



# My Bible School Lessons

Exploring the Word of God

## Lesson #8: "Views of Heaven"

SCRIPTURE READING: REVELATION 21 AND 22

**Memory Verse: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." Revelation 21:1.**

God has a plan to restore "all things" to their Edenic perfection. This hope has been held out to the human race—lost in sin and insecurity by "all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). Yes, from Moses right down through John, the promise of a better world has brought cheer to man, like a bright morning star burning on the gray horizon. At the center of that plan of restoration is a divine person, Jesus. He is called, by Peter, "the day star" of hope (2 Peter 1:19). When He came to earth He said that the "Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Let us see:

### 1: WHAT FOUR TREASURES DID GOD GIVE TO MAN AT CREATION?

#### 1. Life.

**Genesis 2:7: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul."**

In the beginning man was given life. He was created from the dust of the ground. God breathed into his nostril the breath of life. He became "a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Man had not existed before. He did not create himself. For his very existence he was indebted to God—only to God.

#### 2. A righteous nature.

**Genesis 1:26: "God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness."**

**Ecclesiastes 7:29: "God hath made man upright."**

God gave Adam, the first man, a righteous nature. Surely a good, wise, and all-powerful God would do no less than that. A good God would desire to make a good man. And this is exactly what He did. Adam and Eve, our first ancestors (Luke 3:38), were innocent and pure when they came forth from the hand of their Creator.

#### 3. A home in a beautiful world.

**Genesis 2:8-9: "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food."**

**Genesis 1:31: "God saw every thing He had made, and, behold, it was very good."**

Yes, God gave man a home, in a garden, in a lovely primeval world. This is no more and no less than we would expect God to do. He is the author of the home and marriage, of beauty and happiness. Security was to be bound up with the home and family life.

#### **4. Dominion of the earth.**

***Genesis 1:28:"God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."***

God gave man dominion. Although man was made "a little lower than the angels," yet he was equipped with intelligence and management, that he might be in charge of God's creation here (*Psalms 8:5-6*).

What an outlook! Life with abundant health: a righteous character: a home in a beautiful, sinless world; and dominion over the created works of God! What more could man desire? Just one thing—that this happy state might last forever!

And that depended upon man. For God placed him under obedience to law as an indispensable condition of his very existence.

Furthermore, God gave to man the power and freedom of choice. Only in this way could man be a morally responsible being. Only thus could he develop character. "Obedience, perfect and perpetual, was the condition of eternal happiness." In God's order, obedience springs from love and is rendered by choice. But it is, nevertheless, imperative.

A special test was arranged. A certain tree was to be left strictly alone (*Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17*). What an easy test! No great deed, work, or sacrifice was required. There could be no possible reason for transgression. The very lightness of the prohibition would make the sin great. If man sinned, it would be deliberate. God could not be blamed, for He had told them to leave the tree alone. They must have understood this to be a simple test of their faith—nothing more. But we all know what happened (*Genesis 3*).

#### **2: HOW DID MAN LOSE THESE FOUR TREASURES?**

By sin. And what reason can be given for man's sin? None. To give a reason would be to justify the deed. Only lame excuses can be offered.

A little neighbor boy sat on the front steps finishing up a cry with slowly subsiding snuffles. "What's the matter, sonny?" I asked. "Daddy whipped me," he meekly replied. "And why did he do that?" I inquired. "'Cause I was naughty," he answered. "But why were you naughty?" His reply was typically human, "My brother, Kenneth, made me naughty."

Yes, that is the way it is. Adam blamed God for giving him Eve. Eve blamed the serpent for everything, She had listened to his story about getting on a higher plane, about being like gods. Many today are being lured by the ancient sophistries of the devil, streamlined for moderns.

***1 Timothy 2:14: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."***

There was no need for Eve to be deceived. She had to reject God's truth first, before she could accept the devil's deception. Had God not given her truth, the situation would have been different, Adam was not deceived. He walked into sin with his eyes open, taking the risk and hoping God would be merciful. He made an excuse of Eve. He loved her more than he did God. And what tragedy resulted! It is always disastrous to disobey God. Adam gambled and lost, And what did he lose? all that God gave him.

### **1. Man lost life.**

***Genesis 3:19: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Romans 6:23).***

As the result of his sin he was removed from access to the tree of life, lest he should "eat, and live for ever" (Genesis 3:22), Man was not immortal by nature or creation. Sin, God warned, would bring death, not life. "All the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died" (Genesis 5:5). Sin is real: and death is real. God says so. The devil disputed God's Word. Man found God's Word is right.

### **2. Man lost his righteous nature.**

***Romans 5:12: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."***

***1 John 5:17: "All unrighteousness is sin,"***

The unnumbered volumes of history record the deeds of man's sinful career for long millenniums. No words need be added here. Adam lost his righteous nature.

### **3. Man lost his Eden home.**

***Genesis 3:23-24: "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."***

### **4. Man lost his dominion.**

***2 Peter 2:19: "Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage,"***

***2 Corinthians 4:4: "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."***

Having cast off the dominion God had over him, man lost the dominion God had placed under him. He was now in a world fallen to the dominion of Satan.

