

# What will Heaven be like?

**1. When God first created Earth, and the Garden of Eden for man to live, it was definitely a paradise.** But, was the Garden of Eden the same Paradise that Jesus spoke of to the thief on the cross? Was it the same Paradise that the Apostle Paul saw? The Greek word for “*paradise*” is *paradeisos* which, according to “Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words,” was “...used of the Garden of Eden, **Genesis 2:8.**”

**A. Genesis 2:7-25** tells us that it was here, in this perfect paradise called the Garden of Eden, that God made the first man and woman (Adam and Eve). According to **Genesis 1:26**, God made Adam and Eve in “*our image*” (God and His angels had immortal bodies that would live forever). And, according to **Genesis 3:8**, God even walked and talked with them in this paradise He made.

**B. In the middle of the Garden (Genesis 2:9) there were two trees:** “*the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*”

(1) The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the only tree they were commanded not to eat from. According to **Genesis 2:17**, they would die (become mortal) if they ate from this tree.

(2) **Genesis 3:22**, however, says that as long as they ate from the tree of life that grew in this paradise, they would continue to be immortal and live forever.

**C. Genesis 3:1-7** tells the story of how the Serpent (Satan) was able to get Eve to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and how she was able to get Adam to share in its fruit.

(1) **Verses 14-19** tell of God’s curses on the serpent, Eve, and Adam which lasted until their mortal life ended and their mortal body returned to the earth (**verse 19**).

**D. Genesis 3:22** tells us that God then banished Adam and Eve from this paradise called the Garden of Eden, so that they would “*not be allowed to reach out their hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.*”

**2. What ever happened to the Garden of Eden and the tree of life that could allow a human being to live forever?**

**A. Revelation 2:7** Jesus said: “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.*”

**B. Revelation 22:1-3** The Apostle John says: “*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down*

*the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse...*

**(1) Here the Apostle John saw in Heaven** *“...the river of the water of life...flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb down the middle of ...the city .”* Adam and Eve saw *“in the middle of the garden was the tree of life...and a river watering the garden flowed from Eden* (the paradise God made and walked in according to **Genesis 2:9,10 and 3:8**).

**(2) Notice that the tree of life is in Heaven, and there is no longer any curse.** The tree of life allowed a human being to have immortality, and the *curse* came to anyone who would eat of the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, which is no longer in the *“Paradise of God”* (**Revelation 2:7**).

**C. Revelation 22:14** says that Christians *“may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city (Heaven).”*

**D. Revelation 22:19** warns: *“and if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city...”*

**E. II Corinthians 12:2-4** reveals that, like the Apostle John, the Apostle Paul was also allowed to see Heaven; and he tells us in **verse 2** that he *“was caught up to the third Heaven,”* and then later, in **verse 4** he says he *“was caught up to Paradise.”*

**F.** Remember the conversation Jesus had with the thief on the cross just before they died? **Luke 23:42,43** says the thief told Jesus: *“remember me when you come into your kingdom. Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in Paradise’.”*

**3. It must be remembered that in Revelation 21:2 the Apostle John** *“saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven...”*

**A. John went on to describe the “Holy City” from the outside in verses 10-14:** *“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It has a great high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. “*

**B. John then measured the city in verses 15-17:** *The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its wall. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to*

*be 12,000 stadia (about 1,400 miles) in length, and as wide and high as it is long. He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits (about 200 feet) thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using."*

(1) The city was about 1,400 miles square and about 1,400 miles high. If the city, like a square block, were placed in the U.S.A., it would reach from Atlanta, Georgia on the east, to Denver, Colorado on the west, and from Montreal, Canada on the north, to Key West, Florida on the South, and then would be about 1,400 miles high.

(2) Atlanta, Georgia covers 135 square miles. The Holy City covers about two million square miles — about 15,000 times as large as Atlanta. About twenty times as large as New Zealand, and about ten times as large as Germany!

**C. Verses 18-27 describe the inside of the City:** *"The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. I did not see a temple in the City, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp...On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there...Nothing impure will ever enter it...but **only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.**"*

#### **4. So, how do we make sure our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life?**

**A.** When we die and stand before the Lord, **Revelation 20:11-15** tells us we will be "judged according to what we have done" on Earth as "recorded in the Book of Life." If our name is not recorded in the Book, we will be "thrown into the Lake of Fire!"

