

Heaven and the New Earth

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Introduction

The Greek word for heaven means *elevated* or *sky* and can refer to one of three heavens in the Scriptures: (1) the sky or atmosphere (Genesis 1:20); (2) the starry heavens of outer space (Genesis 1:14-17); and (3) the third heaven, or Paradise, where God and His angels live (II Corinthians 12:2-4). It is the third heaven that people mean when they talk about going to heaven for their eternal reward.

When Jesus was on the earth He promised His followers that He would come again to get His people and take them to His Father's house to be with Him (John 14:1-3). According to I Thessalonians 4:16-17 the saved who had died will be resurrected and together with the living saved will be caught up (raptured) *in the air to always be with the Lord*. The saints will then spend the next 1,000 years in heaven. Jesus Himself had taught that His people would ultimately *inherit the earth* (Matthew 5:5). Therefore, God will create a new heaven and a new earth at the end of the millennium right after the final destruction of the wicked (Revelation 21:1). Review our papers entitled "The Second Coming of Jesus" and "The Millennium" for an exposition of Jesus' return and the experience of the saints during the millennium.

After the vision scenes of the final destruction of the wicked at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:11-15), the apostle John *saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away* (Revelation 21:1). The Greek word for *new* here refers to that which is new in *quality* or *nature* rather than to new in *time*. This means that the New Earth will be a restored and transformed earth, not new as in a replacement for the old earth as per an *ex nihilo* (Latin for *out of nothing*) creation. The destructive part of this transformation is described in II Peter 3:10, which says that *the elements will melt with fervent heat and the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up or will be laid bare*. The Greek manuscript evidence is divided between the word for *will be burned up* and the word for *will be laid bare*. In either case, it is clear that fire will play the prominent part in this destruction, undoubtedly the same fire that devours the wicked (Revelation 20:9). The fire will be so great according to II Peter 3:10 that the earth's transformation can be said to prepare for a *New Earth* (cf. v. 13). The New Earth will actually be the third transformation of the earth, for II Peter 3:6-7,13 refers to (1) the world before the Flood (v. 6), the world or earth that now is (v. 7), and (3) the new earth (v. 13).

The New Jerusalem and Its Size

The New Jerusalem is *the holy city* which is now in heaven but will come down to the earth at the end of the millennium (Revelation 21:2). It is also called *the city of My God* (Revelation 3:12) and the *heavenly Jerusalem* (Hebrews 12:22). Ironically, almost the entire Christian world today is fixated on the *earthly* Jerusalem as if it were still God's city. The New Jerusalem will be the capital of the New Earth for God's throne is said to be in that city (Revelation 22:1, 3). Not only will this city be the capital of the New Earth, but the fact that God's headquarters will then be on the earth means that the earth itself will be the capital of the entire universe. Just think about that for a moment. The planet that rebelled against God by siding with Satan will not only be redeemed as a planet, but God will move His capital from heaven to the earth. What amazing love that is! The name *Jerusalem* means *city of peace*, but the old Jerusalem has seldom been that. But the New Jerusalem will live up to its name, for its king will be *the Prince of Peace* (Isaiah 9:6) and of *His government and peace There will be no end* (Isaiah 9:7).

The city is a cube because its length, breadth, and height are equal (Revelation 21:16), 12,000 furlongs for each dimension (also v. 16). We cannot be certain whether the measurements are based on a Greek furlong, consisting of 606.5 feet, or a Roman furlong, consisting of 660 feet. If the Greek furlong was the standard, then the city is 1,378.4 miles long, wide, and high. If the Roman furlong was the standard, the city is 1,500 miles long, wide, and high. We also do not know whether each side is 12,000 furlongs or whether the entire circumference is 12,000 furlongs long. The smallest possible dimension would be the entire circumference as 12,000 furlongs and based on the Greek standard—which would make the city almost 119,000 square miles. Based on the Roman standard, such a measurement would equal 140,625 square miles. If each side is 12,000 furlongs long and based on the Greek standard, the city would be 1.9 million square miles. Based on the Roman standard, such a measurement would make the city 2.25 million square miles. Either of the first two methods of measuring the city makes it larger than the state of Colorado. And either of the other two methods makes it more than half of the entire United States and either 65.5 percent or 77.6 percent of the continental United States. Although we do not know which dimensions are the correct ones, the New Jerusalem will be large enough for all the saved to live there (Revelation 21:24-26).

