

### HEAVEN 3

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 8:18

Words:

Date:

INRTO: We are looking at the topic of heaven. When we talk about going to heaven, we generally think we go up to heaven at death and we are with God forever. If one takes the premillennial view of prophecy, as I do, it changes all that. If one takes the pretribulational view, it changes even more and I hold to that as well. I think a literal interpretation of Scripture brings one to that position, it certainly does take one to the premillennial view.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 4:17. Earlier we had verses 8-18 read for us. The context speaks of the trials of Paul's life, but he includes believers in the passages when he says this in verse 17:

*17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*

In the context of this verse, Paul is looking to the time when this life is over. In light of eternity all our trials and suffering in this life is considered here as "our light affliction!" When you look at what Paul went through, it seems like anything but light. But when you consider eternity, the worst possible trials here on earth could only be considered as light. In view of eternity, our trials in this life are, as Paul expresses it here, "but for a moment".

Now notice in the verse that our life of affliction is doing something for us. What is it? It is working for us! Our light affliction here is compared to working for us that which is coming which is "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!" No, that is not quite right! These light afflictions are working a far more exceeding and **eternal** weight of glory! What do these afflictions these trials, these rough life circumstances do for us? They are building up and building up an exceeding and eternal weight of glory for us.

What does that mean? If we gain the victory in our trials here, each victory is laying up something in heaven for us, and it is glory. What does that mean? As I see it, that means that for all eternity the glory of all we have gone through in this life will be on display in heaven. People will know what we went through

and how we learned to trust God in those trials! We learned to live by faith in our light afflictions!

Now let me add this, we can lay up many other things in glory. Jesus said we were not to lay up treasures on earth, but treasures in heaven. But through overcoming trials and troubles by faith, we can lay up an exceeding weight of glory! Look at the face of any true Christian, and that Christian is going through many things you and I have no idea about. But I believe in this city, we will have millions of stories that bring huge glory to ourselves and others, and it will all be because of Jesus Christ's sacrifice for us!

I am of the opinion that this city is not only for God's glory, it is for our glory! In this life, we are here to live for God's glory. We are to show others what God is like. On the other side, God has ordained things for our glory. What does that mean? It means, as I see it, God will display for others the good qualities He has accomplished in us when we overcame trials by faith. What we truly have become in Jesus Christ in this life will be on display for all others in heaven, and it will never fade away! And let me just add this that all grumbling, complaining, fretting, fussing, fighting our difficult circumstances in this life; these reveal a lack of genuine faith and will not show up as glory for us.

In these three messages I have simply tried to cause us to shift the focus of our eyes from the here and now, to eternity. These last two messages which I have dedicated to my wife, I have sought to show us what our suffering will do for us in eternity if we overcome by faith. We have seen that there will be no more tears, and that signifies the end of all trials. We saw that there are vast amounts of gold in this city, and I think that will speak for eternity of that which we have come through in this life by faith. We want to now look at the twelve foundation stones of this city and the gates of pearl.

## V. THE ETERNAL STATE

### B. The Topic of Suffering

1. Tears
2. Gold
3. Foundation Stones

Well, we go back to Revelation 21 and we'll read verses 19-20:

*19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald,*

*20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysoite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.*

Let me encourage you to read through Revelation 21-22 and try to think what the new heavens and new earth will be like from what is revealed in these chapters. I want to draw our attention now in particular to the kinds of stones that are used for the foundation. One night as I pondered this city I thought, we put so much value on diamonds, why are they not mentioned here? \*\*\*

Well, our question is, what might be the significance of these stones which are used in the foundation of the New Jerusalem? As I pondered this, I remembered that someone had sent me a clip by David Pawson, a pastor from the UK who has now passed on and he spoke about these stones. Listen to what he said and I quote:

"The New Jerusalem it is said is made up of 12 stones that we would turn into jewelry now. Now here is the final proof that the Word of God; that it must be God inspired. In the last generation only, we have discovered how to make purer light than we had before. Most light just bounces around like waves crashing against each other in all directions so that the light coming from there still lights up my face on this side and reflecting off that thing up there and we're used to light coming at us from all directions. But we've now discovered how to turn light in one direction. Lazer light is the most common. You've seen laser that goes straight as a die.

