Date : 15 November 2026
Theme : Making our Election sure
Topic : Is there a heaven and who will be there?
Passage *: Matthew 7:13-23*
Key Verse *: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)*

Introduction

Most religious people including Christians are under the illusion that they will get to heaven. But the important question is, "How would I know that I will actually get in?"
Jesus warned: *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew. 7:21).* The sad truth is not everyone will.
The Bible calls us to not merely hope for the best, but to make our election sure *(2 Peter 1:10).*
So, while we look forward to arriving at heaven's gate, we must not falsely presume so, for *"only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" will enter heaven (Revelation 21:27).*

1. What the Bible says about Heaven
"Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them." (Revelation 21:3)
The Bible describes heaven as the dwelling place of God, where His glory is fully revealed and His people enjoy His presence forever. It is heaven because God is there.

(a) Heaven is the glorious dwelling place of God.
The great attraction of heaven is its splendour, beauty, and rewards, but most of all its God Himself. It is:

- Jesus seated with the Father.
  - The Father is there in all His glory.
  - The Lord Jesus Christ reigns in glory.
  - God's people will dwell in His presence forever.

(b) Heaven is a place without the presence of sin and pain.
"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain..." (Revelation 21:4)

- Everything that causes us pain in this world will be gone. Every tear will be wiped away.
  - No sickness, death, funerals. No loneliness, temptation. No sin, curse.

(c) Heaven is a place of unimaginable glory.
John writes as a vivid eyewitness, standing in the Spirit in *Revelation 21:10.*
- The glory of God shines throughout the city *(Revelation 21:11,23).*
- The city is decorated with precious stones, jasper, gold, and crystal *(Revelation 21:18-21).*
- The tree of life is there *(Revelation 22:2).*
- The throne of God and of the Lamb is there *(Revelation 22:1,3).*
- Yet the most glorious truth is: "They will see his face" *(Revelation 22:4).*
  → The greatest blessing of heaven is not a place, but a Person. We shall finally behold Christ in all His glory. We will also meet the Father. In His presence is fullness of joy.

2. Who will be there in Heaven?

Jesus teaches that not everyone enters heaven. *"… only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21)* will enter heaven. Those who enter heaven are the ones who truly belong to Christ.

(a) They enter through the narrow gate.
Jesus warned: *"Enter through the narrow gate… small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." (Matthew 7:13-14)*

The Lord talks about the broad and narrow gates.

- The *'narrow gate'* represents the tight situations which disciples face.
  - It can be difficult to be a faithful Christian. The journey of faith can be a difficult road to take. Few find this gate because everyone wants an easy route. – the *'broad gate'*.

(b) Many will not enter Heaven. Why?

(i) Because everyone chooses the broad way.
Living the 'way of holiness' may not be popular or easy, "*For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it." (Matthew 7:13)*

(ii) Although they know about Christ, they don't follow Him faithfully.

- Those who profess faith with their lips but deny allegiance by their actions will not make it.
  - Jesus has warned: *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.",* and to such people, Jesus will say: *"I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" (Matthew 7:21,23)*
    [By "evildoers," Jesus refers to those who are lawless – without the law of Christ...]

- Paul, in writing to the Christians in Corinth, states, *"that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God… Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)*
  - The issue is not occasional failure, but an unrepentant life that shows no evidence of Christ's transforming grace.

(c) Who else will not be found in Heaven?
"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Revelation 21:27)

- Heaven excludes: The impure, the shameful, the deceitful.
  - John gives this solemn warning: *"Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:15)*

3. How can I be sure I am going to Heaven?

"Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will not stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:10-11).

- Peter is not teaching salvation by works. He is teaching assurance through evidence of a transformed life.
  - Good works do not merit salvation, but salvation produces good works. A changed life demonstrates that God's grace is evidence that *"you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life."* *(Romans 6:22)*

(a) How do <u>I know</u> I am on the road to Heaven?

(i) Am I trusting Christ alone for salvation?
- Or am I relying on my goodness, service, ministry, or church involvement?
- Saving faith receives Christ and His finished work by faith: *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith... not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

(ii) Has my heart been changed so that I love Christ?
- Do I increasingly treasure Christ above the things of this world. *(Psalm 73:25)*
- Does my love for Christ show itself in my desire to obey Him. *"If you love me, keep my commands." (John 14:15)*

(iii) Is God's grace producing a changed life in me?
A believer is not sinless, but he is no longer comfortable in sin. When he falls, he repents and continues to grow in holiness, and increasingly loves God's people. *"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works." (Ephesians 2:10)*
- A transformed life does not earn salvation; it is the fruit and evidence of salvation.
- As the Holy Spirit works within us, we increasingly display repentance, obedience, love, and spiritual growth.

Faith in Christ, love for Christ, and a transformed life are biblical evidences of genuine salvation and provide assurance that we belong to Christ. Yet Scripture calls us not only to examine these evidences, but also to continue walking faithfully with Christ, and abiding in Him to the end.

(b) Do I <u>persevere</u> as a citizen of Heaven?
Saving faith is not merely a past decision (faith at one point in time – *'aorist'*).
→ It is an ongoing covenant relationship with Christ.

- The Bible repeatedly calls believers to continue in faith, obedience, and devotion to Christ.
  "We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction <u>firmly to the very end</u>." (Hebrews 3:14)
  - The question is not merely, *"Did I once believe?"* but *"Am I continuing to follow Christ today?"*

The same grace that saves also sustains. Those who inherit the kingdom are those who persevere in faith and remain in Christ until the end.

- Paul describes the mindset of those who persevere as a citizen of heaven.
  Philippians 3:17-21

3 distinct orientation Markers	How this confirms my hope of Heaven
1. Imitate those who follow godly examples *(Philippians 3:17)*	1. My pattern of life is to follow godly examples.
2. Show allegiance to my heavenly citizenship by my appetites *(Philippians 3:18-20)*	2. My appetites (stomach) and pride (glory) to focus on Jesus.
3. Anticipate my ultimate transformation when Christ returns. *(Philippians 3:21)*	3. My hope in life is hooked on this eternal perspective.

Application

The question is not merely: "Did I once make a profession of faith?"
The deeper question is: "Am I continuing to trust Christ, obey Christ, and follow Christ today?"

(1) Am I persevering as a citizen of Heaven? Check the following boxes ☑

1. I imitate those with godly examples. *(Philippians 3:17)*	
2. My appetites are not dictated by earthly focus. *(Philippians 3:18-20)*	
3. My identity, life-style and values are transformed now as I focus on Jesus' return. *(Philippians 3:21)*	

(2) Pray over each other:

→ *"Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way." (Philippians 4:1)*

→ Stand firm in Christ. Live as citizens of heaven. Persevere faithfully until He comes.