

SKIP HEITZIG | JON COURSON | SAMUEL RUTHERFORD | LENYA HEITZIG

# Connection

the magazine

# Peeking into Heaven

*Peeking into the  
Portals of Heaven p.6*  
*A Match Made in Heaven p.12*  
*A Place for You p.16*

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## DEAR FRIEND

Since a new year is traditionally a time for new beginnings, we thought it would be a good time to get back to some basics. So in this issue of *Connection—the magazine*, we're taking a look at a very central subject for believers: heaven. We'll examine some of what the Bible has to say about it, address some common questions, and look at our place in the eternal kingdom.

Our guest article is from pastor and author Jon Courson, who has graciously allowed us to reprint part of a message given at the memorial for his father in 1992. "A Place For You" takes a close look at Jesus' promise of our eternal home. Lenya unravels Psalm 45 in "A Match Made in Heaven." She examines this song of love to tell us about the glory of our future—as the bride of the Messiah. Our From the Blog section addresses an interesting reader question: Will there be animals in heaven? It's one that many of us have probably asked from time to time. Uncover tackles an even greater issue that believers struggle with: How can heaven be perfect if all of our loved ones aren't there? Our Dead Pastors' Society features Samuel Rutherford, a 17th century Scottish theologian and author, writing on the joys of heaven. And in "Peeking into the Portals of Heaven," I present a few of the highlights of what God's kingdom will be like. For the new year, we've instituted a new Daily Devo section. This time around, we're going to read through the entire Bible, all 66 books, in chronological order. This will allow us to see how biblical history flows from beginning to end, and how God's plan of salvation was revealed step-by-step. I hope this different Daily Devo blesses you and strengthens your walk with Christ.

Heaven is the ultimate goal of all followers of Jesus Christ—it will be our eternal home. Come with us as we survey our "celestial real estate"!

In His Strong Love,

  
SKIP  
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PORTALS

HEAVEN

**A**n airline magazine carried an advertisement for a hotel in Seattle to capture the attention of busy executives. It said, "Great views. Great location. Great rates." I thought, *Let's apply that to our eternal home—heaven.* It has a great location: You can't beat the new heaven and new earth. There's a great view: the throne of God, the tree of life, and the river that flows from the throne of God is pure as crystal. And there are great rates: It's free to those who follow Jesus Christ, the only Son of our heavenly Father.

## Heaven Is Real

In the book of Revelation, John got a glimpse into the portals of heaven. He said, "I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven" (Revelation 4:1). John was taken to heaven where he saw some wild, but very real, things. This tells us that heaven is a real place. It's not a figment of someone's imagination...it's not a fantasyland. The writer of Hebrews said heaven is "the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Heaven is real; it's

Do you believe that you've been made clean? Or

stable; it's permanent; it has furniture. John didn't notice angels playing harps on clouds, or Peter standing at a gate with a checklist, or streets of gold—the first thing he noticed was a throne: "Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne" (Revelation 4:2).

## Heaven's Inhabitants

Heaven is absolutely huge. Not only will you be there, but there will be millions of other believers who have followed Christ throughout history. There will be "twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes" (Revelation 4:4) and "four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back" (Revelation 4:6). In the Old Testament, there were 24 courses of the temple in Jerusalem. Those 24 courses of priests represented the nation before God. I think the 24 elders are the representatives of the church before God. And there will be "many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11). Heaven will be a habitation for many, many believers.

## Heaven's Accommodations

Heaven may be a place with many cities in it. Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many mansions [abiding places]" (John 14:2). In Revelation 21:2, John saw "the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." New Je-

Jerusalem is a tangible, measurable, corporate city that descends from heaven toward the earth. It is measured as a cube. Its dimensions are “twelve thousand furlongs” (Revelation 21:16), which is 1500 miles wide, 1500 miles long, 1500 miles high. That makes the base of this city 2,250,000 square miles. The city will rise 1500 miles or 780,000 stories. New Jerusalem is large enough to comfortably accommodate more than all the people who have ever lived in history on planet earth.

The Bible often speaks of heaven as be-

earth (see Genesis 9:14-15). Now a rainbow is seen before the storm of judgment, as a reminder that God keeps His promises. Even after the judgment, you can rest assured that the rainbow of promise will be there for eternity to come. You’ve received the promises of God. You ought to see every experience of your life with a rainbow around it.

A Chinese Christian was named Lo. He got awfully excited when he read Jesus’ promise in Matthew 28:20: “Lo, I am with you always” (emphasis added). He took it personally:

are you still trying to earn your own way to God?

ing “up.” A little girl was looking at the stars up in the mountains and said, “Oh daddy, if heaven looks this good from the wrong side, imagine what it must look like on the right side!” It will be truly awesome.

## Heaven Sparkles

The throne is the main attraction because God sits on it. What makes heaven *heaven* is not that there are angels or streets of gold. It’s not that we are reunited with loved ones—though we will be. What really makes heaven *heaven* is that the God you love and serve will be there. You’ll see Him in person. It’s not what—it’s Whom that makes heaven so attractive.

John looked at God on the throne and described Him in terms of brilliant gemstones: “He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald” (Revelation 4:3).

Jasper is a clear, brilliant, diamond-like stone. But any diamond you own would pale in comparison to His dazzling beauty.

Not only is He seen as brilliant jasper, but as a sardius stone. This is like a ruby, with a reddish hue. Perhaps this is to remind the inhabitants of heaven of the blood that was shed on the cross—the crimson stain offered by the Savior to purchase your salvation.

Around the throne there is a rainbow. We first saw the rainbow with Noah, when God judged the earth. God placed a rainbow in the sky to remind Noah of His covenant never again to send a flood to destroy the

“He’s writing about me!” In the same way, we ought to look at the promises of Jesus with our name on it. Fill in the blank:

“And \_\_\_\_\_, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20).

## Coming Attractions

John saw and heard dramatic outpourings coming from the heavenly throne: “From the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices” (Revelation 4:5). The first time we read about lightning, thundering, and voices was on Mount Sinai in the book of Exodus. God’s throne has been a throne of grace for many years. But there will come a time when God prepares His throne for judgment, as if to say, *I love the earth. I’ve given My Son. I’ve sent Christian witnesses throughout the earth, but now I’m fed up.* And you know what? Judgment is a divine necessity. Think of all the wars, famines, murders, and rapes that have happened in your lifetime. Multiply that by the years and years God has endured sin. He’s been patient. But God will finally judge. The storms emanating from the throne in heaven are symbolic of His judgment.

## Model of Heaven

Before the throne, John sees “seven lamps of fire” (Revelation 4:5) and “a sea of glass, like crystal” (Revelation 4:6). The writer of Hebrews says that the tabernacle was a model of heaven—it’s an indication of the

Since heaven will  
be filled with worship,  
why not practice now?

setup of heaven. The tabernacle contained a seven-branched candlestick. In heaven, we see seven lamps of fire. In the tabernacle, there was a laver with water where the priest dipped his hands and ceremonially washed before the sacrifice. Here we view a huge sea of crystal glass that's solid—because there's no longer need for cleansing. Jesus died on the cross and paid the price for our cleansing. We stand on the finished work of Jesus Christ. The question is: Do you believe that you've been made clean? Or are you still trying to earn your own way to God?

A man came to an evangelist named Alexander Wooten and said, "I need to get salvation." Wooten said, "It's too late." The man asked, "What do you mean it's too late? I need to get salvation." Wooten said, "It's too late, it's already been done." You can't get salvation on your own, it's a finished work. You must trust in the merits of Christ.

## Worship in Heaven

Finally, we see that there's worship unto the throne of God. The song "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created" (Revelation 4:11)

is sung as the elders cast down their crowns in heaven. Notice that there is a lot of worship in heaven. The throne room of God is filled with praise and worship. And not one of those songs is solo—it's all corporate. Everyone sings the anthems of eternity. Since heaven will be filled with worship, why not practice now?

A tombstone in a cemetery in England has a clever little poem engraved on it: "Pause stranger as you pass me by. As you are now, so once was I. As I am now, so you will be. So prepare for death and follow me." Someone saw that tombstone and wrote these words in chalk: "To follow you, I'm not content, until I know which way you went."

Consider the path you are following. And consider that the door to heaven is open: He's Jesus. He will lead you to a place of a great location, great views, and great rates.



