

When did Paradise become Heaven?

*(When quoting scriptures, from the Rotherham Emphasized Bible New Testament,
I will substitute the Hebrew word Yahshua for Jesus, Yahweh and Elohim for God and Anointed for Christ.)*

Paradise Defined?

The English dictionary defines paradise as: *1. The garden of Eden. 2. The abode of sanctified souls after death; either heaven, or, as some hold, an intermediate Elysium¹ for the souls of the righteous during the interval between death and the final judgment. 3. A place of bliss; hence a state of happiness.²*

The Greek lexicon defines the Greek word, ‘paradeisos,’ translated paradise as: *(1) among the Persians a grand enclosure or preserve, hunting ground, park, shady and well watered, in which wild animals, were kept for the hunt; it was enclosed by walls and furnished with towers for the hunters (2) a garden, pleasure ground (2a) grove, park (3) the part of Hades which was thought by the later Jews to be the abode of the souls of pious until the resurrection: but some understand this to be a heavenly paradise (4) the upper regions of the heavens. According to the early church Fathers, the paradise in which our first parents dwelt before the fall still exists, neither on the earth or in the heavens, but above and beyond the world (5) heaven*

Philosophy and the religion of men have changed the Garden of Eden, which has always been on the earth, into heaven. Eve and Adam were made terrestrial³ (earthly) beings; beings of flesh. Mankind was given the earth.⁴ Ministering spirits⁵ (angels), cherubim's and zoons⁶ were made celestial (heavenly) beings; spirit beings. Mankind was designed to live in the Garden of Yahweh (Paradise) while spirits were designed to live in heaven. Mankind's destiny was not to dwell in heaven but upon the earth in the Garden of Yahweh, with our Father. Paradise has now come to mean heaven, as we see in the definitions above, and heaven has come to mean paradise. Our adversary and men have changed this foundational truth of Yahweh's Word into a lie, which blinds the minds of men.

¹ Classical Myth. The place where the good dwelt after death, located in the Western Ocean or in the lower world.

² Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

³ So Yahweh God took the man,—and placed him in the garden of Eden, to till it and to keep it. Gen. 2:15

⁴ Gen. 1:26; Ps. 115:16

⁵ And there came to be war in heaven: Michael and his messengers *going forth* to war with the dragon; and, the dragon, fought, and his messengers; and he prevailed not, neither was place found for them, any longer, in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out,—the ancient serpent, he that is called Adversary and the Satan, that deceiveth the whole habitable world,—he was cast to the earth, and his messengers, with him, were cast. Revelations 12:7-9

⁶ Revelation 4:8 and, the four living creatures [2226 ζων zoon *dzo'-on*], each one of them, have severally six wings, round about and within, full of eyes; and they, cease, not, day and night, saying—Holy! holy! holy! Lord, God, the Almighty,—Who was, and Who is, and Who is coming.

Garden in the phrase, Garden of Eden, is the Hebrew word, ‘gan.’ Gan means garden. It is used for the Garden of Eden and also for regular gardens. Eden can be synonymous with Garden, Garden of Yahweh and in the Greek, Paradise.⁷ The Greek word, ‘paradeisos,’ translated paradise, also means garden. It is used three times in the New Testament.⁸ The Septuagint, which is a Greek translation of the Old Testament, used, ‘paradeisos,’ to translate the Hebrew word, ‘gan.’ Garden is the meaning of both words.

