



Three Heavens

FaithBuilder 4 | Lesson 9 | Eternal Life

Lesson Overview

1. Brain Builder

Think about your brain.

2. Read

There are three heavens. Angels in the highest heaven receive the Lord most fully. pp. 1-2

3. Optional Activity

Look at behaviors and decide whether actions are similar to the actions of angels in the celestial, spiritual or natural heaven.

New Church Concept The Sun of Heaven

Heaven's sun is the Lord; light there is the divine truth and warmth the divine good that radiate from the Lord as the sun. Everything that comes into being and manifests itself in the heavens is from this source.... The reason the Lord in heaven appears as the sun is that he is the divine love from which all spiritual things come into being—and, through the agency of our world's sun, all natural things as well. That love is what shines like a sun. *Heaven and Hell* 117

Brain Builder—Right or left brained?

A popular brain function theory categorizes people as being right or left brain dominant. The theory is that left-brained thinkers are more logical, analytic and focused, while right brain thinkers are creative and broad-minded.

1. Does this ring true to you or not?
2. Do you see yourself as mainly right or left-brained?
3. Can you think of friends who are right or left brained?

This theory gives us the useful idea that people are different in fundamental ways. Whatever the cause, some people are more analytical, while others are more spontaneous and fun-loving. The Writings say people love and receive the Lord in various ways—and this continues in the afterlife.

Read

The Lord loves all people and wants everyone to receive His life—from the highest angels to the lowest devils. People receive His life to the extent that they are willing to do so, and some receive it more fully than others. The Lord created three heavens where angels receive the Lord in three fundamentally different ways: an inmost celestial or highest heaven where He is received most fully, a middle spiritual or second heaven, and an outmost natural or lowest heaven where He is received least.

These angels appear simple to others because they are humble in heart, believing that they are not wise, but only the Lord is wise. They are taught about the Lord by angels from the spiritual heaven.

Angels in the third or inmost heaven are in love to the Lord from the Lord. They do all things with interior wisdom. They do not speak about true ideas, but simply do them. For the affections of good and truth which are from that love can exist only in act, and when they exist they are called uses or good works. Uses, to them, are all things done by the Lord in them, which have regard especially to the worship of the Lord, His church, the implantation of the holy things of the church, especially with infants, with whom they have conjunction, and whom they inspire with innocence and its affections; and also the good of society. The angels of the third heaven appear before the angels of the lower heavens as naked infants and children. See *Apocalypse Explained* 826, 828.

New Church Concept Three Heavens

Angels in the second or spiritual heaven love what is true.

Spiritual angels are in love to the Lord from the reception of Divine truth from Him. Their life consists in loving what is true. They first learn true ideas in their memory, and then, after enlightenment from the Lord, they understand them. They love the good of the church, the good of the society in which they live, the good of their fellow-citizens, moral good or sincerity, and civil good or justice. Their love towards their neighbor consists in doing useful acts of service, and they know that only people who find joy in doing useful acts of service can be kept in spiritual love. Like the angels of the third heaven, they live in societies. There are magnificent palaces decorated with precious stones and other ornaments that are more beautiful than anything in the world there that defy description. Spiritual angels wear clothes of fine linen and silk which shine. In many places there are paradise-like scenes of ineffable beauty. See *Apocalypse Explained* 831.

In the spiritual heaven, justice, integrity, verity, chastity, and other praiseworthy virtues of moral life reign. Since they are able to talk about what is true they teach angels in the celestial or highest heaven.

Angels in the outmost or natural heaven are heavenly and spiritual, but to a lesser extent than angels in the higher heavens. They do not love others *more* than themselves, but *as* themselves. They care about leading moral lives but are not as interested in learning and understanding what is true.

Angels in the natural heaven understand what is true in a way that is not unlike people in the world, however they are taught what is true before entering heaven.

People in the first or lowest heaven obey the truths and goods taught in the Word, or in the teachings of the church in which they were born. Most of them are not in truths themselves, but in falsities from ignorance. These falsities are accepted by the Lord as truths because they have as their goal the good of life. *Apocalypse Explained* 443

People who merely practice external charity, but at the same time acknowledge the Lord as God the Redeemer and Savior, enter the lowest heaven. *True Christian Religion* 580.2

Only the more intelligent know what charity towards the neighbor is, the simple there believing that every person is the neighbor, and that charity is to assist the needy, and to do good to the poor, the sojourner, and so on. For the most part they consider persons and what they say, and not the interiors which are the source of what they say. *Apocalypse Explained* 834

There are three heavens - an inmost heaven, a middle heaven, and an ultimate heaven, or a third, second, and first heaven. The inmost heaven is celestial, the angels there are called celestial because they are governed by love to the Lord and so are most closely linked to the Lord. Because of this they are wiser than all other angels. They are innocent and are called embodiments of innocence and wisdom. These angels are divided into internal and external, the internal being more celestial than the external. The middle or second heaven is spiritual, the angels there are called spiritual because they are governed by charity towards the neighbor or mutual love. These angels love others more than themselves. Because they are like this they are called embodiments of intelligence. These angels too are divided into internal and external, the internal being more spiritual than the external. But the ultimate or first heaven is also celestial and spiritual, though not in the same degree as the previous ones; for the natural is closely associated with them, and so they are called celestial-natural and spiritual-natural. They are governed by mutual love, but they do not love others more than themselves, only as themselves. What governs them is an affection for good and a knowledge of truth. They also are divided into internal and external. *Arcana Coelestia* 4286.2

Three Heavens—Three Fundamental Loves

The angels in each of the three heavens are moved by three fundamental kinds of love. In the inmost or celestial heaven the angels are deeply affected when they learn the Lord’s truth, and they put it right into action in their lives. In the spiritual heaven, the angels love to learn and think about the truth, and then commit it to action in their lives. The angels in the outmost or natural heaven care most about leading moral lives, and are not as interested in learning the truth.

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

We cannot know for certain what basic love is at the center of our life, but by reflecting on our lives and discovering what brings us the most delight we may glimpse what is at the heart of what we truly love (see *Heaven and Hell* 486). People are free to change their loves until they die.

A Look at What Delights

Look at the following list of activities and think about the disposition of people who love them. Categorize these 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** (celestial or highest), **S** (spiritual or middle), and/or **N** (natural or lowest) to stand for the different heavens.

?	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