



A View of Heaven

*Matthew 5:8
God blesses those whose
hearts are pure,
for they will see God.*

*Jesus is our
Hope of Joy*

*God's glory will be
Revealed*

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Forward

Heaven is a real place. It cannot be found on any map. It cannot be seen with powerful telescopes. But it is a true location.

The Bible may sometimes use metaphors and similes to describe what heaven is like, but heaven itself is not merely a figure of speech, spiritual concept, or state of mind.

The Bible describes heaven as a location. God speaks "from heaven" (Gen. 21:17; 22:11, 15; Ex. 20:22; Deut. 4:36; 2 Sam. 22:14; Neh. 9:13).

He also hears prayer "from heaven," which is his "dwelling place" (1 Kings 8:34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 49; Neh. 9:27).

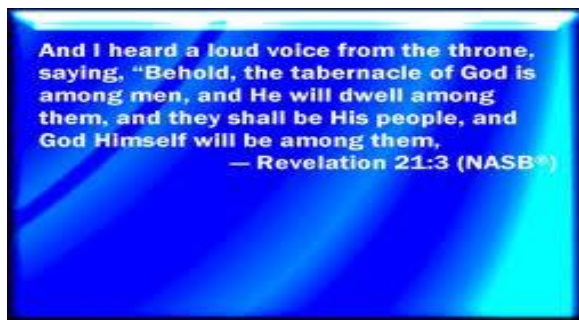
Angels come "from heaven" (Dan. 4:13, 23; cf. Rev. 18:1). Jesus said he was the one who had "come down from heaven" to do the Father's will (John 6:38).

Throughout this study, we do not deal with the location of heaven, or the physical features we consider when we think about heaven.

We will consider the joy, peace and satisfaction involved in the promises of heaven.

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Chapter 1



God will dwell among his people

Revelation 21:3

And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

The New Jerusalem is where God lives among his people. Instead of our going up to meet him, he comes down to be with us, just as God became man in Jesus Christ and lived among us (John 1:14). Wherever God reigns, there is peace, security, and love.

Have you ever wondered what eternity will be like? The "Holy City, the new Jerusalem" is described as the place where God will "wipe every tear from their eyes." Forevermore, there will be no death, pain, sorrow, or crying.

What a wonderful truth! No matter what you are going through, it's not the last word—God has written the final chapter, and it is about true fulfillment and eternal joy for those who love him.

We do not know as much as we would like, but it is enough to know that eternity with God will be more wonderful than we could ever imagine.

We shall awaken in God's likeness

Psalm 17:15

As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with your likeness when I awake.

We deceive ourselves when we measure our happiness or contentment in life by the amount of wealth we possess.

When we put riches at the top of our value system, we let power, pleasure, and financial security overshadow the eternal value of our relationship with God. We think we will be happy or content when we get riches, only to discover that they don't really satisfy, and the pleasures fade away.

The true measurement of happiness or contentment is found in God's love and in doing his will. You will find true happiness if you put your relationship with God above earthly riches.

The word *awake* shows that David believed in life after death. Although belief in resurrection was not widespread in Old Testament times, several verses show that it was partially understood. Some of these are Job 19:25-27; Psalm 16:10; Psalm 49:15; Psalm 139:17-18; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2, 13

The pure in heart shall see God

Matthew 5:8

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Jesus began his sermon with words that seem to contradict each other. But God's way of living usually contradicts the worlds.

If you want to live for God you must be ready to say and do what seems strange to the world. You must be willing to give when others take, to love when others hate, to help when others abuse.

By giving up your own rights in order to serve others, you will one day receive everything God has in store for you.

There are at least four ways to understand the Beatitudes.

- (1) They are a code of ethics for the disciples and a standard of conduct for all believers.
- (2) They contrast kingdom values (what is eternal) with worldly values (what is temporary).
- (3) They contrast the superficial "faith" of the Pharisees with the real faith Christ wants.
- (4) They show how the Old Testament expectations will be fulfilled in the new kingdom.

