The Doctrine of Heaven

Definition and Description

The Lord Jesus Christ as the Creator of both heaven and earth created 3 levels of heaven according to the Scriptures and they can be classified as follows: (1) 1st heaven: Earth’s atmosphere. (2) 2nd heaven: Stellar universe. (3) 3rd heaven: Abode of God, the angels and the dead believers. The present 3rd heaven is abode of all 3 members of the Trinity and of elect angels as well as all believers throughout human history in every dispensation. It is the present location of the Appeal Trial of Satan and all the fallen angels before the Supreme Court of heaven. The present heaven will be destroyed at the termination of human history, which is this appeal trial itself. The Lord Jesus Christ will create a new heavens and a new earth for the eternal state, which immediately follows the Great White Throne Judgment at the conclusion of Appeal Trial, which is the conclusion of human history itself.

Vocabulary


1st Heaven

The original languages of Scripture teach that there are 3 levels of heaven. This multiplicity of heavens is indicated in Hebrews 4:14 where our Lord at His Ascension is said to have “passed through the heavens” (accusative masculine plural noun ouranos). The 1st and 2nd heaven are not specifically mentioned but the 3rd heaven is discussed in 2 Corinthians 12:2. Logically speaking, it is evident that there cannot be a 3rd heaven without also a 1st and 2nd heaven.

The 1st heaven is the earth’s atmosphere which surrounds the earth and is composed of the following 7 layers: (1) Troposphere (2) Stratosphere (3) Mesosphere (4) Thermosphere (5) Exonosphere (6) Ionosphere (7) Magnetosphere. Atmospheric scientists commonly divide the earth’s atmosphere into 5 layers or regions on the basis of the vertical distribution of temperature: (1) Troposphere (2) Stratosphere (3) Mesosphere (4) Thermosphere (5) Exosphere.

The troposphere, the region in contact with the earth’s surface is characterized by a decrease of temperature with increasing altitude. It extends in height from approximately 4 to 5 miles at the poles to about 11 miles at the equator. Above this region is the stratosphere in which temperature rises with increasing altitude to about 30 miles. The troposphere and the stratosphere show distinct circulation systems. Above this lies the mesosphere, which is characterized by a rapid decrease of temperature. Like the troposphere, this region is subject to strong seasonal...
variations of temperature at high altitudes. Beyond the mesosphere is the thermosphere where the temperature rapidly rises attaining a maximum temperature of 1832 degrees above Fahrenheit at about 240 miles. The increase in temperature ceases at this height, beyond which lies the exosphere, the highest layer of the earth’s atmosphere. The density of the atmosphere is so low in this layer that molecular collisions rarely occur and hence the concept of temperature loses its meaning. In the exosphere, light atoms, such as those of hydrogen and helium, may acquire sufficient velocity to escape the earth’s gravitational pull. The bulk of the earth’s atmosphere consists of electrically neutral atoms and molecules. At high altitudes however a significant fraction of the atmosphere is electrically charged. This region is generally called the ionosphere. It extends throughout the mesosphere and thermosphere but is most important and distinct at altitudes above 80 kilometers. It is defined by the Institute of Radio Engineers as “the part of the earth’s upper atmosphere where ions and electrons are present in quantities sufficient to affect the propagation of radio waves.” Satan and the fallen angels are very much in control of this particular region of the earth’s atmosphere (Eph. 2:2).

Ionosphere begins near the top of the stratosphere and extends essentially throughout the mesosphere and thermosphere. Another region of the atmosphere identified by parameters other than temperature gradient is the magnetosphere. This vast region in which charged particles have energies greater than those corresponding to thermal velocities and move along the flux lines of the earth’s magnetic field.

The 1st heaven was created in an instant (Gen. 1:1), and restored on the 2nd day (Gen. 1:7). In the OT, the 1st heaven is often metaphorically conceived as something fixed and material having: (1) Windows (Gen. 7:11). (2) Pillars (Job 26:11). (3) Foundations (2 Sam. 22:8). (4) It can be torn (Isa. 63:19) like a curtain (cf. Mark 1:10). (5) The 1st heaven is the “firmament” called raqia in the Hebrew (Gen. 1:8).