Genesis, chapter two, places mankind in the Garden of Yahweh with the tree of life in its midst. “And Yahweh Elohim planted a garden [gan⁹] in Eden [‘Eden¹⁰], on the east,—and put there the man whom he had formed. And Yahweh Elohim, caused to spring up, out of the ground, every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food,—and the tree of life, in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:8-9). This garden is part of the earth. Yahweh’s Written Word ends with the Book of Revelations, which also unveils the Paradise or Garden of Yahweh. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what, the Spirit, is saying unto the assemblies. Unto him that overcometh—I will give, unto him, to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of Yahweh” (Rev. 2:7). “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for, the first heaven and the first earth, have passed away, and, the sea, is no more. And, the holy city, new Jerusalem, saw I coming down out of heaven [to earth] from Yahweh, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying—Lo! the tent of Yahweh, is with men [men dwell on the earth], and he will tabernacle with them [on the earth], and, they, shall be, his peoples, and, he, shall be, Elohim with them... And he pointed out to me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, issuing forth out of the throne of Yahweh and of the Lamb, in the midst of the Broadway thereof. And, on this side of the river and on that, was a tree of life,” (Rev. 21:1-3, 22:1-2). This Word of Yahweh begins with the Garden of Yahweh, which is on the earth, and ends with the Paradise of Yahweh.

Old Covenant

According to the Old Covenant, mankind, when they die, sleep in the earth in a place called sheol until they are awakened by the resurrection of the dead.¹¹ “Thus saith My Lord Yahweh, Lo I myself am going to open your graves And will cause you to come up out of your graves. O my people,— And will bring you upon the soil of Israel. So shall ye know that I, am Yahweh,— When I open your graves. And cause you to come up out of your graves O my people, And I will put my spirit within you and ye shall live, And I will

⁷ Isaiah 51:3 For Yahweh hath comforted Zion, He hath comforted all her waste places, And hath made her wilderness like Eden, And her waste plain like the garden of Yahweh,—Joy and gladness, shall be found in her, Thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

⁸ Lk. 23:43, II Cor. 12:4, Rev. 2:7

⁹ 01588 גַּן gan gan from 01598; used in the King James Version 42 times; 1) garden, enclosure 1a) enclosed garden 1a1) (fig. of a bride) 1b) garden (of plants) n pr loc 1c) Garden of Eden

¹⁰ 05731 עֵדֶן ‘Eden ay’-den the same as 05730; used in the King James Version 17 times; Eden=" pleasure" 1) the first habitat of man after the creation; site unknown

¹¹ Genesis 37:35, Psalms 89:48

settle you upon your own soil, So shall ye know that I, Yahweh have spoken and have performed. Declareth Yahweh” (Ez. 37:12-14). “Thy dead, shall come to life again, My dead body, they shall arise,—Awake and shout for joy, ye that dwell in the dust For, a dew of light, is thy dew, And, earth, to the shades shall give birth” (Is. 26:19). “...at that time, shall thy people, be delivered, every one found written in the book; and, many of the sleepers in the dusty ground, shall awake,—these, *shall be* to age-abiding life, but, those, to reproach, and age-abiding abhorrence” (Dan. 12:1-2). Upon the resurrection of the just, the people who were sleeping, will be settled on their own soil; the soil that was promised to Abraham. “And, Yahweh, said unto Abram after that Lot had separated himself from him, Lift up, I pray thee thine eyes and look, from the place where thou art,—northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which thou art beholding—to thee, will I give it, and to thy seed unto times age-abiding” (Gen. 13:14-15). The heart of this age-abiding land will be Zion also known as Jerusalem; where Yahweh dwells with His people.¹² According to the Old Testament, Yahshua was the only one to ascend into the heavens. David, being a prophet, foretold not his ascension but the Christ’s resurrection and ascension. “Neither was he abandoned unto sheol, nor did his flesh see corruption” (Ps. 16:10). David is not in heaven but in sheol. “David,—that he both died and was buried, and, his tomb, is among us until this day...For, David, hath not ascended into the heavens” (Acts 2:29,34).

In the beginning, it appears that Yahweh’s dwelling place was in the original Garden of Yahweh.¹³ As Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden so also Yahweh ascended from the earth into the heavens, which is His present abiding place. Now, heaven is the throne of Yahweh and the earth is His footstool.¹⁴ Yahweh, who dwells in the heavens, future home will not be in the heavens but will be upon the new earth; the mountain of Zion, the New Jerusalem, Paradise.¹⁵

In the Old Covenant, heaven (some place above earth) is never a future home for Israel. Abraham “was awaiting the city having foundations, whose architect and builder is, Yahweh” (Heb. 11:10). The land, flowing with milk and honey, promised to Abraham is the future age-abiding home for Abraham’s seed. “And the ransomed of Yahweh! shall return, And shall enter Zion with shouting, With gladness age-abiding, upon their head, Joy and gladness shall overtake them, And sorrow and sighing, shall flee away” (Is.

