

Ascension Day 2022
Mini Series



“Longing for Heaven...!”

“What Heaven will be like...!”

“What WE will be like in Heaven...!”

PETORIA NORTH BAPTIST CHURCH

“Longing for Heaven!”

2 Cor 5:1-9; Phil 1:20-23

Introductory Thoughts:

- **Q: How many conversations did you have this past week about HEAVEN...? This past month...?**
- **Q: How many people asked you a question this week about HEAVEN...? This past month...?**
- **Q: How many times this week did you think about HEAVEN...? This past month...?**
- Although we are now **NEARER** to the **RETURN** of **JESUS** as we have ever been in the **HISTORY** of the world, there seems to be a **LACK** in people **LONGING** for **HEAVEN... ESPECIALLY** in the **WEST**.
- Many people **BELIEVE** that there is a **HEAVEN**, and yet how many people would want to go there **RIGHT NOW...?**
- Why are there a **LACK** in people **LONGING** for **HEAVEN...?**
 - People aren't saved...
 - People are **MISINFORMED** about heaven... think it is going to be **BORING...**
 - Many people, even Christians have to great an **ATTACHMENT** to this material world that results in them not thinking **RIGHTLY** about **HEAVEN** and not **LONGING** for heaven...!
- John MacArthur: *“Most Christians in wealthy Western cultures have things too good right here in this world. Most don't really know what it is to long for heaven. We are in danger of becoming so comfortable in this life that we forget we are but strangers and pilgrims in this world... I often meet Christians who live as if heaven would be an unwelcome intrusion into their busy schedule – an interruption of their career goals or holiday plans... It is all too easy to become absorbed in temporal matters and neglect what is eternally important.”*
- In **CONTRAST** to this, Jesus teaches us in **Matt 6:19-21...**
- Paul **COMMANDS** us in **Col 3:1-2...** We should have **HEAVEN CONSTANTLY** on our **MIND...**
- One writer: *“Because the church doesn't really have heaven on its mind, Christians tend to be self-indulgent, self-centred, weak, and materialistic.”*
- We should have a **GREATER LONGING** for heaven up until the point where we are **CONSUMED** with our **LONGING** for heaven...!
- Paul is a great example of this – **Phil 1:20-23; 2 Cor 5:1-9...**

Teaching Points:

- We want to look at **FIVE MEDITATIONS** on Heaven to **INCREASE** our **LONGING** for Heaven:

1. The PRECIOUSNESS of Heaven...

- In reality, **EVERYTHING** that is **TRULY PRECIOUS** to us as Christians, is in **HEAVEN...!**
 - The **FATHER** is there – **Matt 6:9**
 - **JESUS** is there – **Heb 9:24**
 - Many **BROTHERS** and **SISTERS** in Christ are there – **Heb 12:22-24**
 - Our **NAMES** are recorded there – **Luk 10:20**
 - Our **INHERITANCE** is there – **1 Pet 1:3-4**
 - Our **CITIZENSHIP** is in heaven – **Phil 3:20**
- In other words, everything we **SHOULD** love everlastingly, everything that we **RIGHTLY VALUE**, everything of any **ETERNAL WORTH** is in **HEAVEN...!**
- **WORLDLINESS** stands as the **SIN** and **HINDRANCE** that is causing us to become **BLINDED** and **DISTRACTED** from these **PRECIOUS THINGS** that is waiting for us in **HEAVEN...!**
- Worldliness is a **LOVE** for **EARTHLY THINGS**, an **ESTEEM** for **EARTHLY VALUES**, and a **PREOCCUPATION** with **EARTHLY CARES**. (cf. **Jam 4:4; 1 Joh 2:15-17**)
- John MacArthur: *“The hope and preciousness of heaven should fill us with a joy of anticipation that loosens any grip this transitory world might have on our hearts.”*

2. A WORLDVIEW that Looks toward Heaven...

- It may sound like a paradox to say this, but **HEAVEN** should be at the **CENTRE** of our **WORLDVIEW...!**
- A proper Christian worldview is uniquely focused **HEAVENWARD**.
- Many people would maybe label this as having an “**escapist**” mentality where we use **HEAVEN** to **ESCAPE** the **REALITY** that we are in.
- But we are **NOT** using it to **ESCAPE...** we are simply **OBEYING SCRIPTURE...** (**Col 3:1-2**)
- Looking towards **HEAVEN**, helps us to have a **PROPER PERSPECTIVE** on this life...!

