

## Semester 4 – Week 12 - Class 24

### HEAVEN—IS IT FOR REAL?

Today we want to see what the Bible says about the thrilling prospects of the world to come.

1 Corinthians 15:19 **“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”**  
Our Hope not just in this world.

**Question:** What did Jesus promise His people?

Hebrews 11:16 **“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”**

Planet Earth, photographed from space is beautiful and peaceful looking.

But when you look closer in the cities of our world, there is much in the way of pollution that brings sadness, now 6,000 years from its creation. Articles have been written about its coast to coast garbage glut. Still other stories have told us about the crisis in the oceans. Polluted waterways affecting navigation and the life of the water creatures. Air pollution from smokestacks belching out a constant stream of toxic clouds.

In our time we have seen many shuttle missions sent to help build an international space station, with the hope that one day man can take trips to other planets like Mars. and perhaps beyond. He has designed space suits to work outside the space station and even navigate around independent of a tether line.

Man's greatest problem is man himself.

The cities are for the most part, all pretty much the same, with its dirty streets, a smoldering pot of violence and crime and flashing lights and sirens and insecurity. Cities are a concentration of whatever the people are like. SIN!! Violence, crime, drugs, extortion.

A city reflects the character of those who build it. God has a new city.

Hebrews 11:10 **“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God.”**

**Question:** What is the name of the city?

Revelation 3:12 **“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”**

The name "Jerusalem" means "City of Peace." Now it is good that the heavenly city is called the "New" Jerusalem. "Old" Jerusalem in the Middle East has been everything but a city of peace. War, bloodshed and destruction has been a good part of its history right up to the present day.

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.”** What John was seeing is to take place at the end of the millennium, where Satan had to endure the 1,000 years on this dark, cold depopulated planet, while the saints spent that same period in the New Jerusalem in heaven with Jesus.

**Question:** How big is this city?

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.”**

12,000 furlongs is 1,500 miles in perimeter, since 1 furlong = 1/8<sup>th</sup> Mile. It is foursquare. Therefore New Jerusalem is 375 miles on each side. That would give an area of 140,625 square miles. To put this into perspective, the city is big enough to put the land area of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina combined. Those 3 states add up to a land area of 133,136 square miles. Those three states would take up 94.6% of the area leaving 7,749 square miles vacant. That's enough room, to put the 5 boroughs of New York City 24 times. God's city is huge to say the least.

New York City and its 5 boroughs, have an estimated population of 8.245 million people, according to a 2011 census, in a land area of 321 square miles.

It has been estimated that in New Jerusalem, **39 billion people** could live there. 39 billion is one million 39 thousand times. Jesus said "I go and prepare a place for you."

The greatest percentage of land in the world is presently unusable. Oceans and seas cover about 75% of our planet now. When the earth is re-created, there will be no oceans. Revelation 21:1. In New Jerusalem there would be no police stations, hospitals, jails, fire departments, health clinics, funeral homes, cemeteries and a thousand other things we presently have that take up space.

The question is not "does God have room in heaven for us" but "do we have room in our hearts for God?"

DOES HEAVEN EXIST? Was the subject article of Times Magazine, March 24, 1997. To the world who does not consult a King James Bible, everything about heaven is more or less speculation. Some think heaven is floating on a cloud strumming a harp. Little winged cherubs will float by occasionally.

But to those who search the scriptures, heaven most assuredly does exist and is a real place.

Revelation 21:10-11 **"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: . . ."**

Have you ever wondered why you had to be born on this sinful planet called Earth? Why couldn't you have been created an angel or have been created on some other planet that has never sinned?

That said, have you ever considered that the highest honor bestowed on any creature in the immense universe is being given to human beings? God is going to move the capital of the universe to our world. Is that good news? You and I get to live with God the Almighty Creator of all for eternity, and the glory of God will be in that city.

The Ruler of all things will reside on the very earth where His Son was crucified. We probably cannot comprehend the full significance of this thought but, down through the stream of time, God will broaden our understanding, increase our devotion by the fact that the Creator of the entire universe, the King of kings to which every knee shall bow wants to live with us.