According to Revelation 21:17 the city's wall is 144 cubits, or about 216 feet, since a cubit was approximately 18 inches. Since the city is a cube, this may be the dimension of the wall's thickness, although we cannot be certain; perhaps the buildings inside the city are 12,000 furlongs tall, and the wall is only about 216 feet high. In either case, many have objected to the height of the city because that would extend it into outer space. However, remember that there will also be a *new heaven* (Revelation 21:1), which would have to refer to the earth's atmosphere. Perhaps God will greatly expand the atmosphere so that the city's height will still remain within it. After all, the implication of the torrent amount of rain that fell during the global Flood—when it rained

for 40 consecutive days and nights (Genesis 7:12)—suggests a much larger atmosphere before the Flood than afterwards.

There is great significance in the fact that the New Jerusalem is a cube, for the only other cube mentioned in the Bible is the Most Holy Place of the Jerusalem Temple (I Kings 6:19-20). That may be one reason there will be no Temple there because the entire city is a temple. Indeed, it will be a Most Holy Place because God's very presence will be there (Revelation 21:22; 22:1, 3-4). In an aside, it is interesting that all three of the Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—each has its most holy place as a cube. In Judaism it is the Most Holy Place of their former Temple. In Christianity it is the New Jerusalem. And in Islam it is the kabah, which is Arabic for *cube*, and the building in the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia, although it is not a perfect cube. It is the kabah which is the central focus of activities in Mecca when Muslim pilgrims make their journey there.

The Construction Materials for the City

The construction materials used in the city consists of all kinds of precious stones, pearls, and gold. Each of the 12 foundations for the walls consist of a different precious stone of various colors and shades (Revelation 21:14, 19-20). The walls themselves are made of jasper (Revelation 21:18), a gemstone clear like glass (v. 11), usually with a red hue, although they can also be yellow, brown, green, or even sometimes blue. There are 12 gates to the city, three on each side (vv. 12-13), and each one is a giant pearl (v. 21). Finally, the street is made of *pure gold, like transparent glass* (v. 21). The city will not need to rely on the sun or the moon for its light, and will need no artificial lights, because God's glory provides all the necessary light (v. 23; 22:5), so much so that there will be no night in the city (21:25; 22:5). That does not mean the sun and moon will be destroyed but only that they will not be necessary to light the city. The rest of the planet will apparently still be lighted by the sun and moon.

With all those pearls, precious stones, and gold, one can only imagine how glorious the city will be with God's glory reflecting and refracting amid all those construction materials. Actually, we cannot really imagine it, but we can have fun trying. All of the precious stones, pearls, and gold certainly means that God loves jewelry. Only then, jewelry will reflect God's glory rather than our own as it does on earth today.

The River and the Tree of Life

The water supply for the New Jerusalem will be the *river of the water of Life*, which will be *clear as crystal* in a completely pollution-free environment (Revelation 22:1). It will be the literal equivalent of the spiritual living water that Jesus promises to all who follow Him (John 4:10-14; Revelation 22:17). The Tree of Life, once in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9), is in the city.

Apparently it was transplanted in heaven from the Garden of Eden on earth at some point before the global Flood. It is so large that it has twin trunks, one on each side of the river (Revelation 22:2). It grows 12 different kinds of fruit; verse 2 reads that it *bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month*. The word *tree*, the second one in the whole verse, was supplied by the translators for there is no Greek word for it in the manuscripts. That fact, in addition to the contrast between bearing twelve *fruits* (plural) and *yielding its fruit* (singular) *every month* probably means that the tree will produce a different kind of fruit each month for the twelve months of the year.

