

Heaven

- Do you want to go to heaven when you die?
- Although we all answer yes, few can give a specific description of what it will be like.
- After Paul's revelation that our new body *will be raised in: incorruption, glory, power and immortality. (1Cor. 15:42-44, 56)*
- We can expect a place where such a body can enjoy *“an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven” (1Pet 1:4-5).*

City, Country, Homeland

- *for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. ... 10*
- *These all died in faith, not having received **the promises**, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek **a homeland**. ... 16 But now **they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country**. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for **He has prepared a city for them**. Heb 11:10, 13-16*

Heavens and Earth

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

A City, Country, Homeland, Heavens, and Earth

- Our conception of heaven should have all 4:
- From the very beginning God promised his saints a “city *which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*”
- will be placed in a homeland. ... “a better country, that is a heavenly one” where “He has prepared a city.” Heb 11:10; 13-16)
- This country will be found in the “new heavens and new earth, in which righteousness dwells.” (II Pet 3:13).

Revelation is the Richest Source

- But Revelation is a highly symbolic book and many of us are afraid to take these descriptions too far. And rightly so:
- *For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. 22:18-19*

Our Great Concern

I testify unto every man that hears

If any shall add to them,

***God shall add to him plagues** written in
this book*

if any shall take away from

***God shall take away his part from the tree
of life,** and out of the holy city, which are
written in this book. Rev 22:18-19*

Symbolism in Revelation

- All who read the visions are very aware of danger
- seven seals(5-8)
- seven trumpets (8-11),
- three woes(8-11),
- seven bowls(15-16)
- They were not meant to be easily understood. Revelation's truths can only be learned when we compare the figures and images here to clearer passages elsewhere.
- This is how God intended this book to be studied.

Revelation 20-21 Symbols or Literal?

- Rev 20:1-10 are highly symbolic and easily twisted
The Millennial Reign and the Rapture.
- verse 11 things John saw are easily verified
- *a great white throne and him that sat upon it.*
- *earth and heaven flee with no place for them*
- *dead, great and the small standing before the throne;*
- *books opened: and another Lamb's book of life.*
- *All the dead judged according to their works.*
- *death and Hades cast into the lake of fire*
- *any who were not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

The Holy City – Church in Heaven or Earth?

- *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. 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. Rev 21:1-2*
- This certainly could be a return to symbolism.
- It could be a vision of the glorified church on earth after the terrible conflicts are past.
- But it could also be the glorified church as it enters heaven.
- What saith the Scriptures?

New Heavens and Earth

- Peter spoke of God's promise of a new heavens and earth(1Pet 3:12-13) He also clearly revealed the first heaven and earth passed away(dissolved with fervent heat 2 Pet 3:10-12). Nothing is said anywhere else about the sea,

New Jerusalem

- New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband
- Is this the city Abraham was looking for whose builder and maker is God(Heb 11:10)?
- Is it the city God had prepared for us in the better heavenly country(Heb 11:16)?
- Jesus himself promised the brethren in Philadelphia that if they overcame:
- *... I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God... Rev 3:12*

Heavenly Jerusalem

- The church is heavenly Jerusalem that we come to in time. But it transcends time and this earth. We are here but we are also there.
- *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. Heb 12:22-24*

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- This certainly could be a return to symbolism.
- But with all the other passages pointing in the direction of a literal fulfillment we are safe to see this as a vision of the glorified church on earth AND as it enters heaven.
- Thus it could be a description of the city God will build for us.

A Description of Heaven

- *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. Rev 21:4-7*

Literal or Symbolism

- When God said there would be no mourning, he was also revealing that all the things that now cause mourning will be removed.
- Everything that creates sorrow or mourning will be gone forever.
- In New Jerusalem there will be “*no pain anymore.*” This means those things that now create pain will no longer exist. Our body will not be subject to cuts, bruises, broken bones, sickness, headaches, depression, or any other thing now causing pain.

- When “*The first things are passed away*” not only will there be no pain, God also promises: “*Behold, I make all things new.*”
- What does it mean to be new?
- “*Recently made, fresh, unused, unworn. . . . of a new kind; unprecedented, novel, unheard of*”
The heavens and earth given to Adam and Eve were six days old when they entered..
- So it will be again. But more than this it will also be *of a new kind; unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of.*

- To gain some insight consider Paul's description of the resurrection.
- *“the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.”* 1Cor 15:46-47; 49
- Since *“flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God”* (1Cor 15:50) things will be very different.
- All will be *unprecedented and of a new kind.*

- Another thing that will be unprecedented is the removal of the curse.
- No more “*in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground.*” (Gen 3:19)
- No more ravages of sin either within our heart or against us by the sins of others.
- The “physical laws” that now create accidents and death will be rescinded.
- No more bacteria or virus to make us ill.
- These are the novel things indeed!

- As inquisitive people we find many things to wonder about and many questions to ask.
- Will there be a spiritual counterpart to fish, birds
- Will God create spiritual flowers and trees?
- Will there be spiritual fruit and nuts?
- Will we eat spiritual food three times a day?
- Will we breath in the spiritual realm?
- Will we need to do work to have self-esteem.
- Will we enjoy hobbies, will we learn and grow,
Will we take dominion as we have done here?
- Will there be a spiritual garden to tend?

- We don't know. All things will be made new so we can't even guess. We simply trust God. Based upon the first creation we can get a shadowy picture of how wonderful things could be there.
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- Genesis 1-2 a rough sketch of this creation.
- If we didn't see these things how would explain a bird, fish, or a star.
- If Genesis were prophecy we would not be able to explain any of it.
- Therefore it is not surprising that a similar abbreviate account of the new heavens and new earth also give us little to truly understand and see clearly
- While the things revealed about the world to come are similar to Genesis, we can't see them.

The Most Comprehensive Scripture

- *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. Heb 11:13-16*