"But we've also got what is called cross polarized light. A polarized filter, as you can imagine, allows light like that, but if you put another

polarized filter so that the light goes through this filter crossed over at right angles to that, you've really got a very fine filter." He explained all that with a diagram which I can't explain without a picture. I quote again, "If you take sunglasses and take another (set) and put it at right angles to the other it goes even darker and it only lets very straight light through.

"Now people have taken jewels and precious stones and cut a very thin slice, for microscopic purposes, then shone cross polarized light through them to see what happens, to put it very crudely, what happens to these stones in pure light? And one of two entirely different things happens to every jewel. The technical scientific terms you have are anisotropic jewels and isotropic jewels. Now what happens is this, some jewels in pure light whatever their color to begin with, they may be red, blue, or green, turn into all the colors of the rainbow and turn into a most fantastic (and I didn't get the word) but a most fantastic display.

(PICTURE)

"Other precious stones in pure light lose all their color, they just go black, look like a lump of coal. And its only in the last generation that people have discovered this unusual property. For example, diamonds, in pure light are nothing.."

I couldn't understand everything that was said here, but he said that some precious stones like rubies, when you put this light on them they just lose everything.

(PICTURE)

I continue to quote now:

"There are other stones that are anisotropic and go into beautiful colors. Now here is the fascinating thing; the twelve precious stones that God uses to build the new Jerusalem are all anisotropic. In pure light they are all far more beautiful, and God doesn't touch the diamonds or the rubies. He doesn't build with it." End quote.

(Pauson then put the twelve stones on a screen and you could see the beautiful colors. Then he said, "Look at the four bottom ones." And they were black, no attraction.)

So, let me ask you, who knew this about these stones 2,000 years ago? No scientist knew it, nobody knew it. John the Apostle as he wrote this down as the Lord dictated it to him, didn't know it; nobody knew except one Person in the entire universe, and that was God Himself.

Pawson then said, "To me that alone (i.e. the isotopic qualities of these stones) would prove that the Bible is the Word of God, because nobody knew it but God Himself. They didn't know it until our generation."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKZDpRSAM1k>

Now there are other isotropic stones than the ones mentioned in the foundation of the New Jerusalem but these 12 are all isotropic. I am always afraid of becoming fanciful, but I have no doubt that each of these 12 kinds of stones are used for some reason and mean something, and I cannot yet even suggest what that might be.

Study the promises made to the seven churches in chapters 2-3, like that of the white stone given to believers, and I have no doubt those prophecies have very special meaning, some of which we do not know yet. What I am saying is that only now have we learned this beautiful truth of these 12 stones because of science. Who knows how much there is to learn about the properties of gold and stones and pearls?

Let me add that without light these stones lose their beauty. We are not going to study light, but this city has light that is radiated by God Himself and by Jesus Christ. Look at verses 10-11:

*10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,*

*11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.*

The verse 23:

*23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.*

Then verse 24:

*24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.*

Then verse 22:5:

*5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*

Do you remember the different kinds of light Pauson talked about and how it makes certain rocks give off all the colors of the rainbow? What kind of light do God and Jesus Christ give off? What does this light do when it shines on the foundation, or the walls of jasper, or on the gates of pearl? Well, I don't know but I expect it will be beautiful, maybe beyond description. What will it do when it shines on people? We have to wait and see.

One of the amazing things I have tried to study is light. Darkness is a natural thing, but light is unnatural; it was created. God said, "Let there be light," and light came into existence. As we have seen, today scientists are able to do amazing things with light, like a laser light.

The internet said, "A laser generates a beam of very intense light. The major difference between laser light and light generated by white light sources (such as a light bulb) is that laser light is monochromatic, directional and coherent." End

quote. Monochromatic means that all of the light produced by the laser is of a single wavelength."

Now the outstanding thing about light is that it reveals. I suppose that God could have made us with eyes that see in the dark, but all of creation is the way it is for a purpose. And light is spoken of in a spiritual sense. So, Ephesians says that whatever reveals is light. One of the greatest things light reveals in a spiritual sense is sin.

