The Importance of Heaven

Imagine that you would soon be leaving your country and would spend the rest of your life in a new country that you knew nothing about. Then, imagine that a book was supplied to you with reliable information and details about your new home, including precise directions on how to get there. Would you read the book? Most of us would answer, “Yes.” Nevertheless, while most people hope to spend eternity in heaven, very few have studied the exciting details contained in the most reliable travel guide ever written, the Bible, the Word of God. In this study we will examine in detail what the scriptures say about heaven. However, as we venture into this subject, we need to realize that human words fall far short of expressing the magnificent descriptions of the heavenly state.

The mental image that you have of heaven can serve as part of your motivation and your attitude concerning your spiritual life here on earth. Once you have learned the principles found in this book, you will be motivated to live for eternal rewards. The Living Bible translation says:

“Set your sights on the rich treasures and joys of heaven where He [Jesus] sits beside God in the place of honor and power.” (Col 3:1)

In the midst of our worldly pursuits and interests, it is sometimes very difficult to remember that this life is only a testing ground, a place of training that prepares us for the wonders of our eternal home, which is noted in the book of Matthew:

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” (Mat 25:34)

The subject of death and eternity is one of the most important subjects we need to know. Many people, including Christians, do not want to talk about the subject of death. Usually, when the death of someone is mentioned, there is a gloomy quietness that suffocates the conversation; or a morbid “I’m sorry to hear that” will follow. While the subject of death was a great conversation piece for the early Christians, in our day, it is avoided like the plague, by most people. As such, many believers don't know much about heaven, because the people whose job it is to prepare them for death and heaven, such as pastors and parents, are not doing their job. In fact, they are often not prepared to do their job. As a result, Christians who attend church seldom hear a sermon of any
depth about heaven. This clear lack of biblical teaching about heaven has produced a vacuum concerning eternity in the minds of many believers.

If you were to ask most Christians today to tell you specifically about their expectations for their life in heaven, you frequently get a blank stare. They might suggest there will be “streets of gold” and “angels,” but often that is the full extent of their knowledge; and there are tragic consequences to this lack of teaching about heaven and our future eternal life. In defense of their lack of knowledge, many Christians have expressed the opinion that the Bible must not say anything very specific about heaven, and that must be the reason no one talks about it. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible contains thousands of verses that refer to the very real life that we will enjoy in our future home, as well as the fact that God created a natural desire in the heart of man to know the future and to explore the reality of eternity. As Solomon noted:

“He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.” (Ecc 3:11)

A growing problem is that new-age teaching and many occult groups are trying to fill this void by offering their counterfeit and satanic doctrines to the young and uninformed; and if the Church is not going to teach on the subject of heaven, Satan is quite willing to supply a counterfeit substitute. As a result, many modern heresies were born in the vacuum created by the failure of today’s Church to teach the truth about heaven, hell (the eternal lake of fire), and eternity. So again, while most people hope to spend eternity in a place called heaven; very few have ever studied or read the exciting details told to us in the Bible.

Webster’s New World Dictionary describes heaven as “the dwelling place of God and His angels, variously conceived of as the place where the blessed will live after death.” It also describes heaven as a “place of great beauty and pleasure.” Although various polls indicate that around seventy-five percent of the American people believe in heaven, many of these people know little more about heaven than this description from a dictionary. The Bible is filled with specific facts about heaven; and we are going to examine what it has to say about our true home and our future life there.
The Physical Characteristics of Heaven

First and foremost, heaven is a glorious place. “Look down from heaven, and see from Thy holy and glorious habitation” (Isa 63:15). It is so glorious that only Almighty God could conceive the absolute perfection of this eternal paradise, which He has prepared for His children. Therefore, heaven is so magnificent that it is far beyond anything any of us could ever contemplate or imagine. In fact, the majority of Christians are unaware that heaven is not a single entity, but rather is comprised of three parts.

The Bible describes the first heaven as the atmosphere and clouds that we can see with our eyes. “He did good and gave you rains from heaven” (Act 14:17).

Next comes the second heaven, where God’s angels and Satan’s evil spirits engage in spiritual warfare, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12).

Finally, we will enter the third heaven, our eternal home where the Lord Jesus Christ is “seated at the right hand of the majestic [God] in heaven” (Heb 8:1).

Heaven is billions of light-years away, far above the earth “in the recesses of the North,” according to Isa 14:13.

So let’s try to imagine for a moment what we will see as we approach the third heaven. Heaven will be recognizable from a distance; and as we get closer, and are able to see it in more detail, it will become evident that we will not be spending eternity floating around on white clouds. As we continue our approach, the New Jerusalem, the capital city of heaven, will come into focus, and its overwhelming size will astonish us. It will be far more magnificent than we could ever imagine since it is described as “the city which has fixed and firm foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God” (Heb 11:10). In fact, specific measurements are given to us in the Word of God.

“And the one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. And the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.” (Rev 21:15-16)
It is said to be 1,500 miles across in length, width, and height! Can you visualize a city so large that the city limits are 1,500 miles apart? The length and width make it approximately half the size of the United States, not to mention 1,500 miles high! In contrast to our flat, earthly cities, it is difficult to even imagine such a city; no city on earth can begin to compare. On the contrary, the highest skyscraper in the world would look like a mere pebble next to the heavenly city, New Jerusalem. The best way to visualize the immense height of the Holy City is to take the illustration of half the United States and stand it on end to look at it vertically, because this will give us some indication of the enormous height of New Jerusalem. However, no one has ever seen anything even close to the magnitude of the Holy City.

