

"I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

The Precious Presence of Heaven

Kevin wrote us with an interesting, important question:

"What is the truth about heaven? Is it a far, far off place, realm, or invisible dimension? Are we in heaven when we have God's spirit dwelling inside us? I know that Jesus descended from heaven, and He ascended up into the sky, and a cloud hid Him from site. Are the 'many mansions' He went to prepare each individual believer?"

Three Heavens

There are at least three heavens that we're aware of:

The **first heaven** is the physical one above this realm, in this dimension, above the world - the skies and outer space:

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away" (Mark 13:31 MKJV).

"For as the lightning which lights up, flashing from the one part under heaven, and shines to the other part under heaven, so also shall the Son of Man be in His day" (Luke 17:24 MKJV).

"But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land" (Luke 4:25 MKJV).

The **second Heaven** is the spiritual realm or dimension.

The **third Heaven** is where we find God's throne, the spiritual place where He resides and from where He rules the second Heaven:

"But I say to you, Do not swear at all! Not by Heaven, because it is God's throne" (Matthew 5:34 MKJV).

"Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool. What house will you build Me, says the Lord, or what is the place of My rest?" (Acts 7:49 MKJV)

Paul spoke of having visited the third Heaven, otherwise known as Paradise:

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 MKJV

(2) I know a man in Christ fourteen years before (whether in the body, I do not know; or outside of the body, I do not know; God knows) such a one was caught up to the third Heaven.

(3) And I know such a man (whether in the body, or outside of the body, I do not know; God knows),

(4) that he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not allowed for a man to utter.

The Kingdom of Heaven

There are those who make a difference between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God. They are one and the same. Heaven and the Kingdom of Heaven are also the same, just as Canada and the Dominion of Canada are the same.

Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven is in our midst and within, which makes it very close indeed. Yes, it is a realm or dimension, a Kingdom, as Jesus, its King, says. And it is invisible to the carnal man (“the Kingdom of God comes not with observation” - Luke 17:20), yet it does eventually become manifest in this world by its fruit, by its influence, even as Jesus said:

Matthew 13:31-33 MKJV

(31) He put out another parable to them, saying, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field;

(32) which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches.”

(33) He spoke another parable to them: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened.”

Daniel prophesied of the day to come when the Kingdom of Heaven would be fully manifest on earth, even as all other kingdoms prior to it have been manifest:

Daniel 2:44-45 MKJV

(44) “And in the days of these kings, the God of Heaven shall set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed. And the Kingdom shall not be left to other peoples, but it shall crush and destroy all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

(45) Because you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it crushes the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what shall occur after this. And the dream is certain, and its meaning is sure.”

Not that God’s Kingdom doesn’t rule all things at all times and always has. Though Nebuchadnezzar was the emperor of the first and greatest empire of men, Heaven was ruling over him. God humbled Nebuchadnezzar when he proudly thought he was determining his own course and said, “Is this not great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?” (Daniel 4:30)

Having learned his lesson, Nebuchadnezzar declared:

Daniel 4:34-35 MKJV

(34) “And at the end of days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to Heaven, and my understanding returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him Who lives forever, Whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and His rule is from generation to generation.

(35) And all the people of the earth are counted as nothing; and He does according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the people of the earth. And none can strike His hand, or say to Him, ‘What are You doing?’”

The Kingdom of Heaven reigns supreme, everywhere; always has and always will.

The Saints on Earth Are in Heaven

In the hearts and lives of the overcomer saints (Revelation 2 and 3), those earthly kingdoms have been done away:

“Him who overcomes I will make him a pillar in the Temple of My God, and he will go out no more. And I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the Name of the City of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of Heaven from My God, and My new Name” (Revelation 3:12 MKJV).

The earthly kingdoms will also be done away entirely in the fullness of time.

“Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven” (Matthew 6:10 MKJV).

When we receive the Holy Spirit to indwell us, we have entered Heaven. How could we have the King of the Kingdom within us, He being seated on His throne in Heaven, if we weren’t in Heaven?

How could I be a member of Christ’s spiritual Body, into which I have been immersed by the new birth, if I weren’t in Heaven?

“For also by one Spirit, we are all baptized [immersed] into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, even all were made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13 MKJV).

“But you **have come** to Mount Zion and to the City of the living God, the **Heavenly Jerusalem**, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the firstborn who are written in **Heaven**, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel” (Hebrews 12:22-24 MKJV).