These beatitudes are not multiple choice—pick what you like and leave the rest. They must be taken as a whole. They describe what we should be like as Christ's followers.

Each beatitude tells how to be *blessed*. “Blessed” means more than happiness. It implies the fortunate or enviable state of those who are in God’s kingdom.

The Beatitudes don’t promise laughter, pleasure, or earthly prosperity. To Jesus, “blessed” means the experience of hope and joy, independent of outward circumstances. To find hope and joy, the deepest form of happiness, follow Jesus no matter what the cost.

With Jesus’ announcement that the kingdom was near (Matthew 4:17), people were naturally asking, “How do I qualify to be in God’s kingdom?”

Jesus said that God’s kingdom is organized differently from worldly kingdoms. In the kingdom of heaven, wealth and power and authority are unimportant. Kingdom people seek different blessings and benefits, and they have different attitudes.

Are your attitudes a carbon copy of the world’s selfishness, pride, and lust for power, or do they reflect the humility and self-sacrifice of Jesus, your King?

Jesus shall return for believers

John 14:3

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

We shall forever be with the Lord

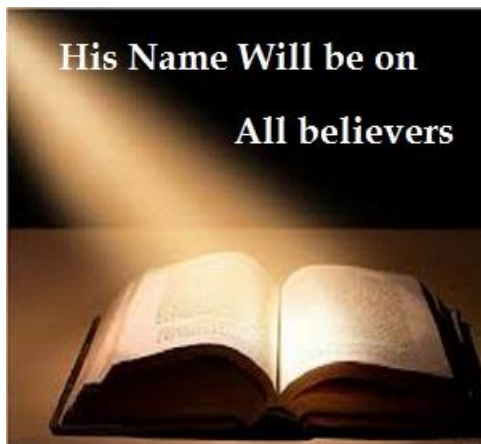
1 Thessalonians 4:17

Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Because Jesus Christ came back to life, so will all believers. All Christians, including those living when Christ returns, will live with Christ forever. Therefore, we need not despair when loved ones die or world events take a tragic turn.

God will turn our tragedies to triumphs, our poverty to riches, our pain to glory, and our defeat to victory. All believers throughout history will stand reunited in God's very presence, safe and secure. As Paul comforted the Thessalonians with the promise of the resurrection, so we should comfort and reassure each other with this great hope.

Chapter 2



His name will be on the believers

Revelation 22:4

They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.

This tree of life is like the tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9). After Adam and Eve sinned, they were forbidden to eat from the tree of life because they could not have eternal life as long as they were under sin's control. But because of the forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus, there will be no evil or sin in this city. We will be able to eat freely from the tree of life when sin's control over us is destroyed and our eternity with God is secure.

Why would the nations need to be healed if all evil is gone? John is quoting from Ezekiel 47:12, where water flowing from the temple produces trees with healing leaves. He is not implying that there will be illness in the new earth; he is emphasizing that the water of life produces health and strength wherever it goes.

“No longer will there be any curse” means that nothing accursed will be in God’s presence. This fulfills Zechariah’s prophecy (see Zech. 14:11).

In his presence is fullness of Jay

Psalm 16:11

You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hands there are pleasures forever.

This psalm is often called a Messianic psalm because it is quoted in the New Testament as referring to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Both Peter and Paul quoted from this psalm when speaking of Christ’s bodily resurrection (see Acts 2:25-28, 31; Acts 13:35-37).

David’s heart was glad—he had found the secret to joy. True joy is far deeper than happiness; we can feel joy in spite of our deepest troubles. Happiness is temporary because it is based on external circumstances, but joy is lasting because it is based on God’s presence within us. As we contemplate his daily presence, we will find contentment. As we understand the future he has for us, we will experience joy. Don’t base your life on circumstances, but on God.