Furthermore, architects have calculated that the enormous size of the New Jerusalem would easily provide a mansion of over a half mile in length and breadth to every believer from Adam to the present. Therefore, the Bible clearly describes heaven and impresses the fact that God does not do things in a small way! Some believe New Jerusalem is like a cube. It could also be as a mountain with a peak 1,500 miles high. For example, when the Apostle John was taken to heaven, he said that “…he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God” (Rev 21:10). New Jerusalem could be an extremely large mountainous city. While it is difficult to estimate exactly how large this city is, the size of New Jerusalem is somewhere in the vicinity of seven hundred to eight hundred times as large as the United States. But, no matter how large it turns out to be, we will not be cramped for space because the “architect and builder is God” (Heb 11:10).

As the angels carry us closer to the Holy City, our attention might focus on the wall surrounding New Jerusalem because no wall on earth is as large or as beautiful, “and he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements” (Rev 21:17).

Imagine a city with 1,500-miles of wall on each of its four sides; that is seventy-two yards high. This huge wall is very unique. In addition to being large and beautiful, it also pays tribute to the twelve original apostles of Jesus Christ. Notice there are only twelve apostles! The self-proclaimed apostles of today are imposters and counterfeits.

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the apostles of the Lamb.” (Rev 21:14)

We will see the names of Peter, Andrew, the two James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, Thaddaeus, Simon, and the one who replaced Judas Iscariot, the apostle Paul, memorialized forever. The foundation stones of a wall are usually beneath the surface of the ground; however, these particular foundation stones must extend quite a bit above the surface. Each is approximately five hundred miles long and each of these gigantic stones displays an apostle’s name. It is wonderful to see how the Lord Jesus Christ honors His original apostles. Each of these twelve foundation stones also has a large, beautiful jewel.
“The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. (Rev 21:19-20)

Here are the colors of the precious stones:
- Jasper = translucent and multi-colored
- Sapphire = blue
- Chalcedony = bluish white
- Emerald = green
- Sardonyx = alternating layers of white and orange-red
- Sardius = blood red
- Chrysolite = yellow or greenish yellow
- Beryl = transparent bluish green
- Topaz = yellowish
- Chrysoprase = greenish
- Jacinth = red with a mixture of yellow
- Amethyst = purple

The magnificent light of the glory of God will shine through each of these precious gems; and each of these foundation stones is immense, much larger than we can comprehend. When we see them for the first time, we will be stunned by their size and incredible beauty.

Additionally, we’re told that the wall on top of these foundation stones is also comprised of a precious gem. “And the material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass” (Rev 21:18). As Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words says, the word translated jasper in this passage means a translucent stone of various colors, especially that of fire. So just picture for a moment the angels bringing us closer to the Holy City and an immense, transparent, multi-colored wall glowing with many different colors.

Also, there are twelve gates in the large walls around the Holy City, “It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel” (Rev 21:12). Further, there are three gates on each of the four walls. “There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west” (Rev 21:13).

On the east side are Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; on the south side, Reuben, Simeon, and Gad; on the west side, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin; and on the north side, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali. This wall is patterned after the wall surrounding the city of Jerusalem here on earth, which also has a wall with twelve gates, three on each side. However, the wall around New Jerusalem is much larger and infinitely more attractive.
“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl.” (Rev 21:21)

Try to visualize a large pearl here on earth that’s only a few inches long. Then, try to compare this with the gigantic pearl of each gate. We cannot comprehend the size and beauty of the twelve pearls in the gates of the Holy City. Instead, we can only compare them with pearls on earth that are created by oysters, which present a very interesting analogy. When a foreign particle, like sand, finds its way into an oyster, it inflicts irritation and pain that causes the oyster to secrete fluid that surrounds the particle and then hardens to form a pearl. It is possible that the pearls in the gates of heaven are as large as they are because they were formed to represent the tremendous wounds of the Lord Jesus Christ. This may be one reason why the Bible refers to heaven as a “…pearl of great value” (Mat 13:45-46). Every Christian approaching a gate of New Jerusalem will be able to go through the gate only because of the terrible wounds the Lord Jesus Christ suffered for all of us and therefore, these gates will serve as an eternal reminder of the price our Lord paid.

Imagine that the angels have brought you up to one of the twelve gates of New Jerusalem. What would you see? As you stand there, you’ll be overwhelmed by the beauty of the foundation stone, the jasper wall, and the immense pearl gate; it will be a great occasion for each of us when we go through the gates of New Jerusalem for the first time. There is no joy we have experienced on earth that can compare with the exhilaration and joy we will experience when we first enter the gates of the Holy City; and every Christian will eventually go through one of these gates. Also, note that the angel will not have to open the gate because the gates of heaven are always open. “In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed” (Rev 21:25). The purpose of these gates is not to keep anyone out; this is not necessary since entrance through the gates is limited. “And nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev 21:27). The gates to the Holy City are merely a place to channel incoming traffic so that everyone entering the gates can be welcomed by an angel.

At this time, we will no longer be subject to the curse that God placed on the earth after Adam’s sin. When the curse of sin is removed, decay, germs, and decomposition will also be eliminated. There will be no rust or decay because the very process of entropy, the running down of the universe, will have ceased. Nothing unclean will ever enter there, even though the gates are left open. The angels of God will guard the city forever.

