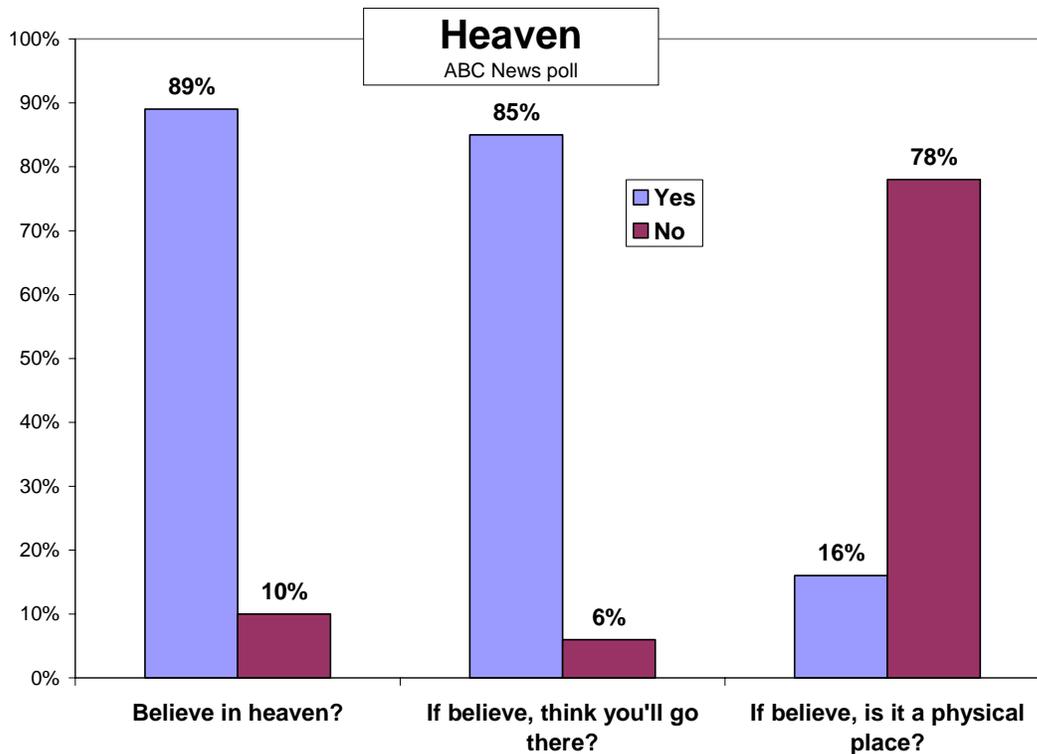


Nine in 10 Believe in Heaven; A Quarter Say for Christians Only

Vast majorities of Americans believe in heaven and think they're headed there. But elbow room won't be a problem: About eight in 10 believers envision heaven as a place where people exist only spiritually, not physically.

Eighty-nine percent in this ABC News poll believe in heaven, which is consistent with data going back 30 years. Among believers, 85 percent think they'll personally go there – mainly in spirit, since 78 percent say it's a place where people exist only spiritually.

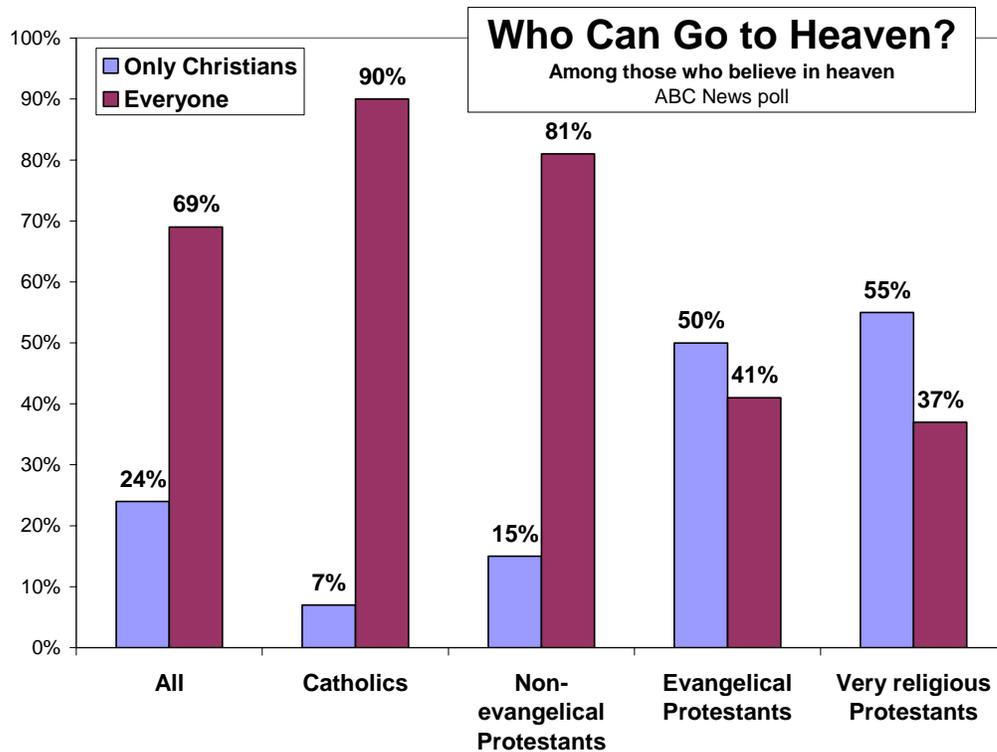
Who gets in is another matter. Among people who believe in heaven, one in four thinks access is limited to Christians. More than a third of Protestants feel that way, and this view peaks at 55 percent among Protestants who describe themselves as very religious.