The 1st heaven is the location of the rainbow, God’s sign of his covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:13-17). Our Lord at His Ascension passed through the earth’s atmosphere, i.e., the 1st heaven (Acts 1:9-11). An invisible war is taking place in the Church Age between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness throughout the 7 layers of the earth’s atmosphere as part of the angelic conflict (Dan. 10:20; Eph. 2:2; 6:11-17) and will visibly manifest itself during the Tribulation period (Rev. 6-19). The Church is under attack from the kingdom of darkness, which conducts its operations against the Church “in the heavenlies (en plus the locative of sphere tois epouranious)” or within the sphere of the earth’s atmosphere (Eph. 6:12). Satan is called in the Greek, “ton archonta tes exousias tou aeros, “the ruler of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). He has tes exousias, “the authority or the power” over the earth’s atmosphere. He is archon tou kosmou toutou, “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

Catastrophic atmospheric conditions as a part of God’s judgment upon a Christ rejecting world will occur during the last 3 and half years of the Tribulation (Rev. 6-19). The Rapture will take place in the earth’s atmosphere delivering the Church from “the wrath to come” upon the earth during the Tribulation period (1 Thess. 1:10; 4:13-17; 5:9; 2 Thess. 2:1).

2nd Heaven

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The 2nd heaven is the stellar universe or space, which consists of a vast array of stars, moons, suns, galaxies and solar systems. Angelic beings populate the stellar universe. The pre-historic battleground of the angelic conflict stretches into this region known as the 2nd heaven.

In astronomy the stellar universe is referred to as the cosmos. The cosmos contain the entire physical universe consisting of all objects and phenomena observed and postulated as well as invisible angelic beings. The principal components of the universe are the galaxies, stars and stellar groupings, and nebulae. Substantially smaller components include the solar system and any other assemblage of planets, satellites, comets, and meteoroids revolving around a central stellar body that may exist among the millions of galaxies. The universe also contains gravitational fields and various forms of radiation.

An American astronomer Edwin Powell Hubble stated that the vast stellar universe was a result of a big bang or explosion, which is alleged to occur 10,000,000,000 years ago. This theory states that all of the matter in the universe was closely packed together in an incredibly dense state (although he doesn’t indicate how it came to be this way) and that everything then simply exploded in a big bang. His theory that the universe had a beginning, which he calls the big bang, has produced big problems for scientists since it implies a creation event thus fulfilling the principle of cause and effect. Science cannot explain who or what started the universe. Science can only observe the creation. Only theology and specifically biblical Christianity can answer the question. Creation could not have taken place by itself or without an intelligent being initiating it.

Creation is the work of the 2nd Person of the Trinity, God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Chaos is the work of Satan. Restoration is the work of the 3rd Person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit. The stellar universe was created in an instant by the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 33:6; 115:15; 124:8; 134:3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:3).

The OT and NT Scriptures state dogmatically that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe (John 1:3; Col. 1:16-17). He created the universe out of nothing. It was initially created exclusively for the angels. It underwent a catastrophic change as a result of Satan’s rebellion against God (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:11-19). This rebellion and the resultant destruction of the earth and universe took place between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. Therefore, the earth had to be restored.

Genesis 1:2 states that earth was “formless” and “void” and there was no light in the universe. Angels need light to function but all light in the universe was turned off as part of God’s judgment of the angels (Psa. 148:3; 2 Cor. 11:14). Creation is different from Restoration. Creation is making something out of nothing. Restoration is fixing something up after it has been destroyed. God the Holy Spirit is responsible for the restoration of the earth and the universe from the chaos, which resulted from Satan’s rebellion (Gen. 1). Everyone in the Trinity was involved in the Restoration of the earth. God the Father planned the restoration. God the Holy Spirit actually restored or fixed the earth that had been preserved under the ice (Gen. 1:2b-20). God the Son created and sustained the new things that were going to be put on the earth such as mankind (Gen. 1:21, 27; Heb. 1:2).

The work of restoration and creation from the chaos took 6 days and was perfect (Gen. 1). 1st day: The Lord restored the day and the night (Gen. 1:3-5). 2nd day: He restored the sky and the air for living things to breathe (Gen. 1:6-8). 3rd day: He restored the waters gather so that dry land could appear and plants could grow (Gen. 1:9-11). 4th day: He restored the stellar universe (Gen. 1:14-19). 5th day: He created animal life on the earth (Gen. 1:20-21). 6th day:
He created man (Gen. 1:26-28). The entire stellar universe was restored on the 4th day of creation and restoration of the earth and heavens. The creation and restoration of the universe was for a distinct purpose. According to Genesis 1:14-19, the “lights” in the stellar universe surrounding the earth were to serve a 5-fold purpose: (1) Separate the day from the night on the earth. (2) Signs (3) Seasons (4) Days (5) Years.