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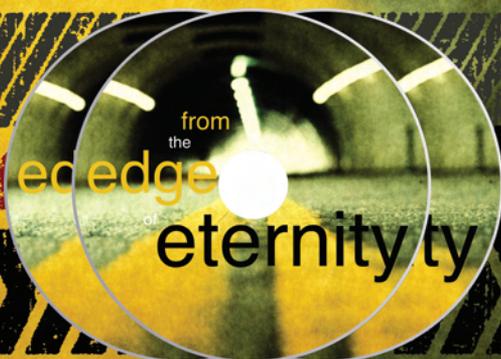
### SKIP HEITZIG

is the author of the book *You Can Understand the Book of Revelation* and is the senior pastor at Calvary of Albuquerque. You can follow him on Twitter @skipheitzig

from  
the  
edge  
of  
eternity

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What happens when a believer dies? What will heaven be like? What about infants and children who die? When do our bodies get resurrected? What will they be like? These questions and more occupy our thoughts from time to time.



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HEAVEN



W

e heard about it; we read about it; and some of us watched it on TV: the wedding of socialite Kim Kardashian to NBA player Kris Humphries. The stats were impressive: wedding costs—\$10 million; diamond size—20.5 carats; bride's and bridesmaids' dresses—upward of \$150 thousand; length of the marriage before filing for divorce—72 days.

It didn't come as a total shock. Rumblings of trouble began from the lawyers' offices well before the wedding. Pre-nup issues ranged from how the profits from the wedding would be divided, to whether the bride could keep the ring in the event of divorce, etc.

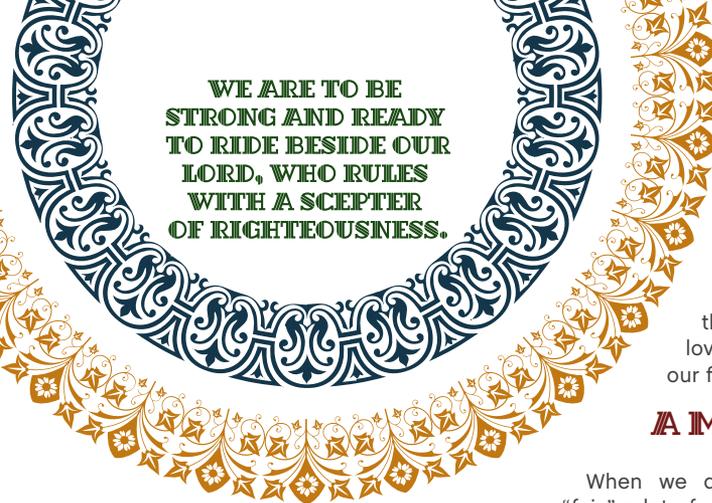
In the aftermath of this brief marriage, Kim admitted it wasn't the fairy-tale wedding she tried desperately to create. The most extravagant celebration can't compensate for the absence of committed hearts. Clearly, this was not a match made in heaven.

.....

**THERE IS ROOM FOR NO  
OTHER LOVE OR GOD IN  
THIS RELATIONSHIP.**

.....

Lenya  Heitzig



**WE ARE TO BE  
STRONG AND READY  
TO RIDE BESIDE OUR  
LORD, WHO RULES  
WITH A SCEPTER  
OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

He expresses His joy for us with gracious words of devotion and speaks of the fidelity and exclusivity of our relationship. In Isaiah 45:6 we read, "There is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other." There is room for no other love or God in this relationship. He jealously loves us and we are to love only our fair Lord.

## **A MIGHTY GROOM**

When we describe someone as being "fair," a lot of us may think of the evil queen in Snow White standing before her mirror asking, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" Fair is an old-fashioned word that refers both to the outward beauty and inner character of a person.

*You are fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured upon Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever. Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, with Your glory and Your majesty. And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness...Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; the peoples fall under You (Psalm 45:2-5).*

Our heavenly Husband is a mighty Man of valor who consistently does good. He has a sword upon His thigh. With glory and majesty, He rides prosperously, armed with sharp arrows. He is a Man of war. Both the King's subjects and enemies fall at His feet. Sounds a lot like a knight in shining armor to me. But that doesn't mean we are to be wimps. As the bride of Christ, I believe we're meant to be more like Joan of Arc than Snow White. Revelation 19:14 says, "And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses." We are to be strong and ready to ride beside our Lord, who rules with a scepter of righteousness (see Psalm 45:6).

## **THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE THRONE**

The battle here on earth has been fought and won, and we will abide with Him forever.

## **A SONG OF LOVE**

However, in Psalm 45, we read a love song depicting an eager groom and his devoted bride in anticipation of their wedding day and marriage. This was not just any bride and groom. Although we don't know for certain, many believe this psalm was written about King Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter. But most importantly, this is a Messianic psalm that points to the reality of Jesus and the impending wedding and marriage of Christ and His church.

As we read, we learn this wedding won't be a shabby affair. The psalmist speaks of great anticipation and joyful preparation, a magnificent, anointed groom who is a righteous king, a beautiful bride, an everlasting dwelling place, and eternal adoration.

## **A LANGUAGE OF LOVE**

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to describe someone you love? The words just roll off your tongue. You could go on and on. Often people in love have an intimate language of their own and call each other by pet names that signal private moments and romantic meaning. That is also true in this song of love:

*My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer (Psalm 45:1).*

God's language of love is filled with grace.

No less than an ivory palace awaits.

*Your throne, O God, is forever and ever*  
(Psalm 45:6).

For so many people, home is an elusive location rather than a steady place of rest, security, and peace. Imagine the profound comfort and splendor of abiding with the Lord as His bride. In Hebrews 1:8-9, the writer says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” Luke’s gospel adds to our understanding of our secure, future home: “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

## THE GROOM AND HIS BRIDE

On the day of their union, the Groom is ready. He has been anointed with the oils of joy and gladness. He is righteous, strong, and has fought for His bride.

*You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. All Your garments are scented with myrrh and aloe and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad* (Psalm 45:7-8).

The bride, too, is at her lovely best. Revelation 19:7-8 describes her well: “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” Her wedding dress is made of “the righteous acts of the saints”! Interesting to consider that our good acts will add to the beauty and loveliness of our wedding dress. Pearls, lace, diamonds, and a dress guaranteed not to be found on the rack of any mundane bridal shop.

## A NEW LIFE

In wedding ceremonies today, the couple is counseled to leave their parents’ home and form a new alliance by cleaving to each

other. Divided loyalties are certain to divide the newly married couple.

*Listen, O daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your own people also, and your father’s house; so the King will greatly desire your beauty; because He is your Lord, worship Him* (Psalm 45:10-11).

No person, no activity, absolutely nothing should be worthy competition for the Son of God in your life. Not your mother or father, not your sister or your best friend. Matthew 10:37 says, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” God can tell if your ultimate devotion is to Him, just as your earthly spouse can tell if your loyalty is exclusively for him. Our Lord rightly deserves all that we are and all that we have.

## AND THEY LIVED...

After the wedding, in this psalm depicting our future life with our heavenly Husband, we see wealthy people coming to visit and paying their respects with gifts. The bride, now the “royal daughter,” is in her new palatial home, preparing to be brought to the King.

*And the daughter of Tyre will come with a gift; the rich among the people will seek your favor. The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; her clothing is woven with gold. She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors. The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You. With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought; they shall enter the King’s palace”* (Psalm 45:12-15).

