriptures have to tell us about heaven? Let us come to a Scriptural understanding of *heaven*.

### The Kingdom of heaven is at hand

Understanding heaven has got to do with understanding the nature of the kingdom. John the Baptist and Jesus came preaching, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand**” **Matthew 3:2, 4:17**. These verses tell us that the kingdom is *of heaven*. This means that the origin of the kingdom is from heaven. This tells us that the nature of the kingdom is heavenly, “**not of this world**” **John 18:36**.

We also learn that this kingdom, which is of heaven, is *at hand*. John the Baptist and Jesus were proclaiming that the rule and reign of heaven was able to be grasped, touched and experienced. Heaven was now invading the earth realm through the King who had arrived!

### Heaven Rules

Heaven is the place of authority. King Nebuchadnezzar was told, “**your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules**” **Daniel 4:26**. Earthly kingdoms are under the authority of Heaven. Heaven governs the earth. It seems from this verse that *Heaven* may even be used to refer to God Himself. The prodigal son said, “**I have sinned against heaven**” **Luke 15:18**. We do not sin against a place; we sin against a Person (**Ps.51:4**). The *kingdom of God* and the *kingdom of heaven* were terms used interchangeably by Jesus Himself (**Matt.19:23-24**).

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that there is a “**God in heaven**” (**Dan.2:28**) and that the “**God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed**” **Daniel 2:44**. Earthly rulership is given and set up from heaven. Jesus told Pilate, “**You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above**” **John 19:11**. Power and authority in the earth come from the realm of heaven, from above! Heaven is the realm of authority. Heaven is the realm and dwelling place of God (**1 Kings 8:30**).

## Heaven is the Throne of God

In Isaiah 66:1 it is written, ***“Thus says Yahweh: ‘Heaven is My Throne, and earth is My footstool.’*** Here is one of the clearest Biblical definitions of heaven. It is the Throne of God. It is the seat of all authority. It is the realm of rulership. God, by His mighty power, ***“worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies [in NKJV “heavenly places” but the literal is “heavenlies”; the word places was added by the translators], far above all principality and power and might and dominion...”*** Ephesians 1:20-21. Jesus is now ruling from heaven, from the Throne.

## We are welcomed to approach

***“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace”*** Hebrews 4:16. The Throne of God is in heaven and it is a Throne of Grace. When we approach this Throne by faith we are able to ***“obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need”***. Heaven can be accessed by us on the earth! We do not need to wait until we die!

The apostle John said, ***“I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven”*** Revelation 4:2. We can access Heaven by the Spirit. Heaven is a realm in the Spirit. It is a realm to be revealed. Whenever Heaven was revealed to the saints the Throne was the centrepiece (Isaiah 6:1-3, Ezekiel 1:1,26-28).

## We are called to sit with Him

After declaring Jesus to have been raised and seated at the right hand in the heavenlies (Eph.1:20-21), Paul the apostle goes on to reveal a further mystery! ***“God...even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus”*** Ephesians 2:4-6. This is something already accomplished! It is written in past tense. When we are born again, baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit, we are placed into Christ, raised up and united with Him in the heavenly realm.

Jesus affirmed this by telling the congregation in Laodicea, ***“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne”*** Revelation 3:21. We need to realise that we are now living in two realms. We are learning to rule from heaven with Jesus while we live on the earth.

## What comes from heaven?

There are many things that the Scripture affirms come into the earth realm from heaven. Such things include:

- **Gifts of ministry** – John the Baptist said, ***“A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven”*** John 3:27. This is confirmed by apostle Paul, ***“When He (Christ) ascended on high...And gave gifts to men”*** which were the five ministry gifts given to the church, the congregation of Jesus (Eph.4:8,11)
- **The Holy Spirit** – ***“the Holy Spirit sent from heaven”*** 1 Peter 1:12. By receiving the Holy Spirit we receive the nature of heaven while we are on the earth!
- **Visions** – Peter ***“saw heaven open and an object like a great sheet...let down to the earth”*** Acts 10:11
- **Jesus** – ***“the second Man is the Lord from heaven”*** 1 Corinthians 15:47

- **The New Jerusalem** – *“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God...” Revelation 21:2.*
- **Our new way of life** – apostle Paul writes, *“For our citizenship [KJV ‘conversation’] is in heaven” Philippians 3:20.* Our manner of life is now of heaven as we are *“not of this world”* and are learning to live in the image of the *“heavenly Man”* (Jn.17:14, 1Cor.15:49).

## **THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL – HEAVEN AND EARTH TOGETHER IN HIM**

### **All things coming together**

In Christ we have been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Him (Eph.1:3). One of the blessings is, *“He has made known to us the mystery of His will...that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him” Ephesians 1:9-10.* What a mystery! In Christ, all things in heaven and on earth come together.

