

# ... ✨ ... HEAVEN OR HALAKAH ... ✨ ...

## WALKING WITH JESUS IN JOHN 14

In recent years, the traditional idea of an otherworldly “heaven” as the eternal dwelling place of the redeemed has come under increasing scrutiny. Most evangelical scholars do not dispute the idea that some type of “heaven” exists, but many doubt whether the redeemed will actually go there to spend eternity. John 14 is a passage often referenced to support the notion of “going to heaven.” Yet, an analysis of significant Greek terms and relevant Second Temple period literature reveals that “the Father’s house” is not a designation for heaven, but a reference to Jesus Christ as the new temple. Similarly, the “prepared place” is a reconceptualization of temple imagery, in which the preparation consists of Jesus’s obedience, crucifixion, and resurrection, which makes the presence of God accessible for all believers. As Christ walked in obedience to the Father, he modeled a new *halakha*—one based on personal, relational faith. Believers are called to follow in the cruciform footsteps of Jesus as he makes a way for his people to enter the presence of the Father—not in a future heavenly paradise, but right now. When he does return, he won’t be coming to help his people escape, but to establish a kingdom in which redeemed mankind will experience heaven on earth forever.

Chapter 1: A History of Heaven (Jewish, Greco-Roman, and Biblical conceptions of heaven, paradise, and afterlife)

Chapter 2: Mansions in the Sky (Analysis of temple and dwelling imagery)

Chapter 3: Walk This Way (Jesus’ provides the way to the Father and model of obedience by going to the Cross)

Chapter 4: Coming and Going (Analysis of language surrounding the departure and return of the Messiah; the role of the Holy Spirit)

Chapter 5: Eschatological Implications (Discussion of overarching scriptural narrative; focus on restoration of relationship rather than escaping creation)