David stated confidently that God would not leave him in the grave. Many people fear death because they can neither control nor understand it. As believers, we can be assured that God will not forget us when we die. He will bring us to life again to live with him forever. This provides *real* security. For other passages about resurrection, see Job 19:25-26; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2, 13; Mark 13:27; 1 Cor. 15:12-58; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:11-21:4.

Believers will be shouting to Zion

Isaiah 51:11

So the ransomed of the LORD will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, and everlasting joy will be on their heads they will obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

God's people feared Babylon, but not God. They had reason to fear Babylon for the harm it wanted to do, but they should also have realized that God's power is much greater than Babylon's. Babylon was interested in making the people captives; God was interested in setting them free.

The people had misplaced their fear and their love. Jerusalem should have feared God's power and loved his mercy.

You will enter into the joy of your master.

Matthew 25:21

"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

Jesus is coming back—we know this is true. Does this mean we must quit our jobs in order to serve God? No, it means we are to use our time, talents, and treasures diligently in order to serve God completely

in whatever we do. For a few people, this may mean changing professions. For most of us, it means doing our daily work out of love for God/

The joy of the Lord will be in you.

John 15:11

"These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

When things are going well, we feel elated. When hardships come, we sink into depression.

But true joy transcends the rolling waves of circumstance. Joy comes from a consistent relationship with Jesus Christ. When our lives are intertwined with his, he will help us walk through adversity without sinking into debilitating lows and manage prosperity without moving into deceptive highs.

The joy of living with Jesus Christ daily will keep us level-headed, no matter how high or low our circumstances.

Chapter 3



Jesus is our hope of joy.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.

The ultimate reward for Paul's ministry was not money, prestige, or fame, but new believers whose lives had been changed by God through the preaching of the gospel.

This was why he longed to see them. No matter what ministry God has given to you, your highest reward and greatest joy should be those who come to believe in Christ and are growing in him.

You will receive relief from your suffering

2 Thessalonians 1:5-7

This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,

As we live for Christ, we will experience troubles because we are trying to be God's people in a perverse world. Some people say that troubles are the result of sin or lack of faith, but Paul teaches that they may be a part of God's plan for believers.

Our problems can help us look upward and forward, instead of inward (Mark 13:35-36; Phil. 3:13-14); they can build strong character (Romans 5:3-4); and they can provide us with opportunities to comfort others who also are struggling (2 Cor. 1:3-5). Your troubles may be an indication that you are taking a stand for Christ.

There are two dimensions of the relief mentioned by Paul. We can gain relief in knowing that our sufferings are strengthening us, making us ready for Christ's kingdom.

We can also gain relief in the fact that one day everyone will stand before God; at that time, wrongs will be righted, judgment will be pronounced, and evil will be terminated.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord

Revelation 14:13

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

While it is true that money, fame, and belongings can't be taken with us from this life, God's people *can* produce fruit that survives even death. God will remember our love, kindness, and faithfulness, and those who accept Christ through our witness will join us in the new earth.

Be sure that your values are in line with God's values, and decide today to produce fruit that lasts forever.

We shall be as the angels in heaven

Matthew 22:30

"For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

The Sadducees asked Jesus what marriage would be like in heaven. Jesus said it was more important to understand God's power than know what heaven will be like.

In every generation and culture, ideas of eternal life tend to be based on images and experiences of present life. Jesus answered that these faulty ideas are caused by ignorance of God's Word. We must not make up our own ideas about eternity and heaven by thinking of it and God in human

terms. We should concentrate more on our relationship with God than about what heaven will look like. Eventually we will find out, and it will be far beyond our greatest expectations.

The glory of the Lord will illuminate the city of God.

Revelation 21:23

And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

The temple, the center of God's presence among his people, was the primary place of worship. No temple is needed in the new city, however, because God's presence will be everywhere. He will be worshiped throughout the city, and nothing will hinder us from being with him.

Those with insight will shine brightly

Daniel 12:3

"Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Many people try to be stars in the world of entertainment, only to find their stardom temporary. God tells us how we can be eternal "stars"—by being wise and leading many to God's righteousness. If we share our Lord with others, we can be true stars—radiantly beautiful in God's sight!

