

A Tourist's Guide To Heaven



We often think of heaven as a vague notion – someplace way out there where we might go someday. However, if we look at heaven from the point of view of the Christian faith, we see that it's described in more concrete terms.

If you were planning a trip to a place far away that you'd never been to, you'd probably look for information about it, such as on the internet. Let's say for example that you're going to Paris, France. Here's some tourist information:

On your first day touring Paris, what strikes you is not just the beauty of the many individual sites, but that the entire city is designed as a work of art. The modern arch at La Défense, a sharp piece of architecture in itself, becomes part of the grander scheme as it's set in a perfect line of sight with the Arch de Triomphe and the Louvre. You might find a picture of the Eiffel Tower and learn that it is 1040 feet tall.



Wouldn't it be nice to have some of that kind of information about heaven?

In the Christian faith the Bible gives us our travel information about

heaven.

According to the Bible, heaven consists of a new universe and a new earth.

Heaven also has a capital city, and it resides on the new earth. We'll just look at the capital city of heaven and only its dimensions and capacity. We'll actually do some calculations with that.

We'll refer to one verse in the Bible - Revelation Chapter 21 Verse 16.

The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long.

Notice three things about this verse:

1. An angel is measuring the capital city of heaven with a measuring rod.
2. The New Testament was written in Roman times so they used Roman measurements: 1 stadion = 607 feet 12,000 stadia = 1380 miles.
3. The length, width and height of the capital city of heaven are all equal. The shape could be a cube, but it could also be a pyramid. There are some reasons to think it's a pyramid, and since it will make our calculations on the low side we'll assume it's a pyramid shape (with a square base).

Consider the scale of heaven's capital city ...

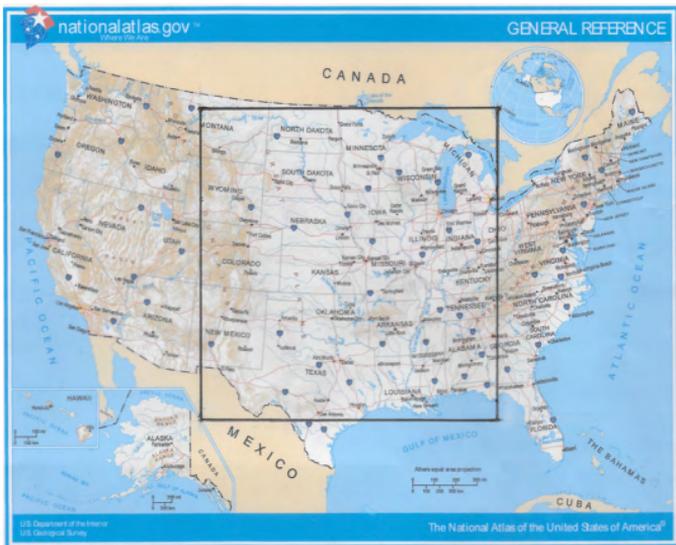


It's huge!

The base is 1380 miles square. To get an idea of this size, it would cover most of the United States. The area of the base is over 1.9 million square miles.

If we think of the capital city of heaven as a big hotel, questions arise: "If each person has his own room, how many people can the capital city hold and how large is each room?" If you are interested





in the math, check out the boxes. If not, just skip them.

First we need to calculate the volume of the capital city, using the formula for the volume of a pyramid.

$$\begin{aligned} V &= 1/3 \times \text{area of base} \times \text{height} \\ &= 1/3 \times 1380^3 \\ &= 8.8 \times 10^8 \text{ cubic miles} \end{aligned}$$

The volume is 880 million cubic miles!

Second, to determine the number of people that can fit and the room size we'll make a couple assumptions:

1. The earth's current population is around 7 billion. In past centuries the population was much less. To account for all the people who have ever lived, and to allow for the people to be born in the foreseeable future, we'll use a total of 1 trillion.
2. The entire volume of the capital city of heaven is used for rooms of equal size.

Now we'll figure for one trillion people how large each room would be.

We'll do this calculation using round numbers.