Next, we will probably notice the street beneath our feet because it will be much different from any street on earth. “And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass” (Rev 21:21b). When something is transparent, we’re able to see through it as if we were looking through a pane of glass. Now, anyone reading Rev 21:21 might think there was only one main street in the New Jerusalem. However, if there are
twelve different gates, there must be at least twelve different streets. Along with the magnificent streets, you will probably notice that a beautiful, clear, sparkling river flows through the center of each of these twelve divided highways.

It is a magnificent river that flows directly out of the throne of God. This river has at least twelve different branches winding through the foothills and mountains of the Holy City and we are told it is a river whose waters give life. “And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev 22:1). Apparently there is supernatural power, in liquid form, flowing through the branches of this river from God’s throne. The water in this river is so pure that it sparkles like crystal continually and shines with reflected light that mirrors the beauty of its celestial surroundings. When we stand next to the river of life, we will be able to see right through its perfectly clear waters. In addition, we will also see beautiful heavenly orchards located on both sides of the river. “And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Rev 22:2). Apparently, the leaves of the tree have something to do with the healing of the nations. Here we are told that nations and races are represented in heaven.

Probably the most impressive characteristic of New Jerusalem is the fact that it glows with God’s radiance and is illuminated by His glory. In fact, its glow is compared with a rare and precious jewel, such as jasper, that shines as clear as crystal. As such, the sun or moon are of no value in heaven. “And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb” (Rev 21:23). Therefore, the glory of our heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, will produce a beautiful light. The illumination produced by the sun and the moon can never compare with the brilliance of the glory of God. The prophet Isaiah wrote, “Then the moon will be embarrassed and the sun ashamed, for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and His glory will be before His elders” (Isa 24:23). Try to recall the most beautiful sunrise or sunset you have ever seen, or the most beautiful moonlit night. None of these sights can remotely compare with the beauty produced by the magnificent radiant light of the glory of God, which we will continually be aware of from the first moment we arrive in heaven.

Since it is the only city designed and built by God and not by creatures, New Jerusalem is different from any city on earth and therefore, it is absolutely perfect in every respect. The apostle John was given a vision of heaven and the Holy City of New Jerusalem.

“And I saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev 21:2).

“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.” (Rev 21:10-11)
When our time on earth ends and this magnificent journey to heaven begins, we will literally soar through the atmosphere that surrounds the earth. We learn this from what the angels did for Lazarus when he died. "Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom [a reference to paradise]" (Luk 16:22). In fact, when a believer dies, he will immediately see the faces of angels waiting to escort him to heaven. However, when any believer dies now, they are immediately transferred to heaven and said to be "absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord" (2 Co 5:8).

When we look into the faces of those angels, we will know that the troubles of life on earth are all behind us and a wonderful new existence has begun. Then, they will carry us through the first and second heavens and into the third heaven, the home of God. So while our loved ones on earth are experiencing their reactions of mourning and sadness at our death, we will be experiencing the greatest exhilaration and excitement we have ever known. Our finite minds cannot begin to comprehend “the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God” (Isa 35:2). There are no words in our human vocabulary to describe the brilliance of the glory of God.

Shortly after we die, we will actually be able to see the Lord Jesus Christ in all His glory and majesty. We will feel overwhelming exhilaration when we are actually able to see with our own eyes “the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Rev 22:13). He is the beginning and the end; He existed before everything else, and He will always exist in all His majesty. Every part of heaven is filled with His glory and nothing we have ever experienced can compare with the overwhelming wonder of being face-to-face with the glory of God. After experiencing this glory, Ezekiel tried to describe it to us:

"Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli [a translucent blue or violet-blue or greenish-blue gem] in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance
of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking. “(Eze 1:26-28)

When we see God in all His glory, we will be so overwhelmed that we will not be able to stand in His presence. In fact, we may all fall flat on our faces just as Ezekiel did. This description of the glory of God in the Old Testament is confirmed in the New Testament:

“Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.” (Rev 4:2-3)

Jasper is a precious green stone that shines brightly like a crystal. The sardius is a reddish-orange gem that radiates a beautiful light and appears as if it has fire inside of it. Once again, we are told that a rainbow surrounds the throne of God. Therefore, the lesson that is taught by these passages is the absolute brilliance of the Lord Jesus Christ and how we will not be able to take our eyes off Him because we will be so filled with reverence and awe.

After we see the Lord and honor Him, it will be time to be reunited with our Christian loved ones who had passed on before us, and to see members of the human race we had always wanted to meet, the heroes of yesterday and today. Just think of the rich, intimate fellowship that will take place in heaven. Many of us have experienced loneliness after our loved ones have died, but on our arrival day in heaven, this loneliness will end forever as our loved ones welcome us with open arms. Eyes that were once filled with tears when these people died will sparkle with joy when we see them again. Moreover, our loved ones who suffered from health problems will be in perfect health and they will be happier than we have ever seen them. Some Christians will have a large welcoming committee, while others will not; but one thing is for sure, no matter how many people are waiting for us, it will be a heartwarming time of fellowship and friendship.