Chapter 4



The righteous shall shine as the sun.

Matthew 13:43

"Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father He who has ears, let him hear.

At the end of the world, angels will separate the evil from the good. There are true and false believers in churches today, but we should be cautious in our judgments because only Christ is qualified to make the final separation.

If you start judging, you may damage some of the good "plants." It's more important to judge our own response to God than to analyze others' responses.

Jesus often uses these terms to refer to the coming judgment. The weeping indicates sorrow or remorse, and gnashing of teeth shows extreme anxiety or pain. Those who say they don't care what happens to them after they die don't realize what they are saying. They will be punished for living in selfishness and indifference to God.

Those who receive God's favor stand in bright contrast to those who receive his judgment.

Light affliction will produce eternal glory.

2 Corinthians 4:17

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.

Our troubles should not diminish our faith or disillusion us. We should realize that there is a purpose in our suffering. Problems and human limitations have several benefits:

- (1) They remind us of Christ's suffering for us;
- (2) They keep us from pride;
- (3) They cause us to look beyond this brief life;
- (4) They prove our faith to others; and
- (5) They give God the opportunity to demonstrate his power. See your troubles as opportunities!

You are called out of darkness into light.

1 Peter 2:9

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellences of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Christians sometimes speak of “the priesthood of all believers.” In Old Testament times, people did not approach God directly. A priest acted as intermediary between God and sinful human beings. With Christ’s victory on the cross, that pattern changed.

Now we can come directly into God’s presence without fear (Hebrews 4:16), and we are given the responsibility of bringing others to him also (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

When we are united with Christ as members of his body, we join in his priestly work of reconciling God and man.

People often base their self-concept on their accomplishments. But our relationship with Christ is far more important than our jobs, successes, wealth, or knowledge.

God has chosen us as his very own, and we have been called to represent him to others. Remember that your value comes from being one of God’s children, not from what you can achieve. You have worth because of what *God does*, not because of what you do.

God's glory will be revealed.

Colossians 3:4

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Christ gives us power to live for him now, and he gives us hope for the future—he will return. In the rest of this chapter Paul explains how Christians should act *now* in order to be prepared for Christ's return.

The glory of Jesus will be revealed.

John 17:24

"Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Jesus' great desire for his disciples was that they would become one. He wanted them unified as a powerful witness to the reality of God's love. Are you helping to unify the body of Christ, the church?

You can pray for other Christians, avoid gossip, build others up, work together in humility, give your time and money, exalt Christ, and refuse to get sidetracked arguing over divisive matters. Jesus prayed for unity among the believers based on the believers' unity with him and the Father. Christians can know unity among themselves if they are living in union with God.

Chapter 5



You are called into his kingdom and glory.

1 Thessalonians 2:12

So that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

By his words and example, Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to live in such a way that would be worthy of God. Is there anything about your daily life that would embarrass God? What do people think of God from watching you?

Present suffering cannot compare to his revealed glory.

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Sin has caused all creation to fall from the perfect state in which God created it. So the world is subject to frustration and bondage to decay so

that it cannot fulfill its intended purpose. One day all creation will be liberated and transformed. Until that time it waits in eager expectation for the resurrection of God's children.

Elders will witness Jesus suffering and glory.

1 Peter 5:1

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed.

Elders were church officers providing supervision, protection, discipline, instruction, and direction for the other believers. *Elder* simply means "older." Both Greeks and Jews gave positions of great honor to wise older men, and the Christian church continued this pattern of leadership. Elders carried great responsibility, and they were expected to be good examples.

He will wipe all tears from your eyes.

Revelation 21:4

And 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; the first things have passed away."

Have you ever wondered what eternity will be like? The "Holy City, the new Jerusalem" is described as the place where God will "wipe every

tear from their eyes.” Forevermore, there will be no death, pain, sorrow, or crying.