Revelation 21:14 **"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."**

Revelation 21:17,18 **"And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: "**

The walls of the New Jerusalem are 216 feet high and made of clear jasper. (144 cubits. 1 cubit = 18")

Revelation 21:19, 20 **"And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. "**

If you take the twelve stones that are in the foundation of the city, they match up with the stones that were on the breastplate of the high priest. In the Old Testament the high priest wore a breast plate and on it were 12 stones, one for each of the 12 tribes of Israel. And each stone was different. And each foundation has the name of one of the apostles in the gate. And each foundation has the name of one of the tribes. When you line up the stones in the order in which they appear, if you do the research of what the colors of the stones are, do you know what it forms underneath the New Jerusalem? THE COLORS OF A RAINBOW!

The rainbow was a symbol of a promise God made that He would never destroy again. The city is built on a promise that it will never be overthrown.

Revelation 21:21 **"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."**

Each gate is made of one pearl!!! The gates are of pearl because the "Pearl of great Price" is the only way we can enter into the kingdom of God. Notice the streets are of gold, the gates are of pearl, the foundations are of beautiful minerals. As we examine the building materials for the eternal city, nothing ever deteriorates and

nothing ever dies. We are now in a world where things are constantly deteriorating. But not so in God's city. It will always be in a constant state of newness.

People in this world lay down their lives for a little bit of gold and yet the saints of God will walk on it! What should that tell us about our priorities?

Revelation 21:23-25 **"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."** (Notice it did not say there is no sun or moon) It said there is no need of the sun. There is a sun and moon because the Bible says they'll be for times and seasons. The reason there is no need for the sun in the city is because God Himself is in that glorious city and the glory of the eternal God will far outshine the object which He has created. The brightness of God exceeds the brightness of the sun. Gates of ancient cities were always shut at night as a security measure. But these gates shall be always open—another sign to us of the eternal safety of God's glorious city.

**Question:** Where is the city's water supply coming from?

Revelation 22:1 **"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."** This is no ordinary river. This is God's river of life! Not like the Amazon or the Nile. This is a river that is going to supply water to 140,625 square miles of the city. An enormous spring of crystal clear water coming forth from the throne of God, spreading out and diverting out of the twelve gates. We can't even imagine it.

Revelation 22:2 **"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side on 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."**

Have you noticed a certain number being highlighted over and over in the heavenly city? Numbers have meaning in the Bible. The number 12 represents the church. The dwelling place of the church is the New Jerusalem.

The walls were 12x12 cubits high. There were how many foundations? 12; There were how many gates? 12; The tree of life had how many fruits? 12; The tree bore these fruits how many times a year? 12; How many tribes of Israel in the Old Testament? 12; How many apostles had Jesus in the New Testament? 12. 12 also happens to be a perfect number for building because of its divisibility.

The whole purpose of the plan of salvation and the Bible is to get us back to the Tree of Life. Restoring all things back to His perfect plan. In this world the Tree of Life was Calvary's tree, the cross. We need to surrender to what happened on that tree, because that's the way into the kingdom.

The Tree of Life grows over the River of Life where the base of the tree is split so as to span both sides of the River and yet grows together at the top. And it's big enough for millions of people to eat from. 12 crops. The Bible says that in the New Earth from week to week and from month to month we'll gather before the Lord. Every time a new crop comes out. The different people of the nations of this earth will gather before that tree, and all of the divisions that are present in this world will be healed as we all gather as brothers and sisters in the shade of that tree eating of that fruit plucked from its shimmering leaves. There will be a unity there such as the human race has never seen. The fruit will be unlike anything we've known and it has the ability to perpetuate life. Something that is missing from our diet now and keeps us from aging will be present in that fruit. Glory to God! What a gift! Eternal life.

Revelation 22:4 **"And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."**

In the new earth we will be privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son. **"Now we see through a glass darkly."** (1 Cor. 13:12) But in the next world we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in the very presence of God and behold the glory of His countenance. And of course there'll be the pure communion with the holy beings we call angels. As we gather about the great white throne, joy unspeakable will fill every heart, and we'll cast our crowns at the feet of Jesus and praise Him through the endless rounds of eternity.