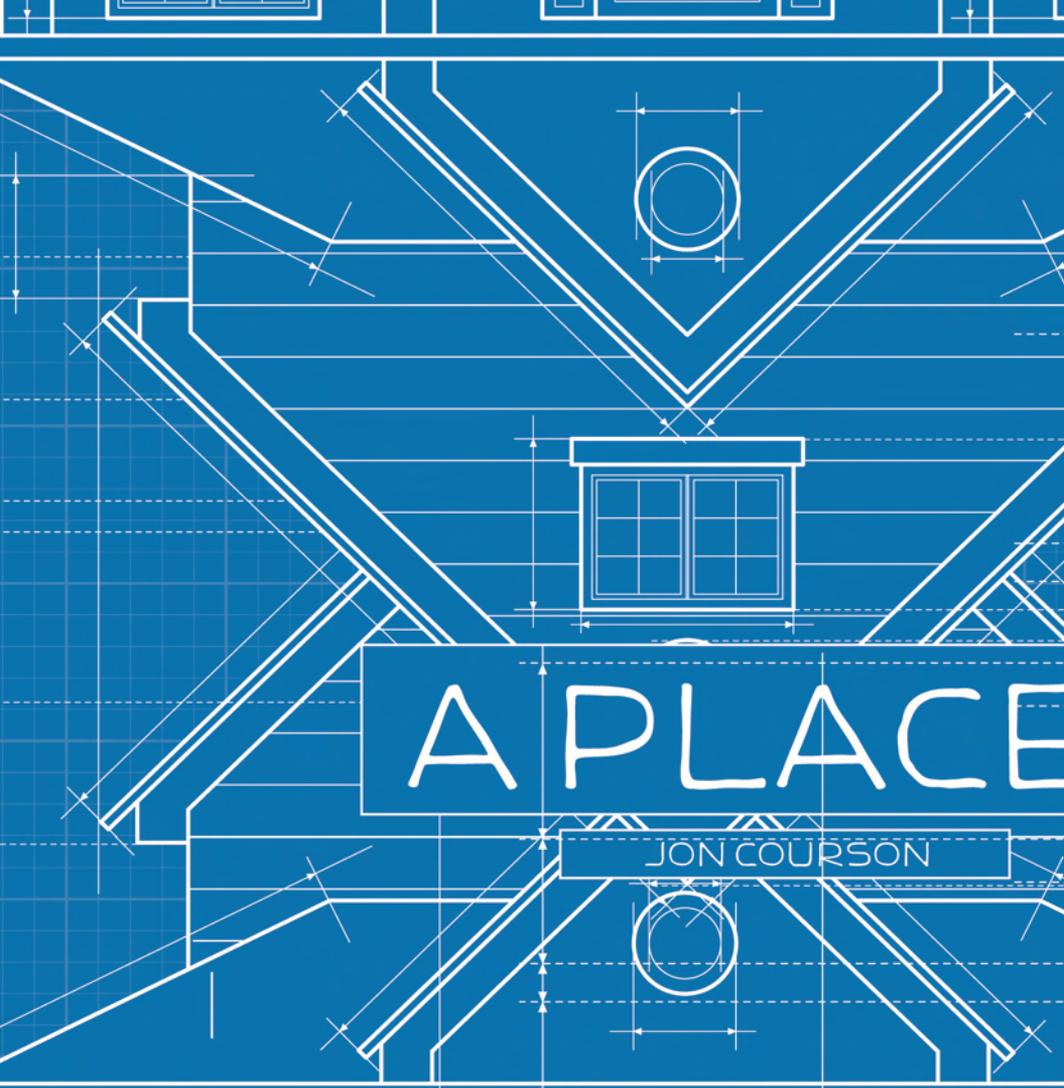
A bridal procession of pure joy and celebration! Can you imagine the choir of jubilant angels, the anticipation of the bride, and the culmination of God’s plan coming together at this unparalleled moment? The King and His bride...together at last! Living in the praise and respect due to the King of kings and Lord of lords—happily ever after.



**LENYA HEITZIG**

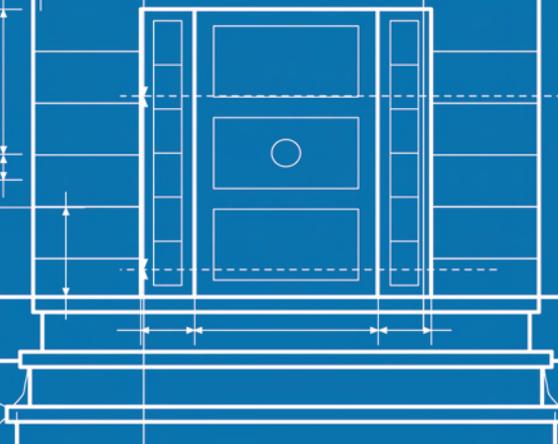
is an award-winning author and sought-after speaker at conferences and retreats worldwide.

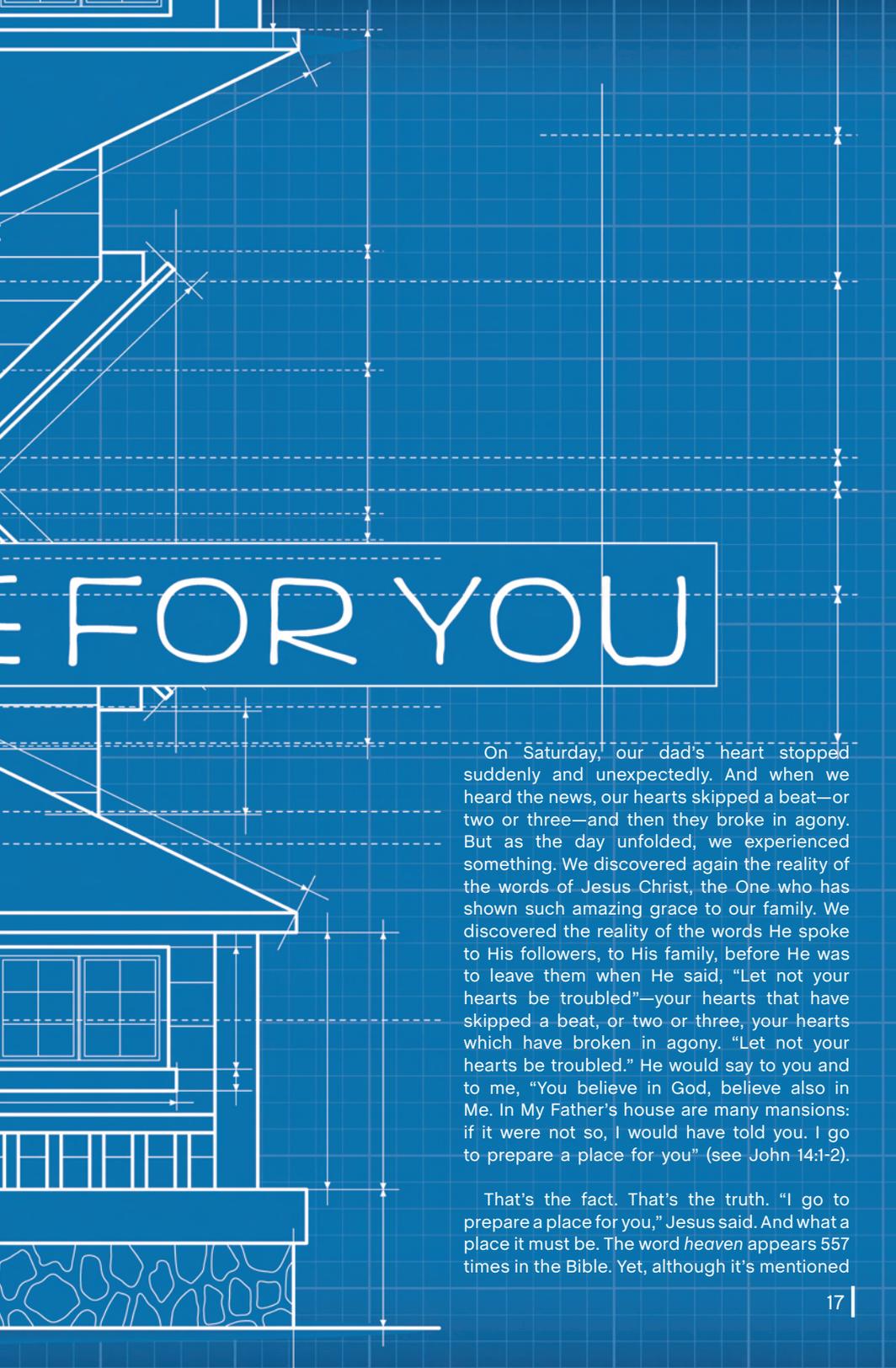
Visit [Lenya's Corner at sheabq.org](http://Lenya's Corner at sheabq.org) to read encouraging articles from Lenya.

The background is a white architectural blueprint on a blue grid. It depicts the upper portion of a house, including a gabled roof with rafters, a central dormer window with a six-pane grid, and a circular vent or window in the peak of the roof. Dimension lines and crosshairs are scattered throughout the drawing.

