

## Imagine Heaven Series – Questions About Heaven

### Question:

Is it possible to long for heaven too much?

### Answer:

Absolutely not!

The apostle Paul commanded, “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory”<sup>1</sup> (Colossians 3:1-4).

It has been said, “Some people are so heavenly minded they are no earthly good.” I could not disagree more. The more we understand about heaven and hell, eternal rewards, and what God has in store for those He loves—I believe it will motivate us to living in a manner worthy of the gospel (Philippians 1:27) and compel us to store up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-20).

The prize of heaven allowed Paul to say; “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”<sup>2</sup> (Philippians 1:21). Paul’s eternal perspective and hope for eternal life allowed him to face death with joy and anticipation. The joy of heaven compelled Jesus to “endure the cross” and finish well (Hebrews 12:2-3).

The reality that one day God will dwell with His redeemed people should motivate us to continually live in light of eternity (Revelation 21:3).

### Question:

If a person once walked with the Lord and then turns away from the Savior—will that individual go to heaven?

### Answer:

Ultimately only God knows who are and are not true believers.

Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?’ Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you! Depart from me, you lawbreakers’<sup>3</sup> (Matthew 7:21-23).

In 2 Corinthians 13:5 Paul told the Corinthian church to, “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or do you yourselves not recognize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless you fail the test.”<sup>4</sup>

#### How can we test genuine faith?

- Genuine repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - Acts 20:20 “I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.”<sup>5</sup>
- Genuine experience of the Spirit of God living within and empowering for life and ministry.
  - Romans 8:8-9 “Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God lives in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (1984). (Col 3:1–4). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (1984). (Php 1:21). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>3</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version*. (2009). (Mt 7:21–23). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>4</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version*. (2009). (2 Co 13:5). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version*. (2009). (Ac 20:21). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>6</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version*. (2009). (Ro 8:8–9). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

- Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”<sup>7</sup>
- Genuine desire to live “obedience of faith.”
  - Acts 2:38 “Repent,” Peter said to them, “and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”<sup>8</sup>
  - Romans 6:12-14 “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its desires. And do not offer any parts of it to sin as weapons for unrighteousness. But as those who are alive from the dead, offer yourselves to God, and all the parts of yourselves to God as weapons for righteousness. For sin will not rule over you, because you are not under law but under grace.”<sup>9</sup>
- Genuine relationship with the great Shepherd, Jesus Christ.
  - John 10:27-29 My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish —ever! No one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.”<sup>10</sup>

**Question:**

What age will a baby be in heaven?

**Answer:**

The Bible does not specifically answer this question. Will babies and children who die still be babies/children in heaven? What about elderly people who die - do they remain elderly in heaven? Some have guessed that babies are given a resurrection body (1 Corinthians 15:35-49) that is “fast-forwarded” to the “ideal age,” just as those who die at an old age are “rewound” to the ideal age. This would indicate that there won’t be any children or elderly people in heaven.

One thing we can be certain of, whatever age we appear to be in heaven, we will be gloriously perfect. Our entire person will be remade flawless, wholly and completely Christ-like. We will lose all trace of human sinfulness, wearing the white robes of purity, holiness and absolute perfection. So whatever age we are, it will be the age of complete and total perfection.

**Question:**

Any thoughts on the Holy Spirit’s apparent absence in the New Jerusalem?

**Answer:**

Yes, the Holy Spirit is less prominent; however, in Revelation 22:17, “The Spirit and bride” give an invitation for the thirsty to come.

The New Jerusalem will be a place of incredible blessing. The curse of the old earth will be gone (Revelation 22:3). In the city is the tree of life “for the healing of the nations” and the river of life (Revelation 22:1–2). It is the place that Paul spoke of, “In the coming ages [God] might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). The New Jerusalem is the ultimate fulfillment of all God’s promises. The New Jerusalem is God’s goodness made fully manifest.

---

<sup>7</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.* (2009). (Ac 1:8). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.  
<sup>8</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.* (2009). (Ac 2:38–39). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.  
<sup>9</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.* (2009). (Ro 6:12–14). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.  
<sup>10</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.* (2009). (Jn 10:27–30). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

Who are the residents of the New Jerusalem? The Father and the Lamb are there (Revelation 21:22). Angels are at the gates (Revelation 21:12). But the city will be filled with God's redeemed children. If you believe that Jesus, the Son of God, died and rose again and have asked God to save you by His grace, then you are a citizen of the New Jerusalem. "God raised [you] up with Christ and seated [you] with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). You have "an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade" (1 Peter 1:4).

