

5 Answers from Billy Graham on Heaven

Courtesy of the Billy Graham Evangelism Association
Provided to you by The Journey Church

Q: What happens to us in the first minute after we die? Do we enter heaven immediately, or do our souls go into some kind of a sleep?

A: The Bible doesn't answer all our [questions about heaven and life after death](#)—and the reason is because our minds are limited and heaven is far too glorious for us to understand. Some day, all of our questions will be answered—but not yet. As the Apostle Paul wrote, “Now I know in part; then I shall know fully” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

However, the Bible certainly does indicate that [when we die](#) we enter immediately into God's presence if we belong to Christ. From our earthly point of view, death looks somewhat like sleep—but not from God's point of view. Paul declared, “We are confident (of eternal life), I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). Elsewhere he wrote, “I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far” (Philippians 1:23).

Later, we will be given new bodies—bodies that will never age or be subject to death, because they will be like Christ's resurrection body. As the Bible says, “The dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

Is your hope in Christ? Death is a reality—but so is God's offer of salvation in Christ. Don't put off your decision for Him, because you could be called into eternity at any moment—and then it will be too late.

Q: Will we recognize our loved ones in heaven? Will they recognize us?

A: I have no doubt that in heaven your family will recognize you, and you will recognize them—even if you never knew each other on earth. When King David's infant son died, David declared, “I will go to him” (2 Samuel 12:23).

Perhaps you are thinking of Isaiah 65:17: “Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.” But this verse has nothing to do with whether or not we will be reunited with our loved ones in heaven if we

know Christ. Instead, it gives us a great promise: Someday all the sins and pains and failures of this world will be over, and we will be with Christ forever.

More than that, God has promised that in heaven nothing—even the memory of this world’s sin and pain—will cast a shadow over the joy He has in store for us there. Think about that for a moment. In this world, even the memory of what someone did to us years ago can still cause us pain. But that won’t be true in heaven, because our focus won’t be on the past but on Christ and what He means to us.

In the meantime, make it your goal to walk with Jesus every day. [Do you know Him? If not, make your commitment to Him today.](#) Then take comfort in His promise: “I am going there (to heaven) to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2).

Q: When we get to heaven, will we know what’s happening on earth? If so, how can we be happy with all the misery in the world?

A: The Bible doesn’t answer all our [questions about heaven](#)—and we don’t know exactly how much knowledge those in heaven have about what happens here. The Bible does say that “we are surrounded by ... a great cloud of witnesses” (i.e., those who have already entered heaven) but it isn’t clear if this means they are able to observe our lives (Hebrews 12:1).

But what we do know about heaven is that we will be with God—and because of that, heaven is a place of supreme joy. The Bible says, “You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand” (Psalm 16:11). And even if we do see something of what is happening on earth, we’ll see the whole picture then, and we’ll realize how it all fits in with God’s eternal plan. We’ll realize too that evil and death will be defeated, and Christ will be victorious. That will give us joy!

Heaven is the heritage of every believer—because [Christ conquered](#) death and Hell and Satan by [His resurrection](#) from the dead. Have you put your faith and trust in Him for your salvation? Make sure of your eternal destiny by turning to Christ in repentance and faith, and committing your life to Him.

Then [ask God](#) to use you to encourage others who are overwhelmed by life’s burdens. Yes, our world is full of misery—but God wants to use you to point others to Christ, who alone can give us hope and new life.

Q: Does an angel accompany us into heaven when we die?

A: Yes, the Bible indicates that when a believer dies, the angels will escort them safely into Heaven.

In one of His parables, for example, Jesus told about two very different men. One was a rich man, who lived only for himself and ignored both God and others. The other was a poor beggar who had nothing as far as this world's goods were concerned, but had faith in God and His promises. When the rich man died, he received what he deserved: a life of misery, separated from God forever. But when the poor man died, the angels accompanied him safely into God's presence. (You can read this parable in Luke 16:19-31.)

Although we may not see them or even be aware of their presence, God's angels are real, and when we know Christ, we know they are always with us to safeguard us from Satan's attacks. If they safeguard us now, can't they also be trusted to safeguard our journey to Heaven? Of course. The Bible says, "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14).

Never forget, however, that Christ alone is our Savior, and He alone is the one in whom we are to place our faith and trust. We should be grateful for God's angels, but we are not to worship them or make them (instead of Christ) the center of our faith. [Is Christ the center of your faith?](#) Make sure of your commitment to Him. Then put your confidence in God's promise: "For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11).

Q: Will there be animals in heaven?

A: Heaven will be a place of perfect happiness for us—and if we need animals around us to make our happiness complete, then you can be sure God will have them there.

Heaven will be glorious—far beyond anything we can fully imagine. It will be glorious first of all because it will be perfect. All the sufferings, conflicts and disappointments of this life will be over, and death will no longer exist. Sin will be banished, and Satan will never again have any influence over our lives. One of the Bible's greatest promises declares, "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

But heaven will be glorious most of all because we'll be in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ. Even the most glorious thing we can imagine on earth or in the heavens is but a pale reflection of the glory of God. Think of it: If you know Christ, some day you will be with Him forever!

But the Bible also promises that at the end of time God will bring about a new heaven and a new earth (see 2 Peter 3:13). We will share in that wondrous world, and in that day, many scholars believe, the Bible's prophecy will be fulfilled: "The wolf will live with the lamb. ... And the lion will eat straw like the ox" (Isaiah 11:6-7). Is Jesus Christ the source of your hope?

The Journey Church | Sundays @ 11:00am | AMC Empire 25 in Times Square, 234 W 42nd St