# A PLACE

JON COURSON

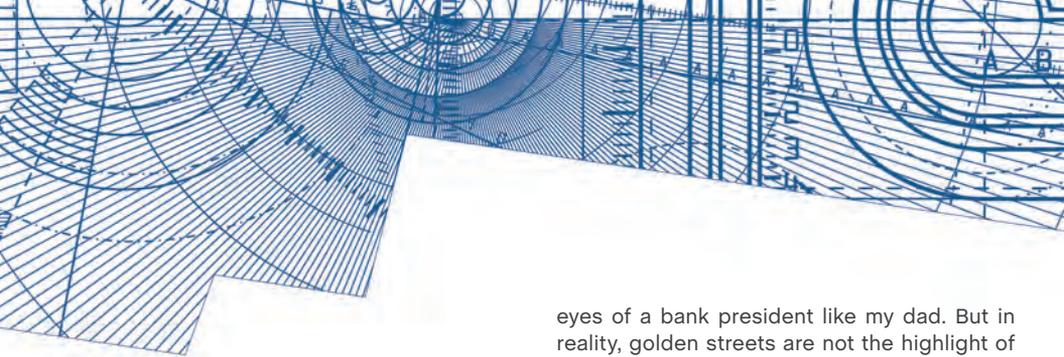




# E FOR YOU

On Saturday, our dad's heart stopped suddenly and unexpectedly. And when we heard the news, our hearts skipped a beat—or two or three—and then they broke in agony. But as the day unfolded, we experienced something. We discovered again the reality of the words of Jesus Christ, the One who has shown such amazing grace to our family. We discovered the reality of the words He spoke to His followers, to His family, before He was to leave them when He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled"—your hearts that have skipped a beat, or two or three, your hearts which have broken in agony. "Let not your hearts be troubled." He would say to you and to me, "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" (see John 14:1-2).

That's the fact. That's the truth. "I go to prepare a place for you," Jesus said. And what a place it must be. The word *heaven* appears 557 times in the Bible. Yet, although it's mentioned



frequently, the descriptions are rather sketchy. Why isn't heaven described more clearly?

The Bible says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). It's indescribable, this place called heaven. After all, how could you describe to a man born blind the brilliant colors of a sunset? How could you describe to a man born deaf what Beethoven's Ninth Symphony sounds like? It can't be done.

So too, God cannot describe heaven to us very vividly because it's beyond our wildest imaginations. It's a place beyond description. And that's our hope today. We come missing our dad deeply, but celebrating the fact that he is in heaven, in a place beyond description.

I look around and see the creative genius of God—at the mountains and at the coast. All over, we see His spectacular creative abilities. But He created all the wonders that we see in six days. Over 2000 years ago, Jesus said, "I am going to prepare a place for you." Therefore, if He made all we can see in six days, imagine what He could do in 2000 years' time! It must be absolutely mind-boggling!

A couple of days ago, Tammy took four-year-old Benjamin and his four-year-old cousin, David, to the dump in Jacksonville. "Uh-oh," Benny said as he got out of the car. "Somebody littered." "It wasn't me, Aunt Tammy, honest!" little David was quick to respond.

Truly, the things we'll see will make the finest things on earth look like the Jacksonville dump in comparison. In fact, the Bible says the streets there are paved with gold (Revelation 21:21). People think gold-paved streets must be wonderful—especially in the

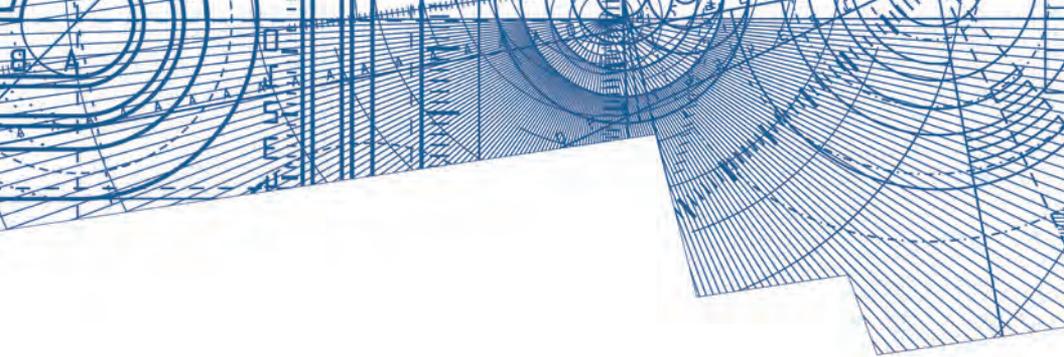
eyes of a bank president like my dad. But in reality, golden streets are not the highlight of heaven. Not at all. We pave our streets with asphalt. We drive over it. We walk across it. We take no notice of it. So what the LORD is saying to us by telling us the streets in heaven are paved with gold is simply that the most valuable commodity on earth—that upon which our economy is built, that for which wars have been fought, that for which men have died—is like asphalt in heaven. We won't even notice it because of the wonderful things we'll see and experience.

But please understand, our Lord said, "Don't let your hearts be troubled," not because of the beauty of heaven in totality, but because, "I go to prepare a place for you personally, for you specifically." Therefore, if the Lord has prepared a place for my dad specifically, I know that place must be landscaped beautifully...

Every Saturday, as I was growing up in Campbell, California, out would come the old push mower. Dad always liked to mow the lawn himself because he could do it just right, making the lines on the freshly cut grass perfectly parallel. But almost without fail, somewhere between the side yard and the apricot trees in the front, he would stop and say to my brother Jimmy and me, "Let's play some Horse." We'd grab a basketball and go to the driveway, where we'd shoot baskets and play a game of Horse—or two or three. He would always win.

He'd always have time for us before finishing the yard and creating a thing of beauty. That's why I know that when we see Dad's mansion in heaven, it will be landscaped beautifully. And I bet he will even get to mow the lawn, where he'll do it just right.

It's not only my earthly father who loves gardening, but my heavenly Father does as well. When He created the first man, it was in a



# LIVE FOR HEAVEN NOW AND YOU'LL ENJOY THIS WORLD IMMENSELY. YOU'LL BE FREE IN RELATIONSHIPS. YOU'LL BE USED IN MINISTRY. YOU'LL FIND PEACE.

---

garden that He placed him. And we are told in the book of Genesis that Adam walked with God in the garden in the cool of the day. The last Adam, as the Scriptures call Jesus, was also One who spent time in gardens. He talked to the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Luke tells us He went frequently.

It was in a garden that the first Adam walked with the Father, and it was in a garden that the last Adam talked to the Father. I find this interesting because my mom shared with me a couple of days ago that my dad was rising before the dawn broke to walk out to the orchard to garden before leaving for the bank. "It's where I can talk to God as I'm tending the trees or watering the lawn," he had told her. So, like the first Adam, my dad walked with his Father in the garden. In one of the few descriptions of heaven we are given in the Bible, we read of a crystal river, of a garden-like setting, of trees whose leaves are used for healing. And I believe my dad is there right now.

It's not only my dad who can walk with God in the garden, who can talk to God in the garden, so can you and so can we, for "whosoever will" can come freely.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him that heareth say, "Come!" And let him

that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17 KJV).

Live for heaven now and you'll enjoy this world immensely. You'll be free in relationships. You'll be used in ministry. You'll find peace.

Thank You, Lord, that because of what You did on Calvary, our sins will not keep us from living forever with You in a place that's right. We have seen the stupidity and futility of this world, the emptiness, the short pleasures of sin that lead to destruction. But You've saved us from that and given us the promise of eternal life with You in a place where every tear shall be wiped away, every question answered, every wrong righted. How we look forward to that time, Lord. How we look forward to being with You forever. How we look forward to heaven.

Excerpt taken from *A Place for You: Reflections on Heaven*  
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## JON COURSON

Jon Courson has amassed more than 1500 expositional and topical Bible studies during his ministry.



