

Introduction

Many of us have heard the phrase "open Heaven" but do we really understand its meaning. The bible has a lot to say about what an open heaven is and in this study we will look at what it *actually* is, what the scripture describes happens there and how do we experience it.

In **Matt 3:16-17**, we see when heaven opened, a vision of the Holy Spirit poured out, the voice of God was heard and revelation was revealed. But an open heaven is more than that! In **Gen 28:10-17**, angels ascended and descended under an open heaven, covenants and promises were revealed and made. But it is more than that! **Deut 28:1-13** describes the result of a lifestyle living under an open heaven, and there is much more. Some dismiss many of the OT promises as not relevant to us as NT Christians but that is a bad mistake, *the OT is the NT concealed and the NT is the OT revealed!* **Gal 3:16-29, Rom 15:9, 2 Cor 1:20**

An open heaven is when a person on earth has full access to all of heaven!

OT, Heaven Hidden

There were very few times in the OT that the heavens were opened to man. For 1500 years the Holy presence of God was veiled, separated from mankind in the temple. Because of the covenant of the Law, God, His presence and Glory and all of heaven was unapproachable for people except for the high priest. Everything of heaven was symbolised by a piece of furniture behind this curtain called the Ark of the Covenant. It was here that heaven touched earth but it was both mystical and fearful. Mystical because not much was known about it, fearful because to get too close could kill you. It was aloof, unknowable and unapproachable and this symbolised man's spiritual condition towards God. Two cherubim covered the Ark covering and guarding what was yet to be revealed and this natural tabernacle held dominion until Jesus came to the earth. During those years God could only be approached through a natural pattern that He had shown Moses, it was of physical substance, of laws and regulations.

At the cross the veil was torn in two from top to bottom and the dominion of the natural/physical way of approaching God came to an end. The Ark /heaven was opened to us, fear and dread of God fell aside like the curtain and a flood of knowledge of God's presence, of grace and truth, mercy and forgiveness, Love and acceptance flowed like the light and power of the resurrection. Jesus permanently opened heaven to us revealing the Glory and presence of the Father to us all. He has bought us this privilege and made it available to all through his blood, it is our inheritance!

Matt 27:51, Mark 15:38, Luke 23:45

NT, Our Inheritance Revealed

Our inheritance of the treasures found behind the veil are founded upon the death and resurrection of Jesus – they are founded on Salvation! BUT IT ONLY STARTS HERE, IT NEVER ENDS! There is no end to the depths of the riches of God's grace and presence, after a billion years going deeper into God there will still be more to know, more to experience, more to fall in love with, more to be overawed with, more to get lost in. Heaven has been opened to us! We must make a conscious decision to press in and pass behind the torn veil. **Heb 6:19-20.**

The Most Important Piece

The most important piece of furniture in the Temple was found in the most holy place behind the curtain – the Ark. The Ark was the centrepiece of divine revelation and authority, it was the heart of God dwelling with man. It was the greatest of the temple treasures and it symbolised the Holy Spirit. **John 7:37-38, 4:14, 14:20, 23, Is 12:3, 2 Cor 4:7**

We must remember that the whole temple was holy,

- the gates
- altar
- laver

Living Under an Open Heaven

- priestly garments
- fire
- lampstand
- table of bread
- incense altar

but they all pointed the focus to the one thing that as far as God was concerned, was ranked the highest treasure – the ARK.

All the other aspects of Christianity are important, bible reading, prayer, spiritual knowledge, awareness, experience, blessing, revelation, righteousness, ministry etc but the most important is the presence of God dwelling in you! **Matt 7:23, 25:12, 29,**

Without the ark they lose purpose, the ark represents our spirit, our inmost being. Body is the flesh, soul is the mind and spirit is our hearts. **Prov 4:23** We are the temple of the Holy Spirit, **2 Cor 3:14-16** and our spirit needs to be quickened by the baptism of the Holy Spirit to be able to experience and understand revelation. It is out of this "inmost being" that the Holy Spirit flows.

Spiritual Disciplines

All this is only available to us through the practice of spiritual disciplines, we must develop and nurture our Most Holy Place to be able to live under an open heaven. In OT it was only for the priests but now it's for everyone. Emmanuel – God with us! We don't need to rely on outward stuff to get into God's presence, it is inward ministry! Israel was limited to the physical presence of the Ark but we don't have to go and find it, we don't have to find a priest and wait for him to arrive it is inside us! Joy, peace, comfort, power, warfare, love is in our possession all the time. **1 Sam 4:5, Jer 3:16.** God would speak from between the Cherubim on top of the Ark, **Ex 25:18-22, Num 7:89.** But it was limited to Moses and the priests. Now it's open 24/7, not by religion but by faith and the practice of spiritual disciplines.

Jesus Has opened heaven for us, all that He has and is is ours. But do we tap in to all He is and has for us?