

HEAVEN: An Awesome Real Place!!

Colossians 3:1-2 “Set your heart on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things”.

Is Heaven merely a state of mind? Or will it be a real “place”? What is Heaven? Who lives there? What will it be like? We can’t begin to fully understand what heaven will be like ... but the Bible does give us enough information that should really get us excited about spending our eternity there.

Unfortunately most people, including Christians, don’t think that Heaven will be physical. Many have bought into the view of Christoplatonism which believes that the spirit realm is good and the material real is bad. This belief system can be traced back to Plato and infiltrated the church through the teachings of Philo, Origen and others. The problem is that belief system is NOT biblical and a lie that detracts from our desire and attraction to the eternal new Earth and Heaven. Truth is that the material world without Sin and the Curse is very good and godly! Refer back to Genesis chapter 1 where God stood back after every day of creation and summarized “it was very good! (see Genesis 1:31)”.

Biblical truth: Someday there will be an eternal New Earth and the New Heaven will be co-located on it. The existing old earth will be renewed/restored and the intermediate Heaven will come down and become part of the New Earth and New Heaven and will be under Christ’s rule (Daniel 7:13-14; Luke 1:32-33; Eph 1:9-10; Col 1:20; Acts 3:21; Matthew 19:27-28; Rev 11:15, 21:1-3; Is 66:12,18,22-23; Zech 9:10).

Highly respected theologian Dallas Willard says “The life we now have as the persons we now are will continue in the universe in which we now exist” (some have called this the *principle of continuity*).

As Randy Alcorn summarizes we will have a “resurrected life in a resurrected body with the resurrected Jesus on a resurrected Earth”. Satan doesn’t want us to learn the truth about Heaven. Why? “If we fall more in love with the place and look forward to the future that God has for us, we’ll fall more in love with God, and we’ll be emboldened to follow Him with greater resolve and perspective”.

*One important truth: Heaven and the New Earth will be **far** better than life here on the old earth which has been corrupted by sin and the curse! Case Study: Apostle Paul (2 Cor 12:1-4; Phil 1:21-23; II Cor 5:8)*

Here are some of the biblical teachings about the New Earth and New Heaven:

1) What is the eternal Heaven?? Who will live there??

- A place that Jesus is preparing for us (John 13:33,36, 14:1-3; Rev 21 & 22)
- A real earth similar (but far better) like we know now – including dirt, water, rocks, plants, animals, natural wonders and people (Rev 21 & 22; Is 60).

- **Home of God** (Rev 21:3; Mt 6:9-10, 10:32-33; Acts 7:49, 55-56; Heb 8:1; Rev 4:1-2; Duet 4:39, 26:15)
- **Home of Angels** (2 Chron 18:18; Mt 24:36, 28:2; Mk 12:25; Lk 2:15, 12:8; Jn 1:51; Gal 1:8; 2 Thes 1:7; Rev 5:11, 12:7-9)
- **Eternal home of Believers** (Mt 8:10-11; 2 Cor 5:6-8; Phil 3:20-1; James 2:5; Rev chapters 21 & 22) [**Inheritance of Believers** – Rom 8:16-17; Gal 3:8; Eph 1:3-4, 18, 3:6; Jm 2:5; I Pet 1:3-4; Rev 21:6-7]

