



World Christian Fellowship

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Heaven 03- New Jerusalem

He is so heavenly minded he's no earthly good.

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We are trying to draw our thoughts to heaven to teach us to think of the place to which we are going because ours is a journey to a celestial city and we must be heavenly minded to be any earthly good.

What is heaven?

We have already learned that heaven is a place.

Heaven is where,

- ✓ Our Father,
- ✓ Our Saviour,
- ✓ Our brothers and sisters,
- ✓ Our names are written,
- ✓ Our inheritance,
- ✓ Our citizenship,
- ✓ Our reward,
- ✓ Our Master, and
- ✓ Our treasure is there.

Where is heaven?

Heaven is a place.

It's a place like London.

It's a place like India, Europe, or America or any other place you know. It is a place.

Where is heaven?

Up!

Heaven is very far.

Yet we can reach very fast!

What is heaven like?

Ezekiel attempted described it in his prophecy chapter 1. It was mindboggling.

We also saw the version from Apostle John from Revelation.

Today we are going to look at the New heaven and earth.

New Heaven and Earth:

Revelation 21 describes in more detail what heaven is like by describing the new heaven and earth.

In the universe the stellar bodies, moons, and planets compose the present heaven, and we occupy the earth. Someday God will renovate the universe and make a new heaven and earth.

Revelation 21 and 22 tells us about what the Bible calls the new heaven and the new earth, the eternal state.

1. Prophesied:

The Old Testament prophets spoke of that renovation.

Isaiah 65:17-18, *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy.*

When we get into the new heavens and the new earth, we will never remember what the old was like, never, in that glorious new heaven.

Isaiah 66:22, *“For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the Lord, “So shall your descendants and your name remain.*

Psalms 102:25-27, *Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. ²⁶They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, And they will be changed. ²⁷But You are the same, And Your years will have no end.*

Hebrews 1:10-12, *And: “You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your*

hands. ¹¹ They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; ¹² Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail.”

Someday God will change the present heaven and earth.

That present universe exists as we know it, going out all the stellar bodies, stars, moons, planets and so forth. That is the present heaven.

Down here is the present earth.

Surrounding the sphere of our expanding universe is the infinite abode of infinite God, as limitless as God is Himself. Someday, God is going to literally engulf the whole universe and turn it into the final heaven.

That’s why it’s called the new heaven and the new earth.

Right now, we have an old earth and an old heaven. They have been touched by sin. They have been marred by the Fall.

In fact, the earth is the dominion of Satan, under the dominion of Satan. The earth is populated by fallen men. Outer space is populated by fallen demons. And only the third heaven is pristine pure flawless.

But in the recreation, there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

The third heaven will literally engulf the first and second heaven and the earth into the final eternal state, and from earth on out to infinity will all be the heaven of heavens.

There will just be one little pocket somewhere called hell. But apart from that, everything will engulf itself in the final state called the new heavens and the new earth.

There will be an eternal earth.

There will be an eternal universe.

There will be an eternal heaven.

They will all be one and the same.

There will be an earth not like the earth we know and there will be outer space not like the outer space that we know.

2. Created

By the time we reach Revelation 21,

The history of the earth is over.

The final great holocaust on the earth has been fought.

The Battle of Armageddon is finished.

Satan is taken captive and sent to hell.

The 1,000 reign of Jesus Christ is over.

Then the whole universe, except hell is dissolved and God will create a new heaven and new earth that's so magnificent no one will remember the first.

2 Peter 3:13, *Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

[Psalm 102; Isaiah 65-66] we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Since Satan fell, the earth and the first two heavens have been under God's curse. In

Genesis 3:17, *Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.*

Job 15:15, *If God puts no trust in His saints, And the heavens are not pure in His sight,*

Isaiah 24:5, *The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws, Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant.*

We live in a polluted universe, but God is going to remake it. All the ungodly of all the ages are dispensed into hell.

Revelation 20:14, *“Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire,”*

This is the second death, the lake of fire. If anyone’s name is not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The dispensing of Satan and all the ungodly into this place called hell, nothing is left but to then create the new heaven and the new earth.

