

The Location and Nature of Heaven

As has been shown throughout the length of this paper certain characteristics of the New Jerusalem, the heavenly dwelling place of God, are revealed in Scripture. To be able to view this magnificent structure will enable the reader to appreciate its incredible architecture, no matter where it may be located. While there are too few details given to provide a thorough view of this City, some plausible visions of it will be given later. Be aware that this City of God does not represent all of the heavenly realm, but only the “Capitol City” of the earthly realm.

What do we know about the City of God?

1. Its light is like a precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal (Revelation 21:11).
2. It is living, comprised of the saints (the Lamb’s wife; Revelation 21:9) and likely as not countless angels of all types, plants, and all sorts of spirit beings.
 - a. The overcomers of Philadelphia will become pillars in the temple (Revelation 3:12).
 - b. The overcomers of Laodicea will sit with God on His throne (Revelation 3:21).
 - c. The overcomers of Ephesus will eat from the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God (Revelation 2:7).
3. It has a great, high wall with twelve gates, and an angel at each gate, with names written on these gates of the twelve tribes of Israel. Three gates are on each wall (Revelation 21:12-13), most likely in the same order and arrangement as the tribes were arranged in their camps during the wilderness wanderings: on the east, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; on the south, Reuben, Simeon, and Gad; on the west, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin; on the north, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali; Levi was in the center, near the Tabernacle (Numbers 2:1-31). The twelve gates are twelve huge pearls (Revelation 21:21). On the walls are towers and bulwarks (Psalm 48:12-13).
4. The wall has twelve foundations, each with a name of an apostle of the Lamb (Revelation 21:14). It is 144 cubits high, made of pure jasper. With one cubit equaling 25 inches, then the wall would be 300 feet high (the sacred cubit is 25 inches as built into the Great Pyramid; Rand, 1966). These foundations are adorned with all sorts of precious stones: the first with jasper, the second with sapphire, the third with chalcedony, the fourth with emerald, the fifth with sardonyx, the sixth with sardius, the seventh with chrysolite, the eighth with beryl, the ninth with topaz, the tenth with chrysoprase, the eleventh with jacinth, and the twelfth with amethyst (Revelation 21:19-21).
5. The length, width, and height of the city are equal, being 12,000 furlongs (Revelation 21:16). A furlong (stadia) is 2200 yards, or one-eighth mile (see Luke 24:13). Thus, 12,000 furlongs equal 1,500 miles. This makes for so huge a city that it appears as if its upper

portions, viewed from ground level, are descending from heaven (Revelation 21:2, 10; 3:12).

6. The City is pure gold, transparent like clear glass (Revelation 21:18).

7. The street of the city is pure gold, like transparent glass (Revelation 21:21).

8. It contains no temple, since the Father and the Lamb are its temple (Revelation 21:22).

9. Within the city are palaces (Psalm 48:13).

10. Light shines continuously in the city due to the energy of the Father and the Son within it (Revelation 21:23-26).

11. Nature of the throne of God:

a. A river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flows from the throne (Revelation 22:1).

b. In the middle of the throne's street, and on either side of the river, is the tree of life which bears twelve fruits, a different type each month. The leaves of the trees are for healing the nations (Revelation 22:2).

c. Cherubim, four in number, with four wings (John saw six wings: Revelation 4:8) and four faces (man, lion, ox, and eagle), "support" the throne. They appear like men, but also like burning coals of fire and torches, with bright fire and lightning going back and forth between them. This produces thunderings, and voices are heard (Revelation 4:5). The cherubim's legs are straight, their feet like calves' hoofs, and they sparkle like burnished bronze. Hands like a man are under the wings on their four sides. Each cherub has a wheel with various parts, which is the color of beryl, and another wheel within the main wheel. The wheel rims are very high, and full of eyes all around. John saw eyes "around and within" the creatures (Revelation 4:8). The wheels go wherever the Cherubim go, laterally or vertically (Ezekiel 1:5-21). The wheels are like burning fire (Daniel 7:9).