3rd Heaven

The 3rd heaven was also created by the Lord Jesus Christ (Psa. 102:25; 115:15; 124:8; 134:3; Isa. 45:12; 51:13; Jer. 32:17; Zech. 12:1; John 1:3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:10). He will also be the Creator of the new heavens and new earth (Isa. 65:17). The Scriptures teach that the 3rd heaven is the abode of the Trinity (Gen. 14:19, 22; 23:3, 7; 1 Kings 8:30, 49; 2 Chron. 6:21, 30; Neh. 1:4-5; 2:4, 20; Psa. 11:4; 20:6; 33:14; 103:19; Isa. 63:5; 66:1; Matt. 5:34; Luke 16:9; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 7:56; 2 Cor. 12:2; Heb. 2:10; Rev. 19:14).

Although it is true that the Scriptures teach that “the heaven of heavens cannot contain God” (1 Kings 8:27), and that God is omnipresent in the universe, nevertheless, they clearly affirm that heaven is in a particular way the habitation of God (Isa. 57:15; 63:15). The Lord Jesus Christ during His 1st Advent repeatedly stated that He came from heaven (John 3:13, 27, 31; 6:38, 41-42, 50-51, 58). The humanity of Christ’s substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross reconciled all things in both heaven and earth thus including angels as well as humanity (Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:20). He is in heaven now seated at the right hand of God (Psa. 110:1; Acts 2:33; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13; 1 Pet. 3:22). He will come again invisibly from heaven at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-17). He will visibly come again from heaven at the 2nd Advent to bring to a conclusion the Armageddon War and initiate His Millennial reign on planet earth (Zech. 12; 14:1-7; Matt. 24:29-31; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7).

The 3rd heaven is located billions and billions of light years away from the earth above the 1st and 2nd heavens. A light-year in astronomy is the distance traveled by light moving in a vacuum in the course of 1 year, at its velocity of 186,282 miles per second. A light-year equals about 5,878 x 10,000,000,000,000 miles, or 63,240 astronomical units. The branch of learning that deals with phenomena at the scale of many millions of light-years is called cosmology. The term cosmology is derived from combining 2 Greek words, cosmos meaning “order, harmony,” and the “world,” and logos, meaning “word.”

Cosmology is, in effect, the study of the universe at large. On cosmological scales, the use of light-travel times to measure distances assumes a special significance because the lengths become so vast that even light, traveling at the fastest speed attainable by any physical entity, takes a significant fraction of the age of the universe, roughly 10,000,000,000 years, to travel from an object to an observer. Thus, when astronomers measure objects at cosmological distances from the Local Group which consists of the Magellanic Clouds, the Andromeda galaxy, and the Milky Way system which are all part of an aggregation of 2 dozen or so neighboring galaxies.

Astronomers are seeing objects as they existed during a time when the universe was much younger than it is today. Under these circumstances Albert Einstein taught in his theory of general relativity that the gravitational field of everything in the universe so warps space and time as to require a very careful reevaluation of quantities whose seemingly elementary natures are normally taken for granted. The observed expansion of the universe immediately raises the spectre that the universe is evolving, that it had a beginning and will have an end. Encyclopaedia
Britannica makes the following comment, “The steady state alternative, postulated by a British school of cosmologists in 1948, is no longer considered viable by most astronomers. Yet, the notion that the Cosmos had a beginning, while in common in many theologies, raises deep and puzzling questions for science, for it implies a creation event—a creation not only of all the mass-energy that now exists in the universe but also perhaps of space-time itself” (15th edition, volume 16, The Cosmos, page 762).

Robert Jastrow, an astrophysicist and director of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies made this comment, “Now we see how the astronomical evidence supports the biblical view of the origin of the world.... The essential elements in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are the same. Consider the enormousness of the problem: Science has proved that the universe exploded into being at a certain moment. It asks what cause produced this effect? Who or what put the matter and energy into the Universe? And science cannot answer these questions.... For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason; the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been there for centuries.”

