

The Spiritual Realm

Lesson 9: Heaven

Heaven as a Higher Dimension

- ❖ Heaven is a real place with **material, spatial beings** occupying it. Therefore, heaven must have some form of **dimensional location**

Heaven Is Near, Not Distant

- ❖ God took Elijah into heaven. **2 Kings 2:9-12**

Purgatory

- ❖ The Catholic Encyclopedia defines Purgatory as a “a place or condition of temporal punishment for those who, departing this life in God's grace, are not entirely free from venial faults, or have not fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions.”
- ❖ The length of suffering in Purgatory is determined by the person's degree of sinfulness but this time of suffering can be shortened through the prayers and good works of the living (based on 2 Maccabees 12)
- ❖ His once-for-all sacrifice was absolutely and perfectly sufficient (Heb 7:27; 9:12)
- ❖ So, the very idea of Purgatory fails to recognize that Jesus' death was sufficient to pay the penalty for **ALL** of our sins
- ❖ If we must in any sense pay for, atone for, or suffer because of our sins – that indicates Jesus' death was not a perfect, complete, and sufficient sacrifice.

Will we be singing in a heavenly choir 24 hours a day for the rest of eternity?

- ❖ No, worshiping God through praising Him with singing will be part of what we do but not all.
- ❖ We will rule and reign, we have a place to live, we have food to eat, we have a new heaven and earth to discover.

Will we have physical bodies in heaven?

- ❖ Yes, believers will have transformed, glorified bodies like Jesus did when He was resurrected.

Will we be able to look down at earth from heaven?

- ❖ No, heaven is a higher dimension of space and time.
- ❖ It is most likely another time when we arrive in heaven.

Will we recognize each other in heaven?

- ❖ Yes, believers will recognize one another in heaven. Though our bodies will be transformed and perfected, the Bible indicates that we will know one another. **1 Corinthians 13:12**
- ❖ Jesus remembered His disciples.
- ❖ When David's young son died, David declared, “I will go to him, but he will not return to me” (2 Samuel 12:23). David's words imply that he believed he would recognize his son in heaven.

Will our pets go to Heaven?

- ❖ The Bible does not give any explicit teaching on whether our pets will be in heaven.
- ❖ There were animals in God's creation that man ruled over - it seems reasonable to believe that there will be animals in God's New Heaven and New Earth.
- ❖ It is difficult to know if God would give us our pets in heaven - God has the ability to do so - if we needed that to be complete then He would do it.

Revelation 21:1 *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.*

- ❖ **A new heaven and a new earth:** God will completely destroy the present physical and spiritual realms and create new ones for resurrected believers to live forever.
- ❖ **The sea was no more:** The seas or oceans were seen as a mysterious and endlessly deep place where the bottomless pit was located. The sea swallowed up millions during the flood of Noah.

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

Revelation 21:3-4 *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

- ❖ **The dwelling place of God is with man:** Man and God will have a new fellowship as we live together.
- ❖ **The effects of sin will be gone:** Nothing to cry about, no death, no sorrow, no pain. The results of sin will be no longer.

Revelation 21:5-7 *And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6 And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.*

It is done: All prophesy and all of human history has led up to this point. It is done, Heaven is here.

- ❖ **To the thirsty:** Physically water was always needed and a necessity for life. Spiritually the desire for everlasting life is found in Christ and it is free.
- ❖ **The one who conquers:** The one who has placed their trust in Christ as Savior is an overcomer. He or she will have a new family tree straight to God as the Father.

Revelation 21:8 *But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”*

- ❖ We are not characterized by our sin - we are characterized by Christ's Righteousness

Revelation 21:9-10 *Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”*

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

- ❖ This city is going to be the central focus of the New heavens and New Earth.

Revelation 21:11-14 *having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— 13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

- ❖ **Having the glory of God:** The physical manifestation of God presence is at the dominating characteristic of the city.
- ❖ **A great, high wall:** There will be no need for protection from enemies or security in heaven, therefore the wall is symbolic or part of the necessary construction.

Revelation 21:15-17 *And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16 The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. 17 He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.*

- ❖ **A measuring rod of gold:** Represents that the new city is God designed, God owned, and God maintained.
- ❖ **Its length and width and height are equal:** This is either (1) a cube, (2) a pyramid, (3) or a multi-dimensional structure that is beyond 3D description.

Revelation 21:18-20 *The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.*

- ❖ **Jasper and gold:** John uses the most beautiful and costly objects he knows to describe the most beautiful place he has ever seen.

Revelation 21:21 *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

- ❖ **Gates were twelve pearls:** Obviously not from a real pearl out of an oyster. John is describing the beauty and magnificence of the gates.
- ❖ **The street of the city was pure gold:** John highlights the cities beauty and splendor. Streets were normally filthy, but here they are clean.

Revelation 21:22-23 *And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.*

- ❖ **No temple in the city:** The temple was a place were God's presence could dwell with man on earth with many restrictions on entering. In heaven we will need no restrictions to come near God and be in His presence.

Revelation 21:24-27 *By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

- ❖ **Gates never shut:** The city will be open for all people all day every day. God is easily accessible.
- ❖ **Glory and the honor of the nations:** The Gentile nations that destroyed the earthly Jerusalem(s) will now come and worship there. They will bring their glory to the city.

Revelation 22:1 *Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb*

- ❖ **River of the water of life:** Water was essential for life, every city had to have water. It is ultimately symbolic of Jesus Christ as central in the city of eternal life.

Revelation 22:2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

- ❖ **The tree of life:** Every city needed a food source. The tree is symbolic of Jesus and symbolizes eternal life for those who are sustained by it.
- ❖ **Twelve kinds of fruit...fruit each month:** The fruit is symbolic for sustaining life. There is no off season or reason to store up, plenty of fruit throughout the year.
- ❖ **Leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations:** Death, sickness, disease will be no more in heaven. The leaves are symbolic of having a cure for whatever sickness might be, though none will be needed.
- ❖ Water, food, healing or health are the big 3 needs that no one will ever need to worry about ever again.

Revelation 22:3-5 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

- ❖ **Nothing accursed:** No more curse. Nothing will be affected by the curse of sin ever again.
- ❖ **No night:** Darkness being symbolic for sin and evil, it there will be no more. The night was an unproductive time for labor and a time to sleep and recover.
- ❖ **God will be their light:** God illuminates literally and symbolically the physical and spiritual realms that combine into one.

Genesis

Heavens and earth created, 1:1
Sun created, 1:16
The night established, 1:5
The seas established, 1:10
The curse announced, 3:14–17
Death enters history, 3:19
Man driven from the tree, 3:24
Sorrow and pain begin, 3:17

Revelation

New heavens and earth, 21:1
No need of the sun, 21:23
No night there, 22:5
No more seas, 21:1
No more curse, 22:3
No more death, 21:4
Man given the tree of life, 22:14
No more tears or pain, 21:4

1. Live with a heavenly perspective.

2. Rest fully in the sufficiency of Christ's work.

3. Let hope replace fear about death and the afterlife.