

## Heaven and the Bible - The Short Version

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### The Destiny

*"But, just as it is written, 'Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him'"* (1Cor 2:9). If you go through that statement again ... nice and slow ... it will become clear that each person who loves the God of the Bible is destined for treasure untold. This treasure begins now, but He also informs us of a coming, certain afterlife, and its abode, which we generally refer to as ... heaven.

God compares the current heavens and earth to clothing. *"All of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing You will change them, and they will be changed"* (Ps 102:26). *"The heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up ... But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells"* (2Pet 3:10,13). The curse of death, and all accolades of injury, disease, calamity, etc., will be forever expunged from this new physical environment - never to return. Already, we are in territory beyond comprehension. But rather than focus on this coming physical environment I want to spend time on our own personal situation. So, here goes.

### Our Current Situation

*"Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights ..."* (Ja 1:17). Each positive thing that brings joy, satisfaction, or fulfillment finds its root in God. For example, the joy one gains from learning or exploring is a gift from God. The ability to recognize, and then enjoy, beauty is a gift from God. The pleasures of touch, taste, smell, sound and sight are gifts from God. If God allows us to live and enjoy such things as sinners in a fallen age, is it reasonable to think that the coming age will be *"less than"* - in any way?

I suspect that everything we experience - now - will be exponentially enhanced - then. And if some positive thing presently here does *not* exist in glory, most likely it will have been replaced with something far superior. That is to say, we will not miss whatever it was we had here. For example, Jesus made the comment that in the coming age we will *"neither marry, nor (be) given in marriage, but will be like angels in heaven"* (Mt 22:30). Some have assumed this means there will be no sexual activity. If this is true, I am confident it will be replaced with something far superior. And it may be something we can even experience righteously with multitudes of others.

I am also of the conviction that sin has dulled, darkened and deadened our emotional capacity in varying degrees. As a Christian, there are times we experience *"joy inexpressible and full of glory"* (1Pet 1:8). Such events are tastes of *"the powers of the age to come"* - unsullied by sin (Heb 6: 5). Our entire array of emotional responses in glory will be just as pure and intense as are these glimpses of joy. In fact, I do not expect it can be any other way.

### My Most Vivid Imaginations

... of the coming glory will be exceeded. So will yours. But, I want to forward a few more things anyway. God allows us even now to inquire into His nature, His priorities and His desires. He also allows us to investigate and learn about the things He has created. I fully expect such activity will not cease on the other side of the Jordan. We have a Creator of inexhaustible knowledge, wisdom, complexity and power ... and I believe He is going to allow us access into His things like we have never seen before. We will always be in perfect health, in the prime of life and may never need to sleep

or rest as we eternally engage in these pursuits. And if we do operate on some kind of time line, we may grow in cumulative knowledge. And one other matter. We will never be bored. Boredom is a fruit of the fall and something we will leave to this age. Don't fall for the notion that eternity will only consist of sitting on a cloud playing a harp or lifting up hands in praise to God. Activities, I believe, will abound.

Some of you might be thinking, "*In first Corinthians 13:12 we're told, 'For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.'*" Do you think the moment we are face to face with Him - we will know everything that He knows? I don't think so. I don't think we can, or will, ever know everything God knows. This passage may be a reference to us having full knowledge of ourselves and possibly the events that occurred to us in this current age. But, that is just a guess. In one place He does say, "*Behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth: and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind*" (Isa 65:17). But, I am not sure I will "*forget*" what Jesus did for me ... or other people, etc. from this experience. We will see.

By the way, the transfer of one person from this "*present evil age*" (Gal 1:4) into the Kingdom of the eternal Son ... we have no idea how substantively this will impact the eternal state. The addition of one soul is an incalculable addition to the nature and dynamic we will experience there. Maybe that is why, in another of His massive understatement, God simply says, "*(H)e who wins souls is wise*" (Pr 11:30). Keep laboring and keep praying for that one soul. What Jesus did in His life and death is worthy of each addition to His redeemed domain. "*Remind*" God The Father of His Son's obedience – and how worthy He is of these additions. When He "*looks*" at that ... I think He will grant these requests.

### **Conclusion (Though There Never Will Be One)**

My brethren, there is no way we can yet comprehend, or appreciate, the massive fields of magnificent glory that God has spread before us. He has decided in the ages to come, to "*show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*" (Eph 2:7). You see, from His viewpoint, He has already - **past tense** - given us The Ultimate. "*He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*" (Ro 8:32). In Koine Greek, a question like this is syntactically an intensive assertion. Having granted His Son in sacrifice so as to eternally expunge our sins - there may be nothing He will choose to withhold from us. All other "*things*" - and an eternity of "*good gifts*" - are, relatively speaking "*chicken feed.*" There is no telling what lies ahead. So, I guess the only question is, "*Are you in - or out?*"

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In 1977, Robin Calamaio became a Christian.  
BA, Bus Admin (Milligan College '90) and Master of Divinity (Emmanuel School of Religion '92).