All of us, no matter who we are, when we sin, we want to keep it hidden. Turn to John 3. Our weaknesses, oh how we want to keep them hidden. When it comes to confessing a need in an area of weakness, every window into our lives is closed up tight. Oh, how we hate confession. Jesus said that men love darkness rather than light. The word "men" means all of us, mankind. We begin in verse 14:

14 *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,*

15 *"that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*

16 *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

17 *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

18 *"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

19 *"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

20 *"For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.*

21 *"But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."*

When we get to glory, when all the dross is gone, we will love exposure. I believe that in heaven, exposure will bring glory to us, not shame. Oh, the glory of the believer in this city!

Now, how are gemstones formed? I asked omniscient Google how gemstones are formed. One article said there are five requirements for crystals to form. Ingredients, temperature, pressure, time, and space.

The ingredient we are speaking about is the Christian. To make this beauty we have seen in these stones, it takes very high temperature. We have looked at that in the gold as well. But a new thing needed is pressure.

Do you remember that Jesus said we should enter through the narrow gate? That is because this narrow path leads to the city we are talking about. But Jesus said, "difficult is the way." The word translated "difficult" here is our word "pressure." In this narrow road we will be put under pressure, sometimes great pressure. The online bible says it speaks metaphorically of trouble, affliction and distress. Are you familiar with any of those?

The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:

8 *We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;*

9 *persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed –*

10 *always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*

11 *For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.*



He said, "We are hard pressed." There is our word. "Hard pressed; crushed; perplexed, persecuted, forsaken, struck down" here are words familiar to the Christian on the narrow way.

I can speak of time without number of experiencing these things and it has only gotten worse. Many times, it was due to my own failures, and I submit that if we will deal with our own failures by faith, doing that will create tremendous pressure. I know of little that creates more pressure than repentance and confession of sin. But that is what it takes to make transparent Christians.

But there is another ingredient important to the formation of gemstones and that is time. God cannot rush the Christian into living by faith! It takes time. We cannot be conformed to the image of Christ in a moment! Some mature faster than others, but to learn to live by faith in life's circumstances takes time and time, like light, is almost indefinable.

Now let me ask you, what makes gemstones valuable? You might help me out, but I do not know of any use for them except for beauty. That is a major difference between them and gold. Think about this, what is a gemstone good for? Only its beauty. What is a pearl good for? Only its beauty. This is their most outstanding feature. But gold is useful for many purposes. And to be able to appreciate gemstones one must have light. And it is amazing what light does to the kinds of gems that are used in the foundation of this city. And one of the first things we are told about this city is its light source. Listen to verses 10-11 again:

*10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,*

*11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.*

If a certain kind of light used on these gemstones brings out a vast array of colors, what might the light of the New Jerusalem do to these stones? May I raise a question: What might this light do to the believer when it shines on them?

Our verse said that the light of the New Jerusalem was like a precious stone, like a jasper stone, and it was clear as crystal. I wonder what this will look like. But from what scientists are learning today, one can imagine a little of what it might be like. And could it be that these stones speak of the pressure and heat that believers have experienced in their time in life? And could it be that when the light of this city shines on them, that the glory of man's suffering and the beauty that comes out of it is magnified?

I think we will always be reminded of that, and see that through all of life God knew what He was doing, and that all things do truly work together for good to those who love God, even into all eternity. I recommend that may be the significance of these things. Surely there is a divine purpose.

In another message I mentioned Psalm 56:8. David was in one of the times when he experienced deep trials. Saul had pursued him from one place to another. Every day his life was in jeopardy. And in verse 8 he says:

*8 You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?*

Now why would God number David's wanderings? Is it because God might forget? Do you ever wish people you know could know some of your pain? We have a woman in our community. I understand she and her husband were friends with another couple. The man of the other couple got sick, and the husband of the first couple was very caring to the other man, and then he started to sympathize with the wife of the other man. After the sick man passed away, a connection had grown between the man who had cared for the other man and the other man's wife.

The long and short of it was that he ended up leaving his wife who was expecting their 8<sup>th</sup> child. Then he had to go to Germany for back surgery and the other man's wife went with him while his own wife was at home having their 8<sup>th</sup> child. This man ended up rejecting his own children in a court of law and is still living together with the other woman who had 6 children.

