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Heavens of the Bible

Heaven is most commonly thought of (by most people) in terms of the future dwelling place of the saints, along with the angels, God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Son of God. As it turns out, the term *heaven* is used in more ways than this in the Bible. In this article, we will take a look at how heaven is used in the Bible; how it applies as the future home of the saints; what some of the conditions of heaven will be like; who will *not* be there; and a few other topics.

I. The Three Heavens of the Bible

A. The Atmospheric Heaven – The 1st Heaven.

Genesis 1:6 - 8 (KJV) “And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the *waters from* the **waters**.⁷ And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which.⁸ *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the *firmament* Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.”

Many people mistakenly think that the word *firmament* in this passage refers to *land*, but it does not. The word firmament means “*expanse*.” What God is doing is making Earth’s atmosphere by separating a *significant* amount of water from the flooded earth (see **Gen 1:2**) and putting it into an expanse (our atmosphere) which extends about 20 miles above the earth. The water is largely in the clouds that He is making and also in the air as plain moisture (or humidity). This layer of air that we breathe is also where birds fly (and planes).

Genesis 1:20 (KJV) “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.”

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Genesis 7:11-12 (KJV) “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. ¹²And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.”

B. The Stellar (Celestial) Heaven – Outer Space, the 2nd Heaven.

Genesis 1:14-18 (KJV) “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: ¹⁵And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. ¹⁶And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *He made* the stars also. ¹⁷And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was good*.”

Genesis 15:5 (KJV) “And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be.”

Psalms 8:3-4 (KJV) “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; ⁴What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?”

These are just a sample of the scriptures which address the 2nd heaven, which we call outer space. The Bible speaks to the *celestial* bodies – the sun, the moon, and the stars. Of Course we also know of many other planets, comets, asteroids, our *solar system* (the earth’s **sun** [or *star*] together with all the planets and other bodies that revolve around it), and **galaxies** (a large system of *stars* held together by *mutual gravitation* and isolated from similar systems by vast regions of space), which contain an *average* of 100–200 billion solar masses (stars) and range in *diameter* from about 1,500 to 300,000 *light years* (**5.88 trillion miles per light year**). Even with these estimates, it is obvious that we are talking about a pretty big expanse! **Consider this:** Most people are familiar with the “North Star, which is quite easily seen with the naked eye. It takes **700 years** for the light from the North Star (traveling at **186,324 miles/second**) to reach the earth. So, if it stopped burning, we wouldn’t even know it for 700 years.

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Our *solar system* is about 6 billion miles across. There are estimated to be trillions of other solar systems beyond ours. Our *galaxy*, called the *Milky Way*, contains possibly up to 400 billion stars, which are suns, each with its own family of planets. The *nearest* star to earth, *other than our sun*, (which is about 93,000,000 million miles from earth) is 26 trillion miles away. It is also *estimated* that there are 100 billion galaxies like the Milky Way. This would make 40 sextillion stars or suns in space. **If** each sun is the center of a solar system, then there are possibly 40 sextillion solar systems and many more planets and satellites in space. Of the possible 360 sextillion *major* planets, approximately **10% are believed to be habitable**. The earth is believed to be about 5.5 billion years old and is “*middle-aged*” by celestial standards. Furthermore, it is believed that if man ever reaches other planets, he may find himself just a primitive and comparatively new in existence considering other beings on other planets. Planets are *invisible* to terrestrial telescopes because they are cold masses, emitting no light of their own. Most of the numbers given are estimates because of the *limitations* of mankind and our technology to be able to see into space. *One thing is certain* though; the **Bible teaches** that the *heavens are inhabited*. **Consider the following 9 passages very carefully:**

1. **Nehemiah 9:6 (KJV)** “Thou, *even thou, art* LORD alone; Thou hast made heaven, **the heaven of heavens**, *with all their host*, the **earth**, and *all things that are therein*, the *seas*, and **all that is therein**, and Thou *preservest* them **all**; and the *host of heaven worshippeth Thee*.”
2. **Daniel 4:35 (KJV)** “And **all** the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as *nothing*: and He doeth according to His will in the *army of heaven*, and *among* the *inhabitants* of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?”
3. **Matthew 22:30 (KJV)** “**For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.**”
4. **Luke 2:13-14 (KJV)** “And suddenly there was with the angel a *multitude* of the *heavenly host* praising God, and saying, ¹⁴Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”
5. **Revelation 13:6 (KJV)** “And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and *them that dwell in heaven*.”

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6. **Ephesians 1:9-10 (KJV)** “Having made known unto us the *mystery* of His *will*, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: ¹⁰That in the *dispensation* of the *fulness of times* He might gather together *in one all* things *in Christ*, *both which are in heaven*, and *which are on earth*; even *in Him*.”

7. **Colossians 1:16 (KJV)** “For by Him were *all* things created, *that are in heaven*, and that are in *earth*, *visible and invisible*, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: *all* things were created by Him, and for Him:”

8. **Revelation 12:12 (KJV)** “Therefore rejoice, *ye heavens*, and *ye that dwell in them*. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the *devil* is come down unto you, having great *wrath*, because he knoweth that he hath but a *short* time.”

