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The Geography of Heaven

by Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., 1999

Edited and expanded by David Sielaff, 2006, and now July 2024

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We have all heard of the New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2). That city which comes to earth after the Millennium is arriving to take the place of the earthly City of Jerusalem established in the time of King David about a thousand years before the birth of Christ. This biblical reference alone shows that there is a “Jerusalem” that exists in the heavens like the one on earth, and both function politically and domestically in practically the same category of influence. There was one difference. The Jerusalem in heaven is about **a thousand times larger in area** than the Jerusalem on earth (Revelation 21:16).

In spite of this large area, the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem are equal in size to human beings. Jesus in his glorified state and the angels when they appear to men always look like ordinary human beings in size. And Jesus is the same in body form as the Father (Hebrews 1:3; John 14:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15–16).¹ Also, the measurements used to calculate the size of the heavenly Jerusalem are the same as mankind uses on earth, which are the same standards used by the angels:

“And the city is lying four square: and its length is as much as the breadth. And he measures the city with the reed to twelve thousand stadia [about 1,500 miles]. Its length and breadth and height are equal. And he measures its wall of a hundred forty-four cubits of a human measure, which is that of the messenger [angel].”

• *Revelation 21:16–17, Concordant Literal Version*

Vast crowds, “**out of every nation and out of the tribes and peoples and languages standing before the throne and before the Lambkin,**” almost innumerable in population, inhabit the regions of heaven

¹ See Dr. Martin’s article, “[The Bodily Composition of God.](#)”

(Revelation 7:9; 12:12; 13:7; and verse 19:1, where it speaks of “**a vast throng in heaven**”).²

Whereas the earthly Jerusalem was the capital of all twelve tribes of Israel in the time of David and Solomon, we find that the heavenly Jerusalem has twelve gates with the individual names of the twelve tribes of Israel on each of the gates (Revelation 21:12). Since the original twelve apostles of Jesus were told they would each sit on a throne over an individual tribe of Israel (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30), we find that each of the twelve foundation stones of the heavenly Jerusalem have the individual names of the twelve original apostles inscribed on them (Revelation 21:14).

What we need to emphasize in this context is the fact that both the twelve tribes of Israel and the original twelve apostles of Jesus were of earthly origin, yet they had so much influence with God that these human creations had their names associated with the heavenly Jerusalem. Or, perhaps it is better to turn the example around and say that the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve original apostles were named after the names found on the gates and the foundation stones with the City of Jerusalem in heaven.

The Three Heavens

What do I mean when I use the term “**heaven**” in this Geographical Report? The Bible speaks of three heavens, and each is different from the others (2 Corinthians 12:1–4).

The first heaven is one about which all of us on earth are very well acquainted because it simply means the atmosphere (particularly that where all weather phenomena occur). If a human being is six feet tall, then that person has the top of his or her head six feet upwards into the first heaven. So, even human beings live in the bottom part of the first heaven.

Birds and the clouds are found in the middle and upper parts of this first heaven. This is the “**heaven**” into which Elijah was taken when he left Elisha in the 9th century BC (2 Kings 2:1). We later find Elijah still on earth in the land of Judah (2 Chronicles 21:12–13). We know for sure that Elijah did not go into the third heaven (the heaven of God’s throne) because Jesus explicitly taught that no man before His time had ever gone into the heaven where God had His throne. “**And no one has ascended into heaven except He Who descends out of heaven, the Son of Mankind Who is in heaven**” (John 3:13).

The second heaven is where the moon, the sun and all the stars are found (and this includes the billions of galaxies that modern man has been able to discover with the use of various kinds of telescopes). This “heaven” is described in Genesis 1:14–18 and it is one that all of us are familiar with, except we have not been able to go beyond the moon in any human exploration (though instruments from the earth are now in motion outside the solar system and located between various suns within our galaxy).

This Geographical Report is interested only in **the third heaven**. This is where God’s abode happens to be. He lives in a palace that is located within a city in an area called “Jerusalem” (or, “Mount Zion”). This vast region (remember, this “Jerusalem” is a thousand times larger than our earthly “Jerusalem”) is called in the Bible by the name “**Paradise**” (2 Corinthians 12:1–4). The word “Paradise” means a “Park” or a “Garden” and the Jews have long equated the Garden of Eden as a parallel (and a microcosm) of the grand Garden in heaven in which God the Father lives and has His throne. In fact, the Garden of Eden is nothing more than a type (or counterpart) of God’s own residence in His heavenly domain.