¹² Isaiah 2:1-5, 11:1-11, 35:1-10, 51:3,60:14-22, 65:17-25

¹³ Then heard they the sound of Yahweh God, walking to and fro in the garden at the breeze of the day Gen. 3:8

¹⁴ Isaiah 66:1 ¶ Thus, saith Yahweh, The, heavens, are my throne, and The earth, is my footstool: Where then is the house which ye can build me? Or where is my place of rest?

¹⁵ But it shall come to pass, in the afterpart of the days, That the mountain of the house of Yahweh Shall be, set up, as the head of the mountains, And be exalted above the hills,—And all the nations, shall stream thereunto; And many peoples shall go and say—Come ye, and let us ascend Unto the mountain of Yahweh Unto the house of the God of Jacob, That he may teach us of his ways, And we may walk in his paths,—For, out of Zion, shall go forth a law, And the word of Yahweh out of Jerusalem; Is. 2:2-3, And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for, the first heaven and the first earth, have passed away, and, the sea, is no more. And, the holy city, new Jerusalem, saw I coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying—Lo! the tent of God, is with men, and he will tabernacle with them, and, they, shall be, his peoples, and, he, shall be, God with them; Rev. 21:1-3

35:10). Yahshua told the evil-doer, “Verily, I say unto thee this day: With me, shalt thou be in Paradise” (Lk. 23:43). Yahshua did not promise the evil-doer a place in heaven but a place in Paradise!

Paradise is the Greek word, ‘paradeisos.’ “Paradeisos is a loan word from old Persian, where the paradeisos of the Avesta denotes an enclosure, then the park surrounded by a wall. In Greek it occurs first in Xenoph. for the parks of the Persian king and nobility. Already by the 3rd century B.C. it could then be used generally for a “park.” In Jewish Greek, from the Septuagint on, it is used especially for the garden of Yahweh in the creation story (Septuagint Gn. 2:8–10, 16 etc.).”¹⁶ The transformation of the meaning of the word, ‘paradise or garden,’ came about by the philosophy and the religion of men.

Corruption through Philosophy and Religion

The adversary teaches, by way of religion and philosophy, that people don’t die, only their body dies. “And the serpent saith unto the woman, ‘Dying, ye do not die, for Elohim doth know that in the day of your eating of it—your eyes have been opened, and ye have been as Elohim [elohims], knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:4-5, Young’s). This pagan teaching helps to fuel the concept, that upon death, souls or spirits need to go somewhere after their bodies die. Therefore, since Yahweh presently abides in the heavens, these wandering disembodied souls must also go to where He is, which is in the heavens. These disembodied spirits become celestial beings as the ministering spirits (angels). The philosophical or religious teaching that man is an immortal soul or that man is a spirit, who has a soul and lives in a body, automatically positions man as a celestial or spirit being. The repercussion of this lie is that death is now our friend instead of our enemy.¹⁷ Philosophy teaches that death releases our soul or spirit from our bodies into the heavens, ever to remain. If this was the case, then Revelations 21:3 and 4 do not make any sense. Religion teaches us that Yahweh is dwelling with men in heaven. Revelation 21:1-4 states that the New Jerusalem descends from heaven to the earth and then a voice says, “Lo! the tent [tabernacle] of Yahweh, is with men, and he will tabernacle [dwell] with them [men], and, they, shall be, his peoples, and, he, shall be, Yahweh with them;” According to philosophy and religion, men have already been abiding with Yahweh for thousands of years in heaven. Verse four continues with, “And he will wipe away every tear out of their eyes,—and, death, shall be no more, and grief and outcry and pain shall be no more.” According to religion, people have been in heaven for thousands of years where there are no tears or death or grief and pain. Why would Yahweh being wiping away tears?