What a wonderful truth! No matter what you are going through, it’s not the last word—God has written the final chapter, and it is about true fulfillment and eternal joy for those who love him.

We do not know as much as we would like, but it is enough to know that eternity with God will be more wonderful than we could ever imagine.

He will swallow up death for all time.

Isaiah 25:8

He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

When the Lord speaks, he does what he says. It is comforting to know that God’s plans and activities are closely tied to his word. When we pray according to God’s will (as expressed in the Bible) and claim his promises (as recorded in the Bible), he hears us and answers our requests.

Part of this verse is quoted in 1 Cor. 15:54 to describe Christ’s victory over death. God’s ultimate victory is seen when death, our ultimate enemy, is defeated (see also Hosea 13:14). Another part of this verse is quoted in Rev. 21:4, which describes the glorious scene of God’s presence with his people.

Chapter 6



The ransomed of the Lord will come with singing.

Isaiah 35:10

And the ransomed of the LORD will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads they will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

This highway, the “Way of Holiness,” is the way that righteous pilgrims will take from the desert of suffering to Zion (Jerusalem). It is found only by following God. Only the redeemed will travel God’s highway; they will be protected from wicked travelers and harmful animals.

God is preparing a way for his people to travel to his home, and he will walk with us. God never stops at simply pointing the way; he is always beside us as we go.

The lamb will be their shepherd and guide them.

Revelation 7:17

For the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

God will provide for his children's needs in their eternal home where there will be no hunger, thirst, or pain, and he will wipe away all tears. When you are suffering or torn apart by sorrow, take comfort in this promise of complete protection and relief.

In Rev. 7:1-8 we see the believers receiving a seal to protect them through a time of great tribulation and suffering; in Rev. 7:9-17 we see the believers finally with God in heaven.

All who have been faithful through the ages are singing before God's throne. Their tribulations and sorrows are over: no more tears for sin, for all sins are forgiven; no more tears for suffering, for all suffering is over; no more tears for death, for all believers have been resurrected to die no more.

Our citizenship is in heaven.

Philippians 3:20

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Citizens of Philippi had the same rights and privileges as the citizens of Rome, because Philippi was a Roman colony. Likewise, we Christians will one day experience all the special privileges of our heavenly citizenship, because we belong to Christ. Let us not be so tied to this life that we would be sorry to see Christ return.

The Most High will establish you.

Psalm 87:5

But of Zion it shall be said, "This one and that one were born in her";
And the Most High Himself will establish her.

The redeemed will walk without fear.

Isaiah 35:9-10

No lion will be there, nor will any vicious beast go up on it; these will not be found there but the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the LORD will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads they will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

God is preparing a way for his people to travel to his home, and he will walk with us. God never stops at simply pointing the way; he is always beside us as we go.

Chapter 7



God is preparing a city for the redeemed.

Hebrews 11:16

But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

These people of faith died without receiving all that God had promised, but they never lost their vision of heaven (“a better country—a heavenly one”). Many Christians become frustrated and defeated because their needs, wants, expectations, and demands are not immediately met when they believe in Christ.

They become impatient and want to quit. Are you discouraged because the achievement of your goal seems far away? Take courage from these heroes of faith who lived and died without seeing the fruit of their faith on earth and yet continued to believe (see Hebrews 11:36-39).

The city is made ready for God's bride.

Revelation 21:2

And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

The New Jerusalem is where God lives among his people. Instead of our going up to meet him, he comes down to be with us, just as God became man in Jesus Christ and lived among us (John 1:14). Wherever God reigns, there is peace, security, and love.

Rejoice because your names are recorded in heaven.

Luke 10:20

"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

If Jesus had been merely a man, his claims to be God would have proven him insane. But his miracles proved his words true—he really was God.

The Jewish leaders could not see beyond their own prejudices, and they looked at Jesus only from a human perspective—Jesus confined in a human box. But Jesus was not limited by their restricted vision.

