



Destination “Heaven”

Think of this: Light travels at the speed of 186,000 miles per second. Since the sun is 93 million miles away from the earth, the light of the sun takes eight minutes to reach our planet. Yet, in comparison, light from the star Betelgeuse in the constellation of Orion takes 520 years to reach us. Bear in mind that the diameter of Betelgeuse is twice that of the earth’s orbit around the sun; in fact, the diameter is estimated to be about 400 million miles (it is in constant flux). Yet, this is only one star among about two hundred billion others in our Milky Way Galaxy; the universe over one hundred billion galaxies, is thought to be over 13 billion light –years in diameter.

There is mind-blowing information I believe is just a fraction of what really is out there. **Deuteronomy 29:29** says “The secrets things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.” This simple study about heaven may not be that exhaustive, but I believe is sufficient for us to understand as God revealed heaven in His word.

I. WHAT IS HEAVEN?

A. HEAVEN IS A DWELLING PLACE.

B. HEAVEN IS GOD’S STOREHOUSE.

Deuteronomy 28:12 The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none.

II. WHAT ARE THE THREE HEAVENS?

In **Genesis 1:1** the scripture says that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Take note it says heavens not heaven. If its heavens, then there is more than one heaven it would be two or more. The possibility that God created two heavens at the creation is through the confession of the Apostle Paul in **2 Corinthians 12:2** it says “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the thirds heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know – God knows.” If Paul is caught up to the third heaven, the dwelling place of God, then it is safe to conclude that the heavens mentioned in **Genesis 1:1** are two heavens. Giving us decisive information that there are three heavens.

A. FIRST HEAVEN – This is the heaven where the earth dwells. The heaven that is also called the atmosphere from where the dew descends and the rain drops to the ground.

Deuteronomy 11:11 But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven.

Acts 14:17 Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven in crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.”

B. SECOND HEAVEN – This is the heaven where our solar system and all the billion of galaxies reside.

Deuteronomy 10:14 To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it.

Nehemiah 9:6 You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and that is on it, the seas and that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

Job 9:8 He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea.

Psalms 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

C. THIRD HEAVEN – This is the heaven where God dwells and where His throne is.

2 Corinthians 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the **third heaven**. Whether it was in the body or out of the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows – ³ and I know that this man – whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows – ⁴ was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.

Psalms 115:16 The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man.

1 Kings 22:19 Micaiah continued, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD; I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left.

2 Chronicles 6:13-19 Hear from heaven is mentioned eight times in this intercessory prayer of Solomon. In some occasions “heaven your dwelling place is mentioned.

III. WHERE IS THE FINAL DESTINATION OF THE SAVED?

NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

2 Peter 3:11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Revelation 21:1 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. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ 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. ⁴ 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 has passed away.”

IV. HOW ABOUT PARADISE?

PARADISE (paradeisos – Greek) is an oriental word, first used by the historian Xenophon, denoting “the parks of Persian kings and nobles (Vines Complete Expository Dictionary p.457). In line with this thought, paradise then is not use to describe the name of the place rather it describe the state of the place mentioned. Hence, when the word paradise is used it refers to the blessedness, peacefulness, and blissfulness that one will experience from a certain place, dimension, and even a circumstance.

As far as I know, there are only three instances where the word paradise is mentioned in the Bible.

The first one is in **Luke 23:43** Jesus answered him, I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise. Here, Jesus used the this word to bring comfort to the man not in the midst of the current pain and suffering but also because it brought certainty on his uncertain future.

The second one is in **2 Corinthians 12:2** now a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know - - God knows.³ And I know that this man - - whether in the body apart from the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—⁴ was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. The Apostle Paul used the word paradise here to describe what third heaven is really like.

The third one is in **Revelation 2:7** 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. Here, John the beloved, the writer of Revelation is using the word paradise to describe the place of God where the tree of life is situated.

After going through these Scriptures where the word paradise is used, it became clearer that Paradise is not used in the Bible to describe the Name of the place rather it describes the state of the place, in this case, the abode of God.

V. HOW ABOUT LAZARUS IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM?

Luke 16:19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine line and lived in luxury every day.²⁰ At this gate was

laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity 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 fire.' ²⁵ But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over there to us.'

COMMENT: There is a lot of speculation as to what "Abraham's Bosom" (NIV: Abraham's side) means. The Scripture is clear that when a person is dead, his body goes back to the ground and his spirit goes to the world of the dead called "sheoul" in Hebrew and "Hades" in Greek. Nobody knew really what was in Hades until Jesus shared the story about the rich man and Lazarus. It is through this story that we had a glimpse of what is inside the world of the dead. Here, we see its two dimension the lower and the upper dimension. And this dimension is separated by a great chasm. The lower dimension is mentioned as hell (Hades) where the selfish Rich man went and in torment while waiting for the final judgment. The upper dimension is mentioned as Abraham's bosom/side where the patient Lazarus went.

Abraham's bosom is a dimension in the world of the dead (Hade) where the spirit of the saved goes while waiting for their resurrection at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word paradise is not used here, but I see no problem to use

paradise to describe this dimension because this place is apparently in contrast to hell.

CONCLUSION

John 14:1 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust in me. ² 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. ³ 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. ⁴ You know the way to the place you are going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.