

# HEAVEN REVEALED

## HEAVEN REVEALED: A NEW HOPE FOR THE NEW YOU

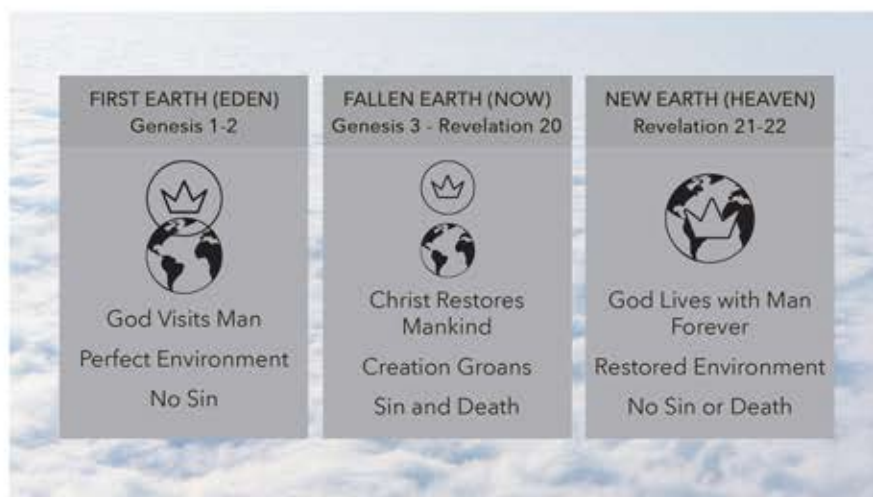
Aloha everyone, I'm Mark if we haven't met and I want to welcome you to our service. This is the last week of teaching in our series, Heaven Revealed and next week we will have our Pastor's Panel to discuss any unanswered questions about Heaven.

At the beginning of our series we established the importance of understanding Heaven. If we don't know what Heaven is like we won't be able to fulfill the Lord's Prayer to contend for God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven, (Matthew 6). Having a clear understanding of Heaven will empower us to live with an eternal perspective and purpose.

In Week 2 we traveled back to the future. We saw that God's plan for creation is not destruction but restoration. So in order to know how God will restore creation we saw what it was like in the beginning. In Genesis we saw a perfect world in which God and man reigned together in perfect unity. This gives us a glimpse into what God has in store for the future.

So we know that the future plan of creation is the reunification of Heaven and Earth. But that hasn't happened yet. So what is heaven like now? What happens when we die now? Pastor Mike gave us a beautiful glimpse into Heaven now or the intermediate Heaven.

But we know that that is not Heaven's final form. God will eventually reunite Heaven and earth. Before that happens God will rapture His Church and return to judge all of creation. Last week Pastor Theresa gave us a powerful message on the Judgment seat of Christ. We saw that there are actually two judgment seats. God will judge all people on their faith (did they believe in Jesus for salvation from sin) and also on their works (how did we live our lives here on earth). The Judgment seat of faith will determine our eternal destination. The Judgment seat of deeds will determine our eternal reward.



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I hope this series has given you a greater understanding and more compelling vision of Heaven. I hope it has cleared up confusion and misconceptions. And I pray it has given you a greater sense of intentionality to live with an eternal perspective and purpose. The more we set our sights on heavenly realities, as Paul says, the more we can contend for the realities of heaven here on earth.

## THE FINAL HEAVEN

This week we will talk about the final state of creation – a new Heaven and a new Earth reunited. God is making all things new. Here are three things that will mark the new creation.

### 1. A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

<sup>1</sup> *"Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God,'"* (Revelation 21:1-3).

The story of the Bible is that of a loving Father who is trying to get back to His children. All of human history is really His-story of redemption and reconciliation. But whereas in Genesis earth experienced God's visitation, in Revelation it will experience His habitation. God will dwell upon the earth with His people.

*"For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known,"* (1 Corinthians 13:12).

*"As for me, I will be vindicated and will see Your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing Your likeness,"* (Psalm 17:15).

Now we only get glimpses of Heaven, glimpses of God. This life only offers a poor reflection of God at best. But one day we will awaken and be fully satisfied in the Presence of God. We'll never have to wonder if that feeling will fade or if His Presence will leave us because we will dwell with Him forever. We will experience a new relationship with God.

### 2. A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH SIN

<sup>4</sup> *'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'*

<sup>5</sup> *He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then He said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*



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<sup>6</sup> He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. <sup>7</sup> Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be My children. <sup>8</sup> But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death," (Revelation 21:4-8).

God is in the process of getting the hell out of His creation. One day He is going to make all things new and that will include removing all traces of sin and death from His creation. They will be consigned a place outside of His domain. Last week, Pastor Theresa talked about the Judgment Seat and how to be ready for that day. She also talked about the lake of fire and said "Turn to your neighbor and assure them, 'That's not you because you're here.'" I know her heart. And she said other things to clarify what it means to be truly saved. But I want to clarify just in case there was any confusion. Being here doesn't make you a Christian. Sitting in Church doesn't make you a Christian any more than sitting in McDonald's makes you a Big Mac. The only One who can save you is Jesus. And not just learning about Him, not hearing about Him, not believing He's real. Even the demons believe that. But have you put your faith in Jesus and made Him the Lord of your life? He is the only One who can give You a clean heart and wash you of all unrighteousness. God is in the process of removing sin from His creation. At the Cross Jesus frees us from the penalty of sin, in this life the Holy Spirit frees us from the power of sin, and one day the Father will free us from the presence of sin once and for all.