We should all live in anticipation of this wonderful occasion. The greatest family reunion on earth cannot begin to compare with the great festive reunions that will take place shortly after we arrive in heaven. Our loved ones will have many awesome and marvelous things to share with us. Every relationship we have in heaven will be much closer than the best relationship any of us ever had with any other person here on earth. Even though we will completely enjoy our reunion with friends and loved ones, we will not be spending eternity fellowshipping exclusively with members of this small group. After we enjoy our reunion with friends and loved ones, we will all begin to develop close, intimate relationships with Christians we have never known before meeting them in heaven. There are no barriers between people in heaven; everyone there is perfectly humble and loving, and no one will ever withdraw from anyone else. As the Apostle John teaches, “If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another” (1Jo 1:7). Likewise, if we walk in the light on earth, we are able to enjoy wonderful fellowship with one another. However, in heaven everyone walks in the
light of the Lord and because of this, we will all have magnificent fellowship there. No one in heaven will be difficult to love as they sometimes are on earth. Instead, all the human traits that cause problems on earth will disappear when we arrive in heaven. No one is arrogant, bitter, jealous, vindictive, or rude; and there are no unkind words or angry looks. Behavior that we see here on earth will never exist in heaven.

“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Gal 5:19-21)

Almost every sin on earth has its root in selfishness. However, there will not be any sins in heaven because everyone there will be perfectly knit together by the virtue-love of God. All of these earthly imperfections will disappear, and we will be perfect just as the Lord Jesus Christ is perfect. In His Sermon on the Mount, our Lord spoke to His Father as He prayed, “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Mat 6:10). God’s perfect will is not always done on earth, but everything in heaven is done according to His will. Therefore, when we are in heaven, we will be totally occupied with worshipping, serving and loving the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as loving others! As a result, all the misery caused by self-centeredness on earth will have disappeared, and everyone will enjoy a magnificent life, because everyone there is completely selfless. In fact, we will not even have to work at being unselfish, humble, and loving once we are in heaven, because we could not be selfish even if we tried. Instead, we will all have a nature that cannot sin. “He cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1Jo 3:9). There will be no hypocrisy, just perfect people in a perfect environment. Paul knew this, and therefore he could say, “For me, living is Christ, likewise dying is profit” (Phi 1:21) and “For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Co 5:1).
Our Bodies in Heaven: What Will We Look Like?

One question that is often asked is, “What will our heavenly bodies be like?” To begin, let’s consider what they won’t be like. No matter how good our physical condition may be, our earthly bodies are constantly decaying. Through diet, exercise, and even positive reaction to stressful situations, many people are able to slow down the rate of decay, but decay is still inevitable. Nevertheless, we should heed the advice of the apostle Paul to “not lose heart, but though our outer man [human body] is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day” (2 Co 4:16). Our decaying earthly bodies cannot live in heaven where everything is fresh, beautiful, immortal, and eternal. In heaven, we will be in much greater physical condition than that ever attained by any member of the human race while on earth. Remember that God never intended for us to live in heaven in these decomposing bodies since “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable” (1Co 15:50).

The bodies we inhabit on earth are referred to in the Bible as “tents,” and a tent is a temporary dwelling place. Therefore, our human bodies, that are temporary dwelling places, were designed for life on earth, which is also our temporary dwelling place. This is why we are said to be “strangers and exiles on the earth” (Heb 11:13).

If we die before the Rapture and go immediately to heaven, but do not receive our glorified bodies until the Lord returns, what will we look like in the interim state? Will we be recognizable? The Bible doesn’t tell us everything about this, but it does give us some interesting facts that indicate that we will be able to recognize one another before we receive our glorified bodies. For example, shortly after Jesus died, Mary Magdalene went back to His tomb and found it was empty.

But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beheld two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. And they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” When she had said this, she turned around, and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means, Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the
Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’” (Joh 20:11-17)

Jesus had yet not ascended into heaven, and had not yet received His glorified body, but He did not look like a ghost. Obviously, He was recognizable as a human being. However, Mary was not able to recognize Him instantly by His appearance, so we can conclude that He did look somewhat different than He did before He died. So although Mary was talking to a recognizable human being, who she thought was the gardener, it wasn’t until this man spoke her name that she immediately knew it was Jesus. Likewise, when we first arrive in heaven, we will look somewhat different than we do on earth. However, our loved ones will be able to recognize us by our voices, mannerisms, and other personality characteristics. How can anyone believe our loving Heavenly Father would arrange for us to die and go to heaven and not be recognized by our loved ones? In fact, the disciples recognized Elijah and Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration, although they had never met them.

Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming. And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. And as these were leaving Him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not realizing what he was saying. (Luk 9:28-33)

In addition to being recognizable, our new bodies will not be restricted in any way, which means that the law of gravity, and all other earthly restrictions, will no longer apply to us and that we will be able to travel instantly from one place to another. As such, we will be just like the Lord Jesus Christ who, after the resurrection, was able to appear wherever and whenever He wished.

And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached, and began traveling with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. And He said to them, “What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?” And they stood still, looking sad. One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, “Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?” And He said to them, “What things?” And they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since
these things happened. But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. “Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see.” And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. But they urged Him, saying, “Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.” And He went in to stay with them. When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. They said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?” (Luk 24:13-32)

These two men spent hours with the Lord, yet they did not recognize him until He broke bread with them. Additionally, Jesus unexpectedly appeared to His disciples on several occasions.

While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be to you.” But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. And He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them. (Luk 24:36-43)

Apparent,ly Jesus appeared very suddenly in the middle of the room where the men were talking, causing them to be startled and terrified, thinking that they had seen a ghost. But, Jesus assured them that He was not a ghost and invited the disciples to examine His resurrected body. On another occasion, the disciples locked themselves in a room because they were afraid of the Jews and suddenly, Jesus appeared before them.