TRAVEL WITH US AS PASTOR SKIP TAKES US THROUGH

# believe:879

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## THE VAULT

*“No, it is not the jasper walls and the pearly gates that are going to make heaven attractive. It is the being with God.”*

**DWIGHT L. MOODY**

*“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”*

**C.S. LEWIS**

*“Be thou comforted, little dog, thou too in the resurrection shall have a little golden tail.”*

**MARTIN LUTHER**

*“If I ever reach heaven I expect to find three wonders there: first, to meet some I had not thought to see there; second, to miss some I had expected to see there and third, the greatest wonder of all, to find myself there.”*

**JOHN NEWTON**

*“He whose head is in heaven need not fear to put his feet into the grave.”*

**MATTHEW HENRY**

*“If there were no hell, the loss of heaven would be hell.”*

**C.H. SPURGEON**

featuring Samuel Rutherford

# Ye Shall Never Weep Again



“And God shall wipe away all tears.” When friends meet, they give the stranger his welcome-home. Here is the pilgrim’s welcome that our friend Christ gives us. It was spoken from heaven, and therefore it is true doctrine. Then we see that the sufferings and tears of the saints shall be wiped away and removed, but not fully, until the world to come; for then is Christ’s welcome-home to poor sinners. They come all to Him with wet faces, and bleared with tears for sin and the manifold troubles of this life; and Christ meets them in the door, with a fair soft napkin in His hand, and puts up His hand to their faces, and says, “Hold your tongue, My dear bairns; ye shall never weep again.”

And indeed, in my judgment, it is a speech borrowed from a mother that has a bairn with a broken face, all bloody and all bleared with tears, and it comes to her (and woe’s her heart to see him so), and she sits down and wipes the tears from his eyes, and lays her hand softly on the wound, and his head in her breast, and wipes away the blood, and lays her two arms about him, and there is no end of fair words.

So when Christ and we shall meet in heaven, He will hush us, and wipe away all tears, and lay our head in His bosom...If ever there was a happy meeting betwixt two, it must be betwixt the Bridegroom and the bride in the marriage-day. And what a meeting there is of joy betwixt such a Bridegroom and bride cannot be conceived. For Christ that day will have on all His best clothes. And such a bride

*If ever there was a happy meeting betwixt two, it must be betwixt the Bridegroom and the bride in the marriage-day.*

as the Lamb’s wife! When we shall be clothed, and not a wrong pin on us; a fair bride in silk and purple of Christ’s own dressing. And what a welcome she will get! To get a drink at our first meeting and incoming to heaven, “of the well of the water of life.” Oh, strong comforting water!

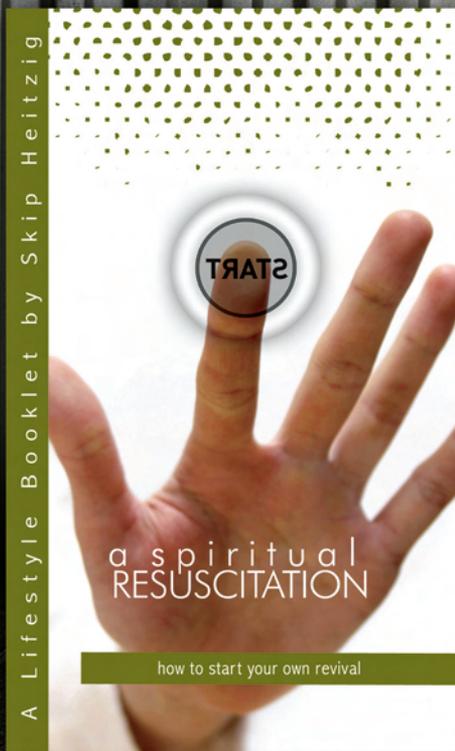
And Christ our Lord shall present His bride to His Father; and our Father-in-law, the Father of our Husband, shall take us by the hand and lead us to the inner part of the house to the dining hall, and set us down at a table to feast our fill upon “the tree of life”—to feast upon the Trinity forevermore! Now, mock and scorn the way to heaven as ye please; ye never heard of true happiness till now. Here is a “banquet of joy” for evermore.

Excerpt from *An Inspirational Treasury of Samuel Rutherford*



**SAMUEL RUTHERFORD** (1600-1661)  
Samuel Rutherford was a Scottish Presbyterian theologian and author, and one of the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly.

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—*Maria* (California)

# UNCOVER

by Skip Heitzig



**HOW CAN HEAVEN  
BE PERFECT IF ALL OF  
OUR LOVED ONES  
AREN'T THERE?**



Revelation 21 tells us this about heaven: “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful” (vv. 4-5).

You see that? No sorrow! No matter what our sorrows here on earth, we won’t experience them in heaven. How does this work? I don’t know, but I know He promises no more sorrow, and His words are faithful and true. The God who made heaven, the God who sent His only Son to be our Savior, has given us this promise.

I want to be sensitive here. The pain of losing an unsaved loved one is profound and intense. I know this from personal experience.

When I was a young Christian, I witnessed for several years to my own brother. I remember one night in particular when I went to his home, even though it was late, and we talked for some time about eternal life and about the consequences of life without Jesus. I tried to impress upon him the risk of not receiving Christ, and I told him that we are not

overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (vv. 4-5 NIV). So heaven will be a "city of believers."

That's why it's imperative that we share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone, beginning with the unsaved members of our families. There won't be any sharing of the gospel in heaven...because everybody there will know it and will have



## DO I STILL THINK HEAVEN WILL BE PERFECT—EVEN THOUGH MY BROTHER WON'T BE THERE?



guaranteed any minute of life. He said that that was a chance he'd have to take. "I don't want to do it right now," he told me. Two weeks later he was killed in a motorcycle accident. His opportunity had passed.

Even though my heart was broken—and it's a pain that I still feel today—I know that the choice was his. But do I still think heaven will be perfect—even though my brother won't be there? Yes!

Revelation 21:7 tells us that "he who overcomes shall inherit all things." And who is that? 1 John 5 says, "For everyone born of God

accepted it! While there is time, we must work for Him (see John 9:4). When Jesus comes to take us to heaven, there will be no more work, no more sorrow...no more time itself.

Again, I don't know *how* there will be no more sorrow or crying or pain in heaven, when certain loved ones may be absent. But I know that God has promised it—and I trust Him because He is faithful and true!



## FAST FACTS

76%

OF AMERICANS BELIEVE  
THAT HEAVEN EXISTS

64%

BELIEVE THEY WILL GO  
TO HEAVEN UPON THEIR DEATH

43%

BELIEVE THEY WILL GO TO  
HEAVEN BECAUSE THEY HAVE "CONFESSED  
THEIR SINS AND ACCEPTED  
JESUS CHRIST AS THEIR SAVIOR"

24%

ADMIT THAT THEY HAVE "NO IDEA"  
WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER THEY DIE

15%

FEEL THEY WILL GET TO HEAVEN  
BECAUSE "THEY HAVE TRIED TO OBEY  
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS"

15%

BELIEVE THEY WILL GET  
TO HEAVEN BECAUSE "THEY ARE  
BASICALLY A GOOD PERSON"

14%

CLAIM THAT HEAVEN  
IS JUST "SYMBOLIC"

6%

BELIEVE THEY WILL ENTER  
HEAVEN BECAUSE "GOD LOVES ALL PEOPLE  
AND WILL NOT LET THEM PERISH"

THE MORE EDUCATION A PERSON HAS OR THE MORE INCOME THEY EARN,  
THE LESS LIKELY THEY ARE TO BELIEVE THAT HEAVEN EXISTS



*Unbelievers don't worry about this stuff. They don't battle with the temptation or the demonic spirits from their background.*



# O&

# A

*with Skip Heitzig*

## **WHEN A CHRISTIAN DIES, WILL HE GO STRAIGHT TO HEAVEN, OR DOES HE HAVE TO WAIT?**

As soon as a believer dies, that believer is immediately conveyed to the presence of the Lord. The apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians, “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). That’s reinforced by what Paul wrote to the Philippians: “Having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better” (Philippians 1:23). He anticipated that at the moment of his death, he would instantly be with Christ. There’s no limbo. There’s no purgatory. There’s no soul sleep. There’s no holding place before heaven. If we are believers in Christ, we go directly to heaven at that moment.

## **WHAT DOES IT MEAN IN THE BIBLE WHERE IT SAYS THAT SOME OF THE SAINTS WILL AWAKE WHEN JESUS COMES BACK?**

When Jesus comes back for the church at the rapture, 1 Thessalonians talks about how “the dead in Christ will rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:16). “The dead in Christ” is a euphemism for saints, or those in Christ. Saints can be dead or alive. They’re not just people who have died and have halos and are canonized by a particular church. The word simply speaks of all believers. When Jesus comes back toward the earth from the heaven at the rapture of the church, we will be snatched up instantly from this earth and taken somewhere into the outer atmosphere. At that moment those who are alive will be translated, or have their bodies changed, in the twinkling of an eye. Those believers who have died, or the saints, will be given their resurrected bodies prior to that, and then we’ll be translated. So it’s an event called the rapture of the church: Every believer from that point all the way back will be given resurrected bodies.

