The Borg of Heaven

The Bible describes heaven as a 1500 mile cube, similar to Star Trek's Borg

by Jim Walker

originated 31 March 1999

back to Satire & Comics

The frightful story of Heaven and Borg

I can't imagine a more frightening story than that of the Bible's heaven. Unfortunately most Christians believe heaven as a pleasant eternal vista for which their souls reside as one with their God, forever. Oh, but what they have misconstrued.

If one considers the Bible an authoritative source (and after all, that's where the idea of Christian heaven comes from) then you will find little to be desiring about the place called heaven unless you wish to become a mindless soul in a utopian world similar to the world of the Borg as presented by the Star Trek
The Borg of Heaven

series. How many Christians realize that heaven is a 1500 mile cube city, or that violence and horror occurs from there, and that its inhabitants have little freedom of expression?

The source of my interpretation comes not from me but from the Bible and from one of the worlds best-known scholars and an authority on the New Testament: Bruce M. Metzger. He has taught for many years at Princeton Theological Seminary, the author of over 35 books and the Chairman of the NRSV Translation Committee. My only contribution is the comparison of the descriptions of heaven with the Borg from the Star Trek series.

About the Borg

The story of the Borg comes from the TV series, Star Trek, and the Star Trek movie, "First Contact."

The Borg consists of a collective consciousness of assimilated species where the concept of individuality has no meaning and freedom and self-determination are irrelevant. The Borg live in mechanical planets some of which are large cubes that roam the universe (see photo at the top). The Borg are extremely war-like and can destroy worlds (just like the God and angels of the Bible).

The social structure is like a bee hive. There is a Queen whose purpose is not breeding but rather acts as a central reference point around which the collective will and purpose of the hive revolves (like the God of heaven).

The Enterprise first meets the Borg in space where they are asked to "Lower your shields." This is similar to religion demanding to submit to faith and lower the shields of skepticism. The Borg commands that "Your culture shall adapt to service ours. Resistance is futile...... Your defensive
capabilities are unable to withstand us. Your life, as it has been, is over. From this time forward, you will service us. You must comply." (In the Bible, God demands obedience and if you do not comply, your life will end).

As long as you submit to the Borg, you will be taken care of. Once you submit, you become assimilated you will dwell in the Borg cube forever. The Borg appears similar in concept to the tabernacle of God:

> And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

> -Rev. 21:3

The 'assimilated' (the saved) beings in the Borg do not die, nor do they feel pain or sorrow. They are, in effect, zombies who fully accept their condition. The inhabitants of heaven, also do not feel pain or sorrow (Rev. 21:4).

Whether the Star Trek writers intended to make an allegorical comparison with heaven is unclear, but the similarities are uncanny. There is even a Borg unit named "Third of Five" (like the third angel in Rev. 8:10), the Queen God (like the woman in Rev. 12:1).

In explaining the purpose within the collective, the Borg Queen replies to Lt. Commander Data:

> "I am the beginning. The end. The one who is many. I am the Borg... I am the Collective. I bring order to chaos."

Note how similar this is to Jesus in Revelation 21:6:

> "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

---

**The cube shaped city of heaven**

How many Christians realize that heaven is a 1500 mile cube? Check the Bible for yourself:

> "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."
The city refers to the new Jerusalem, the holy city, a metaphor for heaven. It represents the tabernacle of God where men will dwell with God. Bruce Metzger writes, "The city measures fifteen hundred miles in length, in breadth, and in height (21:16). But how can a city be a cube? The description is architecturally preposterous, and must not be taken with flat-footed literalism." Of course we must not take the Borg cube literally either. It describes a vision from writers of a science fiction series, similar to the visions of John.

Yet if the city of heaven were in space, like the Borg, then indeed, a cube would serve quite well as a description. After all, isn't heaven usually thought of as 'the heavens above'? Metzger continues: "In ancient times the cube was held to be the most perfect of all geometric forms. By this symbolism, therefore, John wants us to understand that the heavenly Jerusalem is absolutely splendid, with a harmony and symmetry of perfect proportions. Furthermore, he says that "the street of the city is pure gold (21:21)."

So also is the technical marvel of the Borg cube. Splendid is its design for a utopian world, filled with alien zombies, united as a Borg consciousness. So also is the description of the Biblical heaven, a perfect cube filled with believers, connected to a powerful mind-drain called God.

Metzger writes about the inner city of god: "There is no temple or sanctuary in the holy city, for in one respect, the city itself is all sanctuary. Its dimensions, being in the form of a cube, are like the Holy of Holies in the Mosaic tabernacle of old. The immediate presence of God is no longer in a reserved place, entered only by the high priest... God is now accessible to all." Just like the Borg cube! All live for the unity of the one, the Borg.

