

Glimpse of Heaven

Heaven: to us here on earth it is an abstract notion. A place of beauty, perfection and a place where there is no sin. Because there is no sin, there is no death or sorrow or pain. Could this be when all we have known in our existence is deterioration, sorrow and death.

I often when observing a beautiful forest or waves crashing on a sunny shore or a spectacular sunrise, what these things must have looked like at creation before sin entered the world. If we could have a momentary glimpse of what that forest, or sunrise would have looked like then. How we have a degraded version of beauty.

Many of us today that remember back to the 60's and 70's can remember what these things looked like even then. When we compare the scenes of nature around the world then to now, in most cases there are obvious signs of ever more degradation.

Recently I was interviewing a local business owner and the conversation came up (as it often does) about faith. He insisted that man is able to create heaven here on earth. I considered carefully his well-crafted argument but finally reminded him that we do not see evidence of this ability for mankind to universally work together for good. From what we observe in the local and broader world, harmony and heaven for some or all is impossible.

1 Thessalonians 5:3, "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

In fact, the Bible gives us an indication of the way people will behave, and it points to things getting worse and not better before Jesus returns.

2 Timothy 3:13, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

Just above this in verse 1-5, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Consider that Paul is talking about the condition of some people that are in the church "...having a form of godliness."

Heaven

Think through your life and remember friends that you had when you were younger. I can think of a few really good friends that I had for years. I thought we would be friends forever and yet, over the years the friendships faded, some were destroyed. But all of them, I would enjoy an opportunity to meet them again to see how they are.

We have no greater friend than Jesus.

John 13:37-38, "37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice."

John 14:1-4, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In 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. And 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. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

Jesus loves us so much that even though He knew that Peter would deny Him, He told Peter not to be troubled, because of his belief. Peter asked why he could not follow Jesus then. Jesus explained that He was going to prepare a place and once He came back to collect the faithful, that where ever He went from then on, we would know where He is and the way to get there.

John 15:13-15, "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

Can you imagine spending eternity with a Creator like this? It is hard to imagine since we are shaped in iniquity. But this is a promise that Jesus has made to all who serve Him.

He has promised to prepare a place for us, and after His death and resurrection He did just that. He has promised to not forget us but to come again to gather us to Him.

1 Thessalonians 4:14-17, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 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. 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: 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."

The purpose of this study is to remind us of the glimpse of Heaven as described in the Bible. But more importantly to remind us of God's incomprehensible love for us. The Bible in Revelation 21, tells us something so amazing that it is hard to understand.

Revelation 21:3, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

In a previous study on the Millennium, saw how Christ revealed in the Bible that when He comes the second time, he gathers His elect from the four corners of the earth and they live and reign with Him 1000 years. After that thousand years, Satan and the lost are destroyed after the second resurrection. The world is then destroyed by fire, and Christ recreates the world. (Revelation 20:7-15).

John the disciple was given a glimpse of the holy city. This city has our mansion in it, it is the city of God.

Revelation 21:2, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Revelation 21:16, "And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."

This means the city is 1400 miles wide, 1400 miles deep and 1400 miles high.

1 Corinthians 2:9, "'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

Revelation 21:4, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Can you sense the love and care that God has for us?

Discuss: _____

Revelation 22:1-17, "1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there 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. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

And 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. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Blessed 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. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

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. And 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."

Let's take a look at Isaiah 65:17-25. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

It seems that in heaven there won't be home builder companies and landscape companies. You have eternity to build your home and occupy it. To grow a garden and enjoy the yield.

Isaiah 66:22-23, "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD."

There will be time for celebration and worship in heaven. Here in heaven, we will understand the real and true meaning of worship.

Revelation 21:22-27, "22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall

bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The choice is clear. To spend eternity with a perfect loving God who spent our lives here on earth pleading with us, forgiving us, protecting us, receiving and answering our prayers, comforting us and then saving us. But not just saving us. Saving us to live with Him in a perfect world where there is no night, no danger, no death or sorrow. There is a tree that yields 12 different types of fruit and yields her fruit every month (Revelation 22:2). A place where we can build our own house in the country then stay in our mansion in the city on the weekend. A place where we will spend every Sabbath in face to face communion with God.

Or, to make this world our home where nothing lasts forever, not even time.