## **THERE ARE DAYS THAT I QUESTION MY SALVATION—IF I’M SAVED OR NOT. HOW CAN I OVERCOME THIS?**

Paul said we walk by faith and not by sight (see 2 Corinthians 5:7). Under the category of sight, I’m going to put feeling. We feel a certain way. You’ve given your life to Christ. You trust Him by faith to save you. Yet feelings come, and the feelings are either founded on fact or on fallacy. It’s important to move from feelings to what we know. Feelings are what we feel about a situation or how we interpret things that have happened to us. But when our feelings are in conflict with Scripture, we need to go back to—not how we feel—but what we know. We walk by faith and not by sight. I like to look at it like a train. Think of the engine as faith and the caboose, the end car, as feeling. We get it backward if we’re trying to run the train with the caboose pulling the engine. If we’re thinking we’re saved by feeling, and then we’re not saved because we don’t feel saved, then we’ve just negated the whole principle of walking by faith and not by sight. Now the engine of faith and what we know to be true based upon the truth and inerrant Scripture needs to run the train of our lives. At the same time, the fact that we are battling as a Christian is a good sign. It’s a sign that the old nature is in conflict with the new nature. Unbelievers don’t worry about this stuff. They don’t battle with the temptation or the demonic spirits from their background. They don’t care about it—it’s not even on their radar screen. The fact that you’re even having a battle and wanting to please God and are afraid that you’re not is a good sign. Just don’t let your faith be swallowed up by your feelings. Let the engine of faith pull the caboose of feelings.

## **CAN YOU LOSE YOUR SALVATION?**

This issue has been discussed for the last 2000 years and there are basically two groups of people: those who believe that you can never, under any circumstance, lose your salvation (that once you’re saved, you’re always saved), and those who say you can lose your salvation at the drop of a hat—and they live in fear of losing it. I tend to lean to the side of the first. I believe that a person truly saved is kept by the power of God. No man plucks us from Jesus’ hand. We’re secure in our walk with Christ, not because of our works or our ability to manufacture good deeds even

## **THERE’S NO HOLDING PLACE BEFORE HEAVEN.**

after salvation, but by faith. And if it’s a true faith it will work—it will produce something. I believe in the security of the believer. Charles Spurgeon said, “God knows whom He has elected. I don’t. He didn’t paint yellow stripes on the back of everybody He elected so I know who to preach to. He told me to preach the gospel to everybody.” And those who respond have obviously been chosen before the foundation of the world. They may not know it until afterward, but that’s exactly what Peter would agree with. We’re “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Peter 1:2). You’re a believer. God chose you before the foundation of the world. Again, the fact that there is an interest—even a worry—about it is a good sign. But you can rest secure. I’m never worried about my salvation. I’m never worried that I’m not good enough. I know I’m not good enough already; that issue was settled a long time ago. Jesus died for sinners. Paul said he was the chief of sinners. He understood that. You should be able to rest secure knowing to whom you belong.

## **I HEARD A SONG SPEAKING ABOUT A LINE DRAWN IN THE SAND AND YOU WANT TO BE ACROSS THAT LINE WHEN IT’S TIME. I’M JUST CURIOUS ABOUT THAT LINE DRAWN IN THE SAND. WHAT IS IT?**

I’m not exactly certain of the name of the song. I do know an old poem and maybe this song was taken from this idea where the author said, “There is a time we know not when, a line we know not where, that marks the destiny of man between sorrow and despair. There is a line though by man unseen and once it has been crossed, God in all His love has even sworn that all is lost.” And there is an eternal line, where a person makes a choice and when they die it’s over. Choices are made and destinies are formed. For some people that seems very narrow; but God is generous and seeks in so many ways to get people’s attention. People also have a tremendous power—the power of human volition, the power of choice. And no is a choice. People can say no—many do. And many die without Christ.

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WILL THERE BE ANIMALS IN HEAVEN?



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REALLY LOVE MY DOG, MAC. BUT THE SHORT ANSWER IS: I DON'T KNOW. THE BIBLE DOESN'T SAY. IT'S SILENT ON THIS SUBJECT.

.....

Someone once wrote to columnist Ann Landers because his son asked if his dog would be in heaven. She consulted someone from Notre Dame University who said, "Tell the boy that heaven is anything you want it to be. Assure him that he will see everyone he wants to see in heaven, including his pets."

A lot of people think that heaven will be everything they want it to be—but that's wrong. Heaven is everything *God* made it to be. That's the essential difference, because the focus of heaven will be God alone. When we see Him, everything else—everything—will pale in significance.

We've all heard the dumb jokes with St. Peter at the gates of heaven holding a clipboard, checking off names. And we've all seen the silly cartoons of people sitting on clouds playing harps. Rather than believe any of that (or any of the supposed "life after death" experiences that contradict Scripture), I'd listen to what John the apostle said. In the book of Revelation, this eyewitness wrote over and over, "And I saw..." John was shown a vision of heaven by Jesus Christ, the very One who died and came back to life—and He ought to know!

Heaven is described as a place of perfect sinlessness, perfect fellowship, perfect worship, perfect service, perfect glory, and perfect government.

And we will have perfect intimacy with God. The book of Revelation speaks about it: "And

I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God'" (Revelation 21:3). "And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him" (Revelation 22:3).

We'll have immediate access and intimate communion with God. When we are resurrected, our new eyes will be face to face with Him!

We may have great worship or devotion now, but full intimacy will not be reached until we see Him in heaven. That will be total satisfaction! (See Psalm 17:15.) Never again will we have to push distractions away to focus on Him. Never again will anything tempt us away from God or compete for our time with Him. Never again will we depend on a style of music to get us in the mood. Never again will we read a Bible, or listen to a sermon, or even close our eyes to pray!

Heaven's main attraction will not be the golden streets, or the angels, or the pearly gates, or meeting Paul or Moses—or our pets. It will be God Himself. What could be better than that?

.....

# A Crown Over There

SHALL I WEAR THAT BRIGHT CROWN GOD HAS OFFERED TO ME,  
WHEN MY LIFE SHALL HAVE COME TO A CLOSE?  
OH, HOW HAPPY I'LL BE WHEN MY SPIRIT IS FREE,  
OVER THERE IN SUCH BLISSFUL REPOSE.  
YES, I WILL WEAR A CROWN OVER THERE, OVER THERE,  
YES, I WILL WEAR A CROWN OVER THERE,  
WHEN MY TOILING IS O'ER I SHALL REST EVERMORE,  
IN THAT HOME HE HAS GONE TO PREPARE.  
SHALL I TRUST HIM ALWAYS? YES, THE PROMISE IS MINE,  
"BE THOU FAITHFUL, MY CHILD, UNTO DEATH,  
AND I'LL GIVE THEE A CROWN WHICH FOREVER SHALL SHINE,  
ENDLESS LIFE AT THY LAST, FLEETING BREATH."  
LET MY ANCHOR BE GROUNDED SO DEEP IN THE ROCK,  
TILL THE STORMS OF THIS LIFE ALL ARE PAST,  
THAT I'LL FIRMLY ENDURE ON THE PROMISE SECURE,  
TILL HE BRINGS ME TO GLORY AT LAST.

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## JANUARY 13

**Read:** Job 35-36

**Reflect:** *“Behold, God is mighty, but despises no one; He is mighty in strength of understanding”* (Job 36:5).

**Return:** Job 37

## JANUARY 14

**Read:** Job 38

**Reflect:** *“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding”* (Job 38:4).

**Return:** Job 39

## JANUARY 15

**Read:** Job 40-41

**Reflect:** *“Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine”* (Job 41:11).

**Return:** Job 42

## JANUARY 16

**Read:** Genesis 12-13

**Reflect:** *“Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you”* (Genesis 13:17).

**Return:** Genesis 14-15

## JANUARY 17

**Read:** Genesis 16-17

**Reflect:** *Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees* (Genesis 16:13).

**Return:** Genesis 18

## JANUARY 18

**Read:** Genesis 19-20

**Reflect:** *But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt* (Genesis 19:26).

**Return:** Genesis 21

## JANUARY 19

**Read:** Genesis 22-23

**Reflect:** *And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me”* (Genesis 22:12).

**Return:** Genesis 24

## JANUARY 20

**Read:** Genesis 25

**Reflect:** *And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob* (Genesis 25:28).

**Return:** Genesis 26

## JANUARY 21

**Read:** Genesis 27-28

**Reflect:** *And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”* (Genesis 28:17).

**Return:** Genesis 29

## JANUARY 22

**Read:** Genesis 30

**Reflect:** *Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb* (Genesis 30:22).

**Return:** Genesis 31

## JANUARY 23

**Read:** Genesis 32-33

**Reflect:** *So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: “For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved”* (Genesis 32:30).