If you have not yet trusted Christ, the invitation is extended, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let the one who hears say, 'Come!' Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life" (Revelation 22:17). This seems to indicate that the Holy Spirit is present in the New Jerusalem. Also, the Trinity - Father, Son and Spirit are one. The Trinity will be fully present in the New Jerusalem.

**Question:**

Will our sinful nature leave us as believers when we enter into heaven?

**Answer:**

Yes. Heaven cleanses our lives of sin but doesn't erase our memory. We have learned lessons on earth about God's grace, mercy, forgiveness, love and those lessons will go with us into heaven. Remembering God's character enhances our appreciation of heaven.

Christ promises in the New Earth, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will no longer exist; grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer, because the previous things have passed away" Revelation 21:4.

Author Randy Alcorn states, "Since 'the wages of sin is death' (Romans 6:23), the promise of no more death is a promise of no more sin. Those who will never die can never sin, since sinners always die. Sin causes mourning, crying and pain. If those will never occur again, then sin can never occur again."

The Bible makes it clear that Christ died once to address sin and will never again need to die (Hebrews 9:26-28; 10:10; 1 Peter 3:18). Because of Jesus, we receive the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). We won't sin in heaven for the same reason God doesn't... He cannot sin. The sacrifice of Christ's blood has made our ability to sin in heaven impossible.

**Question:**

Does the process of sanctification continue on into the afterlife (heaven/millennium)?

**Answer:**

No, thankfully, Scripture teaches that heaven will complete the process of becoming like Christ and being made completely holy in who we are and all that we do.

The apostle John wrote, "Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure"<sup>11</sup> (1 John 3:1-3).

The apostle Paul wrote, "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose. For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; and those He justified, He also glorified"<sup>12</sup> (Romans 8:28-30).

Glorification means that we will share in the glory of God and be made in the image and likeness of Christ. That is why in Revelation 21:8 the apostle John contrasts the inhabitants of heaven with the non-inhabitants

---

<sup>11</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.* (2009). (1 Jn 3:2-3). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>12</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.* (2009). (Ro 8:28-30). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

stating, “But the cowards, unbelievers, vile, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars — their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”<sup>13</sup>

Finally, the apostle John reminds us that heaven will be a place of “no more.” Revelation 21:4 states, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will no longer exist; grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer, because the previous things have passed away.”<sup>14</sup> Why no more death, pain, crying and grief? Because in heaven, sin will no longer exist. Because heaven is a perfect place inhabited by perfected people.

**Question:**

Will heaven be so perfect that there will be no failures or challenges?

**Answer:**

Yes, heaven will be perfect and temptation to sin will cease to exist and failures as we know them will no longer haunt us. However, with all that said, heaven is filled with glorious activity that will challenge and stretch us, and be incredibly exciting.

For instance, the apostle Paul said, “if we endure, we will also reign with Him” (2 Timothy 2:12). Can you imagine what that may be like? To enjoy a co-regency with the Lord Jesus Christ will be an incredible experience and last throughout eternity.

In addition, Jesus said these beautiful words to His followers who faithfully manage their time, treasure, talent and touch, “Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master’s joy!”<sup>15</sup> (Matthew 25:21). In heaven, we will have exciting opportunities to lead, oversee and be in “charge” of the new heaven, the new earth and the New Jerusalem.

Can you picture in your mind’s eye what it would be like to serve as a “heavenly travel agent” where you get to book celestial trips for the citizens of heaven? Does that sound like fun?

How would you like to govern a galaxy or manage a heavenly amusement park or golf complex?

Maybe you enjoy music and the arts. Could you imagine what it would be like to be the worship leader for the heavenly choir? Some of you like to read and write. Can you imagine the new literary works that will be created and enjoyed by God’s people for all eternity?

And friends, please realize, the ruling, overseeing and being in charge of God’s new creation is part of our ongoing “joy” in the Lord. (Matthew 25:21)

**Question:**

Will we have relationships with people? Will some people be more important or closer to us than others?

