

comes from Persian and means a garden or park, and that is used in the New Testament as a figure for heaven, the garden of God. **παράδεισος** is heaven, the abode of God, of the angels, and of the blessed. Just as Enoch was caught up to God, to the third heaven, to **παράδεισος**; so when Jesus commended His spirit into the Father's hands and breathed His last, His soul/ spirit passed into heaven, to **παράδεισος**, and the repentant thief's soul/spirit with Him.

II Corinthians 12:2-4 -- "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago -- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows -- such a man was caught up to the third heaven. And I know how such a man -- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows -- was caught up into **παράδεισος**, and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

This concept of the "third heaven" reflects a common Jewish mode of thought. The first heaven was the air above the ground, the atmosphere in which the birds flew. The second heaven was the sky in which the sun, moon, planets, comets, and stars moved. The third heaven was the abode of God, the angels, and the blessed. In this passage Paul equates **παράδεισος** with the third heaven.

Revelation 2:7 -- "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the **παράδεισος** of God.

This tree of life, which first appeared in the Garden of Eden, appears again in the holy city, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:2, 19). Also in the New Jerusalem is found the throne of God and of the Lamb. Since God makes His abode in the New Jerusalem, the third heaven is located in the holy city. Since the tree of life is said to be in **παράδεισος** and in the New Jerusalem (which, following the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, comes down out of the sky to earth), and since the New Jerusalem will be the third heaven, then **παράδεισος**, the New Jerusalem, and the third heaven will be one and the same place. However, since this occurs after the Second Coming of Christ, it would not appear to have any direct bearing on the nature of the intermediate state.

The word **οὐρανός** is used 284 times in the New Testament. The A.V. translates this word 268 times as "heaven", 10 times as "air", five times as "sky", and once as "heavenly".

Although it would be interesting (and doubtless profitable) to examine all of the uses of **οὐρανός**, we will note merely three.

Philippians 1:21-24 -- "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake."

Now it may have been noticed that the word **οὐρανός** is not used in this passage. However, Philippians 3:20 states, "For our citizenship is in **οὐρανός**, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;" Here we learn that at the present time, Jesus Christ is in **οὐρανός**.