

Heaven— 8/09/2019

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” Phil.3:20-21

Beloved in the Lord,

If you were able to board a plane tomorrow and fly first class to any destination you desired, all expenses paid, with accommodation in a luxury hotel, where would you go? My first choice would be Waikiki in Hawaii, and my second choice would be Tokyo in Japan. We each have our places we would like to be. The world is a very interesting place and there are many things to see and do. It is not possible to see it all. There is one place that far surpasses any other and that place is called Heaven.

In the letter to the Hebrews we read:

“For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.” Heb.13:14

We do not have a lasting city here on earth. We are only passing through. 70,80 or 90 + years, is in reality, a very short time. Moses wrote:

***“As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years,
Or if due to strength, eighty years,
Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow;
For soon it is gone and we fly away.” Ps.90:10***

Moses was right in what he wrote – time passes very quickly. As we get older, it seems that the years fly by even faster than before. This verse from Moses could be a very depressing one, but only if you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are a Christian, then you know that with every day that passes, we are a day closer to eternity. If this life – the 70,80 or 90 years is all that there is, then that would be extremely depressing. We would have to say as the pagans of old – let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.

The truth is that this is not all that there is. In fact, the life we live here- those few brief years are just the prologue to our eternal life. Paul used a tent to illustrate this truth, he was a tent maker by trade, and so he used an illustration from his own life and experience. He wrote:

“For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, ³ inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. ⁴ For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

⁶ Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— ⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight— ⁸ we are of good

courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” 2 Cor.5:1-8

A tent is only a temporary dwelling. Our physical body is like a tent, it is a temporary dwelling for our soul and spirit. This tent, this body has a limited life span. It grows old, it wears out and eventually it dies and returns to the dust. Thankfully the body is only a small part of us. Our other two parts – the soul and the spirit are eternal. They will never die. If we are in Christ, then after death, at the resurrection we will receive a new spiritual body, which Paul likens to a house – a permanent dwelling. This one will be fit for heaven. It will neither age nor die.

This is not wishful thinking, but it is the truth revealed in the Word of God. Jesus Christ rose from the dead, on Easter morning with a new resurrected body. His bodily resurrection guarantees our bodily resurrection.

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” Rom.8:11

God, The Holy Spirit, who raised Jesus from the dead, dwells in the heart of every believer, and at God’s appointed time, He will raise us from the dead, we will have a new spiritual body, that will never die.

This is our sure hope. One day, Jesus shall return to complete God’s plan of salvation. On that day we will meet Him, we will see Him, and we will be together with Him forever. I don’t know about you, but I eagerly await that day. I live in an earnest expectation of that day. It is my true hope. Life here is great, but life in Heaven will be even better.

Paul knew that. He lived with the hope of Heaven clearly before him. He felt an inward struggle: part of him wanted to go and be with the Lord, but the other part knew that he still had work to do here on earth. He wrote:

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. ²³ But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; ²⁴ yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. Phil.1:21-24

All throughout Paul’s writing we see that he knew that there is more to life, than this life. He lived every day in the knowledge that after this life ends, there will be a much better life that will never end. When, like Paul we understand this, then it is so much easier to live this life, because nothing ties us down too much. We understand that this is not our home, we are just passing on through.

When we plan our holidays, then usually we try to gather as much information as possible about our destination. To be honest, Linda does most, if not all the research. She finds out the best places to stay, how to get there, what to see, where to eat and so on. Years ago, we would visit a travel agency and take some brochures and study them. They always had

beautiful pictures to entice you. These days, we can go online and with the help of “Google” find out pretty much whatever you want to find out.

This year in January, we travelled to Singapore and Japan. I remember the excitement leading up to the trip, we couldn’t wait. When we got there, we were not disappointed, and it was so much better than I had imagined.

As we think about our upcoming trip to Heaven, we cannot even begin to imagine how good it will be. Paul writes:

***“but just as it is written,
“Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard,
And which have not entered the heart of man,
All that God has prepared for those who love Him.”
1.Cor.2:9***

Our imagination is too limited to be able to work out how wonderful Heaven will be. In order to give us some glimpse, God revealed certain aspects to John, and he wrote them down for us. The Book of Revelation serves in part as a travel brochure that describes some of the things which we will see in Heaven and what we will experience. For example:

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He *said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” ⁶ Then He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. ⁷ He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. Rev.21:1-7

At times, when doubts assail me, and the dark clouds of despair try to overshadow me, I tend to turn to these verses in the Bible, and they drive away all the negative thoughts and fill me with hope and joy.

This passage tells us that the best is yet to come. In Heaven all will be well. There is nothing bad, nothing negative there. We will see our Lord face to face in His full glory. We will see all of our brothers and sisters in Christ who have gone before us. We will live in the Light of God’s glory forever in His presence.

May we live every day with our eyes toward Heaven, and may we faithfully serve Him, till the day we fly away. May God help us. Amen

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