

receive the eternal rewards.

**Matthew 7:21** Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only \_\_\_\_\_ who is in heaven.

Not all who profess Christianity will enter the glorious land – Jesus makes this quite clear. Those who are given a passport to life are those who do the will of the Father.

Salvation is free, and cannot be earned, but the evidence of genuine acceptance is obedience to the commandments of God. One who claims to believe, but does not obey God, shows that his conversion is not genuine.



**Revelation 22:14,15** Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Those who wash their robes through the blood of Jesus cease to willingly sin, and choose to keep God's commandments. Only this class has the right to the city and the tree of life.

**Revelation 22:17** The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" \_\_\_\_\_ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

The invitation is generous and is extended to all. 'Whosoever' means you – it means everybody. God wants us to share in the joys of His eternal home. His desire is for all to accept Jesus so they may enter, but only those who choose Jesus and believe in Him enough to obey Him, can enter into the glorious land. God wants you to be here. Will you choose to serve Him today? Is it your desire to live in God's eternal kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_



# Life's VITAL ANSWERS

## Living in Paradise.



Imagine a country of indescribable beauty, clothed with majestic trees and flowers far surpassing anything on earth. Crystal clear streams making their way through lush vegetation to a destination of picturesque lakes. There are no vast oceans or restless waves. There are no chilly winds or destructive storms—only perfect peace. There is no war or death but there is genuine happiness. This is certainly an incomplete picture of the eternal paradise. In fact, the land beyond tomorrow is incomprehensible in its beauty and majesty because we have nothing with which to compare it in this earth. However, the Bible does give some revelations which we will examine in this lesson.

**2 Corinthians 12:2** I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was \_\_\_\_\_ . Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows.

Obviously, if there is a third heaven, there must be a second and a first. What are the other two heavens, and what is the third heaven?

**Genesis 1:8** God called the expanse “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

In some versions, the Bible calls our atmosphere – heaven. In sequence of closeness, this is the first heaven, or as we say—the sky.

**Psalm 8:3** When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place.

Here is the second heaven – space – where the stars and the planets are.

**2 Corinthians 12:4** . . . was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.

**Matthew 6:9** This, then, is how you should pray: “\_\_\_\_\_ hallowed be your name,”



The Second Heaven – the realm of the sun, moon, stars.

gone for a long time brings great joy – so it will be when we see His face.

**Matthew 17:3,4** Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”



On the mount of transfiguration Moses and Elijah appeared and spoke with Christ. Peter, James and John recognised these men even though they had never seen them. Under conviction of the Spirit, the disciples were no doubt enlightened. Many remarkable changes take place on the day of resurrection.

It is true that we shall all be changed, but just as the disciples recognised Moses and Elijah, so a loving God will enable us to recognise loved ones.

**1 Corinthians 13:12** Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

We do not fully understand all that lies before us. When Paul speaks of seeing a poor reflection, he is referring to the mirrors used in his day, which consisted of polished metal. At best, only a blurred image was possible. This parallels our life of faith today compared with seeing the realities of heaven in the future. Our knowledge at the present is only partial, but there it will be full, no doubt including the recognition of those we know in this life.

**John 5:28,29** Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

Heaven begins on the day of resurrection for the righteous. They will be raised to live forevermore, never again to see death, but rather, to

dants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food.

They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

Heaven will be a real place where we will do constructive, enjoyable things. With the energy of eternal youth, the saved will rejoice in worthwhile occupation. So often in this life one builds, but another receives the benefits. This will not be so in the land beyond tomorrow. There will be no vain labour. Death will be abolished forever. Even in the animal kingdom. All will be at peace.

#### **Revelation 21:4** He \_\_\_\_\_

There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

There will be no need of tears, for there will be no more death, sorrow, crying or pain. Life as we know it now, will be banished forever. Neither will there be any disease of suffering "The eyes of the blind will be opened—the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped—the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongue of the dumb sing." Isaiah 35:5,6. Imagine a world of perfection and such happiness. This is what God is preparing for believers. A place where the desert will blossom as a rose, Isaiah 35:1, and the inhabitant will not say, "I am sick." Isaiah 33:24, and violence will cease, Isaiah 60:18. In God's land there is fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16:11.



