

Heaven

In truth, what does the Bible reveal concerning this magnificent spiritual realm from where God rules? And how many souls of mankind have entered her gates?

Joh 3:13 No one has ascended into Heaven except He Who descended from Heaven, the Son of Man.

Enoch

Gen 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not, for God took him.

Heb 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken up (*Gk.3346- From G3326 and G5087; to transfer, that is, [literally] transport, [by implication] exchange, [reflexively] change sides*) so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.

Col 1:13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and hath transferred (*Gk.3179- From G3326 and G2476; to transfer, that is, carry away, depose or [figuratively] exchange*) us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

- Just as Enoch went from the physical realm into the spiritual without experiencing death, so does the Christian, when first converting, from their worldly, carnal existence into the new godly, spiritual life. Enoch didn't experience the "sting" of death (*1 Cor 15:55-56*) just as the faithful saint will not experience the "second death" found in the "lake of fire and brimstone" (*Rev 20:14-15*).

Elijah

2Ki 2:11 And they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven (*Heb.- 8064- lofty; the sky [visible arch in which the clouds move, as well as to the higher ether where the celestial bodies revolve]*).

- Either way, Elijah vanished into the physical sky out of Elisha's view. But he did not go to Heaven.

Jesus & Heaven

Joh 14:1 Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. (2) In My Father's house (*Gk.3614- residence, an abode; by implication a family*) are many rooms (*Gk.3438- a staying, that is, a residence*). If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you unto Myself, that where I am you may be also.

- Jesus was telling the apostles that they too would have to wait for His return. The church (*a.k.a.- the kingdom*) is "Heaven on Earth" until Jesus comes back. In her is where God's will is being done as in Heaven. In other words, the only place righteousness can exist is within the collective redeemed. But some might say "I thought the kingdom hasn't come yet".

Mat 6:10 “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.”

Mat 16:28 “Truly, I say to you, there are **some standing here** who will **not taste death until they see** the Son of man coming in His kingdom.”

Mar 9:1 “And He said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there are **some standing here** who will **not taste death, until they see** the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”

- Even the apostles didn’t understand the concept of the kingdom that was to come. All they did understand was that **Jesus** was going to rule over it.

Act 1:6 “So when they had come together, they asked of Him, ‘Lord, **will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?**’ (7) He said to them, ‘**It is not for you to know** times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. (8) **But you will receive power** when the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’”

Act 2:1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (3) And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. (4) And they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

- Jesus’ “coming” in Mat 16:28 was in reference to the **Holy Spirit’s** coming on the day of Pentecost after **Jesus** ascended to the right hand of **God**. The kingdom of **God** that came with power that day was none other than **Christ’s** church. If the millennialists were correct in their teaching of the “still coming” kingdom there would be a few very old people still living today who would have had to hear **Jesus** speak those words.

Eph 4:8 “Therefore it says, ‘When **He** ascended on high (*sat down at the right hand of God*) **He** led a host of **captives** (*those who are in bondage to sin who became servants of Christ*), and **He gave gifts** to men (**Eph 4:11-13*). (9) (In saying ‘**He** ascended (*went back to Heaven*)’, what does it mean but that **He** had also descended into the lower regions, the earth (*lower parts of the earth could refer to His incarnation, His death, burial and resurrection in order to save mankind from sin*)? (10) **He Who** descended is the **One Who** also ascended far above all the heavens (*2 Cor 12:22- 1st, 2nd and 3rd*), that **He** might fill all things.)

*Eph 4:11 And **He** gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, (12) **to equip the saints** for the work of ministry, for building up the body of **Christ**, (13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the **Son of God**, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of **Christ**,

Heb 1:3 **He** is the radiance of the glory of **God** and the exact imprint of **His** nature, and **He** upholds the universe by the word of **His** power. After **making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on**

high, (At this point *He became our advocate [1 Jn 2:1] having removed our servitude to sin unto death making us free from sin and alive unto righteousness.*)

* *Joh 14:9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know Me, Philip? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’”*

Paradise vs. Heaven Physical Description of a Spiritual Place

- Heaven is not the place depicted in cartoons where people are welcomed in by ‘St. Peter’ who sits at a ‘pearly’ gate with feathered pen in hand while looking over a log of names to see who gets to go in and who gets sent to the other place. It’s not a place where everyone there gets his/her own cloud, white garment, halo, wings and harp. Other than being clothed in white (*Rev 7:9; 19:14*) those are items that were added by artists sometime after the first century.

Paradise

Luk 23:43 And He said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will **be with Me in paradise.**”

Php 1:23 “I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and **be with Christ** (*outside the physical realm in the spirit realm*), for that is far better:”

2Ti 4:6 “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. (7) I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (8) Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the **Lord**, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day (*resurrection*), and not only to me but also to all who have loved **His** appearing.”

2Co 12:2 “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago who was caught up to the **third heaven** (*First-terrestrial -earth and sky; second being the celestial – above the sky. Both are physical [1 Cor 15:40]*) - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know God knows. 3 And I know that this man was caught up into **paradise** (*Gk.3857- a park, that is, [specifically] an Eden*)- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows- 4 and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. (*See also Rev 10:4 concerning the “seven thunders” whose words John was not to record.*)

- If the apostle **Paul** was having a very difficult time describing the place where **Jesus** and the thief went after their deaths, imagine how difficult it must have been for **John** to describe the highest plain of existence, **Heaven**. In **Revelation** chapter 4 **John** describes the throne of **God** with **Him** seated there along with the power that surrounds **Him**. Here (*in chapter 21*) **John** describes the bride of **Christ**, the church in all her glory. He did so, for the most part, by using known, yet common very costly elements as examples that were in existence but with greater emphasis on their magnificence.

