

Heaven. The doctrine. The Mysteries of Ouranology! Hear of Heaven from those who have been there.

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[0:00] Tonight we're talking about ouranology, is the technical word, in other words the doctrine! of heaven, the doctrine of heaven. The word ouranology comes from the Greek word for heaven, uranos is the word, and so we're going to go through what the Bible tells us about heaven, the doctrine of heaven. And so of course we know that God is the maker and the owner of all things and Deuteronomy 10 14 says, Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the hearth also with all that therein is. So he's the maker of it, the sustainer of it, the heavens were created by God and we can see really the whole trinity involved in the creation of heaven. We see Genesis 1 verse 1, in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

So heaven and earth did not always exist as God has, they were made and their creation marked the beginning. We see that the son was involved in creation as the creator. Colossians 1 16 it says, For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, all things were created by him and for him. And then we see the Holy Spirit also in Job 26 13 it says, By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens. And of course the word of God it says, Psalm 33 6, By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. God spoke it into existence by the power of his word. It's not man speaking into existence anything, man can't do that, but God can. He speaks it into existence. And heaven, the word heaven means lofty or elevation. Heaven's mentioned 551 times, 313 in the Old Testament, 238 times in the New. And hell is mentioned only 54 times. So the Bible speaks about heaven over 10 times more than hell. And heaven is where God wants us to be. Of course we need to know the way there, who is Christ and the one and only way to heaven. And the word heavens, plural, appears 127 times. That's 678 times in total. There's three heavens.

Someone's pictured it here. See the first heaven, which is the atmosphere. Then you see the starry skies, the second heaven or outer space. And then you see the third heaven. So the first heaven is, as we say, the atmosphere where the air is. Heaven's found seven times in Genesis 1. It's the seventh word. In Genesis 1, 8 we read of the firmament, which means the expanse or the sky. And it's the atmosphere. We read of the birds or the fowls of the air. It's where the dew comes from too. The dew of heaven and the rain, of course.

So then we see the second heaven is that kind of outer sphere, the outer space, the stars, the planets, the galaxies. We read of the stars of heaven, the sun and the moon in the creation account of Genesis 1.

[3:21] We see it tells us about the creation of the stars there in Deuteronomy 1 verse 10. The Lord your God have multiplied you and behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.

Of course, we know the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth forth his handiwork. Psalm 19 1. Another one there, Psalm 8, 3 and 4. It says, When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?

So we see the first heaven, the sky, the atmosphere, the second heaven, the starry sky, the outer space. Now we see the third heaven. This is where God currently dwells. In 2 Corinthians 12, 2, Paul tells, I knew a man in Christ caught up to the third heaven.

And it appears that that is Paul himself speaking. And it's interesting to note that the third heaven is not the final heaven, because there's going to be a new heaven.

A new heaven of Revelation 21 and 22. So we'll talk about that towards the end. So talking about this third heaven, mostly tonight, the third heaven, the dwelling place of God, and what that means for us.

[4:42] Because that's the place where we'll go when we die for the present. It's the third heaven. And what does the Bible tell us about this place? We see it's called a city.

It was said of Abraham, for he looked for a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. That's Hebrews 11, 10. So we should be like Abraham, shouldn't we?

For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. And Hebrews 13, 14, it tells us of that. And then this city is described further in Hebrews 12, 22.

It's called a city. It's also called a country.

You've got that one there. It says, But now they desire a better country that isn't heavenly.

Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.

[5:42] It's a city, a country. It's also called paradise. In Luke 23, of course, the dying thief who trusted Christ, the Lord said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

And Revelation 2, 7, it says, To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. So heaven will be a paradise, a place of bliss.

Think of paradise, the meaning of the word. It talks about really forests and orchards and enclosed gardens. That kind of beautiful place that we can't really imagine.

But that's the intent of it, paradise. And so we're going to look at a few accounts of actual descriptions of heaven. How the Bible describes heaven and this various accounts that show us what heaven is like.

