

## STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

John 14:1-4

March 18, 2007 Sunday a.m.

### INTRODUCTION

- A. Led Zeppelin was an English rock band formed in 1968. They disbanded in 1980 after the death of their drummer John Bonham. Their music, however, still remains popular, selling over 300 million albums worldwide, including 110 million in the United States. One of their most popular songs was written by their guitarist, Jimmy Page and is called, "Stairway to Heaven". Its said to be the most played song on FM radio in the United States and listed by Rolling Stone Magazine as number 31 of the 500 greatest songs of all time.
- B. Its been said that every culture in the world has some concept of heaven.
  - 1. The Australian aborigines pictured heaven as a distant island beyond the western horizon.
  - 2. The Peruvians believed heaven was associated with the Sun or the Moon.
  - 3. The Egyptians embalmed bodies and gave them maps to guide them to heaven.
  - 4. The Romans believed heaven was in the Elysian Fields.
- C. Christians too, obviously believe there is a heaven awaiting us when we die. But what is heaven like? Consider what Jesus tells us about heaven in John 14:1-4.

### I. HEAVEN IS A PLACE.

- A. Three times in John 14:1-4 Jesus refers to heaven as a "place", meaning a real, rather than imaginary place.
- B. To illustrate that heaven is a real place Jesus said it is filled with many "rooms" (NIV) or "mansions" (KJV).

### II. HEAVEN IS A PERSONAL PLACE.

- A. Its personal in the sense that people are there-v.2b.
  - 1. Enoch was taken up to heaven.
  - 2. Elijah also was taken up to heaven.
  - 3. The apostle Paul caught a glimpse of heaven and called it "paradise".
- B. In 2003, Mitch Albom, author of the best selling book, "Tuesdays with Morrie" (1997), wrote another best seller later made into a movie called, "The Five People You Meet in Heaven".
  - 1. We're going to meet a lot of people in heaven-family, friends, fellow Christians.
  - 2. The most important person there, however, is Jesus-v.4.

### III. HEAVEN IS A PERFECT PLACE.

- A. Heaven is perfect because of what is not there-Revelation 21:4.
- B. C. S. Lewis writes about this perfect place called heaven.

"We are very shy nowadays of even mentioning Heaven. We are afraid of the jeer about "pie n the sky," and of being told that we are trying to "escape from the duty of making a happy world here and now into dreams of a happy world elsewhere." But either there is "pie in the sky" or there is not. If thee is not, then Christianity is false, for this doctrine is woven into its whole fabric. If there is, then this truth, like any other, must be faced, whether it is useful at political meetings or not."

### IV. HEAVEN IS A PEACEFUL PLACE.

Lyman Coleman is a pioneer in the small group movement when he joined Navigators and Young Life after graduating from Baylor.

In their book ***Building a Church of Small Groups***, Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson relate the words of Lyman Coleman as he reflected on the death of his beloved wife, Margaret: The most painful decision of my life was asking God to take her home. She had been suffering from repeated brain seizures and her body was wasted. I whispered in her ear: "Honey, I love you. I love you. Jesus wants you to come home. We are going to be all right. We give you permission to let go." She closed her eyes and fell asleep....

As I write this letter, I realize I am without my editor. My greatest critic. My teammate. Soul mate. Prayer mate. Partner in everything. We traveled the roads less traveled together in hard times and good times. Honey, I miss you. I miss you. I miss you. I will keep the light on for the kids. I will be there for friends. And one day, we are going to join you. All of us. Because Jesus promised it. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, Building a Church of Small Groups (Zondervan, 2001), p. 61

#### **V. HEAVEN IS A PREPARED PLACE.**

- A. Jesus promises to prepare a place in heaven-v.2b-3.
- B. Who is he preparing it for?
- C. Only for those who know him-John 14:6.
- D. Jesus, then, is the only stairway to heaven.

#### **CONCLUSION**

- A. Remember then that heaven is....
  - 1. A place.
  - 2. A personal place.
  - 3. A perfect place.
  - 4. A peaceful place.
  - 5. A prepared place.
- B. Is Jesus your stairway to heaven?