9. **Revelation 19:14 (KJV)** “And the *armies which were in heaven* followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”

- The 9 passages above are just samples of what the Bible says about how the heavens are inhabited. Man is really quite in the dark as to the *extent* of God’s creation! The *entirety of man’s collective knowledge*, concerning **God’s creation**, whether *invisible* (to us) because of its size (being too *small*); whether *visible* to us; or whether *invisible* (to us) because of its *distance* from us (such as within outer space); or whether *invisible* due to other causes – possibly a different *dimension* or *state of matter* (or energy); could likely be compared as a drop of water compares to all the water contained within the clouds and atmosphere above the earth, the rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans on the earth, and the rivers, lakes and seas under the earth combined. Man’s knowledge is really small compared to God’s.

C. **The Heaven of Heavens** – the *dwelling place* of **God** (also called **Paradise**), the **3rd** Heaven.

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 (KJV) “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: **God** knoweth;) such an one *caught up to the third heaven*. ³And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) ⁴How that he was *caught up into paradise*, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

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This passage was penned by the apostle Paul when he describes a time when he was caught up into the 3rd heaven, which he also calls “*Paradise*.” This was into *the very dwelling place of God*. He saw and/or experienced things that he could not even express and which it was not lawful for him to utter.

1 Kings 8:39-40 (KJV) “Then *hear* Thou in *heaven* Thy *dwelling place*, and *forgive*, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart Thou knowest; (for Thou, *even* Thou *only*, knowest the *hearts* of *all* the children of men;) ⁴⁰That they may *fear* Thee all the days that they live in the land which Thou gavest unto our fathers.”

- *Solomon* praying to God when the Ark was brought into the newly finished Temple

Acts 7:55-56 (KJV) “But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, ⁵⁶And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”

- In this passage of **Acts**, *Steven* was miraculously given a view into the third heaven and he saw Jesus (the Son of Man) standing at the right hand of God. This was moments before he was *stoned* to *death*.

Psalm 103:19 (KJV) “The LORD hath prepared *His throne* in the heavens; and *His* kingdom *ruleth* over *all*.”

- This is one of my favorite scriptures to illustrate that God has a place where He dwells and where He rules from. This is the 3rd heaven.

John 14:1-3 (KJV) “Let *not* your *heart* be *troubled*: ye believe in **God**, believe also in **Me**. ²In My Father’s house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. **I go to prepare a place for you.** ³And **if** I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.**”

- When Jesus was preparing His disciples for the time of His *approaching* departure, He comforted them by telling them that in His Father’s house are many mansions and He was going to prepare them for His saints. Then He said He would *return* for His people (believers) and take them with Him so they could be with Him in heaven throughout eternity (see **1 Thess. 4:13-18** also **1 Cor. 15:51-57**).

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II. Where will God's Saints dwell *with Him*

Heaven is ***not*** a mystical imaginary place where people float around on clouds with wings, a halo, and playing on a harp, as the *world* would have you believe. It is a place that is more real than this earth and the houses we live in. It is more real *because* it lasts forever and this earth, ***as we now know it***, will *not*. Some people try to explain this away by saying that heaven is a “state of character” or a “state of mind” rather than an actual place where we will live.

The Bible says that Heaven is (*for us*) two things:

A. A *Heavenly Country* (or *Homeland*):

Hebrews 11:13-16 (KJV) “These ***all died in faith, not having*** received the *promises*, but having seen them afar off, and were *persuaded of them*, and embraced *them*, and *confessed* that they were *strangers* and *pilgrims* on the earth. ¹⁴For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a ***country***. ¹⁵And truly, ***if*** they had been *mindful* of that ***country*** from whence ***they came out, they might*** have had **opportunity to have returned**. ¹⁶But now they desire a better ***country***, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a **city**.”

Notice something important in this passage, which speaks of the patriarchs of the Old Testament, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob etc. – they ***all died in faith not having*** received the *promises*! They were just “*passing through*” this vain, earthly life. They were *strangers* and *pilgrims* on this earth, looking (by ***faith***) for a *better country*. The last verse even says that **God** has prepared a *city* for them. I emphasized the warning in **verse 15**, about ***not*** returning back into the bondage that God had brought them out of. ***We*** must heed this too.

Philippians 3:20 (*Phillips Translation*), says, “But we are citizens of Heaven; our outlook goes *beyond* this world to the *hopeful expectation* of the **Savior** who will come *from* Heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The *true* believer's *citizenship* is in the most *stable*, the most *secure*, and the **most Blessed country of all** – ***Heaven!*** It will exist for ***all eternity***.

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2 Peter 1:10-11 (KJV) “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: ¹¹For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the *everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*”

As *true* Christians, we will **never** be *genuinely at home in this world*, since Satan is presently the god of this world (**2 Cor. 4:3, 4; John 12:31; 14:30**). We are waiting for that *better country*.

B. A Heavenly City:

We read earlier (in **Hebrews 11:16**) that God has prepared for us a *city*.

Hebrews 11:8-10 (KJV) “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, *not knowing* whither he went. ⁹*By faith* he sojourned in the land of *promise*, as in a *strange* country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: ¹⁰For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Hebrews 13:14 (KJV) “For *here* have we no *continuing city*, but we seek one to come.”