• **2 Cor 4:16-18; Rom 8:18; 1 Pet 1:3-7**

- All these passages has the **SAME TEACHING** namely that we endure the sufferings of this world for the sake of heaven's glory... **WHATEVER WE SUFFER IN THIS LIFE CANNOT BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY OF THE LIFE TO COME...!**
- In other words, we do not set our minds on heaven to **ESCAPE** this world and reality, but rather to **ENDURE** whatever we may go through in this **TEMPORAL** world, **KNOWING** that heaven is **REAL** and that it is **ETERNAL...!**
- This then also results in us **NOT** looking to make this world our **PARADISE**, knowing that this life **IS NOT IT...!**
- We are **NOT** looking at **THIS LIFE** here on earth to bring about our **JOY, PEACE** or **SATISFACTION...!**
- We hope in Jesus for **MUCH, MUCH MORE...!** (cf. **1 Cor 15:19**)

3. A NEW BUILDING from God...

- **2 Cor 5:1-4** – when this **EARTHLY BODY** comes to an end, we will receive a **GLORIFIED** body...!
- **Phil 3:20-21**
- When we have our **NEW BODIES**, the **PRESENCE** of **SIN** will be **REMOVED...!** (cf. **Rom 7:24**)
- We will also be **HEALED** from every and all **AILMENTS** that we may **EXPERIENCE** in this life...
- A glorified body alone is a **GREAT REASON** to fix all our **HOPES** and **AFFECTIONS** on heaven...!
- John MacArthur testifies about a lady he knows who where **PARALYZED** as a youth... making **APPOINTMENTS** with her Christian friends to do all sort of **FUN THINGS** once they get their new bodies...!
- She writes: *“My assurance of heaven is so alive that I’ve been making dates with friends to do all sorts of fun tings once we get our new bodies... I don’t take these appointments lightly. I’m convinced these things will really happen.”*
- In heaven we **WILL** receive a **NEW BODY** that is more **SOLID** and **STABLE** than this body here can **EVER BE...!**

4. No place like HOME...

- **2 Cor 5:5-8**
- We have received the **HOLY SPIRIT** as a **GUARANTEE** of what it to come, and what is to come is that we will be **GOING HOME...!**
- This world is **NOT** our home... we are **ALIENS** and **STRANGERS** in this world... we are **PILGRIMS...**
- We do not feel **COMFORTABLE** in this world... **MORE** and **MORE** so...!
- Home is where the **HEART** is... God has our hearts and **HOME** is to be with **HIM...!**
- The **GREAT ASSURANCE** is that we who are in Christ can be **CERTAIN** that we will come to our **ETERNAL HOME**, for God Himself is our **SHEPHERD** who is **LEADING** us there...! (cf. **Ps 23:5-6**)
- The story is told of a missionary couple who returned from the missions field at the same time that the president of the United States came to visit their home town... *“We are not home yet...!”*
- May we **LONG** for **HEAVEN** because that is our **HOME...** and we are **ALMOST HOME...!**

5. The DWELLING PLACE of God...

- *Q: Where is heaven...?*
- The Bible speaks of **THREE HEAVENS**.
- **FIRST** heaven is our **ATMOSPHERE...** **Gen 1:6-8**
- **SECOND** heaven is the **PLANETARY** heavens... **Gen 1:14-17; Ps 19:1**
- **THIRD** heaven is where God dwells... **2 Cor 12:2**
- The other two heavens will pass away, but the third heaven is **ETERNAL** and it exists **OUTSIDE** of our universe...! **THIS** is where God **DWELLS**, where His throne **RESIDES**, from where He **RULES ALL THINGS...!**
- **Isa 57:15; Ps 33:13-14; Matt 5:16; 16:17**
- God has a **REAL DWELLING PLACE...** that does **NOT** mean that God is **CONFINED** to heaven or is even **CONTAINED** to heaven, **BUT** that there is a **PLACE** which God calls His **HOME** and in due time, it will be **OUR HOME** as well...!
- Heaven, in the end, is a **PLACE**. It is a **PLACE** where **GOD DWELLS**, the place where the elect will dwell with Him for all eternity, the heaven of heavens – the **THIRD** heaven...!

Closing Thoughts:

- In closing, how can we then **GROW** in our **LONGING** for **HEAVEN**?
- We need to **PURGE** our hearts from **WORLDLINESS**.
- We need to **WEAN** ourselves from the **PREOCCUPATIONS** of this life... what will matter for **ETERNITY**, is what should matter to us **NOW**...!
- We need to **LOOK AHEAD** to **ETERNITY** and live in the **EXPECTANTION** of a **SURE** and **CERTAIN HOPE**.
- We need to **LOOK AWAY** from the **MUNDANE** and **TEMPORAL**, fixing our eyes steadfastly on **HIM** who **IS** the glory and the centrepiece of **HEAVEN**...!
- Ultimately, to have a **GREATER LONGING** for **HEAVEN**, is to have a **GREATER LONGING** to be with **JESUS**...!
- It is to **KEEP OUR EYES** on Him...! (**Heb 12:1-2**)
- It is to **LOOK BACK** at the **CROSS** and **REMEMBER** what he has done for us...!
- It is to **LOOK UP** and to know that He is in **CONTROL**...!
- It is to **LOOK FORWARD** and to know that He is **COMING**...!
- May we **LONG MORE** for **HEAVEN**...!

“What Heaven will be like...!”

