

HEAVEN

When Christians pray the "Our Father" prayer, they say, "Our Father Which art in HEAVEN." (Matthew 6:9). Hear God's own word in Isaiah 66:1: "The HEAVEN is My Throne and the earth is My footstool." In John 6:38 the Lord Jesus Christ said "I came down from HEAVEN, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." To His disciples Christ said; "Rejoice because your names are written in HEAVEN." (Luke 10:20).

We read this very interesting statement concerning the exaltation of the Lord Jesus, in Ephesians 4:8 and 10: "He ascended up on HIGH". "The Same also that ascended UP FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS." Then note Ephesians 1:19 concerning the mighty power of God which He wrought in Christ, "when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the HEAVENLIES FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY, AND POWER, AND DOMINION, AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Paul wrote to the saints at Colosse; "Knowing that we also have a Master in HEAVEN." (Colossians 4:1). To His disciples the Lord Jesus said; "Great is your reward in HEAVEN." (Matthew 5:12). The Lord Jesus spent several weeks on earth after His crucifixion, burial and resurrection. When he left this earth in His glorified body some heavenly messengers said to Christ's apostles: "This same Jesus, Which is taken up from you into HEAVEN, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into HEAVEN." (Acts 1:11).

"We have such a High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the HEAVENS." (Hebrews 8:1). Christ has entered "into HEAVEN itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Hebrews 9:24).

Thus we learn that Christ came down from HEAVEN, and that Christ went back up to HEAVEN. Before Christ came down from HEAVEN He was in the form of God. Now up in HEAVEN Christ is God in the form of Man, where He is the Head of the Church, Which is His Body. (Ephesians 1:20 to 23). Members of that Body say, "Our citizenship is in HEAVEN;" for they have been raised up and made to sit together in the HEAVENLIES in Christ." (Philippians 3:20 and Ephesians 2:6).

Before Christ went back to HEAVEN He said to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you. If I go, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1 to 3). So we can understand something of the meaning of the statement of the apostle Paul to members of the Body of Christ: "For the hope which is laid up for you in HEAVEN." (Colossians 1:5).

To God's redeemed ones the Holy Spirit wrote these words, by the pen of that apostle whom Christ loved: "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." (I John 3:2). These redeemed sinners are to have bodies like unto His glorified body. (Philippians 3:21). "And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the HEAVENLY." (I Corinthians 15:49). "For this corruptible must put on incorruption." (I Corinthians 15:53). Then what? "When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:4). "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Thessalonians 4:17). Thus we learn that the prayer of Christ, in John 17:24, will be answered: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me."

We have learned from these Scriptures, that Christ is now far above all HEAVENS; so there are other heavens between where we are and where Christ is in HEAVEN. We have

learned that HEAVEN is the Christian's eternal home; that the Christian will have an incorruptible body for this incorruptible inheritance. Therefore, HEAVEN is something more than a state or condition of mind, soul or spirit. It is a place; and in that place the redeemed will have glorified bodies like unto Christ's body of glory. The hope of the Christian is an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into the veil, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, Jesus. (Hebrews 6:19 and 20).

As believing sinners receive salvation and righteousness and eternal life, by grace, as God's free gift through Jesus Christ our Lord, they likewise receive the earnest of their eternal inheritance, the Holy Spirit, by Whom they are sealed unto the day of redemption, the very moment they believe God's Word and receive God's Son. (Ephesians 1:13 and 14 and Ephesians 4:30).

When the Christian says with Paul, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Romans 8:18)," that Christian knows that he is not going to enjoy eternal glory in heaven because of what he suffers for Christ, but because of what Christ suffered for him. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward." (I Corinthians 3:11 and I Corinthians 3:15). "In the ages to come God might shew the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:7).

Redeemed sinners will be in HEAVEN by God's grace and by faith in the perfect redemptive work of the perfect Christ. But these redeemed ones will be rewarded according to their works after they get into HEAVEN by grace. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus." (Colossians 3:17). "Do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men: Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ." (Colossians 3:23 to 25).

There is only one way to get to HEAVEN. That is God's way, and remember it is God's HEAVEN. The one way is by God's grace and by faith in God's Son. But so far as the resurrection of the body is concerned, there are two ways. "The dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." (I Thessalonians 4:16 to 18).

"The dead in Christ" will be those whose bodies have gone to corruption, but whose spirits have departed to be with Christ; absent from their bodies at home with the Lord. (Philippians 1:23 and II Corinthians 5:8).

So HEAVEN is a prepared place for a prepared people. HEAVEN means eternal bliss and everlasting glory with Christ. Hell (the lake of fire) is a prepared place for the devil and his angels, but those who refuse God's offer of eternal life through Christ will go there. (Matthew 25:41 . . . Revelation 20:14 and 15 and Revelation 21:8).

As we as Christians behold the great throng, which no man can number, on the way to eternal perdition, let us remember our responsibility (Romans 10:12 to 15) and remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke 15:10). ". . . Joy shall be in HEAVEN over one sinner that repenteth . . ." (Luke 15:7).