

## Heaven and Hell

Written by W.J.Pais

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Heaven (Anglo-Saxon *heofon*, O.S. *hevan* and *himil*, originally *himin*) corresponds to the Gothic *himin-s*. Both *he*

*aven*

and

*himil*

are formed from

*himin*

by a regular change of consonants:

*heaven*

, by changing

*m*

before

*n*

into

*v*

; and

*himil*

, by changing

*n*

of the unaccented ending into

*l*

. Some derive

*heaven*

from the root

*ham*

, "to cover" (cf. the Gothic

*ham-ôn*

and the German

*Hem-d*

). According to this derivation heaven would be conceived as the roof of the world. Others trace a connection between

*himin*

(heaven) and

*home*

; according to this view, which seems to be the more probable, heaven would be the abode of the

[Godhead](#)

. The Latin

*coelum*

(

*koilon*

, a vault) is derived by many from the root of

*celare*

"to cover, to conceal" (

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*coelum*

, "ceiling" "roof of the world"). Others, however think it is connected with the Germanic *himin*

. The Greek

*ouranos*

is probably derived from the root

*var*

, which also connotes the

[idea](#)

of covering. The Hebrew name for heaven is thought to be derived from a word meaning "on high"; accordingly, heaven would designate the upper region of the world.

In the [Holy Bible](#) the term *heaven* denotes, in the first place, the blue [firmament](#), or the region of the clouds that pass along the sky.

[Genesis 1:20](#)

, speaks of the

[birds](#)

"under the

[firmament](#)

of heaven". In other passages it denotes the region of the stars that shine in the sky.

Furthermore heaven is spoken of as the dwelling of

[God](#)

; for, although

[God](#)

is omnipresent, He manifests Himself in a special manner in the light and grandeur of the

[firmament](#)

. Heaven also is the abode of the

[angels](#)

; for they are constantly with

[God](#)

and see His face. With

[God](#)

in heaven are likewise the

[souls](#)

of the just (

[2 Corinthians 5:1](#)

;

[Matthew 5:3, 12](#)

). In

[Ephesians 4:8 sq.](#)

, we are told that

[Christ](#)

conducted to heaven the

[patriarchs](#)

who had been in

[limbo](#)

(

*limbus patrum*

). Thus the term

*heaven*

has come to designate both the

[happiness](#)

and the abode of just in the next life. The present article treats as heaven in this sense only

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## Hell

The term *hell* is cognate to "hole" (cavern) and "hollow". It is a substantive formed from the Anglo-Saxon *helan* or *behelian*, "to hide". This verb has the same primitive as the Latin *occulere* and *celare* and the Greek *kalyptein*

. Thus by derivation hell denotes a dark and hidden place. In ancient Norse mythology Hel is the ill-favoured goddess of the underworld. Only those who fall in battle can enter Valhalla; the rest go down to Hel in the underworld, not all, however, to the place of punishment of criminals.

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