The Tree of Life will always serve as a reminder that we are dependent upon God for our immortality, as it was for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Apparently God put certain nutrients in its fruit that were required to be eaten periodically in order for Adam and Eve to maintain their immortality, which was the reason that God expelled them from Eden to prevent them from remaining as immortal sinners (Genesis 3:22-24). Of course, life comes from God, but He used the Tree of Life to maintain it.

Verse 2 also states that its *leaves...were for the healing of the nations*. The Greek word for *healing* appears elsewhere in the book of Revelation only in chapter 13, verses 3 and 12, in reference to the healing of the beast's deadly wound (wound of the Antichrist)—which refers to a revival of that symbolic beast's status and power. Since there will be no sickness in heaven and the New Earth (Revelation 21:4), this healing must also be a metaphorical healing. Leaves on trees serve to provide shade. In Zechariah 3:10, when God removes the iniquity of His people (v. 9), *Everyone will invite his neighbor Under his vine and under his fig tree*. This may refer to the different ethnic and racial groups sitting under the Tree of Life (under its leaves), perhaps while eating its fruit, where their interaction with each other will enhance understanding among the different people groups in heaven and the New Earth. There will not be hate or fear of one another in heaven and the New Earth because sin has been eradicated. However, a growth in understanding and appreciating our differences in culture is a healthy exercise, which the Tree of Life may afford the opportunity for. In this way, the Tree of Life becomes a positive symbol similar to the negative Tower of Babel, which God destroyed shortly after the global Flood because it represented a congregating of the world's people in a world unity effort to make a name for themselves (Genesis 11:1-9). There God also miraculously created many different languages in order to scatter the people all over the earth (vv. 6-9). But in heaven and the New Earth, where there will be no sin, world unity will be a positive thing. Therefore, we can expect that God will undo the confusion of the languages and miraculously give everyone the ability to speak the same language again for an eternity.

Conditions in the New Earth

According to Revelation 21:1 there will be *no more sea* on the New Earth. Isaiah 57:20 and Revelation 13:1 (cf. Revelation 17:15) suggest that a symbolic sea may be a source of evil and

strife. While that is true, the context in Revelation 21 is of a literal new heaven, a literal New Earth, and a literal New Jerusalem (city). Therefore, the lack of a sea on the New Earth should be understood as meaning there will be no large oceans. At the Second Coming of Jesus, the mountains will disappear in the tumult of the earth (Revelation 6:14-17; 16:18-20). The really significant mountains on earth today were undoubtedly created by the tremendous upheaval caused by the global Flood. He may recreate some mountains simply for the sake of their beautiful scenery, but the really large mountains today are symbols of the destruction of the world by water, so they are not likely to be recreated.

The fact that the Tree of Life produces edible fruit all year long indicates that temperatures will be mild all year long. We know that the earth's axis today tilts about 23.5 degrees and that this tilt is what causes the different seasons. If it were much straighter than it is, the seasons would be far less pronounced or extreme. Scientists know that thrust faults, which are earthquakes in which the earth's crust is thrust vertically, can alter the earth's tilt, usually only by centimeters. Thrust earthquakes increase the tilt of the earth by redistributing the earth's mass. The kind of massive global disturbance described in the account of the global Flood—particularly the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep (Genesis 7:11)—must have produced enormous earthquakes and created the great mountains of the earth. Surely this must have been the cause of most of the earth's 23.5-degree tilt today. Although Genesis 1:14 does indicate the pre-Flood earth did have seasons, these facts mean that they were far less extreme than they are today. Undoubtedly God will undo the effects of the Flood by putting the earth's axis at a much straighter angle and thus producing a year-long moderate climate everywhere on the earth.

