

# HEAVEN

as an image flowing through the Bible  
according to the design of the LORD God  
(with a few personal comments)

## A place of last resort

There wasn't much conversation about heaven in the Old Testament. There was, of course, the understanding that man once had access to the Garden of Eden. This was a matter of the understanding of God's perfect Creation; that at one point, mankind too was perfect. This is the initial state of all infant creatures, such as was mankind at its beginning. In the Genesis window to our history, we were given a bit of understanding about where mankind had been; but it was also understood that there would probably be no immediate returning there. God had made a certain arrangement that would prevent us from entering the Garden, even if we were ever able to find it. Don't think of it as a penalty; instead, think of it as a prod to keep mankind moving along the circle of reality; a prod that would, one day, loop back to the perfect state.

*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.*

(Genesis 3:24)

Back in the Old Testament, folks were content if they could live a comfortable life, with appropriate blessings, and then die somewhat peacefully. Even the kings had a simple end of life experience that is chronicled in the pages of the Bible. This experience touched all the kings of the Old Testament; from the most revered . . .

*So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.*

(1 Kings 2:10-11)

. . . to the most reviled.

*And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying,  
Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they*

*shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.*

*Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.*

*Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*

*And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.*

(2 Kings 21:10-18)

In time, though, the religious leaders started to develop lines of reasoning that included concentration on heaven. These lines of reasoning are not errant, it is just not clear why they make a difference in everyday life. In fact, in many cases they can be the anchor to keep us fixed on a certain spot on the circle of reality; and sometimes, even, they can cause us to backtrack in our movement toward the perfection of Creation. This was demonstrated in the Bible times, revealing the fact that for many of the religious leaders this type of concentration led to contention. The apostle Paul was involved in one such very intense *discussion*, which involved two factions of his day.

*And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.*

*And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.*

*Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?*

*And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?*

*Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.*

*But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.*

*And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.*

*For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.*

*And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.*

*And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.*

(Acts 23:1-10)

Now; I can understand why there was some effort put forth to ascertain the place of heaven in the life of the servant of God. As a pattern of a part of our conception of heaven, the apostle Paul gave us a very good reason why we should be willing to pursue some place of ultimate repose that was absolutely of God. After all, it is not robbery or arrogance to desire a place of repose after a hard day's, or in this case, life's work.

*But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

*For 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 8:11-18)

However, for those who would spend significant time on the consideration of the marvels of their future repose in the LORD, the Lord Jesus Christ had a few words to say to the Father about why this should really be a second-tier matter for the servant of God. You see, Jesus Christ had this image of, us being willing to go the distance for him while we were alive in the world. This is a portion of one of Jesus' last prayers that sets us up for an endurance run on the earth.

*These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

*I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.*

*And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

*I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

(John 17:1-17)

Considering what Jesus prayed; some may think that the apostle Paul would have been more in line with the message of Jesus Christ, if Paul had stopped short of talking about the glory, and just paused at the discussion of the trials that we face. Though if you do, please pick up the Bible and read what is written beyond John 17:17; then you will discover that Jesus, too, directed our attention, somewhat, to the glory.

In defense of the apostle Paul; he did not spend time concentrating on the time of his departure to that glorious state that awaited him. Indeed, the apostle was willing to forego that honor for the sake of all of his brethren (and sisters) who were struggling to understand that new thing known as, the Christian walk.

*But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.*

*Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*

(Philippians 1:22-30)

If you place yourself in the apostle's shoes, you can see why this might be something that has the potential for raising frustration. To lessen the possibility of this type of mood, working to hamper our peace in the LORD, and in the Lord; the apostle also addressed the duality of being on the earth while having a glorious rest waiting for us.

*And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*

*For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

(Philippians 1:14-21)

It may surprise you that our rest in the LORD does not have much to do with how many souls we have walked into the knowledge of Christ. Nor does it have anything to do with

our reputation in the world, in the things of the LORD. It does have a lot to do with our attitude about the mission to which we have been called by the LORD, in the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul explained this matter to us.

*I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

*For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 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.*

(2 Timothy 4:1-8)

The apostle Peter also weighed in on this matter of rest in glory. Peter gave us the marching orders that allows us to become, shall we say, entitled to our place in that rest.

*Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*

*Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever.*

*Amen.*

(2 Peter 3:14-18)

For, it is the Lord Jesus Christ who is the actual--please forgive me for being so seemingly insensitive--ticket to our rest. However, to redeem myself, let me quote from the apostle

Paul on this matter.

*Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

*For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.*

*Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*

*For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

(Hebrews 4:1-11)

On this matter of the payment that was made for our right, if you will, of entering this rest; let me quote from one of the LORD God's prophetic ambassadors.

*Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

(Isaiah 53:1-6)

Now, some would have you believe that this rest is still a future thing. The Bible, though, describes the time when the doors open. (This is where this writing will come into some serious conflict with the prevailing philosophy of the Christian church, in this time.) The events that you are about to read, are completed events. The events that you are about to read, are the reason that we all have access to the place of rest, immediately after we move from our fixation on the places of rests on the earth.

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Sly hint: access to the place of rest does not necessarily require death to occur  
[Cue the apostle Paul]

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

(Ephesians 2:1-7)

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These are the events that opened the doors to our place of rest (right now) in the LORD.

*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. 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. 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.*

*And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

(Revelation 20:11-14)



And all this was foretold back in the Old Testament. It was revealed to us in a book that is not really a part of the mainline progression; the progression that moves from the introduction of righteousness to Abraham, to the personal responsibility for righteous living that is a part of the way of Christ Jesus. It is the man Job who gave us our introduction to the concept of being in heavenly places, in the LORD.

*For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*

(Job 19:25-27)

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So; here's the view of that rest, flowing through the Bible, as seen in the

### **New Testament conceptualization**

#### **>Homework Assignment<**

see if you can detect  
in the following Scripture  
any of the anxiety  
or the urgency  
or the accusatory atmospherics  
that are so much a part of modern preaching  
about heaven

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### **Luke 16:19-23**

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

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; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

### **Luke 23:42-43**

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, *remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

**Matthew 16:19**

And *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven:* and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

**Matthew 18:18**

Verily I say unto you, **Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**

**Matthew 19:21**

Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

**Mark 10:21**

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

**Luke 18:22**

Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

**Luke 6:23**

Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

**Luke 10:20**

Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

**Acts 3:20-21**

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

### **Acts 7:49**

Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?

### **2 Corinthians 5:2**

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

### **Ephesians 1:10**

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

### **John 12:26**

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

### **Revelation 6:9-11**

And when he had opened the **fifth seal**, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and **avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?**

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

### **Colossians 1:5**

For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

### **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: *and 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: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

### **Hebrews 10:34**

For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

**Hebrews 12:23**

To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

**1 Peter 1:1-4**

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

**Revelation 19:1**

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

**Revelation 21:2**

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

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**>Homework Recap<**

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in the following Scripture  
any of the anxiety  
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**>Homework Conclusion<**

there doesn't seem to be  
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