

# Connect360: Living in a Far Better Place

August 7, 2023

- *Lesson 8 in the Connect360 unit “Heaven & Angels: Our Eternal Home and Its Heavenly Hosts” focuses on Philippians 3:20-21.*

The Bible calls heaven a “better” place, compared to our existence on earth. In Hebrews 11:16 the writer described how the heroes of faith could live during times of difficulty—because they were longing for a “better country”—a heavenly one.

When Paul was writing to the church in Philippi, Paul used a triple superlative to describe the departure of soul and spirit to be with Jesus. He said that experience would be “very much better” (1:23). He described his struggle between wanting to remain on earth to help these baby churches get off the ground. But how much better by far it would be for Paul to be in heaven. He is torn. “Very much better” does not capture the emphasis of what he was saying. In fact, it should be translated, “Much, much, much more better.” That is not good grammar, but it is good theology.

Paul was not morbid or suicidal. He was willing to hang around gladly until God called him home, but he admitted that being with Jesus in heaven is far superior to any experience on earth.

So, what is so much better about heaven? I could list hundreds of examples, but they would all fall under several categories that encourage us about the wonderful eternal destination awaiting us.

For example, Heaven features a better government. No earthly system of government is perfect, because they are led by imperfect people. The

government in heaven is simple; it is a benevolent monarchy. There will be no political debates or differences. Everyone will love and serve the King.

No spot on earth will ever come close to the beauty of heaven. In earlier lessons, we see John described heaven as having a crystal sea and a main street of gold with the river of life flowing down either side.

In heaven, we will also have a better mind. The mind is where fear, anxiety and despair often camp out. Can you imagine having such a clean, pure mind that you will never have a single thought that causes you to fear, worry or sin? That's heaven.

In the Bible, Jesus explained to his disciples that God was preparing a place for them in heaven, and he used the imagery of a house. The King James Version of John 14:2 says of heaven, "In my Father's house are many mansions." That is an unfortunate translation that caused some people to imagine we are going to be living in our own mansion, separated from everyone else like in a heavenly subdivision with huge lots. Elvis even crooned about having his very own mansion just over the hilltop, but Elvis was mistaken. The actual word in Greek is *mone*, which means "rooms." One mansion, many rooms.

But do not imagine your own private room with walls and a door you can lock, like in a hotel, since there will be no need for locks in heaven. The biblical concept of heaven is sharing an enormous house with all your other heavenly family members from every continent throughout the earth for eternity.

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