

# Thriving in Heaven

By: MaKayla Harvey

There is a phrase that we try to avoid. There is no easy soft way to say it, so I will be blunt. ***Our earth is corrupted.*** It has been cursed since the very beginning. I understand that many people will not agree with my view point, but I believe my faith is the center of who I am.

You likely have heard the verse Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." God created our world. If that is a hard fact for you to accept, then I would suggest you pause and perhaps not finish this essay. Once God created the earth and all living things in it, he created man. From the dust he created Adam, and then went on to create Eve. God placed them in the Garden of Eden.

The world was blooming, everything showed the fingerprints of the one who created it. There was no sin, no pain, and no death. Life was indeed perfect. Man walked with its creator. It was truly a paradise. Because its such a beautiful picture and such a mystery to us, I want to discuss a bit about the Garden of Eden. We know from the account in Genises 2 that the garden was placed in the east.

We don't know for certain how long Adam and Eve lived in the paradise, but one day it came crashing down. Satan was once an archangel, known as Lucifer. He was so full of pride that he rebelled against God and was kicked out of heaven, because in heaven there can be no sin. Satan came as a serpent and tempted Eve into disobeying God's ONE rule, Not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve ate the fruit and offered some to her husband, Adam. He also ate from it. When they took the bite they realised for the first time that they were not clothed. AShamed, they tried to hide from God.

God, being just, punished Adam and Eve. To the woman, childbearing became painful, and man would rule over her. To the man, labor became toilsome, constant work. To the serpent, cursed was the ground because of him. In short context, the punishment was death. The fellowship between God and people was broken. Humans would die, and be separated for eternity from God. This was and is the future for us. WE live in a cursed and corrupt world. We are all born sinners from that very day, and our punishment is death (Romans 6:23)

It is a sad future to be sure, but here is the good news: God is MERCIFUL. Right after the verdict was given, actually while it was given, God said that an offspring from the woman would crush the serpent's head and destroy the curse. (Genesis 3:15) Which gives us hope. Around the time 6 BC, Jesus was born to a virgin Mary. Now, I am sure you have heard of the Christmas story. This son, Jesus, was the son of God. the offspring that would crush the serpent's head.

Because Jesus died on the cross for our sins, the death that was promised in the garden of Eden is no longer a part of our story. The broken fellowship between God and humans is repaired. I have heard it described as the brokenness as a divide, a chasm too large to cross. On one side, God. On the other hand, Us. Jesus was and is the bridge. Through him and only him do we have eternal life. Imagine a world where all the disasters of this fallen world did not exist. Mosquitoes would not bite, no allergic reactions, no floods or wildfires. This future is one that we can have through Christ Jesus. When those who believe in him die (yes we still have a physical death) they go to be with him in heaven forever.

Have you ever heard the song about heaven? It goes a little something like this... "*Heaven is a wonderful place, filled with glory and grace. I want to see my Saviour's face because Heaven is a wonderful place!*" I have often wondered what heaven will be like, but I know a few things for certain.

First, we will live forever in the presence of God. There will be no sin. In Revelation 21:4, the Bible says that God will wipe away every tear from our eye. Just a few verses before in 21:3, the apostle John wrote, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more." This is a beautiful future that we can have if only you accept it. I can not wait until heaven, where the earth and humans grow together and thrive. I hope to see you there.