Two passages in Isaiah specifically speak about animals in the New Earth. Isaiah 11:6-9 is written in the context of the Messiah coming and slaying the wicked *with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips* (v. 4). This is a reference to Jesus, who is said will slay the wicked at His Second Coming with His rod (Revelation 12:5; 19:15) and with the breath of His mouth (II Thessalonians 2:8). In the aftermath of the death of the wicked, Isaiah 11:6-9 speaks about the wolf and lamb, leopard and goat, calf and lion, and the cow and the bear all dwelling peacefully with each other. It also speaks of a child playing near a snake and not being hurt. Isaiah 65:25 is written in the context of the New Earth (v. 17) and repeats in a summary format the same idea of Isaiah 11:6-9. This proves that what are now wild animals will no longer be wild.

Will God resurrect our pets that we loved so much here on the old earth? The Bible says nothing about this subject. However, a God of love (I John 4:8, 16) might be expected to do this for His children. We just do not know. However, because there will be animals in the New Earth, and none of them will be wild, we will have a much larger choice from which to select new pets whether or not God resurrects our old pets.

The Condition of Mankind in Heaven and the New Earth

There will be no more deformities, defects, sickness, pain, or death, not even sorrow, in heaven and the New Earth (Isaiah 35:5-10; Luke 20:35-36; Revelation 21:4). (We know that Isaiah 35 is speaking of conditions in the New Earth because they are described right after the description in chapter 34 of the destruction of all wicked nations (Isaiah 34:1-4, 8). Those things belong to our present world, so when that world passes away and is transformed as the New Earth, it will be said that those *former things have passed away* with it (Revelation 21:4). That will put an end to several current occupations, including all medical and mental health professions and the undertaker profession.

So why does Isaiah 65:20, also in the context of the New Earth (v. 17), say that *the child shall die one hundred years old*? Note that this was initially promised to Judah (vv. 18-19), but Judah left her covenant with God at the end of the 70 Weeks prophecy in A.D. 34 (see Daniel 9:27 and Appendix I in my book *Jesus and His Teachings*). Apparently, if Judah had kept her covenant with God, the New Testament eschatology would have been quite different. In this context, it is evident that God would have *gradually* blessed Judah in part by extending her citizens' lifespans until God would later raise the dead and give the saved immortal bodies. Not only would lifespans increase, but there would be no premature deaths (*No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days*, Isaiah 65:20).

According to I Corinthians 13:10-12, the apostle Paul declared that when perfection comes *I shall know just as I also am known* (v. 12). This means that once we get to heaven those who knew us on the earth will know us there also. According to Philippians 3:20-21 at the Second Coming of Jesus the saved will all receive glorious bodies like Jesus has. This is what theologians call glorification, and according to I Corinthians 15:51-54 this includes immortality. Some have thought that at that time we will become disembodied spirits, partly on the basis that I Corinthians 15:44 says the resurrected saints will have *spiritual* or *heavenly* bodies (cf. v. 48). However, Paul defines the spiritual or heavenly body as a real physical body but one that is not subject to sickness, decay, or death (vv. 52-54). Remember too that he compares our resurrected bodies to Jesus' resurrected body in verses 44-45 and 47-49. And even after His resurrection, those who knew Jesus before recognized Him then also (Matthew 28:9, 17; Luke 24:36-40; John 20:19-20; 21:1; I Corinthians 15:5). Therefore, the saved will not be disembodied spirits but real recognizable people.

Not only will we look like our human selves, but like Jesus after His resurrection, we will still eat food (Luke 24:41-43). When Jesus first appeared to His followers after His resurrection, He apparently passed right through a closed door (John 20:19) and frightened them (Luke 24:36-37). This suggests that our glorified bodies will be able to experience a temporary ability to pass through solid objects. Furthermore, I Thessalonians 4:17 says that the saints will ascend in the air

to meet Jesus at His Second Coming. If we then go to heaven with Him, we must be able to fly in our glorified bodies and have a supernatural way to create our own oxygen as we travel through space. This means that we will be able to fly to other worlds, visit other intelligent beings, and study God's creation everywhere in the universe.

