

Biblical Truths about Heaven and Hell

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. PROPER PERSPECTIVE	5
3. PERTINENT PARTICULARS	20
4. PERSONAL PROSPECT	35
5. PRIZED POSSESSIONS	49
6. PRISTINE PLACES	72
7. PERPETUAL POSITION	87
8. POTENTIAL POSSIBILITIES	94
9. PRECISE PRINCIPLE	103
10. PIERCING PRIVATIONS	108
11. PUNITIVE PUNISHMENTS	112
12. PERMANENT PRESENCE	119
13. PASSIONATE PLEA	125
NOTES	134
BIBLIOGRAPHY	138

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since heaven for the saved and hell for the lost is the end of history, it becomes vital to our understanding to grasp the truths of these doctrines that clearly relates where we came from and where we are going, and points to God as the sovereign Lord of history.

What strikes a chord in my heart as I think on these doctrines is the impact that they should have upon the world, but particularly, upon my friends and family. If I do not warn my neighbour and my family, who will? The church is not doing so. It is very rare indeed to hear these doctrines preached and taught in our churches. We hear of prosperity and a good life being spoken of as the *good news*, and it is in great error of understanding Scripture. The Good News, or The Gospel, has to do with biblical salvation. To be saved, in the simplest form doctrinally, is to be saved from everlasting damnation from a place we know as hell, to life eternal in a place we know as heaven. Once we understand these truths we must make a decision to either accept them and salvation, or to reject them and face damnation. You might tell me that you do not believe in a heaven or a hell; and many people do not. I would like to relate something from my life recently: One night I was preaching on the subject of the Glory of God. In

the message on several occasions, I used the phrase, "I believe". After the service a dear friend and seasoned preacher came up to me and offered some suggestions. One was to never use the phrase "I believe" in my preaching. I took his instruction and thought it over, and this is what he was saying to me: The Word of God, like the Glory of God, is intrinsic, meaning that it has value in and of itself. You cannot add anything to it to make it more valuable or true. It is like gold; you cannot add anything to gold to make it more valuable; it is intrinsic. To take from it would not make any part of it any less intrinsic. You cannot take away from the Word of God thinking that, if certain verses were not there, then that truth will not exist. The Word of God is intrinsic and 'cutting out' verses or stating that you do not believe certain passages does not change the reality of its truth. In other words, it is truth if you believe it or not.

Another thought to consider as you read through these doctrinal truths pertains to my title. I stated that we will be examining, "Biblical Truths about Heaven and Hell"; emphasis on the word "Biblical". There are scores of books on the book stores shelves about personal experiences of people, who claim having gone to heaven, to return to tell about it. I have read many of these books, comparing them to Scripture, only to find that they do not line-up with the Word of God. One book describes people arriving in heaven on trains, by the

car loads. Many of these people are weak and have to eat special golden leaves to gain strength to live in that beautiful land. Though this person may have had a very real experience, these things just are not in the Bible. The Word of God cannot be treated as an exhaustive discourse on the realities of heaven and hell; this I know. So instead of including other people's experiences in this writing, which may be real or imagined, I decided to stick with the inerrant Word of God. Though the Lord has not revealed all about heaven and hell to us, He has given us enough information to instil in the heart, hope of eternal bliss on one hand, and on the other, make us realize the torments of damnation, so much so, that we know hell is a place we do not want to end up at.

One account I have read of a person's journey to heaven and back, that I believe is factual, and by-the-way, does not contradict the Word of God, is that by John Piper. After telling of his account of dying in a terrible accident, and spending 90-minutes in heaven, to return to earth, to face a very long and painful recovery, says this: "Without the slightest doubt, I know heaven is real. It's more real than anything I've experienced in my life. I sometimes say. "Think the worst thing that's ever happened to you, the best thing that's ever happened to you, and everything in between; heaven is more real than any of those things." At the end of this

life, wherever we go - heaven or hell - life will be more real than this one we're now living."¹

For these things I am compelled to write about the *Biblical Truths about Heaven and Hell*, so my family, along with you my readers, will not only know that God is the sovereign Lord of history, but also know, that you were born into this time of history for a specific purpose. It is no accident that you are living on this earth. It is no accident that you are living at this specific time in history. And it is no accident that you are reading these pages. Now, you might ask, "What is God's purpose for me"? This may seem like a hard and difficult question to answer, but I assure you that the answer to this question is simple and easy to understand. God's purpose for all mankind, is to receive *true* salvation, and then bring glory to God in service to Him, and in all that you do.

My prayer is that you will be both blessed and challenged as we look into these all-important doctrines of heaven and hell. Do not skip the chapter titled, 'Passionate Plea'. While the chapters in this writing will describe certain aspect of the realities of heaven and hell, this last chapter will tell you, from the Word of God, how you can make heaven your eternal home.

CHAPTER 2

PROPER PERSPECTIVE

To have a right understanding of heaven, or any doctrinal truth for that matter, we need to have a proper perspective. We are limited by time, by knowledge, and by our human nature because we are living at a very specific time and at a very specific place in history. We cannot see the end from the beginning, and too we are living in a 'fallen' condition being the offspring of fallen Adam. The only chance we have to gain a proper perspective on doctrine is by being born anew from above, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and by praying for insight as we read and study Scripture. For it is only in the Scriptures by divine illumination, that we can gain a glimpse outside the confines of our human sphere of limited understanding of time and eternity. We, living at our time of history (which may span a little more than an average lifetime) compared to eternity, are like a spec on a head of a pin when compared to the largest of heavenly bodies. It is why we need God's perspective and understanding as best as we know how, to rightly understand Bible doctrine. In addition, we are instructed by Paul in his letter to Timothy (2 Tim 2:15) to rightly divide the word of truth. "The emphasis on 'rightly dividing' is: To make a straight cut, that is,

(figuratively) to dissect (expound) correctly (the divine message)."1

The following is an example of gaining God's perspective on a recent event: We have in the last several years come through a terrible drought in South East Queensland Australia. It got to the point of being critical with dams shut off and towns being evacuated, as trucks carrying water were used bringing very little relief. We had prayed for rain but had not seen anything significant in a very long time. There were children living in this country that had not known what rain was; they had never seen it. Imagine talking to these children about rain; it would be like Noah describing rain to the generation of his time.

The government, both State and Federal, offered rebates to homeowners to install water tanks for collecting rain water as it would tend to rain for short periods of time over some neighbourhoods, while the dam catchment areas received very little. The human perspective was very bleak and hopeless at that time, being limited by the here and now. We knew that, unless we received substantial rain, within one year we would have been facing the greatest economic disaster that Australia had ever faced, which could have led to deaths and famine.

As I was praying, I asked God for His perspective on the drought facing us and this is what came into my spirit: God did not send the drought for us to seek rain; God sent the

drought that we would seek Him. Though we would be quick to say God was judging this country, a real possibility of why we were having such a severe drought was not the judgment of God on this land, but as a means to save life. We are fast approaching the time the Bible refers to as Tribulation, and those not snatched off the earth by the Lord beforehand, will be facing a judgment of "Wormwood" as described to us in Rev 8:10-11. Wormwood will cause one third of the world's fresh water to be polluted and unusable. You cannot judge something that does not exist, so there will have to be fresh water on the earth including in this country. The grace of God will be demonstrated through the many thousands of tanks of water that will be full and unaffected by the contamination of Wormwood. Even though many will die as a result of the Wormwood plague, God has been preparing this area of Australia to sustain life, by His grace, for when that Day of Judgment comes. Thankfully, last year, we received substantial rain around the catchment areas. This year there has not been as much rain, and there are still areas severally affected by drought. God has been gracious in supplying rain.

We often find God's grace in judgment, as with Joseph. The story of Joseph is found in Gen 37-50. God sent a terrible famine to Egypt but sent Joseph there beforehand, by means of terrible 'judgment' (our perspective), to save life (God's perspective). We read in Gen 50:20 "But as for you, ye

thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."

Do you know that God's grace can even be found in the depths of hell? Just as I have read accounts of people claiming to enter heaven, to return to tell us about it, I have also read several accounts of people who say that they died and went to hell, and then were brought back to this life to tell us about it. It is interesting to read and discover that their stories are not consistent with Scriptural teaching. One common thread in these accounts is the seeing of demons. The Bible plainly tells us that one of the characteristics of hell, since Christ's resurrection, is that it is a place of outer darkness (see Matt 8:12, 22:13, 25:30 for examples).

As a teen I used to go on spelunking trips with the Christian Service Brigade group that I belonged to. When we got to the depths of the caves we were in, we would turn off our carbide lights. It was so dark that not only could you not see your hand in front of your face, you did not even have the sensation that it was right at the tip of your nose when placed there. This is what outer darkness is like.

If hell is truly such a place of outer darkness, and I believe it is, the 'blindness' of the soul's eyes would definitely be a demonstration of God's grace, for to be able to see the demons confined in the chambers of the damned would

be a horror in itself. I will tell you this: If there were light enough to see in hell you will most assuredly beg for darkness.

The point that I want to make in all of this is, that you can easily see the difference between perspectives and you can see how vastly different the human perspective could be when compared to God's perspective. It is therefore important, when studying Scripture, to ask for the Holy Spirit to guide you in truth, and the hardest thing to do is to remove the human element out of our understanding, but we must do our best, for a person's perspective is their 'reality'.

A word of caution is in order here. We must be careful in the reaching for divine understanding that we do not venture outside the bounds of sound biblical interpretation. In other words, if what you surmise as the mind of God is in contradiction to the Word of God, then you are in error, which, sad to say, is a very common practice in the church today. This why I made an emphasis based on 2 Tim 2:15 to make a straight cut, that is, to dissect correctly the divine message. When you hear the words from a preacher's lips, "I have a word of knowledge", or "a new revelation", be very attentive as to what is being said, and above all, compare the words with biblical doctrine. Paul tells us that the believers at Berea were nobler than those at Thessalonica; "in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and

searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" Acts 17:11.

Though heaven presently exists it will not become 'home' for the believer until he/she passes from this life into the next, for heaven is not of this world. Since the eternal state of heaven is still future for the Children of God, just as the everlasting state of hell is still future for the Children of Disobedience, and our understanding of these places is not first hand, there is another type of proper perspective we need to have and that is a proper prophetic perspective.

We need to lay some basic ground work beginning with the definition of prophecy which is: 'The revelation of the mind of God to the heart of man with reference to the past, the present, and the future.' The future tense of prophecy we call prediction. About one-third of the Bible was predictive prophecy when first uttered, of which many of these prophecies have already come to pass. Eschatology (from two Greek words meaning "knowledge of" and "last things") is the title given to the study of those predictions still awaiting their proper fulfilment.

Eschatology is divided into two areas: *personal eschatology* (the future of each man's soul between death and the resurrection), and *general eschatology* (the future of world history - and beyond). These vital areas of personal

and general eschatology reach deep into the doctrines of heaven and hell. It shows us the place the soul enters when it dies (personal eschatology), and where all of history is heading - to be concluded as we know it, in the presence of God (general eschatology), with a new age dawning.

When thinking about personal eschatology we must understand that all men and women will be raised bodily from the dead (Jn 5:28-29). The saved will be resurrected to life eternal beginning at heaven, while the unregenerate will be resurrected to be sentenced to everlasting existence in the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:12, 15). The all-important reality You need to know is that not all people will conclude their present history to enter heaven; not all are or will be saved. It is crucial to our understanding of heaven to know that most people living will not end up there for Jesus tells us, as recorded in Matt 7:13, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Most will find their final abode in the Lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever. So who will be saved then? We will examine this question in the last chapter of this book.

Generally speaking, when we look at biblical prophecy, we quickly find out that it covers the pages of Scripture

beginning in Genesis and continuing through to the final pages of The Revelation. When we compare the closing chapters of Scripture with the opening chapters of Scripture, we realize that everything lost in the Garden will be restored in heaven, and so much more, which should be a great comfort to the believer. Look at the following comparison by Lehman Strauss:

Gen - The commencement of heaven and earth (1:1);
Rev - The consummation of heaven and earth (21:1).

Gen - The entrance of sin and the curse (3:1-19);
Rev - The end of sin and the curse (21:27, 22:3).

Gen - The dawn of Satan and his activities (3:1-7);
Rev - The doom of Satan and his activities (20:10).

Gen - The tree of life is relinquished (2:9; 3:24);
Rev - The tree of life is regained (22:2).

Gen - Death makes its entrance (2:17; 5:5);
Rev - Death makes its exit (21:4).

Gen - Sorrow begins (3:16);
Rev - Sorrow is banished (21:4).²

By the end of Biblical history God's program will have come full circle. As the believer is comforted by the restoration of all things lost at the Garden, so those who have not experienced God's saving grace should be disturbed to the depths of their soul, for all will be eternally lost. The only heaven they will know will be the life they presently have on earth, no matter how good or bad it may seem.

What we have seen so far is that there is a place called hell that the unregenerate will find as their abode and a place called heaven that those in Christ will enjoy as their

home, when this life ends. What we have examined to this point relates more specifically to those who have passed from this life, or will pass from this life, to the next. To have a proper prophetic perspective, as it relates to heaven and hell, we need to have a little better understanding of the events leading to the end of history. This is important for many will be alive when these events occur as all of creation is on an accelerated collision course with its Creator.

The end result of the Second Law of Thermodynamics is that nature left to itself will become more and more disorganized; therefore, the universe must run down. A good example of this law is seen all around us and is found within us as our bodies grow old and die, and are laid to rest in cemeteries to await the resurrection. Because of this, I believe with all my heart that the events I am about to describe, as I conclude this chapter, are just about upon us and will quickly come to pass.

I would like to examine what the living can expect with coming prophetic events, and give you a prophetic timetable in summary. Let me start off by saying that I do not hold to the teaching that the soul sleeps, as the body does, waiting for the resurrection. Paul said in 2 Cor 5:8 that (for the believer) to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. 1 Thess 4:13-18 not only gives us a glimpse of what happens to the soul of the departed believer, but it gives us

some insight as to what the saved, that are living, can expect when history runs its final course. The example Paul gives is that Jesus rose again bodily so it is only natural for us to know that we have the same hope of bodily resurrection, but more importantly, we see from verse 14 that those believers who have already died are presently alive and with the Lord. Commenting on verse 14, Matthew Henry says this: "They then are with God, and are better where they are than when they were here; and when God comes, he will bring them with him."³

This passage of Scripture finishes up by telling us that the Lord will descend from heaven and the believers who have died will be raised (bodily) to meet those which are alive (translated - body changed) to be taken up off the earth to meet the Lord in the air. We call this event the 'Rapture'. The word rapture comes from the Latin word 'Rapiemur' in verse 17 of this passage meaning 'caught up'. And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Those in Christ should take comfort in these words as those without Christ should be fearful being without hope. There are no specific prophecies that have to be fulfilled for Christ to come for His children as told us in the passage we just looked at. This calling away of Christ's church can take place at any moment.

An important aspect to our proper understanding of prophecy is that this event we know as the rapture of the church will trigger the last remaining years of history as we

know it, with a time of judgment to come upon the earth we refer to as the Tribulation. The following is a prophetic timetable running from the time of Christ to the beginning of eternity:

In the year A.D. 33, just before Passover in Palestine, Jesus Christ is crucified. Three days later he is raised from the dead. He spends 40-days on earth with His disciples. Jesus is raised off the earth to heaven taking with him the righteous dead that were in a place called Paradise; this event is referred to as the First Fruits of the Resurrection. Approximately 10-days after Christ' ascension to heaven we have the event of Pentecost where the promised Holy Spirit falls upon the 120-disciples waiting for Him; this marks the beginning of the Church age, which we are living in now.

This age of the church we are presently living in, is also part of another age referred to in Scripture, as the Day of Man, or the Time of the Gentiles (1 Cor 4:3, Rev 13, 2 Thess 2:1-12, Lk 21:24). This 'Day' began in 605 B.C. with Judah being taken into captivity by Babylon, marking the end of the reign of the Kings, and the beginning of the Gentile rule over the earth. This Day of Man will end with the Rapture of the Church which is also called the Day of Christ in the Scriptures (Phil 1:6, 1 Thess 4) for it will mark the "Fullness of the Gentiles" as described in Rom 11. This event

is still future, but as I have already stated, it is in the very near future; or in other words, it is imminent.