Psalm 94:8, “Pay heed, you senseless among the people; and when will you understand, stupid ones. Psalm 104:24, “O’Lord, how many are Thy works. In wisdom Thou hast made them all; the earth is full of Thy possessions". Colossians 1:16-17, "For by Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things and in Him all things hold together.” Psalm 148:1-6, “Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights. Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts. Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light. Praise Him, the highest heavens, and the waters that are above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He (the Lord Jesus Christ) commanded and they were created. He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away.”

William Cullen Bryant eloquently wrote, “My heart is awed within me, when I think of the great miracle which still goes on, in silence, round me—the perpetual work of Thy creation, finished, yet renewed, for ever.

We know that through the law of cause and effect, that the law requires an adequate cause for every effect. The universe must have been created by a superior being whom the Bible dogmatically has stated is the Lord Jesus Christ. John 1:3, “All things came into being by Him (the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ), and apart from Him nothing came into existence that has come into existence.”

Description of Heaven

Paul states that “inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak” are heard in heaven (2 Cor. 12:1-4). Heaven is the place where Paul says “eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not entered into the right lobe of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9). Heaven is a place of beauty (Rev. 21:1-22:7). It is a place of eternal life (1 Tim. 4:8). Both the present heaven and the new heaven are a place of service to God (Rev. 22:3). Heaven is a place of worship (Rev. 19:1-3). It is a place of glory (2 Cor. 4:17-18). There will be no tears or unhappiness in the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:3). The
reason for this is that only perfect righteousness will be allowed in the new heavens and earth (2 Pet. 3:13).

The throne room of God is located in the 3rd heaven and from which proceed His judgments (Job 1-2; Isa. 6; Jer. 14:21; Psal. 14:2; 103:19; Acts 7:49; Heb. 12:2; Rev. 3:21; 19:4; 22:1). The New Jerusalem is located in heaven (Rev. 21:2). The temple of God is also located in heaven along with the tabernacle (2 Sam. 22:7; Isa. 6:1; Heb. 8). God the Father’s house is located in heaven (John 14:1-2). Our Lord Jesus Christ in Hypostatic Union as part of His High Priestly prayer promised His Bride, the Church, a dwelling place in heaven (John 14:1-3). The Church Age believer’s true home and citizenship is not on planet earth but in heaven (Phil. 3:20). The resurrection bodies of believers are located in heaven (2 Cor. 5:1-2). Heaven is the location of the winner believer’s Escrow Blessings (Eph. 1:3). It is the place where the resurrected humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ in Hypostatic Union conducts the government of the kingdom of God as the ruler of all creation including the 3rd heaven (Psa. 110:1-2; Matt. 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62; 16:19; Luke 20:42; 22:69; Acts 2:33-34; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 3:20-22; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).

Sometimes heaven itself is said to be the throne of God (Isa. 66:1; Matt. 5:34; Heb. 8:1). God the Father’s house is said to be located in heaven (Psalm 61:4; John 14:1-2). The Trinity is said to dwell in the 3rd heaven (1 Kings 8:12). Thus, God is often called the “the God of heaven” (Gen. 24:3, 7; 2 Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1:2; Neh. 1:4; Dan. 2:37, 44). Heaven is now the place where the Lord Jesus Christ in Hypostatic Union presently sits at the right hand of God the Father intercessing for believers in the Church Age as part of His High Priestly Session (Heb. 8:1).

The 3rd heaven is the location of the Supreme Court of Heaven, which is composed of all 3 members of the Trinity Who are presiding over the Appeal Trial of Satan and the fallen angels. Heaven will also be a place of great inequality due to the fact that some believers on earth will have positive volition towards Bible doctrine thus executing the Plan of God for the Church Age and there will be the majority who exercised negative volition towards Bible doctrine and were not faithful in executing the Plan of God (1 Cor. 15:41; Luke 19:17). There will be winner and loser believers in heaven with the winner believers receiving greater honor and privileges than the loser believers as a reward for their faithfulness to the Plan of God while on planet earth (Luke 19:17; Rev. 2-3). Equality on earth means inequality in heaven and in the eternal state.