According to Matthew 22:29-30 glorified humans will not be married and that this is like the angels. This means that there will no human births in heaven or the New Earth, so that there will be no children after the saved children are grown up. The reason for this is probably because the Scriptures tell us that sin will never rise in the universe again. The book of Nahum is a prophecy concerning the destruction of Nineveh, which represented the entire Assyrian Empire (1:1). But the destruction of the Assyrians is a type of the destruction of *all* the wicked at the end-time because verse 5 speaks of the entire earth heaving at God's presence in judgment and all the world's inhabitants. Then verse 9 states that once the wicked have been destroyed, *Affliction will not rise up a second time.*

That cannot be because God will take free will away from His intelligent creatures because a God of love (I John 4:8, 16) will never take away free will from them. It must therefore be because every intelligent creature in the universe will remember what sin has caused and thus will never repeat that awful experience. But for this to be true seems to require no new births of intelligent creatures because those born after the final end of sin would have no personal knowledge of what sin caused. Family units seem highly likely to continue in the beginning as children grow up in heaven. After that we will simply have to trust God that He will have something better for us than marriage.

Some have even wondered out loud whether we will have to go to the bathroom since its purpose is to eliminate toxic wastes and heaven and the New Earth will be places where nothing is wasted and there are no toxins. Of course, that depends on what you consider waste and toxins. What is waste to human and animal bodies becomes fertilizer if untreated. Therefore, in the end it is not really wasted. Also, experts tell us that every chemical component is toxic in large enough amounts, and no substance is toxic in very tiny amounts. It is also difficult to see why God would completely redo our anatomy. For these reasons we suggest that we probably will still need to eliminate in heaven and the New Earth since we will still eat and drink, although the Bible does not specifically address this issue. God is certainly capable of doing whatever He wishes to do.

Experts tell us today that we only use about 10 percent of our brains. But in heaven and the New Earth we will be able to use 100 percent of the brain's capacity. Our memories will therefore be perfect and our intellectual capacity for learning enormous in contrast to our present experience. Furthermore, since we really see, hear, and smell things with our brains, perhaps this means we will have microscopic and telescopic vision and hear and smell things that we cannot now hear or smell. We might even be able to communicate by telepathy. This is based on our sanctified

imagination because the Bible does not explicitly say anything about our mental abilities. However, if *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him* (I Corinthians 2:9), then the fact that we *can* imagine *some* things probably means they will come true.

Activities in Heaven and the New Earth

As we already indicated, the saved should be able to fly anywhere on earth or to other worlds in order to learn from other intelligent creatures and study God's creation. And since the universe is so enormous we will never run out of new places to explore and new things to learn. Some have wondered whether there is any intelligent life anywhere else in the universe besides humans and angels (and God of course). We believe there is for three good reasons. First, it is inconceivable that a God of love (I John 4:8, 16), who therefore desires love in return, would have created only two worlds with intelligent life on them—heaven (angels) and earth (humans).

Second, Job 1:6 and 2:1 refer to two different occasions (note the word *Again* in 2:1) in which *the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord* in heaven. Satan comes there from the earth and engages God in conversation about Job. Apparently what God gave Satan permission to do to Job was expanded in the second occasion. Almost all scholars understand the term *sons of God* as a reference to angels on the basis of Job 38:4-7. However, the Scriptures also speak of God's followers as His sons and daughters or children (Deuteronomy 14:1; II Samuel 7:14; Isaiah 43:6; Malachi 2:10; II Corinthians 6:18; Philippians 2:15; I John 3:1). Neither passage in Job identifies the meeting between the sons of God and God to be for the purpose of worship, although whenever one is in His presence there is worship of Him. They do not mention what day it was, like a Sabbath or a new moon, which were set apart specifically for worship (Isaiah 66:23). And Satan would certainly not go to heaven to join the good angels in worshiping God. Yet God allowed Satan access to heaven on those occasions as if he had a right to be there. There is only one reason that Scripture gives that could be a reason for Satan being allowed temporary access to heaven. When he succeeded in getting Adam and Eve to sin in the Garden of Eden, they effectively transferred their citizenship from God's kingdom to Satan's kingdom. In this way Satan can be called, as he is in the Scriptures, *the ruler of this world* (John 12:31) or *the god of this age* (II Corinthians 4:4). Therefore, he would be allowed periodic access to heaven as the official representative of planet Earth. All this strongly implies that the two council meetings in heaven mentioned in Job were some kind of universal United Nations meeting that God sometimes convenes. Thus the sons of God would be the official representatives of various different worlds. The term there could *also* refer to angels, whose life in heaven would probably entitle them to attend these council meetings as well.