Christians know that their day is *coming*. One day the Lord is going to *renovate* the heavens and the earth. It will be a new heaven and earth and there will be no more curse. John describes it in Revelation. He saw the “New Jerusalem,” that holy *city, coming down from God*, out of *Heaven*.

Revelation 21:1-5 (KJV) “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. ²And I John saw **the holy city, new** Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And 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. ⁴And 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. ⁵And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, **Write**: for *these* words are *true and faithful.*”

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This is the city that the ancient patriarchs were looking forward to, as described in Hebrews chapter 11. This is *the city prepared by God*; whose foundations were *built and made* by God. This is that which was to come in **Hebrews 13:14** and it will be a *continuing* city – *for all eternity!* This is the city referred to in the Old Testament’s Book of Psalms:

Psalm 46:4 (KJV) “*There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad **the city of God**, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.*”

John called this city the “Holy City.” For the God who will dwell there is a **Holy God**. His holy saints will dwell in this city – the *New Jerusalem*. The apostle Paul *contrasts* the present Jerusalem (on earth) with this *New Jerusalem* which will *come down from heaven* to *remain* on the *new earth* forever and ever. He described a difference between them in his letter to the Galatians.

Galatians 4:25-26 (KJV) “For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. ²⁶But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.”

This city is also called Mount Zion by the writer of Hebrews.

Hebrews 12:22-24 (KJV) “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto *the city of the living God*, the *heavenly Jerusalem*, and to an innumerable company of *angels*, ²³To the general assembly and *church* of the firstborn, which are *written* in heaven, and to **God** the *Judge* of all, and to the spirits of *just* men made perfect, ²⁴And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel*.”

Revelation 3:12 (KJV) “*Him that **overcometh** will I **make a pillar** in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and **I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name.**”*

The apostle John gives a fairly detailed overview of this *New Jerusalem* in **Revelation 21:9–22:5**. The city is a perfect cube, measuring about 1,500 miles square and 1,500 miles high. **If** it were positioned in the *present* United States, it would extend more than from Atlanta, GA, on the east to Denver, CO on the west; and nearly

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from Montreal, Canada on the North to Key West, FL on the south. Just as mathematicians consider the cube to be a *perfect* geometric structure; we can consider heaven to be an even more perfect place to live. It will be plenty large enough, covering 2,250,000 square miles (*not to mention that it is 1,500 miles high*). This makes it 20 times as large as all of New Zealand or 10 times as large as Germany! The wall surrounding this city is made of jasper and is 144 cubits thick (**216 feet, if a cubit is 18 inches**). There will be twelve foundations beneath these walls – the first being jasper, then sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprasus, jacinth, and finally amethyst. Interestingly, an artist was interested in the color scheme presented by these precious stones and he obtained a sample of each of them. When he laid them out in the exact order as listed in **Revelation 21:19-20**, he discovered a perfect blending of colors.

This city wall of the New Jerusalem has 12 gates; 3 on the east, 3 on the west, 3 on the south, and 3 on the north (**Revelation 21:13**). Each of these gates is a single pearl and on each gate is written the name of one of the tribes of Israel. There is an angel standing at each gate and the gates remain *open continually*, *since* there is *no night* there. There is *no need* to worry about murderers or thieves for there will be none there. The streets of the city are pure gold, *like transparent glass* and the city itself is pure gold, like transparent glass. It will be more beautiful and more wonderful than we could imagine. The *city* does *not need* the sun or the moon to shine on it, for *the glory of God illuminates it*. The Lamb is its *light*. To get an idea of just how bright this light *might* be, we can look at the example of when Paul (then Saul) was confronted by *Jesus*, while on his way to Damascus, as recorded by Luke in the book of **Acts 22:6**. Outside the *New Jerusalem* there will still be day and night on the rest of the earth for all eternity. This is affirmed in the following passages:

Genesis 1:14-18 (KJV) “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: ¹⁵And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. ¹⁶And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also. ¹⁷And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was good*.”

Genesis 8:22 (KJV) “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

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Psalms 89:34-37 (KJV) “*My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips.* ³⁵ Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. ³⁶ His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me. ³⁷ It shall be established for ever as the moon, and *as a faithful witness* in heaven. *Selah*”

Jeremiah 31:35-36 (KJV) “Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the *sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night*, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts *is His name:* ³⁶**I** if those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the LORD, *then* the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever.”

Acts 26:12-15 (KJV) (*Paul records*) “Whereupon *as I went to Damascus* with authority and commission from the chief priests, ¹³**At midday**, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. ¹⁴And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.** ¹⁵And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.**”

Just *imagine* a light so pure and so bright that it appears as a “light **brighter than the noonday sunlight!**” We think of the light of a flashlight in a darkened room as relatively bright but the **light of the Lamb of God** is so much **brighter** than the Sun’s light that it *appears* as a beam of light even in the brightest *peak* of daylight. Most of us have experienced approaching a large city at night, while driving a vehicle. We see the glow of the city lights long before we get to the city. Now, **if you can**, *imagine approaching this New Jerusalem*, a city 1,500 miles wide and 1,500 miles high, which is pure (transparent) gold and is illuminated from within by a light so bright that it **outshines the sun**. What a sight that will be!