And the first one we see is Paul's witness of heaven. So Paul's witness of the third heaven, as we referred to before, it is apparent that Paul went there and that he came back.

[6:50] And he only commented on what he heard. He considered it so sacred that he could not share it with this world. Unlike some of the modern TV preachers that give you detailed accounts of fanciful stories of heaven, Paul didn't really describe it.

He wasn't bragging on about what he saw there or what he heard there. And so we read what he says there in 2 Corinthians 12, 2-4. Paul writes, It looks like Paul likely was referring to this when he wrote this in 1 Corinthians 2, verse 9.

As he was quoting Isaiah 64, 4, it says there in 1 Corinthians 2, 9, But as it is written, I have not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Who knows, perhaps he was having that in mind as to what he encountered himself. So we see Paul's account, Paul's witness, and then we see Isaiah's witness as well.

Isaiah talks about the third heaven in Isaiah chapter 6 from verses 1 through 7. And it shows us various things. We see it tells us that the Lord is seated upon a throne.

[8:19] He's wearing this long robe. It tells there's a heaven. There's a temple in heaven where he sits. And that's in contrast to the new heaven of the future.

As we talk about later, Revelation 21, 22, it says that there's not a temple in the new heaven. And then we see these flying creatures, these six-winged seraphim, flying about the throne.

And they're announcing the holiness of the Lord of hosts. So you see that there. They cry out, And it says, And it reads on verse 5, It tells us that also Isaiah saw this altar with live coals.

And it says, So we've seen Paul's witness.

We've seen Isaiah's witness. Now we're going to go on to John's witness of the third heaven. The revelator John, the apostle John, tells us about heaven in the last book, the book of Revelation.

[9:35] And really the entire book of Revelation was given to John by the Spirit on the Lord's day. So it was on the Sunday. Revelation 1 verse 10. He was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

So those who are in heaven at the rapture will probably observe the following things. So there's a whole list of some 66 different things here that John saw and recorded. So we're just going to touch on them because really we don't have time to fully unpack it.

But just to catch a glimpse of what John saw and in his account here in the book of Revelation. So we see it talks about firstly chapter 4 verse 1. He says there's a door in heaven.

And some see that as a type of the rapture. The door opened to all who hear the first audible voice and the sound of the trumpet. Trumpets too are mentioned several times in Revelation. They're most often used by angels.

God himself also has a trumpet. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 16. We see that there's a throne set in heaven. As Isaiah saw in Isaiah 4 verse 2.

[10:39] We see God's glory there. It's described as being like jasper which is like clear crystal. And a sardine stone which is a dark red colour. So God's glory is there. There's a rainbow there.

And this rainbow is above the throne. And it appears as an emerald. So like a green colour. Green represents life. The rainbow about the throne. We see around God's throne there's some 24 seats for the 24 elders.

They're clothed in white and they wear a crown of gold. And then there's lightning and thundering and voices that come from the throne of God. And then it tells about seven lamps that are before God's throne as well.

And it reads of those lamps that there's seven spirits of God. We could see that explained in Isaiah 11 verse 2 where it tells us, And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.

And it gives these seven names of the spirit. The spirit of the Lord. The spirit of wisdom and understanding. The spirit of counsel and might. The spirit of knowledge.

[11:42] And of the fear of the Lord. So the seven spirits are there as well. We read on more things that John saw. He saw this sea of glass. Like crystal before the throne.

In chapter 4 verse 6. He saw four beasts. And they are announcing the holiness of God. Which was and is and is to come. So alike to the beasts.

The creatures of Isaiah 6 as well. And it tells us that they give glory and honour and thanks to God.

And then the 24 elders fall down and worship. They cast their crowns before him.

They exalt the Lord who created all things for his pleasure. So there's worship. It's a real big theme. Really right through John's record of heaven. And worship is a real theme of heaven.

And they give glory and worship. It tells of this seven sealed scroll in heaven that's waiting to be opened. No person in heaven is worthy to open this book, this scroll.