In the first eight pages of my book *[Secrets of Golgotha](#)*, I give scriptural and historical evidence that the Garden of Eden was the model that was used by Moses in constructing the Tabernacle in the wilderness (a type of portable Temple) and it was also the archetype of the Temple on Mount Zion that David had Solomon build in Jerusalem. From pages 110 to 147 in my book *[Restoring the Original Bible](#)* I have detailed information that the Temple in Jerusalem was also shaped to resemble the Garden that was in the

² **Editor’s Note:** The words “people” and “peoples” are translated in the Concordant Literal Version (which I use for the biblical quotes in this article) from the Greek noun root *laos*. It means a group of inhabitants without specifying that they are human beings or gender. The word for “human being” would be derived from the Greek noun *anthroupos*. DWS

Land of Eden and that even the Old Testament scriptures in its three divisions was arranged to fit in a symbolic manner with the three compartments of Eden (Paradise) and the Temple design.³

For Israel to assemble in the outer courts of the Temple, it was like meeting God within the **“first heaven”** where all weather phenomena take place. (Rain could fall into this area since it did not have a roof). The Holy Place of the Temple was a space where only priests were privileged to enter. It had a curtain in front of its entrance with the heavens embroidered on it (the moon, sun and stars, but not the zodiacal signs representing the **“second heaven”**). The Holy of Holies inside the Holy Place was separated by another curtain (sometimes by two parallel curtains attached to one another). Inside that final curtain was considered to be the **“heaven of heavens”** which is the **“third heaven,”** where God has His residence.

Remember that Moses was ordered to build the Tabernacle (a type of portable Temple) exactly like the pattern given to him by the angel (Exodus 25:9, 40) which the apostle Paul said was the same pattern of God’s throne and house in heaven (Hebrews 8:5; 9:23). There are more parallels. The 24 priestly divisions in Solomon’s Temple (1 Chronicles 24:1–18) represented the 24 elders in the heavenly Temple mentioned in Revelation 5:8.

There were also four major Israelite tribes that encamped around the Tabernacle represented by a Lion, an Eagle holding a Snake, a Man, and a Bull, with their exact counterparts represented in heaven by the four Cherubs (Ezekiel 1:10; Revelation 4:7.). Indeed, the Garden and the whole area of Eden also represented a pattern of God’s abode and the country of God’s residence in heaven. The Garden had Cherubs guarding it, like God has before His throne.

The Gihon River

Note this important point. In my book [*101 Bible Secrets That Christians Do Not Know*](#), I give detailed information in plain language about the geography of the four rivers in Eden (Genesis 2:10–14).

Most people of the present and recent past have adopted a false opinion that the “heads” of the four rivers were at their sources in four different mountain regions.

Actually, the rivers merged to become one great river within the Garden. I show in plain language that the four “heads” of the four rivers were located at what we call their “mouths.” The Bible actually shows that the four rivers by the names of Euphrates, Tigris, Pison, and the Gihon entered the Land of Eden separately but they came together in the Garden to form one river that left the Garden. That single river went into the Persian Gulf. That river was a continuation of the River Gihon. Thus, the water that left the Garden of God (typical of God’s throne) was the Gihon River, now made larger by the volume of the other three rivers.

This is important to know because when David had Solomon built the Temple at Mount Zion it was built over the single water source in all the area of Jerusalem, they called that spring by the name of Gihon to tally with the Gihon River that came forth from God’s presence, in the Garden of Eden. The Gihon Spring (and the Gihon River) in turn were patterned after the River of Life that issues forth from God and His heavenly throne (Revelation 22:1–2). They are analogous to the “Waters of Salvation” that David wrote about in the Psalms. Note David’s teaching:

**“His [God’s] foundation in the holy mountains: Yahweh is loving the gateways of Zion More than all the tabernacles of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of you, City of the One, Elohim
... The singers, like a chorus, will say: All my springs are in you [Zion].”**

• ***Psalms 87:1–3, verse 7***

God also has “springs” [or fountains] issuing forth from His throne in heaven:

³ See also the detailed analysis in Dr. Martin’s article: [“The Temple Symbolism in Genesis.”](#) DWS

**“Grant to Yahweh, sons of the elim [God], Grant to Yahweh glory and strength.
Grant to Yahweh the glory of His Name; Worship Yahweh in His holy effulgence.**

**The voice of Yahweh is over the waters; The El of glory, He thunders;
Yahweh is over the abundant waters.**

**... In His temple everyone is saying, ‘Glory.’ Yahweh, He sat enthroned above the deluge,
And Yahweh shall sit enthroned as King for the eon.”**

• *Psalm 29:2–3, 9–10*

God even lives in a palace in heaven that has chambers with their beams of support located in the **“waters”** of the springs (Psalm 104:3). Note Psalm 36 where David speaks both about the earthly Temple and God’s heavenly palace:

“How precious is Your benignity, O Elohim, So that the sons of humanity, they may take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. They are satiated with the richness of Your house [the Temple at Zion], And the watercourse of Your luxuries You give them to drink; For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light shall we see light.”