Joh 14:1-3; Rev 4; 21; 22

Introductory Thoughts:

- What a **GREAT JOY** to remember and celebrate the ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...!
- We read in **Acts 1:6-11**...
- Jesus ascended into heaven and He is now seated at the **RIGHT HAND** of the Father where He is **REIGNING** over **EVERYTHING**, for **ALL AUTHORITY** has been given to Him, and where He is **INTERCEDING** for us...!
- These alone are **GREAT TRUTHS** that should cause us to be greatly **ENCOURAGED** and have great **HOPE** and **JOY** and it should cause us to **WORSHIP** our **LORD** and **SAVIOUR**...!
- Jesus is in **CONTROL** of everything that happens in our lives **AND** He is interceding for us **CONSTANTLY** with the Father so that we can have **ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE** of our **FULL** and **FINAL SALVATION**...!
- But that is not **ALL** that Jesus is doing... there is something else that He is **ALSO DOING** as we are **WAITING** for His return...
- We read about this is **Joh 14:1-3**...
- The context is that Jesus has just revealed in **Joh 13** that one of the twelve is going to **BETRAY** Him... that Peter, their **LEADER**, is going to **DENY** Him... and that Jesus Himself will be **GOING AWAY**...
- And then He says this to them... **Joh 14:1-3**...
- Jesus has **ASCENDED** to go and **PREPARE A PLACE** for His **DISCIPLES**... for His **FOLLOWERS**...!
- And tonight we want to **LOOK** and **THINK BIBLICALLY** about this **PLACE** that Jesus has gone to **PREPARE** for us... we want to look at the theme: *What Heaven will be like...!*
- From these verse we can already make **THREE QUICK OBSERVATIONS** about **HEAVEN** namely:
 1. *Heaven is BIG ENOUGH for ALL of God’s children...!*
 2. *Heaven is a PREPARED place...!* Jesus **HIMSELF** is preparing it... Can you **IMAGINE** what it will look like if in **SIX DAYS** He **CREATED** all of creation and for almost **TWO THOUSAND YEARS** He is now preparing **HEAVEN**...! What a **GLORIOUS WONDER** it must be...!
 3. *Heaven is to be WITH JESUS...!* Ray Pritchard: *“The glory of heaven is not the streets of gold or the gates of pearl or the river of living water. The glory of heaven is JESUS. Wherever He is, that’s where heaven is.”*
- Along with this, we also need to understand that heaven will be a place of **UNSPEAKABLE** and **UNMEASURABLE JOY** and **PLEASURE**...!
- Many people, as well as some uniformed Christians, have this **IDEA** and **PERSPECTIVE** that **HEAVEN** is going to be **BORING**...! They **THINK** that life here on earth is much more **EXCITING** and **PLEASURABLE** than heaven...!
- One writer comments on this wrong idea and says: *“Our belief that Heaven will be boring betrays a heresy namely that God himself is boring. There’s no greater nonsense. Our desire for pleasure and the experience of joy come directly from God’s hand. He made our taste buds, adrenaline, and the nerve endings that convey pleasure to our brains. Likewise, our imaginations and capacity for joy were made by the God whom some then imagine is boring. Are we so arrogant as to imagine that human beings came up with the idea of having fun?”*
- David had the right perspective about heaven when he wrote in **Ps 16:2, 5-6, 11**...
- The highest and chief end of man is to **GLORIFY GOD** and to **ENJOY HIM** forever...! This end will be **FULFILLED** in **HEAVEN**...!

Teaching Points:

- Building on these brief observations we will then look at **THREE COMPONENTS** of **HEAVEN** to help us think more Biblically about *What Heaven will be like...!*
- In order to do this, we will turn to the book of Revelation namely **Rev 4, 21 and 22**...

1. The BREATHTAKING THRONE of GOD...! (Rev 4; 22:3)

- At the **CENTRE** of **HEAVEN RIGHT NOW** and then also for **ALL ETERNITY** in the **FINAL HEAVEN** that is to come, the **THRONE OF GOD** is the focal point of it all...!
- There is **A THRONE** in **HEAVEN** and there is **ONE SITTING ON THE THRONE**...!
- John MacArthur: *“The throne... is the hub of all heaven and the focal point of God’s presence. From the throne of God emanates all the glory of heaven.”*

- The **DESCRIPTION** that John gives us here is to implant in our minds the understanding that it is a **BREATH TAKING** and **AWESOME SIGHT**...! That it is **BEAUTIFUL** and **MAJESTIC** and **ONVERWHELMINGLY AWESOME**...!
- John uses things that he has seen, namely precious jewels, to try and describe what He is seeing as he behold the **THRONE** of **GOD**... the throne of the **ALMIGHTY, SOVEREIGN, HOLY** and **GLORIOUS GOD**...! (cf. **v3**)
- He also describes what He **EXPERIENCES** concerning the **MAJESTY** and **GLORY** that is coming from the throne in **verse 5**...
- This **LANGUAGE** and **DESCRIPTION** is designed to inspire **AWE** and **FEAR**... it speaks of an **IMMEASURABLE GLORY, POWER** and **MAJESTY**...!
- We find the **REACTION** of the **MARVELOUS ANGELIC BEINGS** and of the **COMBINED** and **COMPLETED CHURCH** is to **WORSHIP** the **ONE** who is on the **THRONE**...!
- Being in the **GLORIOUS PRESENCE** of the **ALMIGHTY GOD** will bring about that **ALL** of our **BEING** and **EXISTENCE** in heaven, namely all of our **THOUGHTS, WORDS** and **ACTIONS** will be done as **ACTS** of **WORSHIP** to God...!
- We will experience the **PERFECT REALITY** of **Rom 12:1** in heaven...!
- **Rev 22:3** – We will be **PERFECT SERVANTS** of God and we will **WORSHIP** Him...!
- *Q: What will heaven be like...?*
- It will be **AWESOME** and **BEAUTIFUL** and **GLORIOUS**, beyond any **PHYSICAL SIGHT** we can even **IMAGINE NOW**, and it will **CHARACTERISED** by **UNBROKEN** and **CONSTANT WORSHIP**...!
- *Q: Are you living in AWE of God NOW and are you DESIRING and STRIVING to WORSHIP HIM...?*