Mankind, who was made a little lower than Elohim, was given the earth and not heaven. “For, not unto messengers [angels], hath he subjected the coming habitable earth of which

¹⁶ Kittel, Gerhard; Friedrich, Gerhard, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 2000, c1964.

¹⁷ As a last enemy, death, is to be destroyed I Cor. 15:26

we are speaking; But one somewhere hath borne witness, saying—What is man, that thou shouldst make mention of him? Or the son of man, that thou shouldst put him in charge? Thou hast made him less, some little, than Elohim¹⁸, With glory and honour, hast thou crowned him,—And hast set him over the works of thy hands; All things, hast thou subjected beneath his feet. For, in subjecting, to him the all things, nothing, left he, to him unsubjected; But now, not yet, do we see, to him, the all things subjected” (Heb. 2:5-8). “As for the heavens, the heavens, belong to Yahweh, but the earth, hath he given to the sons of men” (Ps. 115:16). Mankind are terrestrial beings made to rule the earth!

The Gospels

The four Gospels introduce a new terminology, which cannot contradict the Hebrew Old Testament. This new terminology, spoken by Yahshua, is the phrase, ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ and the ‘Kingdom of Yahweh,’ which means the same thing.¹⁹ These terms are never used in the Old Testament, although Kingdom of Yahweh is used twice.²⁰ Kingdom of Heaven is only used in the book of Matthew, which portrays Yahshua as the King. Kingdom of Yahweh is used in all of the Gospels and in the Pauline Epistles. The phrase, ‘Kingdom of Heaven,’ can mislead us to believe that our future home will be a kingdom in heaven, when the phrase really represents a Kingdom over which Yahweh will reign.

Yahweh is King of heaven but not of the earth. The nations have always rebelled against Yahweh as King, as also did Israel. Yahweh did reign over Israel through the prophet Samuel, who was Yahweh’s mouthpiece, until Israel rejected Yahweh as King.²¹ Yahweh’s will is being performed in heaven by the heavenly beings that have submitted themselves to His will. In the Lord’s prayer we are informed that His will is being done in heaven but not on the earth. “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come [to the earth]. Thy will be done in earth [His will is not being done on the earth], as *it is* in heaven [His will is being done in heaven by heavenly beings]” (Mt. 6:9-10). Yahshua said, “The meek will inherit the earth.”

The Age of the Secret

The Age we live in was kept a secret from the Old Testament prophets and from Yahshua until he was raised from among the dead.²² I believe that Yahshua was not aware that he

¹⁸ Ps. 8:4-9 The Hebrew word translated messenger is the word, ‘Elohim,’ and not, ‘mal’ak.’

¹⁹ Matthew 5:3 ¶ Happy, the destitute, in spirit; for, theirs, is the kingdom of the heavens; Luke 6:20 Happy, ye destitute, for, yours, is the kingdom of God.

²⁰ 1 Chronicles 28:5, 2 Chronicles 13:8

²¹ So then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together,—and came unto Samuel, to Ramah; and said unto him—Lo! thou, art old, and, thy sons, walk not in thy ways: Now, appoint for us a king to judge us, like all the nations. But the thing was displeasing in the eyes of Samuel, when they said, Give unto us a king to judge us. So Samuel prayed unto Yahweh. And Yahweh said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people, in all that they shall say unto thee,—for, not thee, have they rejected, but, me, have they rejected, from being king over them. I Sam. 8:4-7