**B.** Remember Jesus' warning to the Church in Ephesus recorded in **Revelation 2:4,5:** *"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things (works) you did at first (taught by the Apostle Paul who founded the Church). If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place."*

**C. James 1:12:** *"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him."*

(1) **1 Peter 1:6-9** tells us that the "trials" or "test" is to prove your faith genuine.

(2) Jesus gives everyone the opportunity to pass their test on this earth in their mortal body, and prove their faith genuine. The Lord won't allow you to die until He decides you've either passed or failed:

**(a) *In Matthew 10:28-39*** Jesus tells us that not even a sparrow dies *“apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”*

#### **D. Do you have the Holy Spirit?**

(1) *Acts 2:38* says the first 3,000 Christians were told to *repent and be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and they would receive the Holy Spirit.*

(2) *II Corinthians 5:5* says: *“Now it is God who made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come.”*

#### **E. Do you believe what He said before He died for you?**

**(1) *John 14:1-26*:** *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In My Father's House are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”* Thomas said to him, *‘Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’* Jesus answered, *‘I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’...Whoever has My commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me...If anyone loves Me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching...But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

**(2) *Are you obeying all of His commands? John 6:48-56*:** *“I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from Heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. If a man eats of this bread, He will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world...I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day...Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in Me, and I in him.”*

**(a) *What did He mean by this? He explained at the Last Supper in Matthew 26:26-28*:** *“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave*

*thanks and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant (New Testament), which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'.*"

**E. I Corinthians 15:19** says: "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men." Because, **I John 5:13** adds: *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*"

### **5. So, what will we look like in Heaven? Angel? Ghost? What kind of body?**

**I Corinthians 15:35-58 has your answer:** "But someone may ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?' How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as He has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds have another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies...So it will be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body...**And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the Man from Heaven...**flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable...but we will all be changed..."

**A. Philippians 3:20,21** says "...the Lord Jesus Christ...will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body."

**B. John 20:13-20** tells us that Mary, the first person to see Jesus in His resurrected body, at first didn't recognize Jesus (she was looking for a dead cut up body); but when Jesus called her name, she turned and recognized Him. The two that Jesus appeared to that same day in **Luke 24:13-35**, also didn't recognize Him until He "broke The Loaf" (Communion) and started to give it to them.

(1) The voice sounds the same?

(2) The heavenly body must at least resemble the earthly body (if you could imagine what you're body would look like in perfect condition).

**C.** After appearing to Mary, Jesus went back into Heaven (**John 20:17**), and then appeared to many of His disciples. We know He must have appeared to them in His heavenly body because **I Corinthians 15:50** tells us the earthly body was not allowed into Heaven, and Jesus had just come back from there.

**D. Luke 24:36** tells us that Jesus just appeared to them in the room ("with the doors locked," according to **John 20:19**), leading His disciples to believe that He was a ghost.

(1) He told His disciples in **verse 39** that He wasn't a "ghost," and invited them to "touch Me and see." His proof was in the fact that He had "flesh and bones," which means you will be able to hug and kiss them when you see them!

(2) Remember **I Corinthians 15:39,40** tells us that there are different kinds of "flesh," and one kind is the body we will get in Heaven.

(3) **Verses 41,42** show us that Jesus' heavenly body could also eat. Remember, in **Genesis 3:22**, Adam and Eve had immortal bodies in the Garden of Eden (Paradise) as long as they ate of the Tree of Life, and Jesus tells us in **Revelation 2:7** that we will still eat of this tree in Heaven (Paradise).

**E.** Perhaps this heavenly body can best be described in **Matthew 17:1-3**: "...Jesus took with him Peter, James and John...and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus."

(1) Moses and Elijah both died, and, according to **I Corinthians 15:35-58**, transfigured (*changed*) from their *natural* or earthly bodies into their *spiritual* bodies. In order to speak to them, Jesus transfigured or *changed* from His *mortal* or *earthly* body to His *spiritual* or *heavenly* body.

(2) Notice their faces *shone* and their clothes were *white as light*. This may be why the Apostles thought He was a *ghost* (**Luke 24:36-42**).

**F. I John 3:2**: "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him..."

**6. Revelation 21:1-5**: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea (salt water). I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God...And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them (as it was in the Garden of Eden or Paradise). They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things (this earth and these mortal bodies) has passed away...I am making everything new!'"