2. The **NEW HEAVEN** and the **NEW EARTH**...! (**Rev 21:1, 4-5**)

- These verses makes it **CLEAR** that God will establish a **NEW HEAVEN** and a **NEW EARTH** as He **REPLACES** the existing heaven and earth – referring to the **CREATION** of God that was marred by **SIN**.
- This is something that the **OLD TESTAMENT** prophecy about – **Ps 102:25-26; Isa 65:17; 66:22**
- The apostle Peter also wrote about this – **2 Pet 3:10, 13**
- After the **FINAL JUDGEMENT**, God will **REMAKE, RECREATE, RESTORE, RENEW, REGENERATE** the **OLD CREATION** so that it will be made **NEW**...!
- But please note that it will be a new **HEAVEN** and a new **EARTH**...!
- This is referring to **PHYSICAL REALITIES** where it contains something **FAMILIAR** to us...!
- It will be **LIKE** the old heaven and earth concerning its **REALITY** and even **DESIGN, BUT** it will be of a **DIFFERENT QUALITY**...! It will be **NEW**...!
- John MacArthur: *“The new heaven and earth, like our newness in Christ, will be glorified, free from sin’s curse, and eternal.”*
- That is why **Rev 21:4** mention the things that will be **ABSENT** in the new heaven and earth – they are **ALL** because of the consequences of **SIN**...!
- The **NEW** heaven and earth, **CREATION** being **RESTORED** and **RENEWED**, makes us think of **Rom 8:20-22**...
- Wayne Grudem: *“Though [this creation] have been marred and distorted with sin, God will not completely destroy the physical world (which would be an acknowledgement that sin had frustrated and defeated God’s purposes, but rather He will perfect the entire creation and bring it into harmony with the purposes for which He originally created it. Therefore we can expect that in the new heaven and new earth there will be a fully perfect earth that will once again be “very good”. And we can expect that we will have physical bodies that will once again be “very good” in God’s sight, and that we will function to fulfil the purposes for which he originally placed man on the earth.”*
- *The point is this:* The new heaven and earth that God will **REMAKE, RECREATE, RESTORE, RENEW, or REGENERATE**, will be a **PHYSICAL HEAVEN** and **EARTH**...! For **ALL ETERNITY** we will dwell on a **PHYSICAL EARTH** with **PHYSICAL BODIES** in which we then will be able to **ENJOY GOD** and His **CREATION**...!
- Randy Alcorn: *“God’s future plan of a renewed physical universe means we will live, eat and drink, laugh and play, rest and work, exercise our gifts as God’s image-bearers, and most importantly, be with, worship, and serve King Jesus... God plans to physically restore his entire creation, including us, the earth, and the animals.”*
- That brings me to same **FACTS** about heaven that Randy Alcorn mentions, based on his in-depth study of the Scriptures concerning heaven, facts that might **SURPRISE** you, as some of them surprised me...

1. We won't miss our old lives... – Have you ever bought an economy ticket for a flight, but because of overbooking, been upgraded to first class? Did you regret the upgrade? Did you spend your time wondering, What am I missing by not being in the back of the plane? The upgrade from Earth to heaven will be vastly superior to that from economy to first class. If we would miss something from our old lives, it would be available to us in heaven. Why? Because we will experience all God intends for us. He fashions us to want precisely what He will give us so what He gives us will be exactly what we want.

2. We won't become angels... – I'm often asked if people, particularly children, become angels when they die. The answer is no. Death is a relocation of the same person from one place to another. The place changes, but the person remains the same. The same person who becomes absent from his or her body becomes present with the Lord (**2 Cor 5:8**). We won't be angels but we'll be with them.

3. We won't be tempted.. – Once I was asked if we will ever be tempted to turn our backs on Christ. The answer is no. What would tempt us? Innocence is the absence of something (sin), while righteousness is the presence of something (God's holiness). God will never withdraw His holiness from us; therefore, in heaven we cannot sin. We'll never forget the ugliness of sin, however. Having known death and life, we who experience life will never want to go back to death. We'll never be deceived into thinking God is withholding something good from us or that sin is in our best interests. We'll always know sin's costs. Every time we see the scarred hands of Jesus, we'll remember. We'll see sin as God does. It will be stripped of its illusions and will be utterly unappealing.

