

## HEAVEN--THE HOLY CITY

Text: Revelation 21:2-8

INTRO: We don't hear much about heaven anymore. And even less about hell. But the Bible still teaches what it has always taught about these two eternal abodes. In this lesson, we will stay mostly in the context of Revelation 21, and we will talk mostly about heaven.

### I. IN VISION, JOHN SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING TO MAN FROM GOD, vs. 2, 10

This passage is not meant to give us the location of heaven, but the SOURCE from which it comes. It comes from God. Of course it comes from God. Every good & perfect gift comes from God, James 1:17, and heaven is the best & most perfect gift of all. In some of the visions, God had taken John in the spirit to heaven itself. In this vision, God brings heaven down to John.

### II. IN THE HOLY CITY, THE NEW JERUSALEM, GOD WILL DWELL WITH HIS PEOPLE LIKE HE HASN'T DWELLED WITH THEM SINCE EDEN, vs. 3; 22:1-5, 14.

[To Ephesus:] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. (Revelation 2:7).

A. We think of heaven with God on His throne, the saints around the throne, singing to Him, bowing to Him, serving Him. Adoring Him. All this they will do.

B. But I believe the suggestion of the tree of life in chapter 2 & in chapter 22 is meant to underscore that once again man will enjoy the immediate, direct fellowship with God that Adam & Eve enjoyed before they were expelled from the Garden of Eden.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day... (Gen. 3:8).

III. DEATH, SORROW, DISAPPOINTMENTS WILL FOREVER BE BEHIND US. What the hymn writer calls "all the fleeting changes of life's uneven ways" that so often disrupt our lives & spoil our dreams in the here & now, will be gone forever, vs. 4.

Did you ever have a toothache, a headache, a back ache, a heartache? You'll never have one in heaven.

IV. THESE WORDS ARE TRUE & FAITHFUL, vs. 5.

Much of what we read in the book of Revelation is in highly figurative & symbolic language, eg., the golden street, the pearly gates, etc. But what God has said about death & pain & sickness & sorrow--about making all things new, these words are meant to be taken literally, completely at face value. These words are true & faithful. They need no explanation.

V. LET US LOOK BRIEFLY AT SOME OF THE THINGS GOD USES TO IMPRESS US WITH THE BEAUTY, THE VALUE, THE DESIRABILITY & THE ENDURANCE OF HEAVEN. READ 21:18-19a, 21

Heaven is described in terms of pure rivers, sparkling fountains, abundance of fruit, with no enemies to invade or threaten.

VI. ITS INHABITANTS, 21:7-8, 24-27; 22:14-15.

A. Note again 21:27. No sin will ever enter heaven. Nothing that defiles, causes abomination or makes lies. There are only two classes of people that have no sins:

1. Those who die in infancy, young childhood, or who otherwise never reach a condition of being able to tell right from wrong, James 4:17.

Moreover your little ones & your children who ...today have no knowledge of good & evil, they shall go in there: to them I shall give it and they shall possess it. (Deut. 1:39).

2. Those whose sins have been forgiven.

Acts 2:36-41; Acts 8:22

Note: It is not a matter of how many sins we have committed, or of what particular sins they were. It is simply a matter of whether we have come to Jesus & received forgiveness.

B. What about the person who has wasted much of his time & comes to Jesus late in life. Is there still hope?

See Matt. 20:1-16. READ EZEKIEL 18:21-22.

C. What about the person who has served faithfully for years, then turns his back on Christ & His church & His gospel? READ EZEKIEL 18:24

D. Remember that there is only one alternative to turning from our sins & preparing to go to heaven. The only other destiny is described as a lake of fire & burning sulfur. Its inhabitants are not those with whom we want to dwell forever. And it is forever.

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, December 24, 1995