Now how often must this woman with the 8 children, left to fend for herself, not have wished to speak some sense to her husband, but her mouth is shut. There is nothing she can do but bear it in some way. She professes to be a Christian, and I wonder how often would she wish there were those who truly understood what she was going through and that she could pour out her heart and find comfort? Day by day, day by sorrowful day goes by and her husband lives with the other woman and she and her children are totally rejected by him.

Every person who experiences life's trials has an opportunity to trust God in those trials and build up beauty for eternity. Beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning! I have told you briefly one of billions of stories of sad things Christians have experienced. Consider this, these 12 foundations are almost 6,000 miles long! How many stories could those stones portray?

This lady I told you about, could she not say with David:

*8 You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?*

There is One who knows. I want to propose a possibility to you that here, in these precious stones in the New Jerusalem is God's bottle and His book. I can imagine some day in the future, if this woman walks faithfully with God and arrives in this city, she might meet a friend and say, "Come, I want to show you my story!"

You say, "Oh well, you are just speculating." I am. But let me suggest that if this is not the way it is, could not only be much better!

I spent some hours studying geology. Since I didn't know much about it, I started with a few kid's videos. The study of rocks is simply fascinating. There are basically three kinds of rocks, and you can boil that down to two because one kind is just small pieces of the other two and they are called sedimentary rocks. The other two are formed, geologists say by much stress, heat, and pressure.

Now these stones in the foundation of the New Jerusalem are called "precious" stones. Twenty times the Bible talks about precious stones. When I was young, we walked to school and back each day and that added up to 6 miles. I can take you there, and show you where we lived and the school I went to is still there. And in summer we would find agates on the gravel road. We did not know anything about rocks but we knew there was something a little more special about those above the common gravel.

Years later some good friends took us to the Queen Charlotte Islands and they took us on a long trip along the coast of the Island. From this New Jerusalem I had learned about jasper and that it is often red. I picked up a number of red rocks and beautiful white quartz and agates and I polished many of those and our interest in rocks just grew. I now have a number of the red jasper stones.

Now our chapter calls the stones of the foundation of this city "precious stones." The way quality stones become the most precious is when they are polished or when they are cut. Everything about gemstones speaks of pain from their formation to the cutting or polishing. There are many precious stones that do not look precious at all until they are polished or cut.

I am inclined to think that here in these stones may be God's bottle and book to remember our tears. For those who learn to live by faith and who learn to trust God in the midst of being conformed to the image of Christ, their sorrows will be turned into beauty for eternity.

Isaiah, speaking to Israel about the millennium says this:

1 *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;*

2 *To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,*

3 *To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."*

Verses 2-3 speak of the millennium, and if that is the millennium, what then of the New Jerusalem? The trials and troubles of this time, like many of the precious stones that come out of the stress and heat and pressure in the earth are metamorphized into beautiful reminders of the past.

It is simply an amazing thing that it is in our times of sorrow that God is able to bring about that which is of the greatest value to Him and will bring glory to us. If we learn to trust God in our sorrows, what God receives when we trust Him right there, is of inestimable value to Him. The way God gives us an idea of how much it is worth to Him He tells us it is much more precious than gold is to us. And I wonder if the beauty that comes out of those who learn to trust God in their trials is on display in the New Jerusalem. Could this be the book and the bottle where God remembers our tears and He displays in language we understand best, what all the saved are to Him?

#### 4. Pearls

We go now to verse 21:

*21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

I mentioned that I am zeroing in on the matter of suffering only. But if you notice, it is the Apostles names on the foundation stones, and the names of the 12 tribes of Israel on the gates. What do you think God built first, the gates or the foundation? So why are the Apostles names written on the foundations? Well, there is something for you to ponder.

Pearls are called gemstones by some. If so, they are the only gem material formed and found in a living creature. One article said, "Pearl is one of the oldest, most desire and most spectacular gemstone in the world. Formed differently to most gems, pearl is an organic creation found in the sea, an natural phenomena that actually occurs as a part of a defense mechanism of a mollusc shell."

They are extremely unique, but unlike all other gemstones they require no cutting or polishing before their stunning beauty is displayed! Let me ask, what do pearls and precious stones and gold have in common? Stress! Trouble! Trials!