**Answer:**

Yes. We will have relationships with people, although God will be our primary relationship. We will experience an unhindered love relationship with God like never before. He will be our greatest source of joy and satisfaction.

We need relationships with one another here on earth and in heaven. “It is not good for man to be alone...” (Genesis 2:18). God was in relationship with Adam in the Garden and yet he knew that Adam needed companionship. The Garden of Eden was a preview of the New Earth. Relationships are seen throughout scripture and will be citizens of a city called the New Jerusalem and enjoy God honoring and healthy relationships for all eternity.

---

<sup>13</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.* (2009). (Re 21:8). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>14</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.* (2009). (Re 21:4). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>15</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.* (2009). (Mt 25:21). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

Our greatest joy will be to relate with God; but as we relate with others, God is pleased as well. God is our Father and He delights in the relationships of His children.

The Great Commandment tells us the importance and priority of relationships. We are to love God and love others. That priority doesn't change in heaven.

**Question:**

Psalm 110 states – The Lord says to my Lord: I understand we will see Messiah (Lord) face to face. Will we see Yahweh (Lord) face to face?

**Answer:**

Yes, we will see Yahweh (Lord) face to face in heaven. Our longing for heaven is really a longing for God. *Matthew 5:8 - The pure in heart are blessed, for they will see God.*

*Revelation 22:4 - They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.* It is hard to know exactly how we will see God's face, but Scripture indicates that we will see God face to face.

**Question:**

Does the phrase "dwelling places" indicate connected domiciles so we can visit easier rather like row houses or condos?

**Answer:**

We are not sure; however, we will live in perfect community.

In John 14:1-4 Jesus told His disciples, "Your heart must not be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also. You know the way to where I am going."

The Place: In Revelation 3:12-13 Jesus says, "I am coming quickly. Hold on to what you have, so that no one takes your crown. The victor: I will make him a pillar in the sanctuary of My God, and he will never go out again. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God—the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God—and My new name."<sup>16</sup>

In Revelation 21:1-2 we read, "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. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."<sup>17</sup>

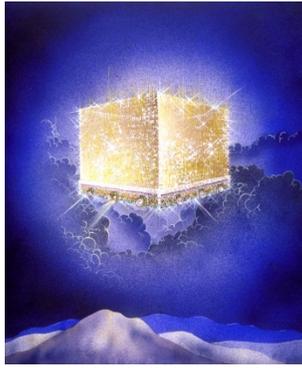
The New Jerusalem is called the "the Holy City" and "city of My God" and is described as "coming down out of heaven like a beautiful bride adorned for a bridegroom."

The Space: Pictured is a visual aid of the New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven and the new heaven to the new earth.

---

<sup>16</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.* (2009). (Re 3:11–12). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>17</sup> *The Holy Bible: New International Version.* (1984). (Re 21:1–3). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.



**God's Holy City** has the dimensions of a perfect cube that is enormous in size. The city's exact dimensions are measured by an angel and reported to be 12,000 stadia, the equivalent of 1,400 miles or 2,200 kilometers, in length, width, and height (Revelation 21:15-16). A city of this size in the middle of the United States would stretch from Canada to Mexico and from the Appalachian Mountains to the California border. Even more astounding is the city's 1,400-mile height.



Therefore, we do not have to worry that Heaven will be crowded. The ground level of the city will be nearly 2,000,000 square miles. This is 40 times bigger than England and 15,000 times bigger than London. It's 10 times as big as France or Germany and far larger than India. But remember, that's just the ground level.

Given the dimensions of a 1,400 mile cube, if the city consisted of different levels (we don't know this), and if each story were a generous 12 feet high, the city could have over 600,000 stories. If they were on different levels, billions of people could occupy the New Jerusalem, with many square miles per person.



The Community: Surely these dimensions are given to convey that the home of God's people will be extremely large and roomy, where perfect community will be enjoyed by all. The New Jerusalem will be our primary residence for all eternity. Remember, these dwelling places within the New Jerusalem were prepared for us by Jesus Himself (John 14:3).