²² Rm. 16:25-26, Eph. 3

would be in heaven for thousands of years but was expecting to rule the earth after a short stay in heaven. The promise written to him was that he would inherit the earth. “My son, thou art, I, to-day, have begotten thee: Ask of me, and let me give nations as thine inheritance, and, as thy possession, the ends of the earth: Thou shalt shepherd them with a sceptre of iron,—as a potter’s vessel, shalt thou dash them in pieces” (Ps. 2:7-9). Yahshua knew he would be seated at the right hand of Yahweh until his enemies were made his footstool (Ps. 110:1). The meek were to inherit the earth and not heaven.²³ Yahshua was raised from among the dead and ascended into heaven to be seated at Yahweh’s right hand until he returns to the earth for his thousand-year reign. Yahweh will descend to the new earth (Paradise) and abide with men after death and sheol have been thrown into the Lake of Fire.²⁴

Christians are the only group of saints that will spend some time in heaven before returning to the earth with our Lord. This event, as recorded in I Thessalonians 4:13-18, was never prophesied about in the Old Covenant or the Gospels because it was a secret. The “Lord himself...shall descend from heaven,—and, the dead in Christ, shall rise, first, After that, we, the living who are left, together with them, shall be caught away, in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” The Old Testament saints are not a part of this event but await the resurrection of the just, which occurs around our Lord’s thousand-year reign upon the earth.²⁵ No saints are in heaven until this event occurs and even then the saints will be there for just a short time. All saints, Old and New Covenant, are presently asleep.²⁶ As Christians, Christ is our Head and we are his Body. No other group of people has had the honor to be the sanctuary or the holy of holies of the Holy Spirit, Yahweh. We are the only group who will ascend into the clouds with our Lord, only to return to the earth during the Day of Yahweh, which is the seven-year tribulation recorded in Revelations.

Tree of Life

The tree of life in the midst of the Garden is only in the books of Genesis and Revelations. If mankind takes of the tree of life, they have age-abiding life in the Garden of Yahweh. “Lo! man, hath become like one of us, in respect of knowing good and evil,—Now, therefore, lest he thrust forth his hand, and take even of the tree of life, and eat, and live to times age-abiding” (Gen. 3:22). “He that hath an ear, let him hear what, the Spirit, is saying unto the assemblies. Unto him that overcometh—I will give, unto him, to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of Yahweh” (Rev. 2:7). The Garden of Yahweh will be our home. “Wilderness and parched land, shall be glad for them,—And the waste plain, shall exult, and blossom as the lily: It shall, blossom abundantly, and exult...Then shall the glowing sand, become a lake, And thirsty ground—springs of water...And the ransomed

²³ Psalms 37:9,11,22,29,34; Is. 60:21, 65:9; Mt. 5:5

²⁴ Revelation 20 – 22, I Cor. 15:23-28

²⁵ Rev. 20:4

²⁶ Jn. 11:11; I Cor. 15:6,18,20; I Thess. 4:13-15,

of Yahweh! shall return, And shall enter Zion with shouting, With gladness age-abiding, upon their head, Joy and gladness shall overtake them, And sorrow and sighing, shall flee away”(Is. 35).

Conclusion

There are a few difficult verses in the Word of Yahweh that make it appear that people might be in heaven but in light of the clear verses, this cannot be. Christ was the first man who ascended into heaven, while all others are asleep. “But, now, hath Christ been raised from among the dead,—a firstfruit of them who have fallen asleep...For, just as, in the Adam, all die, so, also, in the Christ, shall all be made alive. But, each, in his own rank:— A firstfruit, Christ, after that, they who are the Christ’s, in his presence [Parousia²⁷]” (I Cor. 15:20-23). The Body of Christ are the only saints who will ascend into the clouds upon his Parousia, only to return to the earth during Christ’s thousand-year reign.²⁸ The Old Covenant saints will be raised from the dead at another Parousia²⁹ of Christ and placed in the Garden of Yahweh with us. “Thus saith My Lord Yahweh, Lo I myself am going to open your graves And will cause you to come up out of your graves. O my people,— And will bring you upon the soil of Israel. So shall ye know that I, am Yahweh,— When I open your graves. And cause you to come up out of your graves O my people, And I will put my spirit within you and ye shall live, And I will settle you upon your own soil” (Ez. 37:12-14). The Rebellion against Yahweh, by the Adversary and men, will occur during the end of Christ’s thousand-year reign on the earth. They will be destroyed along with death and Sheol. The New Jerusalem will descend from heaven to the earth. Yahweh will dwell and reign on the earth with men.³⁰