Our fellow workers names are in the book of life.

Philippians 4:3

Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Paul did not warn the Philippians church of doctrinal errors, but he did address some relational problems. These two women had been workers for Christ in the church.

Their broken relationship was no small matter, because many had become believers through their efforts. It is possible to believe in Christ, work hard for his kingdom, and yet have broken relationships with others who are committed to the same cause.

But there is no excuse for remaining unreconciled.

The identity of this “loyal yokefellow” remains a mystery. It could be Epaphroditus, the bearer of this letter, or a comrade of Paul in prison. It could also be someone named Syzygus, another way to understand the word for yokefellow.

Those “whose names are in the book of life” are all who are marked for salvation through their faith in Christ (see also Luke 10:17-20; Rev. 20:11-15).

The firstborn are enrolled in heaven.

Hebrews 12:23

To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.

As Christians, we are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem right now, because Christ rules our lives, the Holy Spirit is always with us, and we experience close fellowship with other believers. The full and ultimate rewards and reality of the heavenly Jerusalem are depicted in Rev. 21.

The overcomer will be clothed in white garments.

Revelation 3:5

'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

To be “dressed in white” means to be set apart for God and made pure. Christ promises future honor and eternal life to those who stand firm in their faith. The names of all believers are registered in the book of life.

This book symbolizes God’s knowledge of who belongs to him. All such people are guaranteed a listing in the book of life and are introduced to the hosts of heaven as belonging to Christ (see Luke 12:8-9).

Chapter 8

Revelation 13:8

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

All they that dwell on earth shall worship him.

Revelation 13:8

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

The name of the Lord will be written in the foreheads.

Revelation 14:1

Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads

An onslaught of evil will occur when Satan and his helpers control the world. Rev. 14 gives a glimpse into eternity to show believers what awaits them if they endure.

The Lamb is the Messiah. Mount Zion, often another name for Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, is contrasted with the worldly empire. The 144,000 represent believers who have endured persecutions on earth

and now are ready to enjoy the eternal benefits and blessings of life with God forever.

The three angels contrast the destiny of believers with that of unbelievers.

Those on the earth will wonder at the beast.

Revelation 17:8

"The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

Rev. 12 we met the dragon (Satan). In Rev. 13 we saw the beast from the sea and the power he received from Satan. In Rev. 14-16 we see God's great judgments. In this chapter, a scarlet beast similar to the beast and the dragon appears as an ally of the great prostitute. The phrase, "was, now is not, and will come" means that the beast was alive, died, and then came back to life.

The beast's resurrection symbolizes the persistence of evil. This resurgence of evil power will convince many to join forces with the beast, but those who choose the side of evil condemn themselves to the devil's fate

The things written in the books will judge the dead.

Revelation 20:12

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things that were written in the books, according to their deeds.

At the judgment, the books are opened. They represent God's judgment, and in them are recorded the deeds of everyone, good or evil. We are not saved by deeds, but deeds are seen as clear evidence of a person's actual relationship with God.

The book of life contains the names of those who have put their trust in Christ to save them.

Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire. God's judgment is finished. The lake of fire is the ultimate destination of everything wicked—Satan, the beast, the false prophet, the demons, death, Hades, and all those whose names are not recorded in the book of life because they did not place their faith in Jesus Christ.

John's vision does not permit any gray areas in God's judgment. If by faith we have not identified with Christ, confessing him as Lord, there will be no hope, no second chance, no other appeal.

Nothing unclean shall enter heaven

Revelation 21:27

And nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Not everyone will be allowed into the New Jerusalem, but “only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (The book of life is explained in the notes on ■Rev. 3:5 and ■Rev. 20:12-15.)

Don’t think that you will get in because of your background, personality, or good behavior. Eternal life is available to you only because of what Jesus, the Lamb, has done.

Trust him today to secure your citizenship in his new creation.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation
Holy Bible: New Living Bible translation.

Additional comments and charts are taken from:

Life Application Study Bible. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print