A curse was also pronounced upon the earth for man's sake. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3: 17). Sinful man in a sinful world needed the discipline of toil and care. No civilization has yet been able to endure ease and luxury. Our civilization today is no exception. And yet the tired and weary heart of man longs for the time of restoration to come when the dominion lost through sin will be his once more.

### **3: HOW WILL CHRIST RESTORE THE FOUR TREASURES?**

The Saviour came to earth "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10), He purchased our salvation by shedding His "precious blood" (1 Peter 1:19). Then He returned to heaven, "having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12),

God so valued man that He gave heaven's greatest gift for his redemption. He could not have given more. Think now of the treasures that will be restored to us through the gospel.

### **1. Life restored.**

No matter how a man dies, God can raise him up. His ashes may be strewn on the moving bosom of a river and carried to the bounds of seven seas, but God can raise him up to everlasting life. Here are the promises of life restored by the Lifegiver, Jesus Christ:

***John 3:16: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."***

***Romans 6:23: "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,"***

### **2. Righteousness restored.**

A sinner comes to God. His sins are confessed, forsaken, and forgiven. Love is awakened in his soul, and the process of restoration begins. Sanctification is another name for it. The work is done by the Spirit of God, and the Word of God has a part. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (*John 17:17*). Cooperation with God is paramount in this process. Here are the promises:

***2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new."***

***2 Corinthians 3:18: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."***

### **3. Man's beautiful home restored.**

Many an infidel, millions of skeptics, and some Christians have asked, "Why doesn't a good and mighty God put an end to this cruel, suffering world?" The answer is, "He is planning to do that very soon." The first step will be Christ's second coming. The next and the last step will be taken at the end of the 1,000 years, as you have studied. New heavens and a new earth will be created, and God will dwell here with His people forever. Here are the promises:

***Acts 3:20-21: "He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began."***

***Isaiah 65:17: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."***

### **4. Dominion restored.**

We do not propose to speculate on the details of the future life. Its loveliness will surpass our fondest dreams, its beauty will exceed the greatest flight of our imagination, and its joys soar beyond our highest hopes. There, man's lost mastery of himself and his dominion of the earth shall be restored as God has promised.

***Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne,"***

***Matthew 25:21: "I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."***

#### 4: A PICTURE OF THE BETTER WORLD

It is a glorious prospect, and Thank God, it is real; and it is coming soon, God's better world. Here are six facts about the earth made new, where there will be freedom from fear, want, worry, pain, and every evil. And there will be security over there—eternal security.

##### **1. The New Jerusalem, the capital city, comes down to earth.**

***Revelation 21:2: "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."***

##### **2. God dwells with men in this city.**

***Revelation 21:3: "I heard a great voice out of heaven saying. Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."***

##### **3. There will be country life and useful labor.**

***Isaiah 65:21: "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat of the fruit of them."***

##### **4. There will be no pain, sorrow, crying, or death.**

***Revelation 21:4: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Isaiah 33:24).***

##### **5. There will be life and beauty and song everywhere.**

***Isaiah 35:1, 6, 9-10: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. . Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. . No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 11:6-9).***

##### **6. The restoration will be perfect and complete.**

***1 Corinthians 2:9: "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."***

***Nahum 1:9: "Affliction shall not rise up the second time."***

With such promises soon to be realized, how earnestly should we seek to do the will of God!

#### 5: HOW SHALL WE MAKE SURE OF A PLACE OVER THERE?

There are three important guideposts to help direct your feet as you journey heavenward. Here they are:

### **1. Confess Christ before men.**

***Matthew 10:32: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven" (Luke 9:26).***

### **2. Obey God's commands and instructions.**

***John 14:15: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments,"***

### **3. Keep an eye of faith on the better world.**

***Hebrews 11:13-14: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country."***

Wendell Phillips delivered a lecture in Boston one cold November night. Afterward he found that he had missed the train to his home, some twelve miles away. He hired a carriage, His friends urged him to remain until the next day. He said simply, "Ann Phillips is at the other end. I'll go home tonight, thank you!" He would not disappoint his wife. We must not disappoint God nor our loved ones and friends. They will be looking for us when that happy hour comes.

The Bible tells us about three heavens. The first is the atmospheric heavens (*Genesis 1:6-8*). The second is the starry heavens (*Psalms 19:16*). The third heaven is paradise to this earth. If God dwells in us now by faith, we may dwell with Him forever then. It is a glorious future that God has planned for you and me. Shall we meet over there and enjoy eternal security? It will be the answer to a million dreams and hopes that life in this present evil world can never afford!

## **BIBLE VIEWS OF HEAVEN: SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL**

"There the redeemed shall know, even as also they are known. The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. . There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

"All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar-worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation, suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator's name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed.

"And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of

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redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever' (Revelation 5:13).

"The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love." - *Great Controversy*, 677-678