We shall see His face.

#### **Revelation 22:4** They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

One of the greatest joys of the Christian who has lived for Christ in this life will be to see the face of the One who he/she has laboured and lived for. To see the face of a loved one after he/she has been

This is the third heaven Paul was caught up to see (see verse 2) and is referred to as paradise. Jesus referred to God's dwelling place as heaven.

**John 14:1-3** Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. \_\_\_\_\_

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.



The Third Heaven – where God dwells.

The followers of Jesus are here assured of a mansion in heaven – God's dwelling place – Christ Himself promising to prepare a place for His faithful followers.

**1 Corinthians 2:9** However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."

To picture the glories of this eternal land is beyond our comprehension. Our wildest imaginations cannot conceive what heaven is really like. We only know God's promises are sure, and if He has promised these things, and by faith we accept them, then, if we remain faithful, we will one day receive them.

**Revelation 21:10** And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

In Revelation chapter 21, John describes in earthly language the beauties of the New Jerusalem. Human speech appears to be inadequate as he reiterates what he has seen in vision – this great city – the New Jerusalem – that God has prepared for His people.

**Revelation 21:1-3** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, \_\_\_\_\_, 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."

The Holy City is more beautiful than we could ever imagine. A city that shines like the sun with the appearance of glowing gold. Try to visualize the walls of jasper and the foundation of precious stones. Twelve gates made of twelve pearls and streets of transparent gold. In this life we cannot fully picture the scene. We have not yet seen the wonderful things God has prepared for those who love Him. We do know it is most glorious. We know it is worth striving for. Furthermore, the flush of youth will be on every face of those who dwell there. There will be no sickness, no death and no curse. With the surge of eternal life flowing through incorruptible bodies, the saved cry out in victory, "Death; where is your sting: Grave; where is your victory?" 1 Corinthians 15:55.



God has made all things new: a new heaven and a new earth. The New Jerusalem is situated on this earth. God's headquarters are also transferred to the new earth – transformed into its original Edenic beauty and perfection. God will dwell with the saved and be their God.

**Matthew 5:5** Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Whilst the Bible promises God's children a home in heaven, it also promises that the meek shall inherit the earth. At first sight it seems like a contradiction, until we recall that at the end of the millennium, after the cleansing fires have done their work, heaven is actually going to come down to this earth. This planet will become the eternal home of the saved.

**Hebrew 11:10,16** For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. If they had been thinking

of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

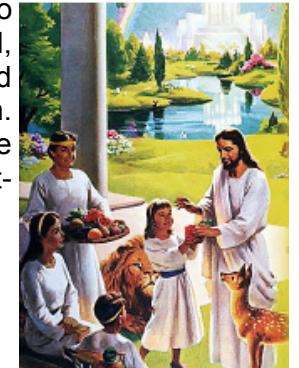
The home of the saved is called a 'country', a 'better country', 'a heavenly country'. The Bible minglest its description of the heaven that now is, with its description of the heaven on earth that will be.

Abraham was promised an inheritance. He was told that he and his seed would be given a land flowing with milk and honey. It is true that God did give the land of Canaan to the Israelites, but Abraham had his sights on something of more value than an inheritance in this life. He looked forward to inheriting the earth in 'the earth made new'.

**Isaiah 65:17** Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.

The promise of making all things new is not limited to the New Testament era. The promises were given to God's people thousands of years ago. If God's people had been faithful these promises would have their fulfilment, but because of their backslidden condition, they failed to enter into God's promised rest. In Isaiah 65 we see a mixture of blessings received in this life and the life to come. However the promises were conditional, as are all God's promises. Obedience to God brought life, and disobedience brought death. One of the joys of this new way of life is that the old way, with all of its sorrows and disappointments will be entirely forgotten.

**Isaiah 65:21-25** They \_\_\_\_\_; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants.



In heaven with Jesus.