



**By**

**Mark McGee**



## What Was Heaven Like That Special Night?

A friend sent a question to me that I thought would be worth a short study.

*What was it like in Heaven just before that first Christmas?*

Here's how I responded to my friend –

*Heaven operates according to God's will and eternal plan. We know that Jesus coming to earth as a baby born to a virgin was God's will and eternal plan (Isaiah 7:14). Heaven was busy responding to God's will and plan as angels visited Mary, Joseph and Zacharias to announce what God was about to do (Matthew 1 & Luke 1). The Old Testament prophecies concerning the virgin birth, place of birth and other details surrounding the birth of the God/Man all came together in the months, weeks and days leading up to the birth of Jesus Christ. God sent a multitude of angels to speak to shepherds watching their flocks at night near the town of Bethlehem. The angels praised God for His great*

*plan, then returned to Heaven. The shepherds went to Bethlehem and became witnesses to what God was going to do by sending His Son into the world.*

*Though we don't know how much time elapsed between the birth of Jesus and the arrival of wise men from the East to find the one who had been born 'King of the Jews,' we know that God had caused a star to move from the East toward Bethlehem so that the men who were watching the skies for the prophetic sign would find Jesus and bring Him gifts that were prophetic of what He would accomplish for His Father and for the human race.*

*Heaven is always busy, but Christmas was the culmination of God's promise to Eve, Adam and all of humanity. It was the beginning of the great harvest of Heaven that has brought hundreds of millions (possibly billions) of people into the family of God since Jesus died on the Cross and rose from the dead. That first Christmas was just the beginning of the greatest events in all of history .. events*

*that will eventually lead to Christ's return to earth to establish His great Kingdom.*

Another friend asked me how I could know what was going on in Heaven on Christmas Eve. That's the question I'd like to answer in this study.

## How Heaven Works

How does Heaven ‘work?’ Another way to ask that is how does Heaven ‘function?’ Are the activities of Heaven ‘orderly?’ Do they have purpose and direction?

It’s good to remember at the outset of our study that there was a ‘time’ *before* time. The Bible speaks of it as ‘before time began.’ We also know it as ‘eternity.’

Psalm 90 is a prayer of Moses. Here’s how he started his prayer –

*Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. PSALM 90:1-2*

The word ‘everlasting’ in Psalm 90 is עוֹלָם – ‘*ōlām* and means ‘long duration, eternal, eternity, antiquity.’

Moses also said, ‘The eternal God *is your* refuge, And underneath *are* the everlasting arms’ (Deuteronomy 33:27).

The prophet Isaiah described God as the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, said ‘Known to God from eternity are all His works’ (Acts 15:18).

When Moses was at the burning bush and asked God, ‘Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What *is* His name?’ what shall I say to them?’. God’s reply was this – ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ (Exodus 3:13-14). That holy name is Hebrew is אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (‘*ehyeh ’ăšer ’ehyeh*).

Our God is OTHER. His existence is different and separate from the existence of all other life. He is not contingent. He is Necessary. All life is contingent on His existence. God's existence is not contingent upon anything or anyone. Our God is Eternal. He has always existed and all life depends on Him. That's what God told Moses to tell the leaders of the people of Israel who were enslaved in Egypt.

## In The Beginning

Most people, including scientists, would agree that the universe had a beginning. That's how the Holy Spirit inspired Moses to write the first three words of the Bible – 'In the beginning...' 'Moses went on to write, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' The first chapter of the Bible, Genesis 1, is the orderly progression of how God created the heavens and the earth. That's how God does things. He knows what He wants to do, then does it in an orderly fashion.



God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, determined to create time and space and to fill time and space with both natural (material) and supernatural (immaterial). When God finished creating, 'God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good' (Genesis 1:31). However, something happened that changed things in the heavens and on the earth. A powerful angel rebelled against God and established his own rule and authority in the heavens. The angel deceived the first human beings God created into thinking they could establish their own independent rule on earth. Neither event surprised God. He knew about both from before time began. Though Satan and humans rebelled against God, God remained Sovereign.

What did change in the heavens and on the earth was some of the *order* God had included in His original creation. The Apostle Paul addressed both in his letter to the Romans:

*For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. ROMANS 8:22-23*

## Redemption

Redemption is a primary teaching of the Bible. God will redeem (*luroó*, to release upon paying a ransom) His creation in the future. That will include redemption of the heavens and the earth, of Israel, and those who belong to Christ Jesus by faith in His Name. Redemption is what God promised immediately after Adam and Eve disobeyed God.

*And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel. Genesis 3:15*

That promise God made thousands of years ago was about God the Father sending God the Son to ransom people from sin and death.

*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*  
*MARK 10:45*

*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 1 TIMOTHY 2:5-6*

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. EPHESIANS 1:7*

We know what was going on in Heaven on Christmas Eve because we know what plans God had for that evening. We're not guessing or fantasizing about it. God's Word is very clear about what was going on.

## A Window Into Heaven

Can God actually do what He wants to do? We know that He can and does because of a Heavenly *window* that has been installed for us. Many times in the Bible we will see that window opened so we can see what goes on in Heaven and how God runs things there and throughout His universe. What we see is an Almighty God who has the power and the will to accomplish all His plans.

God is not alone in Heaven. He created tens of millions of supernatural beings to serve Him. Angelic and other heavenly beings stand before God and do what He tells them to do.

Here are four of the heavenly windows that allow us to see how God rules from His Throne.

*I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: 'Holy, holy,*

*holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!’ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. ISAIAH 6:1-4*

*I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened. DANIEL 7:9-10*

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, is also in Heaven with His Father. Jesus died on the Cross to give His life a ransom for many and rules with His Father from His heavenly throne.

*I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed. DANIEL 7:13-14*

*And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. REVELATION 5:6-7*

The window God gives us into Heaven reveals His Sovereignty and Absolute Authority. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were all involved in bringing about our redemption on that first Christmas Eve.

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. JOHN 3:16*

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

**GraceLife © 1990-2021**