The heaven's cube has twelve gates, each made of a huge pearl (21:21). The pearly gates. If arranged symmetrically, there would appear two gates per cube face (a cube having six faces).

The Borg cube as described at the top of the page gives the best description I've yet seen for heaven's cube. I don't care how impressive the cube or if the streets are paved with gold, I do not want to be confined within this cubic prison of submission filled with multi-eyed winged creatures (see below).

---

**About the Heavenly inhabitants**
The most information about Heaven comes from the alleged visions of a man named John in the book of Revelation. No one here intends to take these visions literally. This is a story folks, just like Star Trek! Metzger says that, "in reporting his visionary experiences John frequently uses symbolic language. Sometimes he explains the meaning of the symbols. Other symbols really need no explanation."

But if anyone thinks the heaven of the Bible is a peaceful and pleasant place filled with beautiful beings, think again:

"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, WHICH WAS, AND IS , AND IS TO COME."

-Revelation 4: 6-8

What a frightening vision! Beasts like animals full of eyes hardly imparts a comforting image of heaven. And imagine having to put up with the constant day-and-night howling of HOLY, HOLY... My what a vain god.

"And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

-Revelation 5:6
Here we have the representation of Christ (Lamb), with seven horns and seven eyes. And again, the beasts. Metzger says, "The Lamb is described as having seven horns and seven eyes. This should not be taken as a literal description. Rather, the seven horns means that Christ has complete power, and the seven eyes mean that he sees and knows all things." The Queen Borg also represents the power and the knowledge for the Borg.

Anyone who works for a corporation knows the feeling of uncomfort when the boss looks over your shoulder. Now imagine that when you die, you'll be watched by the biggest Boss in the universe, EVERY NANOSECOND OF ETERNITY! Kiss your cherished secrets goodbye. There's no such thing as privacy in heaven.

The Old Testament describes the heavenly creatures as angels, cherubim (cherub), and seraphim. Note that nowhere in the Bible does it describe angels with wings. The idea of winged angels came from the imagination of Baroque painters and sculptors, not from the Bible. Only the cherubim and seraphim have wings. And nowhere in the Bible does it classify cherubim & seraphim as angels (the classification of angels came from imaginative priests).

But what fearsome creatures these are! Seraphim [Hebrew for "burning ones"] are humanoid in form with six wings (they are the ones who sing the Holy-Holy chants). Cherubim are not cupid-like chubby babies but are rather depicted by ancient Mesopotamian religions as creatures of evil who guard buildings. The Bible describes them with four wings, four faces, and mixed human and animal characteristics. Angels are human in form (never with wings or multiple heads). They are represented as messengers of god, servants and warriors, and sometimes evil beings (fallen angels like Satan and demons). A nice bunch of eternal bunk mates, eh?

A few examples of cherubims are found in Gen. 3:24, Ex. 25:17-22, Ex. 26:31, 1 Ki. 6:23-28, 2 Sam. 22:11, Ezek. 1, 10.

Examples of the seraphim are found in Isa. 6:2-3; Isa. 6:6 (and, no doubt, the four beasts in Rev. 4:6-8)

A few examples of angels are found in Gen. 19:15-17, Gen. 22-11, Dan. 8:16, Jud. 13:3, Lk. 1:11-20; 2:9-14, Rev. 5:2; 5:11; 7:1-2; 7:11; 8:2-13; 9:1; 9:11-15; 12:7-9

---

Wars in heaven

In spite of the claimed perfection of heaven, the "perfection" also includes the ability to make war:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.
The Borg of Heaven

-Rev. 19:11

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

-Rev. 19:14

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels

-Rev. 12:14

The Borg is also described as a warring system that can destroy worlds. I don't know about you, but a heaven that can include war and armies is not my description of a peaceful place. And remember, every minute you have to put up with the HOLY-HOLY chants. Instead of the glory of heaven, the Bible more accurately describes a "gory heaven."

Violence from heaven

The Borg has the ability to send destructive beams which can destroy planets. So also can heaven's God strike against his enemies:

And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

-Rev. 20:9

Again, the description of fire from heaven does not impart the idea of a pacific place.

And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

-Rev. 11:12

So much for love of enemies. They get left behind to suffer the consequences of their chosen freedom:

And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.
Woe to the frightened people who had the will to abstain:

Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

And again, more fireworks from heaven:

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men

Even Jesus has the vengeance of a blood thirsty killer:

And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

That's right; even Jesus has the will to kill! (If you don't realize those words as coming from Jesus, consult a red-letter edition of the Bible.)