4. We will have work to do... – The idea of working in heaven is foreign to many people. Yet Scripture clearly teaches it. When God created Adam, he "took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (**Gen 2:15**). Work was part of the original Eden. It was part of a perfect human life. God Himself is a worker. He didn't create the world and then retire. Jesus said, "My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I, too, am working" (**John 5:17**). Jesus found great satisfaction in His work. "'My food,' Jesus said, 'is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work'" (**John 4:34**). We'll also have work to do, satisfying and enriching work that we can't wait to get back to, work that'll never be drudgery. God is the primary worker, and as His image-bearers, we're made to work. We create, accomplish, set goals and fulfil them—to God's glory.

5. We will still experience emotions... – In Scripture, God is said to enjoy, love, laugh, take delight and rejoice, as well as be angry, happy, jealous and glad. To be like God means to have and express emotions. Hence, we should expect that in heaven emotions will exist for God's glory and our good. We know that people in heaven have lots of feelings – all good ones. We're told of banquets, feasts and singing. People will laugh there (**Luke 6:21**). Will we cry in heaven? The Bible says, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning or crying or pain" (**Rev 21:4**). These are the tears of suffering over sin and death, the tears of oppressed people, the cries of the poor, the widow, the orphaned, the unborn and the persecuted. Such crying will be no more. We might, though, shed tears of joy. Can you imagine joy flooding your eyes as you meet Christ, for example, and as you're reunited with loved ones? I can.

6. We still won't know everything... – God alone is omniscient. When we die, we'll see things far more clearly, and we'll know much more than we know now. But we'll never know everything. In heaven we'll be flawless, but not knowing everything isn't a flaw. It's part of being finite. Righteous angels don't know everything, and they long to know more (**1 Pet 1:12**). They're flawless but finite. We should expect to long for greater knowledge, as angels do. And we'll spend eternity gaining the greater knowledge we'll seek.

7. We will recognize one another... – Scripture gives no indication of a memory wipe causing us not to recognize family and friends. Paul anticipated being with the Thessalonians in heaven, and it never occurred to him he wouldn't know them. In fact, if we wouldn't know our loved ones, the comfort of an afterlife reunion, taught in **1 Thess 4:14-18**, would be no comfort at all. In heaven we probably won't fail to recognize an acquaintance in a crowd or forget people's names.

• What a **GLORIOUS HOPE** we have, anticipating and waiting for the **NEW HEAVEN and EARTH...!**

3. The HOLY CITY – the NEW JERUSALEM...! (Rev 21:2-3; 21:9-22:5)

• **Rev 21:2-3...**

• This has been maybe the most **WONDERFUL COMPONENT** of heaven to **LEARN** and **THINK** about...!

- I understand and believe this to refer to a **PHYSICAL CITY** that **JESUS** is preparing and that will one day be the **DWELLING PLACE**, the **HOME** of the **INHABITANTS** of **HEAVEN**, of **ALL** the saints where we will **DWELL WITH GOD...!**
- This is the “**place**” that Jesus is preparing for us and that will one day **COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN** to be on the **NEW EARTH...!**
- Randy Alcorn: *“After the final judgment, God will remake the universe itself and then relocate the present heaven to the new earth, where he will live with his people.”*
- **HEAVEN** will come to **EARTH...!** The **THIRD HEAVEN** will enter into the **NEW CREATION**.
- John MacArthur: *“As John watches an entire city, magnificent in its glory, descends whole from heaven and becomes a part of the new earth. Heaven and earth are now one. The heavenly realm has moved its capital city intact to the new earth.”*
- In **Rev 22:9-21** we are then given a **VERY SPECIFIC DESCRIPTION** of this city, which convinces me it is a **PHYSICAL** and **LITERAL CITY** in which we will **DWELL...!** This is going to be our **ETERNAL HOME...!**
- It is described as having **TWELVE GATES** and the names of the **TWELVE TRIBES** of **ISRAEL** are on them... the gates themselves are made of **ONE SINGLE PEARL** each, which means that these are **HUGE PEARLS...**
- The wall of this city has **TWELVE FOUNDATIONS** on which is written the name of the **TWELVE APOSTLES...**
- But it is the **DIMENSIONS** of this city that is simply **STAGGERING...!**
- This city is said to be a **CUBE** with its **LENGTH** and **WIDTH** and **HEIGHT** measuring the same namely 12,000 stadia which translates to 2,250 km...
- That give a surface area of around 5 million square kilometres...! RSA is about 1,2 million square kilometres...! This means that this **CITY** will be more than **FOUR TIMES** the size of **SOUTH AFRICA...**
- That is not to **MENTION** that it is 2,250 km in **HEIGHT** as well, meaning that it comes to having a **VOLUME** of 11,2 billion cubic kilometres...!
- **Q: Why is it a CUBE...?**
- **BECAUSE** the most **HOLY** of **HOLIES** was a **CUBE** and that is where the **PRESENCE** of God was **CONCENTRATED** in the **TEMPLE...!**
- John MacArthur: *“The New Jerusalem is the Most Holy place for eternity..!”*
- That is why we then read in **Rev 21:22-27**... only **GOD** and the **SAINTS** will **DWELL THERE...!**
- **Please note:** The gates will be **OPEN**... there will be **NO SECURITY ISSUES** and we will not be **CONFINED** to the city... It will be our **HOME** but we will be able to **ENTER** and **LEAVE** the city, for we will have the **ENTIRE UNIVERSE** to travel...!
- And then in **Rev 22:1-3** we read of the **PROVISION** for **FOOD** and **DRINK** that will be there... we will not **NEED** it, but God will give it for our **ENJOYMENT** and **FELLOWSHIP...!**
- And then we read in **Rev 22:3-5** the closing verses for this section about the Holy City...
- **THIS** is the **HEAVEN** of **HEAVEN**, namely that we will see His **FACE** and that we will **BELONG** to Him and be able to have **INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP** with Him...!
- Wayne Grudem: *“More important than all the physical beauty of the heavenly city, more important than the fellowship we will enjoy eternally with all God’s people from all nations and all periods of history, more important than our freedom from pain and sorrow and physical suffering, and more important than reigning over God’s kingdom, more important by far than any of these will be the fact that we will be in the presence of God and enjoying unhindered fellowship with Him.”*
- This is what **DAVID** longed for as he declared in **Ps 27:4**...
- This is what **ASAPH** was referring to in **Ps 73:25-26**...
- **GOD** will **DWELL** with us in the **NEW JERUSALEM...!**
- This is the **FATHER’S HOUSE** in which there are **MANY ROOMS...!**