The judgment on sin is final, and we know come to the eternal state.

The millennial earthly reign of Christ is over!

The great white throne has accomplished its purpose as God has sentenced the unrighteous and Satan to eternal hell.

The whole universe then, except hell wherever it is, is then dissolved into the new heavens and the new earth.

God, as we saw in Isaiah, will create a new heaven and a new earth that’s so splendorous that nobody will ever remember the old one. All remembrance of the first one will vanish.

3. Illustrated:

Now, God gave us an illustration of this.

Before we look at the new heaven and the new earth mentioned in **Revelation 21:1**, *"I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away,"*

Peter said we are to know.

2 Peter 3:3-4, *knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."*

There never has been a judgment on the earth, why would there be one now?

Why should we believe that God's going to do something?

He has never done anything yet.

Those men reason that there has never been a cataclysmic judgment on the earth, so why should they expect one now-- which is as logical as saying, "I know I'll never die because I haven't yet."

2 Peter 3:5-6, *For this they wilfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,⁶ by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.*

Prior to the Genesis flood, recorded in the sixth chapter of Genesis, there was a vapor that covered the earth, the heavens were a certain form. There was a vapor. There was no rain. The vapor filtered out the ultra-violet rays that penetrate now to the earth. People lived a long time. Animals lived a long time.

They lived into the nine hundreds of years because there were none of those ultra-violet rays penetrating through that filter of the water canopy that surrounded the earth. The earth then flourished with vegetation unlike anything we would ever comprehend today.

But God, because of sin, broke up the old heavens and broke up the old earth. The water came out of the sky, burst out of the deeps, and drowned all of the human race. And so, what the writer Peter is saying is that is a picture, a small picture, of how God can bring judgment through the renovation of the heavens and the earth. And then that's to remind us who might be silly enough to think that God never has done anything so He never will, not to think like that.

2 Peter 3:6-7, *by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.⁷ But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

2 Peter 3:10, *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise,*

and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

Atomic science has demonstrated to us that such destruction can occur. By splitting the atom man unleashed the potential for unbelievable destruction. A chain reaction of atomic explosions could literally disintegrate this earth.

Earth, we sit on the crust of a fireball. The 25,000 miles of circumference around the earth, the 8,000-mile diameter is mostly molten flame. The atom has the capability to destroy the outside and the universe, the fire on the inside if unleashed could certainly destroy the earth and join in the inferno. Just as God one time broke up the heavens and dumped the water, and then brought water up from the earth, He can bring fire down and fire up as well.

Inside the earth is a flaming boiling liquid lake of fire. When it gets too near the earth's crust, and the crust of the earth is too thin, it bursts through the surface, by pressure blows a piece of the crust off.

We call that a volcano. The earth then is a giant firebomb, whichever way you look at it. God will unleash that fire power from inside and outside through atomic energy and destroy the whole of the universe.

God will make a new heaven and a new earth.

4. Described:

Revelation 21:1, *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.*

The Greek word **'kainos'** translated "new" stresses that the earth God will create will not just be new as opposed to old, but also that it will be different.

Paul uses the same Greek word.

2 Corinthians 5:17, *"If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature."*

The quality has changed.

The new heavens and earth will, like our newness in Christ, will be glorified, free from sin's curse, and eternal.

We can't describe what the new heaven will look like, but we do know that there will be no more tempests, thunderbolts, or demons.

Today our earth has spots of beauty, carpeted with grass, flowers, crops, and shady trees, spanned by snow-capped mountains, and flowing with crystal streams.

Nevertheless, it's marred by disease, death, pollution, and the miseries of godlessness.

Our present heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat.

2 Peter 3:12, *looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?*

Then God will create new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

2 Peter 3:13, *Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

Only then will the universe stop groaning under the curse of sin.

Every believer will live in that new earth.

Matthew 5:5, *"Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth."*

It will then be unnecessary to pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven because He will reign on earth.

Revelation 21:1, *Also there was no more sea.*

That is an intriguing statement that can be interpreted several different ways.