So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” (Joh 20:19)

Notice that He was able to go through the walls of the room; there was no other way for Him to get past the locked doors. With that in mind, we must remove all the limitations of earthly thinking to begin to understand the magnificent experience that awaits us when we receive our glorified bodies. As a guarantee that these things will
come to pass, the Father has given us His Holy Spirit to which Paul attests and teaches us that we all yearn to put on our heavenly bodies and go to heaven.

For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. (2Co 5:1-6)

Every moment we spend in these earthly bodies is time spent away from our eternal home in heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ. With this in mind we should not be afraid to die, but we should actually look forward to its occurrence in God’s perfect timing, for then we will be at home with the Lord, where we truly belong.

For we walk by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. (2Co 5:7-8)

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Phi 3:20-21)

So note again that while many Christians have kept their bodies in fine physical condition and are quite pleased with their earthly bodies, it is still important to realize that the beauty and glory of our heavenly bodies is of one kind, while the beauty and glory of earthly bodies is of a different kind.

All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. (1Co 15:39-44)

For a good analogy of this change in bodies, we can take a look at nature and the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly. Caterpillars are usually ugly and very limited as they crawl slowly upon the ground. On the other hand, butterflies are very beautiful and they can fly freely through the air. When the time comes for a caterpillar to be transformed into a butterfly, it forms a cocoon and usually hangs from the limb of a
tree for several weeks. During this time, a tremendous struggle takes place. Most butterflies have to labor for many days before they are able to break through the cocoon, expand their wings, and fly away. This metamorphosis is quite similar to what will happen to us before we receive our heavenly bodies. As the aging process takes place, some of us struggle with aches and pains just as a butterfly struggles within a cocoon. Now, if God is able to produce a beautiful butterfly from an ugly caterpillar, He certainly is able to change our aging earthly bodies into magnificent new heavenly bodies.

Therefore, let’s look again at some of the characteristics of our Lord’s resurrection body that we will share with Him.

1. Our Lord’s resurrection body was recognizable as a human body.

   “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. (Luk 24:39-40)

   After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.” Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” (Joh 20:26-28)

2. His body had substance and could be touched.

   And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. (Mat 28:9)

   Jesus said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’” (Joh 20:17)

3. He carried on conversations, demonstrating some system of vocal cords and the use of air (Luk 24:39-40, Joh 20:26).

4. His voice was recognizable.

   Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means, Teacher). (Joh 20:16)

5. His body had flesh and bones (Luk 24:39-40).

6. He ate food, although He certainly did not have to eat.
They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them. (Luk 24:42-43)

7. He was able to walk through closed doors.

So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord... after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” (Joh 20:19-20, 26)

8. His body was able to appear and disappear.

Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. (Luk 24:31)

9. He was not subject to gravity.

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. (Act 1:9-10)

With that being said, we receive our interim bodies the moment we die, but we do not receive our glorified bodies until the Lord Jesus Christ comes for His Church. “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is” 1Jo 3:2). When we die and leave these bodies, we will have wonderful, new, celestial bodies in heaven designed for us by God Himself. According to scripture, every Christian whose name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will receive a new heavenly body just like the body of glory and majesty that Jesus Christ received. Remember that when our Lord rose from the dead, He had a resurrected body that was seen before He received His glorified body as a winner in the angelic conflict. This interim body was needed because we would not be able to look upon His glorious resurrected body without being consumed, because “His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters... His face was like the sun shining in its strength” (Rev 1:14-16). Therefore, we know a little bit about what our heavenly bodies will be like based on what our Lord’s body is like, because our glorified resurrection body will be exactly like His.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity
with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to himself. (Phi 3:20-21)

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. (1Jo 3:2)

5 The Arrival

Believers sometimes wonder what they will be doing in heaven for all eternity. Well, the short answer is that we will have so much to be happy about that we will never wonder about what to do next. First and foremost, we will finally be face-to-face with our Lord Jesus Christ. Next, we will be reunited with all of our Christian loved ones who went on to glory before us. Finally, we will begin to form many new relationships with believers from every generation that we meet for the first time in heaven. Moreover, we will live in a place that is incredibly beautiful, far beyond anything we can comprehend with our limited earthly frame of reference and we will be living in our new bodies, which are perfectly healthy and always filled with energy. We will be able to travel and see the spectacular beauty of heaven. Many assume that once we enter heaven, we will automatically become a bland, harp-playing, cloud-rider; a conventional saint with no distinctive features. Others wonder if life in heaven will be boring! Nothing could be further from the truth! Our lifestyle in heaven will be much different than it is on earth.

In eternity we will manifest the perfected form of the character we are building today. Christ will remove the sin in our lives, but we will still have those characteristics that make us unique as individuals. This diversity of personality will provide one of the great joys of our future life. One example of this is seen in the character of Elijah who, for all of his life, fought against evil and idolatry. In Mal 4:5, the prophet identifies Elijah as one of the two witnesses who will appear to fight against the Anti-Christ and his army during the Tribulation. Thus, the resurrected Elijah will manifest the same character he did when he was fighting against King Ahab, Queen Jezebel, and the prophets of Baal.