Rev 21:18 The **wall** was built of jasper, while the **city** was **pure gold, like clear glass**. (*polished to a mirrored finish*)

Rev 21:19 The **foundations** of the wall of the city were adorned with **every kind of jewel**. ...

Rev 21:21 And the twelve **gates** (*not just one...*) were twelve **pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl** (*...very big pearl!*), and the **street** of the city was **pure gold, like transparent glass**.

- In Rev 21:25 these gates are never shut. This proves that the place under discussion here is the victorious state of the church. The realm of Heaven though has to be closed off because of Rev 22:15. “Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whosoever loves and practices falsehood.”

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth (*the N.T. religious system that governs spiritual Israel, the church*), for the first heaven and the first earth (*the O.T. religious system that governed Israel- the Mosaic*) had passed away (*John here saw something that had already transpired at the cross- Col 2:14*), and the sea was no more (*no more separation between God and His people*), coming (*present/perfect-thus continually. Heb 12:28 “...we receiving a kingdom...”*) down out of Heaven **from God** (*shows origin*), prepared (*being prepared in anticipation of Christ’s coming; Eph 5:27 “That He might present [her] to Himself a glorious church...holy and without blemish.”*) as a bride (*church*) adorned for her husband (*Christ*).

- The New Jerusalem is not Heaven but part of it. She is the focal point of the dwelling place of God, thus the capital city. Her origin, where she was created in the mind of God in eternity, is Heaven where she is to live for all the age of eternity when Jesus returns to claim her. After which the physical “heavens and earth” are to be destroyed. The present state of the church is the “camp of the saints”, a.k.a. the “*church militant*” with her weapon of choice being the “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (*Eph 6:17*). Also according to Rev 20:9 she is the “beloved city”.

Rev 21:9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will **show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb**.”

Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and **showed me the holy city Jerusalem** coming down out of Heaven from God, (11) having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel like a jasper, clear as crystal, (12) It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the **twelve tribes** of the **sons of Israel** were inscribed-

- These names are symbolic and represent an inheritance that was/is promised to those who “serve the Lord Christ” as spiritual Israel.

Col 3:24 knowing that of the Lord **you** (*Christians/spiritual Israel*) **will receive the inheritance** as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

...but in order to receive this inheritance we have to be made fit for it.

*Col 1:12 giving thanks to the **Father**, Who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.*

Gal 6:16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the **Israel of God** (*spiritual Israel*).

Jas 1:1 James, a servant of **God** and of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, to the **twelve tribes** (*spiritual Israel*) in the Dispersion: Greetings.

- Heaven is more than just a Utopia. If Hell is such a place of tortuous agony then Heaven is quite the opposite. Very few have been privileged to see into this awe inspiring realm that awaits the faithful after the resurrection and judgment.

Heb 9:27 And just as it is appointed for man once to die once, and after that comes the judgment:

2Pe 3:10 But the day of the **Lord will come** like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. (11) Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, (12) waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of **God**, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! (13) But according to **His** promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth (*higher plain of existence, i.e., Heaven*) in which righteousness dwells.

- We have already received the kingdom (*church*) but are looking forward to that home in Heaven. The same home that was promised to those of faith under the Old Covenant.

Heb 11:16 But as it is, they (*the faithful before the New Testament*) desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore **God** is not ashamed to be called their **God**, for **He** has prepared for them a city (*New Jerusalem, future state of the church*).

Heb 11:39 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised (*the kingdom, the church*) (40) since **God** had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect (*Gk.0548- to complete, that is, [literally] accomplish*).

- The church had to come in order for the entire world to be accepted into the fold. There was no "Israel" before **Jacob** so those before him weren't considered "the Israel of **God**" (*Gal 6:16*). Physical Israel was chosen in order to bring about "spiritual" Israel in which those who were not considered part of the inheritance, a.k.a. the Gentiles, then could be because of **Abraham's** faith.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in **Christ Jesus**. (29) And if you are **Christ's**, then you are **Abraham's** offspring, **heirs according to the promise**.

1Jn 5:11 And this is the testimony, that **God** gave us **eternal life**, and **this life is in His Son**. (12) Whoever has the **Son** has life; whoever does not have the **Son** of **God** does not have life. (13) I write these things to you who believe in the name of the **Son** of **God**, **that you may know that you have eternal life**.

- **God** has given us a road map to point us in the right direction. If we follow this map, a.k.a. the **Bible**, seeking to do **His** will for us, we can get to **Heaven**. **He** has not left us without hope.

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into **Christ** have put on **Christ**.

- Are you absolutely sure you have eternal life? Would you really want to risk all of eternity on not knowing?

1Th 4:14 For since we believe that **Jesus** died and rose again, even so, through **Jesus**, **God** will bring (*not send*) with **Him** (*back to Heaven*) those who have fallen asleep (*died*).

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