[12:43] Or even look at it. Only the Lord Jesus is worthy. And we'll open it in the future. And here's the lion who will conquer Satan and evil. He's the lamb as slain to satisfy God's will.

And we see the description of him there in Revelation 5. He's got these seven horns, seven eyes. Horns represent power. The eyes represent the spirits of God, of his wisdom.

And we see the worship of the lamb of God. We see this universal worship. And the Lord Jesus described with that word, that title of the lamb.

And then, 28 times, it refers to him as the lamb of God in heaven. And of course, we know when John saw him, John the Baptist, he cried out, Behold, the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

So it's only two times he's talked about as the lamb on earth. But 28 times he's talked about the lamb of God in heaven. So a lot of worship goes on in heaven.

[13:53] John saw this. He saw the beasts, the elders, all the angels, all the people worshipping, the one on the throne and the lamb. There's harps in heaven. There's golden vials of odours or perfume, which are the prayers of the saints.

Chapter 5, verse 9. So there's prayer in heaven. There's singing in heaven. We see that there in chapter 5, verse 9 of Revelation. So the theme is redemption through the blood of the lamb.

And heaven is full of these people from every kindred tongue and nation. And it says that they will rule and reign with Christ. So you see that there as the reference there, Revelation 5, from verse 8.

It tells us that they had the vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof.

For thou art slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation. And then it reads on there further.

[14:58] Thou art made us unto our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders.

And the number of them was 10,000 times 10,000 and thousands of thousands. So we see these multitude of angels, 100 million.

So 10,000 times 10,000 and thousands of thousands. He numbers the angels as 100 million. Paul describes them in Hebrews 12, 22 as innumerable angels. So you can't really put a number on them.

And we see all of these creatures, they're there worshipping God. And everyone in heaven and out of heaven, of course, one day will worship God. But someday says that every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And so we see them there crying out, worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing. So they're all crying out, glory, worthy is the lamb, blessing and honour and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the lamb forever and ever.

[16:09] And the four beasts said, amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever. So a whole lot of worship goes on.

It's interesting, a loud voice of worship too. As you see there in verse 12, it says a loud voice. They're saying with a loud voice, worshipping God.

Another feature of heaven is that there's martyrs in heaven from chapter 6, from 9 through 11.

People that have died for their witness of Christ, clothed in white robes.

They're close to God forever. It says that they're right there before the throne. There's still going to be some questions in heaven. Chapter 6, verse 10. So there's still some things yet to unravel, some mysteries that God still keeps the mystery.

Tells us there in verse 11 that there's going to be rest, rest in heaven as well. Saints who've come out of the tribulation will join those already there in worship. So that's chapter 7, verses 9 through 15.

[17:13] It talks about the ones who've come out of the tribulation.

They're going to join those already there in worship. And they're going to be clothed in white and have palm leaves in their hands.

Palm leaves as a token, a sign of victory and of peace. It says this great crowd is one that no man can number. And they're crying out again with a loud voice. This loud voice is found 12 times in the book of Revelation.

Eight of these times refers to events in heaven. So heaven is a loud place. We can shout loudly our praises. Amen. Next reference there, Revelation 7 through 15 through 16.

It talks about how there's no hunger or thirst in heaven, in this third heaven. It says that the Lord will feed us and give us water.

There's no oppressive heat or sunlight there. Christ will be our light and banish our sorrows. They shall serve him day and night. It says they shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore.

[18:13] The lamb is going to lead them unto living fountains of waters. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. So whilst there is a whole lot of loud worship, there will be a space of eerie silence.

It's talked about in Revelation 8 verse 1, where millions of angels and people will keep silent for half an hour as God's wrath is vanterred on earth.

And then seven angels, even seven trumpets to blow, announcing the fury of God. I'm not going to labour some of these points because it's more like end times teaching, which isn't really the subject tonight.

But just really picking out the salient points that talk about heaven. And so it tells us of heaven, that there's an altar there where there's true worship brought before the throne as the angel offers up the incense as a reflection of prayers of the saints.

