

From the Preacher's Pen... Isn't it wonderful that brother (or sister) So-and-so is in heaven? They must be playing golf every day with all their old friends!

How many times have you heard (or been involved in!) a conversation like that? Do we realize what an outright lie that is? Do we really know what heaven is and what it is all about?

Take a few moments to consider how often we cheapen and outright pervert God's great promise:

Selling Heaven Short

Heaven is a place that everyone talks about and everyone hopes to go to... provided they don't have to actually DO something to get there!

The reality of heaven is that it is a prepared place for a prepared people. Unless we "store up treasures there," unless we obey our Lord and God, then we will never live there. Let's take a look at heaven as God presents it and see how that compares with the nonsense that people often imagine is heaven.

Heaven is NOT golf, hunting, fishing nor is it about visiting with friends and loved ones!

That is NOT to imply we won't know or care about friends and loved ones: In the Old Testament, when a person died, biblical writers said he was "gathered to his people" (cf. Genesis 25:8; 35:29; 49:29; Numbers 20:24; Judges 2:10).

In 2 Samuel 12, when David's infant child died, David confidently said, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (v. 23). David expected to see his child again – not just a nameless, faceless soul without an identity, but that very child.

Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. Even though it had been centuries since they'd walked this earth, they still maintained a clear identity (Matthew 17:3) – Peter, James, and John evidently recognized them (v. 4), which implies that we will somehow be able to recognize people we've never even seen before.

We will be able to have fellowship with Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Samuel, Moses, Joshua, Esther, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, David, Peter, Barnabas, Paul, or any of the faithful. For that to be possible, we must all retain our individual identities, not turn into some sort of generic beings.

Describing the Lord's appearing and the resurrection of the saints who have died: 1 Thessalonians 4:17 says, "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. and thus we shall always be with the Lord".

Paul's purpose was to comfort some of the Thessalonians who thought their dying loved ones would miss the return of Christ. He says in verse 18, "Comfort one another with these words." The comfort comes from the prospect of reunion. Little comfort this would be if in the reunion we could not even recognize one another. Paul's promise that we will all be "together" forever implies that we shall renew fellowship with all whom we have known.

We will be reunited not only with our own families and loved ones, but also with the people of God from all ages. In heaven we will all be one loving family. The immense size of the family will not matter in the infinite perfection of heaven. Our eternity will be spent in just that kind of rich, unending fellowship.

If you're worried about feeling out of place in heaven, don't. Heaven will seem more like home than the dearest spot on earth to you. It is uniquely designed by a tender, loving Savior to be the place where we will live together for all eternity and enjoy Him forever.

But we will NOT remember the lost! This is an eternal home for victors NOT losers (also take note of Revelation 21:8):

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." (Revelation 21:1-4)

Opportunities to worship, study & serve:

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY 10 AM

WORSHIP 11 AM

EVENING WORSHIP 6 PM

WEDNESDAY 7 PM

THURSDAY LADIES' BIBLE CLASS 10 AM

Congregational Potluck 3rd Sunday
each month after morning worship
(except June, July & August)

Welcome to all!
We are glad you are here!

Enter to Worship...
Leave to Serve

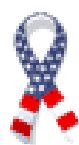
Welcome to our visitors today! We hope & pray you'll be blessed by your time with us & will join us again soon!

Our Prayer List: Keep the following in prayer this week as you "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17): Nora McNeil, Matthew Odom, Heather Ries, Hunter Shirley, Rene Turner, Ruth West, Everett Martin, Anna Mae Hardin, the Najera family, Bill Hall, Reta Wallace, Jim Holder, Kristi Martin, Wally Myers, Cindy Turpin, Millie Cunningham and...

Our Missionaries: Jack Farber and Aaron Knotts and families.

Previously Announced Family & Friends: Robin & Marc Estabrook (Julie Evan's sister & nephew), David Reffner (Flora Doster's grandson with MS), Art Stoneking & wife (friends of Carl Catozzi, cancer), Jeremiah Haller (Flora Doster's grandson), Annette (Cindy Turpin's sister), Cole Myers (grandson of friend of Myers), Sheila Simpson, Lillian Wilhite & Mirlene Smith (relatives of Lynn Shirley), Teresa Acosta, Rosemary Glasier (Crystal Mora-Landroth's mother), John Hoover's relatives with personal difficulties, Shelly Cooper (friend of Carl Catozzi), Lucas Espinoza (Brian Campbell's friend), Kaesha Raffterfer (Gene Pinkston's cousin, cancer), Chuck Keels (friend of Grubbs with cancer), Terri Fillipski (cancer, Julie Evans' cousin).

Special Requests: WBS & WEI Bible study students; Kevin & Nancy Chambers & World Christian Broadcasting; Judy Hagner, son Preston, daughter Angela & son James. Brandi Schroeder (Flora Doster's granddaughter with MS); Dallas Purcella's mother; Paulina's father (Arnold); Julie's father; Laurel's father.



OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL: Nate Panka (Cleo Wise's grandson); Javier Najera; Fernando Najera, Frank Torres (Javier's brother & cousin); Eric Shirley; Trevor Farrow (Allen's son); Scott Hoover (John's son); Ariel Gomez; Paul Sipes & April Belovedstone (Sue Wolfe's son & daughter); Robert Strickland (Cleo Wise's grand-nephew); Ismael Lopez; Robinson Goldman (Cindy Turpin's son-in-law); Destanie Aragon; Nathan Bagley.

