

June 22, 2010

...Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm 105:4)

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## Let Me See

O Lord, I'm trying hard to see  
Through windows of eternity,  
Where glory shines in splendor  
And no darkness can prevail.  
My soul athirst is crying out  
While weariness is casting doubt  
Upon these eyes of flesh  
That cannot pierce the covering vail.  
O Lord, how long shall darkness reign-  
How long shall this night last-  
Until I touch the Everlasting Fire?  
O let me see.. O let me see...  
Beyond the crystal waters,  
Where angel faces pale  
Before the presence of Your Majesty...  
Let me see...  
Let me see.

•ejr

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## Quote of the Week. *from Maurice Roberts*

“It is a feature of true Christianity that it points us continually to the coming day of God. This is not because we have not work enough to do here and now on earth, but because only those whose eye is on the future can serve properly now on earth. Those who are not heavenly-minded are of little earthly good. Hence the Scriptures inform us that all great servants of God have looked fervently to the end of this age. In such a spirit Noah built an ark, Moses spurned the wealth of Egypt and Paul travelled with Christ's gospel to all corners of the Mediterranean world.

It is no surprise to discover, therefore, that false religion is shortsighted and prefers to offer its followers their good things today. Satan well understands that sinners prefer their blessings now rather than tomorrow. Hence he is in the business of entertaining men with the here and now.

*from The Thought of God, Banner of Truth, 1993.*

## Feature Article:

### Heaven

*But you are come to mount Zion, and unto 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, which 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, ... Hebrews 12:22-2-+4*

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that cannot fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5*

I find that there seems to be two perceptions that often dominate Christians' talk about heaven. On the one hand there is an over-emphasis on materialism, as though the economic value of streets of gold, the size of mansions, or the precious jewels in the foundation of the walls, is what will impress us most when we arrive. On the other hand, there is that concept of a wispy, non-physical 'spiritual' existence, with the great joy of having, 'escaped' the confines of our bodies and the physical world (a clearly eastern influence). Perhaps some of our difficulty is that we tend to "spiritualize" the literal, and "literalize" the spiritual, based on our own presuppositions.

My first thought on the subject is this: I believe the most important statement in all the Bible concerning the Christian's future is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, "...and so shall we ever be with the Lord." There is our eternal bliss. That is the calming of all our fears and uncertainties. If we know Jesus, if we have caught even a glimpse of His beauty, if we have experienced the smallest portion of His love, than we know that to be with Him is heaven. However little we may know of our eternal environment and circumstances, we may have absolute confidence, hope and security in the knowledge that He is the one who has prepared it for us, and will be with us (John 14:1-3).

We are assured that in Heaven there is the absence of all that's dark and evil. At present, its existence is isolated from all that has been touched by sin. Should a mortal eye be permitted an exclusive glimpse of its glory, or a mortal ear to hear its sounds, the sinful tongue is strictly prohibited from defiling it by speech (2Corinth.12:2-4). There is not the slightest shadow of a single thought that is not pure, holy, and undefiled in

Immanuel's Land. The fruit of sin has no existence there. Death, sickness, temptation, depression, conflict, broken hearts, hunger, persecution- all afflictions - shall be known and remembered no more (Rev.21:4).

Heaven is a place of sweet reunion and fellowship, We shall be reunited with our loved ones in Christ, forever. This is explicitly promised to the child of God (1Thess.13-14). Though glorified and perfected, we shall still be *ourselves* - the unique creation of God - and we shall know and be known by our friends and loved ones. All of the saints of the past shall be our fellow-citizens in Zion. Adam, Abraham, David, Isaiah, Peter and Paul shall all be our neighbors.

Where is Heaven now? I perceive it to be at the portal between Eternal Glory and the created universe. A land situated at the 'wormhole' between time and timelessness, between transcendence and imminence, between the infinite and the finite, between pure Spirit and spirit-sustained matter, between the Eternal Thought and His manifestation. In that place the beatific effusion of infinite glory shines without the slightest shadow of imperfection. In the midst of that portal, on the right hand of Glory, sits the God-Man upon the Throne of Glory, at once occupying His position in the eternal Tri-unity, and as King of Kings over all His creation. The Lamb slain in atonement, the High Priest interceding for His people, the Temple of I AM, the Shepherd tending His flock, the Sustainer of all that exists - these and a myriad of other roles of perfection converge upon that throne in unspeakable glory and beauty.

From the midst of that portal's glorious throne flows the River of Life, its gracious influence making glad the City of God, unto its farthest outpost in the hearts of the redeemed. It sustains the Tree of Life by whose leaves the nations may, and will be healed. Flowing in crystal perfection it brings forth always the perfect will of Him who is its Source.

The Holy Spirit permeates the very substance and soul of every saint there, so that, though there be an innumerable company of them, each shall have his intimate unbounded communion with his Lord.

Though separate and isolated now, both in its physical proximity, and in the hearts of the saints, the Kingdom of Heaven, in its consummation, shall encompass all of the reconciled creation. The Creator and Firstborn shall destroy all of the works of the devil, and the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption (Rom.8:21). There shall

no longer be bounds to the City of God. Her citizens shall dwell freely, creatively, blissfully, in the fullness of the universe, to the glory of God.

This promise of Heaven is only for those sinners who have been reconciled to God, having come to Jesus in faith, and having cast their lives into His loving arms. *Outside are dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie (Rev 22:15). And there shall by no means enter into it any thing that defiles, ...but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev.21:27).*

Believer, are you fearful about "going home." Are you troubled by the prospect of the unknown. Look to Jesus alone. Do you know his goodness and faithfulness. Do you know the embrace of His love. That is all you need to know: He is glorious, good, loving, and kind; and it is He who will embrace you, receive you unto Himself, and take you home. ●ejr3

*Devotional Minute:*

### **One Basket or Two?**

*For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Mark 8:36*

*But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 1 Timothy 6:7*

The world says, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." Jesus says, "Put them all in the basket of heaven." His advice would seem wise. The evidence of this world's corrupted and transitory nature lies all around us. From the "marble orchards" of the dead, to yesteryear's stars; from the despondent rich to the unhappy powerful - we are constantly reminded that life with an eye to this world is *vanity of vanities* (Eccl). Yet we still resist putting *all* our eggs in the one basket of heaven, so afraid that we are going to miss out on something in this present world. We feel impelled, and even prudent, to keep a few of our eggs in this world. But if *the sufferings of this present world are not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us* (Rom 8:18), how much less should we esteem the *pleasures* of this world. If Christ told us to lay up our treasures in heaven (Matt 6:19-21), should we not trust Him with *all* the eggs of our basket? ●ejr3

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