And we see, as it reads on here from chapter 8 verses 3 to 4, it talks about how the angel is going to fill this censer, this receptacle with fire, and then cast it onto the earth.

[19:28] And then the angel is going to pronounce woes of grief and sorrow and misery on earth. A star is going to fall from heaven, which is an angel. He will have the key to the bottomless pit, which he opens.

A mighty angel will come down to earth from heaven, and he'll have a little book. John was given this book, and he must eat it. And it's sweet in his mouth, but then bitter in his stomach. And it's preparing him to prophesy again.

So you could understand the sense of that is that bitter words are going to come as this time of judgment falls on the earth. And then it talks about the two witnesses. They're prophesied to be on the earth.

They prophesied on the earth for three and a half years, and then they're martyred. Then they're seen resurrected, and then raptured to the third heaven. And then we see another worship session there as time goes by.

The temple is opened. The Ark of the Testament is seen. And there's a whole load of unusual things described in chapter 12 then. So, for one, Israel is a wonder of itself.

[20:31] We see the wonder of Satan and demonic activity. There's this long war that Satan has against Israel, as Israel was used to bring our Lord to the earth.

About one-third of the stars or the angels are cast out of heaven to the earth. And then there's this war in heaven. So it tells us there, Revelation 12, 7, there was war in heaven.

And we see that fight going on. And where Satan and his angels lose, and they're cast down once and for all. And Satan will fall to earth in great wrath. And then we see the victory declared for those in Revelation 12, 11, how they've overcome the devil by their testimony of faith, by the power of the Lord's blood.

After Satan's been in heaven, or had access to heaven, accusing us before God for our sins, as much as we have Jesus Christ our Lord as the advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous.

We see at that point, Satan is cast out. Then we see reference to the 144,000 in chapter 14. They stand with the Lamb on Mount Sinai in heaven.

[21:47] So, the heavenly Jerusalem, like the earthly Jerusalem, has a Mount Zion. And it says that these 144,000 were seen previously on the earth.

And now they're forming another group close to Jesus. They belong to God. They have the Father's name in their foreheads. So, they follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

And they're the firstfruits from the tribulation. We see in Revelation 14, 6 through 7, it talks about the angel that flies from heaven with the everlasting gospel.

We see another angel brings a message of condemnation for Babylon. Then a third angel leaves heaven with a message of condemnation for all who receive the mark of the beast.

So, there's a whole lot of signs and wonders, angels visiting earth, angels giving messages, bringing messages. And then it leads on to the harvest of the earth. In Revelation 14, from 15 through 20, we see the harvest, the ingathering.

[22:46] It tells us in your notes that you can read it in more detail. The Lord takes His people and then an angel reaps the harvest of the unsaved.

And that's really the wrath of God. The Lord gathers the righteous and the angels gather the ungodly. Next we see in Revelation 15, from verses 2 to 4, it tells us about a new group seen in heaven.

And these are they who have overcome the beast during the last half of the tribulation. They stand before God on a sea of glass mingled with fire. So, that's chapter 15, verse 2. And there's a third song heard in heaven.

And it's originated with Moses and the lamb. And then it says how the temple in heaven becomes filled with the glory of God. So, that's from verse 8 there.

It says how there's this smoke reflecting the glory of God. It says that no man in heaven will be able to enter it into the temple till the seven plagues are fulfilled.

[23:50] And then we see that there's seven more angels with seven vials containing seven plagues that are poured out on the earth. These plagues are the wrath of God. A voice in the temple is heard instructing the seven angels to pour out the wrath of God on the earth.

And then there's a celebration in the third heaven where a great voice of many people proclaims hallelujah. So, now we're at chapter 19, verses 1 through 6 there.

It talks about many people in heaven. So, God has delivered his people. He's judged the great whore, the one world Babylon, and he's avenged the blood of the martyrs. And then we'll see the next thing that happens.

I know you can read through some of these verses in more detail. But the next thing from chapter 19, verse 5, it tells us about the marriage supper of the Lamb.

