HEAVEN

The term Heaven is used for three different but very real physical places. Heaven is mentioned or used to describe these places often in the Bible, approximately 582 times.

The first is the heaven that we see immediately above us, or the sky. Turn to Gen 7:11 and Gen. 8:2

Genesis 7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

Genesis 8:2 The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;

The second is the heaven above the sky or outer space. This contains the Moon and Stars. Turn to Psalm 8:3 Isaiah 13:10

Psalm 8:3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

Isaiah 13:10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

The third is the heaven where God dwells, along with the heavenly beings, angels, seraphim, etc. Turn to 2 Cor 12:2 and 2 Chron 2:6

2 Corinthians 12:2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

2 Chronicles 2:6 But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?

Heaven is not merely a state of mind. While some portray Heaven as simply a state of mind, the Word of God tells us that Heaven is definitely a real place. God, Jesus, and the holy angels dwell there. We know that John the Apostle, while receiving the Revelation of Jesus Christ was given a glimpse of Heaven in the 4th and 5th chapters in particular.

Heaven is also the destination of those who have been born again. Those who have accepted Jesus Christ by believing in him as the Son of God, have repented of their sins, have confessed Christ as lord, and have been immersed in the waters of Baptism for the remission of sin.

Christ gave us some very comforting words just before he suffered. He told his disciples this, turn to John 14:1-4

John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 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. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. 4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

Heaven is not here on this earth as we know it. Jesus went to prepare a special place for each and every one of his. This place is in his father's house. This is the heaven of heavens. But he goes further, he says that he himself will come and take us with him. When we die we will always be with Christ.

Our final dwelling place in Heaven is called the New Jerusalem. John the Apostle describes this place as a new Jerusalem. At the end, after Christ has reigned on earth for 1000 years, Satan is loosed to attack Christ, but God the Father sends fire to destroy the earth. John then sees the New Jerusalem come down from heaven. He then describes this almost indescribable place. Turn to Rev 20:7-15, and Rev 21:1-2, 10-21

Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the
earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

**John’s prophetical vision or description of the New Jerusalem/Heaven is recorded in the following verses.**

Revelation 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel*: 13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. 18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

At the very end both the heaven (which is the sky and space) and the earth are destroyed. But we see that Christ has prepared a New Jerusalem for all those that are in Christ.

**I’d like to go over one more topic before I close. Christ makes a reference to a place he calls PARADISE. This too is a real place. It is not a place that we will stay in forever.**

When a person is in Christ and they die, they are taken by the Holy Angels to Paradise. Turn to Luke 23:43, 2 Cor 12:4 and Rev 2:7

Luke 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

2 Corinthians 12:4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Revelation 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Paradise is a place of rest, a place of waiting until Christ descends from heaven with a shout and calls all of his up to be resurrected with him. Turn to 1 Thess 4:16,17

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

This event is commonly called the Rapture of the Church. It precedes the great Tribulation.

Another reference to this place called Paradise is found in Luke 16:19-31

Luke 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried: 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivesth thy good
things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

*Notice that Jesus didn’t call this a parable or story, this was something that really happened, Jesus didn’t use people’s names in his parables.*

So when we look at the scriptures, we can see that there most definitely is a place called heaven. It is a very beautiful place, a place of pure joy and happiness with absolutely no sorrow or sadness. And it is eternal. There is also a place of waiting and rest, this is called Paradise. When Jesus was dieing on the Cross, he promised the thief he would be with him in Paradise.

If you haven’t accepted Jesus, you must. When we die its over, we don’t get another chance to come to Jesus. Please do so now.

Author, Gary Walters