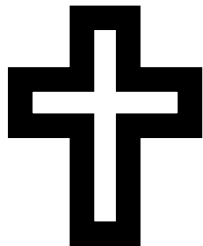


Twelve Lessons
on
The Second Coming

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THE HEAVEN OF HEAVENS – LESSON 1

I Kings 8:27; I Thessalonians 4:13

Introduction: I Kings 8:27—“*But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?*” One of the greatest causes of sorrow when a loved one passes away is a lack of knowledge about the after life. 1 Thess. 4:13—“*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*”

Lesson Goals:

1. To see Biblical evidence of real place called “Heaven”.
2. To learn from the Bible about the three divisions of Heaven.
3. To gain Biblical concepts concerning the description of Heaven.

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Heaven – A word that expresses several distinct concepts in the Bible: As used in a physical sense, heaven is the expanse over the earth (Gen. 1:8). Heaven is also the dwelling place of God (Gen. 28:17; Rev. 12:7-8). It is the source of the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:2,10). Because of the work of Christ on the Cross, heaven is, in part, present with believers on earth as they obey God's commands (John 14:2,23). At the end of time a new heaven will be created to surround the new earth. This new heaven will be the place of God's perfect presence (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; Rev. 21:1). Then there will be a literal fulfillment of heaven on earth (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
2. Three Heavens – The Bible speaks of but three heavens, and among the Jews in the apostolic ages also the heavens were divided into three: The aerial, including the clouds and the atmosphere, the heavens above us, until we come to the stars. Then the starry heavens, the heavens in which the sun, moon, and stars appear to be situated. Then the heavens beyond the stars; that heaven was supposed to be the residence of God (Barnes' Notes).

I. THE REALITY OF HEAVEN

A. Scripture evidently specifies Three Heavens – Since “the third heaven” is revealed to exist (II Cor. 12:2), and it is logical that a third heaven cannot exist without a first and second. Note: The first two heavens are real, so is the third. Heavens is mentioned in the plural, 133 times.

1. The first, however, apparently refers to the atmospheric heavens of the birds (Hos. 2:18, “sky”) and of clouds (Dan. 7:13).
2. The second heaven may be the universe spaces (cf. Gen 1:14-18). It is the abode of all supernatural angelic beings.
3. The third heaven is the abode of the Triune God.
 - a. It is the divine plan at present to populate the third heaven. (God will populate all three heavens).
 - 1) The Nation Israel will occupy the first heaven in a body like Adam.
 - 2) The Gentiles will occupy the second heaven in a body like Adam.
 - 3) The Church will occupy the third heaven in a glorified body like Jesus.
 - b. Illustrate – A little boy was walking with his grandfather under the star studded night when he exclaimed, “Grandpa, Grandpa, if Heaven is so beautiful on the outside, what must the inside look like!”

B. Scripture evidently specifies a Real Heaven

1. It is a place (John 14:1-3).
2. It is called “glory” (Heb 2:10)
 - a. Those who enter it will be perfected forever (10:14)
 - b. They will be made partakers of Christ's fullness (John 1:16), which is all fullness (Col. 1:19) and which comprehends the very nature of the Godhead bodily (2:9).
3. It was seen by the apostle John (Rev. 4:1).
4. The apostle Paul was caught up to the third heaven (II Cor. 12:1-9). He was prohibited, however, from revealing what he saw and heard.
5. It is a place of beauty (Rev 21:1-22:7), of life (I Tim. 4:8), service (Rev. 22:3), worship (19:1-3), and glory (II Cor. 4:17-18).

C. Scripture evidently specifies a City in this Heaven – Rev. 21:9-22:7 – The city is a literal city. From Heb 12:23 we learn that the inhabitants of the city consist of:

1. The bride, the Lamb's wife, the church, referred to as “*To the general assembly and church of the*

firstborn, which are written in heaven...” – Heb. 12:23

2. The redeemed saints of the OT. These are referred to as “...to the spirits of just men made perfect” – Heb. 12:23

3. “To an innumerable company of angels” – Heb. 12:22

D. Scripture evidently specifies the Entrance to the city – It will be by translation (glorification) or resurrection, both in the case of the church saints and the saved OT saints.

