

04 – THE ETERNAL HEAVEN

- ✓ Last week, we looked at the Intermediate Heaven – (the “temporary Heaven” that exists now). Today, I want to examine **the Eternal Heaven** – (the one we’ll live in forever). After the 1000-year reign of Christ, the current earth will be burned up. Then, God will create a new heaven (atmosphere) and a new earth.

2 Peter 3:10-13 – “On that day **the heavens will pass away with a great noise, the elements will be dissolved as they burn with great heat, and the earth and everything in it will be burned up** ... Nevertheless we, according to his promise, **look for new heavens and a new earth**, wherein dwells righteousness.”

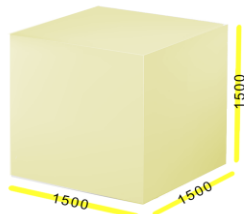
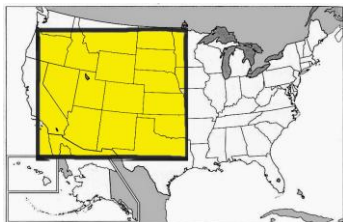
Isa. 65:17 – “For see, I am **creating new heavens and a new earth**—so wonderful that no one will even think about the old ones anymore.” (TLB)

Rev. 21:1-2 – “And I saw **a new heaven and a new earth**: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away And I John saw the holy city, **new Jerusalem**, coming down from God out of heaven ...”

A Tour of the New Jerusalem – (Rev. 21-22)

Rev. 21:15-16 – “The angel that spoke with me held a golden measuring stick in his hand to measure the city and its gates and walls. The **city is laid out in a cube**; its **length, width and height are the same** – 1500 miles each way.”

- ✓ Compared to the United States, it would look like this:



- ✓ If You’ll Allow Me to Speculate: It must have *levels*, to be 1500 miles high. (It doesn’t make sense to have a “ground floor” with a ceiling that’s 1500 miles straight up. It *must* have levels in it!) Again, I’m speculating, but if the levels were a mile apart, there would be 1500 levels. (If you’re wondering about the square mileage of the City, it would be **2 ¼ million square miles PER LEVEL**!) God must be expecting more than just a few people to live there!

Rev. 21:17-18 – “Then he **measured its wall** – **216 feet** by human standards of measurement, which the angel was using. **The wall was made of jasper** ...”

- ✓ Thayer’s Lexicon says a better translation might be “diamond”. (We can’t be dogmatic on this point. Thayer said it *might* be diamond.) Let’s keep reading.

Verse 19 – “The **foundation stones of the wall** of the city were adorned with every kind of **precious stone** ... (list) ... The **twelve gates** are twelve **pearls**; each individual gate was made of a single pearl. **The streets** of the city were **made of pure gold**, transparent as glass.”

- ✓ It didn’t say the streets were “paved” with gold. They’re “made” of gold. They’re transparent gold all the way through! (You and I have never seen transparent gold. That’s going to be new.)
- ✓ v. 22-23 – “There was **no sign of a Temple**, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the Temple. And the city had **no need of the sun**, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for **the glory of God is its light**, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” (1 John 1:5, Ps. 104:2, Eze. 8:2)
- ✓ It didn’t necessarily say there *is* no sun. It might still exist and shine on the new earth. But the City *itself* is lit by the glory of God.
- ✓ (Think back to the diamond wall. Can you imagine the dazzling colors that come from that City, as the glory of God shines off that 216-foot diamond wall?)

v. 24-27 – “The nations of *those who are saved will walk in its light* and earth’s *kings bring in their splendor*, Its gates are always open during the day, and there will be no night there. (If the gates are always open, we must be able to leave the City and venture into the new earth.) And *they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations (ethnos) into it.*”

- ✓ The word “ethnos” is where we get the word “ethnic” (as in “ethnic groups”). Evidently, our resurrection bodies retain their ethnicity. Every race, color and culture that God created is beautiful! And we’ll bring our wonderful diversity into the City. There’ll be no racism there. (Right now, the world is confused. You don’t lift up one race by putting down another. The cure for racism – here *and* in Heaven – is the love of God in our hearts. We’re all one big, loving family!)

“Nothing unclean will ever enter the city ... Only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

Rev. 22:1-4 – “And he shewed me a *pure river of water of life*, clear as crystal. *It flowed from the Throne of God and the Lamb, right down the middle of the street. The Tree of Life was planted on each side of the River*, producing twelve kinds of fruit, a ripe fruit each month. 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: And *they shall see his face*; and his name shall be in their foreheads.”

Quality of Life

Rev. 21:3-5 – “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and *he will dwell with them*, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall *wipe away all tears from their eyes*; and there shall be *no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain*: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, *I make all things new.*” (Perpetually new.)

- ✓ That wraps up the angel’s tour! God closes the Book of Revelation with one final invitation to those who don’t know Him.

Rev. 22:17 – “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hearth say, Come. And let him that is thirsty come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

- ✓ The phrase that sticks out to me, from that verse, is: “Let him that hears say. Come.” We’ve been looking at the wonderful future that we have. But we can’t ignore the fact that we’ve been commanded to invite others to come to this wonderful place, too.

The Sad Alternative

- ✓ One of the things that makes Heaven so wonderful, is the contrast with where we were headed. (“But God ...”) You don’t hear much preaching on hell these days. (When was the last time you heard a sermon on hell?) But there *is* a hell to shun and a heaven to gain. I want to close this series with a reminder of what you and I escaped by receiving Christ. (You can’t fully appreciate Heaven without understanding Hell.)

1. Where is Hell Located?

- ✓ The Intermediate hell is in the heart of the earth (Isa. 14:9). The Eternal Hell (the lake of fire) is located elsewhere.

2. Why Does Hell Exist?

- ✓ Hell was never created for man. It was created for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). But man is an eternal being. You can’t make a man’s spirit go out of existence. If he chooses to remain God’s enemy for eternity, he needs to be locked up.

3. What Is the Intermediate Hell Like?

- ✓ It’s a place of torment (Luke 16:23)
- ✓ It’s a place of real flames (Luke 16:24, Rev. 14:11)
- ✓ It’s a place of darkness (Ps. 49:16 – they’ll never see light.)
- ✓ It’s a place of isolation (7:27)

- ✓ It's a place of wrath (Rev. 14:10)
- ✓ It's a place without God (2 Thess. 1:9)
- ✓ Ultimately, hell is just God giving the sinner what he's asked for all his life. He wanted nothing to do with God. Now God's presence is eternally removed from him. (With all of God's goodness and blessings.)

4. What Do You Have to *Do* to Go To Hell?

Psalm 9:17 – “The **wicked** shall be turned into hell ...”

- ✓ Most of us understand and accept that. We understand why wicked people would be condemned. But don't miss the rest of the verse.

Psalm 9:17 – “The wicked shall be turned into hell, **and all those that forget God.**”

- ✓ The truth is a sinner doesn't have to do *anything* to go to hell. The Bible says he's condemned already (John 3:18). So, all he needs to do, to wind up in hell, is “forget God”. (Just leave God out of your life. And you'll get to hell, just as surely as the wicked will.)
- ✓ But no one *has* to go there! Jesus made a way!