d. A firmament is above the heads of the living creatures, like an awesome crystal (Ezekiel 1:22). This is likely the "sea of glass mingled with fire", on which the saints stand (Revelation 15:2; 4:6). The appearance of fire on the sea of glass could be due to a reflection of God's brilliance from above and the cherubim's' fiery visage from below.

e. Above the firmament is a throne, like a sapphire stone (Ezekiel 1:26).

f. On the throne is one like a Man high above it; above His waist He is the color of amber with fire all around within Him, and below His waist He appears like bright fire. His overall visage is like a jasper and sardius stone (Revelation 4:3). He has a garment white as snow, and hair like pure wool (Daniel 7:9). All around Him is an appearance like a rainbow, like an emerald (Ezekiel 1:26-28; Revelation 4:3; Daniel 7:9). In Revelation 1:13-16, Jesus Christ is pictured as being clothed in a garment to His feet,

girded about His chest with a golden band, having hair white like wool or snow, eyes as a flame of fire, feet like fine brass, a voice like roaring water, seven stars in His right hand, a two-edged sword going out of His mouth, and a countenance radiating energy like the sun. Elsewhere, He is pictured as a slain Lamb, having seven horns and seven eyes, meaning the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth (Revelation 5:6).

g. The dwelling place (Holy of Holies) of God, however it is represented within the City of God, is cubic:

1) As represented in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, a cube of 10 cubits (Exodus 36:20-30; see Soltau, 1972).

2) As represented by the Temple of Solomon, a cube of 20 cubits (I Kings 6:20).

3) As represented by the millennial "sanctuary" of Ezekiel, a cube of 20 cubits (Ezekiel 41:4).

4) As represented within the Great Pyramid, the king's chamber is 206,066 pyramid inches (P.I.) wide x 230,389 P.I. long x 205.8 P.I. wide x 182.4 to 244.4 P.I. high.

5) Since there is no temple per se in the Holy City, but the Father and Son who comprise the temple (Revelation 21:22), then the Ark of the Covenant with its stone commandment tablets, the rod of Aaron that budded, and the gold pot with manna (Hebrews 9:4; Exodus 2) represents the very throne of God exemplified by the following items:

Commandments: the very nature of God, of love personified, doing to others as to oneself, the meaning of the law and the prophets (Matthew 7:12; 22:36-40; Romans 2:15; II Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 10:16).

Aaron's rod that budded: the symbol of the resurrected life of Jesus Christ (it budded and bore fruit overnight), and of the saints that would follow in His footsteps.

Manna: angel's food, designed for the saints, the very bread (food) of life in the Spirit. The manna never spoiled (unless gathered improperly), and its supply is inexhaustible.

The ark: Jesus Christ himself, with the covering cherubs, a picture of the very throne. The ark and its contents may be in heaven today if Revelation 11:19 is to be taken literally (DeHaan, 1955).

h. In the Holy Place outside the throne in the Holy City are three items (below). As with the items within the Holy of Holies, these items are actually fulfilled within the New Jerusalem temple of Jesus Christ, the Father, and the saints and probably don't exist as such.

1) **The candlestick:** this represents the saints of the seven Churches of Revelation 2 and 3 (see Exodus 25:31-40), and also the light for service within His dwelling

(Soltau, 1972).

2) **The golden altar:** incense was burned representing prayers offered up, to plead for God's intercession on behalf of the saints (Exodus 30:1-9).

3) **The table of showbread:** this table and its bread point to Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of His saints, the royal priesthood, who gather around it (Exodus 25:23-30; Soltau, 1972).

i. In the Outer Court two major items were present in the New Jerusalem, though in Revelation 11:1-2 the brazen altar and Outer Court are mentioned as being seen in vision.

1) **The brazen altar:** the sacrifices on this altar picture Jesus Christ's sacrifice, and the sacrifices of all the saints daily (Galatians 2:20); the fire was kindled by God, and it was never to go out, symbolizing Christ's sacrifice once for all, never to be repeated (Exodus 27:1-8; Leviticus 6:12-13; Hebrews 10:1-4, 11-14; DeHaan, 1955).

