

**FROM A GARDEN TO A CITY or  
IS HEAVEN UP OR DOWN?**

**TEXT:** Heb. 11:8-10

**INTRO.:** A. Human life began in **a garden**, but it was designed to end up in **a city**. Not a city as we know it, but a fantastic city of immense proportions and breathtaking beauty. The fact that Adam lost the title deed to the perfect place he called home was not a surprise to God, of course. So He had already had a new default destination planned for mankind. It is called Heaven. (*Apart from the new birth every human's default destination is hell!*) Millennia have passed but even so early a citizen of earth as Abraham had that new destination in mind and he called it **a city**. He was a man who had fantastic faith in **God's new plan for man – Heaven**. He longed all his life to become a citizen of that beautiful city God had created for members of His family. It is described in Revelation and it is labeled as the **"New Jerusalem"** and will become a part of the **"New Earth"**.

**Looking for a city, where we'll never die,  
There the sainted millions, never say good-bye,  
There we'll meet our Savior, and our loved ones too,  
Come O Holy Spirit, all our hopes renew**

- B. **1)** How many here are planning on living in Heaven and have made your reservations?  
**2)** How many **long** to go there? (*Before answering the next question, I want you to think carefully.*)  
Suppose I had a gun and would shoot to death anyone who answers "yes" by raising your hand.  
**3)** How many want to go there **today - NOW?!**

**ILLUS.** Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great hired a servant to stand before him daily and remind him "**Philip, you will die!**" Conversely Louis XIV wouldn't allow the word "**death**" in his presence. Even SOME believers don't like to think or talk about death. Strange! Paul did, Peter did, Stephen did, the saints in Rev. did. They were convinced that Heaven was **real** & their destination.

I graduated from Seminary and did not have one course or even one whole class on the subject of Heaven. I have been saved for 65 years and preaching for 60+ years and until the last five years I never actually studied in depth about the place I am planning on living in for eternity! I was told how to get there, but not what to expect when I arrived. I now have an entire series on the subject of Heaven. **So let's think about the city and place we will dwell in forever...**

## **I. WHERE WOULD YOU GO IF YOU DIED NOW?**

### A. The First Stop is UP:

1. Jesus is in the New Jerusalem in the third Heaven. "**absent...present**" "**where I am...**"
2. That is where your mansion is located.
  - a. You say, "Wait, we can't know anything or very little about Heaven."
  - b. The very Scripture verses we use that seem to suggest that, *actually do the opposite.*

**1 Cor 2:9-10** *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*

#### B. But the First Stop is Temporary:

**2 Cor 5:1-4** *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*

1. Though our home base will be in the New Jerusalem *in that city foursquare...*
2. God has much greater plans for us for eternity.

**ILLUS.:** Although Satan has some power over us regarding death, he is restrained by our Savior due to the fact that we are protected by His blood.

**Heb 2:14-15** *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (Jesus) also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

## II. WHERE WILL WE BE AFTER THAT?

**NOTE:** People often ask if we will know what is taking place on earth when we are in Heaven. At least until the Millennium there seems to be scriptural evidence that we will be aware and longing for the ultimate victory and eternity when all our tears will be wiped away.

**Rev 6:9-11** *And when he 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.*

### A. The Second Stop is Down:

1. The **New Earth** will be our **final destination**.
2. God's original plan was for mankind to dwell in a perfect environment on earth.
3. If Adam had not fallen the entire universe would have continued in perfect form
4. Think of what Eden and the universe were like before the fall.
  - a. The fall was a catastrophe that was not just global, but cosmic.
  - b. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Entropy means EVERYTHING decays, winds down, and dies.
  - c. That Law and the curse will be reversed after the real "BIG BANG" occurs.

**2 Peter 3:10-13** *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall 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 burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

5. The New Earth will be our permanent dwelling place - or Heaven (Heaven on earth)!

**NOTE:** Heaven is not the opposite of earth, it is the resurrection and reconstruction of earth. In a real sense the original earth (man's dwelling place) died at the fall and was cursed. It will be resurrected to suit resurrected saints. It is no coincidence that the 1<sup>st</sup> two chapters of the Bible begin with the creation of the heavens and the earth and the last 2 chapters begin with the re-creation of the heavens and the earth. Someone has said that "*earth cannot be delivered from the curse by being destroyed, but by being resurrected.*" - Alford

6. We are so used to thinking of Heaven as an ethereal, other worldly place that we forget what God had planned in the beginning and will resurrect in the end.
- a. We need to think literally instead of "spiritually" about heaven:
  - b. Was Jesus' body ethereal or real after the resurrection? (He ate and drank and walked and talked.)

c. We will be like Him.

**1 Cor 15:42-44** *So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

**Phil 3:20-21** *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

d. Were there animals on the first earth & was there a Garden?

**NOTE:** God obviously loves animals, He created so many and then saved them during Noah's Flood! So why wouldn't He make animals to exist in Heaven to give man pleasure once again? (Maybe the Flinstones who had a dinosaur pet, weren't so far off after all.)

Since man has the capability to go so deep in the ocean now, he is discovering **thousands** of previously unknown species regularly. Scientists say that about 90% of the species that once roamed our planet are extinct. Maybe the Lord will resurrect them and even add new ones?! Maybe your favorite pet won't be there, but perhaps its replacement will!

e. Did man have chores or "work" to do?

## B. The Second Stop is the New Earth & is Permanent:

1. Sin brought death...victory means the removal of death.
2. Sin meant banishment from Eden (Paradise)...victory means a return to Paradise.
3. Perfection was destroyed in the fall...perfection will be restored in the New Earth.
4. God's inheritance for His children was **the Old Earth**...His redeemed inheritance is **the New Earth**. (As sin is comprehensive now, so is redemption then!)

**NOTE:** In the song: "*This is my Father's World*" one stanza says "Jesus Who died shall be satisfied, and Heaven and earth shall be one."

Our future begins with **Change #1 = Salvation**, **Change #2 = Death**, **Change #3 = Resurrection**. But I will always be me and you will always be you!

**Rom 8:16-23** *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 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.*

**CONCL.:** Yes, we are **LOOKING FOR A CITY!** The question is where is that city? Is it Up or Down?! It is both. At first it is **UP** (the **New Jerusalem**) and then it is **DOWN** (the **New Earth**). The real question is will YOU be there?