Inhabitants of Heaven

The inhabitants of heaven: (1) The Trinity (2) Elect Angels (3) OT saints (4) The Church. Heaven is served by innumerable angels, their hosts and families. It is the sphere of their existence (Matt. 18:10; Mark 12:25; 13:32; Eph. 3:15). They come from heaven and return to it either individually (Matt. 28:2; Luke 22:43), or in hosts (Luke 2:15). Elect angels or angels who did not enter into rebellion with Satan against God have access to heaven. Also, Satan and the fallen angels still have access to heaven because of their Appeal Trial (Job 1; Zech. 3). Old Testament saints are now located in the 3rd heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ as a result of His trip to a compartment of Hades called Paradise (Luke 23:43; Eph. 4:8-10).

Hades has 2 compartments that apply to humans: (1) Paradise (2) Torments. Paradise was the resting place of OT saints before the resurrection of our Lord. Our Lord led these OT saints to heaven as part of His triumphal possession into heaven after His ascension. Torments at this time is the present location of all unbelievers throughout human history-past, present and future (Luke 16:19-31). All unbelievers presently located in Torments will be brought to the Great White
Throne Judgment at the end of human history (Rev. 20:11-15). They will judged according to their “deeds” or their human good works and not according to their sins because their sins were all imputed to the perfect sinless humanity of Christ on the Cross and judged by the justice of God the Father (Matt. 27:45-46).

Also, all Church Age believers are located in heaven at this time. Every Church Age believer who dies immediately goes home to the 3rd heaven and is “face to face with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:23). All believers throughout human history will arrive instantly in heaven at the moment of physical death. The Rapture generation will not have to face physical death but will immediately be translated receiving a resurrection body and meeting the Lord and the rest of the “dead in Christ” in the earth’s atmosphere (1 Thess. 4:13-17). Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ during the 7 year period called the Great Tribulation will immediately go to the 3rd heaven and be with the Lord after dying and will come back with Him at His 2nd Advent reigning with Him during the Millennium (Rev. 7:14-17; 14:13; 15:1-4).

**Session of Christ**

The Session of our Lord Jesus Christ takes place in the 3rd heaven where in His resurrected humanity in Hypostatic Union as the unique theanthropic Person of the universe He sits at the right hand of God the Father as ruler of the universe. The Ascension of Christ was the transfer of our Lord’s true humanity from planet earth to the third heaven in a resurrection body (Acts 1:9-11; Eph. 4:8-10). Our Lord remained on earth for 40 days after the resurrection (Acts 1:1-3).

The Ascension of Christ demonstrates the vertical travel of the resurrection body through the earth’s atmosphere, the galaxies of the stellar universe, and billions of light years in an instant, and then entering the third heaven where the throne of God is.

The Session of Christ pertains to the glorification of our Lord’s humanity at the right hand of God the Father (Psa. 110:1, 5; Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; 16:19; Acts 2:33-34; 7:55-56; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13; Heb. 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22). Our Lord received His third royal title as “King of kings and Lord of lords, the bright morning star.” He had a royal title but no royal family. As a result of receiving this 3rd royal title, the Church Age was inserted to call out a Royal Family for our Lord’s new title.

The Session of Christ points to: (1) His deity (Matt. 26:64) (2) His kingship (Rev. 4:2) (3) His fulfillment of Messianic prophecies (Psa. 110:1; cf. Matt. 22:44) (4) His ascension into heaven (Acts 2:34) (5) His eternal rewards (Rev. 3:21) (6) The power made available to every Church Age believer (Eph. 1:20) (7) Our position in Christ (Eph. 2:6) (8) His intercessory ministry (Rom. 8:34) (9) His power to save and forgive sin (Acts 5:31) (10) His hypostatic union (Heb. 1:3) (11) His royal priesthood (Heb. 8:1) (12) The efficacy of His work on the Cross (Heb. 10:12) (13) Occupation with Christ (Heb. 12:2) (14) His trip to Hades (Eph. 4:9). (15) His victory over Satan in the angelic conflict (Heb. 1:13; 2:8).

**Appeal Trial of Satan**

The 3rd heaven is at this present time a place of conflict and has been for quite some time due to Satan and the fallen angels. The Appeal Trial of Satan is presently taking place in heaven where the Supreme Court of heaven resides. In fact, there will be war in heaven at the end of the dispensation of the Church, which is actually the Rebuttal Phase of Satan’s Appeal Trial. Other
religions depict heaven as a place of complete peace at this present time but the NT does not teach this.