John records in **Revelation 21:22** that he did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb **is** its temple. *We will now be able to see and to know God and Christ firsthand* and we can worship and praise Him throughout all eternity. Yes, that day is coming...

Revelation 22:1-5 (KJV) “And he showed me a *pure river of water of life*, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there*

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the tree of life, which bare *twelve manner of* fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the *leaves* of the tree were for the *healing* of the nations. ³And 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: ⁴And they shall see His *face*; and His *name shall be* in their foreheads. ⁵And there shall be *no night* there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord *God giveth them light*: and they *shall reign for ever and ever*.”

This passage describes the origin of this pure river of “*water of life*” (a.k.a. *living water*) as coming *from the throne of God and of the lamb*. It then gives a description of *one* street, how the river flows down the middle (midst) of the street and how this river is lined on both sides with “*trees of life*” which bear 12 kinds of fruit. Each tree yields fruit every month and *the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations*. We know there will be no sickness, death, sorrow or pain because **Revelation 21:4** says so and **22:3** (above) tells us that there is *no more curse*. The leaves of these trees will be for the preservation of life for the natural, earthly nations as well as for the saints.

Revelation 2:7 (KJV) “He that hath an ear, let him *hear* what the *Spirit* saith unto the *churches*; **To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.**”

It should be now more understandable why this Heavenly City and this *new* earth would be called the “*Paradise of God*.” Not only are the conditions a paradise, but now *God is literally dwelling here on the new earth and within the New Jerusalem*. We must remember that this city is about 1,500 miles square, with 12 main gates. So there would be 12 great broadways (main streets) which we could sort of think of as our present day interstate highways, for lack of a *better* comparison. It is *interesting* how God described His great “divided streets” *long before* we even *thought* of the idea. Within this city there would be *main* streets and *other* streets branching off to access the rest of the roughly 2,250,000 square miles within the city alone (*per level*).

Then, as we *envision* these great divided broadways exiting the 12 gates of the city, with each having a river of pure water of *life* flowing in the *middle* and trees of *life* which bear 12 kinds of fruit each month lining both sides of this river, the gravity of what God describes grows immensely. Now, imagine how these streets (or roads) go out into all parts of the earth, because the leaves of these trees are for the healing of the “*nations*”

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(22:2) all over the entire earth. What a *massive* system of roads and rivers this will be. Let me add that I doubt that there will be any “*pot-holes*” in heaven’s streets.

The servants mentioned in **Revelation 22:3** will include God’s faithful angels, all the redeemed saints, and all other creatures that have *not* rebelled or that have been *redeemed* from all possibility of rebellion in all eternity.

1 Corinthians 15:24-28 (KJV) “Then *cometh* the *end*, when *He* shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. ²⁷For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under *Him*, *it is* manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. ²⁸And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the **Son** also **Himself** be *subject* unto Him that put all things under Him, that **God** may be all in all.”

This speaks of the end of the 1,000 year millennial reign of Christ and His saints, during which *all rebellion will be put down*. This also will include the *releasing of Satan* at the end of the 1,000 year reign and the *final rebellion* on earth (as described in **Revelation 20:1-10** below).

Revelation 20:1-10 (KJV) “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²And he laid hold on the *dragon*, that *old serpent*, which is the Devil, and Satan, and *bound him a thousand years*, ³And cast him into the *bottomless pit*, and shut him up, and set a *seal* upon him, that he should *deceive the nations no more*, *till the thousand years should be fulfilled*: and *after* that he must be *loosed a little season*. ⁴And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and **they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years**. ⁵But the rest of the *dead* lived not again *until* the *thousand years were finished*. **This is the first resurrection**. **Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection**: on such the *second death hath no power*, but **they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years**. ⁷And when the thousand years are expired, *Satan shall be loosed* out of his prison, ⁸And shall go out to *deceive* the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea. ⁹And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and *compassed the camp of the saints about*, and the *beloved city*: and **fire** came down

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from God out of heaven, and *devoured* them. ¹⁰And the *devil* that *deceived* them was **cast into the lake of fire and brimstone**, where the *beast* and the *false prophet are*, and shall be *tormented day and night for ever and ever.*”

The *devil*, who *deceives and tempts*; who *always* sought to *steal, kill and destroy*; who *always opposed mankind* – especially those who *love God and sought to live pleasing in His sight*, will no longer be a *force of darkness and sin* working against us. Rather, *he* will be *in constant torment in the lake of fire* forever and ever.

It is *after* the millennial reign and the *final rebellion of Satan's* that the **Great White Throne Judgment** occurs (as described in **Revelation 20:11-15**) and the *wicked lost* souls are judged and cast into the **lake of fire**, also called the “**second death.**” It will be at *this* time that God will renovate His fallen creation. **Revelation 21:1** merely *summarizes* what He will do in this process: “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.”

It is very interesting that the new earth will have no seas or oceans. Particularly since the oceans and seas take up approximately 75% (or more) of the surface of the earth, this means that there will be nearly four times as much land area as there presently is on the earth. *This also makes watering the land with pure rivers of water of life more practical, because there will be no seas or oceans to obstruct the distribution of roads and rivers.* It sure will require a large amount of the *crystal clear water of life*. What an incredible future God has *promised* to those who are ultimately *saved*! It surely gives one cause to ***thank and praise God!***

1 John 3:1-3 (KJV) “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the *sons of God*: therefore the world knoweth us not, *because* it knew **Him not**. ²Beloved, *now* are we the *sons* of God, and it **doth not yet appear** what we *shall* be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be *like* Him; for we shall see Him as He *is*. ³And *every* man that hath *this hope* in Him *purifieth* himself, even as He is pure.”

III. Other things about Heaven

God not only describes how magnificent this New Jerusalem is, but He goes beyond a mere *physical* narrative by describing some of the *conditions* we can expect to experience there.

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A. Rest, Peace, and Joy.

Revelation 14:13 (KJV) “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”*

Revelation 21:4 (KJV) ⁴And **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.”

We have labored and toiled all our earthly lives for temporal things that are too soon gone, for pleasures that last for only a short while. In the next life, we no longer need to toil and labor to pay taxes, utilities, insurances, or worry about health care expenses or even disease itself. It is difficult to even imagine life without these kinds of concerns.

Some people believe that everyone will go to heaven regardless of their lifestyle and spiritual condition. On October 2, 1961, in the *London Daily Mail*, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Arthur Michael Ramsey, head of the Church of England and President of the World Council of Churches, said, “Heaven is **not** a place to which humans go in our present bodily state **nor** is it a place for Christians only! Those who have led a **good** life on earth but found themselves unable to believe in God will not be debarred from heaven. I expect to meet some present day **atheists** there.” My question to **anyone** would be this: “Who will you believe and put **your trust** in; a man who “**expects**” to meet atheists in heaven or the **Word of God**, which cannot lie?” God has clearly said who will **not** enter His Kingdom. In **Revelation 21:8**, it plainly states that those who are “**unbelieving**” will **not** enter there. Neither will the ungodly, the unrighteous, or any who practice lawlessness (iniquity).

Revelation 21:8 (KJV) “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the **second death**.”

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (KJV) “Know ye **not** that the unrighteous shall **not** inherit the kingdom of God? **Be not deceived: neither** fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of

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God. ¹¹And *such* were some of you: *but* ye are *washed*, but ye are *sanctified*, but ye are *justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus, and *by* the *Spirit* of our God.”

Galatians 5:19-21 (KJV) “Now the *works of the flesh* are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that *they which do such things* shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Matthew 7:21-23 (KJV) “Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. ²²*Many* will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.”

God makes it *very plain in His Word* that *sinners, liars, unbelieving people who practice lawlessness will not enter His Kingdom and be blessed forever and ever*. As Christians, we know that we will suffer in this earthly (vain) life. God makes this *crystal clear* in a multitude of scriptures. I will cite *only two*, which will convey the truth of this matter.

2 Timothy 3:12-15 (KJV) “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. ¹³But *evil men and seducers* shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. ¹⁴But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; ¹⁵And that from a child thou hast known the *holy scriptures*, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

John 16:33 (KJV) “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Yes, we may suffer many things in this life but we are *promised a rest, peace, and joy* in the next life that far surpasses any that we will experience in this *short* earthly life, if we enter into His *eternal kingdom*. *If we*

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do not enter His eternal kingdom, the contrast is very *stark* and extremely *troubling*, for there is *only one other place* that a person can be *destined* to attain ... the *lake of fire*, which is the “*second death*.”

Revelation 20:11-15 (KJV) “And I saw a *great white throne*, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found *no* place for them. ¹²And I saw the *dead*, small and great, *stand* before God; and the *books* were opened: and *another book* was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the *dead* were judged out of those things which were *written* in the *books*, according to their *works*. ¹³And the *sea* gave up the *dead* which were in *it*; and *death* and *hell* delivered up the *dead* which were in *them*: and they were *judged* every man according to their *works*. ¹⁴And *death* and *hell* were cast into the *lake of fire*. This is the *second death*. ¹⁵And whosoever was *not found written* in the *book of life* was *cast* into the *lake of fire*.”

For quite some time, I could *not* understand why **verse 13** said, “And the *sea* gave up the dead which were in it.” It just *never* made sense to me. It wasn’t so very long ago that I was explaining to my wife how the Bible sometimes refers to a large group of people as a “*sea*.” Shortly thereafter, we went to **Rev. 20:11-15** (for some reason); and, as I was reading this verse, God unexpectedly opened my understanding very *unexpectedly*, as He sometimes does. He *caused* me to understand that what it is saying is *this*: The *dead* that the ‘*sea*’ gave up is that large group of “*wicked, lost*” people among *all* those people who are *physically alive* on the earth at the time of the **Great White Throne Judgment** (i.e. the “*sea*” of *all* living people on the earth at that time). This “*sea*” of *all* the people *physically* alive (at *that* time) encompassed a *smaller* (but still a very *large*) group of physically alive, but these were *spiritually dead* people, who had to be delivered up for *their* judgment.

The great Old Testament prophet, Daniel, prophesied this very fact over 2,500 years ago, as he recorded the following in a single, verse:

Daniel 12:2 (KJV) “And many of them that *sleep* in the *dust of the earth* shall awake, *some* to *everlasting life*, and *some* to *shame and everlasting contempt*.”

Jesus explained the process well in **Matthew 25:31-46**, when He described how King (**Jesus**) will one day gather all nations before Him and then *divide* them, “as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.”

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Matthew 25:33-34 (KJV) “And He shall set the *sheep* on His *right* hand, but the *goats* on the *left*.³⁴ Then shall the *King* say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:”

Matthew 25:41, 46 (KJV) “Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:⁴⁶ And *these* shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the *righteous* into life eternal.”

B. Our New Spiritual Body.

The apostle Paul wrote much concerning the resurrection from the dead and about the new body we will then have. The most detailed record we find concerning the resurrection is found in the **15th chapter of 1st Corinthians**. For more clarity, **1st Thessalonians 4:13-18** is a particularly good passage.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (KJV) “But I would *not* have you to be *ignorant*, brethren, concerning them which are *asleep*, that ye *sorrow not*, even as others which have *no hope*.¹⁴ For **if** we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep in Jesus* will **God** bring with Him.¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the *word* of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are *asleep*.¹⁶ For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the *voice* of the archangel, and with the *trump* of God: and the **dead in Christ** shall rise first:¹⁷ Then we which are **alive and remain** shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

1 Corinthians 15:35–44, 49-57 (KJV) “But some *man* will say, **How** are the dead raised up? and with what *body* do they come?³⁶ *Thou* fool, that which thou *sowest* is not quickened, except it **die**:³⁷ And that which thou *sowest*, thou *sowest* not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*:³⁸ But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.³⁹ All flesh is not the same flesh: but *there is* one *kind* of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.⁴⁰ *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial is another.⁴¹ *There is* one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and

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another glory of the *stars*: for *one* star *differeth* from *another* star in glory. ⁴²So also is the ***resurrection of the dead***. It is *sown* in corruption; it is *raised* in incorruption: ⁴³It is *sown* in dishonour; it is *raised* in glory: it is *sown* in weakness; it is *raised* in power: ⁴⁴It is *sown* a *natural* body; it is *raised* a *spiritual* body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body, ⁴⁹And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. ⁵⁰Now this I say, brethren, that *flesh and blood cannot* inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. ⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, ***then*** shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵***O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*** ⁵⁶The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. ⁵⁷But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the *victory* through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our weak, corruptible, mortal (*fleshly*) body will be replaced with a *Spirit* body that will ***never grow old, never die, never be corrupted in any way, and will be very powerful and glorious too.*** This spirit body will be *far superior* to this *earthly* body in *every* respect. It will be, in fact, a *supernatural* body. We do not know ***all*** the new properties and capabilities of these new *Spirit* bodies but we ***do know*** they will be *like* the *glorified* body that *Jesus* had *after* He was resurrected.

1 John 3:2 (KJV) “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth ***not*** yet appear what we ***shall be***: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be *like Him*; for we shall see Him as He is.”

John 20:19, 26 (KJV) “Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were *shut* where the disciples were assembled for *fear* of the Jews, came *Jesus* and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, ***Peace be unto you***²⁶And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then came Jesus*, the doors being *shut*, and stood in the midst, and said, ***Peace be unto you.***”

In these two verses in John, we see Jesus coming and “stood in the midst” of His disciples on two separate occasions. In ***both*** cases the doors were *shut* for fear of the Jews. The original Greek word indicates that the doors were ***locked***, because of their fear. **Jesus either walked through the walls or the locked (shut) doors, or He simply “appeared” in their midst *supernaturally*.** In either case, that is an *interesting* capability of this

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glorified Spirit body. Also, in **Luke 24:13-32**, Jesus walked with *two disciples without them recognizing Him*, on the road to Emmaus. Then Luke records a very interesting event as they sat to eat with Jesus.

Luke 24:30-31 (KJV) “And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake, and gave to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened, and they **knew Him**; and He **vanished** out of their sight.”

One day we will have *eternity* to explore the **capabilities** of our new Spirit bodies, but for now we must be content to do what Paul described when he wrote his final letter to Timothy.

2 Timothy 4:7 (KJV) “I have fought a **good** fight, I have *finished my course*, I have **kept the faith**.”

As Christians, there is only **one** way to get to heaven. It is by *trusting* and *believing in Jesus Christ* as our Savior, by *loving* Him and *obeying* His gospel and His commandments. We must do this **not** for just a **part** of our life but *until we die physically*. Jesus makes this clear in many places in His Word but two witnesses will be sufficient for now.

Revelation 2:10 (KJV) “**Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.**”

In this verse, the message is written to the Christians in the Church in Smyrna. The message is quite clear: “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

Matthew 24:9-13 (KJV) “**Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name’s sake.** ¹⁰And then shall **many be offended**, and shall betray one another, **and shall hate one another.** ¹¹And **many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.** ¹²And **because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.** ¹³But he that shall **endure unto the end**, the same **shall be saved.**”

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In this passage Jesus **warns** of *coming tribulation, persecution, betrayals and offenses, of hatred and lawlessness*. We see this right now! Just look around. He warns that **many** (including *professing* Christians) will allow their **love** to grow *cold*. Then He says that those who **endure to the end** will be **saved**. Many people think that this passage simply means that, as Christians, we are to simply **persevere through the tribulations, trials and problems** to be saved. We must **do** that, but, there is something much greater being said by Jesus. We not only must endure the sufferings and betrayals but we must **not** let our **love** grow *cold*. **If we allow our love to grow cold**, we will **not** gain entrance into His heavenly kingdom. This is affirmed by many other scriptures. Again, two witnesses should be sufficient, but I will include a third.

Jude 1:20-21 (KJV) “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, ²¹**Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.**”

Revelation 2:4-5 (KJV) (written to the **Church** at Ephesus) “**Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.** ⁵**Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.**”

The passage in Revelation was written to the Christians in the Church at Ephesus. Jesus is plainly **warning** them that some have **left their first love and unless** they repent and renew that love He will **remove** their *lampstand*. *Individuals who lose their love (for God or even for others) will be judged by God*. This *could* involve *entire Churches* as well.

1 John 4:7-8 (KJV) “Beloved, let us **love** one another: for love is of God; and every one that *loveth* is born of God, and knoweth God. ⁸He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

The apostle Paul summarized it very well on two particular occasions:

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (KJV) “¹⁶**For which cause we faint not**; but though our *outward* man *perish*, yet the *inward man* is *renewed* day by day. ¹⁷For our *light affliction*, which is but for a *moment*, worketh *for* us a far more exceeding and *eternal* weight of glory; ¹⁸While we look **not** at the things which **are seen**, but at the things which are **not** seen: for the things which **are** seen *are temporal*; but the things which are **not seen** *are eternal*.”

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Romans 8:18 (KJV) “¹⁸For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared with the glory* which shall be revealed in us.”

IV. Day and Night - the Heavens Confirm God’s Existence

Psalms 19:1-6 (KJV) “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament* showeth His handywork. ²Day unto day *uttereth speech*, and night unto night *showeth knowledge.* ³*There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.* ⁴ Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun, ⁵ Which *is* as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. ⁶ His going forth *is* from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”

Psalms 111:2-10 (KJV) “The works of the LORD *are* great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. ³ His work *is* honourable and glorious: and His righteousness endureth for ever. ⁴ He hath made His wonderful *works* to be remembered: the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion. ⁵ He hath given meat unto them that *fear* Him: He will *ever* be mindful of His covenant. ⁶ He hath shewed His people the power of His works, that He may give them the heritage of the heathen. ⁷ The works of His hands *are* verity and judgment; all His commandments *are* sure. ⁸ They stand fast for ever and ever, *and are* done in truth and uprightness. ⁹ **He sent redemption unto His people:** He hath commanded His covenant for ever: holy and reverend *is* His name. ¹⁰ The *fear* of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a **good understanding** have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth for ever.”

Romans 1:19-20 (KJV) “¹⁹Because that which *may* be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. ²⁰For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:”

The heavens truly **do** declare the glory of God and the firmament (the expanse of the heavens) shows the work of His hands. Each and every day, *as we witness the sun rise again in the east to traverse the sky and set in the west, we are witnesses to the greatness, the power, and the glory of God.* Each and every night,

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astronomers search the heavens (along with astrophysicists) and *study* the heavens to be further *instructed* in the *ways* of God, the *creation* of God, the **power** of God, and the *glory of God*, who *created* it all and *keeps* it **all** by His **providential power**. Anyone who believes that the magnificent and expansive creation of the heavens, which dwarfs the earth, mankind, and **all** of man's creations, came about through the random process of evolution is *truly deluding* themselves. This kind of evolution flies in the very face of *proven* science. The 2nd law of thermodynamics basically says that things normally tend to *disorder* on their own, due to the principles of heat and energy. To make this **real basic and easy to understand**, let me give real life examples showing that without some sort of *input*, things basically tend to fall apart.

If you park a new car out in the woods and leave it (without any *maintenance*), eventually it will rust, rot, and fall apart. A new house, **if left** uninhabited, unheated, uncooled, and unmaintained, will degrade and fall into ruins eventually. Evolution says the opposite! Things just get better and better over time. Try parking a broken down wreck of a car in the woods and see how long it takes to get a new coat of paint on it or the dents to heal themselves or the rotten tires to replace themselves with new ones. How **foolish!** God created everything! He created the universe and He also *maintains* it. The *incredible preciseness* of the heavens, the stars, the suns, moons, planets is beyond comprehension. The *preciseness* of *atomic* forces, *nuclear* forces, *subatomic* forces, and *gravity* are **all** regulated by God! His **providence** – the advance preparation and *foresight* of His creation, and the *prudent management* (or economy) of His *divine care and guardianship* of His creation are so astounding that they stagger and **overwhelm** the sensibilities of man! No! This is **no** accident and it is **not** evolution. The Scriptures has an **answer** for those who *deny* God's *existence* and give *chance* credit for *His* creation:

Psalm 14:1 (KJV) “The *fool* hath said in his heart, **There is no God**. They are *corrupt*, *they* have done *abominable works*, there is **none** that doeth *good*.”

What a **privilege** it will be to join with the *redeemed of all ages* in that Holy City, the **New Jerusalem!** All the *pure*, the *holy*, and the *blessed* servants of God will be joined together *with* their God and their Savior, to experience the *highest happiness* in the most precious *Paradise* forever. There is **no pleasure** that *compares* to *experiencing the fullness of the presence of God and the favor of God*. This is **particularly special** because it will *continue forever and ever*, for **all eternity**. For this reason, I wish to make a final comment concerning

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several passages in the book of Revelation. One verse is at the beginning of Revelation and the others are at the end of it.

Revelation 1:3 (KJV) “**Blessed** is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

Revelation 22:7, 12-14, 16-20 (KJV) “Behold, I come **quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.** ¹²And, behold, I come quickly; and **my reward is with Me**, to give every man according as his work shall be. ¹³I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. ¹⁴Blessed are they that **do his commandments**, that they may have right to the **tree of life**, and may enter in through the gates into the city. ¹⁶**I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.** ¹⁷And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. ¹⁸For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **if any man shall add** unto these things, God shall **add** unto him the **plagues** that are written in this book: ¹⁹And **if any man shall take away from the words** of the book of this prophecy, **God shall take away his part** out of the book of **life**, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. ²⁰He which testifieth these things saith, **Surely I come quickly.** Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

I feel that it is **not** a coincidence that the *final book* of the *Bible* begins and ends with **reminders** to all who will read it. These reminders serve also as **warnings**, that point to a key point which is recorded over and over throughout God’s Word: Those who **read, hear, and keep (do or obey)** the *things (sayings) written in this book will be blessed*. This clearly implies that *those who do not*, will **not**, be blessed. **If** they are **not blessed**, the *implication* is that **they will be cursed**. When Jesus says that He will come “quickly,” it doesn’t mean *soon*. Rather, it means that *when He does come*, it will happen “**suddenly**.” We will **not** have *time* to “**get ready!**” Indeed, **when He comes**, we must *already be ready!* The parable of the *Ten Virgins* (5 wise and 5 foolish – in **Matthew 25: 1-13**) paints a clear picture of what will happen. I would like to share a poem at this point, written by **Dr. Nancy Anderson on 9/1/2016**.

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Endeavor to be Prepared!

I hear God calling from His Throne,
One of these days I'll call you home.
Am I ready – am I prepared to depart?
My desire is to be ready and set apart!

He shall come quickly as a thief in the night,
There will be no time then to make things right!
I must diligently prepare – the time is at hand.
I must in faultless righteousness stand!

Therefore, I will diligently strive to be humble,
I'll try hard never to backslide or stumble.
I'll strive always to have a heart contrite,
To be sanctified and anointed in God's sight.

I will constantly strive for sanctification,
And endeavor to overcome every temptation,
A humble and repentant heart I'll pursue,
For Lord, my desire is to always please You!

Just a few verses (of many) that affirm the *truth* of this poem and the reminders above *should* be sufficient to reveal the significance of both.

Revelation 3:3 (KJV) (written to the Church in Sardis) “**Remember** therefore how **thou hast received and heard**, and **hold fast**, and **repent**. **If** therefore thou shalt **not watch**, **I will come on thee as a thief**, and thou shalt **not know** what hour I will come upon thee.”

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Matthew 24:36-39, 42, 44 (KJV) “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, **but my Father only.** ³⁷But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ³⁸For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, ³⁹And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; **so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.** ⁴²Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come ⁴⁴Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

Mark 13:32-37 (KJV) “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. ³³**Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not** when the time is. ³⁴*For the Son of man is* as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. ³⁵**Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh**, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: ³⁶**Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.** ³⁷And what I say unto you **I say unto all, Watch.**”

For those who read this article, I pray that this will, or has, ministered to you in some way. God has been so good to me, even though I have not always been so good to Him. He truly is a very *longsuffering* God! I thank Him so much for His Mercy and Grace! I thank His for His *lovingkindness* and *His faithfulness*, in spite of *my lack* thereof. I wish to *encourage* anyone who has taken the time and effort to read this. I want *more than anything* for you to have **Jesus in your heart**. He is so much *more* than *all* that the *world* can give or offer you! We all must be ever *vigilant* and *ready* for either *His return or* for our *physical* life to come to an *end*. We don't know whether our life's *end* may come slowly or suddenly, but we do know that His *return will* come “*suddenly*.” Therefore, it is most likely that we will not have opportunity to “get ready,” when our time comes. *Consequently*, it would certainly be *prudent* that we always “*be ready!*” **If** you *don't* feel like you *truly* are ready **at this very moment**, let me share two short scriptures that may be a reminder that God is calling out to all of us.

Psalm 86:5 (KJV) “For thou, Lord, *art good*, and *ready to forgive*; and *plenteous in mercy* unto all them that *call* upon Thee.”

Romans 10:13 (KJV) ¹³For *whosoever* shall *call* upon the name of the Lord *shall be saved*.”

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I thank God that not only is He *always* listening for us to cry out to Him, but, He *desires* that we will. And He *is* our great high priest, who *always intercedes* on *our* behalf. (**Heb. 7:25**).

Hebrews 4:15-16 (KJV) “For we have *not* an high priest which *cannot* be touched with the *feeling* of our *infirmities*; but was in *all* points tempted like *as we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let *us* therefore *come boldly* unto the *throne* of *grace*, that we may *obtain mercy*, and find *grace* to *help in time of need*.

Praise God for His Mercy and Grace! Amen!!