



Three Levels of Heaven

Lesson Overview

1. Video

Watch *Communities in Heaven* online at bit.ly/CommunitiesInHeaven (5min 33sec) and discuss.

2. Read

The three levels of heaven are also the three levels of the human mind. Each level of the mind (and of heaven) is ruled by a different love. pp. 1-2

3. Critical Thinking

Read a variety of statements and decide whether they characterize a person motivated by the love of the celestial, spiritual, or natural heaven. p.2

New Church Concept

3 Heavens | 3 Loves

Those who are affected by Divine truths and admit them at once into their life—into their will and thence into action—are in the inmost or third heaven. Those who do not admit truths at once into the will but into the memory and then into the understanding, and from this, will and do them, are in the middle or second heaven. Those who live morally and believe in a Divine Being, but do not care greatly about being taught, are in the outermost or first heaven. See *Heaven and Hell* 33

FaithBuilder 1 | Lesson 8 | Eternal Life

Watch a Video

Watch *Communities in Heaven* (5min 33sec) at bit.ly/CommunitiesInHeaven. (Enter the link in the web browser bar at the top of your screen.)

1. Heavenly communities are structured so that some live towards the center of a community and others live towards the outskirts. Which angels live towards the center? Who lives towards the outskirts?
2. The speaker mentioned that in heaven the distance between individuals and communities is determined by the way people think and feel—their state of love. Why is this? How is this similar to relationships with have with others here, now?
3. How big are communities in heaven? What kind of community would you want to live in? Why?

The Structure of Heaven

Heaven as a whole is made up of three distinct heavens.

The highest or heavenly heaven is often called the celestial heaven, the second or middle haven is called the spiritual heaven and lowest or first heaven is called the natural heaven.

There are three heavens, very clearly distinguished from each other. There is a central or third heaven, an intermediate or second one, and an outmost or first. These follow in sequence and are interdependent, like the highest part of the human body, the head; the middle, or torso; and the lowest, or feet; or like the highest, middle, and lowest parts of a house. *Heaven and Hell* 29

Angels in the different heavens are moved by different fundamental loves. Angels in the inmost or celestial heaven love the Lord above everything else. He is the reason for their actions. They are deeply affected when they hear true ideas, and respond by immediately putting them into practice. Angels in the spiritual heaven love others most of all. When they learn true ideas they think about them, and then afterwards act on them. Angels in the outmost or natural heaven care most about doing the right thing. They obey heavenly rules but are not that interested in learning true ideas.

The inner nature of angels determines which heaven they are in. The more the deeper levels of their mind have been opened, the more inward the

Do Angels Move Between the Heavens?

Angelic perfection consists in intelligence, wisdom, love and every good, and in the happiness therefrom, but not in happiness without these, for, without them happiness is external and not internal. Because with the angels of the inmost heaven the interiors have been opened in the third degree, their perfection immeasurably surpasses that of the angels in the middle heaven, whose interiors have been opened in the second degree. In the same way, the perfection of the angels of the middle heaven exceeds the perfection of the angels of the outermost heaven. So an angel of one heaven cannot be with angels of another heaven. Anyone who comes up from a lower heaven becomes very anxious and cannot see the people who are there. Anyone who comes down from a higher heaven loses his or her wisdom and confidence. Some newcomers from the outmost heaven who believed that they would find greater happiness if they were admitted to a heaven where higher angels lived were allowed to visit. When they arrived, even though there were many angels there, they did not see anyone. The deeper levels of their minds had not been opened at the level where the more inward angels lived, so they could not see. Before long, they were seized by heart pain and could hardly tell if they were still alive or not. So they made their way back to the heaven they had come from, and were delighted to be among their own people. See *Heaven and Hell* 34-35

heaven they are in. There are three inner levels of every angel and spirit, and of every person here as well. The people whose third level has been opened are in the central heaven, while the people whose second or first only has been opened are in the intermediate or the outmost heaven.

The deeper levels of the mind are opened by our acceptance of divine goodness and truth. People who are actually affected by true ideas and let them directly into their lives—into their intentions and therefore into act—are in the central or third heaven, located there according to their acceptance of what is good in response to truth. People who do not let true ideas directly into their intentions but into their memory and from there into their understanding, intending and doing them as a result of this process, are in the intermediate or second heaven. People who live good moral lives, though, and believe in the Divine with no particular interest in learning, are in the outmost or first heaven. See *Heaven and Hell* 33

What Do I Love Most or Which Heaven Will I Go to?

We cannot know for certain what basic love is at the center of our life. But by reflecting on what brings us the most joy in life we may glimpse what is at the heart of what we truly love (see *Heaven and Hell* 486). We may or may not like what we see. But we can remember that the insight we may glimpse from this gives us pause to think and make new choices. We are free to change what we love and how we want to act every day—in fact every moment of every day.

What Gives You Joy?

Look at the following list of activities. Think about the kinds of people who love doing them. Categorize the activities by the loves of the celestial, spiritual and natural heavens. Some activities may belong in more than one category. (Use the column under the ? to write C, S, and/or N to stand for the different heavens.) Discuss your answers.

?	Activity	?	Activity
	going to church and hearing the Word read		standing up against a crowd for what's right
	helping someone because you're told it's the right thing to do		recognizing that everything you do is really being done by the Lord through you
	giving another person something you really love or want		seeing someone in need of help and immediately helping them
	praising another person		playing games by the rules
	listening to someone's problems		helping a stranger
	having a religious conversation		teaching someone about the Lord
	seeing someone who needs help, but weighing whether it is really the most useful thing to be doing with your time		telling someone when they are making a bad choice