The Bible does not tell us how much time lapses after the Rapture to when the seven-year period of Tribulation begins (Dan 9:27, Matt 24:16-28), just as it does not tell us when this Day of Christ will take place. It is important to know that the Rapture is the event that raises the dead in Christ (bodily resurrection) to go together with the living church age saints, also changed in body, to meet the Lord in the air. This event has to take place before the Tribulation can begin for we, the Children of God, will be delivered from the wrath of God that will be poured out upon the earth (1 Thess 5:9, Rev 3:10). In addition, not being told when the time of the Rapture will take place, is evidence that this event cannot happen at a specific time during the Tribulation period, for the time of the Rapture would then be known. Some teach that the Rapture will take place after the Fourth Seal in The Tribulation or at some other point during this seven-year period, but this cannot be. Jesus is very clear in telling us that we need to be ready for no one knows when the time of 'rapture' will occur (Matt 24:36-39). Note too that the beginning of the Tribulation is also the beginning of the Day of the Lord as described to us in 2 Pet 3.

The great Battle of Armageddon (symbolic name for the place of Megiddo: Rev 16:16, Zech 12:11, Rev 19:17-21), where

Jesus comes to earth with His saints to battle the Antichrist, will conclude the Tribulation period also known as the Time of Jacobs Trouble (Jer 30:4-9). The only way you will be able to understand these end time events is to know that this dreadful period of time, though affecting the whole earth, is targeted towards Israel; it is for their salvation. Understanding this will make it clear that the Church and Israel are not one in the same; they are very distinct throughout Scripture.

At the end of the Tribulation, we will see the words of Peter (2 Pet 3) fulfilled along with Rev 21 where the earth that now is will be burned (purified) with fire and a new earth will appear. The end of the Tribulation will also be the end of history as we know it, and the beginning of the Day of God (2 Pet 3:12, Rev 16:14). The righteous dead of the Tribulation will be bodily resurrected at this time and all the saints of all ages will reign with Christ upon the renewed earth.

This time of Christ' reign on earth we call the Millennium for the Scripture refers to this period of time as "a thousand years" (Rev 20). This is the beginning of a new time, the eternal state, for history is no more. Please do not confuse time with history. Time will continue but history which is God's story dealing with man, from The Fall in the Garden to when all will be restored again at the conclusion of the Tribulation, is finished. A new time, a new government, a

kingdom, will be upon the earth and it will be marked by the Holy City, The New Jerusalem, descending from heaven to earth, which is the home Jesus has been preparing for the saints during the last 2000-years. The Millennial reign of Christ will be a time of peace though not all born during this time, or have survived The Tribulation, will ultimately follow Christ by faith. The end of this time will be marked by Satan, who had been bound during this period of 1000-years, to be loosed for a season to gather a rebellion against Christ. He and those who rebel with him are consumed by fire from God. Here we will have the resurrection of the wicked dead of all ages who will be sentenced by God before the Great White Throne to the place reserved for them known as The Lake of Fire (Rev 20:11-15). All rebellion, all sin, will be finished and what happens after these things we will not know until that time comes.

It is necessary for you to have this basic understanding of prophecy to gain a right perspective as we continue with the study of the Biblical Truths about Heaven and Hell. In summary we know that our own personal perspective must be proper; that is, we must do our best to think as God would think not hindered by our limitations of humanity and time. This can only be done by looking into the Word of God with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God must be our foundation for all else would be like building on shifting

sand. In other words, we can think outside the box but must always stay within the 'Book'. Our prophetic perspective must align with the Word of God as well as knowing that at any moment we can be ushered into eternity. It is like Noah being escorted onto the Ark; once God shut the door the fate of his family, along with all mankind was sealed. In like manner, when we are ushered into eternity, either by death or end time events, our fate will be sealed and there will be no second chance. Now with this in mind we will examine more closely, and in more detail, the places and things that awaits you and me in eternity.

CHAPTER 3

PERTINENT PARTICULARS

One of the first things to know about heaven is that just about every religious group teaches of such a place in one form or another. Heaven is a place of hope and motivation. The following article from the New York Times is an example of Heaven being such a place:

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan, July 23 - Hameeda Sarfraz, 19, lively eyes sparkling out of a black burqa, was describing the boons of the afterlife.

'In heaven you get everything without hardship,' explained Miss Sarfraz, daughter of a bus driver. 'In heaven, if a martyr feels hungry, food appears, the best quality food, and you won't even know where it came from.'

Miss Sarfraz, an alumna of the now bullet-ridden Jamia Hafsa Islamic School for Girls, says she deeply regrets missing her chance to be a martyr. She fled through the back door of the school on July 3, just hours after a gun battle began between Pakistani special forces and militants holed up in the neighbouring Red Mosque, the parent institution of Jamia Hafsa.

Sentiments like hers are the fruits of a radical Islam that has blossomed in this country - not just in the lawless tribal areas that American intelligence officials described as an enduring sanctuary for Al Qaeda, but here in its capital, in a mosque-and-school compound that until recently enjoyed the blessings of the state.¹

As you can see in this religious belief, Heaven is a place where martyrs are exalted and honoured. Is this so far off the mark? It is all in how you define martyr. The biblical martyr is one who is put to death for their faith in Christ, and they will receive a reward and be honoured as Rev 6:9-11 hints at. These martyrs will be clothed in white

robes, and the Fifth Seal is exclusively about the vengeance of their untimely death. For examples of biblical martyrs read Heb 11, and *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. For the religious group this young woman in the New York Times article represents, a martyr is more likely one who kills themselves while killing others who are not of the same religion, labelled infidels. To be sure, heaven is not an idea; heaven is a real place, and not one inhabited by murderers. The kinds of people that will never occupy heaven are: 1 Cor 6:9-10 "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Also we read: Gal 5:19-21 "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, (20) Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, (21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

I mentioned heaven but these verses speak of the Kingdom of God. Are they one and the same or different in location and purpose? Myles Munroe states:

Jesus came to earth to restore what Adam lost, and He brought a kingdom message. Jesus came to reestablish the government of God on earth and to reinstate His earthly kings to their rightful place of dominion. Adam lost a kingdom, not a religion, and therefore the redemptive work of the Creator would be the reestablishment of His Kingdom on earth...This is why Jesus said the priority of all men is to seek His kingdom. 'But seek first his kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well' (Matt 6:33).²

This leads me to a very important point that I would like to make: Heaven is not the final home of the believer in Christ. Heaven is a temporary abode for the child of God established as such at the resurrection of Christ, and continuing on to the beginning of His future millennial reign. The purpose of earth at the creation was to be the habitation of mankind. This was lost at The Fall, when sin and corruption was introduced into the perfect world Christ had fashioned. We have promises and prophecies recorded in the Word of God, that the earth will be renewed and restored to a perfect state and condition for man to dwell on; at least until the end of the millennial reign of Christ. One thing the Bible does not elaborate on is what comes after the close of history, the millennial age, which will be the dawn of new dispensations of time. We would do well not to assume about these things as it will tend to distort biblical doctrine. This is a trap that Amillennialists fall into. Anthony Hoekema writes:

The Bible teaches that believers will go to heaven when they die. That they will be happy during the

intermediate state between death and the resurrection is clearly taught in Scripture. But their happiness will be provisional and incomplete. For the completion of their happiness they await the resurrection of the body and the new earth which God will create as the culmination of his redemptive work. To that new earth we now turn our attention. The doctrine of the new earth, as taught in Scripture, is an important one. It is important, first, for the proper understanding of the life to come. One gets the impression from certain hymns that glorified believers will spend eternity in some ethereal heaven somewhere off in space, far away from earth. But does such a conception do justice to biblical eschatology? Are we to spend eternity somewhere off in space, wearing white robes, plucking harps, singing songs, and flitting from cloud to cloud while doing so? On the contrary, the Bible assures us that God will create a new earth on which we shall live to God's praise in glorified resurrected bodies. On that new earth, therefore, we hope to spend eternity, enjoying its beauties, exploring its resources, and using its treasures to the glory of God. Since God will make the new earth his dwelling place, and since where God dwells there heaven is, we shall then continue to be in heaven while we are on the new earth. For heaven and earth will then no longer be separated, as they are now, but will be one (see Rev 21:1-3).³

Nowhere in scripture does it tell us that heaven and earth will be one and the same; they are distinct. I asked the question earlier, if heaven and the Kingdom of God were one and the same in purpose and location. We know that they will be different in location, as for purpose I will assume that they are similar, for where God dwells there his kingdom is. But they are not the same; heaven is the temporary dwelling place for those in Christ who pass on from this life to the next. The Kingdom of God will be established on the earth and all of God's children will dwell with Him on the earth, for at least during the thousand-year reign of Christ.

For after that time we must wait and see what beauties unfold; it could be on earth or it could be elsewhere.

Now that some important ground work has been laid about heaven, lets look at specific pertinent facts of that wonderful place we all desire to be at, beginning with the biblical definition of the word. The word heaven occurs 583 times in 551 verses throughout the English Bible. Of these, the word heaven occurs 327 times in 313 verses in the Old Testament and 256 times in 238 verses in the New Testament. Throughout the Old Testament the word heaven is translated from the Hebrew word *shamayim*, most of the time. And most of the time throughout the New Testament the word heaven comes from the Greek word *ouranos*. The Hebrew word literally means "the heights", while the Greek word has a related but slightly different meaning of, "that which is raised up." The primary meaning of the word heaven is "that which is above."

Although God's house is everywhere, for the time being He makes His home in heaven as told us throughout Scripture. Psa 123:1 "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens." And in Psa 103:19 "The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all." Also, in the New Testament we read as the beginning of what we know as The Lord's Prayer, Matt 6:9-10 "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. (10) Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth,

as it is in heaven." Just a side note: It is interesting that the term Kingdom of Heaven occurs thirty-two times and only in the book of Matt. In Matthew we read about King Jesus who is revealing truths about His kingdom. With every thread of truth Jesus shares about this His kingdom he implores His hearers to repent. Why? For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

There are three heavens mentioned in Scripture. The nearest to us on earth (referred to as the first heaven) is the heaven of the atmosphere above us. This atmospheric heaven is a battlefield. We cannot see it in the natural but we know from Scripture that the angels, good and evil, are in warfare all about us. The evil, or fallen angels, have as their Commander-in-Chief, Satan. Eph 2:2 refers to Satan as the Prince of the Power of the Air. He is also called the Prince of the Devils throughout the Gospels. His purpose is to sway peoples and governments away from God. Because this warfare involves us, Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians says this: Eph 6:12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." High places, occupying the realm of this first heaven of the atmosphere, are where these rulers of the darkness of this world assert their powers.

The second heaven is that of the stars, we call outer space or the universe. This is a very large place, so much

so, that the observable universe is calculated to be 93 billion light years, and the universe is continuing to expand at a rate of about one star per second. We read about the creation of this heaven in Gen 1:14 "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."

We look up at the starry sky and think that we are the centre of the universe. Not even close! We are a speck near one of the outer bands of the Milky Way Galaxy, so earth with our solar system is not even the centre of its own galaxy. The Milky Way is only one of billions of galaxies in the observable, or known, universe. How big is our galaxy? The Milky Way is about 100,000 light years wide. That means that it will take light traveling at 186,000 miles a second, 100,000 years to cross the Milky Way. How fast does light travel in terms that we can understand? Light can circle the earth seven times a second. Light travels 5.88 trillion miles (9.46 trillion kilometres) in one year. We tend to think that God created the universe as a home for us. No, He created the universe to show us how great He is. Psa 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." It also shows us how big God is and how big His home, the third heaven is.

Listen to the opening of Isa 40:12 "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span..." God is able to measure the starry heaven with the span of His hand. The span of the hand is from the thumb to the little finger; for the average man about nine inches. If the second heaven is so vast a place encompassing billions of light years, how big the third heaven must be if the starry heaven can fit in the span of God's hand (taking Scripture literally and seriously).

Satan has no influence in the starry heaven for there is no one there to influence. His battle is for the souls of men and women on the earth, in the realm of the first heaven. Satan does have limited access to the third heaven, God's home, but little influence there. God asked Satan a question in Job 1:7 "And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." Satan has access to God but for what purpose? Rev 12:10 "... for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." Satan has access to heaven to accuse us before God day and night. The word "accuser" is a legal term meaning one that brings charges of a crime against another. Satan uses heaven to charge us of sin against the Almighty. However, great is the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. I love the statement made by John Newton, "One

thing I know, I am a great sinner and God is a great Saviour". Jesus is on the right hand of the majesty on high as our advocate (Greek: *parakletos*. See Jn 14:6 the word translated Comforter). Jesus stands as our defense; therefore, Satan cannot stand, but he tries.

Some thoughts on the third heaven: At the Rapture, the Church will make the journey to heaven in an instant. When the saved soul departs the body at death, it makes the journey to heaven in an instant. Though God's abode is billion upon billion light years away, Stephen (Acts 7:55) "looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." The point I want to make is that this heaven is so far, far away and yet so very, very near; so near in fact, that the whisper of our prayer reaches the very ear of God. So great is His love for you and I that though His throne is high above the heavens and we are as dust, He sent His Son, Jesus, the Creator of heaven and earth to be the substitute for our penalty of sin. So then by receiving Him we are given a home with Him in eternity. Think about the following verses before reading on:

Phil 2:5-11 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (9) Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: (10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven,

and things in earth, and things under the earth; (11) And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

I want to point out that in this passage, Jesus is not the name given which is above every name that we all will bow to. It is to the name given to Jesus that this passage refers to and that name is "Lord". To the Lord Jesus every creature in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth, should bow the knee to and acknowledge that He is indeed Lord. This will happen, if you receive Him now as Lord, or not (see also Eph 1:15-23). The only difference is that those who receive the Lord Jesus will have an eternally rich home with Him. Those who do not receive Him will have a Lake of Fire appointed to them as their home; but all will bow the knee and acknowledge this Jesus as Lord.

Young Hameeda Sarfraz stated in the New York Times article we read at the beginning of this chapter that, "In heaven, if a Martyr feels hungry, food appears, the best quality food, and you won't even know where it came from." I have no idea where this teaching comes from. The little that I have read from the Koran has not revealed such teaching about heaven. It is interesting to note too that among some Christian religions there is a belief that there will be no food in heaven, because we will have no need of food there. It may be true that we will have no need of food in heaven; I do not know. One thing I do know is that there will be food

in heaven and it is for our consumption. If it is not for need, then the Lord has provided it for our social enjoyment. Some of the best times of Christian fellowship that I can remember having, has been around the dining table of dear Christian brothers and sisters. One of the most memorial events described to us after the Rapture is an event associated with eating referred to as the Marriage Supper of The Lamb. Rev 19:9 says, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." It is such a special event that all in attendance will receive a special blessing.

Jesus, while on earth, spoke of food in the kingdom to come:

Lk 22:14-18 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. (15) And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: (16) For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. (17) And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: (18) For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

Jesus tells his disciples that he will not eat or drink in celebration of the blessings and triumphs of redemption "until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God"; until they are received up to heaven. Though these things were communicated to the ones dining with Jesus at the time we can apply this to us, His disciples, as the text lends itself to such application (see also Matt 26:26-29).

We can site many verses telling us about the redeemed eating food in the kingdom of God. Jesus ate fish is His resurrected body (Lk 24-42-43). Lk 14:15 says "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Some scholars will tell you that these kingdom verses apply only to the kingdom that Jesus intended to set up in Israel during His time on earth. Perhaps, so to remove doubt about eating food in heaven I would like to bring our attention to one thing, the Tree of Life:

Gen 3:22-24 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: (23) Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. (24) So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

God had to drive Adam and Eve out of the Garden and then protect the Tree of Life or else fallen man could eat of it and live forever. It would stand to reason that if Adam and Eve, being perfect, could eat and enjoy food, then we too when we become perfect should enjoy the same pleasure. A question is raised here in this passage. Did Adam and Eve need the Tree of Life to sustain them? Rev 2:7 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." This promise is in the letter written to the church at Ephesus. Note in the

letter that this promise is to the churchess and not just to those at Ephesus. And the Tree of Life, which is now at least 7,000 years old, is presently in the paradise of God, or heaven, but it will not remain there.

