

Originally published in German as
Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon, Dritte Auflage (Neufassung)
© 1986, 1989, 1992, 1996, 1997
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, Germany

English translation © 2001 by
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

Published 2001 by
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company
255 Jefferson Ave. S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form
or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording
or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publishers.

Printed in the United States of America

05 04 03 02 01 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon. English.

The encyclopedia of Christianity / editors, Erwin Fahlbusch . . . [et al.];
translator and English-language editor, Geoffrey W. Bromiley;
statistical editor, David B. Barrett; foreword, Jaroslav Pelikan.

p. cm.

Includes index.

Contents: v. 2. E-I.

ISBN 0-8028-2414-5 (cloth: v. 2.: alk. paper)

I. Christianity — Encyclopedias. I. Fahlbusch, Erwin.

II. Bromiley, Geoffrey William. III. Title.

BR95.E8913 2001

230'.003 — DC21

98-45953

CIP

Brill ISBN 90 04 11695 8

Contents

List of Entries	vii
Publishers' Note to Volume Two	x
Introduction	xi
<i>Alphabetization</i>	xi
<i>Statistics</i>	xi
<i>Cross-references</i>	xiii
<i>Bibliographies</i>	xiv
Consulting Editors	xv
Contributors	xv
Abbreviations	xxii
<i>Biblical Books, with the Apocrypha</i>	xxii
<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i>	xxiii
<i>Early Church Writings, with Nag Hammadi Tractates</i>	xxiii
<i>Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Texts</i>	xxiv
<i>Classical Targums and Rabbinic Writings</i>	xxiv
<i>Other Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Writings</i>	xxiv
<i>Modern Publications and Editions</i>	xxv
<i>States and Provinces</i>	xxix
<i>General</i>	xxix
Entries E-I	1

Heaven

1. Meaning
2. Biblical Traditions
3. Theological and Scientific Cosmologies

1. Meaning

From antiquity onward, across various cultures, the concept of heaven unites and distinguishes several notions and systems of reference.

1.1. Heaven is what people see above the earth, marking it off or securing it (i.e., the firmament). It is sometimes regarded as a material half-globe or a disk arching over the earth.

1.2. Heaven is also a syndrome of powers and uncontrollable forces. We cannot directly measure or manipulate it. It has a decisive impact on life on earth by granting or withholding life and water, also by sending storms, hail, and so forth.

1.3. Heaven is the place of the gods, the home of the Supreme Being or various supernatural forces, to which many orders, including social orders, ascribe their coherence.

1.4. Heaven can be equated with → God, the Godhead, or his manifestation and thus gives rise to many more or less figurative and nuanced concepts of the transcendent or transcendence (→ Immanence and Transcendence).

1.5. Finally, heaven is the place of life after → death, in which a more perfect and indestructible → life is possible and from which standards for the orientation of this present life are derived (e.g., → hope).

2. Biblical Traditions

In the biblical traditions we find elucidation and systematization.

2.1. The deifying of heaven is resisted (see 1.4). Heaven is created by God (e.g., Gen. 1:1; 14:19, 22; Ps. 8:3; 33:6; Prov. 3:19; 8:27; Isa. 42:5; 45:18; Acts 4:24; Rev. 10:6). Its stability is under threat, and although it typifies endurance (Deut. 11:21; Ps. 89:29; Sir. 45:15), it will perish or be destroyed in the → last judgment (Job 14:12; Ps. 102:25-26; Isa. 34:4; 51:6; Jer. 4:23-28; Amos 8:9; Matt. 5:18; Mark 13:31 and par.; 2 Pet. 3:7-10). Heaven and earth must be perfected or created anew (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). Being created, heaven is part of the world, which is made up of heaven and earth (e.g., Gen. 2:4a; Matt. 11:25) or of heaven, earth, and sea (Exod. 20:11).