Heaven was and is, even in the period after Christ’s 1st Advent, a place of conflict. God exercises wrath against the demonic attack that threatens to remove Him from His sovereign throne. The Christian does not seek ultimate release in this dispensation or in the heaven of this age, for this age is impregnated with evil and hence subject to wrath. Rather, those who are “in Christ” here on earth and those who are “with Christ” in heaven anticipate that day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall appear and by divine power end the demonic threat by casting Satan and the fallen angels into the Lake of Fire at the end of human history which is the Appeal Trial itself, and inaugurate the eternal state of glory. Then shall every believer in Christ fully rejoice and in resurrection bodies eternally reign with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the new heavens and new earth.

Satan and the fallen angels presently have access to the 3rd heaven as part of this Appeal Trial (Job 1-2; Zech. 3; Rev. 12:7-12); therefore, it is not a place of peace. Heaven will finally become a place of peace when Michael and the elect angels of God wage war against Satan and the fallen angels and casts them out of heaven onto the earth during the middle of the Tribulation period (Rev. 12:7-11; cf. Luke 10:18).

The believer’s confidence still remains in the present 3rd heaven because it is where the resurrected humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ in Hypostatic Union now sits at the right hand of God the Father (Col. 1:5, 27). It is the presence of the resurrected humanity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Hypostatic Union, which makes heaven so appealing at this time even though heaven has been contaminated by the presence of evil and rebellion from Satan and the fallen angels.

Citizenship in Heaven

The Church Age believer’s “citizenship” is heaven (Phil. 3:20). The Greek word for “citizenship” employed by the apostle Paul is the noun politeuma, which meant a great deal during the days of the Roman Empire in which Paul lived. Those who had politeuma or citizenship in the Roman Empire were privileged individuals. Paul uses the politeuma metaphor to teach the principle to the royal family of God the privileges of the Plan of God for the Church Age and the importance of becoming invisible heroes. It teaches the Church Age believer that they have a home in a place of privilege-heaven. It teaches Church Age believers that they have privileges as citizens of heaven. This great privilege means great responsibility. Heaven is the source of the Church Age believer’s politeuma, “citizenship.”

A politeuma in the Roman Empire was a Roman colony in a foreign land. The Church Age believer’s politeuma is in heaven. Our colony comes from heaven. Church Age believers are presently living in a foreign land known as the devil’s world. We are ambassadors for Christ in this foreign land (2 Cor. 5:20). Born again believers are a special privileged group of individuals.

The politeuma metaphor in Philippians 3:20 teaches the royal family of God are a colony of heavenly citizens with great privileges and responsibilities. Ephesians 1:3 states that the Church Age believer has been blessed “with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.” The doctrine of current positional truth which is a result of the Baptism of the Spirit states that the Church Age believer is currently seated with Christ “in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6). God the Holy Spirit through the Baptism of the Spirit places every Church Age believer in union with Christ for a specific purpose and reason as stated in Ephesians 2:7,
“in order that in the ages to come He (God the Father) might show the surpassing riches of His grace in graciousness towards us (Church Age believers) in Christ Jesus.” God is manifesting His infinite wisdom and grace which is the expression and reflection of His perfect integrity through the Church as stated in Ephesians 3:10, “in order that the multidimensional wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the rulers and the authorities (fallen angels) located in the heavenlies (1st, 2nd and 3rd heaven).” Church Age believers are said to be “partakers of a heavenly calling (election)” (Heb. 3:1). Therefore, the Church Age believer just as the illustrious members of God’s Hall of Fame are to “desire a better country, that is a heavenly one” where God has prepared the New Jerusalem for them (Heb. 11:16). The Church Age believers are citizens of the New Jerusalem.

Post-Rapture Events in Heaven

Church Age believers will receive their resurrection bodies at the Rapture (1 Cor. 15:51-57; 1 Thess. 4:13-17). There will be 3 major events following the Rapture or exit-resurrection (exanastasis) of the Church in heaven: (1) Bema Seat Evaluation: Involving all believers (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10). (2) Winner believers are presented by the Lord Jesus Christ to the Father (Rev. 3:5). (3) Marriage of the Lamb: Involving all believers (Rev. 19:7).