Rev 22:2 "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Rev 22 describes the New Jerusalem (the City of God), and the millennial kingdom. The Tree of Life will be part of the New Jerusalem. The kings of the earth will have access to the city. And there is a promise of blessing associated with the Tree of Life: Rev 22:14 "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." This may explain why those living during the millennial age will apparently live extremely long lives, even to the end of the thousand years.

One thing we can know for a certainty is that food will not appear magically just because we wish for it; however, it will be available. For our necessity, I cannot say for certain. It would seem that Adam and Eve needed the Tree of Life to sustain them. Those who survive the tribulation to enter the millennial age, and those born during this millennial age, will need the Tree of Life to sustain them.

Those redeemed of this age and those who enter the era of eternity, may or may not require the Tree of Life to sustain them. Will the Tree of Life be for our enjoyment? Yes, I would say so; and during the millennial age the leaves of the Tree of Life will be used for the healing of the nations of the earth as well.

In this chapter we have looked at some realities of heaven and noted that the inhabitants of this blissful place will have their home moved back to planet earth. During the time we are on this new earth we will be under the reign of Christ as our King. I want to close this chapter by establishing a relationship between the time of Christ's kingdom on earth and the eternal era to follow.

The millennium is only the corridor leading into the eternal era (Ezek 47:1-12, Rev 22:1-2); they are not one and the same in nature. During the millennium, those who are not part of the redeemed of this age, will make it necessary for the Lord to rule in righteousness, from the throne with a rod of iron (Psa 2:7-9). During the eternal era, righteousness will be at home in the heart, for all will be righteous (2 Pet 3:13). Outward conformity to the Lord will be a distinctive characteristic of the Millennial Age; however, obedience from the heart is the only characteristic of the righteous during the eternal era, and the New Jerusalem will be part of both worlds (Rev 21).

In other words, though the New Jerusalem will be part of the eternal era as it is part of the millennium, the point to make is this: Not all living during the millennial age will serve God from the heart; however, all will serve God from the heart during the eternal era as all are presently doing now who inhabit heaven. When the inhabitants of heaven come back to earth they will be introduced to an age where not all are righteous or holy. The distinctive difference between our world today and the millennial one is that sin will be bound for the thousand years. Satan will be of none effect. All will seem righteous and holy, though all will not be.

CHAPTER 4

PERSONAL PROSPECT

The greatest prospect that the believer has today is that of entering heaven. A line in a rock song I listened to in the 70's had these words: "knowing that we are mortal for a limited time." The older we get, the more we are aware that we are mortal and it is for a short time, for soon we will be putting on immortality.

A phenomenon is happening all across this globe of ours. It has always been true that the older we become the faster time seems to go by, but now, even the young people are experiencing the same thing. When I was young, time seemed to go by so slowly; it seemed like an eternity for my birthday, or for Christmas, to roll around. Now the year goes by and I scratch my head and wonder where it went. I have several teens and young men where I work; they too tell me that they cannot get over how fast time is flying by. Personally, I believe there may be a connection with this phenomenon of all ages being affected by 'time flight' and the end times; I just do not know what. I do know, that because of this phenomenon, we as believers have such a sure hope of heaven, for we realise that we are closer there than we ever have been before.

Our hope is not unfounded though; it is based in the Word of God. Jesus says these words as recorded in Jn 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Jesus' departure from the earth is at hand and he is giving His disciples some important teaching and words of comfort. I see these verses as a very personal promise to me as well.

Both verbs "believe" in verse one are imperatives. Jesus is saying, you believe, believe. You believe in God, believe in me. If we believe in Jesus then we also believe His word (Rev 19:13 tells us that a name for Jesus is: The Word of God), there is no middle ground here.

In verse two the word for mansion (Greek: *mone*) is used only one other time. In verse 23 it is used and translated as the word "abode". Verse two literally says, "In my Father's house are many places of abode". Jesus says this is true for if it was not, He would say so. He tells us that he is going to His Father's house to prepare a place for us. As Keith Green so aptly pointed out, if earth took only six days to create, imagine what our place in heaven must look like after 2000 years of preparation.

The hope in all of this is found in verse three. Jesus would not go through the trouble of preparing a place for us if He was not going to come back for us. Verse three is talking about the personal return of Jesus for us. This is the first allusion to the Rapture of the Church described in 1 Thess 4:13-18. The promise is that when Jesus comes back, it is to receive us unto Himself, that where He is at, there we will be also. In other words, it is a promise, that for all of eternity, we will dwell and make our abode where Jesus, our Savior, dwells and makes His abode.

I want to turn our focus to the event of the Rapture of the Church (defined in Chapter Two) as this is the portal in which we, who are alive at the time of this event, will pass through, to reach our personal prospect of our eternal home. You might ask; why spend time on talking about an event where there is so little in Scripture about it; in fact, the word 'rapture' is not even mentioned in Scripture? The fact is that this event is paramount to the study, and understanding, of end time events. Listen to what J. Dwight Pentecost has to say to us as introductory comments on the Rapture:

The present age, in respect to the true church, terminates with the translation of the church into the Lord's presence. The doctrine of the translation of the church is one of the major considerations of the Eschatology of the New Testament (Jn 14:1-3, 2 Thess 2:1; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 1:8; 15:51-52; Phil 3:20-21; 2 Cor 5:1-9). It is one of the questions on which Bible students are most in disagreement at the present time. Interpreters of the premillennial school are divided into such camps as the partial rapturist, who raises the issue

of the subjects of the rapture, and the pretribulationist, midtribulationist and posttribulationist, who raise the issue of the time of the rapture in relation to the tribulation period.¹

So varied are the doctrines formed around this event known as the Rapture of the Church, that J. Dwight Pentecost in his book, *Things to Come*, dedicates five chapters to the Rapture and uses this event to springboard into discussions on the Tribulation. The teachings surrounding the Rapture are not about denying this prophetic event. Most of the teachings surrounding the Rapture have to do with the timing of this event, in relation to the time of tribulation to be poured out upon the earth.

Some teach that the Rapture will occur after the Tribulation (Post Tribulation Rapture Theory). Anthony A. Hoekema summarizes this teaching:

The Second Coming must be thought of as a single event, which occurs after the great tribulation. When Christ returns, there will be a general resurrection, both of believers and unbelievers. After the resurrection, believers who are then still alive shall be transformed and glorified (1 Cor 15:51-52). The 'rapture' of all believers then takes place. Believers who have been raised, together with living believers who have been transformed, are now caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (I Thess 4:16-17). After this meeting in the air, the raptured church continues to be with Christ as he completes his descent to earth.²

Others teach that the Rapture will take place at the mid-point of the Tribulation (Mid-Tribulation Rapture Theory).

Pentecost says that this view is less prevalent than the post-tribulation view. Mid-Tribulationist teaches that the Rapture

will take place at the mid-point of the Tribulation, or three and one-half years after this period begins. Their reasoning is that the wrath of God is not poured out until the second half of the Tribulation, and the church is to be purged to make ready as a bride for Christ during the first half of the Tribulation; therefore, the Rapture will not take place until the mid-point when all is ready.

A recent view that is becoming ever so popular, but very problematic, is that the Rapture will take place just prior to God's wrath being poured out upon the earth during the Tribulation (Pre-Wrath Rapture Theory). This view is a modified view of the Mid-Tribulation Rapture Theory. For the Rapture to take place at the mid-point of the Tribulation, would nullify the verses stating that of this event no one knows the time. The Pre-Wrath position is: "The 'Pre-Wrath' rapture theory teaches that the rapture will occur sometime after the midpoint of the seven-year tribulation but before the second coming."³ The major difference between this view and the Mid-Tribulation view is the beginning point of the wrath of God upon the earth. The Pre-Wrath position is that it is sometime during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation. There have been modified positions on this interpretation which puts the time of the outpouring of God's wrath coinciding with different specific events during the Tribulation.

Another view for the time of the Rapture, and one that I hold to, is the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Theory. In this view the Rapture is taught as being imminent, and the Tribulation will follow some time afterwards. The idea of being imminent is to coincide with the Scriptural teaching of being ready for it, for we do not know when this event will take place. Even the Apostles and early church fathers have looked for this coming of the Lord for us.

Another view of the Rapture, which is not related to the time of the Rapture, is the Partial Rapture Theory. Here only a portion of the redeemed will be raptured, and the rest to remain, to be purged under God's judgment before entering into His glory.

Throughout church history the Rapture, or Christ's return for us, has been taught as being *imminent* (could happen at any moment - Phil 3:20-21). I would like to submit to you, my readers, that now at this time in church history, the Rapture is also *immediate* (must happen soon).

Think about the signs of the times, the events unfolding upon the earth. The 'Iron Curtain' has fallen between East and West Germany, an event that needed to take place prophetically (Ezek 38:6 "Gomer" being united Germany in this chapter describing a still future event). Scores of Jews throughout the world are returning to Israel as predicted in

Ezek 37:1-14. Read the following article from Arutz Sheva,

Israel National News:

The largest chartered flight of the summer filled with new immigrants (*olim*) from North America touched down Tuesday morning at Ben Gurion International Airport. With help from the Nefesh B'Nefesh organization, 225 North American Jews arrived to make their new home in their ancient homeland.

The new immigrants were greeted by Minister of Pensioners Affairs Rafi Eitan, MK Ophir Pines-Paz (Labor) and other dignitaries, along with a crowd of family members, friends and Aliyah activists.

The flight is the sixth such flight this summer. The new immigrants range in age from 78 to two months and will be moving to 20 different towns and cities across the country.

More than 2,200 Jews are immigrating to Israel from North American and the United Kingdom this summer alone on seven chartered flights, as well as several group flights.⁴

America is not the only country where Jews are migrating to Israel from. Just the month before this article was written, 2000 Indian Jews migrated from India, and continue to pour into this tiny, war torn country, of Israel. Have you thought about why God is calling Jews back to their homeland? Is it for blessing? I want to share with you a statement made by Jacob Prasch: "The Jews are not going back to Israel for a picnic or a blessing: they're going back to be deceived by the Antichrist, to make a covenant with death, and to go into a holocaust in which two-thirds of them will be wiped out."⁵ As we can see, there is a great gathering of displaced Jews being called, within their heart, back to their homeland, as never before in recent history. This is in preparation for the *Time*

of Jacob's Trouble, which we also know as *The Tribulation*, which is to come to earth.

Other end time events include the increasing number of earthquakes and severe storms. There is an increasing amount of war that will only get worse, due to the nature of terrorist and terrorism as our current "enemy" (Matt 24:7 reveals this to us). Think about the following verses and ask yourself if this describes the condition of the world today:

2 Tim 3:1-5 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. (2) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (3) Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, (4) Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; (5) Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

All these things are indeed true of this day and age we are presently living in.

Here is the key in understanding why the Rapture is immediate. All the things mentioned above (and they are only a few of the many), relate specifically to the time just prior to the Second Advent of Christ; which is a different event to the Rapture. Now for us who are Pre-Tribulation Rapturist, this means that the Rapture will take place at least seven years, and likely more, prior to Christ's visible return to earth. With all these signs being fulfilled for the visible return of Christ to take place, how close do you think we are to the Rapture? At any moment we can hear His voice calling

us off the earth. I would like to think that it would be like Solomon calling to his bride as recorded in Song of Solomon where he affectionately says, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away (Song of Sol 2:10)." It would be great to hear Jesus personally call our name, to rise off the earth, to go away with Him, the one who loves us. Are you ready to go with Him? We should live everyday as if it will be the day of that great calling away.

One last sign I would like to point out before proceeding is the sign of apostasy. There will be a great "falling away" before the great "calling away". 2 Thess 2:1-3 "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, (2) That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. (3) Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." Notice what Paul says in verse one: he is going to give us instruction based on "the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him". There is only one event where we (collectively) will be gathered unto Him, and that is the Rapture. Paul goes on in verse three to tell us that this day of the Rapture will not come, except there be a falling away first. This falling away, or apostasy, is an all out

rebellion against God (Christianity). This is happening today and we need to wake up and smell the coffee.

Several months back I was preaching at our church on a Sunday morning. A woman, who had visited one of the lady's groups at church, had brought her Muslim husband with her that Sunday morning; the first time this man had been at a Christian church, as far as I know. I preached Jesus as Lord that morning and offered an invitation for people who did not know Jesus to come forward. This man, who was from Iran, and served as an officer for 17-years in the Iranian military, came forward. I was excited thinking that it would be his day of salvation. This man started off by telling me, that it was his duty as a Muslim to kill me because I was an infidel for preaching Jesus as Lord. Let me tell you that hearing these words will send a shiver up and down your spine. The man did not commit his life to the Lord and has not been back to church, and shortly thereafter started abusing his wife for her faith in Christ (she is now safe being separated from her husband). My point is not about the actions of one man but to point out that the actions of one man is representative of an entire religion. This religion of Islam is a manifestation of the rebellion against God with its mandate to kill all who are not of their religion, especially Christians and Jews. The purpose of this writing is not to prove this mandate of Islam as written throughout the Koran; you are encouraged to do this

on your own. I want to express my understanding on the idea of the "falling away" which I see as being two-fold: The falling away will, in one form, be from without the church and in another form it will be from within the church. It is easy, and obvious, to see examples of the world (worldly system) coming against the Church, which is an act of rebellion against God. Personally, I was shocked to see a Pastor in one church take his Christian brother to court. And in another church, to see a Christian attorney take a fellow Christian brother too court as a representative for this man's wife in a law suit. The Scriptures are very clear on how we should act towards our Christian brothers and sisters, especially within the local body, or church. Satan is winning battle after battle as we see both forms of rebellion against God and Christianity today, and it is the last "sign" to take place before God's children are called off the earth "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor 15:52). Do you know how fast a moment, or twinkling of an eye is? A moment of time can be defined as, that portion of time which cannot be divided, in other words, too brief to detect. The twinkling of an eye, is the time it takes for light to travel from the surface of the eye to the retina. Those in Christ, when the Rapture takes place, will be taken off the earth and those around them will not see it.

This chapter is about our personal prospect of entering heaven. This will be the day we cease being mortal and we put on immortality. Our hope is based on the promises of Jesus who says that this is so, and He is preparing a home for us there. We know that these things are true for those who die in the Lord; but it is also true for those of us who are still alive on the earth as well. We need not have this hope of glory just for the day in which we die. If our only hope is in death, we could become easily discouraged. I wanted to spend some time on the Rapture for the Lord wants us to have this hope of heaven now, while we are living. This is why the followers of Jesus, from the time of His Ascension to this present time, look for Him everyday; or should be. This is the encouragement I want to leave with you, that at any moment, we could be standing in the presence of Christ Jesus; from young to old. We do not need to have one foot in the grave, so-to-speak, to begin having this hope of glory. We need to have it now, today, for His return for us is not only *imminent*, but it is *immediate*.

Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, gives a great discourse on the resurrection hope for the believer (Chapter 15). His argument is that since Christ was resurrected from the dead, then we too will be. Something was revealed to Paul towards the end of his discourse. In Verse 51 he says, "Behold, I shew you a mystery". A biblical

mystery is the revelation of a truth that was not previously known. Paul is about to tell us something that had not been revealed before; this was new truth! Let us read: 1 Cor 15:51-52a "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." Paul teaches us that not all will die who are Christ's; some will be alive when He returns for us. The mystery is not so much about the Rapture, though these verses allude to it, because he already taught us about the Rapture in 1 Thess 4, written about five years before this letter to the Corinthians. The mystery revealed is that we all will be changed. More precise is that the mystery pertains directly to those changed at the Rapture, for they will not experience death. Those resurrected at the time of the Rapture, will have their new bodies joined with the immaterial part of their being, that had been enjoying heaven, which will be a change, and a hope fulfilled. What is the change? In Verse 53 we are told: "For this corruptible (the body) must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality." The hope of this is that death will no more have any power over the body. Our bodies will no longer be subject to death or dying. The grave will no longer exist. The day is fast approaching where these words (death, and grave) will indicate impossibilities.

