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## Eternal Life



**QUESTION 1:**

*If you could live anywhere in the world,  
where would it be?*

## THE POINT

We can live forever  
in the presence of God.



## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Location, location, location. Real estate agents often repeat that saying for clients searching for a new home. The Internet is flooded with lists to help us decide . . .

- ▶ . . . the best places to live.
- ▶ . . . the best places to retire.
- ▶ . . . the best places to raise our kids.
- ▶ . . . the most affordable places to live.
- ▶ . . . the best places to live for clean air and water.

People have myriad reasons for choosing where they live. Of course, many people say they don't choose where

they live; the place “chooses” them. For example, many live where they do because it's close to family or it's where their jobs are. Regardless, we all have our ideas of what makes a place ideal. Yet, no matter how idyllic, no place is perfect. Problems still arise. And, of course, sin is ever present.

That will not always be the case. God has promised His followers a perfect home with Him that will last for eternity. The apostle John gave us a brief glimpse into the eternal life that awaits those who follow Christ.

# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

## REVELATION 21:1-5

**<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away. <sup>5</sup> Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new." He also said, "Write, because these words are faithful and true."**

God has promised His children an eternal home that eclipses even the finest neighborhoods in the most exclusive ZIP codes. Our home with God will be perfect because it is in the presence of God Himself. Revelation 21 paints a beautiful picture of God's perfect home. And that perfection is made real by the fact that God Himself will live with us in that place for eternity. The God who spoke the universe into existence has promised to spend eternity with you and me! Revelation 21 begins with a wonderful picture. The new heaven and earth will be far superior to the earth we know now; they will transcend

anything we've ever experienced. Along with the new heaven and the new earth, John saw "the new Jerusalem" and likened it to a beautiful bride walking down the aisle on her wedding day. A bride looks most radiant on her wedding day, and here is a bride whose radiance will never fade.

### QUESTION 2:

***What are some ways our culture expresses the concept of heaven?***

John referred to the new Jerusalem as “the holy city.” The place is holy because everyone inside it is holy and righteous.

This is the city of God’s redeemed people, and living in a city means we will live together—and together we will be in perfect harmony. No longer will we battle the tension between pleasing God or pleasing people because sin and death have been defeated and we will be forever surrounded by God’s holiness.

When we’re in His presence forever, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more” (v. 4). No death. No grief. No crying. No pain. These things will not be in heaven “because the previous things have passed away.” All our old human habits and

traits that were part of our fallen, sinful human nature will be gone—for eternity.

Near the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus told His apostles, “I am going away to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2b). Now in Revelation 21, we see Jesus making this promise an eternal reality. Jesus is not merely giving a makeover to what we currently know. In Christ, we become a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), and we will dwell eternally with Him in His new creation.

#### QUESTION 3:

***What are some things you’d like to see made new?***

## REVELATION 21:6-8

**<sup>6</sup> Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life. <sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup> But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”**

When Jesus hung on the cross, He cried, “It is finished.” (John 19:30). Now He declared to John, “It is done!” All is complete in God’s new creation. On the cross, Jesus completed our redemption, and now in Revelation 21, He marks the end of redemptive history. He can do this because He is “the Alpha and

the Omega, the beginning and the end” (v. 6). He began history, and He will bring it to an end. Jesus is God; He existed in the very beginning and He still exists beyond the end. He is the Creator of all things—all things had their beginning in Him, and all things find their goal or end in Him.

## LOOKING AHEAD

*Check two or three phrases that you hold as the most important aspects of eternal life or the ones you are most looking forward to. Then answer the question.*

**Never dying**

**Living in eternal beauty**

**No suffering**

**Living with Jesus**

**Seeing loved ones again**

**No sin**

Why are these important to you?

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*“He who lays up treasures in heaven  
looks forward to eternity.”*

RANDY ALCORN

All we've read so far describes a pretty amazing place. Yet our culture has conditioned us to look at amazing offers and ask, "What's the catch?" I have to be candid with you: there is a catch. The gift of an eternal home is not automatic. Jesus' offer is open to all, but the only ones who can enter this new heaven and new earth are those who follow Jesus.

1. **"I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life"** (v. 6). We must admit we're thirsty and believe that Jesus is the only one who can quench that thirst.
2. **"The one who conquers will inherit these things"** (v. 7). We are conquerors when we stand strong and faithful to Christ, and we overcome and are victorious through Him.

All this is tied to our relationship with Jesus. When we come to Christ, we are adopted into God's family (Rom. 8:14-15). We will fully experience all the benefits of that family relationship in our future home. "I will be his God, and he will be my son" (v. 7).

The Lord made it clear, though, that not everyone will enjoy the benefits and glories of the new heaven and new earth. In verse 8, He listed "the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars." In the past, we may have been guilty of these sins, but this verse is referring to those who have chosen to remain in their sin rather than choose Christ.

God is preparing an amazing home where we will live eternally, but it will only be available to those who believe in Jesus Christ. The "fine print" in the deed to your heavenly home is that Jesus is the only way to receive salvation.



#### QUESTION 4:

***Why do we often fail to keep the reality of heaven and hell in mind as we relate to others?***

## REVELATION 22:1-5

<sup>1</sup> Then he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> down the middle of the city's main street. The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations, <sup>3</sup> and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Some people have an amazing ability to paint a picture with words so well that we can taste it, feel it, and see it. John painted just such a picture with his vision of the new heaven and the new earth. In these verses, we “see” the incredible home promised to every believer. John was focused in particular on the new Jerusalem, and five images stand out in what he saw: the river of the water of life, the tree of life, the tree's fruit, the tree's leaves, and the throne of God.

We've been given a great picture of our eternal home, but what will we be doing? Popular culture paints a picture of people standing around endlessly playing harps, but nowhere does Scripture teach that. Instead, we will do three things:

▶ **We will worship God.** We will certainly declare His praises, but worship is far more than the words we sing or speak. We worship through the way we live.

▶ **We will serve God.** We are called “his servants,” but our service will not be burdensome.

▶ **We will reign with God.** God is the sovereign Ruler over all, yet He will grant us the privilege to reign with Him forever.

John's vision points to the magnificence of eternal life. We're familiar with the statement, “If it seems too good to be true, it probably is,” but that's not true here. John wrote that Jesus declared to him, “These words are faithful and true” (Rev. 22:6).

### QUESTION 5:

*Which of the descriptions of heaven in these verses do you find most meaningful?*



