

CHIEF MINISTRIES

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Have you ever wondered what heaven is like?

Have you ever traveled to Disneyland on a family vacation? On the way there, your parents may have explained to you what it was going to be like. But no matter how they tried, there was no way for you to understand just how amazing that place was until you walked into the park for the first time. It far surpassed anything you could have imagined it to be! So, what does that have to do with our wonderment about what heaven is like? Well, Disneyland is visited by many daily, and they try to explain to those yet to see or experience it what it is like.

Some say they have been to and seen heaven, and I don't discount their experience, but like Disneyland, the personal experience of heaven is difficult for those who haven't been there to understand. As an ICU nurse of many years, I have had patients brought back from death and shared very vivid and detailed experiences of where they went as their body was being resuscitated (brought back to life by medical intervention). Even as a believer, it can be difficult to comprehend that experience as described by another; we just don't have the words or understanding.

The Bible says, *"Can you understand the mysteries surrounding God All-Powerful? They are higher than the heavens and deeper than the grave. So what can you do when you know so little, and these mysteries outreach the earth and the ocean?"* (Job 11:7-9 CEV). Heaven is a mystery that you will not fully understand until you arrive there. But the Bible does give important information about eternity, including five things that will *not* be in heaven.

In heaven, there will be no sickness. The Bible says, *"This is how it will be when the dead are raised to life. When the body is buried . . . it is ugly and weak; when raised, it will be beautiful and strong"* (1 Corinthians 15:42-43 GNT). There won't be any sickness because you're going to get a new, perfect body.

In heaven, there will be no sadness. God *"will wipe every tear from their eyes"* (Revelation 21:4 NIV). God has kept a record of your tears and pain because he cares about you. But when you get to heaven, there will be no more broken hearts, rejection, loneliness, grief, or heartache.

In heaven, there will be no suffering. The Bible says, *"Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat"* (Revelation 7:16 NIV). Every one of your needs will be satisfied in heaven.

In heaven, there will be no sin. *"God . . . will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault"* (Jude 1:24 NLT). Jesus Christ died on the cross and paid for all your sins so that when you see him face to face, your character will be instantly changed to be like him.

In heaven, there will be no death. *“There will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever”* (Revelation 21:4 NLT). Heaven is glorious in a lot of ways, but the best thing is that you get to be in God’s presence—*forever*.

The Bible says, *“We don’t know everything, and our prophecies are not complete. . . . Now all we can see of God is like a cloudy picture in a mirror. Later we will see him face to face. We don’t know everything, but then we will, just as God completely understands us”* (1 Corinthians 13:9, 12 CEV).

One day, it’s all going to be clear. It’s all going to make sense. You’re going to be able to say, “So *that’s* why God allowed that in my life!” Until then, God wants you to trust him. Think about the things in your life that may appear to have been a hindrance or obstacle, a path you didn’t expect to be on. Maybe that was a loss of a relationship, loss of a job, unexpected role change within your family, responsibility placed upon you that you weren’t prepared for, or maybe it is prison. Whatever the reason, here are some things to always remember.

God promises to take away all suffering, sickness, and sadness in heaven, even though you must endure those things now. What are you most looking forward to about heaven? In what ways can you become more like Christ while you are here on earth? Why is it important to do so?

Heaven probably already sounds pretty good to you. But did you know there are going to be rewards in heaven? You will be rewarded for everything you did in obedience to Jesus while on this earth. God is watching everything in your life. You will be rewarded in heaven for your good actions, speech, and thoughts; for your character and good decisions; and for your generosity and sacrifices. You’ll be rewarded for loving your enemies and for not giving up when it was difficult to do the right thing. You will be rewarded for bringing other people to Jesus Christ. (Is anybody going to be in heaven because of you?)

You will be rewarded for putting up with criticism for being a Christian and for being persecuted as a believer. That’s why Jesus said, *“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you”* (Matthew 5:11-12 NIV).

God is watching it all and is going to reward it all. These rewards have nothing to do with your salvation. The only way you get into heaven is by faith in what Jesus Christ has already done for you. You can’t get into heaven by your good works. But the Bible says that when you get to heaven, you will be rewarded according to your good works.

There are all kinds of verses about this. Matthew 10:42 says, *“If you give even a cup of cold water to one of the least of my followers, you will surely be rewarded”* (NLT). It seems like such a simple thing to give a cup of water to someone or to share a meal. But every time you do that, it’s like God says, “I’m writing that one down. I’ve got them all recorded.” You get to decide where you want your rewards. Do you want them in this life, or do you want them in the next life?

Jesus said, *“Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great”* (Luke 6:35 NLT). If you choose this life’s rewards—like popularity, wealth, fame, success, and comfort—then you will enjoy them for only 80 years or so. But if you build up rewards in heaven, you’ll get to enjoy those rewards forever.

Don’t settle for the rewards this world has to offer. As a child of God, you have so much more to look forward to! Why do you think God wants to reward you for your obedience? In what ways are you working for rewards on earth? In what ways are you working for rewards in heaven?

If you think you're going to be bored in heaven, think again. You're not going to sit around on a cloud doing nothing in heaven. God wired you and knows what you're interested in. All your hobbies, skills, and talents come from Him. He shaped you with your spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality, and experiences. God didn't make you extraordinarily unique just for earth. He's going to use your shape in eternity.

You will have work in heaven. But here's the difference between work in heaven and work on earth: In heaven, you're guaranteed to enjoy your work. You won't experience any heartache or stress over your work. It will be meaningful, enjoyable, and fulfilling all the time. You'll have your dream job forever! I don't know what your specific roles or responsibilities will be in heaven. But I do know that they will be based on how faithful you are with the roles and responsibilities God has given you on earth. God is watching you, and He's testing you. Life is a temporary assignment, and God wants to see how responsible, faithful, and trustworthy you are with the responsibilities you have now.

What are you doing with what you've been given? If you make the most of what you've been given, then God is going to give you more in heaven. You'll make it into heaven because of God's grace, but your rewards and responsibilities once you get there will be based on how faithfully you served God on earth. The Bible explains: *"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?"* (Luke 16:10-11 NLT).

God is watching to see how you manage your finances, your time, your relationships, your health, and your opportunities. The way you manage your money is a test of your faithfulness, and it's going to help determine what you do in heaven. If God can't trust you with worldly wealth, you're always in debt, you can't afford to tithe, and you're not generous, then what do you think He's going to trust you with in eternity?

God is watching how you handle your responsibilities, not because He wants to make you feel guilty, but because He wants you to enjoy all the wonderful things heaven has to offer.

When you choose faithfulness in everything God has entrusted to you on earth, then you will be entrusted with much more in heaven.

May we do all things here on this earth as we would do unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23-24). What a difference it makes when you see your work as a test of faithfulness. What do you think God wants you to do with a job that does not feel fulfilling or meaningful? How can you choose faithfulness in your work today?

I, for one, am excited about what heaven will be like, and I trust that everything that has happened here in this realm will be just a shadow (Job 8:9, I Chronicles 29:15, Hebrews 8:5, 10:1), and the glory of heaven is the reality I look forward to (Romans 8:18, 2 Chronicles 4:17, Revelation 21:4). Read and study these.

Blessings and continued prayers to each of you as we journey through this life together.

Ms. Chief (aka Ms.G)

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