- Some Bible scholars think it means there will be no national boundaries.

- Others point out that the sea symbolized fear to the ancients, so they believe the absence of sea implied the absence of fear.

Both are true!

In the new heaven and earth nothing will make us afraid, and nothing will separate us from other people.

Revelation 22:1-2, *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

Coming out of God's throne and flowing down heaven's main street is a crystal-clear river. There will be no more boundaries, separation, or mysterious, violent seas.

The New Jerusalem

1. Preparation:

Revelation 21:2, *Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

"Made ready" seems to imply that the new Jerusalem had already been completed.

This verse doesn't say that he saw it being created but "coming down out of heaven from God."

Since God dwells in the third heaven, we can conclude that He has prepared this city to eventually become the capital city of the final state.

Apparently when the new heaven and earth are finished, the new Jerusalem will come down out of the third heaven, where it will have already been completed.

When Christ told His disciples that He was going away to "prepare a place" for them.

John 14:3, *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also*

Jesus may have been referring to that incredible city.

2. Identification

a) The capital of Heaven

Now, there have been three Jerusalem's:

1. The historical Jerusalem,
2. Millennial Jerusalem, and
3. Eternal Jerusalem

It's the capital city of heaven.

It's not heaven but it's the capital city of heaven.

It is the city whose builder and maker is God. It is the city for which Abraham really longed and looked.

Hebrews 11:9-10, *By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

Hebrews 12:22-24, *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.*

It's the place where all the saint's dwell.

b) Dwelling of Christ bride

The New Jerusalem is described "*as a bride adorned for her husband*"

One of the greatest ways to express beauty is to liken something to the beauty of a bride. Such a designation reminds us that the church, Christ's Bride, will dwell there.

Revelation 19:9, *Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*

When the saints assemble in the Lord's presence, they will attend a marriage supper.

Revelation 21:9- 10, *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,*

Although the New Jerusalem is uniquely identified as the bride's city because of the church, I believe the saints of all the ages will be there.

- Old Testament saints,
- The church, and
- Tribulation saints.

But if that is true, why did John uniquely identify it as the bride's city?

The book of Revelation was written to comfort the persecuted church. Persecuted Christians in the first century read about a city that belonged to them and were given comfort and hope.

3. Description

Revelation 21:9- 10, *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." ¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,*

An angel took John in a vision to a mountain on the new earth from which he could watch God's masterpiece, the capital city of the infinite heaven, descend from God out of heaven.

a) The glory of the city

John described the city as having the "glory of God"

Revelation 21:11, *having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.*

The essence of the eternal heaven is that God's glory is manifest in it.

Isaiah 60:19, *"No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will the moon give you light; but you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory."*

Revelation 21:23, *The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.*

God Himself will light all the infinite heaven, particularly the sparkling celestial jewel called the New Jerusalem.

In Revelation 21:11, John tries to describe it: *" Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."*

In a mundane way that may picture what John was trying to communicate:

He saw the eternal city coming down from heaven, and it resembled a sparkling, crystal, diamond-like stone blazing with the glory of God's very nature. The splashing light of God's glory literally covered the infinite universe with breath-taking beauty.

b) The design of the city

In Revelation 21:12--22:5 John attempts to describe the indescribable.

i) Walls

Revelation 21:12, *Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:*

The wall probably symbolizes security and protection. In ancient times people expected cities to be safe and secure.

Revelation 22:14-15, *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.* ¹⁵ *But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.*

So, the walls and gates testify that some can enter, and others cannot.

Revelation 21:17, *Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.*

Gates:

Revelation 21:12, *Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:*

Since the gates of the bride's city are named after the tribes of Israel, exhibiting God's eternal covenant relationship with Israel, that leads us to conclude that Old Testament saints will live there.

Apparently twelve is the number of perfect symmetries:

- ✓ Twelve gates, twelve angels, and twelve tribes (v. 12),
- ✓ Twelve foundations, twelve apostles (v. 14),
- ✓ Twelve pearls (v. 21), and
- ✓ Twelve kinds of fruit (22:2).