So often we think of the Christian life as a life of denial. A life of suffering. A life of hardship. But what does the Word of God tell us.

Romans 8:18

**"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."**

When we think of the things that God is preparing for the faithful that love Him, we are told that it is so immeasurably a disproportionate reward that we cannot even compare it to what we have gone through here.

If we could see the rewards of heaven for 5 minutes it would indeed do a lot for our faith but Jesus told us

**"... blessed are they that believe without seeing."** John 20:29

2 Corinthians 4:17,18 **"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 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."**

Paul tells us here that we are to see the reality by faith of that which is not visible to the natural eye. How many professed Christians today really believe heaven is real? National Enquirer Tabloid sells millions upon millions of magazines every month seemingly having no problem convincing people that nonsense garbage is real.

Heaven is REAL!! As real as anything out there in outer space. As real as anything on this earth. Heaven is a real, real, real, place. There's nothing imaginary about it at all.

Now let's put things in perspective:

Revelation 21:2, 3 **"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 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."**

There are 2 great misconceptions about heaven.

1) There's the idea that its source of joy will be the mansions, or material possessions.

2) It will be a boring place void of all the "fun" things in life.

Those who think of heaven strictly in terms of gold and mansions need to spend far more time at the foot of the Cross. Those who think heaven will be boring need to do a lot more research on the subject.

Psalm 16:11 **"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."**

Can you get any more full than full? In God's presence there will always be "fulness of joy."

**Question:** What are we going to be like in heaven and what kind of bodies will the saints have?

Philippians 3:20, 21 **"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."** We are going to have bodies like Jesus' body!

**Question:** Was Jesus' body a real body or just a spirit body?

Luke 24:39 **"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have."**

1 Corinthians 2:9 **"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that (are afraid of Him?) love Him."**

John 14:1-3 **"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."**

But the greatest honor is that we will be privileged to see our Creator face to face without a veil between. We shall stand in His presence and behold the glory of His countenance. And as the years roll by, they will bring to us richer and more glorious revelations of the love of God and of Christ. The more we learn of God, the more we'll admire His character, and the more our hearts will thrill with devotion towards Him. It'll be a place of

unspeakable joy. Before this can happen, things must wrap up in this life. Peter gives us insight on the near future event to take place.

2 Peter 3:10 **"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."** This tells us the elements will melt with fervent heat. What purifies better than heat? When we want something clean we sterilize it by heat. The best purging element is fire. But before the rebuilding program commences, God is first going to purge sin and sinners off this planet. Rev. 20:9 Rev. 20:14.

2 Peter 3:13 **"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."**

Matthew 5:5 The Bible says, **"Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth."**

Isaiah 65:17 **"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."**

Revelation 21:1 **"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."** So the Bible speaks of God creating new heavens and a new earth, and the saved will be able to watch God recreate.

Through the clear jasper walls of the city of the New Jerusalem, we will be privileged to actually behold creation the second time. Adam and Eve weren't around the first time God created. They only saw the result after it was all done. But we will actually be there when God says "Let there be light", and life and fruitful valleys once again. And then God will create again the trees, and birds, and animals. God will speak it and it will be created.

This earth really belongs to Christians—those faithful to God. It was meant to be in the beginning. It will be so in the end. The meek shall inherit the earth. Right now, we're just pilgrims. But we have an eternally rich Heavenly Father who has given the New Earth to the saints. It belongs to the righteous as an inheritance. We, like father Abraham are looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Heb.11:10)

We will participate in real activities. After the Lord finishes His work, let's see what we're going to do there.

Isaiah 65:21,22 **"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."** Not only are you going to have a mansion in the city that God's prepared just especially for you according to your taste, but it says you're going to be able to build your own house out in the country and have your own country estate. It says you're going to build it and inhabit it. And there's not going to be a title on it that anybody can take from you. No mortgage payments! No rent payments! No insurance payments to make! There won't even be any money! No taxes or IRS tax returns! No banks! No locks on the doors.

Whatever you plant, it'll still be there to harvest; it'll never rot on the tree, and you'll never have to move out.