There will be 1 major event on the earth following the Rapture of the Church-the Great Tribulation period. The Bema Seat Judgment of Christ is the evaluation of the lives of all Church Age believers and will take place in the earth’s atmosphere. 2 Corinthians 5:8 states that every Church Age believer must “appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” This is judgment is not to determine salvation which was already accomplished for every believer at the moment of personal faith in Jesus Christ on earth. This judgment is an evaluation of the believer’s works whether they were done with proper motivation from the application of metabolized doctrine under the enabling power of God the Holy Spirit or from the power of the old sin nature (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:11-15). The believer’s works will be tested by fire (1 Cor. 3:11-15). God will only accept that which was performed by His power and not the old sin nature. A perfect God can only accept that which is performed by perfect power, therefore, the believer must perform his good deeds by employing the 2 great power options: (1) Filling of the Spirit. (2) Bible Doctrine.

The believer who executes the Plan of God through the application of doctrine while under the energizing power of God the Holy Spirit will receive rewards at the Bema Seat Evaluation. The believer’s rewards consist of: (1) Crown of life (Rev. 2:10). (2) Crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:7-8). (3) Crown of glory for the Pastor-Teacher (1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Thess. 2:19-20; 1 Cor. 9:24-27). (4) Order of the morning star or the uniform of glory (Rev. 3:4). (5) New Knighthood (Rev. 2:17). (6) New Title in the Lamb’s book of life. (7) Membership to the Paradise Club and access to the Gazebo in the Garden (Rev. 2:7, 14). (8) The winner believer will have his name recorded in the historical record section of heaven (Rev. 3:12). (9) The winner believer will be acknowledged (homologeo) before God the Father in heaven by the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 3:5).

The loser believer’s will remain in the earth’s atmosphere until the winner believer’s have been acknowledged before the Father in heaven. Rank has its privileges. Winner believer’s will have great rewards and will rule on earth with the Lord Jesus Christ during the Millennium while losers will simply receive a resurrection body.

The other great event in heaven that will take place is the Marriage of the Lamb, i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ. The Marriage follows the events of the Bema Seat Evaluation. It takes place in heaven for no other location would fit a heavenly people (Phil. 3:20). The participants of the
Marriage of the Lamb are the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bride, the Church. The friends of the Bride and the Bridegroom are the Old Testament believers. The Marriage Supper, which is distinct from the Marriage, which takes place on earth and involves regenerate Israel in the Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 22:1-14; Luke 14:16-24; Matt. 25:1-13). Regenerate Israel will be waiting on earth for the return of the Bridegroom and Bride at the 2nd Advent, which takes place at the conclusion of the Great Tribulation period.

New Jerusalem

The Lord has built a city for His heavenly people (John 14:1-3; Heb. 11:16). The Lord is the architect and builder of this city (Heb. 11:10). This city is called the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God (Heb. 12:22). It is a literal city and the Word of God describes it in detail. The believer is to diligently seek or desire for the time when he will live in the New Jerusalem (Heb. 13:14).

Church Age believers who are winners in time will have their names recorded in its permanent record section and will have their names permanently inscribed upon the pillars of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 3:12a). The New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven from God (Rev. 3:12b; 21:2, 10). It is called the “holy city” because no unrighteousness or evil will be allowed in it for all eternity (Rev. 21:2a, 8, 27). It will be a city of integrity and virtue.

Inhabitants of the city: (1) The Trinity (2) The Church (3) Regenerate Israel from the theocentric and eschatological dispensations. (4) Regenerate Gentile believers from the theocentric and eschatological dispensations. (5) Elect Angels.

There will be no suffering or death taking place in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:4). Satan and the fallen angels will have already been cast in the Lake of Fire along with unregenerate human beings (Rev. 20:11-15). The New Jerusalem will be suspended in the 1st heaven above the earth. It will be located in the new heavens and the new earth. The New Jerusalem is city designed by God for the eternal state.

The apostle John describes the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:11-27. The structure of the city is composed of: (1) Great and High Wall (Rev. 21:12). (2) Twelve Gates with 12 Angels on guard at each of the 12 gates with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel on them (Rev. 21:12). (3) 3 Gates will be located on the north, south, east and west (Rev. 21:13). (4) Twelve Foundation Stones with the names of each of the 12 apostles inscribed on them (Rev. 21:14). (5) The city will be laid out like a square and measures 1500 miles in length on all four sides (Rev. 21:16). (6) The length, width and height of the city are all equal in measure (Rev. 21:16). (7) The wall measures 72 yards (Rev. 21:17). (8) The walls are made of jasper (Rev. 21:18a). (9) The city is made of pure gold like glass (Rev. 21:18). (10) The foundation stones with the names of the 12 apostles on them will be adorned with every precious stone.


