

# The Afterlife: The Doctrine of Heaven Pt. I

## (Part 1)

### I. Introduction

### II. The Terminology of Heaven

#### A. The Old Testament term “Heavens” (Heb: *samayim*)

##### 1. It is used frequently to refer to the physical heavens

###### a. Gen. 1:1, 9, 14, 15

“1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

... 9 Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so.

... 14 Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; 15 and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so.”

###### b. Psalm 8:3, 8

“3 When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained;

... 8 The birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.”

###### c. Psalm 19:4-6

“4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. 6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.”

##### 2. It also frequently refers to the “abode of God”

###### a. Deut. 26:15

“15 ‘Look down from Thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Thy people Israel, and the ground which Thou hast given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Thou didst swear to our fathers.’”

###### b. Jonah 1:9

“9 And he said to them, ‘I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.’”

- c. Ezra 1:2  
“2 “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.’”
- d. Neh. 9:6  
“6 “Thou alone art the LORD. Thou hast made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. Thou dost give life to all of them And the heavenly host bows down before Thee.’”

B. The New Testament term “Heaven” (Gr: *ouranos*)

1. It is used frequently to refer to the physical heavens

- a. Matt. 26:64  
“64 Jesus said to him, “You have said it {yourself} ; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.”
- b. Mark 13:25  
“. . . 25 AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken.”
- c. Acts 14:17  
“. . . 17 and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”
- d. II Pet. 3:5  
“. . . 5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God {the} heavens existed long ago and {the} earth was formed out of water and by water, . . .”
- e. Rev. 14:7  
“. . . 7 and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”

2. It also frequently refers to the “abode of God”

- a. Matt. 5:16  
“16 “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. . .”
- b. Matt. 6:9  
“9 “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. . .”
- c. Mark 11:26  
“26 [“But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.”]
- d. Eph. 6:9  
“9 And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.”

- e. Col. 4:1  
“1 Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.”

### 3. Angels abide in heaven

- a. Matt. 18:10  
“10 “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven.”
- b. Matt. 22:30  
“30 “For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.”
- c. Luke 22:43  
“43 Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.”
- d. Gal. 1:8  
“. . . 8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”

### 4. Christ is said to have come down out of heaven to earth

- a. John 3:31  
“31 “He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.”
- b. John 6:38  
“. . . 38 “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”
- c. Acts 3:20-21  
“. . . 20 and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, 21 whom heaven must receive until {the} period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.”
- d. I Cor. 15:47  
“47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.”

### 5. Christ returned to heaven

- a. Mark 16:19  
“19 So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.”
- b. Acts 1:9, 11  
“9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.  
. . . 11 and they also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”
- c. Eph. 1:20  
“. . . {These are} in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly {places} . . .”

- d. Eph. 4:10  
“10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.”
- e. I Pet. 3:22  
“. . . 22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.”
- f. Heb. 1:3  
“3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high . . .”
- g. Heb. 4:14  
“14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.”

**N. B.** We find then that heaven is the present abode of God (and Christ and the Holy Spirit) and his holy angels as well as all believers who have died. As such, it represents the source of all that is enduring and lasting and good and pure. What then should be our attitude towards heaven?

### III. The believer’s attitude towards heaven

A. Every Christian should be “heavenly- minded” (i.e., all believers should live in such a way *now* and make decisions in this life that are consistent with what we know about heaven.)

#### 1. Jesus commanded it

- a. Matt. 5:16  
“16 “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”
- b. Matt. 5:44-45  
“44 “But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you  
45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on {the} evil and {the} good, and sends rain on {the} righteous and {the} unrighteous.”
- c. Matt. 6:9-10  
“9 “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. 10 ‘Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. . .”

#### 2. Paul commanded it

- a. Col. 3:1-2  
“1 If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”
- b. I Cor. 15:47-50  
“47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also

are those who are heavenly. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.”

3. John modeled it

a. Rev. 22:20

“20 He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

B. Christians should view heaven as precious

1. Because it is the abode of the Father

a. Matt. 6:9

“9 “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.’”

2. Because it is the abode of Christ

a. Heb. 1:3

“3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high . . .”

b. Eph. 1:20

“. . . 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly {places} . . .”

3. Because it is the abode of brothers and sisters who have died

a. Phil. 1:23

“23 But I am hard-pressed from both {directions,} having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for {that} is very much better,”

b. Heb. 12:23

“. . . 23 to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,”

c. Rev. 7:9, 14-17

“9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and {all} tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches {were} in their hands;

. . . 14 And I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 “For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them. 16 “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their

shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes.”

4. Because our names are recorded there

a. Luke 10:20

“20 “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.”

b. I Pet. 1:4

“4 to {obtain} an inheritance {which is} imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,”

5. Because our true citizenship is in heaven (*not* earth)

a. Phil. 3:20

“20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;”

b. Heb. 11:13-16

“13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that {country} from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better {country} , that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.”

c. Heb. 13:14

“14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking {the city} which is to come.”