So we will have a new relationship with God, we will have a new relationship with sin, and third,

### 3. A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH CREATION

<sup>9</sup> "One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. <sup>11</sup> It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>13</sup> There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. <sup>14</sup> The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

In his vision John is taken up to a great high mountain. Why? Because he's going to need some perspective for what he's about to witness.

<sup>15</sup> "The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. <sup>16</sup> The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. <sup>17</sup> The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick.



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The city measures 1,400-1,500 miles cubed.

*<sup>18</sup> "The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. <sup>19</sup> The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup> the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup> The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass."*

Heaven is a city and a country. Think about the most exciting city you've ever visited. There was life, and excitement, and discovery. At every turn something new to experience. There's art, culture, and history. This city will have the greatest architect in all of creation. And think about the people you'll meet. Heroes of the faith from past and present. Loved ones waiting for you. But it's also a country.

*<sup>22</sup> "I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup> The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. <sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. <sup>25</sup> On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. <sup>27</sup> Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life," (Revelation 21:9-27).*

There are gates to the city, which signify coming and going. There are nations and kings. Remember we will rule and reign over creation with God. Nations will bring their splendor before the King of kings.

*<sup>1</sup> "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. <sup>4</sup> They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever," (Revelation 22:1-5).*

Does this imagery remind you of anything? Tree of life? Yielding fruit? Lifting of the curse? Reigning? It's Genesis. The story ends the way it begins – God and man in perfect paradise. Only this time we will know what it cost to be there. We will live in constant remembrance of God's grace.



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As we conclude our series, I want to remind you to submit any questions you may still have and we will cover them during our Pastor's Panel next weekend. But before we close I want to leave you with some questions.

## 1. Do you know for certain that you are going to heaven?

As Pastor Theresa shared last weekend, we can know for certain. It begins with acknowledging our wrong. All of us have sinned and fall short of God's glory. Jesus alone lived a perfect and sinless life. He was the only one who fulfilled the entire law of God. On the cross He traded His righteousness for our unrighteousness and the Bible says we receive this through faith. If you put your faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross you will receive salvation. He will give You His righteousness and take from you your unrighteousness.

## 2. Do your current priorities and passions reveal a temporal or eternal perspective?

Now that we know how the story ends, are we living in light of that end?

*<sup>25</sup> "For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will find it. <sup>26</sup> What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will reward each person according to what they have done," (Matthew 16:25-27).*

Are you living your life trying to gain this world? Or are you giving your life up here in hopes of the better one to come?

*<sup>29</sup> "Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for Me and the gospel <sup>30</sup> will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life," (Mark 10:29-30).*

Paul summed it up best when he said, "And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world," (1 Corinthians 15:19).

He's saying, "We bet the farm on this gospel!" If this life is all there is then we should be pitied more than anyone in the world because we gave it all on this hope! But if it is true. Imagine the reward to come!

## 3. Do you know anyone who won't be there?

Penn Jillette, half of the magician duo Penn and Teller, is an avowed atheist. But not too long ago he posted a YouTube video encouraging Christians to share their faith.



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Penn and Teller are headliners in Vegas and their shows are typically full of foul language and shock appeal. But in this video, he shared about a time an audience member gave him a New Testament.

He was signing autographs after a show when he noticed a man standing over to the side of the crowd. The man had been one of the audience members who was incorporated into the show during one of the acts. The man walked over to him, complimented him on the show and handed him a Gideons New Testament.

He said, "I wrote in the front of it, and I wanted you to have this. I'm kind of proselytizing." Then he said, "I'm a businessman. I'm sane. I'm not crazy."

Jillette said, "It was really wonderful. I believe he knew that I was an atheist. But he was not defensive, and he looked me right in the eyes. He was truly complimentary. It didn't seem like empty flattery. He was really kind and nice and sane and looked me in the eyes and talked to me and then gave me this Bible."

Jillette then states in the video that he doesn't respect people who don't proselytize.

"I don't respect that at all. If you believe that there's a heaven and hell and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life or whatever, and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward, and atheists who think that people shouldn't proselytize – 'Just leave me alone, keep your religion to yourself.'"

"How much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? If I believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that a truck was coming at you and you didn't believe it, and that truck was bearing down on you, there's a certain point where I tackle you. And this is more important than that."

## Conclusion

For an avowed atheist he seems to understand the urgency better than many Christians (myself included). It can be so easy to live for the immediate and the temporary. But now we know what this world is coming to and what is coming to this world. We know that this life isn't all there is. Let's spend what time we have left trying to win our loved ones for Jesus.