



"Cross Connection"

Radio Ministry of Hope Wesleyan Church and Wells of Salvation Ministries
Ultimate Oldies Radio – FM 97.7 and 101.5, Huber Heights, Ohio



Series: Christian Messages In Secular Music

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Program 39 – "Heaven" © Henry Garza, Jr.

The loss of a loved one – especially a child – leads us to consider where they went, and how we can see them again. This is surely one of the most painful experiences we may ever face. Upon the death of his infant son, King David said, "...I will go to him, but he will not return to me" (2 Samuel 12:23, NIV). When Eric Clapton's toddler son fell several stories to his death, Clapton's reflections were captured in the song, "Tears In Heaven". When Henry Garza, Jr. lost his infant son as a result of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), the tragedy also prompted him to ponder heaven – How far away is it? How can I get there? – and to write this song. Most of the songs we consider in this program series are much older than the three brothers who recorded "Heaven". It is refreshing to note that secular songs with Christian themes still emerge and appeal to a wide range of listeners today!

"Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands." – 2 Corinthians 5:1, NIV

The Song ¹--

- Reached #1 on the Adult Contemporary chart in 2004; also hit #16 on the Billboard Hot 100, crossing over even to the Hot Country Songs chart, where it peaked at #46
- Won the Grammy for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal in 2005
- "Guitarist Henry Garza, Jr. wrote the lyrics as a prayer. When he was 18, his son died of sudden infant death syndrome (S.I.D.S.). It's about the pain he felt and wanting to escape this world and see his son" ²
 - "I got down on my knees and started crying and started praying, and the good Lord told me to start writing it down" – Henry Garza, Jr. ³

The Group – Los Lonely Boys ¹ –

- Grammy-winning rock band from San Angelo, Texas
- 3 Garza brothers – Henry, Jojo, and Ringo
- Followed in their father's footsteps -- Enrique Garza Sr. was in a band "The Falcones", comprised of his brothers, which played conjunto music in south Texas in the 70s & 80s
 - Henry, Jojo, and Ringo sang backup for their father during his solo career, even before they were teenagers
 - Their father returned the favor, contributing vocals on some of their recordings
- Their style combines elements of rock and roll, blues, soul, country, and Tejano
- Influences include Stevie Ray Vaughan, Santana, and Ritchie Valens

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Lonely_Boys

² <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=3723>

³ http://www.monkeyouttanowhere.com/quotes/archives/2004/09/21_12_09.html

Vamonos! -- ["Let's go!"]

Save me from this prison
Lord help me get away
Cause only You can save me now from this misery
I've been lost in my own place
And I'm getting weary
How far is heaven

- What does the lyricist mean by "prison"?
- Who does the writer see as his Rescuer?

Consider Paul's words from 2 Corinthians 5 –
"...while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we...wish to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." (verse 4)
"We...would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord." (verse 8)

And I know that I need to
change my ways of living
How far is heaven
Lord can you tell me

Not just a personal decision to change. This change must begin with faith – a spiritual commitment through Jesus Christ. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide us in how to live a life that pleases God.

Paul told the Galatians -- *"I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."* – Gal. 2:20

I've been locked up way too long in this crazy world
How far is heaven
And I just keep on praying Lord and just keep on living
How far is heaven
Yeah, Lord can You tell me
How far is heaven (I just gotta know how far, yeah)
How far is heaven (Yeah, Lord can you tell me)

The Bible tells us many things about heaven, but doesn't answer "How far?"

- A real place (John 14:2)
- God is there (Deut. 26:15; Eccl. 5:2)
- Redeemed are there (1 Thes. 4:13-18)

Tu que estas en alto cielo, hechame tu bendicion

Loosely translated – "You, who are in high places, guide me with Your blessing"

Cause I know there's a better place than this place I'm living
How far is heaven
And I just got to have some faith and "just" keep on giving
How far is heaven (Yeah, Lord can you tell me)
How far is heaven (I just got to know how far, yeah)
How far is heaven (Yeah, Lord can you tell me)
How far is heaven
Cause I just gotta know how far...
I just wanna know how far

"How far" indeed! In terms of...

- Our time on earth?
- Physical distance?
- Time, space or dimension?

We will know in God's time...

Final thoughts:

Dan Flourney⁴ shares the following story and commentary -- A man who was dying asked his doctor to tell him about heaven. "I do not know anything about heaven," said the physician, "except that my Master is there, and that is enough." As he said this he opened the door, and in leaped his dog and sprang into his arms in gladness. The doctor said to his patient, "This dog has never been in this room before, but HE KNEW HIS MASTER WAS INSIDE. That was all that mattered!"

In the words of James, "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord" (James 5:7). As the dog waited anxiously for the door to open--so may we wait patiently for the Lord until He comes or calls us home.

⁴ http://www.thebible.net/ISBS/journal/archives/1104/X0005_somefactsaboutheaven.html