This poll was conducted to support the Barbara Walters special, "Heaven: Where is it and How Do I Get There?" airing Tuesday, Dec. 20 at 9 p.m. Eastern on ABC.

RELIGION – Religious belief and practice inform views both on the existence of heaven and who can go there. Belief is lowest among people who have no religion; 51 percent of them believe in Heaven. Among people who do follow a religion, by contrast, belief soars to 95 percent.

In terms of entry, there are very large differences among religious groups. Ninety percent of Catholics, and 81 percent of non-evangelical Protestants, believe heaven is open to Christians and non-Christians alike. That declines sharply to just 41 percent of evangelical Protestants, and 37 percent of “very religious” Protestants.



Among all adults, 79 percent are Christians, 14 percent have no religion and the rest, five percent, are non-Christians. Among Christian groups, Catholics account for 21 percent of adults; evangelical Protestants, 19 percent; and non-evangelical Protestants, 13 percent.

SPIRITUAL – There are fewer differences among religious groups on the question of whether heaven is a physical or spiritual place. Belief that it’s a physical place peaks at 22 percent among Protestants who describe themselves as very religious.

As noted, people without a religion are the least likely to believe in heaven (51 percent do, 46 percent don't), followed by people who describe themselves as not religious (72 percent of them do believe, 26 percent don't). Non-religious people who do believe in heaven are slightly less likely than others to think they'll personally go there, but it's a still-high 77 percent

	Believe in heaven	If believe, think will go	If believe, spiritual only
All	89%	85%	78%
Evangelical Protestants	99	94	78
Non-evangelical Protestants	96	84	83
Catholics	96	84	84
Very religious	98	90	75
Somewhat religious	96	86	77
Not religious	72	77	81
Have no religion	51	NA*	NA*

*Small sample

FULL POPULATION – Another way to look at views on heaven is among all Americans, rather than just those who believe in heaven. Among all Americans, 75 percent think they’ll go to heaven. The rest include five percent who believe in heaven but don’t think they’ll get there; nine percent who believe but aren’t sure they’ll get in; and 10 percent who don’t believe in heaven.

Similarly, among all Americans, 21 percent think that only people who are Christians can go to heaven. Among the rest, 60 percent think both Christians and non-Christians can get in, seven percent are unsure and 10 percent don’t believe.

THE SEXES – There’s a difference between the sexes: Eighty percent of women think they’re going to heaven, compared with 69 percent of men. That’s both because men are slightly less apt to believe in heaven in the first place, and among those who do believe, slightly less apt to think they’re headed there.

But it’s religion, again, that seems to be the driving force in the difference between the sexes: Women are 12 points more likely than men to describe themselves as religious, and being religious helps fuel belief in heaven, and the expectation of getting there.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Oct. 5-9, 2005, among a random national sample of 1,023 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Fieldwork by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1. Do you believe in heaven, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
10/9/05	89	10	1
7/1/01	87	8	5

2. (IF BELIEVE, Q1) Do you believe it's a place where people exist physically or only spiritually?

	---Physically/Both---			Only	
	NET	Physically	Both	spiritually	No opin.
10/9/05	16	8	9	78	6

Q1/2 NET:

	-----Believe in heaven-----					Don't believe	No	
	NET	Phys./Both	Phys.	Both	Spirit.	DK	in heaven	op.
10/9/05	89	14	7	8	69	5	10	1

3. (IF BELIEVE, Q1) Just your best guess, do you think you personally will go to heaven, or not?

	Will	Will not	Not sure/depends (vol.)	No opin.
10/9/05	85	6	7	3

Q1/3 NET:

	-----Believe in heaven-----				Don't believe	No	
	NET	Will go	Will not	Depends	DK	in heaven	op.
10/9/05	89	75	5	6	3	10	1

4. (IF BELIEVE, Q1) Do you think that (only people who are Christians can go to heaven), or that (both Christians and non-Christians can go to heaven)?

	Only	Christians and	Only non-	No
	Christians	non-Christians	Christians (vol.)	op.
10/9/05	24	69	*	7

Q1/4 NET:

	-----Believe in heaven-----				Don't believe	No	
	NET	Only Chris.	All	Only non-Chris.	DK	in heaven	op.
10/9/05	89	21	60	*	7	10	1

END