²⁷ 3952 παρουσία parousia *par-oo-see'-ah* 1) presence 2) the coming, arrival, advent 2a) the future visible return from heaven of Jesus, to raise the dead, hold the last judgment, and set up formally and gloriously the kingdom of God

²⁸ I Thes. 4:13-18

²⁹ Mt. 24:3, 27, 37, 39

³⁰ I Cor. 15:24-28, Rev. 21

Appendix A

Paradise

3857 παραδεισος *paradeisos par-ad'-i-sos*

B. Paradise in the Later Judaism of the New Testament Period.³¹

1. Paradise in the First Age.

The exclusive starting-point of all later Jewish statements about the Paradise of the first age is the Paradise story in Gn. 2 f. If this alone offered rich materials for imaginative adornment, this tendency was increased even further by the combination of Paradise with the eschatological hope.

2. The Return of Paradise in the Last Age.

The hope of a future time of bliss, which is commonly attested in the OT, may be traced back to long before the Exile. The depiction of this age uses Paradise motifs. The last time is like the first. Ez. is the first explicitly to compare the expected time of salvation with the Paradise of the first age, 36:35; Is. 51:3. Only in pre-Christian apocalyptic [writings], however, do we find the idea that the Paradise of the last age is identical with that of the first, that the Paradise of the first age reappears in that of the last. The site of reopened Paradise is almost without exception the earth, or the new Jerusalem. Its most important gifts are the fruits of the tree of life, the water and bread of life, the banquet of the time of salvation, and fellowship with Yahweh. The belief in resurrection gave assurance that all the righteous, even those who were dead, would have a share in reopened Paradise.

3. The Hiddenness of Paradise in the Present Time.

Identification of the Paradise of the first age with that of the second necessarily carried with it the further idea that Paradise exists now in hidden form. This hidden Paradise is first mentioned in Ethiopian Enoch³². Throughout apocalyptic [writings] it is the present abode of the souls of the departed patriarchs, the elect and the righteous, and Enoch and Elijah, who were translated thither during their lifetime. Whereas according to the older view $\text{☩} \text{M} \square \bullet$ received the souls of all the dead, only the ungodly were now sought in $\text{☩} \text{M} \square \bullet$ and the righteous in Paradise, → I, 147, 11–16. Hell. ideas about the future life played a normative part in this reconstruction of the concept of the intermediate state (→ n. 13). It should be noted, however, that both old and new ideas were still current in the NT period. Either Hades or Paradise (→ I, 147, 22–30) is here the abode of the souls of the righteous after death. This duality is important for an understanding of the statements about what happened to Jesus between Good Friday and Easter Day, → 771, 37 ff.

Pre-Christian apocalyptic writings have no consistent answer to the question where this hidden Paradise is to be found. a. The older view seeks it on earth, usually in the extreme East (cf. Gn. 2:8), also the North (Ethiopian Enoch 61:1–4; 77:3; cf. Is. 14:13) or Northwest (Ethiopian Enoch 70:3 f.), or the extreme West, or on a high mountain reaching up to heaven, cf. Ez. 28:13 f. b. Closely related to the notion of a high mountain whose peak reaches into heaven is the idea, found from the 1st cent. A.D., that after Adam's fall Paradise was translated to God (S. Bar. 4:3, 6³³), and that since then it has been in heaven, or more precisely in the third heaven. Conceptually statements about the delights of the intervening and the eschatological Paradise merge into one another, though the former are not so strong, esp. in apocalyptic literature.

³¹Kittel, Gerhard; Friedrich, Gerhard, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 2000, c1964.

³²Ethiopian Enoch, ed. A. Dillmann, 1851; R. Charles 1906

³³Syrian Apocalypse of Baruch, originally Hebrew and strongly dependent on 4 Esdras (c. 100 A.D.), ed. R. Charles, 1896