2) **The laver:** a wash basin of brass was in the Outer Court which was used to wash the hands and feet of the priests. This pictures purifying oneself of sins and impediments to perfection ... and also, since water pictures the Word of God, the laver and water picture coming out of the world and its sins (Exodus 30:1-10; DeHaan, 1955; Matthew 5:48; Acts 2:38).

j. Around the throne are 24 thrones with 24 elders sitting, clothed in white robes, having gold crowns on their heads (Revelation 4:4).

k. Seven "lamps" of fire burn before the throne, being the seven Spirits of God (Revelation 4:5).

l. Myriads of angels are in the vicinity of the throne and the City of God (Revelation 5:11; Daniel 7:10).

m. A great multitude of saints, from all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, clothed with white robes and with palm branches in their hands, are before the throne and serve Him day and night in the temple; they purified themselves during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 7:14).

n. Those who overcame the Beast, his image, his works, and the number of his name stand on the sea of glass, having harps of God, singing (Revelation 15:2).

o. The saints sit on thrones and execute judgement (Revelation 20:4).

p. Much foliage, blossoms, fruit, and greenery, and many animals and other creatures appear in the area of the throne and perhaps throughout the entire City of God.

1) The golden lampstand has flowers on it (Exodus 25:31-34).

2) The Paradise of Eden is replete with every tree that is pleasant to see and is good for food (Genesis 2:9).

3) Animals and other creatures in abundance are in the Paradise of Eden (Genesis 2:19-20).

4) The tree of life and other vegetation are there (Revelation 22:2).

q. Many precious and beautiful stones are in the area of the throne, and throughout the Holy City, as well as on the individuals at the throne (Exodus 28:1-30; Ezekiel 28:13-14, 16).

What can we know about the nature of the entire heavenly realm? While the heavenly Zion is indeed a marvelous spectacle beyond words to describe, it by no means comprises the balance of the unseen realities of heaven. It rather is but a small part of the entire spirit realm on earth, that “mirror image”, as it were, of the physical realm. We know that...

“... for ever since the world was created, His invisible nature, His everlasting power and divine being, have been quite perceptible in what He has made” (Romans 1:20; Moffatt).

What God has made in the physical realm is a reflection of what He has made in the unseen spiritual realm: He has made them both (John 1:3; Colossians 1:3). Besides, those possessing His spirit are able to understand the unseen spiritual things:

“No, as it is written, ‘What no eye has ever seen, what no ear has ever heard, what never entered into the mind of man, God has prepared for those who love Him’. And God has revealed it to us by the Spirit, for the Spirit fathoms everything, even the depths of God” (I Corinthians 2:9-10; Moffatt).

We have already investigated the nature of the heavenly Zion, which is pictured by the Edenic paradise of God, the Tabernacle in the wilderness, the temple of Solomon, and the temple of Ezekiel. All of these are depictions or synonyms of the true spirit capital city of earth. What, however, of the rest of the massive territory of the “spirit earth” that covers the same time and space as the physical earth ... or as Christ described the earth’s surface, “... from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:31)? Others have claimed the same semblance of unity of time and space for the physical and spiritual worlds, such as David Jones (Jones, 1999), who advanced the theme that the spiritual world occupies the same space as the material world, the two “worlds” being only weakly coupled.

Knowing that God’s creation is similar for both the physical and spiritual realms, is it not the mind of God — which created both — to create a very similar array of things in each ... for His desire is that heaven and earth both seek a convergence.

“Your Reign begin, Your will be done on earth as in heaven” (Matthew 6:10; Moffatt; or as some have said, “As in the heavens, so be it on the earth”).

Thus, one may examine the created world around us and discover the delightful intricacies of God’s unseen spiritual creation. What template would Elohim have used when the trees,

grass, flowers, insects, birds, fish, mammals, amphibians, and man were created? His image of course ... the template of living beings already present in the heavenly realm (See Genesis 1:11-12, 20-27). As God made mankind "... in His [Elohim's] likeness ...", so He made the plants, animals, birds, fish, and other creatures on the earth in the likeness of things already present in the spirit world.

