

# What Is "Heaven" Going To Be Like?

## Revelation 21:1-22:5

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### Introduction:

- I. We come to the closing scene in Revelation. Here is the most comprehensive section of encouragement for struggling brethren. Throughout this book there have been hints of immortality: the promises to the Conquerors, the white robed multitudes, the triumphant song of Moses and the Lamb, the wedding feast of the Lamb and His bride. Now at last John is given a vision that surveys the Promised Land. In some ways this is the most important part of his book, as it is certainly the most familiar and beloved.
  
- II. As this section is read you cannot help but recall a number of Old Testament passages, thus once again we find an intimate connection with the prophets of old (Isaiah 25:8; 65:17, 19; 66:22; 55:1; 60:20; Ezekiel 36:28; 37:28; 48:31ff; 47:12; 2 Samuel 7:14; Zechariah 14:6>8; Genesis 3:22ff; etc.).
  
- III. In this section there is a marvelous message to believers – "Do not give up because you have wonderful destiny ahead!" The destiny of the redeemed is to be in the "new" Jerusalem. Literally the phrase means, "The new city of peace." In contrast to their present trials and burdens they would share in grand blessings. It is this beautiful city of peace that brings great comfort and cheer to struggling saints.

### Body:

- I. Notice how cheer would be brought to believers as they come to know about this eternal home of the saved.
  - A. This city of peace provides **ETERNAL FELLOWSHIP** with God (Revelation 21:1-8).
    1. Verses 3-4 explain, in symbolic language, the beauty of this promised fellowship. This fellowship allows saints to find access to high joy
      - a. God dwells with them in one tent (Revelation 7:15).

- b. The Lamb is their Shepherd (Revelation 7:17).
  - c. God wipes every tear out of their eyes (Revelation 7:17).
  - d. They are constantly worshiping in the sanctuary (Revelation 7:15).
  - e. They sit with him on the throne and He sups with them (Revelation 3:20, 21).
2. The beauty of this fellowship is enhanced as we see that it is offered absolutely free (Revelation 21:6; 22:17b). Surely the sensible person will see the necessity to remain faithful so he can inherit this wonderful fellowship! (Revelation 21:7).
  3. A greater emphasis is added when the reverse is considered. Those who fail to establish and maintain fellowship with God now will not find it in eternity (Revelation 21:8; Romans 6:23). God's city of peace will not include any who associate with Satan! (Revelation 21:27).
  4. The recipients of John's letter would be challenged to evaluate their relationship with God. John was writing the Christians and telling them they must be sure they were fit to be among those blessed by heaven's rewards. John had earlier challenged these Christians by pointing out that some were claiming to be fit for heaven but were not – their religion was only a pretense (i.e. the 7 churches). As we think of this point may we also be challenged so we will not be deceived thinking we are fit for heaven when we are actually fit for Satan's evil work. Out of the Seven Churches mentioned only ONE was without fault and only TWO were commended!
    - a. Ephesus did not really "love" God (Revelation 2:4).
    - b. Pergamum did not demonstrate conviction (Revelation 2:14-15).
    - c. Thyatira encouraged rebellion to God (Revelation 2:20).
    - d. Sardis was spiritually dead (Revelation 3:1).
    - e. Laodicea was apathetic (Revelation 3:15).
- B. This city of peace is blessed with **ETERNAL PROTECTION** by God (Revelation 21:9-26).
1. John's readers knew the need to be protected. Knowing you are kept safe brings great security and peace. The essence of protection was a great city surrounded by a great wall. Here we read of such a place described in symbolic language.
    - a. "Twelve gates" – abundant entrance where no one who desired would be forbidden entrance.

- b. "Twelve foundations" – such a perfect foundation could never be shaken.
  - c. "Four Square" – this city will have enough room for all the redeemed under the Old Testament and New Testament (12b, 14b).
2. The description is of a strong, spacious, perfect, and beautiful city where God's redeemed will live with Him in perfect fellowship! To try to make this a literal city on earthly Jerusalem destroys the symbol.
  3. No where else can man find a more appealing description of God's home for saved souls!
- C. The city of peace is supplied with **ETERNAL PROVISIONS** from God (Revelation 22:1-5).
1. So great is this New Jerusalem and so magnificently designed by God, it does not need many things that are essential to present life.
    - a. There is "no temple" (Revelation 21:22). No sins need atonement and saints are in God's presence always.
    - b. There is "no sun or moon" (Revelation 21:23). The radiance of the Lamb is all that is needed.
    - c. There is "no night" (Revelation 22:25). There is no darkness for God is light. There is no need for labors have ceased.
  2. Note the provisions offered by God . . .
    - a. The garden – Eden will be restored and eternally enjoyed.
    - b. Water of Life – Symbolic of salvation. It is offered full and free (Psalm 46:4a). The beauty is marvelous (Revelation 22:1).
    - c. Trees of Life – Not just one but whole rows on either side of the river. Fruit is always present.
    - d. Throne of God and the Lamb – The sovereignty of God will be the center of attention. This throne dominates so that God's will is supreme. Never again will the saints battle against the Dragon for God is supreme!
  3. What a striking picture! Pause and reflect on it and sense the strong assurance it offers! What greater provisions could we seek?
- D. This city of peace is a place of **ETERNAL SERVICE** to God (Revelation 22:3, 5).
1. It is misleading to assume heaven will be a place of leisure where all

desires are immediately provided angels (See Revelation 7:15b – "day and night").

2. Notice how service is pictured in verses 3, 5.
  - a. The entire population will offer priestly service.
  - b. Service is rendered and is focused on God.
  - c. Here is a continuation of service that has been offered on earth!  
Note: Matthew 25:21 – service on earth leads to service in heaven. We must understand this simple point (Matthew 25:26-30).
  - d. Heaven will be populated ONLY by those who love to serve God on earth, in the church!

II. From this final vision we discover the following . . .

- A. God answers our desires to know what the future will bring. In symbols He has told us that heaven is a beautiful city of peace where we will find eternal fellowship, protection, provision, and service to God.
- B. In this section we have a dramatic contrast with chapter 20. We have here encouragement to remain faithful because eternal destiny will be lived in either the New Jerusalem or the Lake of Fire! (Revelation 21:27).
- C. Our ability to enjoy heaven depends on how much we enjoy the church on earth. It is hard to imagine how some will enjoy an eternity of that which appears to be intolerable on earth!
  1. Eternal fellowship with brethren.
  2. Eternal Protection by the Almighty's power.
  3. Eternal worship assemblies of praise to God.
  4. Eternal service to God with the redeemed.
- D. Those with whom we identify on earth will be those we will identify with in eternity! You cannot live in Babylon on earth and the New Jerusalem in eternity! (Revelation 18:4)
- E. We discover an answer to the problem of earth's evils (v. 4). God lists some of the more prominent evils that will cease. The Lamb has conquered and has answered the problems of the world.

F. Entrance into God's heaven is not open to just anyone, but only to those who have been given the right (Revelation 21:27). We must make preparations to enter now or else run the risk of never being admitted! (Luke 13:24>29).

**Conclusion:**

I. This is a beautiful section from Revelation. It is filled with hope, cheer, and encouragement.

II. John's message closes with a most practical message. The reason why a Christian is not to surrender to the temptation of distress is because of the "home over there." There is perfection and peace so "Don't give up!"