# Heaven

**The kingdom of heaven is near.**

***(St. Matthew 3:2)***

**Behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.
(St. Luke 17:21)**

**And I saw a new heaven and a new earth;**

**for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.**

***(Revelation 21:1)***

**The ancients believed that the heaven was higher than the earth; therefore, they maintained that God's habitation is in heaven from whence he watches men. In Aramaic and Hebrew the same word that means “heaven” also means “sky” and “the universe.” God is everywhere. The term heaven means peace and harmony. In Aramaic, we often say, “This is heaven,” which means, “We are living in peace and tranquility.” (George M. Lamsa, in Old Testament Light , p. 723)**

**Billy writes a letter to his Granddad who has recently died: “Dear Granddad, sometime when things are slow up there in Heaven, could you get me God’s autograph?” *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**Dolly says to Mom: “It’d be nice if the angels potty-trained babies before they left Heaven.” *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)*
Balancing the budget is like going to heaven. Everybody wants to do it. They just don’t want to do what you have to do to make the trip. (Senator Phil Gramm)

George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Tommy Lasorda under the same roof? It happened Tuesday as a portrait of the Los Angeles Dodgers legend was unveiled at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery on Lasorda’s 82nd birthday. The unveiling was the latest honor for a one-time pitcher with an 0-4 major-league record, Lasorda was voted into baseball’s Hall of Fame in 1997 and had an asteroid named after him in 2003 – Asteroid Lasorda. He now serves as special advisor to the team. “Somebody out here asked me what’s next for you?” Lasorda said. “I said, ‘Heaven.’” (Chicago Tribune)**

**A woman took her young son to the beach on a bright and sunny day. They came upon the remains of a sea gull. “What happened to him?” the little boy asked. “He died and went to heaven,” Mom replied. They walked on, the little boy thinking about the sea gull and her answer. “Does God like birds?” he asked. “He loves birds,” Mom said. “And this bird went to heaven?” “Yes.” “So why did God throw it back down?” *(King Duncan & Angela Akers, in Amusing Grace, p. 62)***

**Children are the hands by which we take hold of heaven. (Henry Ward Beecher)

Bible translators have not understood the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures, and they have nearly always translated the word “heavens” in the singular, making it read “heaven.” This error has misled many into thinking that Jesus, in His many parables and comparisons, referred to a place called heaven. But it is apparent that in these parables and comparisons He was trying to explain to His hearers the character of the omnipresent substance and life that has all potentiality and is the source of everything that appears on the earth. (Charles Fillmore, in Atom-Smashing Power of Mind, p. 170)**

**If you keep looking for a bliss, then you may as well stay stuck in where you are, because that is the closest you will get to it. (Dr. Paul Brenner)**

**Dear God, Is it true my father won’t get in Heaven if he uses his Bowling Words in the house? *(Stuart Hample and Eric Marshall, in Children’s Letters to God)***

**Man’s reach should exceed his grasp, else what’s a heaven for? (Browning)**

**Heart: “Sheesh! What a black year for cartoonists. First Charles Schulz dies, now Jeff MacNelly!” Girl: “Jeff who?” Heart: “I hope you got buckets of India ink and stacks of 2-ply bristol up there, God! You’re gonna need it!” Girl: “2-ply what? Still they’re in a better place.” Heart: “In heaven, the Winsor and Newtons are free, and there’s no such thing as writer’s block.” Girl: “Does anybody know what this kid is talking about?” *(Mark Tatulli, in Heart Of The City comic strip)***

**One neighbor’s cat was run over by a car, and the mother quickly disposed of the remains before her four-year-old son Billy found out about it. After a few days, though, Billy finally asked about the cat. “Billy, the cat died,” his mother explained. “But it’s all right. He’s up in heaven with God.” The boy asked, “What in the world would God want with a dead cat?” *(Ross Sams, Jr., in Reader’s Digest)***

**You'll not be in heaven if you're not leaning on the arm of someone you have helped. (Edgar Cayce)**

**Jeffy: “Wonder what the church is like that Granddad goes to in heaven.” Billy: “Biggest and best anywhere! God is the Pastor!” Dolly: “Granddad must really enjoy that.” *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**If you die in an elevator, be sure to push the up button. *(Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Companion, p. 56)***

**A little boy went to a doctor for a throat checkup and noticed a religious painting on the doctor’s wall. “What’s that for?” the boy asked. “That reminds me that someday I’m going to heaven,” the doctor replied. “Wouldn’t you like to go to heaven?” “Sure,” the boy answered. “Well, now, what do you think we must do to get there?” the doctor asked. “We must die,” the boy responded. “That’s right,” the doctor smiled, “but what must we do before that?” The boy pondered and then said, “We must get sick and send for you.” *(King Duncan & Angela Akers, in Amusing Grace, p. 11)***

