

Whom Have I In Heaven But Thee?

The psalmist Asaph, made the statement, *“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory”*. Then he made this amazing confession, *“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee”* (Ps. 73:24-25).

Every redeemed child of God is looking forward to the prospect of heaven, and in particular, being with and like our blessed Lord Jesus. All who have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, whose sins have been forgiven, redeemed to God by the blood of Christ, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation will be there (Rev. 5:9).

Sadly, all who have never trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, whose names are not written in the book of life, will not be there, but will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

The apostle Paul described the rapture, that moment when the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven, with a shout, accompanied by the voice of an archangel and the trumpet of God, to call every believer, those living and dead, home to heaven to be forever with Himself (1st Thess. 4:13-17).

The apostle John wrote that we do not know what we shall be in that coming day, but we know that we shall be like the Lord Jesus, for we shall see Him as He is (1st Jn. 3:1-2). Paul reminds us in the book of Philippians, that the Lord Jesus will change our vile bodies to be fashioned like His glorious body, by His mighty power (Phil. 3:20-21). We are all anticipating seeing the Lord Jesus and being changed into His image, but what will heaven really be like?

In the book of the Revelation, the apostle John wrote, *“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”* (Rev. 21:2). John described the city as having the glory of God.

The magnificence and splendour of the city which John described is beyond our ability to comprehend. The wall of the city was of Jasper. Jasper is often associated with the majesty and glory of God. It is first mentioned among the precious stones of the breastplate of the high priest (Ex. 28:20). In chapter 4 of the book of the Revelation, John described the one sitting on the throne as having the appearance of jasper (vs. 3).

The city was pure gold like unto clear glass. John says the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. This would remind us of the absolute purity of that holy place. The city had twelve foundations, garnished with all manner of precious stones.

The twelve stones of the foundations of the heavenly city, like the twelve stones of the breastplate of the high priest, are linked with the twelve tribes of Israel. Over the years, Bible expositors have suggested various interpretations of what each of the gems might represent.

However we might think of them, individually and collectively, they express the manifold divine attributes and majestic glories of our God and of His Christ and symbolize the completion of the covenantal promises of God made to His people down through the ages.

There were twelve gates surrounding the city, each consisting of one pearl. This reminds us of the pearl of great price, which when a man found, sold all that he had to purchase it (Matt. 13:45-46). Paul tells us in the book of Ephesians that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25).

In addition to the beauty, majesty and glory of the heavenly city, it is a place where God shall wipe away all tears. John tells us, *“there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”* (Rev. 21:4). John also wrote concerning that holy, heavenly place, *“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him”* (Rev. 22:3).

The apostle Paul tells us in the book of Galatians, *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree”* (Gal. 3:13). In the book of Genesis, God cursed the ground because of Adam’s sin and disobedience. Adam and Eve were put out of the Garden of Eden and forbidden to eat of the tree of life. (Gen. 3:17, 22-23).

In the heavenly city, a pure river of water of life flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. On either side of the river is the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruit every month, for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:1-2).

There is no temple in the city; the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. There is no need of the sun or the moon in the city, for the glory of God lightens it and the Lamb is the light (Rev. 21:22-23). Believers now enjoy unrestricted access to the Father through the Son. What will it be when we are in His actual presence! The presence of God and the Lamb as the temple signifies the complete and eternal communion between God and His people, fulfilling the ultimate purpose of creation and redemption.

The beauties and glories of heaven are indescribable. To be in a place where there will be no sin or sorrow, no pain, no death, is more than human mind can conceive or comprehend. But what makes heaven so wonderful, is the fact that the Lord Jesus is there, and all who have been redeemed through His precious blood, will be with Him and like Him forever.

Many suggestions have been made over the years by various writers, as to what our occupation will be in our heavenly home. The Lord spoke to the people of Israel and called them His peculiar treasure (purchased possession), and said they would be a holy nation, a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:5-6).

Peter used very similar language in describing present day believers (1st Pet. 2:9). John reminds us in the book of Revelation that Jesus Christ has loved us and has washed us from our sins and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father (Rev. 1:5-6).

The Lord Jesus promised when He was in the upper room with His disciples, *“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 ye may be also”* (Jn. 14:2-3). Just before He went to the cross to secure for us the forgiveness of sins and our eternal future in heaven, He prayed to His heavenly Father, *“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me”* (Jn. 17:24).

In the Old Testament, the tribe of Levi had no inheritance in the land that God promised to Israel; the Lord was their inheritance (Num. 18:20; Deut. 18:2; Josh. 18:7). Peter encourages us as believers today, with the prospect of an inheritance reserved in heaven for us, based on the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, out from the dead (1st Pet. 1:3-4).

What a thrilling prospect for every child of God, the Lord Jesus is their inheritance in that city most fair. In the last few words of his prophecy, Ezekiel describes a city. He concludes with these words, *“the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there”* (Ezek. 48:35).

*With glad anticipation,
We wait our Lord's return;
The blessed consummation,
For which all creatures yearn.*

*When purchased souls are raptured,
Home to heaven above;
Each redeemed heart is captured,
By His unchanging love.*

*Adorned with precious jewels;
According to God's Word;
The wondrous prospect fuels,
Our service for our Lord.*

*But amidst the many wonders,
Of that heavenly, holy place;
The ransomed soul still ponders
The riches of His grace.*

*The place that we inherit,
Is purchased by His blood;
We stand upon His merit,
As kings and priests to God.*

*We wait our homeward calling,
To that blest land most fair;
The prospect most enthralling,
To know the Lord is there.*

Bernie Payne