I do not like driving past cemeteries, or visiting them. Cemeteries, like dying, seem to me to be very unnatural. The reason is that we were intended to live forever, and it is at the core of our being. We do not live in our bodies forever because of the curse placed on mankind at the Garden of Eden. But, one day, we will walk the earth and there will be no such thing as a cemetery; they will no longer exist. That will be a great day.

What hope the prospect of the Rapture, and of heaven, must bring to the believer in Christ. This prospect needs to become personal. We need to apply these truths to our lives, and live it everyday. Paul concludes 1 Cor 15 with these words from verses 57-58: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (58) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

CHAPTER 5

PRIZED POSSESSIONS

In this chapter we will look at the rewards (prize), and inheritance (possession), that await us in heaven. Combined, these become our *prized possessions*. We need to understand what qualifies a reward, and an inheritance, and then line this up with Scripture. This is done, so we will know what awaits us in heaven, and how to respond in this life, to obtain all that is, and can be ours in the next.

There are certain conditions, typically speaking, that qualify an inheritance. An inheritance has to have value. In addition, you normally inherit something that you do not already possess. It is given voluntarily by the owner. You cannot inherit something from someone unless they will it to you, and it is validated by a legal document, such as a title or will. An inheritance is given because of position; the heir being in a relationship to the one who gives the inheritance. Finally, an inheritance can only be activated upon the death of the one who bequeaths it.

We, as Christians, have an inheritance; let us read about it: 1 Pet 1:4 "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." As stated above, our inheritance can only be activated upon the death of the one who bequeaths it. Listen to these words from

the preceding verse that leads so beautifully into verse four: "...according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) to an inheritance..." Our heavenly inheritance was made active by the death, and resurrection, of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our inheritance, as described in verse four of our passage, is first of all incorruptible: our inheritance will never be affected by decay. Secondly, it is undefiled: our inheritance is pure and free from physical, moral, and spiritual pollution. Thirdly, "and that it fadeth not away": Our inheritance will not be affected by time. Lastly, our inheritance is reserved in heaven for us, the children of God.

At this point, it is important for us to realize that every child of God will have the same inheritance, but not all will have the same rewards. So, what is our common inheritance reserved for us in heaven? Let us begin at Rev 21:7 "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." In other words, we will be an heir of God in all things. God will bestow upon us all the eternal blessings of the promised inheritance, and we will forever be sons of God, and honoured as such. Paul writes for us in Rom 8:17 "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ..." When we become children of God, we automatically become heirs of God, and not only heirs of God but joint heirs with Christ. Let us read:

Heb 1:2-5 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (3) Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (4) Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. (5) For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

In this great passage we understand that Jesus has been appointed heir of all things. He made the worlds, which literally means "the ages, including time, space, and the material world".¹ He is the outshining of God's glory. He is the very image of God in His existence, His essence, His personality, and in His sovereignty. As we read through the book of Hebrews, it is quickly understood that Jesus is presented as Deity, and he is superior to all things in Judaism, superior to the law, superior to the priesthood, superior in word, superior to angels, and superior in faith. It should excite the believer to the core of his/her being to know that we are joint heirs with Christ, who has God as His Father and is called Son; we too are called sons of God when we place our faith in Him. Our inheritance is found in God himself. He who has God has all! David said in Psa 73:25 "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." And again, in Psa 16:5 "The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot." Do not forget that the Lord tells us He

is our God, and we shall be His sons." Eph 1:11 "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Charles Ryrie has this to say about the words, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance", from verse 11: "May be translated 'we were made His inheritance.' Both ideas are true: we are Christ's inheritance and He is ours."²

How do we know that we have this inheritance? Paul tells us in Eph 1:12-14 "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. (13) In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, (14) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." The point I want to make is from verses 13-14: At the time of salvation, we are immediately sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. He was promised to us by Jesus (Jn 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7). Being sealed (Greek word: *sphragizo*, meaning stamped with a mark for security or preservation) shows ownership. We belong to God and are eternally secure in Him. Verse 14 is the key which tells us that the Holy Spirit is the "earnest" of our inheritance. When something is given in earnest, it means to give a deposit or down payment. It is God's pledge

to us so that we can have the assurance of our future redemption.

The Holy Spirit is not given to all; not all have Him abiding in their lives. The Holy Spirit is given to those who receive Christ by faith. It is all of grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9). Our faith is the title deed that lays hold to, and makes valid, the promises of God in our lives. Heb 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The word substance is from the Greek word *hupostasis* meaning confidence or assurance. The idea here is that faith is the proof or reality of ownership, such as in a Title Deed, to things hoped for. We can treat our future inheritance as a sure hope, for our faith makes it a reality, and God gives us His Holy Spirit as His pledge of promises to be fulfilled.

Here we have a definition or description of the grace of faith in two parts. 1. It *is the substance of things hoped for*. Faith and hope go together; and the same things that are the object of our hope are the object of our faith. It is a firm persuasion and expectation that God will perform all that he has promised to us in Christ; and this persuasion is so strong that it gives the soul a kind of possession and present fruition of those things, gives them a subsistence in the soul, by the first-fruits and foretastes of them: so that believers in the exercise of faith *are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory*.³

Rewards differ from an inheritance in that rewards are given based on merit. We receive rewards, not based on *position*, as with our inheritance, but on *performance*. There is a particular emphasis on biblical rewards for the believer

though. Rewards for the believer are not given because we have done something to deserve them; they are given because we can never deserve them. Now you might say that I have contradicted myself, and it seems so, but let me explain.

Lk 17:10 "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." This is Jesus' commentary to His disciples on the parable he just told them in Verses 7-9: "But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? (8) And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? (9) Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not." If we are totally obedient why then should we declare that we are unprofitable? Here are some things to consider: We cannot, and are not, totally obedient in all things. This is because we are the offspring of fallen Adam, and as such, have his fallen nature. God purchased us back (redeemed) from this fallen condition at a very costly price; the blood of His only Son, Jesus. We could never repay God for this act of love He has done for us, even if we could be totally obedient to Him. For these things we can never have a claim upon any reward. We owe God perfect obedience, and God

has done far more for us than we could ever pay back; just in salvation alone, considering nothing else. I heard a song which contains words that paint a perfect picture of this reality: "I owed a debt that I could not pay, and He paid a debt that He did not owe"; how true. In addition, consider this fact as well: In our service to Jesus, we cannot accomplish anything for Him unless it was done through His working in and through us: Gal 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me". It is all Him, and nothing of us; but, listen to these words recorded in Lk 12:37 "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Not only here, but throughout Scripture, there are promises of rewards to those who are Christ's servants.

Here is the key in understanding the basis of rewards: God will not reward us because we deserve it, He rewards us because He is faithful to His promises. Think of it this way: Since we cannot achieve anything apart from Christ working in us, when Christ rewards us, He is in essence rewarding His own works. This is why we read of the 24-elders casting their golden crowns before the Lord: Rev 4:10-11 "The four and

twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, (11) Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." The 24-elders being representative of all believers of all ages indicates, that we all who receive crowns will cast them at Jesus' feet, for He alone is worthy to receive the honour and glory for all that we are, and all that we ever hope to achieve for service to Him.

There are several categories of rewards mentioned throughout Scripture. The first I want us to consider are Crowns. Crowns in Scripture are generally a symbol of honour, or that which shows royalty. The crowns are literal crowns that will be given. There is a sharp contrast to be drawn from the wearing of crowns, that we will be keenly aware of when we receive ours: Matthew, Mark, and John record for us, that Jesus was given a crown of thorns to wear, as He was being mocked as the King of the Jews. When Jesus is ready to set up His kingdom on earth, He gives us crowns of gold, not of thorns, to wear. We will be so humbled and so unworthy to wear such crowns, we will fall to our faces and take the crowns off our heads, and cast them at the feet of Jesus, the only one worthy of such honour (Rev 4:4, 10).

The first mention of a crown in relation to a reward in Scripture is found in 1 Cor 9:24-27. Here our crown is described as being incorruptible. This means that it will never decay; which, by-the-way, is a characteristic of gold. I have heard it preached, that this is a separate crown called incorruptible, in which the believer will receive, based on a life of self-denial. I do not see it this way. Paul is teaching us important truths of rewards. He is doing so to encourage us to "run well" in our Christian service to Christ. In a sporting event only one receives a crown, which over time will fade away. Paul tells us that we all can obtain a crown that is incorruptible, but we need to discipline ourselves to do so. A pastor related a story that illustrates a great principle in running this "race" of ours: The Special Olympics were being held at Philadelphia in 1992. During a running event, a 100-yard dash I think it was, a girl tripped and fell. All of the other contestants stopped and came to her side and picked her up. They joined arms and ran together across the finish line where all of them finished first; they all won the prize. It should be so with the Christian. We all have opportunity to run, and receive the rewards Christ has for us, but there are responsibilities with it. We need to be faithful in ministering for those who follow us, and too, we need to follow those that lead us as they are given charge over us. "You have great encouragement, therefore, to

persist constantly, and diligently, and vigorously, in your course. There is room for all to get the prize. You cannot fail if you run well. Note, It is the duty of Christians to follow their ministers closely in the chase of eternal glory, and the honour and duty of ministers to lead them in the way."⁴

The next reference to a crown is a crown of rejoicing found in the following Scripture: 1 Thess 2:19-20 "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? (20) For ye are our glory and joy." As in the previous crown we spoke about, I heard it preached that this crown of rejoicing is a crown we will receive for being soul-winners. Again, I see it differently. The phrasing and wording of Paul indicates to us that, being reunited with those his Christian brothers and sisters, is his crown of rejoicing, and not only this, but it is also his hope and glory and joy. I like the comment Matthew Henry makes regarding this passage.

The apostle here puts the Thessalonians in mind that though he could not come to them as yet, and though he should never be able to come to them, yet our Lord Jesus Christ will come, nothing shall hinder this. And further, when he shall come, all must appear in his presence, or before him. Ministers and people must all appear before him, and faithful people will be the glory and joy of faithful ministers in that great and glorious day.⁵

The third crown we find in Scripture is the crown of righteousness. 2 Tim 4:5-8 "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. (6) For I am now ready to be offered,

and the time of my departure is at hand. (7) I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: (8) Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Paul's focus is on his departure (death), and seeing Jesus, whom he has faithfully served. He is telling Timothy to be faithful as he was faithful, for he too will depart this earth, and be in the presence of Jesus. If your mindset is on loving Jesus, and one day standing before Him, then you will be faithful in serving Him now. Love of His appearing, either in death as with Paul, or in the Rapture, which believers may soon experience, is a motivating factor in service to Christ our King. For this there will be a Crown of Righteousness waiting for us.

Observe, it is called a *crown of righteousness*, because it will be the recompense of our services, which *God is not unrighteous to forget*; and because our holiness and righteousness will there be perfected, and will be our crown. God will give it as a *righteous Judge*, who will let none love by him. And yet this crown of righteousness was not peculiar to Paul, as if it belonged only to apostles and eminent ministers and martyrs, but *to all those also that love his appearing*.⁶

There are two passages of Scripture which speaks of our next crown, the Crown of Life. The first is Jam 1:12 "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." The second passage is Rev 2:10 "Fear

none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The idea of this crown is the same as the Crown of Righteousness. It is given for faithful service to Christ because we love Him; but there is something deeper here. This service is based on perseverance no matter what trials may arise. We can only endure such trials if we truly love Christ; it is the only hope we have of enduring. The day and age we are living in has become more challenging to live faithfully for Christ. I have traveled the world and have seen many hardships for Christians. Most of us in the 'west' have not been exposed to the modern-day persecution of the church. If we have not already been exposed to it, we will. When that day comes, and you are facing unbelievable hardships for being a follower of Christ, be strong, be faithful, even unto death. There is a Crown of Life waiting for you because you loved not your life unto death, you rather chose to love Jesus.

Read this verse of warning: Rev 3:11 "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." One thing to understand about rewards is that we can lose that which we had once obtained. Jesus admonishes us to hold fast, be faithful, endure to the end; for then will there

be great reward. At one point in my life I was part of a financial services company. There was great emphasis on reaching predetermined goals, especially financial goals. I have heard several of the top executives in the company comment that, when working towards their goals, the work was hard. There were times when they thought that it would never work out; however, they stuck it out, they persevered. Then, one day, it happened, they reached their goals of financial freedom. They all remarked that the rewards of reaching their goals far outweighed the hardships, and hard work, it took to get there. So it is with our Christian lives. It may seem impossible at times. The hardships may seem too much to bear; however, if we just hang in there, and keep on keeping on, then one day it will happen. We will be standing before Jesus whom we love, and the rewards in the life to come, will far outweigh the hardships we had to endure in this life. In fact, I am confident, that when that day comes, we all will wish that we had done so much more here and now.

The last reference to a crown as a reward is found in: 1 Pet 5:4 "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." In contrast to the life we live now, and the hardships we may face, they are temporary and fleeting, when compared to the crowns we will receive that will never fade away. This Crown of Glory is promised to those who are faithful as church leaders.

"Crown of Glory: Faithful church leaders, who are often dishonored on earth, will receive glory in heaven from Christ the Chief Shepherd."⁷

We learn that the references to crowns, though not many, are pregnant with truths on rewards. I see that there are actually three crowns for believers that meet specific areas of service. We know that these crowns are described as being incorruptible; they will never fade but will last for all of eternity. We will not keep these crowns but will cast them back to Jesus. We are compelled, and encouraged to run our race well to receive these crowns. In addition, we are to guard ourselves so as not to lose these crowns, and rewards. They are worth the pursuit, but our enduring hardships, and being faithful, are not done for the sake of the reward, for our reward is Christ. We serve, not to obtain, but because we love. We understand that crowns and rewards are not given because we deserve them, for we will never deserve them. They are ours because Christ is faithful in rewarding what is His and He does so out of His love for us. 1 Jn 4:19 "We love him, because he first loved us." We can never match the price of love that Jesus demonstrated to us, in that He willing went to the cross to pay the penalty of sin, that we owed, not Him. It was all for love, His love, that we have heaven as home and rewards graciously given.

I have read an account where the passage of Rev 4:4-10 was interpreted as our crowns will be ours to keep. The comment was that we are not going to literally cast our crowns at Jesus' feet, that this passage is symbolic, for Jesus wants to give us crowns to keep for ourselves. I do not see any reason to interpret this passage of Scripture in this way. It seems clear, and the most recognized commentators agree, that this passage is literal in its meaning. We will cast our crowns at Jesus' feet as Rev 4:11 tells us why: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created". But what about our rewards? The Scriptures seems clear that we will be given rewards to benefit us throughout eternity. Also, there is no specific mention, other than the crowns we have already considered, on what these rewards will be. What we do know from Scripture is that these unknown rewards are given based on works.

Two passages of Scripture speak clearly about the receiving of reward, though there are many Scriptures which teach of rewards. This first is 2 Cor 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad". The Greek word for Judgment Seat is *Bema*. This seat represents authority, justice, and reward. Notice that all of us (Christians) have an

appointment, after we arrive in heaven, to stand before this Judgment Seat of Christ. The purpose is that we may receive a repayment or reward. The basis for this reward is things that we have done while we were alive on earth. In other words, the things that we do now on earth, will be rewarded in heaven, and so important are these rewards, that Jesus has made a specific appointment to administer them to us individually. The second passage that I want us to consider is:

Rom 14:10-13 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (11) For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. (12) So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. (13) Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

We are so quick at times to judge (condemn) our brother or sister in Christ. To "set at nought" is to despise our brother and sister, making them out like they are nothing, or of very little value. It is a way of esteeming ourselves better than them, when Paul instructs us in Phil 2:3 to esteem (commend) others better than ourselves. Our conduct on earth and the way we treat others will directly impact the outcome at the Judgment Seat of Christ. That judgment seat is based on Jesus' credentials as Lord. We will give account of ourselves to God. To give account is to express in word, thought, or by reasoning, our actions and motives. We are

going to do this of ourselves not of anyone else. No one else will be an excuse or reason for us. The *Bema* will be based solely on our actions alone. This is why Paul instructs us to commend others and not to condemn them.

