



Heaven: It's Not What You Think

Truth about the new Jerusalem

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Each day 150,000 people across the world pass away. To answer the questions of life after death, every major religion offers the promise of heaven in one form or another. Strict followers of Islam are told that they will have 70 virgins waiting on the other side of martyrdom. Mormonism speaks of ruling planets and Hinduism teaches reincarnation as different beings. The Christian view of heaven is a curious mix of Biblical fact and folklore. Biblically, heaven is not a place where people will spend eternity singing hymns, floating around on clouds, or listening to non-stop sermons. Heaven is not even a Bible believer's final destination!

The pearly gates or doorways into Heaven are each named after one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Revelation 21:12, "And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." To enter into the gates, one must associate with a tribe of Israel. The Scriptures clearly indicate that there is not a Baptist, Lutheran, or even a Christian door to Heaven.

The picturesque mansion over the hill top is really the Holy Temple on the mountain top of Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem (mistakenly called "heaven") is the realm in which YHWH's presence is manifest. It is more magnificent than any person can imagine and is the place where the angels and all believers who have departed because of death now live, Hebrews 12:22-24. In the New Jerusalem, people will be occupied with living and enjoying the best things in

life. Believers will recognize loved ones and fellowship with others, Luke 23:42-43.

The Messiah is now in Heaven preparing the place for future events according to John 14:2. At the end of the Great Tribulation there will be a 1,000 year reign of YHWH upon the earth. Isaiah 66 states that during this time, all nations will keep the Law of Moses, celebrate the seventh-day Sabbath and New Moons. Then, the universe will be transformed as Heaven descends to earth. Revelation speaks of a huge squared city of the New Jerusalem that will come down from the sky to rest upon the planet. Clearly, heaven is not some place in a far away galaxy but is actually very earthly. Revelation 21:2, "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from YHWH out of heaven." The New Earth will have no sea, sun, or moon. The paradise of the Garden of Eden will also be restored. "He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and YHWH Himself will be with them and be their Elohim. And YHWH will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away," Revelation 21:3-4.

The final destination for those who put their trust in YHWH and His Messiah isn't an eternal church service in Heaven but the New Jerusalem. Such knowledge of Heaven demands a paradigm shift in the mind of the believer. For if Jerusalem and Israel will be important in the world to come; perhaps it should be a priority today. The promise of Heaven is in reality the promise of the restoration of the nation of Israel. "On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem. The YHWH will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one YHWH, and his name the only name," Zechariah 14:8-9.