The Bible suggests that we will come and go because the doors of the city are always open. In addition, the New Jerusalem is radiant “like a very precious stone, like a jasper stone, bright as crystal”<sup>18</sup> (Revelation 21:11-12). This brightness suggests an openness to people’s lives because there will no longer be hiding, shame or guilt as sin is completely absent. This is a picture of the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve were “naked and not ashamed.”<sup>19</sup>

**Question:**

Can people in heaven look down and see us?

**Answer:**

Many have tried to answer the question by quoting Hebrews 12:1 which states, “Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us...”

The phrase “cloud of witnesses” may refer to people looking down on us from heaven. However, this chapter of Hebrews records the many people whom God commended for their faith as a means to spur us on in times of challenge. It is these people who are the “cloud of witnesses.” They are “witnesses” not in that they are watching us, but rather in that they have set an example for us. Because of the faith and diligence of Christians who went before us, we should be inspired to follow their example.

Unfortunately the Bible does not specifically say whether or not people in heaven can look down on us who are still on the earth. I think it is unlikely that they can. Why?

1. They would see things that would cause them grief or pain, namely, acts of sin and evil. Since there is no grief, tears, or unhappiness in heaven (Revelation 21:4), it does not seem that observing earthly events would be possible.
2. People in heaven are so preoccupied with worshipping God and enjoying the glories of heaven that it does not seem they would have significant interest in what is happening here on earth. The very fact that they are free from sin and experiencing God’s presence in heaven surely is more than enough to captivate their attention.
3. Whenever there’s a connection with the living and the dead it is condemned in Scripture (Deuteronomy 18:9-14; Leviticus 20:6; Isaiah 8:19).

While it is possible that God allows people in heaven to look down upon their loved ones, the Bible is interestingly silent on the connection between people in Heaven interacting with those on earth.

**Question:**

I’ve been reading in the Old Testament lately where God commands entire cities to be wiped out... men, women, children, infants. Do you think those babies and children are in heaven?<sup>20</sup>

**Answer:**

Yes, there is strong evidence in Scripture that when children die, they go immediately to heaven.

Reason #1 God provides instant heaven for every innocent life that has not reached the condition of moral responsibility. CHILDREN ARE INNOCENT

In Jeremiah 19:3-5 God refers to children as “THE INNOCENT” ones. “This is what the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, says...They have burned incense in it to other gods that they, their fathers, and the kings of Judah have never known. They have filled this place with the blood of the innocent.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.* (2009). (Re 21:11–12). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>19</sup> Randy Alcorn, Heaven, <http://www.epm.org/resources/2010/Feb/22/what-are-new-jerusalem-dimensions/#ixzz3amYWIBOc>, summary of his perspective on the dimensions of the New Jerusalem.

<sup>20</sup> Please visit <http://www.friendship-church.org/fyi/series/seriesdefault.asp?series=Imagine%20Heaven> and see title Safe In The Father’s Arms.

<sup>21</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version.* (2009). (Je 19:3–5). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

Yes, every child is a FALLEN CREATURE with a SIN NATURE. However, “infants are NOT CULPABLE in the same sense as those whose SIN WILFULLY and PURPOSEFULLY.”<sup>22</sup>

A child who has not reached moral responsibility is a child who has not reached sufficient mature understanding to comprehend convincingly the issues of law and grace, sin and salvation. Only God knows the time when a child becomes ultimately “accountable.”<sup>23</sup> Therefore, “From child to child, that precise age varies. It is the ‘condition’ that counts, not a calendar.”<sup>24</sup>

Reason #2 The testimony of King David when his child died.

2 Samuel 12:22-23 “He answered, “While the baby was alive, I fasted and wept because I thought, ‘Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let him live.’ But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I’ll go to him, but he will never return to me.”<sup>25</sup>

Note: David’s mourning ended because he knew he could not change his child’s death, however, he could look forward to a heavenly reunion.

Reason #3 Jesus uses children as an example of faith and members of the Kingdom of God.

Mark 10:13-16 Some people were bringing little children to Him so He might touch them, but His disciples rebuked them. “When Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to Me. Don’t stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I assure you: Whoever does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.’ After taking them in His arms, He laid His hands on them and blessed them.”

These would have been mostly Jewish children and not necessarily coming from believing homes. The driving force for parents was for Jesus to touch their children to provide a blessing. Jesus uses this as an opportunity to teach about the Kingdom of God.