Closing Thoughts:

- **Q: When Jesus comes, will you go with Him...?**
- Heaven is a **PREPARED PLACE** for a **PREPARED PEOPLE...!**
- It is **FAITH** in the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** that **PREPARES** us for **HEAVEN...!**
- In **Joh 14:4-6** we read..
- **Q: Have you placed your FAITH in Jesus Christ as YOUR Lord and Saviour...? Have your REPENTED of your SINS...? Do you LOVE JESUS and LONG to be with Him...?**

Introductory Thoughts:

- As we close our Ascension Day Mini Series on **HEAVEN** tonight, we want to spend our time in thinking Biblically about this theme: *What WE will be like in Heaven...!*
- The short answer to this implied question can be summarized in **TWO WORDS: PERFECT & HAPPY...!**
- In **HEAVEN** we will experience the **FULFILMENT** of our **HIGHEST** and **CHIEF** end as creatures made in the image of God namely: *To GLORIFY God and to ENJOY Him forever...!*
- We will **GLORIFY** God **COMPLETELY** and **CONTINUALLY** when we are **PERFECTED...!**
- We will **ENJOY** God **COMPLETELY** and **CONTINUALLY** and that will make us **HAPPY...!**
- Those are **TWO THINGS** that we haven't **EXPERIENCED** yet and even struggle to **IMAGINE** namely being **COMPLETELY PERFECT** and the experience of **CONTINUAL** and **CONSISTENT HAPPINESS...!**
- Yet, I believe that is what is waiting for us in **HEAVEN** one day, when we will live in the **HOLY CITY**, being heirs of the **NEW HEAVEN** and **EARTH** as we **DWELL** with God, living in His **PRESENCE** and **WORSHIPPING** at His **THRONE...!**

Teaching Points:

- Tonight we want to look at **FIVE GLORIOUS REALITIES** that will be **TRUE** of us in **HEAVEN**:

1. Perfectly Changed from the Inside Out...! (Rom 8:28-29; 2 Cor 3:18; 1 Joh 3:2)

- One day in heaven, our **SALVATION** will be **COMPLETED...! (1 Pet 1:3-5, 8-9)**
- Salvation is very often divided into these **THREE COMPONENTS** namely **JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION** and **GLORIFICATION**.
- Our salvation **STARTS** with being **JUSTIFIED... as we place of FAITH in JESUS**, we are declared **NOT GUILTY** and **PERFECT** in God's sight based on the **LIFE** and **DEATH** of Jesus in our place. (cf. **Rom 3:21-24**) The **RESULT** of our justification is that we are now **FREE** from the **PENALTY** of **SIN...!** (cf. **Joh 3:18; Rom 5:1; 8:1**)
- Our **SALVATION** is the further “worked out” as we are being **SANCTIFIED... we are then made to BECOME** what we **ARE** in Jesus Christ. God in His grace will **SANCTIFY** those whom he had **JUSTIFIED**. He will **CHANGE** them to become more like **JESUS...!** This is the **GREAT PROCESS** that everyone of us who are **IN CHRIST** are in **RIGHT NOW...!** (cf. **2 Cor 3:18**) God is busy **CONFORMING** us to the image of **JESUS...!** He is working **IN US** to bring about this change and we must live lives of **OBEDIENCE** with this **AIM** of becoming more like Jesus...! (cf. **Phil 2:12-13**) Through our **SANCTIFICATION** we are **FREE** from the **POWER** and **PLEASURE** of sin...! (cf. **Rom 6:11-14**)
- The last component of our **SALVATION** is then that of **GLORIFICATION... when we are FULLY and FINALLY CHANGED** to be **LIKE JESUS...!** This will happen in an **INSTANT...!** In the **TWINKLING** of an **EYE** when Jesus **RETURNS** and we **SEE** Him, face to face...! (cf. **1 Joh 3:2**)
- In that **MOMENT**, our **SALVATION** will be **PERFECTED** in that will be **LIKE JESUS...!** We will be **PERFECTLY CHANGED** from the **INSIDE OUT** to be like our **LORD** and **SAVIOUR...!**
- This is then what has been the **PLAN** of God from even **BEFORE** the beginning of our time, namely our **PERFECT SALVATION...!** (cf. **Rom 8:28-30**)
- It is then at our **GLORIFICATION** that we will be **FREE** from the **PRESENCE** of **SIN** for **ALL ETERNITY...!**
- And that brings us to our **SECOND** glorious reality namely...