There is a correlation between what we have just considered and the following passage:

1 Cor 3:12-15 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; (13) Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. (14) If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. (15) If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Jesus is the foundation we are to build upon. Our works are the building blocks. Our works will be as gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble. The gold, silver, and precious stones will endure the "fire" where the wood, hay, and stubble will be consumed to the point of no trace remaining.

Think about this: wood, hay, stubble are things found above ground, where gold, silver, and precious stones are things found under ground. Do you suppose that the things found above ground are representative of our works that glorify ourselves, because we do them before men to receive recognition? Could the things that have to be mined from under the ground be representative of our works that glorify God, because we do them in a way, that we receive not honour

for ourselves from men? In the account recorded for us in Lk 16:19-31, a rich man whose life was one continual party in which he lived only for himself, died. He found himself in hell. He cries out to Abraham (should have cried out to God) for mercy from the torment he was in. Abraham, in response, uses a word with significant meaning. Abraham says, "son remember". The word "remember" is the Greek word *mnaomai*. It means to recollect as a consequence in receiving reward or punishment. In other words, the rich man could not be relieved of his torment, and as a consequence of his punishment, will remember all that his life on earth was about. The Lord uses this same word in speaking to the churches in Rev 2-3. He tells them (us) to remember, repent, and do the first works; those works we were excited to do when we first came to know Him as Savior. The first works are the things we did out of love, not obligation, for Him. These works include reading His word, telling others about Him, fellowshiping with Him, going to church, seeking opportunities to serve, and learning more about Him. These things are the gold, silver and precious stones for they are things that glorify Him, and they will be the things we will remember throughout eternity.

When the Day of Judgment takes place, the works that remain, or is of value, will be rewarded. Note too that our works will be made manifest or be declared (made known)

publicly. We tend to down play 'works' in our Christian circles because we think it is somehow linked to earning salvation. Works cannot save for we see in verse 15 above, that though all works be burned away, yet the Christian will still be saved. Eph 2:8-9 makes it clear that works cannot save, otherwise we will boast about it. There is only one 'work' that we need to do for salvation, and it is an equal work for all believers, so there can be no boasting. That one work is belief. Read the following passage:

Rom 10:9-13 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (10) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (11) For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (12) For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. (13) For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The Lord is rich unto all that call upon Him. To have Christ, and nothing more, is to have the greatest treasure anyone could ever hope to have, yet Jesus tells us to strive for more: Matt 6:20 "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." This treasure in heaven, as we have already looked at, is the work we do on earth for His glory. It is vital to point out a very important fact: "The amazing truth is that, regardless of what happens at the bema, Jesus will not love you any less or any more for all eternity than He loved you when He purchased your life with His own blood - or than He loves you right now."⁸

We should all strive to obtain, for the rewards given us, whatever they are or may be, will be given us to use in the life to come, in our service to our Lord. Our hope of heaven should not be limited to just getting there. The rewards we receive in heaven will determine what we will do there. What that will be I can only speculate. I do know that our rewards will be connected to our service in His kingdom, and that our rewards are not given in equal measure to our works on earth. This truth is illustrated in Jesus' parable of the talents. In Matt 25 Jesus says these words in verses 21 and 23: "His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." What great words to look forward to hearing one day. If we are faithful in a few things here, that the Lord has asked us to be faithful in, then in that day to come, we will be rewarded with being ruler (given authority) over many things. These things will have its beginning in the New Jerusalem as we will explore in the next chapter.

I am going to share with you, as I begin to close this chapter, a way, which I believe will bring you great reward in heaven. It is a financial principle related to giving, called lending. In finance, when you lend money, you get it back over time with interest. In the Old Testament, under law, a person who did not have a tithe to give could give it at a

latter date. It was considered as a loan, and when it was paid back, it was done so with interest; anywhere from 20-30%. You need to grasp this principle of lending. It is such a powerful principle for gaining wealth, that the great economies of the world are based solely on it. Our economy is debt based and operates on borrowing and lending, earning interest as a basis of income. We as Christians have this principle backwards in our lives. We are in debt for borrowing where we should be the ones lending. The Bible plainly tells us that the borrower is servant (literally enslaved) to the lender. The following two verses tell us how this principle can work for gaining rewards in heaven: Prov 19:17 "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." And Lk 6:34-35 "And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. (35) But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." The principles are these: When you show kindness to the poor, and it is not just about giving cash, you are lending to the Lord, and He will repay you. Kindness to the poor may be giving them a meal, clothing, a place to sleep. It could mean spending time with them to assist them. When you do these

things, the Lord notices, and He says consider it a loan to Him which will be repaid. When dealing with others, if you lend and are not repaid, do not become discouraged, for great will be your reward in heaven.

One last thing I would like to touch on in closing this chapter is the value of beginning right now to serve the Lord. Rev 14:13 "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." I want to make an application with this verse that should prompt us into action.

When you invest money into stocks, mutual funds, etc., your money works for you 24/7; it never stops. One of the best kept secrets in finance is *Compound Interest*. This principle in finance tells us that not only does money earn interest, but interest will earn interest. You can earn a large sum in returns with relatively little investment. Think of your heavenly rewards in this way. We need to do things for the Lord now, that will remain and carry on long after we are gone from this earth. The application I want to make from our Scripture in Rev 14:13 is, that we have opportunity to accumulate reward in heaven long after we pass from this life and are living in the next. As a very basic example: If you lead a young man or woman to the Lord, and then pass on to

glory; when this young man or woman bears fruit in this life, you will continue to lay-up rewards in heaven for it; just like *compound interest*. As this blessing tells us in Rev 14:13, "your works do follow you". I believe too that the opposite is true for the non-believer. When they die and go to hell, whatever evil works they have established here on earth, these will continue to add to their punishment in hell, and the memory of those evil works will be haunting.

If our works for the Lord on earth continue to earn *compound interest* in heaven, then it would be wise for us to be about our Father's business, and it is quite simple too. In addition to what we have already discussed, find out what your gifts and talents are. Ask God to direct you in using these for Him. Finally, be obedient to what you know is right to do as you seek to serve Him. If you do these things then great will be your reward in heaven.

CHAPTER 6

PRISTINE PLACES

Rev 21:1-2 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. (2) And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband". The time frame is immediately after the Great White Throne Judgment. John sees three new things: a new heaven, a new earth, and a new city. The new heaven John sees is not the heaven we know as the dwelling place of God, but it is the heaven that surrounds our earth. We read in 2 Pet 3 that the heavens and earth will be burned with fire. This is a renewal process, not a destruction, where the sky above and the earth beneath will be purged and cleansed from all the affects of sin. This has to be done in order for the new city we call New Jerusalem (also known as the Holy City), to have a worthy place to come to.

Notice that the new earth will have no sea in it. Having been a sailor I have a love for the sea, and in this new world there is no sea, but there will be water as we will read about. Our blue sky is the result of our blue oceans; the sky reflecting the light and colour of the seas surrounding the dry land. In that future day the sky will be different, for

its light and colour will come from the throne of God located in New Jerusalem.

Interesting to note is that John does not give us a detailed description of the new heaven and new earth, but he does give us a detailed description of New Jerusalem: This future city will be the main topic of this chapter. John gives us a detailed description of New Jerusalem for there is great significance in this great city: This city will be the focal point of the coming millennial age, and the seat of government for the whole earth. God will rule and reign from this city, and the inhabitants of this city will be reigning with Christ as his coregents during this new age that is rapidly approaching.

One thought that needs to permeate our hearts and minds is that of Jesus' promise: Jn 14:2b-3 "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also". What tremendous words of comfort and hope for us as believers. Jesus left this earth almost two centuries ago to prepare a place for us. This place is a place of dwelling for us to abide with our Savior, Jesus Christ. This place will include New Jerusalem and I would say that our home will be within this pristine city. If we know that Jesus went to prepare a place for us then we can take assurance in knowing that he will keep his word and will come again to

fetch us from this earth to be with him continually and forever. We may not own a home here, or may not have much in the way of possessions here, but there we will have much more than a house, we will have a home that will belong to us, and we will be with the one that loves us and redeemed us from this world of sin. We will be expected at our new home, and when we arrive, we will not be strangers, but family with those who have gone on before, and those who will follow after us.

Before we look at the description of New Jerusalem, we need to consider briefly the words John heard and recorded for us:

Rev 21:3-8 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (4) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (5) And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. (6) And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. (7) He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. (8) But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

God will, in a physical sense, dwell with men. His tabernacle, or literally habitation, will be with men. This

verse does not say that the tabernacle of God will be in New Jerusalem specifically, but that he will dwell with men. Today in this age of the church, God dwells within the hearts of the believers by his Holy Spirit, which make up his church, but in the age to come he will dwell physically with men on the earth.

He will wipe away all tears from their (our) eyes. All of the redeemed just witnessed the sentencing of the damned to the Lake of Fire. We will be in unspeakable sorrow and crying over family and friends, whom we just saw sentenced and cast into an eternity separated from us and from God. Great comfort will come after great sorrow. My twin sister and her husband flew back home after a two-week holiday with me. I have not seen them for about six years prior. The pain and sorrow of having to say good-bye was so much to bear; it hurt having to bid them farewell. For us it is a temporary good-bye for we shall see each other again. What about that day when we see our unsaved family and friends cast into an eternal Lake of Fire with no hope of ever seeing them again? This is why God will wipe away our tears and heal us, and not only from tears, but we read that: There will be no more death, no more sorrow, and no more crying. There will be no more pain. Why? Because the former things (where and how we live today are the former things) are passed away. Now we hear God speak: He makes all things new. He tells us it is

done. Those that are athirst are offered to drink from the fountain of the water of life freely. This is a reference to water being available; and if it is not on earth, then it is in New Jerusalem. Those that overcome will inherit all things. As we noted in Chapter 5, we gain an inheritance because we are part of the family of God. The Lord concludes by giving us a list of those people that will not be part of the new heaven, new earth, and New Jerusalem: The fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars. All these will have their part in the Lake of Fire and will experience the second death as described in Rev 20:11-15.

I would like to take a little time to discuss "overcoming". What do we overcome? This could be tied to the letters given to the seven churches in Rev 2-3. In each letter the Spirit gives promises to those that overcome; but what are the promises, and what things are the churches to overcome? It is important to note that in each individual letter to each individual church, there is written the phrase, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."¹ This would indicate that each letter was meant for all the churches, and if for all the churches, then it is applicable for all churches of all ages. "The 7 churches addressed in chapters 2 and 3 were actual churches of John's day. But they also represent types of churches in all

generations. This idea is supported by the fact that only seven were selected out of the many that existed and flourished in John's time, and by the statement at the close of each letter that the Spirit was speaking to the churches."² This being the case, the warnings to the seven churches being applicable to us, then we would do well to heed the warnings, and obey the instructions in these letters.

In warning and instruction Jesus does the talking. Some of the warnings, or things to overcome, are: voluntarily leaving your love of God, fearing what suffering may come in Christian service, pretending to be something that you are not, especially for profit, causing a stumbling block for others, to lead into sin, practicing false doctrines, promoting false prophets (prophetess) that lead astray, performing dead works, being lukewarm, and equating physical prosperity with spiritual prosperity (so much alive in the church today).

Jesus goes on to tell us what can be expected by overcoming the things he warned us about: Will eat of the Tree of Life in the midst of the paradise of God, will not be hurt of the second death, will be given to eat of the secret manna (reference to the sufficiency of Christ to meet the believer's needs), will be given a white stone with a new name written in it, given power over the nations to rule with a rod of iron, will be given the morning star (probably referring to being

given eternal life), will be clothed and walk with God in white, will not have name blotted out of the Book of Life, will have name confessed before the Father and His angels, will be made pillars in the temple of God (reference to being given a place of honour), will have the name of God and of His city (New Jerusalem) written upon them, will have Jesus write upon them His new name, and will be granted to sit with Jesus in His throne (all acts of bestowing honour).

We saw what we need to overcome, and what can be expected by overcoming. So how do we overcome, and guard against falling into these traps? The answer is that it is by faith: 1 Jn 5:4-5 "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. (5) Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." For all those in the church who trust God by faith will be given not only an inheritance, but a place of honour in New Jerusalem, and throughout the millennial kingdom.

A detailed description of New Jerusalem can be read in Rev 21:9-22:5. I will break this passage down into several sections to describe this remarkable city: Rev 21:9-11 "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. (10) And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and

high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, (11) Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal". This description is given to John by one of the angels that administered judgment upon the earth during the Great Tribulation. The angel tells John that he is going to show him the bride, the Lamb's wife, which we understand to be the church (you and me). John sees the Holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God. Verses 9-10 tell us that we will already be inhabitants of this great city as it descends from heaven to earth. Apparently, we will return to heaven at the conclusion of the Great Tribulation to witness the Great White Throne Judgment. After this God will purge and cleanse the earth with fire and we will then descend out of heaven as residence of New Jerusalem. The city houses the glory of God. The light of the city is like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. We understand that this light comes from him that sits on the throne: Rev 4:3 "And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." Please note that the throne of God will be moved from heaven to New Jerusalem.

Rev 21:12-17 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: (13) On the east three gates;

on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. (14) And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (15) And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. (16) And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. (17) And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

New Jerusalem has walls that are about 216 feet (66 metres) tall, roughly about as tall as a 20-storey building. The city, within the four walls, is foursquare which is approximately 1,500 miles (2,414 kilometres) long, wide, and high. The actual city has to be constructed differently than the walls to be as tall as it is wide and long. One suggestion is to think of the city as a pyramid with walls around it. The dimensions given does not say that the city is a cube, only that it is foursquare; height, length, and width being equal. It could be in the shape of a cube, but then the walls would not need to be dimensioned separately as they would be part of the cube itself. The city could very well be another shape, characteristic of another dimension we are not familiar with. The bottom line is that we really will not know what shape it will be in until we get there, so I only speculate to create a sense of wonder in our souls.

It seems that it is generally agreed by biblical scholars, that the city will be suspended above the earth. To have a foundation 1,500 miles long, the earth, because of its

curvature, would have to be dug out miles deep for the foundation to remain level. The only way to have a level foundation is to have the city suspended above the earth. Keep in mind that New Jerusalem, being 1,500 miles square, will cover more than half the distance of the land mass of the continental United States.

Rev 21:19-21 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; (20) The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. (21) And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

The wall of the city is made up of 12-different foundations of which are garnished with all manner of precious stones. This passage does not say that there is one stone for each foundation only that the foundations are garnished, or made beautiful, by these stones. In each foundation we find inscribed a name of one of the Apostles of the Lamb. The following are the colours of the stones mentioned, however, keep in mind that many of these stones are found with different colours: *Jasper*, greenish-white is most common colour. *Sapphire*, bluish-silver most common colour. Blue is best known for use in jewellery. *Chalcedony*, pale purple most common colour, can be bluish white. *Emerald*, green. *Sardonyx*, onyx with white and brown bands. *Sardius*, is blood

red in colour. *Chrysolite*, a bit lighter in colour than an emerald. *Beryl*, yellowish in colour. *Topaz*, found in a variety of colours such as yellow, blue, orange, and purple green. *Chrysoprasus*, greenish gold in colour. *Jacinth*, dark red colour. *Amethyst*, violet or purple in colour.

The 12-gates of the city, three on each side of the four walls, are made up of one solid pearl. Just as the foundations had the names of the Apostles inscribed so will each gate have a Tribe of Israel inscribed on it and each gate will have an angel posted at it as its guard and overseer.