On this basis the demonizing of cosmic entities can be challenged, and cosmological theorizing can begin (e.g., Genesis 1; Job 36:27-33; 38:33; Isa.

55:10; see *THAT* 2.967-68). Especially noteworthy in this regard is the doctrine of seven heavens (oriented to the seven constellations). It is hardly possible today to trace other numberings.

2.2. Although created by God and part of the world, heaven is also the dwelling place of God (Deut. 26:15; 1 Kgs. 8:30-51; 2 Macc. 3:39; Ps. 2:4; Matt. 5:34; 23:22; Acts 7:49; Rev. 4:2) and the sphere of God's rule (Deut. 4:39; Judg. 5:20; 1 Kgs. 22:19-23; Job 1:6-12; Ps. 11:4; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3). God comes down or looks down from it, especially on humans (Ps. 14:2 etc.). God speaks from heaven, blessing and punishing (e.g., Gen. 11:5; 19:24; 49:25; Exod. 20:22; Deut. 26:15). In a special way God's reign there is uncontested.

2.3. As the place of God's uncontested lordship (Matt. 6:10), heaven is the dwelling place of the "heavenly hosts," or the → angels who surround, worship, and serve God (Neh. 9:6; Ps. 103:20-22; 148:1-6; Matt. 18:10b; Luke 2:13, 15; 22:43). Heaven, then, is not just the point of departure for natural forces (see 1.2) but also the sphere of social forces that direct history.

Nevertheless, although heaven is the location of great powers, the Bible clearly maintains the distinction between it and God (Deut. 10:14; 1 Kgs. 8:27; 2 Chr. 2:5-6; 6:18; Heb. 7:26). In the NT it is from heaven that the triune God does his work for us as the "Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16, 45; 6:1, 9; 23:9, etc.; cf. Mark 1:11 and par.) through the Christ-event (see 2.4) and the sending of the → Holy Spirit from heaven (Mark 1:10 and par.; Acts 2; 1 Pet. 1:12).

2.4. Through the Christ-event (→ Christology) there is communion (J. Moltmann) between heaven, the sphere of the undisputed lordship of the God who is distant from us and relatively inaccessible to us, and earth. This communion is set forth in the descent of Christ from heaven (John 3:13; 6:38, 42; Eph. 4:9), the opening of heaven at his → baptism (Matt. 3:16-17 and par.), his → ascension (Mark 16:19 and par.; Acts 1:9), his session at the right hand of the Father (Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3; 8:1), his awaited coming again as Kyrios (Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 14:62; 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:16-17), and his being given all power in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18; cf. Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:16). The coming → kingdom of God can also be called the kingdom of heaven (almost always in Matthew).

2.5. Heaven is the place where the dead are either close to God or distant from him. It is also the place where believers experience their definitive personal (Matt. 16:19; Luke 10:20; Heb. 12:23) and public (2 Cor. 5:1; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 3:1; 13:14) calling and the fulfillment of their hope (Col. 1:5).

3. Theological and Scientific Cosmologies

Direct conflicts between theological and scientific cosmologies have led both to escape in the deifying of heaven — strengthened and attacked by the philosophical criticism of religion (L. Feuerbach; → Religion, Criticism of) — and to a suppression of the doctrine of heaven. Rehabilitation of the doctrine is possible on the basis of a multisystemic thinking, which shows that different reference systems combine in different ways in what is said about heaven as cultures and perspectives change (J. Moltmann, largely following M. Welker 1981). In modern Western culture temporal ideas predominate (heaven as the future), or modal-theoretical concepts (heaven as the reign of possibilities) prevail.

A developed doctrine of heaven can help give us a better grasp of the political and cosmic dimensions of the Christ-event and the differentiated unity of the work of the triune God. Serious theological and conceptual difficulties stand in the way of such a development, however, especially unresolved conceptions of eternity (see Aristotle's *De caelo* 283b29: heaven containing and enclosing immeasurable time) and problems in fixing the relations between creatures of nature and those of culture.