2. A Perfectly Redeemed Soul...! (Rom 7:18-24; Ps 16:1; 1 Cor 13:12-13; Luk 16:25; Matt 25:23)

- The greatest **STRUGGLE** and **FRUSTRATION** here on earth as we are **AWAITING** our **GLORIFICATION** is the struggle against our own **FLESH...namely the PRESENCE** of **SIN** that is still **RESIDING** in our **UNREDEEMED HUMAN NATURE** that we have because of the **FALL** of man into sin...
- Paul writes about this **REALITY** and the **STRUGGLE** that we have against our **FLESH** in **Rom 7:18-24**.
- This is one of the **GREATEST GLORIES** that awaits us in **HEAVEN** namely that **COMPLETE ABSENCE** of **SIN – IN** us and therefore **IN HEAVEN...!**
- John MacArthur: *“When people ask me what appeals to me about heaven, it isn't the streets of transparent gold or gates of pearls; its the absence of sin. I'm tired of sin...!”*

- I can only but say **AMEN** to that...! I am so tired om **MYSELF**... of **MY FLESH** and all the **SIN** that I do in my thoughts, words and deeds... I am **TIRED** of **MYSELF**...!
- What a **JOY** it is going to be to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and to be able to know Him and love Him and worship him with an **UNSINNING HEART**, for we will have a **PERFECTLY REDEEMED SOUL**...! Sin will for **ALL ETERNITY** be **GLORIOUSLY ABSENT** from us...!
- *The **RESULT** of this...?*
- John MacArthur: *“There will be no temptation because the world, the flesh, and the devil will al be conspicuously absent. There will be no persecution, division, disunity, or hate. In heaven there will be no quarrels or disagreements. There will be no disappointments. Prayer, fasting, repentance, and confession of sin will cease because the need for them will cease. There will be no weeping because there will be nothing to make us sad. With sin and its effects erased forever, it will be a life of unimaginable blessing!”*
- In heaven our **SOULS** will know:
 - *Perfect Pleasure – **Ps 16:11***
 - *Perfect Knowledge – **1 Cor 13:12***
 - *Perfect Comfort – **Luk 16:25***
 - *Perfect Love – **1 Cor 13:13***
 - *Perfect Joy – **Matt 25:23***
- But it is not just our **SOULS** that will be perfected....

3. A Perfectly Glorified Body...! (Phil 3:20-21; 1 Cor 15:35-49)

- God has made humans **BODY** and **SOUL** together... at **DEATH** they are **SEPARATED** for a **TIME**, but God **WILL** one day **REUNITE** every **PERFECT REDEEMED SOUL** with a **PERFECTLY GLORIFIED BODY**...!
- We read in **Phil 3:20-21** this glorious truth...
- We must firstly understand that our resurrection bodies **WILL BE** our earthly bodies that has been **RESURRECTED** and **GLORIFIED**...!
- The bodies we receive in the resurrection will have the **SAME QUALITIES** as the glorified resurrection body of Jesus. (cf. **1 Joh 3:2**)
- Christ’s resurrection body was the **SAME** body as **BEFORE**, not a **WHOLE NEW ONE** – the tomb was **EMPTY**...! The very same body that was **CRUCIFIED** was **RAISED** – the **WOUNDS** of the crucifixion was still visible...! Jesus could be **TOUCHED** and **HANDLED** and He wasn’t merely a **HOLOGRAM** or **PHANTOM** of sorts... he looked and was **HUMAN** in every regard... He **WALKED** with some of His disciples and they never **QUESTIONED** His **HUMANITY**... He ate real, earthly food with His disciples as well...!
- **YET**, His body had also had **OTHER WORDLY PROPERTIES**...! He could pass through **SOLID WALLS**...! He could appear in **DIFFERENT FORMS** so that His **IDENTITY** was not **IMMEDIATELY** revealed at times... He could **SUDDENLY** appear out of **NOWHERE**...! And He could ascend directly into **HEAVEN** in bodily form, with no adverse effect as he went through the **ATMOSPHERE**...!
- Our bodies will be **EXACTLY LIKE THAT**...!
- Paul deals with our **GLORIFIED BODIES** at **LENGTH** in **1 Cor 15:35-49**...
- Note just these *observations*:
 - Our bodies will be the **SAME BODY**, but of a **DIFFERENT QUALITY** – it will be **FAR MORE GLORIOUS**...! (God is **ABLE** to do this as He has **DESIGNED** all kinds of different “bodies” and “flesh” for all kinds of purposes...)
 - Our new bodies will be **IMPERISHABLE... GLORIOUS... POWERFULL... SPIRITUAL...**
 - No more sickness and death... no more shame because of sin... no more frailty in temptation... no more limits to the time and space sphere...
 - Again, Paul stresses that Jesus’ **RESURRECTION BODY** is the **PROTOTYPE** for our **RESURRECTION BODIES**... we will **BE LIKE HIM**...!
- John MacArthur: *“So the best picture of what we’ll be like in heaven is the resurrection body of Jesus Christ. We will have a body fit for the full life of God to indwell and express itself forever. We’ll be able to eat but won’t need to. We will have bodies that can move at will through space and matter. Our bodies will be ageless and incorruptible, we will know nothing of pain, tears, sorrow, sickness, or death.”*