So, the marriage of the Lamb. And that occurs there. And, of course, the bridegroom is Christ. The bride is made up of all the saved. And this fulfills John 14, 2, where he says he's going to prepare a place for us.

[24:54] And those in heaven only worship God, not angels or men. Because one of the angels tried to bow down to John as he was seeing all of this. And he says, no, it's only God that can be worshipped.

And then we see that heaven will open as the Lord Jesus on a white horse and his armies descend to the earth for the great battle. So, that's from verses 11 through 16 there.

And he's described as faithful and true. The word of God, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

And he judges and makes war with those on the earth. His eyes are as a flame of fire.

On his head are many crowns. You can think of how the hymn writer says, crown him with many crowns. He'll have a name that no one knows but himself. Only he knows what that name is. So, there are some secret things in heaven.

And then we see that his vesture, his garment, is dipped in blood. In verse 13 it tells us that. And he holds this sharp sword and an iron rod. And in the fierceness and wrath of God, the Lord will trample the enemies of God under his feet.

[25:58] Then it reads how there's another angel comes down from heaven. Having the key to the bottomless pit, he lays hold on Satan and binds him with a great chain and casts him into the pit. And Satan stays there for 1,000 years.

So, that seems to be where John finishes the account of the third heaven. So, the rest of his vision takes place on earth during the great white throne judgment of sinners before God.

So, this event doesn't seem to take place in either heaven or hell. The judgment will be such a sobering, horrific sight that the earth and heaven fled away. So, this phrase can mean to vanish.

So, this will probably be the end of the third heaven. So, we've heard all about the first heaven, the atmosphere. We've heard about the second heaven, the starry sky. We've heard about the third heaven as we've read right through.

These various accounts of Paul, of Isaiah, of John. Now, we're going to look at something that's really the final heaven.

[26:57] Where we're going to spend eternity forever. And that's the new heaven and the new Jerusalem. So, the three heavens are dissolved and melt with a fervent heat.

So, we read about that there in 2 Peter 3, verse 10. It says, The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away. So, the heavens, the three of them. The heavens will 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 burnt up. So, it talks about these three heavens we just talked about. They're going to melt. They're going to be dissolved with fervent heat.

And Isaiah 65, 17 says, For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. And the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind. So, even though the current third heaven is glorious and we're looking forward to that when we pass away before the final heaven.

But we see that it is going to be renewed. It will be changed. So, let's have a look at what the Bible says about the new heaven now. One of the best sources to get information about the new heaven is the last couple of chapters of your Bible.

[28:09] So, Revelation 21, John saw the new heaven and the new earth. It says, For the first heaven and the first earth passed away and there was no more sea. And then he says, I, John, saw the holy city near Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for a husband.

So, John sees now the new heaven. And it says of the new heaven there's going to be a fountain of water, a river of water, but no sea. It says of the new heaven that God's going to wipe away all tears.

You see that there in the next one there, Revelation 21, verse 3 and 4. It reads on, 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.

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. So, imagine a place like that.

There's no crying, no more sorrow, no more grief or tears. No one will ever die. There won't be any undertakers or cemeteries. The saved are immortal. Sorrow is banished.

[29:21] No one's going to feel sorrow, guilt, shame, embarrassment, remorse. There'll be no more pain. The former things are passed away and will not be remembered. And in verse 4 there, Revelation 21, verse 4, it reads there that there's really seven no's.

No sea, no sorrow, no crying, no pain, no death, no curse, no night. The Lord is on his throne and he's declaring that he's going to make all things new.

And then we read on, verses 6 through 8. Sounds like a gospel invitation really. Like the invitation to come and know this wonderful place and how to get there.

And it reads there that the Lord says, So it's telling us there, Of course, thank God.

We're all liars effectively, but he forgives us our sin. We can have cleansing from all our sin and he can forgive us our sin such that we're not counted as guilty anymore.

[30:58] But we must make sure we've trusted Christ. Just as an aside, I found this, just to interrupt things with more of a lighter note. I saw this interesting article I read, Heaven, travel information.