And the street (singular) of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. I don't know why only one street is mentioned. There could be many streets but only one that is gold. When onboard my ship in the Navy there was one ladder called the Captain's Ladder. It was different from all the rest in that it was not made totally out of steel and aluminium like all the rest. It was decorated with teak wood hand rails and set apart from the other ladders in its décor. Everyone onboard ship knew whose ladder it was without asking. It went from an upper deck between the Bridge or Pilot House and the Captain's Stateroom. No one dared use it without an invitation from the Captain, or having business with the Captain. It could be something similar in New Jerusalem. The one street of gold could lead from one main gate to the very throne of God. The Via Dolorosa, meaning the *Way of*

Suffering, is the street in Jerusalem that Jesus walked through carrying his cross to Calvary. It stands to reason that in New Jerusalem he will have a street of gold, the Way of the King, to walk upon. In fact, this street could be named, "The Way of Holiness" described in Isa 35:8.³

Rev 21:22-27 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. (23) And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. (24) And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. (25) And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. (26) And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. (27) And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Where the old city Jerusalem has had temples erected throughout the ages for worshipping God, there will be no need for one in New Jerusalem. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple for they will be there physically to receive our worship. The glory of God will be the light of the city. There will be a sun and moon for day and night will continue on the earth. I imagine the renewed earth should be like the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve experienced day and night in the Garden of Eden. Those people of the millennial age will experience day and night as well. However, New Jerusalem will have no need of sun or moon because the glory of God is the light of the city and it will be continual day within the walls. The city will have great honour and distinction as a

glorious city. The Christian nations and the kings of the Christian nations of the earth will have access to this city of New Jerusalem. God will not allow anything that defiles, or works abomination, or makes a lie into the city. The only ones to have access are they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and the nations of those that are saved, not just the saved only, but those under the rule of Christian leaders. Inhabitants of the city and those who have access are not one and the same. New Jerusalem will only be inhabited by you and me, as children of the Lamb of God, by having been partakers of the new birth.

Rev 22:1-5 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. (2) In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (3) And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: (4) And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. (5) And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

There are two sources of life in New Jerusalem. There is the River of Life, and then there will be the Tree of Life, which is probably the same Tree of Life that was in the Garden of Eden. This passage seems to indicate that the Tree of Life is between the Street of Gold and the River of Life, and tells us that the leaves of the Tree of Life are for the healing of the nations. This may not be so much for the occupants of New

Jerusalem as it is for the nations of the earth. We already received our healing, so these leaves may be to assist us somehow in maintaining our health. It seems to me that the nations of the millennial world will benefit more so from these healing leaves; but only those that have access to New Jerusalem and the Tree of Life.

The curse of sin will be removed. The servants of the Lord shall see him face to face and have his name in their foreheads. We shall see him face to face because we are his friends and are delivered from the curse of sin. Not since before the fall of man in the garden has man this kind of relationship with the Lord.

No need of candle in New Jerusalem. The light of God's glory will be so complete that there will be no shadows, no dark corners; nothing that will be in need of light, for God himself will be that light. This is significant for there will be no darkness at all in New Jerusalem. Darkness is not something that can be generated, as light can be. Darkness is a property, that can only exist, when there is an absence of light, which will not be the case in New Jerusalem.

And they shall reign forever and ever. "They" is a reference to the redeemed of the ages as coregents with the Lord Jesus Christ in reigning in his kingdom. This will never cease.

I chose as the title of this chapter *Pristine Places*. Pristine has these meanings: "Immaculate; so clean and neat as to look as good as new. Unspoiled; not yet ruined by human encroachment. In or of original state. Thesaurus: Perfect, unspoiled, like new, faultless, spotless, and pure."⁴ I could not describe New Jerusalem as a city, along with our home within its walls, any better. What a dream to have; a hope of glory. We are loved by God so much that *Pristine Places* await us. Nothing on this present earth could compare with the glory that is to come. I do not know about you, but for me, I cannot wait for that day to come. I pray that you can say along with me, even so come Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER 7

PERPETUAL POSITION

We need to keep in mind that when we enter the eternal domain of the blessed that all will be perfect. The sin and the curse that we live under now will be removed. So complete will be the removal of the curse and sin that it will be impossible for us to ever sin again. The payment of sin was completely paid for by Christ Jesus, and forever it stands. In other words, we are eternally secure in Christ; we are now and we will be then. The difference is that now, we are living under a curse that had its beginning at the Garden of Eden, so sin is all about us, and we stumble at times and need cleansing; 1 Jn 1:9¹. At that future day, when our history ends, and eternity begins, the curse will no longer exist. The eternal home of the blessed would not be 'heaven' if we, for one moment, thought that we could ever sin and lose our home in that blessed place. We would not be secure in our salvation; in fact, if sin were a possibility there, we would never be eternally secure. This eternal position, that the believer will one day soon be in, is called *Glorification*. It simply means that we will be delivered, or saved, from the presence, and the possibility of sin. When we first came to Christ we were delivered and saved from the penalty of sin (salvation). As we grow in faith, we find that we are being

delivered and saved from the power of sin (sanctification). When we reach our eternal home, we will be complete in our salvation through *glorification*, being delivered and saved from the presence of sin, and the possibility of ever being able to sin again.

Another aspect about eternity is that it is another dimension, or another level of existence and reality. I do not fully comprehend all these things I am about to describe to you, but accept them by faith as being fact. Heb 11:3 "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." This verse tells us that through faith we understand that the ages, and all that is contained in them, have been prepared by the word of God. Because we accept something by faith does not mean that we have to comprehend it. This verse tells us too that creation did not create creation, it was an act of God. There are many things in Scripture that I do not comprehend, but accept them, and do my best to understand them and offer some reasoning as to my understanding. So then, the reason I say that eternity is another dimension is because of God's attributes; one of which is that God is omnipresent. This not only means that He is everywhere present, but that He is in every age present. You and I are creatures of time, God is not. In addition, He tells us over and over again in Scripture, beginning at Ex

3:14, that: "I AM THAT I AM." This is a name, and attribute, ascribed to God to denote that He always was and always will be; meaning that He is self existent, not a created being. Because of this He views all things past, present and future in one undivided vision. Let me put it in another way: God is aware of chronological distinctions within duration, but He is not limited by these. Jesus Christ, being God, has the attributes of God, so when I refer to God, I am including the triune Godhead. To illustrate God seeing the past as the present, read with me 1 Pet 1:19-20 "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: (20) Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." Before the foundations of the world were laid, God saw His Son on the cross for you and me. It is also true that God sees our future as if it were the past: Rom 8:29 "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." He knows from time past who will give their heart to Him in salvation, and has predestined us (decided in advance) to be conformed to the image of His Son (fashioned into His likeness), our future glorification. Our future has already happened, in God's eyes, but is still unfolding before Him. God's attributes are interconnected to His glory. Everything God does is in conformity to His attributes, which

in addition to His omnipresence, includes His omnipotence, holiness, goodness, mercy, grace, longsuffering, justice, and love, to name just a few. Above we were referring to His omniscience as well which means, that if God is everywhere and in every age present, then He, being everywhere and in every age, knows all things.

God, through His attributes, which are perfect, brings all things to pass through His active and permissive will. This is what makes God sovereign, acting in His divine pleasure. We already touched on God being self-existent. Heb 11:6 tells us, "He that cometh to God must believe that he (God) is." You will not be able to know anything of God's plan and purpose for the ages, without knowing first of all, that God exists. In addition to God being self-existent, is knowing that He is a Spirit being (Jesus chose to be in bodily form to identify with His creation), which is His divine essence. Jesus gives us this truth as recorded in Jn 4:24 "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." God also possesses personality. Having personality means being able to think, feel, and do, or in other words, possess intellect, emotion, and will. This is the area that Adam was created in the likeness of God in, and we exhibit those same qualities, as imperfect as they are, that have been passed down from Adam. We read in the creation account that man was created in the likeness of God: Gen 1:26a

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Man being created in the likeness of God was perfect and should never have fallen and succumbed to sin, but he did. We read about Jesus in Phil 2:7 that he "was made in the likeness of men". You would reason that Jesus being made in the likeness of men, that when tested to sin would have fallen, but He did not. We have been taught throughout the ages that God's ultimate purpose for mankind, because of his fallen nature, is his redemption and the restoration of all things lost in his fall. I would submit to you that for us who have lived on the earth since the fall, and will live unto the Day of the Lord, it is so much more than this. Keep in mind that there is a close connection between God's ultimate purpose for us, and the never-ending level of importance we will have in heaven and throughout eternity. What is God's ultimate purpose for us? It is our glorification in its fullest sense.

This is not just a sentimental matter. It involves human beings breaking through barriers of time, space and substance into an entirely new dimension of existence. For we were created with the potential and ultimate purpose of becoming God's family, and joining Him and Christ in ruling the entire universe! When Paul wrote (Heb 2:8-11) that 'all things' are put under man's feet, and that God 'left nothing that is not under him' - but 'not yet' - he clearly indicated that we are to be spirit beings joining with Christ and the Father in directing cosmic events throughout the universe in ages to come!

Therefore, as even Jesus was made 'perfect through sufferings,' so we too must go through trials and tests and absolutely prove to God that we are totally loyal to His purpose for our lives. Setting the example, Christ is 'bringing many sons to glory.'²

In Theology we have been taught that the chief end of man is to "glorify God and enjoy Him forever".³ But there has been little discussion about the chief end of God concerning man. So what is the chief end of God concerning mankind? The answer is: To glorify him and enjoy him forever. This will be our perpetual position in heaven and throughout eternity; glorifying God and being glorified by Him. The price, and plan, of salvation was not to take away sin only; being 'saved' from the penalty, power, and presence of sin is just a small portion of it. We are saved for a purpose, and that purpose is God glorifying us, thereby bring glory to Himself. God does this by transforming us into the very likeness of Christ. This is what John was talking about: 1 Jn 3:2 "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Paul writes the following: 2 Cor 3:18 "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The earth will be renewed and the millennial age will be as the earth was intended to be at the creation. All things lost at the fall will be restored during this coming age, however, the redeemed of the Lord will be in a group all their own. We will be in the very image of Christ, truly the sons of God. This is the ultimate purpose

of God for us and the ultimate meaning of glorification. We throughout ages to come will be perfect, glorified, and ruling with God the universe He has created for His and our habitation. This will never end, but will continue to expand.

I cannot say from the Word of God what will be in store for us throughout eternity, I can only speculate. God is giving us a perpetual position, a level of importance, throughout all of eternity. God could have in mind to create other worlds, with other beings in eternity, I do not know. What I do know is that our living and facing trials and temptations in this life are for a far greater purpose than character building. God paying such a high price in the sacrifice of His son, has more in mind for us than salvation. He has something great for us in eternity, far greater than heaven and earth. In the next chapter I would like to explore some of the potential possibilities that we will have in the ages to come.

CHAPTER 8

POTENTIAL POSSIBILITIES

Have you ever wondered, or asked yourself, what you will be doing in heaven and throughout eternity? Life on earth is but a flicker in time; meaning, to appear only briefly. We spend a few years growing up and going through school, then a few decades working and raising a family, and a few final years in retirement until we pass on from this life into the next. Sounds kind of bleak does it not? With this in mind you begin to think about eternity. Some of the questions that run through your mind are about what you will be doing, and for how long. Eternity is a long, long time to be doing the same thing; the same work or task. Will eternity be all worship like one long church service? Will we be with the same people throughout eternity or will there be others joining us? All in all you wonder if it will become boring and mundane spending eternity like this; after all, the only thing we have to compare eternity to is with our life here on earth. When we use our life on earth to try and comprehend eternity, then it does not sound very exciting does it? There is not a lot in Scripture telling us about the potential possibilities that await us, however, we will use a few verses that do refer to our activities in eternity and draw some conclusions from them.

It is important to know that we cannot compare our activities here in this life with those that will be there in the next. Being glorified, in another dimension of time and reality, without fear of failure, having no sorrow, no sickness, no temptations, and the abundance of all things good, will make life very different in eternity. We will have boundless energy and will never grow weary. We will be living in a perfect environment, and as a perfect glorified being.

The first and foremost thing we will be doing throughout eternity is worship. If you have any doubt, read Rev 4:9-5:14 where every creature in heaven, on the earth, under the earth and in the sea, along with the 24-Elders, sing a new song and fall on their faces in worship. Worship, is the adoration, devotion, and respect that is offered to God as recognition of who He is and all He has done. In all that we will do throughout eternity, it will have at its core, worship. You do not have to be in a church service to worship God. How you live in the presence of others can be an act of worship. How you live in the absence of others can be an act of worship as well. Worship is not dependent on where we are but on what we are doing, and how we are doing it. Heaven and eternity will be about worship.

Friendships and relationships will flourish throughout eternity. Not only will we have a special relationship with Jesus Christ, but we will have wonderful relationships with

angels, and with others who are part of the family of God. Being a family throughout eternity will be such a reality. Here on earth, in this present life, we address one another as brother and sister, but often treat one another as strangers. Throughout eternity, we will truly be family in every sense of the word. This is why the word *mansions*, being interpreted as *rooms* in Jn 14:2 (that in the Father's house are many *rooms*), is so popular. This will indicate that we will live in New Jerusalem as one big happy family.

What about intimate relationships such as we experience now with our spouse? The Scriptures seem clear that the redeemed of this age will not marry in heaven. Jesus answered a question a group of Sadducees had asked Him. They asked intending to try and trip-up Jesus in doctrine. Read the passage:

Matt 22:25-30 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: (26) Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. (27) And last of all the woman died also. (28) Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. (29) Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. (30) For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

Though marriage is ordained by God for us on the earth, it will not be part of our life in heaven. By marriage I am speaking about sexual intimacy as well as personal intimacy in the marriage context. In eternity Christ Jesus, our Savior,

will be the bridegroom of the church, therefore, we will have no need, or desire of marriage.

It also stands to reason that we will not have offspring in heaven, but there will be offspring born on the renewed earth during the millennial kingdom, and perhaps throughout the ages to follow. Clarence Larkin was a brilliant writer for his day. Listen to what he says about procreation in the millennial kingdom to come:

Where did the people who inhabited the earth after the Flood come from? They were the lineal descendants of Noah, how did they escape the Flood? They were saved in an Ark which God provided. Gen 6:13-16. Shall not God then during the "Renovation of the Earth by Fire," in some manner, not as yet revealed, take off the righteous representatives of the Millennial nations that He purposes to save, and when the earth is again fit to be the abode of men, place them back on the New Earth, that they may increase and multiply and replenish it, as Adam (Gen 1:27,28), and Noah (Gen 9:1), were told to multiply and replenish the present earth.¹

With the curse removed during the millennial reign of Christ, men and women on the earth should live for the entire 1,000-year period of time. With the blessings associated during the reign of peace and prosperity, the population of the earth will increase beyond our comprehension. Though we will be separate from the population of the millennial earth, in that we will be glorified, we will have the all-important task of forming friendships, though they will not include marriage for us.

Because of these friendships and relationships, and because of our position and standing with God, we will be

given certain tasks to perform, not only during the millennial, but throughout eternity. We have already examined rewards. We are given rewards to enable us to serve Him. What these rewards are we do not know, but what we do know, is that we will be using the rewards given us in serving God, and one another, throughout eternity. These tasks, and the service we will offer, will be about ruling and leadership. God is going to set up a kingdom, His kingdom. It is this type of government that will rule the earth. Isa 9:7 "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." Because there will be no end to the increase of God's government and peace, and there will be an ever-increasing population, we will never be bored. Our work and service will be fresh and exciting, something that we will love doing; and we will be good at it. Be aware of how God is working in your life right now. The trials, testing, the growth you experience, and the gifts and talents you have, they are all a preparation for what is to come in eternity. We are to resist the Devil, not God, Jam 4:7². Therefore, do not resist what God is trying to do in and through you. We are only here in this life for a flicker, use what may come in the way of trials and testing for His glory.

Though we will be in the image of Christ, glorified, perfect, it does not mean that we will all be the same. We spoke earlier of family. The make up a family is the variances in character and personalities between family members. In heaven we will not all be the same or remain the same, we will be ever growing in knowledge, ability, and service. Think about your occupation here on earth. You may be a master builder and that is what you love to do, it is possible, that in eternity, you may be a master builder overseeing the building of cities for the Master. You may be a skilled preacher or teacher and as such, you may be leading and teaching a large congregation in eternity. Those who love and write music, may be in charge of music groups. Think about George Frideric Handel composing music in heaven. His *Messiah* would be child's play compared to the music he may be composing for our enjoyment in heaven. Just as I do not know what our specific rewards will be in heaven, I do not know what our exact occupation will be in heaven. We will be occupied though in heaven, and this life is the preparation for the next.