A magnificent new life awaits us; a life that we did not earn or deserve, but freely received as a wonderful gift from God our Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Our Lord said, “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly” (Joh 10:10). Additionally, “The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23). This is not a fairy tale; this is a reality! God has arranged everything so that our eternal life in heaven will be perfectly fulfilling. When God created us, He placed a void inside of us that must be filled in order to experience complete happiness, as noted by
Solomon who said that “he has also set eternity in their heart” (Ecc 3:11). While on earth, with the influence of the old sin nature, Satan, and the pull of this world, all of us are kept in some way from experiencing total and complete satisfaction. However, none of these obstacles will be present in heaven and all residents of heaven will love to carry out God’s will. As the Lord said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be completely satisfied” (Mat 5:6). The hunger and thirst that God put within us when He created us can be satisfied if we have a strong desire to live our lives according to every instruction in the Word of God. Although this condition is difficult to attain and maintain on earth, everyone in heaven will be completely satisfied because there they will operate completely in God’s will. Heaven is a place where every desire will be met because every desire will always be pure and in line with God’s will. When we respect God and hold Him in reverent awe, there is fantastic blessing awaiting us! For further insight into this and all that He has promised us, consider these passages from the Psalms:

He will grant you your heart’s desire. (Psa 20:4)
Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. (Psa 37:4)
He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them. (Psa 145:19)

In heaven, everyone will hold God in reverent awe at all times, and they will all experience complete fulfillment. In his letter to the Corinthian church, Paul talked about the transformation in knowledge that we can eagerly await after our resurrection.

“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (1Co 13:9-13)

In essence, Paul is saying that all the limits on our capacity for knowledge and experience here on earth will be removed. That is, if there are elements in our present life not suitable for us in heaven, they will be removed, and we will experience the things designed for our benefit on a much higher level. All that is worthwhile in this life will find its highest expression in heaven.

Another source of gratification will be our continued spiritual growth. “Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known” (1Co 13:12).

Great satisfaction comes from continually studying and meditating upon the Word of God. The more we understand about God’s ways, the more we hunger for His Word. God reveals a great deal of spiritual truth to us while we are on earth, but there is a great deal more that will be revealed to us in eternity. “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us” (Deu 29:29). In heaven, there will be nothing that God holds back! Imagine what it will be like to use 100% of the incredibly powerful brain God gave us! We will be able to do anything, and learn things about the universe that are simply beyond our grasp while here on earth. Likewise, there is nothing
that we will desire to know that we will not learn. Diligent study and meditation upon the Word of God will reach its culmination in the eternal state.

In addition to experiencing continued spiritual revelation from God, we will also have duties to perform in heaven. Contrary to what some believe, we will not just sit around playing harps and singing, but the Word of God says we will do Him Holy service:

“\textit{And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.}” (Rev 22:3-4)

In heaven, everyone will experience great joy doing the work that God asks them to do and our lives will be magnificent from the first moment we arrive and throughout all eternity. We will experience great happiness, worth, satisfaction, and accomplishment, with the result that heaven will be filled with the magnificent sounds of praise. Everyone in heaven will realize that they are there only because God was willing to sacrifice His only Son, and because the Lord Jesus Christ was willing to pay the price for our sins. None of us will have the slightest doubt about why we are there, and who is responsible for our being able to enjoy the splendor of heaven. More than ever, we will realize that praise and thanksgiving is due to our Lord. Because of this, our hearts will be so filled with gratitude that we will not be able to refrain from expressing it. Everyone in heaven will love praising the Lord. When the apostle John was taken to heaven, he gave the following description of the activity before the throne of God:

“\textit{And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads [ten thousand times ten thousand], and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.” And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”}” (Rev 5:11-13)

Ten thousand multiplied by ten thousand is one hundred million people! We do not know for certain whether this is figurative speech, or whether there will actually be that many people surrounding the throne of God. On another occasion, John again referred to the tremendous number of people assembled around the throne of God. He said there were so many people that they could not be counted:

“\textit{After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands.”}” (Rev 7:9)

Most of us have seen, either in person or on television, an athletic stadium that can hold nearly 100,000 people. The crowds in those stadiums will be minuscule in comparison with the multitude surrounding the throne of God. Even though most of us will be far from the throne, our eyesight and hearing in heaven will be so spectacular that it will seem as if we are right next to it. Someday we will actually be part of a crowd of people from every nation on earth standing in awe before the throne of God. We will all speak out boldly as we give thanks to God, and to our Lord Jesus Christ:
“And they cry out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying, ‘Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.’” (Rev 7:10-12)

When we approach the throne of God, we will be overwhelmed by the magnitude of praise. When John described his visit to heaven, he said something very interesting. “After these things I heard, as it were, a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, ‘Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God’” (Rev 19:1).

Also surrounding the throne of God are the thrones of the twenty-four elders. “And around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads” (Rev 4:4). These elders represent winners from the Church-age. The Lord Jesus Christ will be seated in the center of a circle consisting of the thrones of the members of this court. Additionally, they will play stringed instruments. “...the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp” (Rev 5:8). They will lead the tremendous crowd of people in songs of praise to God and His wonderful Son; and from time to time, one of them will speak out to urge the people to praise God boldly, receiving thunderous response:

And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.” And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.” (Rev 19:5-6)

John’s observance of the sounds of heaven was echoed by the Apostle Paul:

"Fourteen years ago I was taken up to heaven for a visit. Don’t ask me whether my body was there or just my spirit, for I don’t know; only God can answer that. But anyway, there I was in paradise, and I heard things so astounding that they are beyond a man’s power to describe or put in words (and anyway I am not allowed to tell them to others). That experience is something worth bragging about, but I am not going to do it." (Living Bible, 2Co 12:2)