New: Jason: son of Carl Catozzi in need of prayers; Dr. Yanni: friend of John Hoover with cancer; Michael Lightheart: son-in-law of Flora Doster, health problems; Jimmy Handtegen: friend of David Davis following a stroke; Derwin Jackson & family: with his job; Sean & Vickie: Carl Catozzi's friends with struggles in their lives; Terri Hoover: John's daughter-in-law with serious health issues; Monica Lopez: George Mora's aunt with breast cancer; Jacob Shirley: struggles; Rhett Booher: Gary & Toni Pierce's grandson: Traumatic Brain Injury while in the Army; Ray Stephenson family: youngest son's cancer has spread; John Mark: in Afghanistan in danger for his faith; Jimmy Davis: friend of Mike Evans with melanoma; Adele Fink: recovering from colon cancer; George Ponter: Brian Campbell's cousin with multiple struggles; Amy Vestal: lupus and intestinal problems; Anna Price: via Kimberlee Myers; Chuck Hedrick family: with multiple health problems; Kathy Gonzalez: grandmother of Heavyn & Tatum with cancer.

Sue Wolfe; LaVerne Jackson's mother; Celeste Wallace: health

problems; Sandra Watson, Sue Shepperd & Elzie Shirley: Lynn's family with illnesses; Ed Baum; Chuck Hedrick; Ray Stephenson; Gene Pinkston: back problems; Delbert White's Granddaughter Jessica; Tom Hoover: (John's brother)

Steve McDonald: Jean Grubbs granddaughter's husband, tests.

Larry West: complications of diabetes.

Donald Helton: on dialysis until he has a kidney transplant.

Kirrin Kerby: (Jean Grubbs grandson).

Shannon White & Talon Bored: friends of the Martin family in need of prayers.

Jerry Odom & family: his sister in New Mexico and his niece in California both passed away..

Also Our New Christians, those travelling and especially those with spiritual struggles.

2018 Directory Update

Be sure to pick up your updates on the table in the foyer!

There is a packet from a few weeks ago of several additions.

There are NEW single sheet additions and updated BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY pages.

If you need a complete directory with or without a binder, please see Lester.

Upcoming Events...

Men's Business Meeting: March 11 after evening worship.

Potluck: March 18 — Group #3 [Cheryl Campbell's group] set-up, serve & clean-up

Monthly Singing: March 25 at 2:30 here.

5th Wednesday Prayer & Song Meeting: May 30.

Heaven IS all about our God and our Savior!

Back to that first lesson. While heaven includes God’s family and all the joy that is a result of that blessing, the real purpose of heaven is NOT family, friends and loved ones. The real joy and purpose of heaven is being with our God and Savior!

Every vision of heaven that John or any other prophet had of heaven is ALWAYS centered around God.

If God is not your priority here on earth, if He is not your first and greatest love, then you won’t have to worry about not enjoying heaven. *You won’t be there!*

Yes, that is shocking to many human beings, but the least of heavens blessings are about us. The priority of heaven, like our lives here on earth, is the focus on God.

Don’t imagine heaven as the place where God will wait on you and give you your heart’s desire.

Make God your heart’s desire, serve Him and learn the real blessings that God has in store for His family.

— Lester P. Bagley



Champions for Change!
For NM Christian Children’s Home
It’s that time again! Several have already exchanged full cans for empty ones & more empties are available on the table in the foyer.
Please return them by April 25th.
Liquid Dishwasher Detergent is also needed!
Pickup for everything will be April 28

Men’s Training Class, 5 pm today...
 for leading prayers, doing talks & devotionals, & song-leading.

Monday with the Master
 Ages 10 through college meet tomorrow at 6 pm for dinner & Bible study in the Fellowship Hall.
See Lou Bagley THIS MORNING if you don’t already know what to bring!

Last Week: 10+ Pew-Packers



Be “in the picture” every week!

✓ Checkup ✓
How are we doing?

Attendance Last Week:
 Sunday Morning Bible Class = 78
 Sunday Morning Worship = 116
 Sunday Evening Worship = 62
 Wednesday Evening = 55

Giving
 2018 Weekly Budget = \$3,015.00
 Contribution Last Week = \$2,683.00

Church of Christ
805 East Racine Place
Casa Grande, AZ 85122

Postage

TO:

Privileged to Serve

Sunday Morning March 4

Adult Bible Class: • *Acts of the Apostles* Lester Bagley
Announcements: Curt Odom
Song Leader:..... Mike Evans
Prayer:..... Ron Cook
Serve Communion:..... Gary Pierce, John Hoover, Kim Myers,
Frank Campbell, George Mora
Sermon: • *God's Names - 1* Lester Bagley
Closing Prayer: Delbert White

Count Contribution: Mike Evans & Bill Hall

Sunday Evening March 4

Song Leader:..... Mike Evans
Prayer:..... Jim Holder
Sermon: • *The Armies of Heaven* Lester Bagley
Serve Communion:..... John Hoover
Closing Prayer: Curt Odom

Wednesday Evening March 7

Song Leader:..... George Mora
Prayer:..... Delbert White
Devo:..... Lester Bagley
Closing Prayer: John Hoover

Anniversaries



March 5: *Everrett & Jeanne Martin*
March 6: *Derwin & LaVerne Jackson*
March 17: *Brian & Catrina Campbell*
March 28: *Thomas & Adele Fink*
April 5: *Archie & Karen Peterson*
April 15: *Delbert & Sue White*

Birthdays



March 6: *Allison Chavez - Amy Vestal*
March 7: *Stephanie Davis - Luke Hill*
March 7: *Vernell Jackson - Morgan Parry*
March 9: *Nancy Robbins*
March 12: *Calie Powell*
March 13: *Phyllis Hall*
March 15: *Lynn Shirley*
March 17: *Allen Harrison - Markus Smith*