

# BIBLE STUDIES ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6 vs 9 to 13

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Part 3.

## HEAVEN

The emphasis made in our last Bible study was on the subject of the 'Fatherhood of God'. In this study we shall concentrate on the words. **'Our Father in heaven'**. When speaking about the Father we referred to a **Person**. Reference to 'Who is in heaven' is about a **Place**.

There are vast numbers of people who believe that heaven is a state or condition. Some say that you make your own heaven here on earth. It is conceived therefore by some, that heaven is not a place but a state. The Bible, which is the word of God, says otherwise, for it refers to a location known as heaven.

The first and foremost matter I think to be addressed concerns the references made to heaven in scripture, for a look at some scriptural references will highlight what is meant by the word 'Heaven' in the Bible. When Jesus said to the disciples "This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name". He was referring to an actual **place**. However there are verses which contain the word heaven, but they don't have the same meaning as the words of Jesus. We will look at some of these so that we don't get confused about the heavens that are referred to in scripture. The word heaven is used 327 times in the O.T. and 255 in the N.T. 582 times the word is used in the whole of the Bible sometimes it refers to a sphere above us, at other times to a place where God is. There are seven references to heaven in Genesis chapter 1 and they are verses 1, 8, 9, 15, 17 & 20. The word 'Heaven' in these verses is alluding to the visible arc in which the clouds move, as well as to where the planets and stars revolve. In Genesis 22 v 17 we have the promise of God to Abraham, in which we find the word heaven. This verse says: **"That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore"**.

There are times when the plural word 'Heavens' is used. 1 Kings 8 v 27: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee". The apostle Paul makes mention of three heavens in 2 Cor. 12 v 2 to 4: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter”. Paul refers to a definite experience he had when carried away into the third heaven. In making his reference to heaven Paul is not stating that it is a condition but a **place**. The three heavens referred to are possibly. **(a) The Atmospheric Heaven. (b) The Starry Heaven. (c) The Place Heaven.** Paul reveals that in the place where he was carried to, they see, hear, and speak. It has to be stated that there are times when heaven is referred to as the sphere above our heads. Psalm 19 vs 1 & 2: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge”. The starry expanse above us is what the Psalmist specifies as the heavens. Jesus however, is not designating this expanse above us as heaven, but He identifies heaven as the place where our Father is. Heaven is a definite and distinct **place** identified as such by Jesus. Before speaking further about heaven as a place, I want you to notice that in scripture the word ‘Heavenly’ is also used. The things that will be referred to next have their origin in the **place** called heaven and are all mentioned in scripture.

Mt:6:14: For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your **heavenly Father** will also forgive you:

Lk:2:13: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the **heavenly host** praising God, and saying,

Jn:3:12: If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of **heavenly things?**

Acts:26:19: Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the **heavenly vision:**

1Cor:15:49: And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the **image of the heavenly.**

Eph:1:3: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us

with all spiritual blessings in **heavenly places in Christ:**

2Tm:4:18: And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his **heavenly kingdom:** to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Heb:3:1: Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the **heavenly calling,** consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

Heb:6:4: For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the **heavenly gift,** and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

Heb:8:5: Who serve unto the example and shadow of **heavenly things,** as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that

thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.

Heb:9:23: It was therefore necessary that the patterns of **things in the heavens** should be purified with these; but the **heavenly things** themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Heb:11:16: But now they desire a **better country, that is, an heavenly**: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Heb:12:22: But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the **heavenly Jerusalem**, and to an innumerable company of angels,

There can be no doubt about the fact that there is a **place** called heaven, and that the evidence of scripture overwhelmingly supports it.

We will now consider certain words of Jesus, which are further evidence that the Father is located in a **place** called heaven.

**John 13 v1: says, "It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father". He then says in chapter 14 v 1 & 2: "Do not let your**

**hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you".**

When we pray to our Father we are not praying to someone who is located in an expanse of space called a sphere, we are actually referring to the **place** where our Father is. I know that when we think of the omnipresence of God, we are conscious of the fact that God is everywhere. I believe that when we think or speak of the presence of God, we have to identify what presence we are meaning, because there is the general presence of God, and the specific presence. God is everywhere, for he fills the whole universe with His presence, however God was in Christ specifically reconciling the world back to himself. God appeared to Moses and spoke with him on mount Sinai.

**Exodus 19 vs 11, 18, & 31 v 18. "Because on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.**

**The LORD descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up. When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the**

**two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets**

**of stone inscribed by the finger of God”.**

There are therefore occasions when God is specifically manifested, and His presence becomes in a sense localised to the extent that it can be identified as being the presence of God. We cannot however deny that the actual location of our Father is in heaven - **The Place**. To further emphasise that there is a specific **place** where our Father is, let us look at the experience of John on the Isle of Patmos. In the book of the Revelation in chapter 5 we read of John finding himself in heaven, he then records what he sees.

**In verse 6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the centre of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which**

**are the seven spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.**

John was not in an expanse of space when this happened, he was in an actual **place**. He graphically depicts for us what he sees in the throne room of heaven. He sees Jesus who is depicted both as the Lion and the Lamb undertaking a certain task. He sees Jesus take a scroll out of the right hand of God, and unfasten seven seals that were used to fasten and hold the scroll intact.

Heaven is not a figment of our imagination. Heaven is the **place** we are to refer to when speaking to our Father, because Jesus said He is in heaven. When we pray to our Father we can visualise that He is in a specific **place** called heaven.

Heaven was the **place** Jesus was before He was incarnated and became man. John in his general epistle writes some wonderful words concerning the pre-existence of Jesus, listen to these words from 1 John 1.v. 1 & 2:

**That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-- this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to**

**you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.**

After reading such verses as these, how can we deny that there is a heaven? What we now have to realise is that Jesus has gone back there. Confirmation of this is given in Hebrews where we read in Hebrews 6 v 20: “Where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf”. Can we doubt or even question the existence of such a **place**? The Biblical evidence is overwhelming proof that there is a **place** where our Father is which is called heaven.

The first phrases in the words of the Lord’s prayer are: “Our Father in heaven”. There are many verses in scripture that confirm what has been projected in this Bible study, and that there is a **place** that is called heaven, which is not the vast expanse of space above our heads, **but an actual place where our Father is.**