Receiving the Spirit of God and entering the Kingdom of Heaven is only the beginning, as we are spiritually refined by fire and eventually experience complete spiritual rest in Him and the physical resurrection to come:

“And He has sealed us and having given the earnest [down payment] of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Corinthians 1:22 MKJV).

“In Him you also, when you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14 ESV).

Jesus in Heaven while on Earth

Jesus was filled with the Spirit of God when conceived and was anointed by His Spirit at the Jordan (John 1:32-33). Jesus the Son communed with the Father steadily, being One with Him Who is in Heaven.

He said: “And no one has ascended up to Heaven except He Who came down from Heaven, the Son of Man who *is* in Heaven” (John 3:13 MKJV).

Jesus Christ was *in* Heaven even as He walked the earth. That is, He was in fellowship with the Father, Who is Spirit. He also communed with people in Heaven, like Moses and Elijah.

Mark 9:2-9 MKJV

(2) And after six days Jesus took Peter and James and John and led them up into a high mountain, apart by themselves. And He was transfigured before them.

(3) And His clothing became shining, exceedingly white as snow such as no fuller on earth could whiten them.

(4) And Elijah with Moses was seen by them, and they were talking with Jesus.

(5) And Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. And let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

(6) For he did not know what to say, for they were very much afraid.

(7) And there was a cloud that overshadowed them. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him.”

(8) And suddenly, looking around, they did not see anyone anymore, except Jesus alone with themselves.

(9) And as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things that they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Those who are united with Christ are also one with the Father Who is in Heaven:

John 17:20-23 MKJV

(20) “And I do not pray for these alone, but for those also who shall believe on Me through their word,

(21) that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

(22) And I have given them the glory which You have given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one,

(23) I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

Heaven Has Been Accessible All Along

It's believed Heaven was shut off from all until Christ was crucified, raised from the dead, and ascended into Heaven. Yet what are we to make of what Jesus said to the Pharisees?

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men. For you neither go in, nor do you allow those entering to go in” (Matthew 23:13 MKJV).

Consider that Moses and Elijah were in Heaven before the cross. And God is not a God of the dead, but of the living. Where were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, Job, David, and so many others before Christ came to earth? They weren't asleep (unconscious), as some erringly believe.

“Have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’ God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matthew 22:31-32 MKJV).

The Mansions Are Us

Kevin asked if believers are the mansions to which Jesus referred:

John 14:1-4 MKJV

- (1) “Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me.
- (2) In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
- (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, so that where I am, you may be also.
- (4) And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

Indeed we are these mansions, and the Lord accomplishes this, beginning at the time of a personal Pentecost when He brings us into His Body.

Acts 2:1-4 MKJV

- (1) And in the fulfilling of the day of Pentecost, they were all with one accord in one place.
- (2) And suddenly a sound came out of Heaven as borne along by the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
- (3) And tongues as of fire appeared to them, being distributed; and it sat upon each of them.
- (4) **And they were all filled of the Holy Spirit**, and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Remember what Jesus said of His body:

“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.’ Then the Jews said, ‘This temple was forty-six years building, and will you rear it up in three days?’ But He spoke of the temple of His body” (John 2:19-21 MKJV).

The resurrection of His temple happened three days after His death and burial.

Also recall Paul speaking of our bodies, those in whom God dwells:

“Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which you are” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 MKJV).

Heaven a Present Reality

Understand this isn't an intellectual lesson in theory, logic, and reason. We speak of the reality of these things. We're talking not only from head knowledge, but from experience. We know these things in, and by, our new natures in Christ.

The Kingdom of God or Heaven is the rule of God in our hearts as His willing subjects.

Heaven is a place and state of being, here on earth, in this world and life. God is Spirit and dwells in Heaven, which place is hidden to the earth and its inhabitants. For those on earth, however, that have entered Heaven by a spiritual birth, often referred to as being born again, Heaven is reality. All those who are born again are in Christ and have access to the throne of grace, the throne of God, which is in the spiritual realm or Heaven:

“Since then we have a great High Priest Who has passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we do not have a High Priest Who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted just as we are, yet without sin. **Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:14-16 MKJV).

The apostle Paul wrote:

Ephesians 2:4-7 MKJV

(4) But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us

(5) (even when we were dead in sins) **has made us alive together with Christ** (by grace you are saved),

(6) and **has raised us up together and made us sit together in the Heavens in Christ Jesus**,

(7) so that in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

The Scriptures often declare that those who are born again dwell in Heaven, not only as a matter of theory or future potentiality, but as present reality. Once this truth is opened to us, our eyes will see it:

Ephesians 2:19-22 MKJV

(19) Now therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,

(20) and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone,

(21) in Whom every building having been fitly framed together, grows into a holy sanctuary in the Lord;

(22) in Whom you also are built together for a dwelling place of God through the Spirit.