Well, our verse says this:

*21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

There are some things stated about the New Jerusalem I have struggled with. I have studied the size of this city and I have struggled with it, as have many others. This city, as it is described here, is 1500 miles by 1500 miles by 1500 miles, whether you see it as a cube or a pyramid.

But now look at these gates. How big do you think these gates are? Well, we don't know. But do you think there could be real pearls that are the size of a big gate? Is the gold real gold? I think so. Are the precious stones real precious stones? I

think so. But could these pearls be real pearls? Well, the next time you can't sleep, ponder that.

Now let me ask you, what do pure gold and precious stones and pearls all have in common? Answer? Trouble. For precious stones it is heat and pressure, and later maybe polishing or cutting. So, let me ask, how are pearls formed? I have told you this before, does anyone remember how a pearl begins? Every pearl begins with a life-long problem for the mollusc. A clam or shell gets a parasite or some piece of grit, sand or anything, into its mantle and if it can't get rid of it. It becomes a lifelong irritant, and to get rid of the irritant it begins to secrete a material that coats the irritant. Because the clam can't get rid of it, the coating keeps building and building and this forms a pearl, and as a pearl, it becomes a treasure for the person who finds it.

There is a pearl called the Giga pearl and it was found by a Pilipino fisherman who had no idea of its value. It is now worth \$100 million dollars! (PICTURE)\*\*\*

Jesus told the parable of a man who found a pearl of great price. By the way, a pearl in the Greek of the NT is a *margaritos*, from which we get the name, "Margaret." Jesus said of the man who found this pearl that he sold everything he had, and bought it. Today there is another pearl, the pearl of Lao Tze and it is valued at \$35 million.

\*\*Now back to the size of these pearls in the New Jerusalem. It says each of these 12 gates was of one pearl. That is as hard to believe as the size of this city. Now the average pearl is 7-13 millimeters in diameter. This pearl that is valued at \$100 million dollars, how big is it? Well, let me show you a picture:



This pearl weighs 61 pounds and is about 15 inches long.

Now the clam that carried this pearl could have carried this irritant for over 100 years. Sometimes we carry things that we try to get rid of for a long time. All we want to do is get rid of it. But I believe that if we live by faith and trust God in the midst of whatever that thing may be that lasts a life-time, that it can become something of inestimable value to God. And it may be that whenever we enter this city, we are reminded of God makes beauty of ashes!

You see, there are some things some people bear for a life-time. Some may be born blind or crippled, or some are like the lady I told you about whose husband left her and she carries something every waking hour and she cannot get rid of it. It is with her all the time. Every effort put into thinking how to fix the problem comes to nothing and brings about no change to the circumstances. But if there is a trust in Almighty God, that may be the formation of a hundred-million-dollar pearl!

CONCL: In conclusion, let me ask, what do gold, precious stones and pearl have in common? First, they all go through very



painful processes to make them of value. That is how life in a fallen world is for those who are believers. Oh, to learn to trust God. Think of this now, how many opportunities to trust God do we waste by worrying, fretting, and maybe even by becoming bitter? It provided us an opportunity for eternal beauty and we wasted it. Oh, how huge trust is.

Let me read 1 Peter 1:6-9 once more:

*6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,*

*7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,*

*8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,*

*9 receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls.*

Here we get a picture from the Lord of how much our faith is worth to Him. It is much more precious than Gold is to us!

A second thing gold, pearls and gemstones have in common is that they are all used for jewelry. It is beauty! Here the desires of the eyes can feast to the full, and it is all good! What this beauty does to us gives us some idea of what our faith does to God Almighty!

Isaiah 66:1-2:

*1 Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"*

*2 For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.*

May I ask you, do you have any trial or difficulty that is giving you an opportunity to trust God right now? How are you doing with it? Will your problems turn black when the light is turned on them, or will they display every color of the rainbow?

What does gold not have in common with gemstones and pearl? Well, gold is useful for other purposes than just jewelry. I understand it is even used on the inside of spacecrafts to protect astronauts from infrared radiation and heat, and there are other uses as well. The only value in gemstones and pearl, as far as I know is their beauty.

Let me close with 1 Corinthians 2:6-10:

*6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.*

*7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,*

*8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

*9 But as it is written: "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."*

*10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*

ANISTROPIC STONES

ISOTROPIC STONES

