

*In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God Amen.*

## **Heaven By His Grace Bishop Youannis**

### **1. Man is a Heavenly Creature**

-Humans are the most unique creature created by God, because it's the only creature that exists by the unity of the spirit and the body together.

-W/out the body man becomes just spirit, and would belong to heaven.

-W/out spirit though we aren't human instead we would be equivalent to an animal.

--*"And God formed the man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"* (Gen. 2:7)

-The body was created by dust, but the spirit by the breath of God.

--*"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh"* (Gal. 5:17).

-This is why we have battles with ourselves or our conscious, concerning our desires because the our spirits are of heavenly essence but our bodies are earthly seeking earthly things so our body tells us to sleep in and not go to church but our spirits tell us to go and take communion, dust vs. heavenly.

-Heaven to man is the beginning and the end, it was our original homeland (the Garden of Eden) and it will be our place after the Second Coming.

### **2. The Reality of Heaven**

-Stages of Heaven:

\*First Heaven: the space enveloping the earth, or as St. Basil the Great refers to it, the "bird's heaven"

\*Second Heaven: Where the frost, ice, rain, stars and planets lay.

\*Third Heaven is Paradise.

-Proof of three heavens, with Paradise as the final stage:

--*"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."* (2 Corinthians 12:2-4)

-Paradise of course is our dwelling after death where the souls of the righteous - go to wait for the Second Coming, this is where our Saints lay today.

-Heaven is God's dwelling for he said to Mary Magdalene:

-- "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."(John 20:17)

-Meaning Jesus Christ ascended first to Paradise and proclaimed these words to his saints, and then ascended to his Father who is in Heaven.

### **3. Death and the After Life**

-Death causes people to become scared and pessimistic, but doing this shows lack of faith and trust in the Lord. Death is for all people even for Elijah the Prophet and Enoch who ascended to Paradise alive, because they will return at the end of time and die as martyrs.

-Even Jesus Christ himself died, which in return granted us eternal life.

-Death is only the end of your body, but it is actually the beginning of your eternal life with God in Heaven.

-We as Orthodoxy believe that death is victory for it takes us away from a life of pain and a world of suffering and unites us, who are worthy of course, with the Lord and his saints.

### **4. The Resurrections through out the Bible**

- "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."(Isiah 26:19) ; "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."(Daniel 12:2)

-Three "resurrections" in the Old Testament as a prophecy...

-When Elijah raised the widow's son in Sidom in '1 Kings'; the woman's son who Elisha the prophet raised in '2 Kings,' the man who was raised from the dead when the bones of Elisha the prophet touched him '2 Kings'

-in the New Testament: "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Matthew 27:52-53

- many, many more mentioned in the book...

### **5. Waiting places**

-1. Paradise: Garden of Eden – waiting for the glorious entry to Heaven

-2. Hades: Place for the wicked ones – like those waiting for their death sentence to be carried out

## **6. Obstacles for entering to heaven...**

- In Psalm 115:5 it reads: "Yes our God is merciful." This is true, but just as God is merciful he is also just. Just as he is perfect in His mercy, He is perfect in his justice. We are currently living in the age of repentance, God is giving us the chance, every single second of our lives, to repent and come home to him. We can be blessed with Gods mercy now, but after death there is no more mercy, only justice. After death the Lord will not have mercy on those who did not have mercy in their life. Now is the chance to repent, you can die any second. Repentance will save you if you die. But if you die a sinner, how will the Lord have mercy on you after giving you so much time?

## **7. Reasons for being kept out of Heaven**

- Pride
- Lack of faith
- Hypocrisy
- Adultery
- Hatred and murder
- Magic and scorcery
- Idol worship
- Liars

## **8. Qualifiers**

- Faith in christs salvation
- Baptism
- Christian virtues: the fruits of the Holy Spirit; goodness, righteousness, and truth.