Here you go. So if you're getting ready for this trip, I want to be your travel agent tonight to think about this now. Heaven, travel arrangement. Travel information, all right?

So accommodation, accommodation, arrangements are first class accommodation. And they've been made in advance. So he's gone to prepare a place for us.

Amen? John 14, 2. Passports. Persons seeking entry will not be permitted to pass the gates without proper credentials. And having their names registered with the ruling authority.

You've got to make sure, yeah, whosoever will may come. All right? Revelation 21, 27. Tickets. Your ticket is a written pledge that guarantees your journey.

[31:57] It should be claimed and its promises kept firmly in mind. So you must pass from death unto life. John 5, 24. Customs. There's a customs declaration. Only one declaration is required while passing through customs.

And that's 1 Corinthians 15. That you believe Christ died for your sins, was buried, rose again. He's your saviour. That's the gospel. There's the customs declaration. Immigration.

All passengers are classified as immigrants since they are taking up permanent residence in a new country. So we're all immigrants to that place, aren't we?

And the quota is unlimited. So there's opportunity to be an immigrant to heaven still. Luggage. No luggage may be taken. It says that we came into this world with nothing and we're going to go out the same way.

1 Timothy 6, 7. Inoculation. Injections are not needed. So you don't need any vaccinations. Injections are not needed as diseases are unknown at the destination.

[32:58] Revelation 21, verse 4. Air passage. Travellers going direct by air are advised to watch daily for indications of imminent departure. Of course, we're going to be caught up.

Get ready. Imminent departure. Air passage. And then departure times. The exact date has not been announced. Travellers should be prepared to leave at short notice.

So we could think, how much time have we got? There's no boasting about tomorrow. We should be ready today for that departure time. So that's just a little bit of an aside there. I thought that was quite good.

So thinking about the invitation. The invitation is still extended, isn't it? And the New Jerusalem, it's that city prepared for the bride, for the believers.

It's going to come down from the new heaven to the new earth. And the New Jerusalem, it's going to look like a bride adorned for her husband. So very beautiful in appearance. And it tells us three times this city, the New Jerusalem, this city is holy.

[33:59] It's inhabited by God himself. And it's announced by a great voice from heaven. It says, the tabernacle of God is with man. And it's God himself really, isn't it?

As glorious as the new heaven will get, nothing is greater than the fact that God will dwell with man. And that's one of the precious things about heaven, that will see his face. And will be with him, just like when God walked with Adam and Eve.

What does it tell us about the New Jerusalem? The New Jerusalem. It tells us about the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21, from verses 10 through 14. You see that there.

One of the seven angels shows John the bride and the New Jerusalem. It's defined as the nations of them which are saved. And this city has the glory of God. And when you think about that, how do you unpack that statement, the glory of God?

We can't fathom it. It says of this city that the lighting is as a jasper stone, which is clear as crystal. So that's there in verse 11. As a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

[35:04] And it goes on to talk there, verse 12, about the wall, great and high, the 12 gates. And at the 12 gates, there's 12 angels. And names are written thereon, which are the names of the 12 tribes of the children of Israel.

So the city has no need of sun or moon, because Christ is the Lamb, is the light of it. And we see the wall around it, as we just talked about, verses 12 through 13.

This wall that is around it, it's 144 cubits high, which is, they reckon, 20 to 24 stories high.

So it's this massive wall that's around the city. And it's interesting, the wall around the city is different from the wall of the city itself, which is 1,500 miles high. So the wall has 12 gates, three on each side, each with an angel posted at it.

And the gates will not be shut during the day. Because there is no night, they will never be shut. So that's in contrast to Genesis 3.24, where you see that man was shut out of the garden. Of course, now the gates are wide open of this city.

[36:13] And each gate has the name of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. So Israel is honoured there. And we see the wall is like jasper, and all these precious stones, different colours.

God looks like jasper. The lighting of the New Jerusalem is like jasper. The wall around the city is like jasper. And the first of the 12 foundation stones, the foundations of the city, is like jasper.

