

# Connect360: The History of Heaven

June 21, 2023

- *Lesson 1 in the Connect360 unit “Heaven & Angels: Our Eternal Home and Its Heavenly Hosts” focuses on Hebrews 11:8-16.*

Many people think heaven is going to be some kind of spooky, ethereal place where we are going to be floating around on soft white clouds playing harps. But the first thing to understand about heaven is that it is a real place.

In Hebrews 11, we meet a group of people who are already in heaven today. Pastors often call this list the “Roll Call of Faith,” because it contains the names and faithful deeds of many of the heroes of the Bible. When you read this list, you quickly discover they all had one thing in common other than their great faith. The Bible says they were all looking forward to a better country—a heavenly country—that awaited them on the other side of this life on Earth.

Consider Abraham. God called him to a special role in the history of God’s people and promised he would have so many descendants they would be like the stars in the sky. God told Abraham to leave where he was and follow him to a new land, which Abraham knew nothing about.

He obeyed God and moved his family to follow God, “not knowing where he was going” (11:8). However, this passage also makes it clear that Abraham had the faith to look past this great promise he would experience in his earthly life and embrace something else far off in a heavenly future in an eternal home with God. This is why the Bible says he was not focused on his new address somewhere in the Middle East—he squinted and looked

right past that in anticipation of living in a city built by God (11:9). He was looking forward to heaven.

The Bible says God is the “architect and builder” of heaven (11:10). In every city on the planet, there are roads and buildings, each designed by an architect and built by a construction company. The same is true of heaven, but heaven is unlike any earthly city because God himself is both the architect and builder.

Every earthly city that stands today is also built on a foundation made by human hands, which means it will one day collapse and crumble like all of the civilizations prior have done. But God himself laid the foundation for the city of heaven, and it will never crumble. It will stand for all eternity.

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