→ Eschatology; Worldview

Bibliography: K. BARTH, *CD* III/3, §51.2 • H. BIETENHARD, *Die himmlische Welt im Urchristentum und Spätjudentum* (Tübingen, 1951) • L. BRÉMOND, *Le ciel, ses joies et ses splendeurs* (Paris, 1925) • L. FEUERBACH, *The Essence of Christianity* (New York, 1957; orig. pub., 1841) chap. 19 • T. FLÜGGE, "Die Vorstellung über den Himmel im Alten Testament" (Diss., Borna-Leipzig, 1937) • J. HAEKEL, J. SCHMID, and J. RATZINGER, "Himmel," *LTK* 5.352-58 • C. HOUTMAN, *Der Himmel im Alten Testament* (Leiden, 1993) • J. MOLTSMANN, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (New York, 1985) 158-84 • S. MORENZ and G. GLOEGE, "Himmel," *RGG* (3d ed.) 3.328-33 • U. E. SIMON, *Heaven in the Christian Tradition* (London, 1958) • J. A. SOGGIN, "מִשְׁמַיִם šamájim Himmel," *THAT* 2.965-70 • H. TRAUB and G. VON RAD, "Ὀὐρανός κτλ.," *TDNT* 5.497-543 • M. WELKER, *Creation and Reality* (Philadelphia, 1999) chap. 3; idem, *Universalität Gottes und Relativität der Welt* (Neukirchen, 1981) esp. 203ff.

MICHAEL WELKER

Hebrew Language

1. Apart from some Aramaic sections, the OT is written in Hebrew. The word "Hebrew," absent from

the OT, occurs first in the prologue to Sirach, and then among the → rabbis, who stressed the dignity of the language of the canonical Scriptures by calling it a holy language.

2. Hebrew represents a dialect group whose local idioms (see Judg. 12:6; 2 Kgs. 18:26) the Israelites adopted. Like the South Canaanite of the Amarna Letters, Phoenician Punic, Moabite, Ammonite, Ugaritic, and Amorite, Hebrew is a Canaanite language (see Isa. 19:18). Canaanite and Aramaic (→ Arameans) form the Northwest Semitic branch of Semitic languages.

3. Three linguistic stages may be distinguished. *Ancient Hebrew* (lasting ca. 1,000 years) runs from the earliest parts of the OT (e.g., Judges 5) by way of the classical Hebrew of the monarchy to the late post-exilic period. Sources apart from the OT include the farming calendar of Gezer, the ostraca of Arad and Samaria, the Siloam tunnel inscription, the Lachish Letters, seals, coins, vessels, and inscribed weights.

Middle Hebrew occurs in an older stage (Ecclesiastes, Tobit, Sirach, nonbiblical → Qumran texts) and a later scholarly stage (→ Mishnah and other rabbinic works).

Modern Hebrew is the form revived in the 19th century under the influence of the Jewish enlightenment and → Zionism, greatly enriched lexically, and syntactically influenced in part by European languages. Hebrew (along with Arabic for the Arab minority) is the official language of the State of Israel.

4. As a Semitic language, Hebrew has the following features:

- gutturals and emphatic sounds;
- two genders, masculine and feminine;
- roots mostly with three consonants and carrying the general sense, with more specific meanings and grammatical forms being indicated by the vocalic pattern or by a prefix, infix, or suffix;
- an attributive relation between two nouns whereby the governing noun comes first in the so-called construct state and the governed noun comes second in the absolute state;
- frequent parataxis in sentence construction;
- distinction between a nominal statement (with no "to be"), which says something about the state of a subject, and a verbal statement, which usually puts the verb first and can describe an act, a process, or a state.

Historically, Hebrew went through a series of stages. Thus an originally long *ā* became *ō*, and diphthongs were contracted (*ay* to *ē*, and *aw* to *ō*).