

Heaven is a City

But this city is anything but ordinary.

Deep in the endless darkness of the cosmos, the walls of this city sparkle like crystal-clear jasper—a perfectly square jewel radiating brilliant rainbows of God’s glory in every direction. Each side of the city is fifteen hundred miles long, with massive walls fifteen hundred miles high and two hundred feet wide at the base. Twelve gates, each made of one gigantic pearl, are the only entrances. Each gate is five hundred miles apart from the others. The name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel is engraved above each gate. Precious, multicolored gems form the foundation of the walls. They glisten with a brilliance that pierces the cosmic darkness for millions of miles.

Within the fifteen-hundred-mile-high walls are fifteen hundred levels, one level every mile above the bottom level. Each level contains an entire heavenscape covering the length and breadth of heaven, like the floors of a king’s castle. God’s Throne is in the center of the top level, where he meets each believer as they arrive in heaven through the middle East Gate. This is also where the new arrivals see their family members for the first time in heaven. No one ever forgets that glorious and highly emotional scene.

From there, an angel escorts each saint to their eternal home on one of the lower heavenscapes. Only angels, the Twenty-four Elders, and a few select saints live on the top floor of heaven. Everyone else may choose whichever other heavenscape they desire. Most prefer to live where it is always 72 degrees with low humidity. Others choose heavenscapes with towering, snowy mountains or lush tropical beaches. Because there are so many beautiful places in heaven, many citizens change locations every fifteen hundred years just for a change of scenery and weather. Angels have noticed that those who moved around a lot on Earth tend to change heavenscapes more often. Some American military families even move *every three years*—just like on Earth! Variety and freedom are two of heaven’s most popular features.

There is never a housing shortage. Billions of exquisite homes for the faithful followers of Jesus cover every heavenscape below the top level. A hundred and forty-four billion miles of pure gold roads connect each home to all other parts of heaven. Since fatigue is unknown in heaven and it never gets dark, the saints usually visit their neighbors just by walking on those golden roads. Long distances can be traveled simply by thinking about the destination. In an

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instant, the residents can go to any place in heaven. It is common to see visitors from even one thousand heavenscapes away suddenly appear for a short visit to a friend or relative. In fact, deep, satisfying fellowship with generations of family members and saints from Old and New Testament times consumes most of the time in heaven. As any angel will be quick to tell you, everything in heaven is about relationships.

Unlike Earth, heaven has neither sun nor night. The light of God illuminates all of heaven with a brightness and clarity never seen on Earth. Plants, animals, angels, and humans all radiate a soft, golden light. Heaven also has no clouds, no rain, and no sea. But a large river of pure water runs steadily from God's Throne through all fifteen hundred heavenscapes. The river replenishes the lakes, ponds, and streams in heaven's magnificent parks.—which are everywhere in heaven.

Each park is different and unbelievably gorgeous—vast areas of the greenest grass, the most fragrant flowers, and trees with delicious fruit always in season. The small ponds in the parks are filled with colorful, glowing fish of every shape imaginable. Animals from every continent on Earth also freely roam these green meadows, but remarkably, they do not need to eat anything. Usually, all the animals live in the parks, but every child who comes to heaven without their parents is allowed to have two animals as personal pets in their homes. Koala bears and lions are always the first to be picked!

In a word, heaven is—well—*heavenly*.