6. Because our rewards are there

a. Matt. 5:12

“12 “Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

b. Matt. 6:19-21

“19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

c. I Pet. 1:3-4

“3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to {obtain} an inheritance {which is} imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,”

7. Because all that this world represents will pass away and be destroyed
  - a. Matt. 6:19-21  
 “19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”
  - b. I John 2:15-17  
 “15 Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and {also} its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.”
  - c. II Pet. 3:7, 10-13  
 “7 But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.  
 . . . 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, on account 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.”
  
8. Because all suffering in this life is producing something far better in the next.
  - a. II Cor. 4:8-11, 16-18  
 “8 {we are} afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.  
 16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while 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.”

#### IV. Heaven and the Heavens

- A. In scripture there are at least 3 uses of the word heaven or heavens:
  1. The atmospheric heaven (the sky or troposphere) This is the breathable atmosphere that surrounds the earth. This is the *first* heaven.
    - a. Gen. 7:11-12

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. 12 And the rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

b. Psalm 147:8

8 Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who provides rain for the earth, Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.

2. The planetary heaven. This is the realm in which we see the planets, the moon, and the stars. This is the *second* heaven.

a. Gen. 1:14-17

14 Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; 15 and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. 16 And God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; {He made} the stars also. 17 And God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,

3. The heaven where God dwells. This is the abode of God, the angels, and those who have died as believers. This is the *third* heaven.

a. Isa. 57:15

15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell {on} a high and holy place, And {also} with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.

b. Isa 63:15

15 Look down from heaven, and see from Thy holy and glorious habitation; Where are Thy zeal and Thy mighty deeds? The stirrings of Thy heart and Thy compassion are restrained toward me.

c. Psa. 33:13-14

d. II Cor. 12:2

**N.B.** While God dwells in a unique sense in heaven He is, nevertheless, omnipresent-meaning that there is no place which His presence doesn't touch in some sense (Ps. 139:8). As Solomon noted at the dedication of the temple, God cannot be "contained" (I Kings 8:27)

## The Afterlife: The Doctrine of Heaven (Part 2)

### I. Introduction

### II. What we will be like in Heaven (Rom. 8:18)

#### A. The Present state (i.e., what we know from the Bible about heaven and earth and how they relate to one another and how this knowledge should affect how we live now)

1. The entire creation has been affected by the curse which sin brought on the world.
  - a. Our bodies: Rom. 7:24  
24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?
  - b. The physical creation: Rom. 8:22  
22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.
2. Believers have been given a promise that the imperfections of this world and this body will one day give way to the perfections of a brand new heaven and earth and body
  - a. The physical creation: Rom. 8:19-21  
19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
  - b. Our bodies: Rom. 8:23  
23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for {our} adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.
  - c. Our souls:  
- I John 3:2  
2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

- Rom. 8:29

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined {to become} conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; 30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

- Eph. 1:4

“4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. . . .”

- Phil 1:6

“6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

3. The perfections of the next life are designed to be the consummation and completion of all that was earnestly longed for and desired in this life:

a. Matt. 11:28

28 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

b. John 6:37

37 “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

c. Rev. 22:17

17 And 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.

B. The Future State (what heaven will be like)

1. Perfect pleasure

a. Ps. 16:11

11 Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.

2. Perfect knowledge

a. I Cor. 13:12

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

3. Perfect comfort

a. Luke 16:25

25 “But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

4. Perfect Love

a. John 13:1

1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

b. I Cor. 13:13

13 But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

5. Perfect Joy

a. Matt. 25:23

23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

b. Ps. 16:11

11 Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fullness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.

6. Perfect rest

a. Heb. 4:9-10

9 There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

b. Rev 14:12-13

12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

7. Perfect fellowship with God

a. it starts now I John 1:3

3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

b. it was promised by Christ

- John 17:24

24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world.

- John 13:36

36 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later."

- John 14:1-3

1 “Let not 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 “And 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.

c. it characterizes heaven:

- Rev 21:23

23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp {is} the Lamb.

- Rev 21:3

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them,

- Rev 7:15

15 “For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them.

III. The New Heaven and New earth (The Bible teaches that at the end of human history there will be a cataclysmic re-ordering of the present order and relationship between heaven and earth. This future transition is a major theme in Scripture.)

A. The Old Universe must pass away

1. Anticipated in the Old Testament

a. Psalm 102:25-26

25 “Of old Thou didst found the earth; And the heavens are the work of Thy hands. 26 “Even they will perish, but Thou dost endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing Thou wilt change them, and they will be changed.

b. Isa 65:17-19

17 “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. 18 “But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem {for} rejoicing, And her people {for} gladness. 19 “I will also rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying.

c. Isa 66:22

22 “For just as the new heavens and the new earth Which I make will endure before Me,” declares the LORD, “So your offspring and your name will endure.