### **Heaven and earth reconciled in Christ**

The fullness of God was pleased to dwell in Christ *“and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross” Colossians 1:19-20.* The God of heaven entered the earth in the form of a Man, Jesus, so that He could reconcile heaven and earth together, in Himself! That is, *“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself” 2 Corinthians 5:19.* Now heavenly realities can manifest on earth, just as God in heaven manifested in the flesh!

### **The heavens opened**

*“When He had been baptised, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him” Matthew 3:16.* Jesus as a Man in the earth walked under an open heaven. Since Adam fell, no man had walked continually under an open heaven while on the earth. In Jesus there was no separation between heaven and earth. He lived and walked a heavenly life on the earth. If we are baptised, immersed, into Him, we too walk under that open heaven with no separation between God in heaven and us on earth!

### **Being in heaven while on earth**

*“No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven” John 3:13.* The Son of Man, Jesus, told this to Nicodemus while He was on the earth. He told Him that He is the One who came down from heaven and *is in heaven* – at the same time! How is this possible? Jesus is God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim.3:16). He can be in both realms at once.

This is also true for the believer in Jesus the Messiah. We have been raised up and made to sit together with Christ in the heavenlies while we are still living on the earth (Eph.2:6). The purpose of the gospel was never to take us to heaven as a final destination. God has always wanted heaven and earth brought together in Jesus!

## THE HOUSE OF GOD – THE GATE OF HEAVEN

### The Dream

In **Genesis 28:10-22** there is the record of Jacob receiving an awesome dream as he fled from his angry brother Esau. There are many awesome truths to draw out of this but the main point for this study is the content of the dream, **“behold a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there were angels [literally messengers] of God ascending and descending on it” v.12**. Jacob saw **a ladder**, or stair case which, importantly, was **set up on the earth**. This ladder was established in the earth. It was stationed and erected on the earth while its top **reached to heaven**. This dream was showing Jacob that what God was setting up on earth would be connected to heaven and **“Yahweh stood above it” v.13**.

### The Interpretation

When Jacob woke up he received a revelation! **“Surely Yahweh is in this place and I did not know it...How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!” v.16-17**. This dream was concerning the house of God. Jacob was being shown that the house of God, the dwelling place of Yahweh on the earth, is the gate of heaven. The house of God is the place where heaven and earth come together.

There were **angels [messengers] ascending and descending**. In the house of God there are messengers accessing heaven, **ascending**, then bringing the will of God in heaven to the earth, **descending**. This fulfils the prayer Jesus taught us for His kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as in heaven (**Matthew 6:9-10**). These messengers access the throne in heaven, and then release the will of the King on the earth! What a house!

### The Fulfilment

When Jesus first met Nathaniel, knowing he was a true Israelite **in whom was no deceit (Jn.1:47)**, He told him, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” John 1:51**. Jesus pointed Nathaniel to Jacob’s dream and gave the fulfilment. Jesus is the fulfilment! He is the ladder. He was the dwelling place of God in the earth, the house of God! In Him heaven and earth are connected. He is the gate of heaven! Heaven comes into the earth through Him! God in heaven is fully revealed in the earth through the Man, Jesus!

### We are the house!

Jacob’s dream was of the **house of God**. Although Jesus was that house while He lived on the earth, through His death and resurrection, the dwelling place of God has now extended to all those joined to Jesus the Messiah. **“Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are...” Hebrews 3:6**. Christ is now a many-membered Body, each member having been joined by believing and being baptised by One Spirit into the One Body (**1 Cor.12:12-13**). Paul the apostle affirms that the **“the house of God, which is the church of the living God...” 1 Timothy 3:15**. Jacob saw **the house of God**. Jacob saw the **church of the living God**. The church, the congregation of God, is **the house of God!**

### We are the gate of heaven

Jacob referred to **the house of God as the gate of heaven**. We are the house. We are the gate of heaven. Jesus said that on the Rock revelation of who He is as the Christ, the Son of God

**(Matt.16:16)**, He would ***“build My church and the gates of Hades would not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven...”*** **Matthew 16:18-19**. Jesus is building His house, His church.

His house is given the ***“keys of the kingdom of heaven”***. Keys unlock doors; keys unlock gates. The house of God has the keys to unlock the realm of heaven to come on the earth! The authorities of hell cannot stop this. It is through the ***house of God*** that things in heaven will be revealed and released on the earth. Heaven, God’s Throne, will be established on the earth in and through His house! His will and authority are made visible through the church, the house of God!

It is time for the church, the congregation of Jesus, to grow to maturity, understanding the Scriptural reality of ***heaven***. Heaven is the invisible realm of God. It is the realm of the kingdom. It is the realm of God’s authority and Throne. Heaven is to be seen and manifested on the earth in God’s house, ***whose house we are!***