Heaven will not be all work but we will have rest there. God rested from all His work (creating the earth) on the seventh day, Gen 2:2-3³. He did not rest because He was tired, His rest was one of satisfaction from a job well done. In my youth I worked as a drywall subcontractor. It is hard work

putting up sheet after sheet of the heavy boards of sheetrock, or gyprock. Often, I would complete a job mid-day, but before traveling to begin my next job, I would walk through the house and look over the work. It was actually energizing to take satisfaction in seeing a job done well. It gave me an eagerness to start another job. Taking satisfaction in my work was like a type of rest. In heaven we will not get tired, but we will have rest. Rest will have another meaning for us in heaven as well. Rest there will also mean freedom from struggle in our work (it will be easy), freedom from frustrations, fatigue, and failure (everything will go according to plan), and freedom from weariness (will not grow tired or become sick in mind or body). Jesus gives us a glimpse of this rest: Matt 11:28-30 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Listen also to this blessing proclaimed: Rev 14:13 "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." What a special rest that will be in that day. We will be happy and satisfied in our work, and it will be easy going and enjoyable.

Along with rest, I will speculate that there will also be recreation in heaven. If you enjoy certain forms of recreation here, I do not know why it will not be enjoyed in heaven, though I cannot give you a passage of Scripture to support this.

The greatest attribute we will have in heaven is love. In all our work and in all our activities, love will permeate every fiber of it. 1 Cor 13:12-13 "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (13) And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." The word charity is the Greek word *agape*. This word is from the root word love; a perfect and complete love - God's love. The translators of the King James used the word charity to describe acts of love and benevolence. *Agape* is translated *love* 84 times in Scripture, and *charity* 28 times. In heaven, our behavior and actions will be done out of God's great love, which will be the very fabric of our being.

The potential along with the possibilities will be limitless in heaven; so much greater than we could ever imagine. We should be caught up in such wonderful thoughts that capture the mind and thrills the soul. David made a tremendous statement while writing his Psalms. Psa 16:11 "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is

fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." This sums up our life in heaven: We will have life. We will have not only joy, but fullness of joy, meaning joy that satisfies. And we will experience continual pleasures that will never cease. If we received just these three things only; we would be men and women most happy.

CHAPTER 9

PRECISE PRINCIPLE

The next few chapters are going to deal with a very unpopular subject, and that, is a place we refer to as hell. We spent a lot of time discovering the biblical truths of heaven, but to be sure, just as there is a heaven, there is also a hell, and we need to learn of its truths. There are some people, when reading about heaven, will not have a stirring of heart, or an urgency of heart, to commit on finding out how to go there. For these people, fear of an opposing reality so terrible, may be what it takes to open their eyes to make an immediate decision, in finding an escape, to avoid any chance of having the dungeons of the damned as their eternal home.

I made a decision to follow Jesus at a very young age. When I was 13 years old, I went to week long nightly services at our church. An evangelist named Dusty Rhoads was the guest speaker that week. On the last night of the services, a Friday night, Dusty preached on the realities of hell. The message shook me to the very core of my being and I felt fear of that dreadful place. When the preacher gave a call to come forward for prayer, I did not hesitate. I grasped my pastor's hand and told him that I wanted to make sure that I am saved, and not headed to hell. I recommitted my life that night to

Christ, gaining full assurance of my eternal destiny. You might say that it is a terrible thing to frighten, or scare people into heaven. Read the following verses with me: Jud 1:21-23 "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (22) And of some have compassion, making a difference: (23) And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." I would ask, "Why not fear?" It is a motivator. If I was walking down the street in the middle of the night, and saw your house on fire, out of fear for your life, and the lives of your family, I would run around the house banging on doors and windows, screaming, doing all I could to make sure you got out safely. It is the same with the Doctrine of Hell. I want to do all I can to make you aware of its realities, so you will escape the clutches of that dreadful place.

Another reason why it is important for me to spend time speaking of hell, is that the churches today are not doing so. Christian preachers are admonished in the Word of God, to preach the whole counsel of God, which includes the truths of hell, yet preachers of God's Word avoid this topic like the plague. I can only conclude that they do not want to offend anybody. Instead of trying to save with fear, they are afraid of not saving the numbers who are in their congregation. In other words, they are afraid of losing membership. How sad.

What is even more severe is, that there is a move to remove the Doctrine of Hell completely from the pages of Scripture, or to twist the meaning of Scripture to remove any true meaning of hell. Religious reformer, Theodore Parker (24 August 1810-10 May 1860), a Unitarian, rejected the Doctrine of Hell. Theologian A.H. Strong, in his book, Systematic Theology, speaks of Parker: "While he acknowledged that the doctrine (of hell) was taught in the New Testament, rejected it, and came at last to say of the whole theology which includes this idea of endless punishment, that it 'sneers at common sense, spits upon reason, and makes God a devil'."¹ This is the sense of the theology that is becoming more and more prevalent in our churches today. They reason, that God, which would send someone to hell, is a deity considered angry, awful, avenging, hateful, unloving, and loathsome. We need to set aside our own reasoning, and the reasoning of these preachers that deny very Scripture, and find out what the Word of God actually has to say on the matter.

The truths of hell are clearly taught in the Bible: Luke 12:4-5 "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. (5) But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." Read this actual account of a

first century rich man, that went to hell, and is still there today:

Luke 16:19-31 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: (20) And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, (21) And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. (22) And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; (23) And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (24) And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. (25) But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. (26) And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. (27) Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: (28) For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. (29) Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. (30) And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. (31) And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Hell is clearly taught in the Word of God, and the Word of God is without error. God is the creator, and we part of His creation. God has the right to set all the rules, and He can do whatever He pleases. This is known as the Sovereignty of God. Do not make the mistake of bringing God down to human levels. The human justice system (the USA is not exempt) is partial, unfair, corrupt, and unrighteous. If we bring God down to our level, then it would be easy to reason that God is

also unjust, partial, unfair, corrupt, and unrighteous in his dealings with mankind. However, God is perfect, and acts perfectly in all He does. He is just, impartial, fair, incorrupt, and righteous.

Rom 3:22-26 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: (23) For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (24) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (25) Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (26) To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

We must understand that God acts justly and rightly for all men, those that trust Him by faith and those that do not.

Hell is a very real place, just as heaven is. You cannot have one without the other. Just as we know that one day we will face death, we know that there is either a heaven or hell awaiting to receive our soul. Men may try to deny it or reject it, but it does not make the realities any less true. This is the whole point of this chapter, to know that hell is a very real place, and that God is just to send men, and women, there for all eternity for not accepting His way of escape (see last chapter).

CHAPTER 10

PIERCING PRIVATIONS

My desire was to have all the chapters of this writing to flow from one to the other. *Piercing Privations* simply means, an intense quality of unpleasant lack of basic necessities. Once you understand that hell is a real place, then the realities of that place will begin to come into focus. One of the first things you will realize is, in that place of the damned, there will be no water, no food, no shelter; all the basic necessities we take for granted in this life, will be missing in the next, for those that find their abode in the pits of hell. This lack will become increasingly more intense as time goes on. Have you ever felt thirsty and not able to quench that thirst? The longer you went without something to drink, the worse it got? This is what it will be like in hell. Remember the story we read in the pervious chapter about the rich man? He was so thirsty, he begged for one drop of water thinking that, it would cool his tongue. I would like to point out here, that basic necessities are not limited to water, food, and shelter. The absence of light would be included in that list, along with the absence of social interactions, and not having the ability to do anything, such as work, and hobbies, just to name some of the basic necessities that will not be present or available in hell.

I do not want to throw together a list without backing it up with Scripture. I want to take the next few minutes to support the claims that I have made. I have heard people say throughout all my Christian life, that they are standing on the promises of God. They probably did not realize, that there are a lot of promises, which they would not want to hold on to. Such as the ones relating to hell. My point here is, that we cannot take the good and ignore the bad. We must consider the whole council of God, if we like it or not. To be sure, I do not enjoy speaking of the realities of hell, for they are so horrific, but I must. I am sure Jesus did not enjoy speaking of hell, but he has done more, than anyone ever could, to warn people about hell, and to keep people from going there.

The first aspect about hell is its darkness. In the second chapter of this writing, I mentioned the idea that the darkness of hell is the demonstration of God's grace. My reasoning is, that darkness is the protection from seeing the horrors of that place. Jude verse 13 describes darkness of hell this way: "...to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." To those headed to hell, there is a place of darkness reserved for you. Hell is waiting for you, and its darkness is far beyond the darkness you or I can imagine. Jude tells us, that it is the blackness of darkness, and it will be forever. Matthew 8:12¹ tells us that hell is a place

of outer darkness. One thing I want us to focus on more than the darkness, are the two words ending Verse 13 of Jude, which are, "for ever". There are groups springing up and teachings in the Christian churches, which claim, that hell is not forever. The teaching is, that people will suffer for a time and then go on into annihilation, never to exist again. Not so. The Bible clearly teaches that hell, and its torments, will last forever.

Looking at the history of words (etymology) we find in the Old Norse language (Germanic), the word 'hohle', meaning 'hole' in English. I want you to hear what William Shedd says about this word: "Hohle or holle, a Gothic etymon, (tracing the word 'hell' back to its original meaning) signifies a covered-up hole."² The idea is this: Every being in hell will be sharing a hole. There will be no travel, no holidays, just a hole filled with fire and torments, which the person sentenced to go there will have as his or her 'home'. In addition to having a place reserved in a hole of torment, think about being chained to one spot throughout eternity. I cannot say for certainty that mankind in hell will be chained. There is a reference in Jude, which clearly states, that there are a group of angels which are currently reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness. Revelation 20 tells us that the day is coming where Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. Just a side note here:

Where do you think the bottomless pit is at? It is a hint that hell is at the centre of the earth, or some other spherical body. If you were at the centre of the earth, every direction from there would be up; therefore, a description of a bottomless pit. But, think with me for a moment, if everlasting chains were reserved for every being in hell.

Are you starting to get the picture of how terrible a place hell is? Now add, to being reserved to one spot in hell, perhaps being chained there in outer darkness, having a desire to sleep and rest, but cannot. We read in Revelation 14:11 "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night." Have you ever been so tired, that you could have slept standing up, or leaning against a wall? Not so in hell. There will be no chair, no wall, and though surrounded by darkness, no sleep...ever. There is a popular saying that I hear regularly, which goes like this: 'there is no rest for the wicked.' How prophetically true this statement is, and those that use it, do not realize it.

In this chapter, we looked briefly at some of those things we take for granted as basic necessities, and how they will be absent from hell. In the next chapter I want us to examine far greater punishments. As awful as all these punishments are, we will realize that all those in hell deserve them.

CHAPTER 11

PUNITIVE PUNISHMENTS

Not only will those assigned to hell be without basic necessities, they will suffer things beyond imagination, and they will deserve it. God did not create hell though for mankind. Hell was originally reserved for Satan and the angelic hosts that followed him (Mt 25:41¹). God created man, and woman, perfect, without sin. One thing God allowed for though was freewill. When God created man and woman, He created them with freewill. God did not want his creation to sin, but as we read the opening chapters of Genesis, it is obvious that the woman, Eve, and then the man, Adam, sinned by choice, and the rest of the Bible is about God being involved with the redemption of mankind. Mankind still has freewill. Just as man sinned by freewill, by freewill, man can choose to accept God's way of salvation (see Chapter 13), or reject it.

An individual that does not think murder is much of an offense, will think that the punishment of the electric chair harsh and excessive. An individual that does not regard sin as an offense against a holy God, will be abhorred at the punishment by God to an everlasting hell. We need to grasp who we are, what sin is, and who it is we are sinning against.

Justice, by definition, is the sentence of doom pronounced in any cause, civil or criminal, by the judge or

court by which it is tried. Judgment, though pronounced by the judge or court, is properly, the determination or sentence of the law. I want you to read what the Bible says about the judgment of God: Romans 2:2 "The judgment of God is according to truth," Romans 2:11 "For there is no respect of persons with God." And Romans 2:16 "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to the gospel." Therefore, we understand, that the judgment of God will be without error, without prejudice, and will be according to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, we read: Romans 3:19-20 "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. (20) Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin". Our conscience alerts us when we break the law. When we break the law, we become guilty, and guilt involves legal responsibility, which outcome is punishment. When we compare ourselves to God, we know assuredly, that we stand guilty before a holy and just God. One thing to know about God, who is perfect, holy, and just, is that, He will never punish any sinner, any more than he or she deserves. When you discover the realities of hell, you will recognize the holiness of God, and the price it cost Him to provide for our salvation. That price? God sent His Son to earth, to die a terrible death, to

pay the sin debt we owe. You see, Jesus paid for, and satisfied, the penalty for sin. When you reject the price paid by Jesus for our sin, then you will pay the penalty for your own sin, and eternity will not be long enough a sentence. Sin is an eternal offense against an eternal God, therefore, requires an eternal payment. So, what are the penalties imposed as punishment for individual sin? I want us to look at these briefly. You will gain a proper understanding of these penalties without having to do an exhaustive examination of the tortures that await the damned.

The first and foremost agony will be that of fire. This is a literal fire. You might argue how hell can be a place of total darkness and also be a place of fire, which gives off light. Do not forget high school chemistry. There are chemicals that burn and have a flame, however, the flame is invisible. It is very reasonable to have a fire and flame in hell, which gives off no light. Read the following verses: Mark 9:43-44,49 "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: (44) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (49) For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." The fire of hell will never be quenched, but what is important to note is that the fire of hell will have a preserving effect. Just as salt

can be used as a preservative, fire in hell will allow you to feel the torments of its flame, not being perished by it, but preserved.

Screaming will be the foremost sound you will hear, and never be able to escape it. There will be no music in hell, no beautiful singing of birds, no television or computers, just screaming. The Bible calls this screaming, wailing and gnashing of teeth (Mt 13:50²).

Stench will permeate the air. There will be no smell of flowers, of food, coffee, or anything that we enjoy the aromas of. Four times in Revelation, brimstone is mentioned as being associated with hell (Rev 14:10-11, 19:20. 20:10, 21:8). Brimstone is most closely associated with sulphur. Have you ever smelled sulphur? It smells like rotten eggs. Imagine having this as your only smell for all of eternity.

There is a finality to hell to accompany the eternal punishments. There will be no 'prison breaks' there, no escaping, no hope, just dismal despair.

The Bible suggest too that our sin will increase in hell, therefore, punishments will increase proportionally. In my chapter, *Prized Possessions*, I quoted Revelation 14:13 where it states that the works of the righteous follow those in eternity. The same is true of hell. The sinful works you do now, will follow you into hell, and as those works multiply on earth, so will your punishments in hell. To illustrate,

imagine you established a pornographic film or magazine industry, then died in your sin. In hell, as your earthly works influence people to sin, your punishment will increase. Just as there are levels of reward in heaven, there will be levels, or degrees, of punishments in hell. The following verse develops this thought: Rev 22:11 "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." This is at the heart of the Doctrine of Retribution. On death row, Ted Bundy told how he became a murderer. As a young boy he came across pornographic magazines. This gave him a thirst for sexual perversions. This thirst developed in deviate behavior and a total disregard and lack of respect for women. This finally led him into a life of kidnapping and raping college age women, which led to murdering his victims. Sin developed into a worsening degree of depraved behavior. Ted, at 7-years old, never thought of raping and murdering women as he gazed upon the pictures inside pornographic magazines. Sin is insidious, and once in its grips, will take you down a road much further than you ever thought of going. I heard that Ted Bundy gave his heart to the Lord on death row. If so, what a demonstration of God's forgiveness and grace. No one is beyond hope. If you continue down the road of sin, it will only get worse, never better, and in the life to come, that

sin will follow you throughout all eternity, you will never be able to satisfy the penalty for that sin. In addition, you will not be able to repent of that sin, or change your character, condition or attitude.