And when you think about the, it's measured and it's described, all these measurements, these dimensions are given to us. And just to put it in kind of comparison, this is the size of the New Jerusalem.

I know someone else did something like this a while back when they preached about heaven. And it really helps just to get it in perspective, the dimensions of heaven compared to the size of Australia, for example.

And this city, the New Jerusalem, is like a cube. It is a cube. So the length, height, width, the breadth of it, it's all equal size. So it's this great big cube.

[37:15] If you can imagine a cube of that dimension sitting on top of Australia, just to give you a perspective of size. So it would make the city 2,200 kilometres in each direction.

And the city is so high, if you could think of it, that an aeroplane flying at 35,000 feet would crash 1/20th of the way up. So that would be really, really low.

And the land mass equals 2.25 million square miles. And the total mass of the city is 3.3 billion cubic miles.

So the walls of the city are described in Revelation 21 from verse 15. You see the measurements there, as we talked about. We see the description of the wall there as well and the dimensions of it. So the wall has 12 foundations and each one of them is named after an apostle. So Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, Simon, Judas, not Judas, Iscariot, and Matthias.

[38:22] So it would be the 12 apostles. And then it talks about 12 stones. And here's how someone's pictured. You can imagine as a guide what those colours could be.

And the 12 foundations are made of these 12 different kinds of stones. Jasper. There's some interpretation about the colours, but sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprasus, chacinth, and amethyst.

So they're all, there's different probably interpretations of some of that, but that just gives you a bit of a clue of what they might look like. So very colourful. And think as it reads on about the, further the description of the place, we see the street of the city.

And the city itself are pure gold, as it were, transparent glass. So there's a whole lot of gold.

Imagine, as we talked about the dimensions of it.

That's a lot of gold. There's no temple, it says, and the God and the Lamb are the temple. It says that there in verse 22. It says that there'll be nations and kingdoms on the new earth, and all people are saved.

[39:35] It says that there, verse 24. So this is the last time the word saved appears in the Bible. And it refers to those rescued from destruction. So it's really important, if you want to go to heaven, to make sure that you're saved.

Of course, how do we get saved? By faith. By grace, through faith, we're saved. And if you're one of the saved, you can know this is where you're going to end up. This is where we will ultimately be. And it says that the saved are going to bring their glory and honour into the city. Verse 26 tells us that. And there's going to be all of that glory and honour.

And they shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they that are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Thank God we can know our name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life before we depart. Amen.

We can make that reservation. So although there's no temple, there is a throne there.

[40:34] Revelation 22, verse 1, it tells us of the throne of God and of the Lamb. For the Father and for the Son. So from this throne, there flows this pure river of water, clear as crystal.

There's also a fountain with the water of life. We see the tree of life is there in the New Jerusalem. So this amazing large tree. It's got these leaves.

And it says the leaves are for the healing of the nations. Interesting. It's the Greek word, therapia, which we get our English word therapy from.

So the best therapist is right there. The healing of the nations in the leaves of this tree of life.

It says there'll be no more curse. And so we think of a curse. It means invoking evil. That's never going to happen anymore. There's no evil. God is on the throne and we will serve him.

[41:31] It says we'll see his face. Verse 4. They shall see his face. That's going to be one of the best things about heaven, isn't it? To see his face. And it says that God's name is going to be on their foreheads, which denotes our ownership.

We're going to be marked with ownership that we belong to him. There'll be no need of the sun because the Lord will be the brilliant light. There'll be no night. It says God's servants will reign forever and ever.

Verse 5 there. It says they shall reign forever and ever. As the hallelujah chorus goes, forever and ever. We'll be rewarded according to our work.

Of course, salvation is a gift, but there are rewards. So it's worth serving the Lord. It's worth doing something for him. There are some further benefits.

So we see that there in the notes. So just some other thoughts. Some other scriptures we could take to heart. Matthew 6, it tells us there, verse 19.

[42:33] Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

For where your treasure is there will your heart be also. So think about, as we think about heaven, that our treasure really is to please our Lord. We see 2 Corinthians 5.1.