Clearly, Paul was unable to adequately put this experience into words; his inability to express what he heard is similar to trying to describe color to a blind person, or sound to a deaf person. Thus reinforcing the principle that it is impossible to use earthly words to describe what we will hear in heaven, because we cannot fully comprehend God. His glory is beyond human comprehension. Everyone in the New Jerusalem will be fully conscious of God’s eminence and will long to praise Him. “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, His holy mountain” (Psa 48:1). Along with spending much of our time in heaven praising and thanking God, we will also be able to play many kinds of musical instruments. In fact, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will play the trumpet according to Zec 9:14. Heavenly orchestras will continually play indescribably beautiful concerts, and we will all marvel at the quality of the music as it will be far greater than the finest music we have ever heard on earth. In heaven, every
person will welcome the opportunity to praise the Lord in every possible way with the words we speak, the songs we sing, and the instruments we will be playing.

The Bible describes our life in the resurrection as a life of pure joy, worship, and purposeful activity. We will have all the good things that the Lord created for Adam and the Woman, and none of the bad things like sin, pain, worry, or death. Can you imagine what a joy life will be in heaven when we will be able to work in harmony with God to complete His purposes? There will be no misunderstandings, no sins of pride, no gossip, and no violence. With all eternity before us, we shall be able to explore all the gifts and talents that God gave us. In heaven, every interest and gift of God can be utilized and explored; we will be able to develop all the tremendous potential that God has given to every one of us. We will not have any regrets in heaven.
Questions and Answers Concerning Heaven

In this section, we are going to answer some commonly asked questions regarding heaven.

Q: When the Bible talks about heaven being a place of rest, how does that relate to the activity in heaven?

A: Heaven is truly the last frontier, and like other frontiers in human history, it will challenge us with new opportunities, possibilities, and experiences. Unlike the previous frontiers on earth, heaven will be unlimited in time and space. It will inspire us to join as participants in the dynamic, creative plans of Jesus Christ as we embark on a greater adventure than any we have ever dreamed of because we will be able to explore the infinite possibilities of an unlimited universe. Our future blessings in heaven will begin with the ending of all evil, suffering, and adversity, but it will also provide the fulfillment and enhancement of all the real joys and happiness of human life. The important thing to realize is that the Bible describes our rest after our labor on earth, but these passages do not suggest a life of inactivity or boredom. The promises are of an active, purposeful, and joyful life in a creation filled with beauty, fairness, and justice.

Q: Will there be any animals in heaven?

A: There is an interesting passage in the book of Isaiah concerning how creation will be transformed into a worldwide Garden of Eden; this passage talks about the Millennium and then also the eternal state. “For behold, I create new Heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind” (Isa 65:17).

In Isaiah 65:25 it is said that “the wolf and the lamb shall graze together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain,’ says the Lord.” Thus, we will no longer fear the violence of animals. Also, John reveals that there are horses in heaven:

“And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.”

(Rev 19:11-14)

So the answer is “Yes,” there are animals in heaven.

Q: Will there be such a thing as time in heaven?
A: Some theologians have taught that there is no time in heaven, but they do not understand the original language of the verse that they quote. The King James translation says: And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer (KJV, Rev 10:6).

However, this is a mistranslation. As the New American Standard says:

“And swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there shall be delay no longer.” (Rev 10:6)

The New International Version and the New King James both agree with the New American Standard version. For clarification, let’s look at another passage:

"And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month." (Rev 22:1-2)

The Tree of Life will yield “twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month,” which shows not only that we shall still enjoy the taste of various kinds of fruit, but also that the continuation of months and seasons will go on in heaven to provide some variety of climates in our new home.

Q: Will we have to wear clothes in heaven or will we be naked like our original parents?

A: Rev 7:9 states that we shall be clothed with white robes to symbolize the righteousness of God:

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands." (Rev 7:9)

Q: Ecc 9:10 seems to say that there is no activity beyond the grave; how does this relate to heaven? (Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going).

A: There have been many preachers who have taught what is called “soul sleep.” Some teach that when a person dies, their soul sleeps until the judgment day. However, the Bible teaches that the soul does not sleep at death and neither is it “annihilated.” The body is described as “sleeping” in a sense because it rests until God resurrects it into a new immortal and incorruptible form for eternity. For example Paul says “for this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep” (1Co 11:30). This is a reference to the body sleeping, not the soul. The Bible never speaks of the soul as sleeping. The clear teaching of Scripture is that once a Christian dies they immediately join Christ in heaven. (2Co 5:8; Phi 1:21-23).
In confirmation of this interpretation, in the final chapter of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon affirms the different destiny of the soul as opposed to the body, when he says “remember Him before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed, the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed; then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it” (Ecc 12:6-7). Additionally, when the thief on the cross turned in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, he said, “Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!” And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise” (Luk 23:42-43). Here is the clearest possible statement that the soul passes immediately from consciousness in this life to a conscious existence in heaven. The Lord also taught His disciples that the rich man who died in sin was totally conscious, not only of his torment, but also of his brothers who were in danger of hell:

And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.” But Abraham said, “Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.” And he said, “Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.” But Abraham said, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.” But he said, “No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!” But he said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.” (Luk 16:20-31)

Several Old Testament passages speak of death as sleep and Sheol as a condition of unconsciousness, but each time the passage refers to the body, not the soul.