4. Perfect Relationships...! (Matt 22:25-30; 1 Thess 4:16-18; Joh 17:20-22)

- Our **RELATIONSHIPS** that we had with one another here on earth will not **CEASE** in heaven, but they will be **PERFECTED**...! We will **LOVE** each other **PERFECTLY** as Christ loves us...!
- **Joh 13:34** will be **FULFILLED** in heaven...! I look **SO** forward to that, because we, I, can make **SUCH A MESS** of relationships here on earth...!
- One great question that lingers in our minds concerning our **RELATIONSHIPS** in heaven is, how will a **HUSBAND** and **WIFE** relate to one another in heaven...?
- We **KNOW** that they will not be **MARRIED** in heaven – **Matt 22:25-30**
- **WHY?** Because the **NEED** and **PURPOSE** for **MARRIAGE** will not exist anymore... all the **REASONS** for marriage will not **EXIST** anymore... namely Here on earth man needs a **HELPER**, woman needs a **PROTECTOR** and God has designed **BOTH** to produce **CHILDREN**. In heaven, glorified man will **NOT** need a helper... glorified woman will **NOT** need a protector... and the population heaven will be a **FIXED** number...
- **BUT** our **COMPANIONSHIP** will not come to an end...!
- John MacArthur: *“You will enjoy an eternal companionship in heaven that is more perfect than any earthly partnership. The difference is that you will have such perfect relationships with every other person in heaven as well! If having such a deep relationship with your spouse here is so wonderful, imagine how glorious it will be to enjoy a perfect relationship with every human in the whole expanse of heaven – forever!”*
- Like we have mentioned now a **FEW TIMES** in this series, we **WILL** be able to **RECOGNIZE** one another for all the **REDEEMED** will maintain their **IDENTITY FOREVER**...! (*Ex: Moses and Elijah on the mountain...*) We will be able to have **FELLOWSHIP** with one another and **ALL** the saints of **OLD** and those who are still to come...! (**1 Thess 4:16-18**)
- And **EVERY ONE** of these relationships will be **PERFECT**...! We will be **PERFECTLY ONE** with one another as the **FATHER** and **SON** are perfectly **ONE**...! Jesus’ prayer in **Joh 17:20-22** will be answered...!

5. Perfect Fellowship with God...! (1 Joh 1:3; 1 Cor 1:9; Joh 17:24; Rev 22:3-4)

- Our **SALVATION** here on earth brings about that we are in a **RELATIONSHIP** with God where we can have **FELLOWSHIP** with Him – **1 Joh 1:3**
- This is then also why God **SAVED** us namely to have **FELLOWSHIP** with His **SON** – **1 Cor 1:9**
- This is what it **IS** to have **ETERNAL LIFE** - to **KNOW** God; be in **FELLOWSHIP** with Him – **Joh 17:3**
- The **ISSUE** is that in **THIS LIFE**, **SIN** always comes and **HINDERS** our **INTIMACY** with God...!
- The **JOY** of heaven – **NO MORE SIN** and therefore we can have **PERFECT** and **UNHINDERED FELLOWSHIP** with God **PERMANENTLY**...!
- This **WAS** and **IS** the **DESIRE** of **JESUS** – **Joh 17:24**
- This is what **SHOULD** be our **DESIRE** as **WELL**...!
- The **PRESENCE** of Christ is what make **HEAVEN, HEAVEN** and the **FACT** and **REALITY** that we can be in **PERFECT FELLOWSHIP** with **GOD** is the very **ESSENCE** of **HEAVEN**...!
- We will be in the **VERY PRESENCE** of **GOD** – the **TRIUNE GOD** – and we will have **COMPLETE ACCESS** to Him, for **HE WILL DWELL WITH US**...! (cf. **Rev 22:3-4**)

Closing Thoughts:

- *So what will WE be like in heaven...?*
- **PERFECT** and **HAPPY**... **FOREVER**...!
- For we will have the **FULFILMENT** and **SATISFACTION** of our **DEEPEST DESIRE** – to **BE WITH GOD**...!
- I **HOPE** that is your **DESIRE** tonight...
- **Ps 27:4; 73:25-26**