

Thoughts on Heaven – Part Two

Revelation 6 & 21 – June 20, 2021

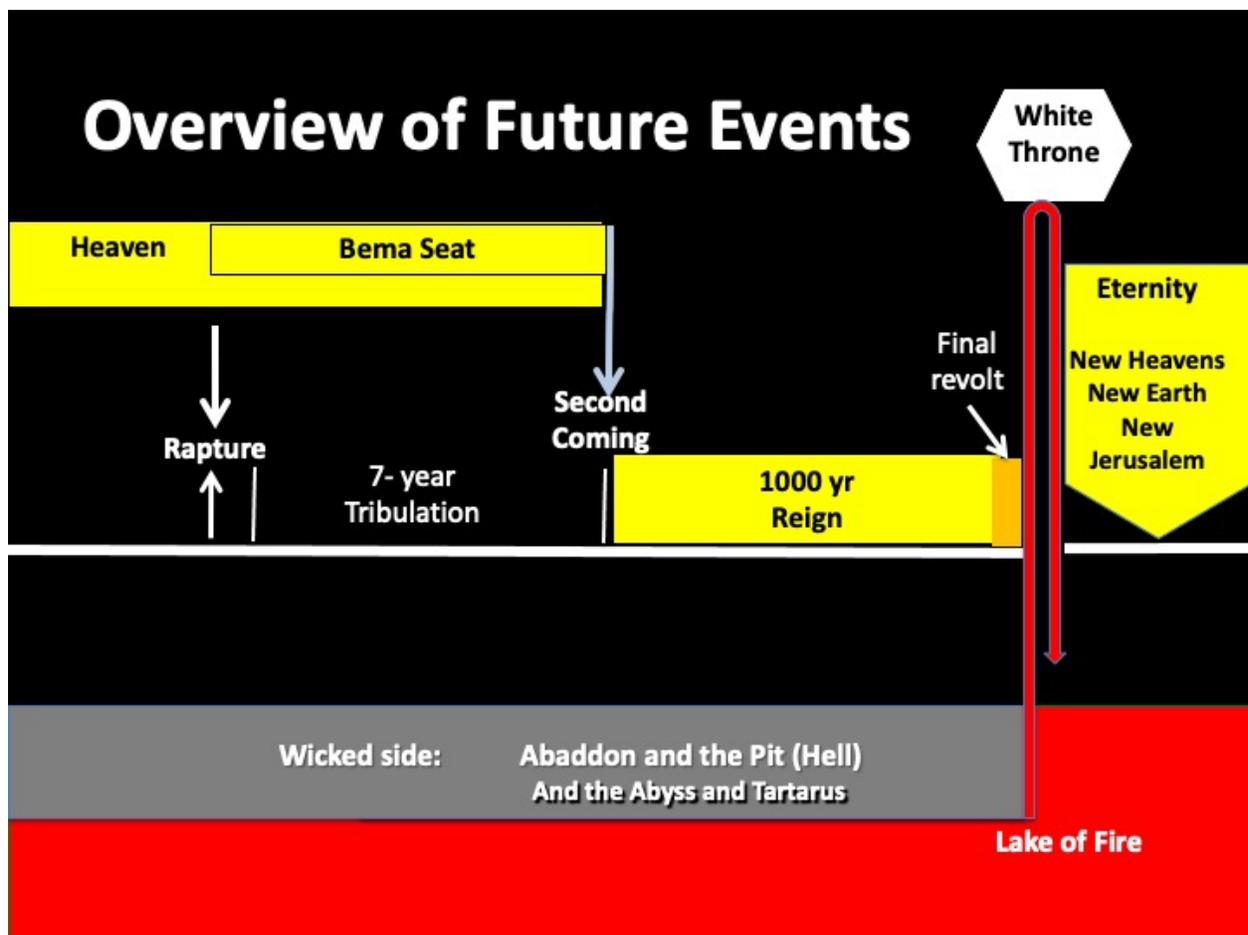
Do we remember our time on earth? Are we aware of what happens on earth? What do we do in heaven? Do we recognize one another in heaven? Do we pray in heaven? Do we learn while in heaven?

