

December 15, 2024

Various Scriptures

This is the sight of the intermediate heaven as found in Scripture. The New Heaven and New Earth of Rev. 21 is the final heaven we have in Scripture. Christ came into the world to redeem the host of the elect. He will come again to bring the redeemed home to Him.

The Sight of Heaven

1. **God's House:** John 14:2, "many dwelling places," have been prepared for Jesus' bride. Eph. 1:17, is a prayer that God would give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation. V18, that we would know the riches of His inheritance in the saints. V19-20, the greatness of God's power displayed in raising Christ from the dead and seating Him at the right hand of God on His throne. We were dead, but God has made us alive in Christ, Eph. 2:1-5. God seated us with Christ in heavenly places as well, Eph. 2:6. There is joy in heaven when a sinner comes to repentance, Luke 15:7.
2. **Divine Fire and Heavenly Light:** Rev. 4:5, "lamps of fire burning." Ez. 1:13, "like burning coals of fire." Is. 6:1-2, the seraphim are there which means "burning ones." I John 1:5, "God is Light." Yahweh appearing as a blazing fire in a bush, Ex. 3:2-3. Jesus revealing His glory when transfigured before Peter, James, and John, Matt. 17:2, Jesus shown like the sun. Jesus described with eyes of fire and a face like the sun, Rev. 1:14-16. The glory of God illuminating all of heaven and the Holy City, Rev. 21:11, 23. The Lamb is the city's light, Rev. 21:23.
3. **Endless Sky:** Ezekiel 1:22, describes an "expanse" like crystal spread out over them. The word "expanse" is used in Gen. 1:6 to describe the sky when created. In Gen. 1:14, the "expanse" describes the creation of the sun, moon, and stars. There is also the "expanse" of heaven referred to in Rev. 4:6. The expanse described in Ezekiel speaks of a sound that comes from above the expanse. From the space above this expanse is the throne of God Himself and the man Jesus is there (Ez. 1:25). Ps. 19:1, speaks of the heavens and expanse that declare the glory of God. Ps. 150:1, Yahweh is praised from His sanctuary and His mighty expanse. Worship and singing come from the expanse of that God has created in the heavens.
4. **Majestic Animals:** Yes, there will be animals. How do we know? 1) Examples of animals: Elijah is carried to heaven by horses of fire. Elisha sees the armies of the Lord on horses of fire, 2 Kings 2:11, 6:17. 2) Angels have descriptions as animals: lions, eagles, oxen that are like animals, Rev. 4:7, Ezekiel 1:10. 3) Every stage of man includes animals: animals in the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark, animals protected in the Mosaic Law. Animals are part of the Millennial Kingdom, Is. 11:1-9. Christ is referred as the Lamb of God, Rev. 22:1. 4) Will animals I knew be in heaven? A) No, but in the final state when creation is restored. Creation does not bear the blame for man's fall. B) God is counting animals that have died. He would count them to restore all things, Matt. 10:29. C) 2 Pet. 3:12-13, speaks of the heavens being destroyed and the elements melting, but from them come a new heaven and earth without sin. It is not annihilation but a restoration as creation awaits its redemption.
5. **Wide Open Paradise:** Rev. 2:7, the tree of life is in the Paradise of God. The thief was promised to be with Christ in paradise. It is a "walled garden" or "orchard." The Garden of Eden is referred to as paradise. The Valley of Jordan was described as a garden or paradise, Gen. 13:10. Numbers 24:5-6, Balaam prophesied of Israel that it will dwell in a garden or paradise. Solomon created numerous gardens, Eccl. 2:5. Solomon's described his bride as a garden, in Song of Songs 4:12-15. There will be trees in abundance, Rev. 2:7. Palm trees as well, Rev. 7:9. Jesus comforted the thief with the promise of paradise on that day.

Further Discussion and Application

Why is there great comfort in knowing that heaven will be relatable to us? How does Genesis chapter 1 give us a good picture of life on earth before the fall of man? What is comforting about trees, orchards, gardens, springs of water, and animal life in the Millennial Kingdom and final state?

God and the Lamb will outshine the sun in all its glory. Being absent from the body is being present with the Lord. How can we give encouragement to those suffering in this world with the promises of God? How would we start out our storytelling of God's faithfulness as shown in His Scriptures? We also could add that we will always be with the Lord and His people. What joy is there that fellowship with the family of God will never be separated by death and pain?

Being seated with Christ in heavenly places is a blessing that can be hard to grasp when we take the words from Scriptures together with the imagination of our minds. We have God's word to tell us about the throne room of heaven and the angels and presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being there. There is an innumerable crowd of those redeemed. How is God preparing you for the day when you will meet with Him? What is being created and formed in you as you are sanctified and become more like Christ?

Jesus tells believers in John 14:3 that there is a place prepared for them. Jesus is the way to that place. Why must we continue to proclaim the truth of Christ as the only way? Why are works insufficient to save us? Why must we humble ourselves before the Lord now? Unbelievers compare what they know to what they can't understand. Believers accept that what they know doesn't compare to what is promised to them in Scripture. Why should we sever our affections for the world's pleasures? Since the world is corrupted by sin, what will remain of it in the end? How does a heart that looks to glories of heaven better relieve itself of the burdens of the days we have now?