

What is heaven like & where is heaven?

John 14:1-3 even says that Jesus is in heaven preparing a place for us to live. In heaven, those saved by God will have new bodies without the curse of sin! There will be no one who is blind, deaf or lame in heaven (Isaiah 35:5, 6 and Philippians 3:21). Although Jesus builds houses in heaven, the Bible also says that those saved will also build their own houses and inhabit them as well as plant and eat from vineyards (Isaiah 65:21). Most importantly, God will be in heaven and He wants to be your friend. He wants to dwell with you and wipe away all your tears (Revelation 21:1-4).

What does the Bible say about heaven?

Is heaven real? Is there a heaven? There are many popular myths about heaven and where it is that create misunderstanding. According to the Bible, the universe is not only infinite, but also filled with intelligent, friendly, benevolent beings. The most amazing and almost unbelievable fact is that the way to heaven is not complicated. Our title to heaven is given freely to those who accept that God bore our wrongs against Himself when Jesus died on the cross. When we ask Him for forgiveness and a new heart to keep His commandments, He will freely give us both.

Three meanings of "heaven"

1) The word "heaven" (Hebrew: shamyim, Greek: ouranos) can mean God's dwelling place. The Bible says: "The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all" (Psalm 103:19). God's throne is also mentioned in connection with the mountain of God (Ezekiel 28:16).

2) Heaven may also refer to the endless planets, stars, and galaxies of the universe. The Bible says: "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained" (Psalm 8:3).

3) The Bible also speaks of the atmosphere that surrounds the earth as heaven or heavens (Genesis 1: 7, 8). Please note: one must study the biblical context to understand which of the three meanings is implied.

The Bible is clear on the following:

After Jesus was raised from the dead, He went to heaven. The Bible says: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Prior to this Jesus told His disciples: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

What is heaven like?

1) All things are new

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1, 2).

2) No tears or pain

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

3) Perfect peace

"'The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust [shall be] the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,' says the LORD" (Isaiah 65:25).

4) Houses and vineyards

"They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit" (Isaiah 65:21).

5) Fruitful gardens

"The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose" (Isaiah 35:1).

Is heaven real?

1) Heaven has solid real estate

Popular myths picture heaven as a fanciful place where spirits sit on clouds playing harps or float around in nebulous space. However, in John 14:2-3 the Bible says that Jesus is building mansions in heaven for those who accept salvation. He is preparing real buildings with real tangible materials for real people who will inhabit them.

Additionally, when Jesus went to heaven he told his disciples: "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29). This means that in heaven real vineyards will produce real grapes.

The Bible even refers to heaven as a country (Hebrews 11:16). Before sin came into this world, the world was a physical paradise — a beautiful garden full of fruits, trees, and animals. Similarly, when sin is finally eradicated from this universe, we will get to live life as God originally intended for mankind when He first created the Garden of Eden — not as spirits on clouds, but in a tangible, material Heaven.

2) There are many intelligent beings in heaven

With the increasing understanding of solar systems, planets, stars, and galaxies it is inconceivable to believe that human beings are the only intelligent life in the universe. It makes sense to realize that there is a country out in the universe, perhaps even the universe itself, known by the Bible writers as heaven.

The Bible speaks about hosts or inhabitants of both heaven and earth. "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished" (Genesis 2:1). The Bible mentions that beings on other planets rejoiced at the creation of the earth. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). The biblical prophet Micaiah said: "I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and His left" (2 Chronicles 18:18).

3) Perfect unselfish love governs all relationships in heaven

The Bible says: "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8). Those who love God keep His commandments (John 14:15). The inhabitants of heaven obey God's commandments of love (Psalm 103:19-21).

4) We will have physical bodies in heaven

Our bodies will be free from disease, pain and death in heaven (1 Corinthians 15:40-49). We will still have physical bodies. The Bible says: For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body (Philippians 3:20, 21). The body of Jesus after His resurrection was physical. Jesus said: "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have" (Luke 24:39). We will be able to recognize our loved ones. The Bible says: "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

5) The New Earth as heaven

Real earth, real houses, gardens, hobbies, loved ones, are all part of the perfect future life in store for those who are faithful to God's Word. This becomes more believable when we realize that the Bible says that the greater part of the future existence of human beings will take place right here on our planet Earth, which will be recreated and restored to its original perfection. This life will be free from sickness, war, crime and anything harmful. The future life will have the best of this life plus additional joys beyond our imagination. (see Revelation 21:1-4; Isaiah 65:17-25; John 14:2, 3.)

Bible prophecy points to the fact that Jesus will return the second time. He will not come in secret, but every eye shall see him (Revelation 1:7). At that time, those who have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior will be taken to heaven for a period of time. They will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years in the mansions Jesus is building and in the New Jerusalem in the heavenly country. Then He will bring the New Jerusalem down to earth. God will recreate a new earth with a new atmosphere, and our heavenly life will take place right here. (See Second Coming, Millennium)

How do you get to heaven?

Contrary to popular belief, the Bible says we do not go to heaven or hell when we die. We sleep in the grave until the resurrection as the Bible says: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2).

The entrance to heaven is not automatic for people who have simply tried to be good. The Bible says: "But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" (Revelation 21:27). The qualifying factor for those who enter will be whether or not their names are written in the Lamb's book of life.