**Return:** Genesis 34

## JANUARY 24

**Read:** Genesis 35-36

**Reflect:** *“Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments”* (Genesis 35:2).

**Return:** Genesis 37

## JANUARY 25

**Read:** Genesis 38-39

**Reflect:** *And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand* (Genesis 39:3).

**Return:** Genesis 40

## JANUARY 26

**Read:** Genesis 41

**Reflect:** *And the name of the second he called Ephraim: “For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction”* (Genesis 41:52).

**Return:** Genesis 42

## JANUARY 27

**Read:** Genesis 43-44

**Reflect:** *Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. And he went into his chamber and wept there* (Genesis 43:30).

**Return:** Genesis 45

## JANUARY 28

**Read:** Genesis 46

**Reflect:** *“I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes”* (Genesis 46:4).

**Return:** Genesis 47

## JANUARY 29

**Read:** Genesis 48-49

**Reflect:** *And Israel said to Joseph, “I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!”* (Genesis 48:11).

**Return:** Genesis 50

## JANUARY 30

**Read:** Exodus 1-2

**Reflect:** *So she called his name Moses, saying, “Because I drew him out of the water”* (Exodus 2:10).

**Return:** Exodus 3

## JANUARY 31

**Read:** Exodus 4-5

**Reflect:** *So the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?”* (Exodus 4:11).

**Return:** Exodus 6

## FEBRUARY 1

**Read:** Exodus 7-8

**Reflect:** *“I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be”* (Exodus 8:23).

**Return:** Exodus 9

## FEBRUARY 2

**Read:** Exodus 10-11

**Reflect:** *“Thus says the LORD*



## FEBRUARY 15

**Read:** Leviticus 8-9

**Reflect:** *And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people* (Leviticus 9:23).

**Return:** Leviticus 10

## FEBRUARY 16

**Read:** Leviticus 11-12

**Reflect:** *“And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised”* (Leviticus 12:3).

**Return:** Leviticus 13

## FEBRUARY 17

**Read:** Leviticus 14

**Reflect:** *“Then the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness”* (Leviticus 14:19).

**Return:** Leviticus 15

## FEBRUARY 18

**Read:** Leviticus 16-17

**Reflect:** *“They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons”* (Leviticus 17:7).

**Return:** Leviticus 18

## FEBRUARY 19

**Read:** Leviticus 19-20

**Reflect:** *“You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy”* (Leviticus 19:2).

**Return:** Leviticus 21

## FEBRUARY 20

**Read:** Leviticus 22

**Reflect:** *“And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer it of your own free will”* (Leviticus 22:29).

**Return:** Leviticus 23

## FEBRUARY 21

**Read:** Leviticus 24

**Reflect:** *“Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death”* (Leviticus 24:15-16).

**Return:** Leviticus 25

## FEBRUARY 22

**Read:** Leviticus 26

**Reflect:** *“I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people”* (Leviticus 26:12).

**Return:** Leviticus 27

## FEBRUARY 23

**Read:** Numbers 1

**Reflect:** *Thus the children of Israel did; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so they did* (Numbers 1:54).

**Return:** Numbers 2

## FEBRUARY 24

**Read:** Numbers 3

**Reflect:** *“And you shall take the Levites for Me—I am the LORD”* (Numbers 3:41).

**Return:** Numbers 4

## FEBRUARY 25

**Read:** Numbers 5

**Reflect:** *“When a man or woman commits any sin that men commit in unfaithfulness against the LORD, and that person is guilty, then he shall confess the sin which he has committed”* (Numbers 5:6-7).

**Return:** Numbers 6

## FEBRUARY 26

**Read:** Numbers 7

**Reflect:** *Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him above the mercy seat* (Numbers 7:89).

**Return:** Numbers 8

## FEBRUARY 27

**Read:** Numbers 9

**Reflect:** *According to the command of the LORD they would remain encamped, and according to the command of the LORD they would journey* (Numbers 9:20).

**Return:** Numbers 10

## FEBRUARY 28

**Read:** Numbers 11

**Reflect:** *And the LORD said to Moses, “Has the LORD’s arm been shortened? Now you shall see whether what I say*

*will happen to you or not”* (Numbers 11:23).

**Return:** Numbers 12

## FEBRUARY 29

**Read:** Numbers 13

**Reflect:** *Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it”* (Numbers 13:30).

**Return:** Numbers 14

## MARCH 1

**Read:** Numbers 15:1-15:21

**Reflect:** *“Of the first of your ground meal you shall give to the LORD a heave offering throughout your generations”* (Numbers 15:21).

**Return:** Numbers 15:22-15:41

## MARCH 2

**Read:** Numbers 16

**Reflect:** *And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense* (Numbers 16:35).

**Return:** Numbers 17

## MARCH 3

**Read:** Numbers 18-19

**Reflect:** *“Then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the LORD, a tenth of the tithe”* (Numbers 18:26).

