

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN IT? IT'S A HEAVEN THING!

Hebrews 11:13-16

ATTENTION:

There are lots of things that Christians believe and do that can only be explained because we believe in heaven.

- And that can be a problem for unbelievers:
 - Stephen Hawking' is quoted as saying:
"I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail," He goes on to say, "There is no heaven or afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark."
(<https://www.livescience.com/14183-hawking-afterlife-fairy-story.html>)
"If you think of your body as a machine, it's kind of hard to believe in life after death," Nathan Heflick said. "You're not going to be able to think of yourself as a spirit."
 - We believe in a place that you can't see, feel, touch and it leads us to do some pretty strange things.
- Let me show you what I mean:
 - In Hebrews we find a series of examples of great acts of faith:
 - v. 4-12 - Extolling the faith-virtues of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah
 - v. 17-31 – Picks back up with Abraham's acts of faith, then Isaac's, then Jacob, Joseph, Moses...

³² And what more can I say? Time is too short for me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, ³³ who by faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the raging of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength in weakness, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received their dead, raised to life again. Other people were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might gain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated. ³⁸ The world was not worthy of them. They

wandered in deserts and on mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

Hebrews 11:32-38

- In the middle of this list of outrageous examples of faith we have a short 4 verse parenthesis where the writer explains why these people are willing to do these things.

¹³ These all died in faith, although they had not received the things that were promised. But they saw them from a distance, greeted them, and confessed that they were foreigners and temporary residents on the earth. ¹⁴ Now those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they were thinking about where they came from, they would have had an opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But they now desire a better place—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 11:13-16

- The explains why these people do decide to live in a way that is so radically different from the rest of the world.
- The writer had said earlier of the Christians who had been themselves persecuted...

³² Remember the earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings. ³³ Sometimes you were publicly exposed to taunts and afflictions, and at other times you were companions of those who were treated that way. ³⁴ For you sympathized with the prisoners and accepted with joy the confiscation of your possessions, because you know that you yourselves have a better and enduring possession. ³⁵ So don't throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you need endurance, so that after you have done God's will, you may receive what was promised.

Hebrews 10:32-36

ATTUNE: It's All About Heaven!

. ³⁴ *For you sympathized with the prisoners and **accepted with joy the confiscation of your possessions, because you know that you yourselves have a better and enduring possession.***

Hebrews 10:34.

- *It's better than anything we have on earth.*
 - Heaven lasts forever.
 - We give what we have here for something better that will never be taken away from us!
 - The words of Jim Elliott, states why Christians live the way they do as well as anything **"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."**

BODY:

- In a 1992 essay called "*You'd Cry Too If It Happened to You*", Peggy Noonan discussed what happens when we lose our faith in a world beyond this world. She considered the many advancements of the last 500 years, then concludes that while life in every way is much easier nowadays for us, we are not happier people, "*I believe we are just cleaner, more attractive sad people than we used to be.*"
- The writer of Hebrews presents a world view foreign to the unbeliever:
 - A belief in two worlds, and that this life is the lonely, poor, harsh and short life.
 - To live life expecting to find happiness here on earth results in unhappiness, disillusionment.
 - The writer to the Hebrews is leading people to believe in two worlds, and that the next world is the "real" world, the one that lasts forever.
 - So, to live in this world with one eye looking forward to the next one because this world could not, cannot, and does not bring you the ultimate happiness.
 - Hebrews 11 calls it **a country of their own** and **a better country—a heavenly one.**
 - We will die here feeling out of place and will arrive at home where we belong!
- Like we sing: *This World Is Not My Home*
 - When we get entangled with the world we invariably find that it does not satisfy the way we thought it would.

- Spurgeon gives us this sentence that succinctly sums up much of what we have discussed today:

"Our expectations are our largest possessions."

- This is why we keep believing.
- We have **expectations** of something much better than anything this world has to offer.
 - This is our guesthouse, not our home.
 - *We remain here a night; we are away in the morning.*
- That's why we don't go back.
 - That's why we won't turn around.
 - That's why we keep our eyes always on heaven.
 - We live by a different standard and die with a different hope.
- Death for the believer is not what it is for the unbeliever.
 - For those who know Jesus, death is going home, to our real home, our eternal home, the place where we, we will say, **"This is where I belong."**

PROJECT:

- God has prepared a city for us – Heavenly City!
 - ¹⁶ *But they now desire a better place—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*
- Hebrews 11:16

ACTION:

There are lots of things that Christians believe and do that can only be explained because we believe in heaven.

What are you doing for heaven's sake?