It says that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. So really, the last house we're going to be in, even this earthly body is just a temporary house.

It will be that eternal house in the heavens. We see Jeremiah 32. It says, Our Lord God, behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power, and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.

Think of the one who's made heaven and earth. He's your maker and saviour. We see Philippians 3.20. It says, For our conversation is in heaven, for when so also we look for the saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[43:41] Our conversation, you could put it our way of life, our conduct, even our citizenship. There's that sentiment that we're citizens of heaven. We've got a citizenship that is in heaven.

Then we've got God's promise there in John 14, where our Lord says, Let not your heart be troubled. You 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 you may be also. Of course, the question then was posed, how do we know the way?

And he says, I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. So think of it. Saints here tonight, I pray you'd be encouraged to think. We've only just scratched the surface.

We've only caught a little glimpse of the glory of the place. It's a wonderful place. It's a prepared place for a prepared people. And Hebrews 13 says, For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

[44:45] And really the question for all of us is, have we prepared to go there? Have we prepared to go there? You know, the hymn writer says, I just love this last scripture here.

Now, unlike some false cults that teach the false idea of soul sleep, when we leave this body, when we pass away in the physical, says that we're immediately present with the Lord.

So we're immediately located. Our spirit goes to our maker. Our spirit goes straight to God and we're with him. We're present with the Lord. And so we've got that assurance.

And just some other scriptures are jotted down. When you think about heaven, it's our home. It's the Father's house. It's our homeland as well.

It's God's kingdom. It says, Revelation 22, 4, they shall see his face. That's going to be the most precious thing. And think of it. Christ himself is there. His presence, his peace, his rest.

[46:14] It's a pure place. There's going to be nothing that defiles. 1 Peter 1, verse 4, it talks about how we've got an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, reserved in heaven for us. So it's got that picture of it's reserved.

We've got a reservation. We can make a reservation by faith. As we trust Christ, we can receive his promise. And of heaven, it says, its builder and its maker is God.

We think God's throne is there, his glory. But sadly, many are going to miss out. Of course, we know the broad way leadeth to destruction. The narrow way leadeth to life.

Few there be that find it. It's really important that we have our hearts trust that Christ is our saviour. And if we have that, he says, you can know that you have eternal life.

He says that, I go to prepare a place for you and I'll come again and receive you to myself. You know, there's some cults that deny heaven or put some view that heaven is not where we're going to go.

[47:11] But it's very clear that he ascended into heaven. He says, I go to prepare a place for you. Where I am, there you may be also. So there is that truth that we will be with our Lord. We will go straight.

We'll be present with the Lord when we pass away. That's an encouragement to us. We don't go into limbo or purgatory or some netherworld until the resurrection.

No, we go straight to be with the Lord. We're present with the Lord and we can have that assurance. We don't go into some soul sleep where we kind of cease to have consciousness or cease to exist. We are present with the Lord that moment that we are deceased from this life. That we are present with the Lord. But that's only if we know the Saviour. If we don't know the Saviour, we go to the holding place for our judgment and the ultimate lake of fire. So it's really important that we know the Saviour.

Of course, we'll talk more about the alternative place at some future time. So hopefully you've got some food for thought about heaven. Perhaps we'll just close for now and have some questions then.

[48:13] Lord, we thank you that you are the God of heaven. You're the maker of heaven and earth. And Lord, you've made heaven as a prepared place for a prepared people. Lord, that you've gone to prepare a place for us that have trusted you.

Lord, thank you for the assurance of that. That when we are absent from the body, we're present with you, our Lord. And ultimately, the third heaven and then ultimately the new heaven and the new earth.

Lord, we thank you for these promises. And help us, Lord, to be assured of that. And know that I have not seen, nor have the ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of men, the things that you have prepared for us that love you.

We thank you for these things and the promise that we've got an inheritance reserved for us. That's just awaiting for us to claim at our passing.

Lord, we thank you for that. For our loved ones who've trusted you, that we know that they're there awaiting us too. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.