2) **What will the New Earth & Heaven be like??**

- We can not begin to understand on our own what great things God is preparing for us, but God has revealed much to us through the Holy Spirit inspired scriptures (I Cor 2:9-10).
- In the broad sense, will consist of all of God’s creation – which will include a “merging” of the intermediate heaven on the new earth and will include the “capital city” of New Jerusalem (Rev 21:1-3).
- New heaven and new earth predicted (Is 65:17-19, 66:22), process described (II Pet 3:10-13), fulfilled (Rev 21:1).
- New heaven and earth is in a sense both a “country” and contains a great city (Heb. 11:16; 12:22; 13:14; Rev. 21:2). A country is typically a large territory of various geographies, with citizens of diverse cultures and vocations, sometimes even languages, under one government that provides a common identity. A city is a place of many residences in near proximity. A city's inhabitants are subject to the common government. Cities usually have varied and bustling activity, community events, education, arts, entertainment, sports and visitors.
- There will be multiple nations and cities – and included will be rulers/leaders (including “kings”), buildings, roads, transportation, commerce, culture, etc. (Hebrew 11:10, 16, 13:14; Is 60; Rev 2:26, chapters 21-22; Ps 72).
- Place of everlasting joy, laughter, gladness, physical well-being, full knowledge, satisfaction of all needs, and eternal pleasures from God (Ps 16:11; Is 33:24, 35:10; I Cor 13:12; Rev 7:16-17, 21:4)
- Place of life (I Tim 4:8), glory (2 Cor 4:17-18), and reward (see Handout)
- There will be NO death, sorrowing, mourning, hunger, thirst, tears, pain, or scorching heat (Is 25:8, 33:24, 35:10; I Cor 15:53-54; 2 Tim 1:10; Rev 7:16-17; 21:4) (Also no taxes, weeds, unemployment, wars, car accidents, etc. !!)

- God will be the everlasting source of light; will be no nights (Rev 21:23, 25; 22:5). Likely will be seasons (Ez 34:26-27).
- Will be a sense of time (Is 66:22-23; Eph 2:7; Rev 7:5, 8:1, 20:10, 22:2; Luke 15:7).
- There will be no marriage, but something even better than marriage (Mt 22:23-30)
- We will recognize each other in heaven (see handout)
- Will be able to travel and explore and enjoy God's creation with our new super-duper resurrected bodies! (see handout)
- Those who enter it will be perfected forever (Heb 10:12-14); no sin (Eph 1:4; Jude 24; Rev 21:27, 22:3)
- We will be sharing in Christ's glory (Mt 13:43; Rm 8:17-19; Col 3:4; 2 Tim 2:10; I Pet 5:1)

3) **What will New Jerusalem be like?**

- Located on new earth, and serves as the “capital city” (Rev 21:1-2,10; 3:12)
- Will shine with the glory of God! Will be glorious and brilliant! (Rev 21:11)
- Will have high walls, 200 feet thick, made of Jasper. Will have twelve gates with twelve angels and twelve foundations. (Rev 21:12-14,17)
- Will be 1,400 mile in length, breadth and height (could be pyramid or cube shaped) (Rev 21:15-16). Roughly the size of the moon, or if placed in the middle of the United States would stretch from Canada to Mexico and from the Appalachian mountains to the California borders. May or may not have “levels”, but especially if levels would be large enough to accommodate a billion people with a large amount of space per person.
- Will be a place of great beauty, both natural created beauty and architecture, including streets of gold and buildings of pearls and emeralds and precious stones (Rev. 21:18-21). Heaven will have the advantages we associate with earthly cities, without the disadvantages (e.g. crime, pollution, corruption).
- Gates will always be open. People will travel in and out, some bringing treasures into the city (Rev. 21:24-25; 22:14). Travel outside the city shows that the city is not the whole of heaven, but merely its center. The great city is the capital of an endless empire, called a heavenly country (Heb. 11:16). There is a universe outside the city's

gates, to which its citizens have free access. Cities are characterized by visitors coming in and occupants going out for various reasons.

- No temple needed – God will be the “temple” (Rev 21:22)
- No special light source **needed** like sun or moon – God is light source (but could still be a sun as another manifestation of God’s glorious creation (Rev 21:23, 22:5))
- “Water of life” river flowing from throne of God down the middle of the main street of the city. Will be a “tree of life” bearing 12 monthly crops of fruit (Rev 22:1-3). Likely will have many trees of life and water of life tributaries throughout the city. May not be a “sea”, but likely will be bodies of water (e.g. large lakes).
- Will have a glorious throne room (Ezekiel ch. 1; Rev ch. 4, 22:3)

A few of the scriptures that speak to the intermediate Heaven include Luke 16:22-31, 23:43; Acts 7:55-56; Phil 1:23; 2 Cor 5:8; Rev 6:9-11).