Jesus said, “Blessed are they who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake! For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 5:10 MKJV).

Jesus didn't say theirs **would be**, but **is**, the Kingdom of Heaven. That's why they're persecuted by the inhabitants of the earth, the carnal men who aren't a part of the Lord's

host in Heaven. So if you aren't being persecuted, you aren't in Heaven. And you aren't in Heaven because you aren't His.

Jesus Christ is the Way, the Gate, the Door to Heaven, to be accessed here and now. There is no other valid way.

"I am the door. If anyone enters in by Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:9 MKJV).

Jesus Christ the Only Way to Fellowship with the Father

People assume they can enter the Heavens and have fellowship with God apart from Jesus Christ. They err. Only through God's Mediator can we have access to Him, and He is Jesus Christ, none other.

When we receive the King, we receive His Kingdom. We know and follow Him as Lord. From then on, the Kingdom of Heaven begins to reign on earth by the thoughts, words, and works of the one apprehended by the King of Heaven. His rulership comes to be known on earth by the citizens of His Kingdom.

The King's Name is glorified in His son or daughter, one who has entered the Kingdom or one in whom the Kingdom has taken over. Hence the prayer and its answer:

"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven" (Matthew 6:10 MKJV).

The Kingdom of Heaven is the rulership of God. We enter Heaven when the King of Heaven enters us and renews our spirits, which have been cut off from God ever since the fall of man in Eden.

Adam and Eve were in Heaven while on earth. They had fellowship with God and weren't afraid, until they disobeyed (Genesis 3). Then their fellowship ended. They died, as God said they would if they ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and were no longer inhabitants of Eden.

Beware of Heavenly Deception

Have you ever wondered how some have spiritual revelation and understanding or insights into the spiritual realm, yet don't know the Lord? They deceive many into believing there are many ways to God. There *are* other ways into Heaven, but they aren't valid to God:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, He who does not enter into the sheepfold by the door, but going up by another way, that one is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1 MKJV).

Matthew 22:2-14 MKJV

(2) The Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king who made a marriage for his son.

(3) And he sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they would not come.

(4) Again he sent out other servants, saying, "Tell those who are invited, 'Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the marriage.'"

- (5) But not caring, they went their ways, one to his field, another to his trading.
- (6) And the rest took his servants and treated them spitefully, and killed them.
- (7) But when the king heard, he was angry. And he sent out his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.
- (8) Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready, but they who were invited were not worthy.
- (9) Therefore go into the exits of the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite them to the marriage."
- (10) So the servants went out into the highways and gathered together as many as they found, both bad and good. And the wedding was filled with reclining guests.
- (11) And the king coming in to look over the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.
- (12) And he said to him, "Friend, how did you come in here without having a wedding garment?" And he was speechless.
- (13) Then the king said to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
- (14) For many are called, but few chosen.

The man entered Heaven, but he was bound and cast out in shame, having arrived an illegitimate way.

"He put out another parable to them, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way'" (Matthew 13:24-25 MKJV).

Jesus wasn't talking of tares in a physical field on Planet Earth, but in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, sown by the enemy of God's people.

Matthew 13:36-43 MKJV

- (36) Then sending the crowds away, Jesus went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."
- (37) He answered and said to them, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man;
- (38) the field is the world; the good seed are the sons of the kingdom; but the tares are the sons of the evil one.
- (39) The enemy who sowed them is the Devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels [messengers in Heaven].
- (40) Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it shall be in the end of this world.
- (41) The Son of Man shall send out His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom [Heaven] all things that offend, and those who do iniquity,
- (42) and shall cast them into a furnace of fire. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.
- (43) Then the righteous shall shine out like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

There are many who practice sorcery and witchcraft, even doing so in the Name of Christ. Many are demon-possessed, inhabited by entities of the spiritual realm. Recall that demons knew who Jesus and His apostles were, while flesh and blood had no idea (Luke 4:41; Acts 16:16-18).

Regarding Heavenly deception, don't the Scriptures declare that Satan has been in Heaven since creation (Job 1 and 2; Revelation 12:3-9)?

“And He said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall from Heaven like lightning’” (Luke 10:18 MKJV).

And what does Satan do when He comes to earth? He poses as an angel of light:

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:13-14 EMTV).

