

# Heaven

Heaven is Heaven, you may think. But, Heaven isn't perceived in the same way by everyone around the world, not even just Christians.

Traditionally, Christianity has taught that Heaven is the location of the throne of God as well as the holy angels, although this is in varying degrees considered metaphorical. In traditional Christianity, it is considered a condition of existence (rather than a place somewhere in the cosmos) of the supreme fulfillment of unifying with God. In most forms of Christianity, heaven is also the abode for the righteous dead, usually a stage before the resurrection of the dead and the saints' return to the New Earth.

While the concept of Heaven is much discussed within the Christian and Islamic religions, the Jewish concept of the afterlife is not discussed so often. The *Torah* has little to say on the subject of survival after death, but by the time of the rabbis two ideas had made inroads among the Jews: one, which is probably derived from Greek thought, is that of the immortal soul which returns to its creator after death; the other, which is thought to be of Persian origin, is that of resurrection of the dead.

The concept of Heaven in Islam differs in many respects from Judaism and Christianity. Heaven is described primarily in physical terms as a place where every wish is immediately fulfilled when asked. Heaven is happy, without negative emotions. Those who dwell in Heaven are said to wear costly apparel, partake in exquisite banquets, and recline on couches inlaid with gold or precious stones. Inhabitants rejoice in the company of their parents, spouses, and children. If one's good deeds outweigh one's sins then one may gain entrance to Heaven. Conversely, if one's sins outweigh their good deeds they are sent to hell. It has been said that the lowest level of Heaven, the first one, is already over one-hundred times better than the greatest life on Earth. The highest level is the seventh Heaven. Houses are built by angels for the occupants using solid gold.

In Buddhism there are several Heavens, all of which are still part of illusionary reality. Those who accumulate good karma may be reborn in one of them. However, their stay in Heaven is not eternal—eventually they will use up their good karma and will undergo a different rebirth into another realm, as humans, animals or other beings. Because Heaven is temporary, Buddhists focus more on escaping the cycle of rebirth and reaching enlightenment (nirvana). Nirvana is not a heaven but a mental state.

In the native Chinese Confucian traditions, Heaven is an important concept, where the ancestors reside and from which emperors drew their mandate to rule in their dynastic propaganda

In Hinduism, attaining heaven is not the final pursuit in Hinduism, as heaven itself is ephemeral and related to physical body. Heaven cannot be perfect either and is just another name for pleasurable and mundane material life.

In Mesoamerican religions, the Aztecs, Toltecs, etc. believed that the heavens were constructed and separated into 13 levels. Each level had from one to many Lords living in and ruling these heavens. The Thirteen Heavens were ruled by Ometeotl, the dual Lord, creator of the Dual-Genesis who was both male and female. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaven>]

