



A Parable About Heaven



The moment finally arrives -- the moment for which *George* has been waiting and longing for all his life. *George* is walking up to the gates of Heaven! Completely overcome with awe, his arms hang limply at his side and his mouth hangs open in amazement. It is more grand and glorious than he had ever dreamed. Presently, *George's* guardian angel appears, introduces himself, and invites *George* to come with him on a tour of the city.

They travel first to *George's* beautiful mansion in the city. It represents the most fantastic design and is complete in every detail. *George* wanders through its spacious rooms in utter amazement. He observes the fine gold work around the doorways, the numerous rubies and emeralds worked right into the flooring. But he is most impressed by the huge diamonds which span the top of the picture window in the living room. He smiles as he reminds himself that diamonds are plentiful in the treasuries of heaven. Which gives him an idea! Working up a little extra courage, he turns to his angel.

"Excuse me, sir, but I'm wondering if I could make one small request -- that is, if it wouldn't be too much bother."

"Certainly," replies the angel. "How can I help you?"

"Well, seeing that diamonds are so plentiful here in Heaven, I was just kind of wondering if maybe I might ask for a few more of them along the top of that big picture window. And while we're at it, maybe they could even be a bit bigger, too."

The angel makes a note on his tablet: "*George* wants more and bigger diamonds in his mansion." They move on through the rest of the mansion, coming at last to the spacious family room. *George* eagerly eyes the exquisite furniture that is so carefully arranged around the room. But the observant angel notices that, for just a moment, a cloud of disappointment flashes across *George's* face.



"Is there something the matter?" the angel inquires.

"Well, perhaps I just haven't spotted it yet; but I was wondering about the television."

"The **television**?"

"Yeah. I mean -- well, if I'm going to be here forever, what in the world am I going to **do**?"

"We had thought you might enjoy spending time talking with Jesus and with Paul, and learning about God's creation, and --"

"Oh, sure! I plan to spend an hour each Sabbath morning doing those things, and maybe even a little time Sabbath afternoon. But whatever am I going to do on Saturday nights? And Monday nights? And Tuesday nights? After all, eternity is a long time, you know."

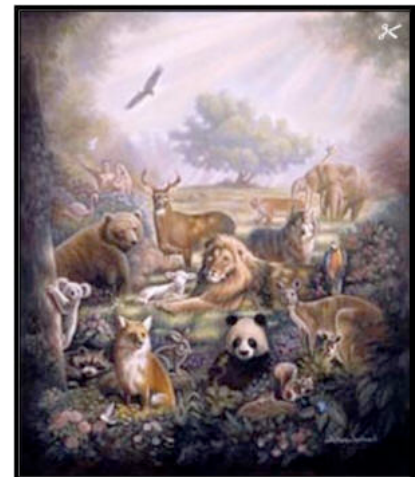
The angel makes another note: "George wants a TV in his mansion."

They step outside to view the beautifully landscaped grounds which surround the mansion. As George is hastily scanning the flower beds, his eye catches sight of a person in the distance.

"Say, isn't that old Harry over there? What's **he** doing here, I wonder."

"**Doing** here?" replies the angel. He **lives** here. He's your neighbor. That's his mansion next door.

"Oh, wow!" moans George. "Don't **I** have any say in matters like this? We never were friends down there. I just don't like him. Now you say I have to live next door to him. Forever! Eternity is a long time, you know."



The angel makes another note: "George doesn't want to live next door to Harry." Then he suggests that they go visit George's country home. George likes that idea. The angel proposes that they stop by the Garden of Eden en route and spend a few leisurely days exploring the marvels of God's creation.

"What?" protests George. "Take all that time just looking at **plants**?"



"Don't you wish to enjoy God's creation?"

"I'd much rather enjoy my other house!"

They make haste to George's country home. George looks straight ahead the entire way there. The country home is all that he expected, and more! Yet he makes the same requests about diamonds, TV, and the neighbors. The angel dutifully records it all on his tablet. On the way back to the city, George is filled with urgent questions about the entertainment schedule for the coming week. He is mentally making plans for his first big party in his new mansion. He is working on his list of who to invite -- and who **not** to invite. He probes the angel with endless questions: Where is the nearest shopping mall? What kinds of recreation activities are planned? How many hours per week does he **have** to spend thinking about religion?

As they near the city gate, George finally notices that the angel hasn't been saying very much. He grows quiet, too. They stop and, taking him off to one side, the angel looks George full in the face.

"George, do you really think you're going to be happy here?"

"Why? What's the matter? Can't you make these few simple changes? Surely you can make just a few adjustments here and there -- "

"I'm sorry, George. you see, God has spent an eternity planning heaven in such a way that it will bring about the most happiness. All your requests are based on an entirely different concept of happiness. They will never blend."

"Well, then, just give me time. Maybe **I** can change. A couple hundred years --"

"That's what you've had your entire life to do. This is not the time for change. You just won't be happy here. Think about it, George. And remember -- eternity is a long time."

George thinks very seriously for several minutes. It is not easy, but he manages to pull all the factors together. Happiness is what he wants, and he surely won't get it here -- not with Harry as a neighbor and no TV in the house. He realizes that this is going to be one miserable place. Sorrowfully, he turns and trudges away.

About that time another person is arriving to view heaven for the first time. Dorothy is every bit as awed as George had been. As she stands in amazement, thrilling to the grandeur of it all, her angel steps up to her side.



"Welcome, Dorothy. We're so glad you are here! May I take you on a tour of the city? We could go by and look at your new mansion --"

"Thank you very much," Dorothy smiles. "But if you don't mind, could we let that wait a while? We'll have plenty of time for that, won't we?"

"Yes, indeed we will," the angel replies. "Eternity is a long time. Perhaps then you would like to go to your country home? We could even look at the Garden of Eden on the way and enjoy God's marvelous creation."

"We'll have time for that, won't we? asks Dorothy.

"Then what shall we do first?"

Dorothy does not hesitate for even a moment. "Please, could you take me to Jesus?"

The angel smiles and leads her off through the city until they come into the presence of One whos very appearance thrills every fiber in Dorothy's body. The angel begins to make formal introductions; but Jesus and Dorothy aren't noticing. They are looking deeply at each other, and in perfect unison they say,

"We have already met!"