According to Revelation 12:10, Satan was cast out of heaven a second time, specifically at the time of the cross. Note that the verse is speaking about the time that *salvation, God's kingdom,*

and Christ's *power (authority)* had arrived and that His *brethren...overcame him* [Satan] *by the blood of the Lamb* (v. 11). This, then, refers to the time of the cross and teaches that Satan then lost the kingdom of Earth. The result is that Jesus is now the official representative of planet Earth as the last Adam (I Corinthians 15:45-47), not Satan, so that the latter is now barred altogether from heaven. Nevertheless he still has great influence on earth so that he can still be called *the god of this age* (II Corinthians 4:4). In the meantime we are waiting for Jesus to physically take His kingdom.

Finally, Revelation 12:12, speaking of the context of the cross, instructs *O heavens, and you who dwell in them* to rejoice. The word *heavens* is plural as is the word *them* that refers to those heavens. If those who live in those heavens can rejoice, then they must be intelligent creatures.

In addition to flying to other worlds to learn from other intelligent creatures and study God's creation, the saved will also engage in productive labor. Besides living in New Jerusalem, where the mansions Jesus mentioned in John 14:1-3 must be located, we will build country homes and plant vineyards and eat of their fruit (Isaiah 65:17-22). If we can plant vineyards then we undoubtedly will be planting other food crops as well, such as other fruit, grains, and nuts. Note that we did not include vegetables in that list, for botanically speaking, a vegetable is any plant food in which the plant's root, stem, or leaves are eaten, which kills the plant (there is no death there). Many children will enjoy hearing as good news that they will not have to eat vegetables in heaven or the New Earth. For the rest of us, perhaps God will create plants which flower and produce its fruit that taste like our favorite vegetables. Who knows what God has in store for us? Since the curse of sin will be gone, cultivating plants and plant foods will be much easier than it is today (Genesis 3:17-19; Isaiah 35:1), and there will be no more thorns, thistles, and weeds. Since there will be no more death, this also means that animals will not eat other animals or people (Isaiah 11:7 and 65:25), and people will not eat meat either. We will all be vegetarians in heaven and the New Earth. Actually, the technically more correct term is that we will all be fruitarians because all grains and nuts are botanically fruit also since they come from the flower part of the plant.

A fourth type of activity that the saints will engage in is reigning with, or serving, God (Revelation 5:10; 22:3-5). Since Jesus is the King (Revelation 19:13, 16), we must be officials in some way in His government. Perhaps we will at least be ambassadors for Him to the other worlds to share the redemption story firsthand from we who were personally redeemed.

Finally, according to Isaiah 66:23 we will worship every Sabbath and every new moon in the personal presence of the Lord. What a treat that will be! Christians know what the weekly Sabbath is even though most do not observe it today. But a monthly worship service is not talked about in our modern world. In Old Testament Israel each new moon (crescent moon) was (1) a day for special sacrifices (Numbers 28:11-14); (2) a feast day, for eating a feast (I Samuel 20:5, 24); (3) a

day that trumpets were blown to call people to the tabernacle (or those near the Jerusalem Temple in later times) for public worship as for all the annual feast days (Numbers 10:10; Ezekiel 46:1-3); and (4) a day when commerce was prohibited (Amos 8:5). It was not a Sabbath per se because apparently other secular activities were not prohibited. Some have suggested that perhaps the Lord will adjust the moon's orbit around the earth to take exactly 28 days so that each new moon falls on a weekly Sabbath. However, that is speculation.