The 12 twelve gates are 12 pearls and each one of the gates was a single pearl (Rev. 21:21). There was no temple in the city because “the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb are its temple” (Rev. 21:22). The city will have no need of the sun or the moon for “the glory of God” will illuminate it and its lamp is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Lamb (Rev. 21:23; 22:5). The nations of the new earth will walk by its light since it will be permanently suspended above the new earth (Rev. 21:24). There will be no day or nighttime and its gates will never be closed.
because there will no longer be any war (Rev. 21:25). The glory and honor of the nations shall be brought into it (Rev. 21:26). The only individuals who will be allowed into the city will be the elect angels and regenerate humanity (Rev. 21:27). Those who rejected Christ as Savior will be suffering in the Lake of Fire forever and ever and will therefore not be found in this city or trying to enter its gates (Rev. 20:11-15). There will be a river in the middle of its only street called the “water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1-2). The tree of life will be on either side of the river bearing 12 kinds of different fruit which it will yield every month (Rev. 22:2).

Regenerate humanity and elect angels will serve the Lord in this city throughout the eternal state and there will no longer be any curse (Rev. 22:3). We shall see the Lord’s face and His title shall be on our foreheads (Rev. 22:4).


**Destruction of Heaven**

The present heaven will be destroyed by our Lord at the end of human history and a new heavens and a new earth will be created by Him (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1). In fact, Hebrews 1:10-11 quoting Psalm 102:25-27 states that the present heaven and earth “will perish...will become old as a garment” and “as a mantle” the Lord Jesus Christ “will roll them up...as a garment they (the present heavens and earth) will be changed.” The new heaven and new earth will be the real place of perfect happiness, peace and righteousness because no form of evil and unrighteousness will be allowed into it (2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1-8). The presence of evil in the universe as a result of Satan and the fallen angels rebellion resulting in the appeal trial require that the Lord Jesus Christ create a new heavens and a new earth.

The fact that God the Father as part of the divine decree allowed the free will of angels and man to co-exist with His sovereign will, resulting in disobedience to His sovereign will, demands that the Lord Jesus Christ create a new heavens and new earth where there will no longer exist the presence of evil and rebellion to His sovereign will. Then what our Lord stated on the throne of God and was recorded by the apostle John under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit will come to pass, “the first things have passed away (the present heavens and earth)...behold I (the Lord Jesus Christ in Hypostatic Union) am making all things new” (Rev. 21:4-5).

**Creation of a New Heaven**

The new heavens and new earth will be created for the eternal state. The new heavens and new earth will be a place of perfect integrity for there will be the absence of evil in its midst (2 Pet. 3:13). Thus, the eternal state will be the fulfillment of 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, “then comes the end (of human history), when He (the Lord Jesus Christ in Hypostatic Union as the God-Man) delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He (the Lord Jesus Christ) has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He (the Lord Jesus Christ) must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death (eternal state). For He (God the Father) has put all things in subjection under His (the Lord Jesus Christ) feet. But when He says, ‘All things are put in
subjection,’ it is evident that He (God the Father) is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him (the Lord Jesus Christ). And when all things are subjected to Him (the Lord Jesus Christ), then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One (God the Father) Who subjected all things to Him (the Lord Jesus Christ), that God may be all in all.”

The eternal state can only take place when the Lord Jesus Christ creates the new heavens and new earth. The eternal state takes place after the completion of Satan’s appeal trial, which is human history. The appeal trial terminates after the Gog revolution, which Satan initiates on earth (Rev. 20:7-9). It will take place after the execution of the sentence against Satan and the fallen angels when they are cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10). It will take place after the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-14).

The apostle John describes the new heaven and the new earth in Revelation 21:1-3, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away (2 Pet. 10-13), and there is no longer any sea (formerly the prison cell for the bena ha elohim, fallen angels who had sex with women during the antediluvian age of Noah). And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men (the Lord Jesus Christ in Hypostatic Union), and He (the Lord Jesus Christ) shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He (the Lord Jesus Christ in Hypostatic Union) shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’”