• *Psalm 36:7–9*

Look what this means. Since the river that came from underneath God’s Temple in Jerusalem was called the “Gihon,” and the river that left the Garden of Eden (a symbol of God’s heavenly Paradise) was also the “Gihon,” it makes sense that the earthly river called the Gihon (or the spring) derived its name from the heavenly “River of God” that emerges from the real throne of God in the **“third heaven.”** Since the geographical scene associated with Eden and the Garden is typical of the heavenly region of God’s abode, then it is not unreasonable to believe that the heavenly Eden also has four rivers flowing into it and they possess the names of the earthly rivers that were named after them.

Geographic Names in Heaven Are the Same On Earth

There is certainly a region in heaven known as Persia because Gabriel the archangel fought with the Prince of Persia (an angel) IN HEAVEN (remember that there was **“War in heaven”** as stated in Revelation 12:7).

Furthermore, Gabriel was later to fight a major battle with the Prince of Javan (Greece and the Greater Balkans) IN HEAVEN (not on earth). But both the areas of Persia and Javan in heaven have counterpart rulers and areas on earth.

Remember also that the earthly King of the North in Daniel 8:9–10 (comparing the context with the **“Book of Truth”** found in Daniel 10:21 and recorded in the Bible throughout Daniel chapter 11 to 12:4) was able through his counterpart in heaven to fight even with the **“host of heaven”** (he will war with angelic armies in heaven) and he will defeat some of the heavenly angels by throwing them to the earth.

Heavenly Events Have Effects on Earth

What happens when there are wars in heaven? They have repercussions on our earth. When angels in heaven are fighting over who controls areas in heaven (for example, those heavenly regions called Persia and Javan), we have similar battles here on earth (usually in the wake of the heavenly wars). See Revelation 12:12–17.

Events on Earth Have Effects in Heaven — Some Examples

Sometimes events on earth precede those in heaven. Note that Jesus said there would be a time of trouble on earth (the Great Tribulation) starting with the setting up of the Abomination of Desolation and lasting about 3½ years. The Tribulation will be so bad that no time before or after could be compared to it (Matthew 24:15–29). But in Daniel 12:1, the Great Tribulation occurs only after the 3½ years (and is of short duration) and it occurs at the resurrection of the dead from the earth.

Note that Revelation 7:9 states that there are IN HEAVEN “... a vast throng which no one was able to number, out of every nation and out of the tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lambkin ...” These are HEAVENLY BEINGS, not earthly men or humans.

They are cited along with innumerable angels who always stay in sight of God’s throne and that of the Lamb (Revelation 7:11). They are the ones who come out of THE HEAVENLY “**Great Tribulation**” (mentioned by Daniel in 12:1) and NOT the EARTHLY “**Great Tribulation**” mentioned by Christ Jesus in Matthew chapter 24 and Mark chapter 13. Thus, the Bible shows TWO “Great Tribulations” — one in heaven in which there was or never will be another like it, and another on earth in which there was or never will be another like it. It is a major mistake to get the two distinct Tribulations mixed up.

Indeed, virtually all of the prophetic teaching about Persia, Javan, the King of the North and the King of the South in what we call the “**writing** [or, book] **of Truth**” (Daniel 10:21 and recorded in Daniel chapter 11 to 12:4) is describing WARS IN HEAVEN and NOT on earth! These wars in part are between the archangels Gabriel and Michael and the angelic Prince of Persia and the angelic Prince of Javan, with the angelic powers called the Kings of the North and the Kings of the South.

For example, the geographical regions of Edom, Moab, and Ammon mentioned in Daniel 11:41 are HEAVENLY districts, NOT earthly. And if the heavenly Jerusalem is about a thousand times larger in size than the earthly Jerusalem, these heavenly regions called Edom, Moab, and Ammon may be the same.

Remember, there are vast nations, tribes, peoples, and different languages now inhabiting the “**third heaven.**” These peoples are not on earth but they have come out of their own heavenly tribulations (Revelation 7:9–17).

Indeed, we have King David in Psalm 45 writing a vision of Christ Jesus at one of his former wedding ceremonies IN HEAVEN (and this is referred to by the apostle Paul in Hebrews 1:8–9) that tells us of a daughter of a king who comes from a district IN HEAVEN called “**Tyre**” (Psalm 45:12) and there is another district called “**Ophir**” (verse 9). Both these heavenly districts have counterparts on earth.