**Return:** Numbers 20

## MARCH 4

**Read:** Numbers 21

**Reflect:** *So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived”* (Numbers 21:9).

**Return:** Numbers 22

## MARCH 5

**Read:** Numbers 23-24

**Reflect:** *“God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent”* (Numbers 23:19).

**Return:** Numbers 25

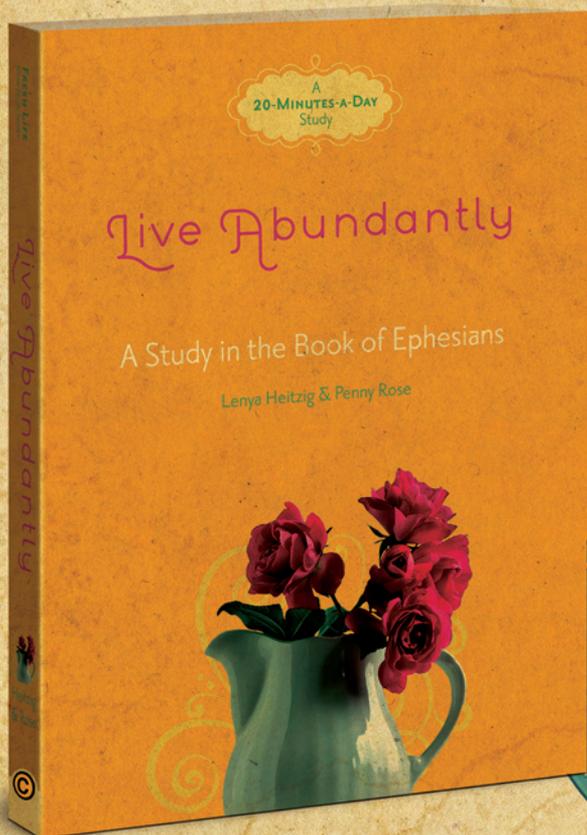




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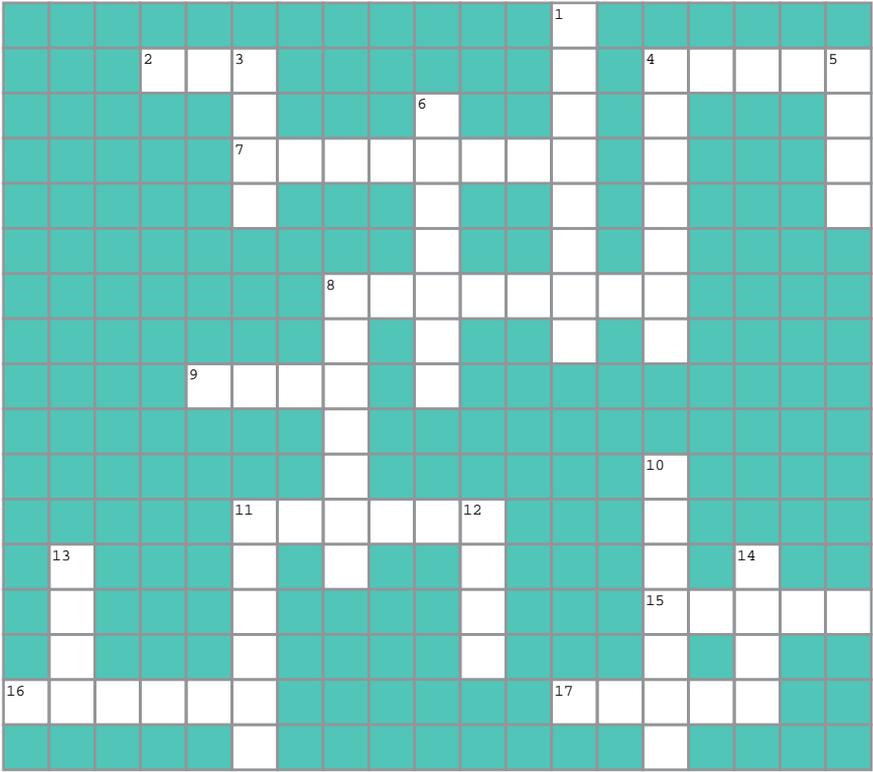
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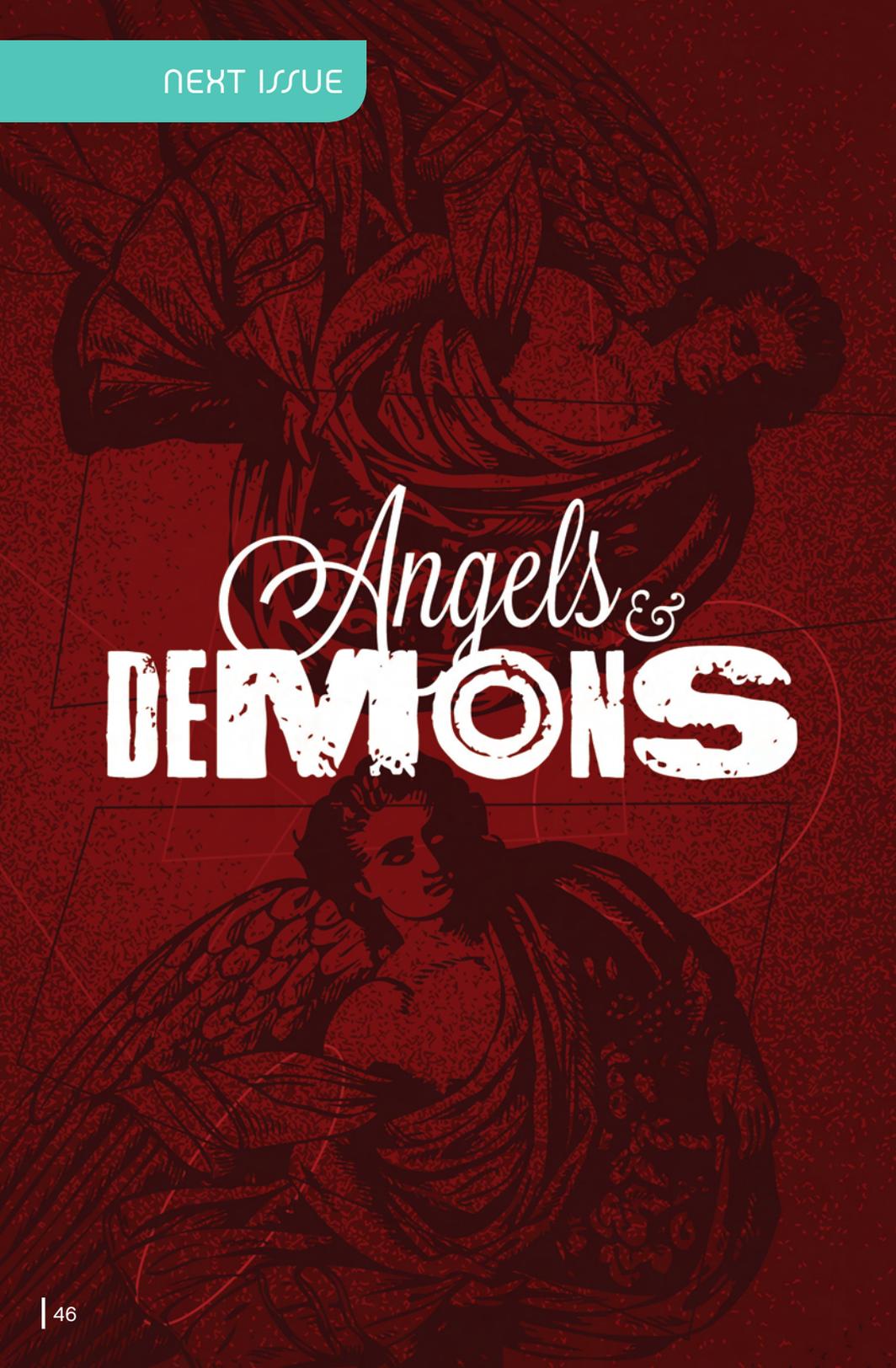
## ACROSS

2. "God is not a \_\_\_\_, that He should lie" (Numbers 23:19).
4. "We walk by \_\_\_\_, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).
7. "In My Father's house are many \_\_\_\_" (John 14:2).
8. "My \_\_\_\_ will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Exodus 33:14).
9. "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the \_\_\_\_ of heaven!" (Genesis 28:17).
11. "The dead in \_\_\_\_ will rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
15. "Then the \_\_\_\_ of the LORD appeared to all people" (Leviticus 9:23).
16. "Behold, a door standing open in \_\_\_\_" (Revelation 4:1).
17. "And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of \_\_\_\_" (Exodus 13:21).

## DOWN

1. "Behold, I set before you today a \_\_\_\_ and a curse" (Deuteronomy 11:26).
3. "Whoever blasphemes the \_\_\_\_ of the LORD shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 24:16).
4. Your throne, O God, is \_\_\_\_ and ever" (Psalm 45:6).
5. "You shall be \_\_\_\_, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2).
6. Paul said he was the chief of \_\_\_\_ (see 1 Timothy 1:15).
8. "I go to \_\_\_\_ a place for you" (John 14:2).
10. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the \_\_\_\_" (Luke 12:32).
11. The elders cast down their \_\_\_\_ in heaven (see Revelation 4:10).
12. "And God shall wipe away every \_\_\_\_" (Revelation 21:4).
13. "And the Spirit and the bride say, ' \_\_\_\_'" (Revelation 22:17).
14. "The LORD gave, and the \_\_\_\_ has taken away" (Job 1:21).

NEXT ISSUE



*Angels* &  
**DEMMONS**



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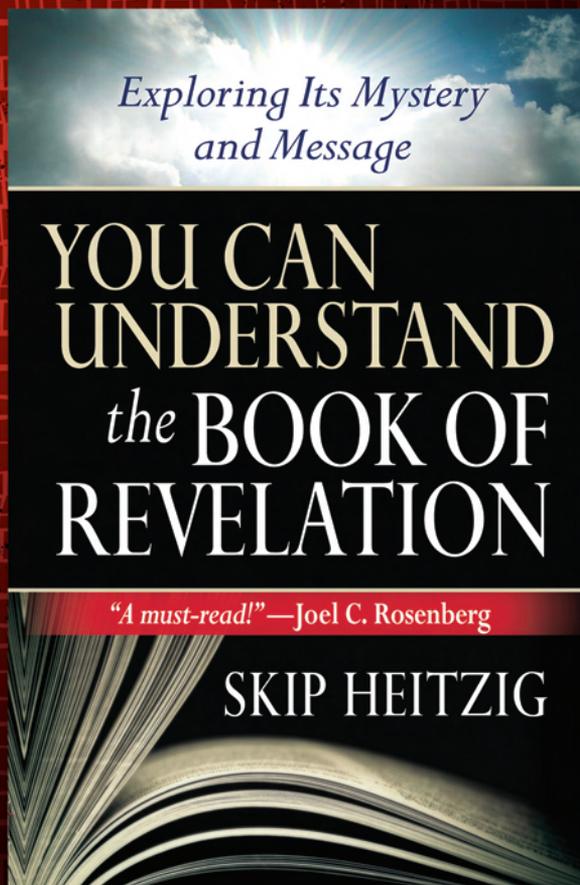
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