

# The Foundations of Prayer

## Review:

- Prayer is much more than a religious ritual or discipline. It is the essence of Christianity, like the air you breath. Prayer is simply the place where your heart connects with the heart of God and you converse with God like a friend talks to a friend.
- Prayer is first and foremost relational. It is an ongoing encounter with a person. When we pray we don't speak vain empty words into the air but we speak to a person. (Luke 24:30)
- Prayer is how we relate and connect with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever. We will forever have fellowship with Christ through the Holy Spirit and prayer.

*"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need. - Hebrews 4:14-16*

## Prayer is Locational:

*"Our **Father** in **heaven** hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." - Matthew 6:9-10*

- When we pray we are encountering a person and that person is in a place. Jesus, as we looked at previously, is not a mystical being but a person who has a geographic location. Therefore when we pray we are not only appearing before a person but we are standing in a place.
- Jesus said His Father was in heaven (Matt 6:9) and we know from an abundance of scriptures that Jesus Himself is now with His Father in heaven (Acts 1:11).

## Our Problem with Heaven:

- When looking at the study of heaven we face two main problems:
  1. Scriptural Ignorance - The truth is that most people never truly think about let alone study heaven. Because it is a place that we cannot visibly see with our eyes it remains out of our minds for the most part. Therefore most of us go our whole lives never looking into the place where we are going to spend eternity.

2. Cultural Philosophy - Just as big of a problem as our scriptural ignorance concerning heaven is our cultural conception and philosophy about heaven.

- A. We in the Modern Western era have a naturalistic view of life and the world. Simply put our culture has shaped our minds in such a way that at a subconscious level we struggle to believe in a real spiritual dimension let alone an actual place that we cannot see or touch.
- B. This is why most people in the west don't believe in angels and demons. Angels and demons remain a conceptual reality at best in our minds. But to admit their true existence our culture views as superstitious and mythical.

- We must acknowledge these wrong paradigms and look at the scriptures through an objective lens with the help of the Holy Spirit not placing our mindset and cultural conceptions onto the texts. We must instead allow the scriptures to speak for themselves regardless if it lines up with our current belief or paradigm of heaven and the world around us.

## Framework of Heaven:

- The scriptures have much to say about heaven. We will only briefly outline what heaven is and how that bears upon our calling to prayer by the model laid out by Jesus in Matthew 6:9-10.

### A created place not a mystical realm:

*"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." - Genesis 1:1*

*"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." - Colossians 1:16*

*"...for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." - Hebrews 11:10*

- Heaven is a created place. Only God Himself is eternal and self-existent. Heaven has not always existed just as God Himself has eternally existed. Heaven, like earth and humanity, has a starting point and a beginning.
  - 3. We see that in the above verses that heaven was created and so it has a beginning but it also has an end (Revelation 21:1)
  - 4. Although God is eternal and outside of time the place of heaven is very much within the confines of time although we may relate to it differently than we do with time here on earth. John in Revelation 8:1 tells us that when the 7th seal is opened there will be 30 minutes of silence in heaven.
- This may seem like a small point (that heaven is a created place) but in reality it has massive implications on our paradigm of heaven and, as we will discuss later, on our understanding of prayer.

5. Our western paradigm makes heaven an intangible realm that cannot be grasped or understood. In our minds we in the west view heaven as this mystical place that has no dimensions, structure, order, or reference point. Because of this belief we simply ignore heaven and put it off as something that cannot be understood.
6. Scripture on the contrary reveals heaven as a real created place not a realm. According to biblical truth there is only one realm, the created realm. Within that realm there are visible things and invisible things. However all things created, whether visible or invisible, are real and substantial.
7. Heaven is therefore to be seen as having substance, boundaries, objects, and structure.

*"For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; **who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things**, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, 'See that you make all things **according to the pattern** shown you on the mountain.'" - Hebrews 8:4-5*

*"Therefore it was necessary that **the copies of the things in the heavens** should be purified with these, but the **heavenly things themselves** with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are the copies of the true, **but into heaven itself**, now to appear in the presence of God for us...." - Hebrews 9:23-24*

*"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." - John 14:2*

*"Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly." - Numbers 16:31-33*

*"When He ascended on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.' (Now this, "He ascended" what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far about all the heavens, that He might fill all things." - Ephesians 4:8-9*

## A New and Living Way:

*"Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, "Where I am going, you cannot come," so now I say to you.....Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "**Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.**".....Let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know." Thomas said to Him, "Lord we do not know where you are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said*

to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." - John 13:33,36, and John 14:1-6

- Jesus tell His disciples that He is leaving and where He is going they cannot not follow right now **"but you shall follow Me afterward."**
- His disciples don't understand what He is saying and continue to question Him concerning where He is going. Upon further questioning Jesus says that He is going to His Father's house (heaven) to prepare a place for them.
  8. Remember that until Christ came, died, and rose from the dead no human had access to the heavenly temple where the Father dwells. Only the High Priest once a year came into the presence of God.
  9. What Jesus is revealing here is something that has never before been offered to humanity, universal access into the heavenly temple and the presence of God.
- This is the "new and living way" that the writer of Hebrews is alluding to in Hebrews 10:19-22:

*"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...."*

*"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." - Hebrews 4:16*

## What this means for us:

- When you pray you are actually walking in what Jesus spoke in John 13-14. Although this promise will ultimately be walked out when we die and walk into heaven forever, we are instructed by the writer of Hebrews that we can access the throne of God right now by faith. Therefore when you pray you are literally going through that new and living way into heaven to take your stand before God.
  10. When we think about this reality, that when you pray you are going into the heavenly temple before God, prayer takes on a whole new reality and substance.
  11. No longer does it pass through our mind as something mystical but it is solidified as something real and true. This should also open a new dimension of worship in our hearts concerning Jesus and what He did for us on the cross.

*"The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven." - Psalms 11:4*

*"The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all." - Psalms 103:19*

*"I cried to the Lord with my voice, and He heard me from His holy hill." - Psalms 3:4.*