There is a simplicity of a child’s faith. The earlier the age, it seems that faith and dependence is deeper within a child’s heart

“But you may think Jesus was only using the children as an analogy for the way adults are converted and become a part of God’s family. However, analogies work only if they are rooted in truth. “If children are not readily and fully received into the kingdom of heaven, the analogy to spiritual conversion would be a very poor one. As it is, the analogy is a great one! Children are readily accepted into the kingdom, and because of that, we are wise to become like children in our spiritual dependency upon the Lord so that we, too, might be readily accepted.”<sup>26</sup>

Further, in Mark 10:16 Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them. MacArthur comments that “he knows no other place in the New Testament in which Jesus blesses ‘nonbelievers.’”<sup>27</sup> “Jesus blessed those children in his arms because from heaven’s perspective, they were counted among the blessed righteous ones whose rightful eternal home was heaven.”<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup>John MacArthur, *Safe In the Arms of God*, 35.

<sup>23</sup> John MacArthur, 37.

<sup>24</sup> John MacArthur, 38.

<sup>25</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version*. (2009). (2 Sa 12:22–23). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>26</sup> John MacArthur, 59.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 59-60.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 59-50.

**Question:**

Why would Jesus cry and bring Lazarus or anyone back from the dead when he knows about paradise in heaven? Does this tell us, “Yes, heaven is great but since you will spend eternity there and such a short time here, there’s no rush?”

**Answer:**

Because this is one of the “signs” to demonstrate that Jesus is God in the book of John and that is why John wrote his gospel.

The apostle John wrote his gospel to prove that Jesus is the Savior and persuade people to faith in Christ (John 20:30-31). When someone was the recipient of a miracle, especially of a resurrection, it becomes a “force multiplier” for the gospel. In other words, it caused people to believe. Other signs in the Gospel of John included:

1. Changing water into wine (John 2:1-11)
2. Healing the royal official's son in Capernaum (John 4:46-54)
3. Healing the paralytic at Bethesda (John 5:1-18)
4. Feeding the 5000 (John 6:5-14)
5. Jesus' walk on water (John 6:16-24)
6. Healing the man born blind (John 9:1-7)

Raising Lazarus was the last and most powerful sign. Everything led up to this epic event for the purpose of eliciting faith from the general populace. Therefore, raising Lazarus from the grave should not hinder our anticipation of and longing to spend eternity with our great God and Savior.

**Question:**

When Jesus died and people came out of the tombs, where had they been? If they were in heaven, it seems they would have been bummed to come back. If not, where were these saints? Another thing I have always wondered, did they stay around until they died naturally again? Did they go back to their homes? Were they now younger than people that they used to be older than?<sup>29</sup>

*The tombs were also opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And they came out of the tombs after His resurrection, entered the holy city, and appeared to many. – Matthew 27:52-53*

**Answer:**

Until the resurrection of Jesus Christ, all people who died were in one of two places.

Place #1 - Abraham's Side / Bosom: A place of comfort—where Old Testament believers went upon death, before the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. (Luke 16:19-31; Proverbs 14:22; Psalm 23:6) In rabbinical writings, the just were thought to be welcomed at death by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jesus affirmed this concept in the story of the rich man and Lazarus.

Place #2 - Hades or Sheol: A place of torment—where unbelievers of all ages go to wait for the Great White Throne Judgment of God. Hades must not be confused with hell because it is a temporary place that will ultimately be destroyed when it is cast into the Lake of Fire which is synonymous with Hell. (Matthew 11:23; Luke 10:15; Acts 2:27, 31; Revelation 20:1-5)

This is the picture painted in Luke 16:19-24:

---

<sup>29</sup> Please visit <http://www.friendship-church.org/fyi/series/seriesdefault.asp?series=Imagine%20Heaven> and see title Is Heaven Our Default Destination?

Luke 16:19-24

There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen, feasting lavishly every day. But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, was left at his gate. He longed to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table, but instead the dogs would come and lick his sores. One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side. 'Father Abraham!' he called out, 'Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame!'

Place #3 - However, when Christ ascended to be seated at the right hand of the Father all Old Testament believers immediately joined Him in paradise. Paradise is a synonymous term for heaven where God dwells.