**When three-year-old Angela stared from the car window to eye a stately white funeral home, she remarked with awe, “What a pretty white house to live in!” “Honey, that’s not a house to live in.” her mother off-handedly explained. “That’s a place where people go when they die.” “Oh! Look, Ceil!” she squealed with delight to her four-year-old sister. “There’s heaven!” *(Therese Beatty, in Catholic Digest)***

**One child says to another: “I’d be a lot better off if God had created more heaven and less earth.” *(The Saturday Evening Post cartoon)***

**The Rev. Billy Graham tells of a time early in his career when he arrived in a small town to preach a sermon. Wanting to mail a letter, he asked a young boy where the post office was. When the boy had told him, Dr. Graham thanked him and said, “If you’ll come to the Baptist church this evening, you can hear me telling everyone how to get to heaven.” “I don’t think I’ll be there,” the boy said. “You don’t even know your way to the post office.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**We don’t go to heaven, we grow to heaven. We grow in consciousness to the heaven of love, peace, joy and wholeness. And, the time of going and growing is now! A change from the 20th to the 21st century will not change your life nor mine. The change must be an inner change. (Dr. R. Eugene Nichols, in Ave-News)**

**A preacher was speaking to a Sunday School class. He had finished speaking on the joys and wonders of heaven. Then he asked, “How many would like to go to heaven?” All but one boy raised his hand. “Harvey, don’t you want to go to heaven?” he asked. “Yes, I want to go,” replied the boy, “but my mother told me to come right home after Sunday School.” *(Rev. Leon Hill, in O’ For The Life Of A Preacher, p. 63)***

**Many people have asked me to tell them about heaven and the afterlife. I sometimes smile because I do not know any more than they do. Yet when one young man asked if I looked forward to being united with God and all those who have gone before me, I made a connection to an old memory. The first time I traveled with my mother and sister to my parents’ homeland of Tonadico di Primiero in Northern Italy, I felt as if I had been there before. After years of looking through my mother’s photo albums, I knew the mountains, the land, the houses, the people. As soon as we entered the valley, I said, “I know this place. I am home.” Somehow I think crossing from this life into life eternal will be similar. I will be home. (Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, in The Gift of Peace)

Hopscotch was once a religious game. Final square was heaven. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Your enjoyment of this world is never right, ‘til every morning you awake in heaven. There is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven. (Aldous Huxley)**

**The little girl was happily humming a hymn as she dusted the furniture to help her mother. “Mommie, will I be dusting God’s chair when I get to heaven, the way the hymn says?” she asked. Mother looked up with surprise, “Which hymn, honey?” “And dust around the throne,” her little girl quoted. It took a while before the mother learned that she was quoting a line from the hymn “Marching to Zion,” with the phrase, “and thus surround the throne.” *(Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations)***

**Recently my five-year-old daughter Rachel, her brother, her godfather, and I were taking an afternoon drive when she got the hiccups. (We are from the South and speak accordingly, so imagine the Southern drawl that each of us uses.) Rachel’s godfather, trying to help her get rid of the hiccups, said, “Rachel, inhale and exhale real slow.” Rachel just looked at him. Thinking she might not understand, he asked, “Do you know what ‘inhale’ and ‘exhale’ mean?” “Sort of,” Rachel answered. “Inhale means when you’re far away from God and never ever get to see Him.” *(Valerie Remy)***

**I've feasted on rich sunsets that were gorgeous as could be, and yet the rarest sunset is the one I'll never see. As footprints spoil the beauty of a smooth and silver beach, so nature’s wondrous music is destroyed by human speech. The birds and forests disappear when civilization comes, enchanting landscapes are replaced by narrow streets and slums. Man's touch defiles the lovely things and ravishes the land, that's why God keeps His Heaven just beyond our mortal hands! (Nick Kenny, in Poems to Inspire)

I believe there is a language in heaven which we learn on earth. If we learn the vocabulary of love now, when we meet God face to face we will know what He is talking about. (Phil Barnhart, in Seasonings for Sermons, p. 86)**

**My wife and I were quizzing 5-year-old Megan about what she had learned in Sunday school that morning. “We learned about fixing things,” she said. “Fixing things? You mean you did crafts.” “No, we learned about fixing things,” she insisted. “It’s in our memory verse. Jesus said, ‘I go to repair a place for you.’” *(David Willingham, in Christian Herald)***

**I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library. (Jorge Luis Borges, Argentine author)**

**“I wish,” said the drinker to the clergyman, “that you had the keys to Heaven so that you might let me in.” “Twere better,” said the clergyman, “that I had the keys to hell that I might let you out!” (Malachy McCourt, in Harold Be Thy Name)

Keep in mind that “heaven,” as Jesus uses the term, is not a place in the sky or a reward for after life. The word “heaven” comes from a Greek root that means “expanding.” Thus, Jesus is talking about the expanding potential within the individual -- within you. Heaven is the potential of the Spirit in you that is wrapped in your human nature. (Dr. Eric Butterworth, in Discover the Power Within You , p. 58)**