Several things we need to understand before we move forward.

1) There seems to be a difference between today’s “present heaven” and “the eternal heaven.”

The “present Heaven coexists with and watches over the Earth while under sin. Whereas the “eternal Heaven” will exist when there is no more sin, no more curse and no more suffering.

2) The time sequence.



The rapture of the church is followed by the bema seat. At that time the saints in heaven will receive their rewards. At the same time the tribulation will be on folding on earth. At the end of the tribulation the saints will return with the LORD and will rule with Him for 1000 years. A final revolt will be put down at the end of the 1000-year reign. Then the white throne judgment will take place where all nonbelievers will be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire. Following this event, the LORD will form the New Heavens and New Earth.

Our discussion today will surround what heaven is like before God forms the new heaven and new earth.

Question #1: Will we remember our time on earth? **It seems so.**

In Revelation 6:9-11 we find the martyred tribulation saints. They know God had not brought judgment on their persecutors. To some extent, therefore, the inhabitants in heaven are aware of what is happening on earth.

“And when he (the angel) had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? ¹¹ And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

2. It seems the martyrs prayed to God in Revelation 6:10-11.

“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”

They were asking God for specific action to be taken on their persecutors. They were also interceding for the saints on earth who were suffering under the hand of these unredeemed tormentors.

In the context of this passage these people were believers killed for their testimony for Christ – (v. 9)

“Them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.”

This demonstrates a direct link between our identity on earth and our identity in heaven. **The martyrs’ personal history extends directly back**

to their lives on Earth. Those in the “present Heaven” are not different people; they are the same people relocated —“righteous men made perfect” (Hebrews 12:23).

The martyrs know enough to realize that those who killed them have not yet been judged. Therefore, they pray for judgment on their persecutors who are still at work hurting others. They are acting in solidarity with, and in effect interceding for, the suffering saints on Earth. This suggests that saints in Heaven are both seeing and praying for saints on Earth.

3. People in heaven will be remembered for their lives on earth. **These were known and identified as ones slain.**

“Slain for the word of God and for the testimony they held” (v. 9).

4. “They cried out” – (v. 10).

This means they are able to express themselves audibly. This suggests they exist in physical form, with vocal cords or other tangible means to express themselves.

Furthermore, we find they can raise their voices – (v. 10). This indicates that they are rational, communicative, and emotional –even passionate— beings, like people on Earth.

They call out in “**a loud voice,**” not “loud voices.” ***Individuals speaking with one voice*** indicate that Heaven is a place of unity and shared perspective.

The martyrs here are seen as **fully conscious, rational,** and **aware** of each other, and of God, and of the situation on Earth.

5. It seems that those in Heaven are **free to ask God questions,** which means they have an audience with God. It also means they need to learn. In Heaven, people desire understanding and pursue it.
6. **Heaven dwellers have a deep concern for justice and retribution (v. 10).**

When we go to heaven, we will not adopt a passive disinterest in what happens on the earth. Our concerns will be more passionate and our thirst for justice greater.

Neither God nor we will be satisfied until His enemies are judged, our bodies raised, sin and Satan defeated, Earth restored, and Christ exalted over all.

7. **The martyrs clearly remember their lives on Earth (v. 10).**

They even remember that they were murdered (Revelation 6:9-11). They wanted the Lord to avenge their blood (their murder)

8. **Those in Heaven see God's attributes** ("Sovereign . . . holy and true") in a way that makes His judgment of sin more understandable.

9. Those in Heaven are distinct individuals: "Each are given a white robe" (v. 11).

The wearing of white robes suggests the possibility of actual physical forms (disembodied spirits presumably don't wear robes) plus the Apostle John was able to see them.

God answers their question (v. 11), indicating communication and process in Heaven. It demonstrates that we won't know everything in Heaven. Therefore, there is learning that goes on in heaven

10. God promises to fulfill the martyrs' requests but says they will have to "wait a little longer" (v. 11).

Those in the "present Heaven" live in anticipation of the future fulfillment of God's promises.

