

# *Citizens of Heaven*

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# Citizens of Heaven

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Think of the most dazzling beauty, the most brilliant radiance, the most immaculate purity. *Heavenly* is the word that comes to mind. *Heavenly* signifies that the height of beauty, the fullness of all that is good and lovely, is to be found in heaven. In contrast to the imperfection on earth, in heaven everything is perfect. Why? — Because of its association with God. Everything connected with God and under His immediate influence reflects the divine nature, which is perfection and fullness.

Nothing in heaven or on earth can compare with Jesus, the King of heaven, the very Son of God. The 'most excellent of men' (Psalm 45:2), Jesus epitomizes all that is lovely in heaven and on earth and fills heaven with His glorious radiance, brighter than a myriad of suns. Light and glory shine from His face, bathing all of heaven in a wonderful radiance. In heaven everything is under His dominion. Nothing hinders His influence there as it does on earth, where He must first penetrate many layers of sin and evil.

Everyone who believes in Jesus is convinced of His reality; and heaven is no less real. Because Jesus is full of beauty and glory, so heaven is endowed with His loveliness. Nothing in heaven is unworthy of Him.

Jesus came down from heaven, leaving the Father's side and all the joy and glory that were His, in order to bring us to heaven. His one longing was to save us from the domain of Satan and lead us into His kingdom, where peace and joy reign. 'In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you' (John 14:2). In His deep love Jesus longs for us as His ransomed ones to enter Zion, our heavenly home, where sorrow and sighing will flee away (Isaiah 35:10).

*Our  
citizenship  
is in  
heaven.*


**Philippians 3:20**



The sole desire  
of God the Father  
is to see  
His children happy.

This is why through His  
only begotten Son,  
our Saviour,  
He has prepared for us  
a place of  
everlasting joy,  
which is heaven.

Sometimes an inexplicable feeling of joy sweeps over us at the thought that this evil world is not all there is. Heaven is a reality — a kingdom of peace and joy, where there will be no more pain for body, soul or spirit. Its gates were opened when Jesus was born and a great company of the heavenly host heralded the dawning of the kingdom of heaven with their declaration: 'Peace on earth.' Heaven was opened when Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan for our sakes. And ever since Jesus returned to His heavenly home at the time of His ascension, the gates of heaven have remained open. The cherubim with the flaming sword have departed from the entrance to paradise. This is why Stephen, the first Christian martyr, could say when persecuted for Jesus' sake, 'I see heaven open' (Acts 7:56).

God raised   
us up with Christ  
and seated us  
with him  
in the  
heavenly realms.



**Ephesians 2:6**

**T**he amazing truth is that heaven has been open for the ransomed of the Lord ever since Jesus completed His act of atonement. For this we have the guarantee of Holy Scripture: 'God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms' (Ephesians 2:6). Could there be a more beautiful demonstration of those words of Jesus: 'The Father himself loves you' (John 16:27)? As a loving Father desiring His children's happiness, God has prepared a wonderful home for His children not just for a while but for all eternity — heaven, where there is nothing but joy and delight.

In this heavenly home we will experience fully the Father's love. Joy will no longer be mixed with pain, the Father having no further need to discipline us. Jesus' victory over sin will be reality in all those who, changed into His likeness, enter heaven. Having battled in faith against sin, submitting to God's chastening and to His sanctifying work during their earthly lives, they will — in heaven, that kingdom where there is no more sin — rest in the Father's love.

# Loving Father,

*Thank You for creating a place like heaven for Your children — a place of everlasting happiness, a place of singing and rejoicing, where all our pain and sorrow will be forgotten, because You will comfort and refresh us, healing all our hurts and wounds and showering us with goodness. Thank You that each new day in my life brings me closer to this goal.*

*Help me to press on towards the heavenly goal, trusting fully in the power of Jesus' blood.*

**Amen.**

Knowing that  
heaven  
is a reality  
makes all  
earthly sorrow  
fade away.



What does heaven convey to us? — No more temptation, trouble, sadness or fear. No more parting and separation, ageing and dying, hunger and thirst, misery and hardship. Instead of having to believe, we will see clearly. In heaven there are no dangers to face, no loneliness to endure, no wants to suffer, no trials to bear. In heaven there is no evil face, no heart full of strife or anger, no one to torment, harass, malign or hate us. All who live in the heavenly glory have been made perfect in love — love for God and man. Their focus is the Triune God, from whom love and joy ever flow.