Conflict in Heaven a Reality

Though this is surprising to some, in Heaven there's warfare:

Daniel 10:1-21 MKJV

(1) In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. And the thing was true, and a great conflict. And he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

(2) In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.

(3) I ate no food for delight, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, until three whole weeks were fulfilled.

(4) And in the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Tigris,

(5) then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man was clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz.

(6) His body also was like the beryl, and his face looked like lightning. And his eyes were like lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet in color were like polished bronze, and the voice of his words like the sound of a multitude.

(7) And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision. For the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great quaking fell on them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

(8) Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me. For my beauty was turned within me to corruption, and I kept no strength.

(9) Yet I heard the voice of his words. And when I heard the voice of his words, then I was in a deep sleep on my face, and my face was toward the ground.

(10) And behold, a hand touched me, which set me shaking on my knees and the palms of my hands.

(11) And he said to me, “O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright. For to you I am now sent.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood trembling.

(12) Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel; for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and to chasten yourself before your God, your words were heard. And I have come for your words.

(13) **But the ruler of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days. But lo, Michael, one of the chief rulers, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.**

(14) Now I have come to make you understand what shall happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is yet for many days.”

(15) And when he had spoken such words to me, I bowed my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.

(16) And behold, one looking like the sons of men touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who stood before me, “O lord, my sorrows are turned on me by the vision, and I have kept no strength.

(17) For how can the servant of my lord talk with my lord? For as for me, immediately there remained no strength in me, nor is there breath left in me.”

(18) Then again one like a man in form came and touched me, and he made me stronger

(19) and said, “O man greatly beloved, do not fear. Peace to you; be strong; yes, be strong.” And when he had spoken to me, I was made stronger, and I said, “Speak my lord, for you have made me stronger.”

(20) Then he said, “Do you know why I come to you? **And now I will return to fight with the ruler of Persia. And when I have gone out, lo, the ruler of Greece shall come.**

(21) But I will show you that which is written in the Scripture of Truth. And there is none who holds strongly with me in these things, but Michael your ruler.”

Heaven (the spiritual realm) contains good and evil, those with wedding garments and those without (Matthew 22:1-14); those who come up by the Door of the sheep and those who come up another way (John 10); those who are bad fish and those who are good (Matthew 13:47-50); wise virgins and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13); those who are wheat and those who are tares (Matthew 13:24-30); those who fight the prince of Persia and those who fight against Gabriel and Michael (Daniel 10:1-21). There’s war in Heaven, says John (Revelation 12).

Don’t be surprised, then, when you find conflict and turmoil within and without.

Christ’s Victory

But the battle isn’t in vain. Christ’s total victory is assured over all realms. “I have overcome the world,” He said, and, “I became dead, and behold, I am alive for ever and ever, Amen. And I have the keys of Hell and of death” (John 16:33 and Revelation 1:18).

And let’s not forget that God promises to reconcile all things to Himself, not only those on earth, but also those in Heaven:

“And through Him having made peace through the blood of His cross, it pleased the Father to reconcile all things to Himself through Him, whether the things on earth or the things in Heaven” (Colossians 1:20 MKJV).

Yes, there’s a time of separating and uniting, of casting off and of gathering up (Ecclesiastes 3). We are arriving at the time of a great gathering, and ultimately a gathering of all to Him:

“After these things I looked, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the

Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation to our God sitting on the throne, and to the Lamb’” (Revelation 7:9-10 MKJV).

Conclusion

Heaven has been invisible to this world, but never absent from it. The rule of God is everywhere, and all things on earth are determined from above. (Let’s not think of “above” in physical terms. For example, your employer may be above you in authority and salary, though not in physical height.)

When the kingdoms of men are soon displaced, it will not be because the Kingdom of God has been absent until now, but because it has been hidden from the world. In this day, however, the Kingdom of Heaven will be made manifest, although not according to the carnal senses or man’s way of understanding.

Victor

The State and Fate of Hell

Some people think we say there is no Hell, because we preach that all men will be saved. But what is salvation, if not deliverance from death and Hell? As the father said of his prodigal son: “It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; and was lost, and is found” (Luke 15:32 MKJV).

This letter tells you what you need know about the real Hell, not the fake one, in which men say unrepentant sinners (or all those who disagree with them and their doctrine) will be tormented forever and ever after they die. That’s a most gruesome and blasphemous fable, but the real Hell is something you are already familiar with, as every person born on earth knows it more intimately than his home.

Prophecy to All Religious

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