

The New Heaven

Throughout history people have tried to describe heaven using sources outside the sixty-six books of Scripture. They appeal to writings like Enoch, Esdras, and other ancient texts that contain imaginative scenes and spiritual impressions. Some of these writings contain beautiful ideas, and some offer glimpses of early Jewish thought, but none of them carry the authority of the final canon. The sixty-six books are exactly what God intended to preserve. If He wanted additional writings included, they would be there. If He did not want them included, they are not. Human councils, popes, cardinals, priests, and church leaders may have debated, banned, or ignored certain writings, but none of them had the power to override the sovereignty of God over His own Word. The canon is not the result of human control. It is the result of divine intention. God allowed the historical process to unfold exactly as it did. If He did not want it so, it would not be so.

Because of this, descriptions of heaven must come from Scripture alone. When we read the Bible, we see various pictures of heaven, but none of them give a complete map. We see Paradise mentioned by Jesus when He speaks to the thief on the cross. We see Paul caught up to the third heaven, also calling it Paradise. We see martyrs under the altar in Revelation, conscious and speaking. We see the spirits of righteous men made perfect in Hebrews. These glimpses show that the redeemed are with Christ, but they do not describe the final eternal state. Paradise is real, but Scripture never says it is the final heaven. It is a present reality, not the ultimate one.

This raises the question of where the souls of Old Testament believers reside. Scripture shows that they are with God, but it does not specify the structure or geography of that realm. Paradise may be the place where the redeemed wait with Christ. It may be the realm where martyrs reign alongside Him. It may be a domain within the heavenly places. Scripture does not define it fully. What it does say is that at the end of the age Jesus gathers all His people from one end of heaven to the other. This statement is profound because it implies that no matter where redeemed souls currently reside, they will all be gathered together. Every heavenly domain, every spiritual realm, every place where the righteous dwell will be swept into one unified assembly. No one remains where they are. All are brought together in the presence of Christ.

Judgment follows, and Scripture presents it as decisive and instantaneous. There is no prolonged courtroom scene. There is no extended process. It happens with the immediacy of divine authority. After this moment the heavens and the earth are destroyed. Not repaired. Not cleaned. Completely gone. The universe itself passes away. Then Jesus ushers His people into the new creation, the place He went to prepare. This is the realm no one has ever seen and no one can describe. He spoke of preparing a place, but He never gave details. That silence is intentional.

The descending New Jerusalem described in Revelation is symbolic. Its measurements, its jewels, its gates, and its foundations are not architectural blueprints. They are theological symbols representing purity, perfection, unity, glory, and the redeemed themselves as the dwelling place of God. New Jerusalem is not merely a city. It is the people of God in perfected form. It is the bride. It is the redeemed community. It is the place where God dwells with His people forever.

This leads to the central point. Scripture never describes the new heaven. Not once. Not even a hint. We are told about the new earth. We are told about New Jerusalem. We are told about the removal of death, pain, and the curse. We are told about God dwelling with humanity. But the new heaven remains completely undescribed. There is no imagery, no symbolism, no measurements, no scenes, and no visions. The new heaven is the one realm God kept entirely hidden. It is beyond human language and beyond human comprehension. It is the realm of God Himself, fully united with His people in a way that cannot be expressed in earthly terms.

Because of this, every attempt to describe heaven using extra-biblical books or imaginative speculation misses the point. The final book is exactly what God intended. The silence about the new heaven is intentional. The redeemed will enter a reality no prophet ever saw, no apostle ever described, and no writer ever imagined. The new heaven is the one thing God chose not to reveal, and that is why no one on earth has any comprehension of it. Scripture never describes the new heaven, and that absence is part of the perfection of God's revelation.