Furthermore, **there is time in the "present Heaven"** (vv. 10-11). The white-robed martyrs ask God a time-dependent question: "How long . . ." **They were aware of time's passing** and are eager for the coming day of the Lord's judgment. God tells them that they must wait.

11. The people in Heaven have a strong familial connection with those on earth, who are called their "fellow servants and brothers" (v. 11).

12. Our sovereign God knows down to the last detail all that is happening and will happen on Earth (v. 11), including every drop of blood shed and every bit of suffering undergone by his children. The Voice of the Martyrs estimate that more than 150,00 people die for Christ each year, an average of more than 400 per day. God knows the name and story of each one. He

knows exactly how many martyrs there will be and is prepared to return and set up His Kingdom when the final martyr dies.

OTHER PASSAGES: DO HEAVEN'S INHABITANTS REMEMBER LIFE ON EARTH?

1. Revelation 18:20:

When Babylon is brought down an angel points to events happening on Earth and says,

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."

Again, it seems that the saints in Heaven are observing events on earth.

2. Revelation 19:1-5:

Rev. 19:1, 3 – People in heaven witness the destruction of spiritual and political Babylon and rejoice.

3. Revelation 19:11-14:

We can assume that the saints know what is happening since they are returning with Christ to set up His millennial kingdom.

4. Luke 9:31:

Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus when He was transfigured. It is recorded that they *"Spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."* They seem fully aware of the drama that was unfolding on earth and that God's redemptive plan was about to be accomplished.

5. 1 Timothy 3:16; 5:21; 1 Corinthians 4:9:

The things on earth were "seen of angels." Angels saw Christ on earth and knew what was happening. If angels saw what was happening on earth, why not the saints?

6. Luke 15:7, 10:

Notice that the joy is "in the presence of angels." Who is doing the rejoicing?

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no

*repentance . . . ¹⁰ Likewise, I say unto you, there is **joy in the presence** of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”*

Does God’s Redemption Plan INCLUDE THE EARTH?

The entire physical universe was created for God’s glory. But humanity rebelled, and the universe fell under the weight of our sin. Yet the serpent’s seduction of Adam and Eve did not catch God by surprise. He had in place a plan by which He would redeem mankind—and all of creation—from sin, corruption, and death. Just as He promises to make men and women new, He promises to renew the earth.

Isaiah 65:17 – “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”

Luke 19:10 – “For the Son of man is come to **seek and to save** that which was lost”.

Rom. 8:19-23:

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope, ²¹ Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. ²³ And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.”

2 Peter 3:13 – “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Revelation 21:1-4 – “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. ² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. ⁴ 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.”

If God’s plan were merely to take mankind to heaven that was only the dwelling place of spirit beings, there would be no need for new heavens and a new earth.

OUR REWARDS ARE REMINDERS OF OUR LIFE ON EARTH

1. **Matthew 12:36; 2 Corinthians 5:10** – After we die, we will give an account for our lives on Earth, down to specific actions and words.
2. **1 Corinthians 3:14** – The doctrine of eternal rewards hinges on specific acts of faithfulness done on Earth that survive the believer’s judgment and are brought into Heaven with us.
3. **Revelation 19:7-8** – The white robe stands for the righteous acts we did.
4. **Revelation 14:13** – Our righteous deeds will not be forgotten. They will follow us.
5. **Matthew 6:19-21** - Rewards given will remind us of the works we have done.
Matthew 19:21 - Rewards given will remind us of the works we have done.
Luke 12:33 – Rewards given will remind us of the works we have done.
Luke 19:17, 19 - Rewards given will remind us of the works we have done.
1 Timothy 6:19 - Rewards given will remind us of the works we have done.
6. **Revelation 2:26-28** – Positions of authority and treasures will be granted in heaven which will perpetually remind us of our life on Earth, because what we do on Earth will earn us those rewards.