## 2. Prophesied in the New Testament

### a. II Peter 3:7, 13

7 But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

... 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

### b. Rev 21

## 3. Realized in the Future

### a. II Peter 3:7, 10-13

7 But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men

... 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, on account 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.

N. B. The setting for the destruction of the present heaven and earth and creation of a new heaven and earth is as follows:

- The Battle of Armageddon (Rev 19)
- The earthy Millennial reign of Christ (Rev 20:7)
- The Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15)
- The present heavens and earth are destroyed (Rev 21:1; II Pet 3)

## B. The New Universe is created

### 1. The old gives way to the new

#### a. Rev 21:1

1 And 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.

(“new” = *kainos* = “new in character”, cf. II Cor. 5:17) (“no longer any sea” = no national boundaries? = no fear - which ancients feared? = no reminder of the curse - II Peter 3:5-6)

### 2. Main features of the new universe:

#### a. Rev 21:3-7

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, 4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be {any} death; there shall 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 And 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 shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

N. B. How can we enjoy the perfection's of heaven when we know that some have been banished to the Lake of Fire forever?

Answer:

1. There is some indication that our memories of past things will fade in the glory of heaven  
- Isa 65:17  
17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.
2. We will certainly have a renewed perspective on all things. We will be untainted by sin. Our earthly attachments will be displaced by or new future deeper relationship to God and others.  
- I Cor. 13:12  
12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.
3. Divine love will finally have gotten complete control of our desires and our affections.  
- Rom. 5:5  
5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
4. In the final analysis we must trust in the character of God (His infinite goodness, compassion and mercy).  
- Ps 16:11  
11 Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.  
  
- Rom. 11:33-34  
33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?

#### IV. The New Jerusalem

(In discussing the new heaven and earth the Bible speaks of a new Jerusalem. Borrowing from the dominant idea throughout scripture that sees the city of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and as the center of God's focus as He fulfills His plan of providing for the salvation of mankind, we see this future city in a similar way. It represents the central focus of heaven and the place where God's presence uniquely dwells.)

##### A. The Descent of the Holy City (Rev 21:2-3)

“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 shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them. . . .”

##### 1. It comes down out of Heaven from God

###### a. Rev. 21:1-2, 10

And 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. . . .”

“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,”

##### 2. It is “prepared” by Christ

###### a. John 14:3

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 “And 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.

##### 3. It enables unprecedented access to God

###### a. Rev. 21:3

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them,

##### 4. It is the final dwelling place anticipated by the righteous of every age

###### a. Heb. 11:10

10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

###### b. Heb. 12:22-23

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,

B. The Description of the Holy City (Rev 21:10-27)

1. It is characterized by the light of the glory of God Himself (vv. 10-11)

a. Rev. 21:10-11)

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.

b. Isa. 60:19

19 “No longer will you have the sun for light by day, Nor for brightness will the moon give you light; But you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, And your God for your glory.

c. Rev. 21:23

23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp {is} the Lamb.

2. It depicts the eternal security of fellowship with God (v 12-14)

a. Rev 22:14-15 (cf. those who “enter” and those who are “outside”)

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 those 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 And the one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.

b. The gates are named for the 12 tribes of Israel and the foundation stones for the 12 Apostles. (i.e., the heavenly city is the dwelling place of all the people of God for all time.

c. The presence of “gates” indicates that we can come and go as we please (cf. v. 25)

d. Eternal life is only for those who enter by the narrow “gate” or way (Matt. 7:13) and the appointed way (cf. Matt. 11:12; Luke 16:16).

**Matt. 7:13** “Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. **14** “For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

Matt. 11:11 “Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. **12** “**And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by**

**force. 13** “For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. **14** “And if you care to accept *it*, he himself is Elijah, who was to come. **15** “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Luke 16:14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him. **15** And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God. **16** “**The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.** **17** “But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail. **18** “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

NB: “Violence is not how one enters the kingdom but with humility and meekness as they humble themselves as sinners and repent. But the religious leaders did not repent from John's preaching to prepare themselves for the one who was to come (Jn.1:6-8; Luke 7:28-30.)

Matt 23:13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”

Matt 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said my kingdom is not of this earth nor do my followers fight for it. Jesus said one must become as a child, the meek and the humble gain entrance. The kingdom comes with Christ's physical second coming to earth, then He will establish it and the church will co-rule and co-reign under Him. There are those instead want to rule and reign now.” (from the “Come Let Us Reason” site)

3. It represents uninhibited access to God for all time (vv. 15-16)
  - a. The city is laid out in a square 1500 miles by 1500 miles (2.25 million sq. miles; London, England is only 621 sq. miles. The city is also 1500 miles high.  
- cf. the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple which was also cube shaped, I Kings 6:20
  - b. These are literal descriptions of our future dwelling place (cf. v. 17)
4. The city will also be unparalleled in beauty.
  - a. The walls, the foundation stones, the gates, and the streets are constructed with unparalleled beauty