I could go on and list a number of things that persons in hell will suffer, but I would rather end this chapter, with the most terrible of all eternal punishments. You might ask, What could be worse than what has already been told? The answer is: Eternal separation from God. Death, in the Bible, is understood as the separation of body and soul; the immaterial part of man from the material. The Bible speaks of the Second Death, which will be eternal separation from God. Listen to what the Word of God has to say about the Second Death: Rev 20:14 "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Rev 21:8 "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

The pains of this second death were felt by the very one that paid the price, so that we would not have to suffer this terrible anguish. Jesus, while on the cross, bore all the sin of humanity. God the Father could not look upon His Son and had to turn away. I want you to think about, and feel within your being, these words of Jesus as He hung on the cross for

you and for me: Matt 27:46 "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Today, hell is still in the presence of God, but in that day when the lost are cast into the Lake of Fire, they will be forever cast out of the very presence of God, and of our memory. If those of my family, which are dear to my heart, do not give their heart to the Lord, I will witness them being cast into the Lake of Fire. As they are cast out of God's presence, they will be erased from our memory as well. How do I know this? Rev 21:4 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." For there to be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain; to have the tears wiped forever from our eyes, then too will God have to wipe away the memory of seeing our friends and loved ones being sentenced to, and cast into, the Lake of Fire. He will have to wipe away the very memory of their having ever existed. Can you imagine being in hell and your saved spouse in heaven has no memory of you. You cannot take comfort in knowing that someone is thinking of you or empathizing with your suffering. Imagine, being in hell, having a glimpse of heaven, seeing the joys of that place, hearing the music of praise to the creator of the universe, to fade out of sight and hearing, as the Lake of Fire is forever removed from the presence of God, and the hosts of heaven.

CHAPTER 12

PERMANENT PRESENCE

Just as was related in an earlier chapter, heaven is a temporary place, for the Lord will move heaven to earth when setting up His kingdom. The point being, that where God is, there heaven will be also. The same principle is true of hell. We use the word hell as reference for eternal death and condemnation; however, the word hell, biblically speaking, is more properly understood, as meaning the abode of the dead, and hints at its location being in the centre of the earth. The actual place of eternal separation, judgment, death, and condemnation, the place of outer darkness, is referred to as the *Lake of Fire*. The Bible teaches that those in hell will not be there permanently. Their abode in hell will be moved to the Lake of Fire, which will be their permanent place of residence. I would like to take a few minutes to present to you what I believe will be permanently present in this dreadful place of the damned.

We have already noted that those who die without the Lord Jesus as Savior, will be assigned to the Lake of Fire permanently. What else, or who else, will be permanently there?

Revelation 20:10-14 "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (11) And I saw a great white

throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. (12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. (14) And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

The first, permanent inhabitants of the Lake of Fire, will be the Beast and False Prophet, who terrorize the earth, especially Israel, during the coming seven-year tribulation period. Following them will be Satan himself, who has been terrorizing mankind since the Garden of Eden. Just after their sentencing, comes the sentencing of the earth's dead.

Notice that these people are resurrected alive, but described as dead. The idea is, that they are already eternally separated from God; therefore, the Great White Throne, can best be described as a place of sentencing, based on works, since guilt has already been established.

All the inhabitants of hell are sentenced and cast into the Lake of Fire. Verse 10 gives some insight as to the duration of the torments in the Lake of Fire: "Day and night for ever and ever". Apparently, time will never cease in that place; neither will torments. Also cast into the Lake of Fire is death. Death will be a permanent presence in the Lake of Fire. Imagine being in a constant state of dying, but not able to die. Some theologians teach that none of this for the

lost and unregenerate will be permanent. Some teach, that the inhabitants of this *Lake*, will suffer for their sins, and then pass on into oblivion. This teaching is called the Doctrine of Annihilation. Millard J. Erickson describes this view well: "The school of thought known as annihilationism, on the other hand, maintains that although not everyone will be saved, there is only one class of future existence. Those who are saved will have an unending life; those who are not saved will be eliminated or annihilated. They will simply cease to exist."¹ He precedes this description of *annihilationism* with this statement: "Not only is the future judgment of unbelievers irreversible, but their punishment is eternal. We do not reject merely the idea that all will be saved; we also reject the contention that none will be eternally punished."² If you take the Scriptures seriously, without adding personal thoughts, feelings, and emotions, it is clear that 'annihilation' is not taught in the Word of God. Damnation is eternal and conscious, just as heaven is eternal and conscious for the redeemed.

The idea I am getting across here is, that in the Lake of Fire, if that is your permanent home, your permanent neighbors will be Satan, the Beast, and False Prophet of the tribulation, along with the most wicked persons that have ever lived. Think about rubbing shoulders with unrepentant sex offenders, molesters, rapists, and murders. Your stomach

turns now seeing these people profiled on the evening news, how would you like having these people as your permanent neighbors, forever? Let this sink in a bit. You will not only be in total darkness, not only in everlasting torments, but will be in company of the vilest persons that have ever lived. Not one righteous person will be found in that place.

You might be thinking, "What can be worse?" I will tell you: Having the fallen angels and the demons of the ages tormenting you for ever and ever. You might ask, "What is the difference?" There has been some interesting theories regarding this in certain days. I will not go into great detail for most of this teaching is speculation.

As you read through Scripture you will notice that there seems to be differences between the fallen angels and demons. For instance, fallen angels have bodies, while demons do not, but, seeking bodies to inhabit.

It is speculated that demons are disembodied spirits. The question is, whose bodies are they disembodied from? There are two lines of thought on this. One is that these demons are disembodied spirits from a pre-adamic race of beings; largely based on teachings of a 'gap' between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2; part of what is called, the Gap Theory. It is thought that there might have been life on earth that was destroyed, before God created Adam and Eve, and gave us life as we know it today. Two, it is reasoned that the disembodied

spirits, or demons, came from the Nephilim, mentioned in several passages of Scripture (Gen 6, Jude), and in the non-canonical book of Enoch. The Nephilim were a race of super humans, that were the offspring of, Fallen Angels who co-inhabited with women living on the earth at the time. These super-humans, were strong, and tall (giants), as described in Num 13:33³.

We cannot be sure where the demons, or devils, came from, but the point I want to make here is this: These demons, who do not have bodies, but are constantly seeking bodies to inhabit for the purpose of torment; these being in hell, will be permanently there to enter in and out of the imprisoned inhabitants there, to torment them day and night for ever and ever.

Can you comprehend what a terrible place hell, and the Lake of Fire, will be like? Search the Scriptures and discover for yourself how hell is described. Once there, you can never leave. You will not only be a permanent residence there, but you will have the company of Satan and the vilest of humanity, along with the permanent torments of the demons, and perhaps the fallen angels, though they will have their own torments and punishments. There is another presence that you will never be able to escape, and that is your memory. In the chapter titled Precise Principle, I quoted a passage out of Luke 6. Here a rich man went to hell, and he was told to

remember. Your memory of the opportunities you had in this life to receive Christ's death, burial, and resurrection as your payment for sin, will never escape you. The memory of this will be one of the most terrible of pains.

I want to conclude this chapter with the following statement made by Millard J. Erickson in answering the question, "How could a loving God send anyone to hell?" He writes, "Sin consists in man's choosing to go his own way rather than follow God. Throughout life, man says to God, in effect, 'Leave me alone.' Hell, the absence of God, is God's simply giving man at last what he has always asked for. It is not God, but man's own choice that sends man to hell."⁴

CHAPTER 13

PASSIONATE PLEA

This is the most important chapter I will write, and if you read no others, please, do not pass on this one. Chapters 1-8 describe heaven in one way or another, yet, what does it accomplish if I do not tell you how to get there? I currently make my home in Australia. I can tell you of the beauty of the beaches, the ruggedness of the outback, the friendliness of my mates, yet it would not interest you much if you were not planning to ever come to Australia. My sister and her husband came to Australia for a holiday a few years back. About a year before they came, when we were first planning their holiday, Kathy and Jim learned everything they could about Australia, her people, and culture. Jim went as far as teaching himself to play the *didgeridoo*.¹ It made their holiday so much the more richer and rewarding, especially for Jim, who was honoured to play a didgeridoo with a native aboriginal group. This is what heaven should be like for those planning on going there. We should look forward to it with an undying expectation, learning as much as possible about our future home, to make our experience there so much more rewarding. If this writing is uninteresting to you, then perhaps heaven is not planned to be your future home. These chapters are not an all-inclusive doctrine about that

beautiful place, but it should provoke an interest to learn more about heaven and the glories that await us there, and within this chapter particularly, how to get there.

It is an interesting thing about words and terms that we use in everyday life. Usually with a word that we use to describe something, there is a word that means the exact opposite. If we were to play this game of opposites and I were to say "day", you would respond with "night". Again, if I were to say "good", you would respond with "bad". Again, if I were to say "heaven", you would respond with "hell". It is so natural to refer to hell as the opposite of heaven, and we know it to be a reality, yet we tend to pick and choose which part of God's reality we are going to believe and to what extent, and which parts not to believe. Heaven is a very real place, a very beautiful place, an expanding place with souls entering there daily. Heaven is a place of rest, a place of peace, a place of joy, and a place of happiness. These are but a few of the attributes that describe heaven. Hell is a very real place as well. Things that are true of heaven can be said to be the exact opposite of hell, and inversely proportional to it. Here are some of the attributes of hell: In addition to being a very real place, hell is a very ugly place. It is also an expanding place with thousands of souls going there daily. Hell is a place of unrest, no peace being found there, no joy, and no happiness. Hell will be dark, and

full of suffering and pain, and these are just a few of the attributes of hell (Chapters 9-12 offers more insights).

Many people are following pastors and joining churches because they are hearing positive and prosperous things. They think they have found salvation because of positive thinking in one form or another. As a result of this kind of teaching they think that God is a bad God, because He sends people to hell, and it is not very positive to believe this way about a God of love. I will let you in on a truth: God does not send people to hell; people go to hell because they want to go there. They want to go to hell because they do not want heaven on God's terms. Here is another truth you need to grasp: Positive thinking will not get you to heaven.

I was speaking to a young minister not long ago and our conversation led to the subject of heaven. I told him about my writing. He asked me what is not true about heaven, since we were talking about what was true of heaven. It caught me off guard and I could not come up with an answer straight away. I told this young man that I never really thought about this as my focus was on the truths of heaven and not the untruths of heaven. However, what is not true about heaven, is that all religious roads lead there, and all good people end up there. In fact, the Word of God tells us that there is none good or righteous (Lk 18:19, Rom 3:10²). This does not mean that a person cannot do good deeds or live a moral life.

These Scriptures are saying that there is none that can be good enough to get into heaven on their own merits or deeds. There is no one righteous enough to get to heaven by their own righteousness. The following verse is about the sin of Israel in its context, however, it applies to you and I, for God considers our righteousness to be such when compared to His: Isa 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Hopefully your response will be that you are not good enough to get to heaven, none of us are, and when you get to the point of realizing that you cannot gain heaven by your own good deeds, you are not far away from true salvation. God knows our hearts (Jer 17:9³), therefore, He does not want you 'good enough' to come to Him, but wants you to come to Him as you are. Heaven, and life eternal, are gifts. The price for these gifts have already been paid, so it is not about being good and righteous. Jesus, in the Bible, says over and over again that the self-righteous (those that try to earn God's favor by their own righteousness) will not see the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus is the only righteous one, and He is the only one qualified to pay the price for us to enter into His kingdom. This next verse says it all: 2 Cor 5:21 "For he (God) hath made him (Christ Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in

him." Jesus took our sin upon Him at the cross so that we could have His righteousness to enter heaven and enjoy eternal life.

Another thing about heaven that is not true is, that some people are predestined (decided in advance) to go there while all others are predestined to go to hell. I need to be firm about this: hell was not made for men and women (Matt 25:41⁴), and God does not want anybody to go there: 2 Pet 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Not only is God not willing that any should perish to enter hell, none need go to hell either. The way to heaven is plain and simple, yet people choose not to go the way of God, but try to go their own way. The payment made for salvation, the death and resurrection of Christ, is sufficient for all men, women, boys, and girls; it is not only sufficient for all, it is available to all. There are no excuses, no reasons, for missing out on eternal life.

Here is the path to heaven: First, as I have already stated, you need to come to the reality of knowing, that apart from God, you cannot enter there. It is because of sin. Rev 21:8 "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth

with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." How many lies do you need to tell to make you a liar? It takes only one. Have you ever told a lie, even a little 'white' lie? How many sins do you need to commit to make you a sinner? Only one; however, if you lived a perfect life, you still would be condemned to hell. Death, which simply means separation (separation of body from soul and spirit; and also applies to separation from God as in the term *second death*), is passed onto everyone because of the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden: Rom 5:12 "Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." We have all sinned in Adam, and a proof of this reality is that after a short few years on earth, we die. Adam was made to live forever, as were his offspring, however, as a result of his sin, death has been passed onto all of his offspring. This is why death seems very unnatural to us, for we were created to live forever. Because we have inherited a sin nature, we will face separation (death) from God for all eternity. God cannot allow a sinful nature into heaven, and you would not want Him to. Hell, and ultimately the Lake of Fire, is the destiny of all mankind because of sin and inheriting a sinful nature from the parents of all creation, Adam and Eve.

The good news is that the issue of sin has been dealt with. There had to be some way God could redeem us (buy us

back), from the clutches of sin. There is a way, and that way is through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus did more than die on an old rugged cross. Many prophets and self-proclaimed gods have died, however, only Jesus Christ was resurrected. This, is what sets Christianity apart from all other religions of the world, our faith being based on a risen Savior and not a dead prophet.

The sin issue being dealt with does not make salvation automatic for the human race. Mankind has a responsibility, and the reason mankind does not gain heaven, has to do with unbelief: Jn 3:17-18 "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (18) He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Now this raises an important issue, and that is understanding what belief is. It is not enough just to know that Jesus came into the world, lived a perfect life, died and rose again. Belief is more than recognizing the facts. Satan and his demons believe the facts but will not be saved from eternal punishment: Jam 2:19 "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." Biblically, to "believe" means, to entrust and commit your spiritual well being to Christ.⁵ Another word for it is the word "faith", which in its simplest form means, to trust

Christ even if it does not stand to reason in doing so. Faith has to have an object; it is not blind. For the one who places their trust, their faith, in Christ, has as their object of faith, the Word of God. As Christians we believe the Scriptures to be infallible; the very words of God communicated to mankind.

Have you ever placed your faith in Jesus Christ? If you were to die this moment and found yourself standing at the gates of heaven, and Jesus met you there and asked you why He should let you into His heaven, how would you answer Him? If you say that you tried to live a good life, access will be denied. If your answer is that you have been to church and were even baptized, access would be closed to you. It is when you can say that you believed the Scriptures to be true, knowing that you were born condemned to everlasting damnation, but recognized Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as the payment made to secure eternal life, and you entrusted your spiritual well being to Him by faith, then will the gates of heaven be opened up to you. It is that simple. Read about it from the Word of God: Jn 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." You know the word salvation implies being saved from something. It is being saved from hell and everlasting damnation, to heaven and eternal bliss. Salvation is not easy, it has come

at a great price and sacrifice, but it is very simple. Everyone, has enough faith to secure this simple way of salvation: Rom 10:9-10 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe (by faith) in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (10) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." If you have not made that commitment to Christ, please do so now. We are not guaranteed our next breath, there may never be another opportunity. Do you believe these things concerning salvation to be true? If so, then entrust and commit your spiritual well being, by faith, to Christ Jesus. How do you do this? It begins in the heart, the inner being. Once you understand these truths, internalizing them, then with your mouth, confess it to Jesus. Tell Him from your heart that you believe these things and accept His way of salvation. After you have done this, tell someone. Find a church that believes and teaches the Word of God. By joining a church, you are committing yourself to learning and growing strong in faith, and you will have a support group to help you along the way. Above all things know that heaven and all the things we described about heaven in this writing are yours, forever.

NOTES

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3. Anthony Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans publishing Company, 1991), 274.

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4. Ezra HaLevi, "North American Jews Put the 'Home' in Homeland", *Arutz Sheva, Israel National News*, 21 August 2007, 1.

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Chapter 6

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3. Isa 53:8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

4. Microsoft Office 2003 - Internet search, (Pristine) *Encarta Dictionary: English (UK)*. *Thesaurus: English (Australia)*.

Chapter 7

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2. Roderick C. Meredith, "Your Magnificent Future," *Tomorrow's World*, March-April 2007, 6.

3. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism A.D. 1647*, Question and Answer 1, [e-sword v9.5.1] (e-sword; Franklin TN, 2009).

Chapter 8

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2. Jam 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

3. Gen 2:2-3 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. (3) And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

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3. Jer 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

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