There are probably an almost infinite number of things that God's people can and will do throughout eternity. We can be certain that they all will be pleasurable experiences. Heaven and especially the New Earth (after the end of all sin) will be a happy and fun place. We know this also because Ezekiel 28:13 calls heaven *Eden*. It is heaven and not the earthly Garden of Eden because of verse 14's reference to *the holy mountain of God*, and a symbolic mountain represents a kingdom (Daniel 2:35, 44-45). The Hebrew word for *Eden* means *pleasure*. Therefore, heaven itself is a place of pleasure, and so will be the New Earth because the New Jerusalem contains the Tree of Life which had been in the old Garden of Eden.

We can briefly summarize the activities of the saints in heaven and the New Earth that probably only touch the surface as follows:

- Traveling, studying, and learning about other cultures and peoples, including those in other worlds
- Traveling and studying God's creation on the earth and in other parts of the universe
- Engaging in productive labor such as building things and cultivating the soil
- Reigning and serving in Jesus' government in some way
- Worshiping the Lord every weekly Sabbath and on each new moon
- Experiencing pleasure that is harmless to others

Reminders of Sin

Although sin will have been eradicated from the universe at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:7-15), there will be two types of reminders of what sin caused. One of these is the memory among all intelligent creatures in the universe of what sin had caused. It is true that Isaiah 65:17 says that God's people will not remember the *former* things (*former troubles*, v. 16). But we will have to remember the results of sin in order for it to never be repeated again. So it must mean that we will not feel the deep *pain* of our past sins and troubles.

The second reminder of what sin caused will be the scars on Jesus' hands from the nails used to hang Him on the cross. This fact is found in Zechariah 13:6, where the answer to the question *What are these wounds between your arms [literally hands]?* is *Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends*. Zechariah 12-14 discusses *the day of the Lord* (12:9; 14:1 onward). In

this context a false prophet will deny he is a prophet (13:4-5) and lie about the wounds *between his hands* (literal Hebrew of v. 6) because false prophets typically self-mutilated themselves to get their false gods to do something on their behalf (I Kings 18:28). Instead he claimed it was given to him by his friends, as if it had happened during some brawl.

In Zechariah 13:3 parents killed a child for being a false prophet by thrusting him through. And although verse 6 refers to a false prophet who was living (not dead), remember that in the context of the day of the Lord, Jesus would have already been resurrected. This is evidence that the generic false prophet here was a type of Jesus. Also, stoning was the form of execution for those relatives who worshiped false gods (Deuteronomy 13:10), so verse 3's thrusting him through is yet another evidence that typology is being used here (with the parents representing *the house of My friends*).

Psalms 22 is recognized as a Messianic prophecy, and verse 16 reads, *They pierced My hands and My feet*. The Masoretic text reads *lion* instead of *pierced* so that the sense may be that he was surrounded by lions around his hands and feet. However, some older Hebrew manuscripts do render the word as *pierced*, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, as do the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate translations. Since the Dead Sea Scrolls and all those translations predated the Masoretic text, the latter may well be the result of a misspelling, perhaps even an intentional one in order to avoid the Christian conclusion that Jesus' crucifixion, with marks on His hands, was referred to here (John 20:25-27). Or it could simply be an unintentional misspelling since the Hebrew words for *lion* and *pierced* are only differentiated by the length of an upright vowel stroke. In addition, the reading of *lion* requires the translators to supply a verb, and all such proposed verbs are awkward. Therefore, with the majority of modern translations (including the KJV, NKJV, RSV, NIV, NASB, ESV, HCSB), we believe the correct reading is *pierced*. This makes Psalms 22:16 the most amazing Messianic prophecy because this was a description of crucifixion as a method of execution even before crucifixion had been invented!

The weight of the evidence is that the false prophet in Zechariah 13:6 was a type of Jesus, who was condemned as a false prophet and pierced between His hands by those who should have been His friends (*the house of My friends*). That also explains why verse 7 appears to suddenly shift to the Messiah (as all agree); instead, the typology makes it a *natural* reference. Therefore, we conclude that the scars in Jesus' hands will be an eternal reminder of what sin did to the Son of God. It is no wonder that sin will never rise again to spoil God's perfect Creation.