Heaven means partaking of God Himself, communing with the Triune God in love, being drawn into His eternal radiance and peace. And those who love Him are granted a foretaste of this here on earth. They taste the precious comfort of His love. The joy that Jesus gives kindles a light in the darkest moments of their lives. Jesus is not far away. He is to be found not only

in heaven. Here and now He comes to those who belong to Him, revealing Himself to them, granting them a foretaste of heaven.

A minister shared how he spent nine years as a prisoner of war in the Ural Mountains under appalling conditions. Yet he called them the happiest years of his life, because in this immeasurable suffering the Lord Jesus drew very near to him. Another man, who was sent to Siberia, similarly recalled, 'This hell-like place became heaven to me, because Jesus was present in a way unknown to me before or since.'

What we suffer ✧  
at this present time  
cannot be compared  
at all  
✧ with the glory  
that is going to  
be revealed to us.

✧ Romans 8:18 GNB



# Loving Father,

*Help me, I pray, to set my heart on heaven, so that I will rejoice and be glad, giving thanks for the great happiness that awaits me above.*

*Help me to focus not on what I can see, for that will soon come to an end, but on what is unseen—heaven and its glory. These are eternal realities that await me if I overcome and endure to the end in faith.*

*Let my thoughts be drawn towards heaven, so that in my heart I may live there even now and have a foretaste of heaven and its eternal glory.*

**Amen.**

If here on earth Jesus' presence can turn hell-like conditions into heaven by the joy that comes when He lives in our hearts, then what will it be like when we are with Him above? We will scarcely believe it when we find ourselves very close to the Lord Jesus, when we suddenly hear His voice and see His face shining like a myriad of suns. The words of Scripture will come true: 'They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights' (Psalm 36:8).

A legend about a man in the kingdom of the dead illustrates this reality of heaven. After spending what seemed an eternity in barren wastes and perpetual gloom, he suddenly discovered a small opening, no larger than a knot-hole. Standing on his toes and craning his neck, he could catch a glimpse of heaven's glory in the distance—a glimpse of the saints celebrating. He could faintly hear songs of worship wafting from the City of God. And so this man stood there on tiptoe, peering and listening with insatiable

yearning, separated all the while by a great chasm (Luke 16:26).

We are still on earth. It is not yet too late to set our hearts on being with Jesus, so that we do not have to spend all eternity yearning in vain but may come to 'the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering...' (Hebrews 12:22 rsv). All earthly values such as prestige, popularity, power, possessions, and even human happiness pale before the goal of heaven. The way is clearly marked out. 'Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 3:13-14).

*Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.*

Revelation 19:9 rsv

# My Lord Jesus,

*Help me so that at the end of my life I may enter Your heavenly glory. Make me ready to take part in the marriage supper of the Lamb. Teach me now the ways of heaven: a humble reverence towards God and others; the warmth and kindness of that divine love which marks a child of the heavenly Father; the gladness, rejoicing and adoration surrounding the throne.*

*Help me to attain the heavenly goal at all costs. I give myself to You that You may do Your refining work in me.*

**Amen.**

*Let us  
fix our eyes  
on Jesus,*

*the author and  
perfector of our faith,  
who for the joy set before him  
endured the cross, scorning its shame,  
and sat down at the right  
hand of the throne of God.*

Hebrews 12:2

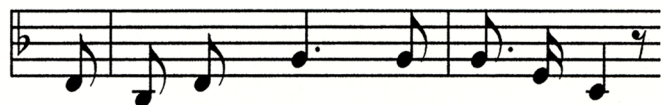




There is a cit- y all of gold,



Far, far from tears and suf- f'ring.



A sin- gle glimpse will stir us all



Till we de- sire noth- ing more.



A fer- vent long- ing fills us,



a fer- vent long- ing.

Poignant but healing to our souls, ✧  
This homesickness for heaven:  
A blaze of glory from afar,  
A shimmering glow of springtime charm.  
How blest are all who've known it,  
✧ are all who've known it!

A lovely, haunting melody  
The heart with sweetness pierces.  
Like homeward flying birds may we  
From all earth's shallow pleasures flee  
And gain the golden city,  
the golden city. ✧ ✧

*Ich weiß von einer goldnen Stadt*  
Anon.

✦ You are the one, O Jesus,  
Who fills my heart and thoughts,  
My crown and joy and treasure,  
Beloved Son of God.

✦ ✦  
Oh, how I long for heaven,  
Where to my heart's content  
I'll gaze upon Your radiance  
And glorious countenance!

Make haste, my soul, for heaven,  
Your everlasting home,  
Where God the Father lives and reigns  
With Jesus Christ, His Son.





*Live  
in heaven  
and you  
will have  
heaven  
on earth.*

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