

Focus #6 - The believer should have confidence that the Lord will take him to a better place.
Philippians 1:23

Focus #7 - The believer should have confidence that he is going to meet with loved ones who have gone on before. **Genesis 25:8; I Thessalonians 4:17**

QUESTION #12 – What happens to a believer who dies?

There is some mystery here, but we do know from the above statements that the believer who dies departs or leaves his body and is taken safely home to be with the Lord in heaven. In other words, when a person dies, his soul/spirit stays in a state of consciousness that does not even know whether one has left his body (II Cor. 12:2-3). The implication of Jesus statement in John 11:26 is that one never dies, which means one is in a state of conscious life. In fact, Solomon says that God has set “eternity in their heart” (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

We may draw a conclusion from Luke 16:22 that holy angels are involved in the actual transporting of the person to heaven. When John wrote Revelation and was in heaven, an angel was very intimately connected to him personally and he saw many angels once he got to heaven (Rev. 1:1; 4:11; 10:8-11; 17:1; **21:9; 22:16**).

QUESTION #13 – What is the third heaven like?

From the Scripture we may make certain observations:

Observation #1 - Heaven is a place far better than earth.

Paul actually says this in **Philippians 1:23**. Paul said he had a desire to depart this world and go to be with Christ which he said was “very much better.” He said in **II Corinthians 5:8** that he would prefer to be at home with the Lord. Take the best things you have ever seen and experienced from this world and you can know heaven is far better than everything.

Now the inference we make from this is that being in heaven and being with Christ is far better than anything on this earth or in this world. In all aspects heaven is a far better place.

Observation #2 - Heaven is paradise.

This word is used for heaven three times in the N.T.: Luke 23:43; II Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7. Now the word “paradise” speaks of a beautiful garden park. We may assume that this is a spectacular Eden type of place, as Eden was before the fall. We know that there are trees with fruit on them (Rev. 2:7).

Observation #3 - Heaven is a place where God lives. **Revelation 4-5; John 14:1-3**

It is a place that features all three members of the Godhead—God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit actually are physically present in heaven. Now think of the glorious things that we can see from God’s creation that are tangible and visible and then think of going to a place where He actually lives. What a place it will be. One theologian said this will be a place of “Incredible Beauty,” a “veritable cornucopia of aesthetic delight... literally beyond description.” (Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, p. 303).

Observation #4 - Heaven is a place that is filled with all holy and good angels. **Rev. 5:11**

Angels were created before humans and with the exception of the angels who followed Satan, they all are in heaven. That is where they reside. It will be a spectacular place to see all of them. Some of them we have met by name in the Bible—Michael, Gabriel, Cherubim and Seraphim. But this innumerable company will be in heaven in all of their glory. It will be spectacular to see them.

Observation #5 - Heaven is the place that features all redeemed humans. **Rev. 7:9**

Think of this; all of the redeemed will be in heaven. All believers of all ages and backgrounds and nationalities and colors will be in heaven. This is a significant chapter because when one gets to heaven there is no more hunger, thirst, hot sun, and tears are wiped away (**7:16-17**). This is a perfect climate. There is service and worship (**7:15**). Jesus shepherds all there (**7:17**).

Observation #6 - Heaven is the place that completes our salvation by glorification. **Rom. 8:30**

When it comes to the Christian life, we could break it down into three theological moments:

- 1) There is the moment of justification—the moment one believes.
- 2) There is the process of sanctification—the process moments of development.
- 3) There is the moment of glorification—the moment we go to heaven.

As we live our lives on earth, the reality of our lives is progress, not perfection. When we are glorified, the reality will be perfection, not progress.

Observation #7 - Heaven is a place that features many dwelling places. **John 14:1-3**

As we pointed out, the words refer to actual places where people live. These are real places prepared and built by Jesus Christ for each believer. These words imply there are many heavenly homes, magnificent heavenly mansions, palatial estates and palaces prepared for those who love the Lord and follow the Lord. The Apostle Paul brings out that this place in heaven is eternal and will not decay or be torn down (II Cor. 5:1).

Like the song says, “Sing the wondrous love of Jesus, sing His mercy and His grace; in the mansions bright and blessed, He’ll prepare for us a place.”

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Observation #8 - Heaven is a place of indescribable glory. **II Cor.12:2-4**

When Paul was caught up to heaven, he saw things and heard things that were indescribable. Things there are not even permitted to be spoken by a human. Paul said no mind can even conceive what God has prepared for those who love Him (I Cor. 2:9).

Observation #9 - Heaven is a place of body transformation. Phil. 3:21; I Cor. 15:51-53;
Job 14:20

Obviously any who are in heaven are not in their old bodies. We also believe the final glorified body will not exist until the Rapture (I Thess. 4:17). In the meantime, those who have left their bodies are in a new recognizable state. It is a glorious state and an imperishable state.

QUESTION #14 – How many places has God created that can be classified as heaven-type places?

There are at least three different specific places that are heaven-type existences for believers.

Place #1 - In the O.T., there was Sheol, a place where O.T. believers went when they died. Specifically this is called Abraham's bosom.

Believers who go here will be raised up after the Tribulation and will enter the Promised Land when Jesus Christ returns (Dan. 12:1-2).

Place #2 - In the present, there is a place called heaven or the third heaven where N.T. believers presently go.

This was the place Paul visited and that which we just described under question 10.

Place #3 - In the Future there will be a New Heaven, New Earth, and New Jerusalem.
Revelation 21-22

Now this third place will not be created until after the Tribulation and after the Millennium. Ultimately the believer is headed to the New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem. But each one of these places is a heavenly existence place for a believer.

Most books that are written about heaven confuse places 2 and 3. What I mean by this is that many take data pertaining to the New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem and say this is the way it is in the third heaven.

We would agree that there are similarities. For example, any believer who goes into eternity via death cannot ever die again. This is true for any believer in any dispensation. It is appointed "once" to die (Heb. 9:27). You do not die two times, three times or four times. This would lead us to conclude there is nothing in heaven that can cause death—no sin and no sickness. So this is a similarity for every believer who dies. We would also agree that there is no curse in heaven.