

PARADISE

A term used in the Septuagint to describe the [Garden of Eden](#) and the abode of Adam and Eve (Gn. 2-3). It also occurs in Nehemiah 2:8, Ecclesiastes 2:5, and the Song of [Solomon](#) 4:13. In the New Testament, it occurs in Luke 23:43, 2 [Corinthians](#) 12:4, and the Revelation to John 2:7.

In Orthodox eschatological teaching, a paradise is an intermediate place where the souls of the righteous who die in Christ await in expectation of resurrection and the Last Judgment. Prior to Christ's redemption of humanity, the abode of all the dead, righteous and unrighteous alike, was in HADES, the lower world. At the death of Christ on the cross, He descended into Hades, from which He conveyed the souls of the righteous to paradise. "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison" (1 Pt. 3:18-19).

It is worthy of note that the first human being to obtain the promise of admission into paradise was the thief who hung on the cross at the right of Christ. His faith and fearless confession made him the first to inherit the glorious destiny of all who acknowledged Jesus as their Lord: "And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise'" (Lk. 23:43).

In the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians, Saint Paul spoke of paradise: "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was [caught](#) up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter" (2 Cor. 12:2-4).

Part of the [funerary](#) rite of the [Coptic church](#) includes the following

prayer, which is said by the priest over the departed: “Give rest, O Lord, in the Kingdom of heaven, to this soul on whose account we are gathered here. Open unto it, O Lord, the gate of Paradise, as Thou opened it for the faithful thief.”

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