In addition, upon death, all New Testament believers are ushered into paradise and the glorious presence of God. When a thief, dying on a cross put his faith in Christ, Jesus said to him; "I assure you: Today you will be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). In addition, the apostle Paul said, "We are confident and satisfied to be out of the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). Finally, Jesus promised that Christians who live victorious "will eat from the tree of life, which is in God's paradise" (Revelation 2:7).

Therefore, after the resurrection and throughout the church age there is no need for Abraham's side because the souls of all believers go directly to heaven or paradise. The apostle Paul said; "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8).

These people who came out of the tomb most likely did not stay around until they died naturally again. They may have gone back to their homes, but for the purpose of *testifying*. This event seems to be unique in the First Century and designed specifically for bringing people to faith. Their souls went to heaven and are awaiting the resurrection of their bodies. It was a first fruits "snapshot" of the resurrection of a believer's body.

The resurrection is pictured in 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17: "For we say this to you by a revelation from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly have no advantage over those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so we will always be with the Lord."

### **Question:**

Do pets and animals go to Heaven? Do they have a soul?

### **Answer:**

Yes, animals have a "primitive soul" and there will be animals/pets in heaven.

The Bible teaches that both humans (Genesis 2:7) and animals (Genesis 1:30; 6:17; 7:15, 22) have the "breath of life," which is a soul. We define the soul as the capacity to think, feel, and act. However, the soul of an animal is much less developed and more primitive than the soul of a human. Furthermore, there is a major distinction between human beings and animals, in that people are made in the *image and likeness of God* (Genesis 1:26-27), while animals are not.

This means that people are created like God, and are His "crown creation" because we are created body, soul and spirit. Examples of this include our ability to envision a future, compose art, invent, love, feel compassion, feel a sense of justice, love God and people, and many other characteristics unique to the His glorious image.

Another factor to consider is that animals are a part of God's creative process in Genesis. God created the animals and said they were good (Genesis 1:25). Therefore, there is no reason why there could not be animals on the new earth (Revelation 21:1). After all, other aspects of creation will be there like rivers, air, beautiful

landscape, etc. Furthermore, animals are mentioned in the prophecies during the millennial kingdom (Isaiah 11:6; 65:25) where the wolf will live with the lamb and the leopard will lie down with the goat.

It is improbable that the pets we had while here on earth will be with us in heaven mainly because we know that Christ's sacrifice was to redeem humanity from their sins and not animals. We do know, however, that God graciously provides every good gift for us to enjoy (James 1:17). Therefore, we anticipate that when we get to heaven we will find ourselves enjoying animals as pets as a part of God's perfect design and wonderful creation.

**Question:**

Will heaven be or look like it did before the Garden of Eden?

**Answer:**

Yes and no. It seems like the New Heaven and New Earth will be an extension of the Garden of Eden but perfected with the city of God known as the New Jerusalem, connecting heaven to earth.

Read Revelation, chapters 21-22. John is given detailed revelation about the New Heaven, the New Earth and the New Jerusalem. Just a plain reading suggests that when God "makes everything new" this new creation will exceed the glory of the original creation.

**Question:**

If heaven is perfect, how did sin occur in heaven and why did Satan and a third of the angels fall?

**Answer:**

There is no easy answer to this question. However, like humanity, God gave the angels a free will to choose to do His will or their own. According to Scripture, Lucifer chose pride and planned to usurp the throne of God and His glory (Isaiah 14:12-14). As a result, God cast Satan out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9; Luke 10:18) and the devil became the "the ruler who exercises authority over the lower heavens" (Ephesians 2:2). In addition, the Bible states that one-third of the angels chose the same path as Lucifer and were "swept out of heaven" (Revelation 21:4).

Does Satan still have access to heaven today? We know that He is the "accuser of the brethren" (Revelation 12:10). That assumes he has access to the throne of God so he can present his accusations like he did against Job (Job 1:6). However, we also know that we have an advocate (1 John 2:1) whereby Christ is constantly winning cases against us in heaven.

The future will be different since Satan and his demons will be thrown into the Lake of Fire in the last days (Revelation 20:10). As a result, sin and death will be no more (Revelation 21:1-5).