1. This City will remain in the Third Heaven until the end of the 1,000 year reign and the Great White Throne Judgment.

2. Afterwards, the City, the New Jerusalem will come down out of the Third Heaven and be like a “Moon” circling the Earth. Rev. 21:10 – “*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.*”

II. THE REPORT OF HEAVEN

A. Spiritual Light – vs. 11

B. Spiritual Lessons – vs. 12-14 – Twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and Twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles. The inhabitants will be Resurrected Israelites and Gentiles making up the Church.

C. Spiritual Lengths – vs. 15-17 – The length and breadth are 1500 miles and the wall is 200 feet thick.

D. Spiritual Lasting – vs. 19-20 – Twelve foundations with each foundation a different precious stone. The last stone in the breastplate of the High Priest is the first foundation in the City.

E. Spiritual Love – vs. 21 – Each gate is one pearl.

F. Spiritual Living – vs. 21 – The street is pure gold, the metal of deity.

G. Spiritual Lives – vs. 26 – Real live people will come once a week (Isa. 66:22-24) in the city and Worship God.

H. Spiritual Liberty – John describes what he does not see.

1. He sees no Temple there (vs. 22).

2. He sees no Sun or Moon there (vs. 23-24).

3. He sees no Closed Gates there (vs. 25).

4. He sees no Impurity or Evil there (vs. 27).

III. THE REPUTATION OF HEAVEN – 1 Cor. 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 love him.*”

A. A Place of Rest – Rev 14:13 – “*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*” I’ve seen young and old labor.

B. A Place of Understanding – I Cor 13:12 – “*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*”

1. Illustrate – Trying to explain to a mother who had three children under six killed by a head on collision with a drunk driver.

2. Illustrate – A poor little boy would stop by the toy store and look through the window at some toy soldiers, every day. One day, the store owner missed him and enquires what had happened. He found the little boy had been hit by a car and was unconscious in the hospital. He gathered the toy soldiers out of the window and took them to the hospital and placed them at the foot of the hospital bed. Several days later, the boy regained consciousness and the first thing he saw was the toy soldiers. He couldn’t believe it. As he touched them, he shouted, “Oh, look, Mother! Look! Here are the soldiers, and there is no glass between.”

C. A Place of Actuality

1. Instant Departure – II Cor. 5:8 – “*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*”

2. Instant Recognition – Luke 13:28 – “...when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God”

a. Abraham was still Abraham after 2500 years, so were Isaac and Jacob.

b. Matt. 17:3 – “*And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.*” Moses was still Moses and was talking with Elijah.”

3. Instant Body – II Cor. 5:1-2 – “*For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*”

a. Body for the Soul in Time (Lazarus – Luke 16 had a body)

b. Body for the Soul and Spirit in Eternity – Phil. 3:21 – “*Who shall change our vile body, that it may be*

fashioned like unto his glorious body...

4. Instant Interest – Luke 15:7 – *“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth...”*
 - a. Angels don’t know what redemption is all about.
 - b. These are Believers rejoicing. Heb. 12:1 – *“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses...”*

D. A Place of Direction – We talk about Heaven being up but that would be different directions to people living in the North, South, East, and West.

1. Ps. 75:6-7 – *“For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.”*
2. What about the Eastern Gate – Jesus will enter Jerusalem from the Mt. of Olives which is “east” of Jerusalem but he comes from the North.

CONCLUSION – Who is going to Heaven? Someone said, “Going to Heaven is like following different roads to the Post Office. They said, “We’re all coming different roads but eventually we all wind up at the Post Office.”

1. That may sound logical but when we die, we are not going to the Post Office.
2. We must repent and believe “ON” the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a difference in believing “IN” something and believing “ON” something. Illustrate with a chair, airplane, car, etc.