**During a sermon our pastor stated that money wasn’t important in the afterlife, because in heaven, there is no money. I overheard one parishioner whisper to her mother, “Did you hear that, Mom? We’re already in heaven.” *(Kevin Wild)***

**Heaven is at the feet of mothers. *(Persian proverb)***

**Little Bobbie, scolded for being naughty, was asked by his mother, “How do you expect to get into heaven?” He thought for a moment and then replied: “I’ll just run in and out and keep slamming the door until they say, ‘For goodness sake, come in or stay out.’ Then I’ll go in.” *(C. J. Papara, in Guideposts)***

**If I ever reach heaven, I expect to find three wonders there; first to meet some I had not thought to see there; second, to miss some I had expected to see there; and third, the greatest wonder of all, to find myself there. (John Newton)**

**A little city girl was in the country for the first time and saw the night sky. “Oh, mother, if heaven is so beautiful on the wrong side what must it be like on the right side!” *(Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations)***

**At the beginning of his ministry Jesus declared, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” This was an entirely new idea about heaven to people who had been postponing their expectancy of good, their security, their peace of mind, their happiness, to some remote future. But Jesus came declaring that it is all at hand, right now, with us and within us. *(Carl Moran, in INTA magazine)***

**Am told “paradise” is a Persian word that literally means “hunting ground.” (L. M. Boyd)**

**Pennies from heaven: Six hundred years ago, if you wanted to go to heaven when you died, you simply bought a certificate, called an indulgence, from the Catholic Church in Rome. *(The Diagram Group, in Funky, Freaky Facts, p. 50)***

**Jean-Paul Sartre (arriving in heaven): “It’s not what I expected.” God: “What did you expect?” Sartre: “Nothing.” (SCTV)**

**Little Johnny’s new baby brother was screaming up a storm. “Where’d we get him?” he asked his mom. “He came from heaven, Johnny,” his mother replied. “Wow! I can see why they threw him out!” Johnny said. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**The gate of heaven is very low; only the humble can enter it. (St. Elizabeth Seton)**

**Where did the phrase “seventh heaven” come from? Mohammedan belief that there were seven heavens, each happier than the one before, with the seventh supremely happy. (L. M. Boyd)**

**I am certain that there will be three surprises in heaven. First of all, I will see some people there whom I never expected to see. Second, there will be a number whom I expect to be there who will not be there. And, even relying on His mercy, the biggest surprise of all may be that I will be there. *(Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, in Treasure in Clay)***

**Billy says to Jeffy while reading a book: “There’s a big special effects department in Heaven just to do halos.” *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**Instead of a heaven after death, the new Christianity teaches a kingdom of the heavens existing now as a righteous state of mind. It teaches that man makes his heaven here and now by the formative power of his thought. *(Charles Fillmore, in Jesus Christ Heals)***

**One night while getting my two boys ready for bed, I told them I would read a new Bible story. The older one said, “You mean there are more stories in the Bible?” The younger one answered, “Oh yes, those people in Heaven are always doing something new.” *(Lois Shenold, in Country magazine)***

**“Mummy,” said little Brian, “Percy doesn’t know how to swim because his mom won’t let him go near the water.” “Well, Percy is a very good little boy.” “Yep,” little Brian answered reflectively, “and I suppose he’ll go to Heaven the first time he falls in the lake.” *(Weekly Progress)***

**Heaven is going to be a vast, colorful tapestry of living things. God is a God of life, and his home is going to reflect that. Does this seem too childish and silly to believe? I certainly hope so, because that’s a sure sign that it’s true. (Anthony Destefano, in A Travel Guide to Heaven)**

**Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads. (Henry David Thoreau)**

**If I have any belief about immortality, it is that certain dogs I have known will go to Heaven, and very, very few persons. *(James Thurber)***

**Ever wonder what TV might be like in heaven? Little Billy draws his version of what Granddad might be watching: Non-Survivor. Those stories and Andy Rooney tonight on ‘60 Millenniums.’ Saturday Night Dead. Touched by an Earthling. *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**Heaven goes by favor. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in. (Mark Twain)**

**If Heaven had a Website, we could send e-mail to Granddad. *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**There is a little church in Ireland with beautiful stained-glass windows. The richness of the reds and blues are breathtaking. However, there is one window that has been left in clear glass. It is the most beautiful window of them all for it looks out over a panorama that includes a clear-blue lake and green rolling hills. Under the window is this inscription: “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork.” (Dynamic Preaching)**

**Dolly says to her Mom: “I wish we could go to Heaven without dyin’, look around, then come back home.” *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**How can the world be improving, when what we once called “heaven” we now call “space”? (Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)**
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