As a matter of fact, both the earthly King of Tyre is described in Ezekiel 28:1–10 and also the heavenly King of Tyre (a Cherub of angelic rank) are mentioned in the last part of Ezekiel 28 starting in verse 11. There is also an earthly King of Babylon who has a counterpart in heaven who wishes to take over the very throne of God in heaven (Isaiah 14:4 with 12–14).

Even humans on earth have their counterparts in the form of angels in heaven.

- Jesus spoke of children having “**their messengers** [angels]” (Matthew 18:10).
- Early Christians thought Peter had his own angel with the same appearance as Peter (Acts 12:15).
- The angel of the Prophet Samuel even went by the name “**Samuel**” (1 Samuel 28:11–15).
- What we will one day discover is that the earth is a pattern of heaven in a microcosm sense.
- The regions in heaven are more vast in extent, but the inhabitants are the same size as humans on earth.
- At the present there is as much diversity in heaven as on earth.
- There have been as many wars in heaven as we have had on earth.
- Soon, heaven will become pure, as the Father and Christ are pure.

All this will be given in my forthcoming book on “Angels.”

[**Note:** Dr. Martin did not complete his book on angels before his death in January 2002. DWS]

Dr. Martin's April 1999 Newsletter ... Beginning At The 8th Paragraph

<https://www.askelm.com/newsletter/1199904.htm>

There is also another subject of the Bible that needs to be understood. It is the one on *Geography* and its heavenly relevance. You may not realize it in its entirety but there are territorial regions in the heavenly realm where God the Father, Christ Jesus and the angels live (along with other “Sons of God”) that have areas on earth named after them. That's right! Not only is there a heavenly Temple (with the former Temples on earth patterned after it), but there is likewise a heavenly Jerusalem, there are also a heavenly city called “Tyre” and other areas called Ophir, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Media, Javan, etc. This information will be contained in a new Prophetic Report that will be attached to next month's *Communicator*. It will be titled: *The Geography of Heaven*. You can now tour heaven if you want.

In fact, the whole of Psalm 45 is a HEAVENLY SCENE with *heavenly* geography. The reason that the earthly geographical terms Ophir and Tyre appear in the text of Psalm 45 is one of the major proofs (among many) that the geographical names we have here on earth are counterparts of geographical names in the territory we call “heaven.” We are even told of “War in Heaven” (Revelation 12:7) with various armies of angels fighting over those territorial regions as well as their counterparts fighting on earth. Note these points ...

- The earthly “Tyre” is mentioned in the first part of Ezekiel 28 (verses 1–10) and there is also the heavenly “Tyre” (the earth's counterpart) mentioned in Ezekiel 28:11–19.⁴
- Psalm 45 means that there is a heavenly “Ophir,” as well as an earthly “Ophir.”
- There was an earthly Jerusalem, and there is also a heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2).
- There were 24 divisions of priests in the earthly Temple, and there are 24 divisions of heavenly “priests” (or elders) in the heavenly Temple (Revelation 4:4).

Indeed, all major areas on earth over which angels have charge ON THE EARTH, have their counterparts in the territory that we call “heaven” in which God the Father and Christ now are. There is yet to be War in Heaven over those particular areas in heaven as well as on earth and we need to distinguish between the two realms. Note that the Prince of Persia (an angelic power) and the Prince of Javan (Greece — also an angelic power) were programmed by God to fight with the angels Gabriel and Michael. This shows that much of the teaching of Daniel chapters 10 and 11 is still future to us.

It is mostly heavenly geography that is being discussed in Daniel chapter 11 (not the earthly counterpart, although the control of the earth does figure into the account as well). The geography on our present earth is simply a reflection (almost an exact one) of the geography in heaven.

You will be amazed at what the Bible actually says about these heavenly regions that are as substantial to people living in them as those areas which are their counterparts on earth.

See “[Chapter 31: God's Divine Headquarters](#)” in Dr. Martin's book [Essentials of New Testament Doctrine](#). It deals with events in heaven and their relationship to earthly events.

See also my article “[Elohim and the Son of God – Part 1.](#)”

Ernest Martin, 1999

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⁴ See Dr. Martin's article, “[Lingering Idolatry in the Temple of God](#)” where he discusses the two cherubs before God's throne. One of them turned against YHWH. The names of the two cherubs are given in Scripture. The evil cherub is the creature who is discussed in Ezekiel chapter 28. That text is not about Satan.

The evil cherub is also referred to in the Book of Revelation. The “**image of the Beast**” that is in the Temple before Christ returns may be the image of that rogue evil cherub, an image that will be animated and be seen to “come alive.” Perhaps that spirit being will have something to do with, and perhaps connect to, artificial intelligence. DWS