The volume of the capital city is 880 million cubic miles. Convert this to cubic feet.

$$8.8 \times 10^8 \text{ cubic miles} \times 1.5 \times 10^{11} \text{ cubic feet/cubic mile} = 1.3 \times 10^{20} \text{ cubic feet}$$

That's 130 billion billion cubic feet! Divide that by 1 trillion people.

$$1.3 \times 10^{20} \text{ cubic feet} / 10^{12} \text{ people} = 1.3 \times 10^8 \text{ cubic feet / person}$$

We get 130 million cubic feet/person.

Usually we talk about living space in terms of square feet not cubic feet. As an easy way to convert cubic feet to square feet, let's assume the capital city is like a building with 10 foot stories – there would be over 700,000 stories! To figure the square footage of each room, we divide 130 million cubic feet/person by 10 feet, which gives us 13 million square feet of living space per person. That is an incredibly large amount of living space!

We've taken a quick look at heaven's capital city:

It's size – an area of almost 1400 miles square.

Its capacity – it stands almost 1400 miles high, creating an enormous volume that can easily hold 1 trillion people.



The capital city of heaven can hold the entire human population.

Would you like to live in heaven's capital city when you die? The Bible calls it the "Holy City". Yes, it has enough room for everyone, however, in the same chapter of the Bible that gives the dimensions of the Holy City, it also says:

Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. — Revelation 21:27

If we're honest, we all have to admit that we don't qualify on our own to enter the Holy City – we've all done wrong things and we've all told a lie (the Bible calls those things “sins”). Our only chance to enter the Holy City lies in the second part of the verse – to have our name in the “Lamb's book of life”.

The big question is then, “How do I get my name in the Lamb's book of life?” The good news is that God loves us and has made a way for that to happen.

The “Lamb” mentioned here is God's Son, Jesus Christ. In the Bible, in the Gospel of John, John the Baptist saw Jesus and said,

Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

— John 1:29

The Gospel also says,

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

— John 3:16

Jesus is called the “Lamb of God” because he offered himself as a sacrifice to pay for our sins (wrong deeds). Jesus died on a cruel Roman cross in our place to take away our sins. The Bible says,

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. — Romans 5:8

Jesus also rose from the dead, as the apostle Paul said,

... Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures ... he was buried ... he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures ...

— I Corinthians 15:3-4

We can never earn our way into the Holy City, because our sin keeps us out. But, it is God's gift to us that he allows us to enter because Jesus paid for all our sins:

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Roman 6:23

However, God asks each of us to make a choice that determines whether we will enter the Holy City. God simply asks us each to chose to believe in his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus said,

Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. — John 5:24

The Bible also says,

Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. — Revelation 20:15

So, when we die we'll either enter the Holy City or be thrown into the lake of fire. It all depends on whether our names are in the Lamb's book of life.

God loves us and has prepared a city for us to live in forever with Him. He wants us to enter it! Will you make the choice to believe in Jesus Christ – that He died for your sins and rose again from the dead? If you do, your name will be written in the Lamb's book of life, and when you die you will be able to enter the Holy City, and you will be saved from the lake of fire.

If you want to make the choice to believe in Jesus, you can express your faith in Him by praying a prayer like this to God (The exact words don't matter. God cares about what's in your heart):

God, I know I've done wrong things in my life. Please forgive me. I believe that your Son Jesus Christ died for my sins and rose again from the dead. I ask Him now to save me and give me eternal life. Write my name in the book of life. I pray this in His name. Amen.

If you prayed a prayer like that from your heart, your name is now written in the Lamb's book of life, and you are a child of God (a "Christian").

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. — John 1:12

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. — I John. 5:11-13

Nothing can ever change the fact that you are a child of God. However, it is important to your new Christian life that you do three things:

1. Tell someone today about your decision to believe in Jesus.
2. Begin reading the Bible and praying to God each day.
3. As a child of God you need to be nurtured to grow. Find a local Christian church that honors Jesus Christ and is faithful to the Bible.

Acknowledgements:

A Tourist's Guide to Heaven would never have been written without the inspiration, support and encouragement of my wife Joy Lynn.

We give all the glory to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

William C. Shepard

“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”
— II Corinthians 5:20

For More Information: