

A Journey with Christ the Messiah

The New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:1-27

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are **completing** a series that I have entitled *A Journey with Christ the Messiah*. Of all the things that we have learned about Christ the Messiah, the most important thing that He would want us to know is that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is only through Him that we can live for eternity in His presence in heaven. Today, I would like to share what the scriptures say heaven will be like.

WHAT IS HEAVEN LIKE? We can't help but wonder what heaven is like. Heaven is mysterious to the human mind. Heaven is a place that defies our imagination.

1 Corinthians 2:9 (ISV)

⁹ But as it is written,

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things that God has prepared for those who love him.”

There are many things about heaven and what happens after we die that has not been fully revealed to us. Even the things that have been revealed to us are often very hard to put in chronological order. So I will tell you concerning some things today "I DON'T KNOW"!

What I would like to share with you today is what IS revealed. We may not be able to tie it all together, but what is most important is that living eternally in the presence of God will be awesome! And Christ tells us to be prepared for His second coming.

1 Corinthians 13:12 (NASB)

¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

So whatever we can imagine heaven to be like, it isn't! It is vastly superior to anything our minds can conjure up. We've heard many stories about what heaven is like. Most of them mention pearly gates and an angel who is standing by to interview those who seek entrance. So AS CHRISTIANS, we often ask the question, "WHAT WILL HEAVEN BE LIKE?"

Much of the popular imagery of heaven actually comes from Revelation 21, where we find the most extensive description of the New Jerusalem in the Bible. However, as we will see, what the Bible describes is quite different from the popular view—and is much more *exciting!*

The time setting for Revelation 21, where we read most extensively about New Jerusalem, is quite different from today's world. In brief summary, by the time we come to Revelation 21, this present evil world will have come and gone, Jesus Christ will have come down to the earth to set up God's Kingdom and He will have reigned upon the earth for 1,000 years—a period of time commonly called the Millennium.

After the Millennium, the vast majority of all humans who have ever lived and died through human history will be resurrected to live another physical lifetime (still on earth)—except this time without Satan present and with the truth of God and eternal life offered to everyone. Christ will be the King over the whole earth.

After this judgment period is concluded, a fire will engulf the entire planet, melting all the elements and works of earth's history.

2 Peter 3:10-13 (NASB)

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

After this fire has finished burning, a pure, transformed new earth will be in place. One which can never grow old or corrupt. This is this new earth upon which the city of New Jerusalem will descend.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 21:1-27 (NASB)

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He *said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." ⁶ Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. ⁷ He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. ⁸ But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. ¹² It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names *were* written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. ¹³ *There were* three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. ¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them *were* the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵ The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. ¹⁶ The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. ¹⁷ And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, *according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.* ¹⁸ The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; ²⁰ the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. ²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

²² I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵ In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; ²⁶ and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; ²⁷ and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

As we prepare to continue on this journey, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

Let's continue the journey!

One of God's most wonderful promises to those who love Him is the creation of the new Jerusalem, a place of unimaginable beauty and perfection. In fact, Jesus promised to go ahead of His followers and prepare a place for them in the new Jerusalem.

In a conversation with His disciples, the Lord Jesus said the following:

John 14:1-3 (NASB)

¹⁴ "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

Where is this place that Jesus is preparing? What does His Father's home look like?

The bible provides us with a number of details. The place, of course, is heaven – His Father's home, the place where God dwells.

So let's examine what the bible says about this place:

BODY:

I. WHAT WILL HEAVEN BE LIKE?

The physical description of the new Jerusalem paints the picture of a city beyond compare in its magnificence and enormity. The apostle John tried to describe to us what it looks like.

John said the entire city glowed with the glory of God. It has twelve gates which have the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The city has twelve foundations which have the names of the twelve apostles.

According to most sources, the physical dimensions described here are astonishing—some 1,500 miles in each direction! (For comparison, the United States is about 1,300 miles north to south.)

Opinions differ as to whether the new Jerusalem is shaped like a cube or a pyramid. An apparent parallel to the shape of New Jerusalem is found in the “Holy of Holies” of the tabernacle and temple that God instructed Israel to build (and which will again be part of the new temple in the Millennium after Christ's return). This room, which was modeled after God's dwelling place or throne room in heaven, was a perfect cube. Whether a cube or a pyramid, it would still be the largest city any human being has ever entered.

The human mind cannot begin to imagine the true beauty of the new Jerusalem. Its beauty will be accentuated by the following construction materials:

Pure gold as clear as glass? An entire wall made of jasper? Its foundation stones will be inlaid with some of the most colorful and exotic stones ever created, and to top it off, the twelve gates will each be constructed from a giant pearl.

Almost everyone has heard of the pearly gates of heaven. But unlike most of the artist renderings we've seen, the actual pearly gates will each be composed of a single pearl.

II. WHAT WILL WE BE LIKE?

We Will Have an Immortal Body.

Paul tells us that we will be changed from a mortal being that will die to an immortal being that will live eternally.

1 Corinthians 15:50-53 (NASB)

⁵⁰ Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

No More Hunger or Thirst.

We are told that we will not suffer from hunger or thirst. But it appears that we **will** drink and eat.

Revelation 7:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.”

There will be a river filled with the water of life that will flow from the throne of the Father and the Son and down the main street:

Revelation 22:1-2 (NASB)

²² Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, ² in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The river will be flanked by a tree of life, bearing a new fruit each month, and its leaves will be used to heal the nations

To all who wish to drink from this water, the Lord Jesus Christ issues a free invitation to come:

Revelation 22:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

No More Death or Crying or Pain

Revelation 21:4 (NASB)

⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

III. GOD WILL DWELL AMONG US.

But the most glorious aspect of the new Jerusalem has nothing to do with its material splendor. The best part of the new Jerusalem will be that God Himself will dwell among men:

We now come to one of the most encouraging prophecies in the Bible:

Revelation 21:3-4 (NASB)

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

Here we see that God the Father’s place of residence will be in the New Jerusalem on the **new earth**, dwelling with us.

Does that mean that the New Jerusalem is the heaven that God currently dwells in or is He going to move?

I DON'T KNOW!

Does it mean that the New Jerusalem city is heaven or is the entire new earth heaven?

I DON'T KNOW!

John does tell us that it is always daytime in New Jerusalem and the gates are always open. This description implies a regular passage of earth's spirit citizens into and out of the city.

This gives us a little different perspective of the popular view of heaven, doesn't it?

No More Darkness.

But we DO know that we will be in the presence of God in the Holy city, new Jerusalem. Physical and spiritual life will be illuminated by the presence of the Lord Himself. There will be no need for the sun, the moon, or the building of a temple:

Revelation 21:22-23 (NASB)

²² I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

In the new Jerusalem, we will see the very face of God:

Revelation 22:3-5 (NASB)

³ There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; ⁴ they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

CONCLUSION:

At my dad's funeral I stated, "If dad could look down and talk to us now, I believe he would say something like this: 'Working for God on earth is hard...but His retirement plan is out of this world!'" What a wonderful place we have to look forward to!

Jesus would tell us to be prepared for His second coming. John tells us that our name MUST be written in the Lamb's "Book of Life"?

Revelation 21:27 (NASB)

²⁷ and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

If you do not have the assurance that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, why not get ready today? God has not promised us a tomorrow!

He is Lord!