

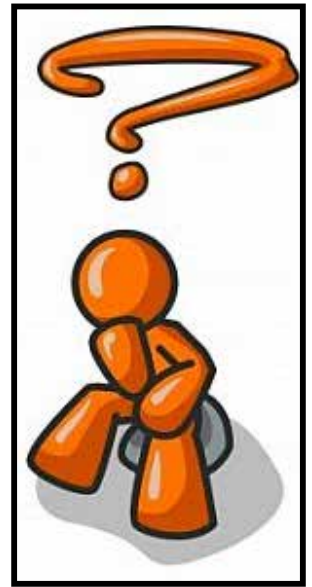
What About ... Up?

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What's Up?

The Bible reveals that heaven, the place where God is enthroned, is above us. Jacob saw a ladder with angels ascending to heaven and descending to earth. God directed Moses to *stretch forth thine hand toward heaven* when delivering the ten plagues, Christ ascended up into the clouds, to later return from the clouds. Stephen the martyr looked up to see heaven opening to greet him. Scripture teaches us that we should think about heaven as being above the earth. *Up* means not of this earth.

How often should we think on our heavenly citizenship? Always and in everything! It should inform our earthly character and decisions, *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy* (James 3:17). It should be our constant state of mind, if we are serious about worshipping the eternal God and developing the mind of Christ, ... *You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world* (John 8:23).



But lately, it seems Christians have little interest in developing a heavenly longing or perspective. Conquering addictions, eliminating poverty, ending abortion, or even making America great seem to dominate their thinking. And, as if to accommodate this thinking, many prominent theologians are now teaching that this present earth will one day be our eternal home.

However important our current earthly issues may be, we must remember that they are only temporary conditions which will eventually be forgotten. One day, like this present earth, *the former things will not be remembered or come to mind* (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:4).

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

Applications

1. I am reminded that God is holy and separated from sin. He sits above the evil and decay of earth (1 Timothy 6:16). I can and should reorder my life towards living righteously before God and not man, in a way that is worthy of my heavenward calling and not just my earthly outcomes (1 Thessalonians 2:12). I must discern what God hates and avoid it at all costs.
2. I am reminded that God controls not only the forces of nature, but also the course of history from above.

When I pray, I should ask my Heavenly Father to fill me with His Spirit. His Spirit is from above and knows His will. It's by His Spirit that my prayers can escape the limits of my weakness, immaturity, and lack of understanding. I can properly pray for the things of His will that I cannot see (Romans 8:26-27).

3. I am reminded that the things down here are temporal but the things above are eternal. I will not only leave physical possessions down here, but I will also leave behind those I love. I must not (like Lot's wife) develop an attitude of looking back. Though it is hard, I must surrender to His ultimate authority and learn to join my desire for contentment to a desire for godly living. *But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either* (1 Timothy 6:6-7).
4. I am reminded that heaven is the place where God's glory (not man's) is always visible and celebrated. I should spend my days on earth seeking to glorify God in heaven, and not myself or the achievements of man (1 Corinthians 6:20; 10:31). I should always remember that God is only glorified when my thoughts, words, and actions are instructed by the Word of God. *Thy word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path* (Psalm 119:105).

So the next time someone asks you "What's up?" just tell them "Heaven!"