Revelation 21:13, *three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.*

Gates imply that people leave and enter the city. Don't think that city contains us forever. We have the infinite universe to travel, and when we do, we will go in and out through those gates.

Revelation 22:14, *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.*

God is identifying Himself with His new covenant people.

Jesus Christ is referred to as "the Lamb"

He will forever be known by His sacrificial name!

ii) Measurements

Revelation 21:15-16, *And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal.*

The city as a perfectly symmetrical, 1,500 miles cube. Greater London is 621 square miles. The city of London is one square mile and has a population of about 5,000. On that basis, the New Jerusalem would be able to house over 100 billion people!

In Solomon's Temple the Holy of Holies was a cube of twenty cubits.

1 Kings 6:20, *The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high. He overlaid it with pure gold, and overlaid the altar of cedar.*

The New Jerusalem is the Holy of Holies for eternity.

It is large enough for the few who find the narrow way!

iii) Materials

Revelation 21:18, *The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.*

The transparent stone will allow the glory of God radiating from the centre of the city to shine through.

The gold we are familiar with is certainly not clear. What John saw must have sparkled with a brilliance and glow that had a golden tone but was still crystal clear. In addition, in our glorified bodies our perceptions will be different. In His glorified body Christ walked through a wall.

Both Ezekiel and John describe much of heaven as being transparent. The radiance of God's glory reflects the beauty of His presence through every diamond facet.

Revelation 21:19-20, *The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst..*

Those coloured jewels, along with the transparent glass, diamonds, and golden hue, form a picture of unbelievable and indescribable beauty.

God has planted within us a love of beauty!

Heaven's surpassing beauty will satisfy that love forever!!

Revelation 21:21, *The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

John doesn't tell us how big the gates are, but each is one pearl.

4. Distinctions of the city

i) Temple

Revelation 21:22, *But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*

Heaven's temple is the presence of God.

ii) Light

Revelation 21:23, *The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.*

The presence of God and the Lamb will light the entire city.

Isaiah 24:23, *Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed; For the Lord of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously.*

Revelation 21:24, *And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into it.*

John is saying that even the kings of the earth will give up their glory for the glory of heaven. All nations will walk in the light of God's presence, and all men, regardless of their position, will bow to His glory.

iii) Security

Revelation 21:25, *Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).*

In an ancient city the gates were shut at night to protect the people from robbers, bandits, and invading armies. Gates that are always open speak of perfect security and protection.

Revelation 21:26, *And they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations into it.*

No rival for God's glory.

iv) Citizens

Revelation 21:27, *But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

Only those who put their trust in Christ will enter that great city.

v) Refreshments

Revelation 22:1-2, *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

In Eden there was a beautiful river that watered the garden, and here we find that in the New Jerusalem a crystal-clear, celestial river flows out of the throne and through the middle of the city.

Psalm 46:4, *"There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God."*

Imagine what a river meant to someone living in a barren place like Palestine. It was a welcome place of comfort and rest, refreshment, and sustenance.

A river meant cool water to a mouth parched by the desert heat. The New Jerusalem will be the height of everything precious--a city, a river, and trees.

Imagine the joy of someone who lived in the desert finding a tree with fruit!

In heaven we will eat for enjoyment, not sustenance.

The Greek word '*therapeia*', translated "healing" is which we get the English word therapeutic. John is saying that the leaves of the tree of life promote the enrichment of life and they are for the pure joy of eating.

The water of life is for the sheer joy of drinking.

No food will be needed in heaven, but all will be enjoyed.

vi) Fellowship

Revelation 22:3-5, *And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. ⁵There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*

1 Thessalonians 4:17, *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

Seeing His face implies intimacy, communion, and fellowship. Having His name on our forehead speaks of His ownership.

Sinners will fellowship intimately in the presence of a holy God forever. Christians speak of being with the eternal God, of

having intimate fellowship with Christ, of being joint heirs with Christ.

They declare that they will judge the world and rule with Christ. All those statements would be blasphemous if God had not promised them to us.