Today, the corrupt, the proud, and the dishonest seem to have charge over the earth. But it will not remain that way. There are glorious days ahead for those who will take their stand on the side of God now!! God is looking for men and women and young people who are willing to stand for the right though the heavens fall. Those who in their inmost souls are true and honest. Those who are willing to champion the cause of right when champions are few. And for those who stand up for Jesus, God will stand up for them. Scripture tells us in 1 Samuel 2:30 **"Those who honour me, I will honour."**

Isaiah 35:5, 6 **"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."**

Revelation 21:4 **"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, Repeat that again. "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."**

Look at God's PROMISES He has given us in the scriptures:

Isaiah 40:31 **"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."**

Isaiah 33:24 **"And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein [shall be] forgiven their iniquity."**

Isaiah 11:6 **"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."**

Isaiah 65:25 **"... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD."**

There's lots of tears in this world isn't there? People cry for a lot of reasons. Murders, and kidnappings, child abuse and accidental deaths and a thousand other things. The day will come when there are no more tears. Amen? No more funerals. No more cemeteries. No more memorial services that people attend. Wouldn't that be great?

In the New Earth painful memories that have bothered us here won't bother us there. We all have certain things we wish we could forget. In heaven those things will never be remembered.

You'll be able to lay down in the woods and there will not be a sense of foreboding. No animal, insect or person will ever attack us. Everything will be friendly. The climate will be perfect. The fragrances of the air will be forever sweet. The oxygen will be invigorating. The trees will be bigger, healthier and more beautiful by far. The animals will be perfect, symmetrical and friendly. Everything will be there to satisfy the needs and the longings of mankind. You'll not even so much as fall down and skin your knee.

No more dying of AIDS or cancer. No more hospitals or expensive drugs to take, no more medical bills. Every physical problem will be remedied. No more surgeries. No more imperfect eyesight or dimmed hearing. Crime will be a thing of the past. We won't have to fear being robbed or assaulted. No street gangs or bullets to avoid. Traffic accidents are non-existent. No planes to crash. No natural disasters such as earthquakes or tornadoes. Wars won't annihilate and diseases won't devastate. What a place!

Some wonder if we'll recognize each other in heaven. Of course, we will! Even though we'll have a new glorified body without wrinkles and gray hair, we'll still know each other. You'll have a real body with flesh and bones. We will all have a youthful look because of our glorified bodies. And because of the sense of discernment that God will give us we'll have no problem knowing who are the ones that we've always known. There'll be something about the personality and demeanor that will be very obvious to us.

And not only will we recognize those who we knew down here, but we'll be able to know and talk to all the great people of ancient Bible times. We can ask brother Noah how he fit all the animals on to the ark, and how they stayed for over a year. We can ask the patriarch Abraham about the day he offered up his son Isaac upon Mt. Moriah. What an experience that must have been! We can hear the story from the prophet Daniel himself about how God shut up the mouths of the lions on that fateful night. Wouldn't you like to ask Mary about the 30 years of Jesus' life that we know almost nothing about? Even in our wildest imagination we find it difficult to envision socializing with those faithful Bible characters we have learned to love and respect. But ultimately, we'll want to spend time with our Saviour.

Revelation 14:4 **"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."** If you want to follow the Lamb there in heaven then you must first follow the Lamb here now. Sin is the one thing that can keep us out of heaven, and the Bible tells us that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin."

1 John 1:7, 8 **"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."**

Matthew 6:33 **"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."**

We live in an insurance rich society. We have car insurance; homeowner insurance; health insurance and life insurance— which when you think about it is really death insurance. There are at the present time all these so-called earthly insurances but only One source can give us eternal life assurance. And that's Jesus. The good news is that our Lord has paid the premium! It's free to us all! And it's got out of this world benefits!!

Almost seems so hard to imagine but the prophet John records these words of our Lord.

Revelation 21:5 **“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”**

John 14:2 **“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.”**

When that day dawns and the saints of God go marching into that city, will you be among them? Noah will be there. Abraham will be there. Isaac will be there. Jacob will be there. Joseph, Peter and Paul and the faithful of the ages will march inside the gates of that city. You can make your reservation now if you so desire.

**End of Seminar**