Q: Are there any churches or temples in heaven?

A: There are no churches or temples, as we know them; there will not be any need for a church building in heaven. Here on earth, a church building is a place where we gather in the name of the Lord to worship Him. We will not have to go to a building to do this in heaven because the Lord’s presence will be there continually as John points out. “I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple” (Rev 21:22).

Q: Do people in heaven know what is taking place on earth?

A: No. Heaven would not be heaven if our loved ones knew what was happening on earth. However, when we arrive in heaven, we will very likely find that certain people there interceded for us in prayer while we were going through difficult times on earth.
Everyone in heaven wants everyone on earth to experience the manifestation of the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Q: Will people get married in heaven?
A: No one will marry in heaven; marriage is an earthly institution:

Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection), and they questioned Him, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies, having a wife, and he is childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up offspring to his brother. Now there were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died childless; and the second and the third took her; and in the same way all seven died, leaving no children. Finally the woman died also. In the resurrection therefore, which one’s wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife.”

And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; for neither can they die anymore, for they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.” (Luk 20:27-36)

Q: Where will the Gazebo be in heaven?
A: Remember that the winner has special privileges related to the Tree of Life and the Gazebo of the Garden, called the paradise of God, “To the winner, I will give to him the privilege of eating from the tree of life which is in the paradise of God” (Rev 2:7).

“Blessed are they [winners] who have washed their robes [rebound], that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city [new Jerusalem].” (Rev 22:14)

The winner is a member of a special club with special parties to which they are invited, a member of the Paradise Club forever. The Gazebo is located in the New Jerusalem, not on the new earth. The exact location in the new Jerusalem is not mentioned.

Q: Why will there be no sea in heaven?
A: The sea was actually used by God as a prison for the fallen angels:

"And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.” (Rev 20:11-13)

Revelation 20:13 is not talking about people who drowned in the sea, nor is it talking about people who are buried in the sea. It is talking about the sea as the most powerful set of gates ever used for a prison! The word for sea is thalassa, which refers to the floodwaters of the universal flood where those fallen angels are imprisoned. This is why we are told that there is no more sea in the new heaven and the new earth:
“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.” (Rev 21:1)

It is interesting to note that when God restored the earth in Genesis 1, He said everything He did was good except when He separated the sea, and that is because this caused the fallen angels to be released from prison.

Q: What does the Bible mean when it talks about the final days being like the days of Noah?

A: The Lord said: "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." (Mat 24:34-39)

It is possible that our Lord is pointing to something here which is much more immense than what we know. The days of Noah were characterized by the Nephilim: The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God [fallen angels] came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. (Gen 6:4)

The Living Bible translation says: In those days, and even afterwards, when the evil beings from the spirit world were sexually involved with human women, their children became giants, of whom so many legends are told (Gen 6:4).

This is actually a description of the days of Noah and why God destroyed the ancient world with a flood. There will be super-creatures on this earth, and Satan will need a way to explain their presence. He might say they are visitors from another planet, but in reality they are his fallen angels. Remember what our Lord said about His second coming, And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you” (Mat 24:4).

Q: If an unbeliever has been given 24 hours to live and has no clue about the Lord Jesus Christ or heaven or even sin, and a pastor comes in to speak with this unbeliever and is then said to have made peace with his God, is he saved?

A: There is no such thing as a person who has no clue about the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Bible. “There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man” (Joh 1:9). Also, the apostle Paul explains this in his letter to the Romans: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse” (Rom 1:18-20).

Q: Since Satan is still allowed to go to heaven, if we die today, will we be able to see him or any other fallen angels?
A: Yes! We will be able to see him:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.” (Job 1:6-7)

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.” (Job 2:1-2)

It appears that Satan will have access to heaven until that time when he is forever banished:

“And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.” (Rev 12:7-9)

Q: How will we be able to talk to one another with a universal language if we have different nations?

A: The same way the languages were scattered in Genesis 11, they will be brought back together. When God created the earth, there was only one language: Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. [However, as so often happens, pride caused a problem. The citizens of the city of Babylon tried to build a tower on earth that would actually reach heaven.] And it came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.” And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. And they said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” [God was not pleased with this carnal desire to reach heaven by human power.] And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

(Gen 11:1-9)

If the Lord was able to confuse the one language spoken at that time, He certainly can do the opposite in heaven.

Q: Will we see the Father?
A: We know that the Father has a throne in heaven, so we have to see something.

"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." (Rev 3:21)

Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God. (Job 19:26)

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Mat 5:8)

Q: What is the difference between fallen angels and demons?

A: There are two different opinions on this. One opinion is that they are one and the same, but the other is that the demons are the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim.

Q: In all that we are learning about the beauty and wonder of heaven, if the stress of this world drives a believer to take his life, so that he may not hurt anymore, but experience this greatness in heaven, does taking His life cancel his ticket to heaven?

A: No. If a person is born again, he can do nothing that would cause him to lose his salvation. And, if a person is born again, he has the available power to handle all stress in life. If a believer commits suicide, he is guaranteed to be a loser in heaven for all eternity.

This concludes our study on heaven. Remember, our attitude about heaven affects our spiritual life here on earth. Do not be reluctant to learn all you can about the future home of believers; it can only help you to grow and prosper. But always keep in mind that there is no crown without the Cross.

So pick up your cross daily, knowing that God loves you with an infinite love and has prepared a magnificent future for you; a future without end.