Sorry, but I just don't want to live with a wrathful entity who slaughters his enemies, or has the will to kill "children." I'm not impressed by the macho or the fireworks. I don't care how powerful he is, or what great wonders he "doeth".
The Borg of Heaven

Thankfully only 144,000 will reach heaven

The Bible explicitly tells how many will be "saved":

...the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins.

-Rev. 14:3-4

Metzger writes, "The first part of chapter 14 is a scene of tranquillity and rejoicing. John sees the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, with the 144,000 of the redeemed. . . 144,000 is a symbolic number, representing all those who remain faithful. . . On the surface this means that only men who have never had sexual intercourse can 'follow the Lamb wherever he goes'. . . Rather, John appears to adopt the imagery found frequently in the Old Testament where any contact with pagan worship was called 'fornication' or 'adultery.' Hence, the 144,000 are those who have not defiled themselves by participating in pagan worship."

Metzger sees that the 144,000 consist of the 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The twelve tribes symbolize the new Israel, the Christian church. Each individual is marked on the forehead with a seal. (See the marked head of a Borg unit above.)

In other words, unless you are a male virgin believer (or a pagan worshiper) you will not get into heaven. Whew! Now I can relax.

I don't know how many people inhabit the cube of the Borg, but 144 thousand seems to be a reasonable guess. It also appears that the Borg have no relationship with women, or have sex of any kind; they seem entirely virginal.

Sitting for eternity with 14399 tribal men in a cube, with the absence of women & sex, paying homage to a wrathful war god surrounded by multi-eyed beasts (symbolically speaking, of course), and having to listen to a never ending chant of HOLY-HOLY is not my cup of tea. Thank you very much, but I'd rather remain peacefully dead for eternity than suffer the entertainments from this vainglorious god.

Conclusion

"The horror, the horror"

-Marlin Brando in 'Apocalypse Now'
Both the Star Trek version and the Biblical account of heaven presents a frightening but interesting story about submitting to a powerful entity in a utopian world devoid of personal freedom.

Heaven is filled with beasts with many eyes (regardless of how metaphorical), power hungry beings with the ability to create war and destruction. The Biblical heaven more closely resembles a hell rather than the bowdlerized descriptions from Christians. Hardly a place where I would like to spend eternity. Moreover, imagine that some people would be joined with their family, including their mother and laws. What exquisite horror.

If I were to believe the Bible, I could not in all good conscious accept the horrors of the heavenly God as truthful, but rather, as a tale invented by the most evil being imaginable. Only an evil power could construct such a figure of God as a ruler who only dispenses forgiveness as long as they submit to His will. The God of the Bible resembles a slave owner who punishes his servants with an iron rod or kills them if they do not obey. A benevolent God would not construct a book with so many horrors, contradictions and falsehoods. Therefore, if I were to believe in the Bible, it would not be a belief that God influenced this but rather Satan inspired. An all powerful God who wished to reveal himself could easily prove himself to all people directly; he would not need a book, a priest, or a religion. If a God does exist, it's obvious that he means to remain unknown. Only an evil being would try to lure people through the ignorance of faith and the unreliability of words, while condemning skepticism and reason. But I am not a believer and I do not believe in God or Satan. Nor do I believe in the Borg.

As a non-believer, I can enjoy fiction and can postulate meaning from allegorical myths. The story of the Borg presents us with a juicy tale of utopian heaven where its citizens cannot think for themselves. The Borg inhabitants live in accordance with a communal system, each unit living "happily" within the system, uncannily like the subjects of religion who submit themselves to a superstitious god who demands love and submission. But I would not volunteer myself to this kind of life anymore than I would reject reason for faith (the reliance on hope and ignorance).

Both Star Trek and the Bible represent mythical stories and they both contain messages that we can learn from (well, at least the Star Trek myth). Although I don't follow Star Trek philosophy, I find the ethics of Star Trek superior to that of the Bible and provides a much better example for healthy living than the cruel submission methods used in the Bible. Star Trek promotes cooperation and tolerance while the Bible promotes intolerance and submission to faith. I do not believe in Star Trek or the Bible, but if I had to choose, I would prefer to live and die on an Enterprise rather than conform to the Borg and I would rather die a non-believer than submit myself to the horrors of the bee-hive of heaven.

Although I wrote this article as a satirical piece on the Biblical concept of heaven for non-believers, Christians and those who believe in a supernatural heaven must consider this a shocking and serious theological presentation about what the Bible really says about heaven. To those who still believe, you might want to reconsider your position in regards to your soul; do you want to spend eternity in the Borg of Heaven, or would you rather free yourself from this horrible theological trap? Consider yourself warned.
Live long and prosper.

Sources:


King James Bible, 1611

Star Trek web sites:

The Borg Arc: The Next Generation

The Borg Collective... Borg Information

Star Trek Philosophy