One can also examine Scripture and discover what the prophets have revealed about the heavenly realm as inspired by the very God who inhabits that realm. Note the following:

Trees, grass, and other vegetation. The tree of life is mentioned in Genesis 3:22, and also in Revelation 22:2 and Ezekiel 47:12. Pomegranates adorned the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the priest's clothing (Exodus 28:3, 39:24-25), and were carved or cast into parts of Solomon's temple (I Kings 7:18-20, 42; II Chronicles 3:16; 4:13). Palm trees likewise adorned the temple, as well as open flowers (I Kings 6:32-35; 7:36; II Chronicles 3:5). Eden itself was created in heaven's image, a mirror of the unseen, and was replete with fruit trees and other vegetation (Genesis 2:9)

Abundant water. Note the descriptions of water welling up under the throne, and rivers of living water, in Ezekiel 47:1-12, and Revelation 22:1-2, and also the description of four rivers originating in Eden where God dwelled at His throne (Genesis 2:10-14).

Animals, birds, fish, and other creatures in abundance. Genesis 2:19-20 speaks of all of the birds and creatures that God brought to Adam to name in the Garden of Eden ... and these beings were indicative of all that Eden represented: the beautiful heavenly realm. The temple of Solomon had lions, oxen (or bulls), and cherubs engraved in bronze (I Kings 7:29,36), Solomon's throne itself was flanked by lions, and the steps to the throne likewise (I Kings 10:19-20; II Chronicles 9:18-19). The cherubs and living creatures at God's throne had faces of a man — which we know is made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27) — and also of a lion, a bull, and an eagle ... all realities of the spirit realm which we see today in birds and animals (Ezekiel 1:5-10; 10:18-22). The lion, sheep, bear, ox, snake, and other species will carry over into the coming age — in a tame and peaceful character, of course — which Kingdom is typical of the heavenly realm (Isaiah 11:6-8). The wings of the cherubim are typical of birds everywhere.

If we were somehow thrust into the spirit dimension at this moment, in the same time and space, we would very likely feel very much at home and awestruck by the beauty and productivity of this place that is inaccessible to us at this time. The lush trees, grass, and flowers, the crystal clear and bubbling streams, the tame and curious array of animals. birds, fish, insects, and other creatures, the gorgeous sky with its water canopy and non-glaring sun, the moderate temperature and invigorating, fragrant air, the absence of mosquitoes, ticks, thorns, and dead branches on trees, and friendly, vigorous, ageless men and women ... and to think that this reality is right here ... though it may as well be a million miles away since one cannot enter into that realm unless placed there by God Himself. To enter into that place requires walking through the door to the next age, which door is Jesus Christ (John 10:1-9).

Would not God have placed Adam, His son, into an environment with which he was familiar, having lived before amongst such bucolic bliss in the heavenly dimension? Any father concerned for his son would give him the very best place possible, and our heavenly Father is the

epitome of love and concern for His progeny.

This is not to say that everything is perfect as yet in the heavenly realm. Recall that Satan the devil also lives within that dimension, and we do not understand the extent to which he has besmirched that environment. Knowing his character, and that of his demonic cohorts, it is likely there is some imperfection in the spirit dimension; we just do not know how much. However, we do know that the Father reigns supreme in the heavens, and only what He would allow to be besmirched would be affected from its heavenly Edenic perfection.

The nature of the heavenly realm is indeed a spectacle to ponder with great anticipation, since the saints will have access to that realm at the resurrection. At that time the final “cleanup” of heaven will begin, just as the long-awaited “cleanup” of the physical earth will commence as the Kingdom begins, Satan having been put away for good (Revelation 20:1-3) so the character of the Father, Jesus Christ, the perfected saints, and all of the righteous heavenly hosts will finally be impressed upon all of the creation ... both material and spiritual.