

# Heaven

A [contemporary](#) ballad declares, “This is heaven . . . when I’m with you.” Being in close communion with a loved one is indeed a blessing. Yet as there are no earthly situations worthy of comparison to the misery of hell, so there are no earthly joys suitable to serve as accurate analogies of the marvels of heaven.

As we find grim and ghastly [biblical](#) images for hell, so we find rich and promising biblical images for heaven. It is likened to paradise, to the bosom of Abraham, and to a glorious city that comes down from heaven. The New Jerusalem is described in terms of translucent streets of gold, a place with walls of [precious](#) gemstones, and a setting of perpetual and everlasting joy.

What is most [notable](#) about heaven is what is absent from it as well as what is present in it. Things that will be absent include: (1) tears, (2) sorrow, (3) death, (4) pain, (5) darkness, (6) ungodly people, (7) sin, (8) temples, (9) the sun or moon, and (10) the curse from Adam’s sin (see Genesis 3:14-19).

What will be present in heaven includes: (1) the saints, (2) the river of the water of life, (3) healing fruit, (4) the Lamb of God, (5) worship, (6) the wedding feast of the Lamb and His bride, (7) the unveiled face of God, and (8) the Sun of Righteousness.

Heaven is where Christ is. It is the eternal bliss of communion with the [God](#)-man. Jonathan Edwards, in trying to give voice to the joy believers will find in heaven writes that the saints will

swim in the ocean of love, and be eternally swallowed up in the infinitely bright, and infinitely mild and sweet beams of divine love; eternally receiving the light, eternally full of it, and eternally compassed round

with it, and everlastingly reflecting it back again to its fountain.

While the saints will delight in fellowship with their [God](#) and Savior, there is no reason to believe that they will not recognize and fellowship with saints they knew on earth. Heaven is the abode of all good things.

There will be degrees of blessedness in heaven. Paul uses a metaphor of the stars of differing brilliance shining in the same heaven to describe this. There are, however, several clarifying points that need to be made. First, all the stars will shine. That is to say, there is no unhappiness in heaven. All are blessed beyond our most insightful imaginations. Second, the atoning work of Christ has the same saving efficacy for all saints. Finally, the “works” of the believer, which “merit” greater or lesser blessedness, are not good in themselves. Rather, it is the sovereign pleasure of [God](#) to regard these works as meritorious. He does so for Christ’s sake only. While the greatest horror of hell is its eternality, one of the greatest joys of heaven is the assurance that it will never end. The last enemy, death, will be no more. Luke 20:34-38 assures the believer that this reward of heaven is everlasting.

The greatest joy of heaven is the beatific vision, seeing the face of God. This unspeakable joy, however, comes through the eyes of the soul. [God](#) is spirit, and in spirit the elect shall see Him. This is the reward, earned by Christ, enjoyed by His children.

## Summary

1. Heaven will include the absence of all that brings pain and death.
2. Heaven will be a place without sin and the effects of sin.
3. Heaven will be a place where believers will enjoy the immediate presence of Christ.
4. Heaven will include the beatific vision, the glorious experience of gazing at the face of God, which is not possible in this life.
5. Heaven will be a place to enjoy [God](#)’s rewards forever.

6. No earthly knowledge or experience will be able to dim the fullness of joy we will have in heaven.

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