

Kingdom of Heaven

Part Three

(Open Doors)

Performance

We have already read of the transportation of Elijah to the Kingdom of Heaven: this example is one of dynamic activity. As we also read, Elijah did not just sit in the Kingdom of Heaven, spending all of eternity just performing the function of praising God; this is not the sole duty of regenerated humankind. The LORD God has a particular category of creation that operates this fashion.

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 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.

And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

(Revelation 4:1-8)

The LORD God also has a category of creation that performs periodic praise of His name, and periodic display of His glory.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

(Psalm 19:1-6)

Our assignment, so to speak, in Heaven is to perform service for the LORD, still. I know that there are a lot of people who talk about eternal rest; this, though, is a matter of definition. Sometimes, when a person is on vacation (which is supposed to be rest), this is the most active time of their life. There is an expression, "honey do," that describes one of the reasons for the work during the rest that is supposed to be the content of a vacation. In an earthly home there are many things that need to be done, and many of these don't stop needing to be done just because we go on vacation. Consider the fact that even when the LORD declared the Sabbath as a day of rest, He excluded certain operation from the category of required rest.

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.

(Exodus 12:14-16)

When we do arrive at the Kingdom of Heaven, there are still things that need to be done on the earth, with those who remain. Though there are some who think that the earth will someday physically disappear, I tend to think that the references from Scripture that could give this impression, are actually speaking of a spiritual transformation of reality. Among these references is an admonition that was given by the apostle Peter.

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the

words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 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. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

(2 Peter 3:1-12)

Another of the reference was given to us in the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

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.

(Revelation 20:11)

The reason that I perceive these as being reference to spiritual reality is because the LORD indicated in two places, and by the mouth of two witnesses that the earth was made to endure for ever.

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.

(Ecclesiastes 1:1-4)

For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

(Isaiah 45:18-19)

There are, however, changes in the worlds of the earth that were announced. In fact, the book of Daniel foretold the occurrence of four changes in the worlds of the earth.

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.

*This image's head was of fine gold,
his breast and his arms of silver,
his belly and his thighs of brass,
His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.*

Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

(Daniel 2:31-35)

The four changes are given a historical rendering as Daniel continues to share his revelation. We have separated each change into its own paragraph (including one that is a sentence fragment).

First change:

This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee,

The second change is not directly stated, but it is obvious in the transition from the, *after thee*, kingdom, to the *third kingdom*. The change can be recognized by the presence

of the word, *and*.

and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

As with the second change to the *third kingdom of brass*, the third change is indicated by the word, *And*.

And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

Then there is the fourth, and final, change:

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

(Daniel 2:36-45)

The book of Daniel points to a time when there will be an earthly kingdom that will not end. It does not indicate that there will be a significant change in the nature of the physicality of these transformations of world, as the kingdom *which shall never be destroyed* is put in place. In fact, history has shown that the physical side of these worlds has proceeded seamlessly, from one to the other. The book of Daniel also describes the birth of the final world.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

(Daniel 7:13-27)

A quick look at the calendars in the United States of America, along with many other places in the world, will give you an indication of the fact that we are now in a new world. Hint: recall the meanings of the combinations of letters, B.C., and, A.D. So, what is the reason that God has released this world to our consciousness, from His Consciousness that dates from well before Daniel's revelation?

If, as I suppose is the case, the earth and its inhabitants have a really long life ahead of them, then there must be some form of continual service that must be performed. In this

regard, the Lord Jesus Christ left us with a promise that still needs to be kept.

And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 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.

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.

Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

This he said, signifying what death he should die.

(John 12:23-33)

The promise is yet to be fulfilled, though it is indeed moving toward that state, in a most powerful flow, indeed. Sometimes, when I read John, chapter twelve, I wonder if the first promise has been accepted as being fulfilled; which promise is, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again*. However, there is no wonder in my soul about the still pending status of the promise that Jesus gave us: *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me*. In fact, this is a never-ending promise, in my understanding of the nature of mankind. For, with each new birth of a human child, this promise must be pressed into the heart of some other human, who must be diligent about insuring that Jesus is *lifted up from the earth* in the presence of this child. And this does involve giving them an understanding of Jesus that includes *what death he should die*. This is the ongoing transformation that must occur in the race of man.

The Lord Jesus Christ also told us of a transfiguration that would occur in us, and of a new type of status that we would achieve. Before introducing you to the new status, let me tell you of the current status that we, living individuals, hold.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of David.

O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set

thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

(Psalm 8:1-9)

The Lord Jesus Christ described the new state in which we would abide, in a new life, through all eternity.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

(Matthew 22:29-30)

As we mentioned, above, the angels in Heaven are not dormant beings, with only Heaven on their minds all the time. The angels in Heaven are also called upon to participate in the conduct and progress of the worlds on the current earth. The prophet Daniel had several interactions with angels that were about the business of molding the world of his day, in righteousness. One of these encounters is the following.

In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me

into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent.

And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.

(Daniel 10:2-14)

The angels have jobs to do, and we will join them in service to the LORD God. At that time, it will be our joint function of providing grace, in the glory of God.

But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

(Hebrews 1:13-14)

I don't know about you, but as for me, when I consider the things that are the substance of life on earth, it seems that this will be a restful type of thing to do. To finally be able to make a contribution that is both effective and longstanding; this is the type of thing that provides me with an immense amount of rest. It is not a rest that waits for the completion of the task: it is a rest that is present, too, in the performance of the task. Those who have seen me at my other skill set, of computer tinkering; know that what some people would define as work, is, to me, very restful.

When I am allowed to do that for which I have been trained, knowing that there is someone, somewhere who will benefit from it; then, I perform my work in an atmosphere that is free of tension. This must be at least one of the definitions of rest: to be able to move about in a place that is free of tension. The Kingdom of Heaven and the New Jerusalem are places of this type of rest; they are not citadels of stasis. At the minimum of activity in these the Kingdom of Heaven and the New Jerusalem, they are places of continued learning.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor

standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

(Psalm 1:1-2)

Ah, you need some examples of that; do you? Okay, let's look at some of the folks that were of the earth, who have had direct interactions with the Kingdom of Heaven. First, there is the apostle Paul. The interaction in this case, was one of a visit of unknown duration. The apostle Paul was given the opportunity to participate in a school in the Kingdom of Heaven. This is the time of the visitation, as recorded by the apostle Paul, of a man who went to that school.

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

(2 Corinthians 12:1-5)

Yes, the Kingdom of Heaven does have at least one school. The Lord Jesus Christ referred to the school that the Son of God attended before he was made flesh and dwelt among us.

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.

(John 17:5-8)

There is, too, an account of a man who went to the Kingdom of Heaven, for that kind of rest that involves absorbing the word of the LORD. In this case, the man, Enoch, had as long a time as there is--from the time of his transfiguration, to the other end of everlasting--to hide the word of God in his heart. It started on the earth, and, without skipping a beat, it continued on into the Kingdom of Heaven.

And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred

sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

(Genesis 5:21-24)

Our most far-reaching example of a man flowing into the Kingdom of Heaven is that of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, went to that Kingdom for the purpose of active rest-in-study, too. The purpose for which he returned to the Kingdom of Heaven is told to us by the Psalmist.

A Psalm of David.

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

(Psalm 110:1-4)

The Promise that the LORD God had made to the Son is also chronicled by the Psalmist.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah, Maschil, A Song of loves.

My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

(Psalm 45:1-7)

