



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting **every man** perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XVIII
Issue 44I-2

The Revelation of the Mystery

by — Robert C. Brock

(Part 5 of 6)

The Revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began (Romans 16:25).

What “The Revelation of the Mystery” Contains

THE FORMATION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

This is the primary purpose of the Gospel revealed to the Apostle Paul. Up to the time of this Gospel, Israel had been the people of God; but with the raising up of Paul in Acts 9, a new group of saved individuals was beginning to be formed by God. The name of this group is called *the Body of Christ*. Paul uses this phrase two times in referring to its members.

Now ye are **the Body of Christ**, and members in particular (I Corinthians 12:27).

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of **the Body of Christ** (Ephesians 4:12).

This living organism is also referred to by the word “Body” some eighteen times in Paul’s epistles. Note these examples:

So we, being many, are **one Body** in Christ, and every one members one of another (Romans 12:5).

For we being many are one bread, and **one Body** (I Corinthians 10:17).

There is **one Body**, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling (Ephesians 4:4).

To the which also ye are called in **one Body** (Co-

lossians 3:15).

And gave Him to be the head over all things to the church [ecclesia], which is **His Body** (Ephesians 1:22-23).

And He is the head of **the Body**, the church [ecclesia]” (Colossians 1:18).

That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the **same Body** (Ephesians 3:6).

For He is our peace, who hath made both one... for to make in Himself of twain one new man... And that He might reconcile both unto God in **one Body** by the cross ... For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Ephesians 2:14-16, 18).

The Body of Christ begins with the Apostle Paul. Notice very carefully his testimony to this fact.

Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

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MYSTERY (continued from front page)

*was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief [first]. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me **first** Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting (I Timothy 1:13-16).*

This is the Holy Spirit's interpretation of Paul's conversion in Acts 9. It is worthy of being accepted by all. The word "first" is the same Greek word in both cases, and the using of "chief" as a translation is very misleading. Paul was no worse a sinner than anybody else. All outside of Christ are dead in sins (Ephesians 2:1).

**THIS PRESENT
ADMINISTRATION OF GRACE**

This present Dispensation also begins with the Apostle Paul. It was given to him by Christ.

*If ye have heard of **the dispensation of the grace of God** which is **given me** to you-ward (Ephesians 3:2).*

*Whereof I am made a minister, according to **the dispensation of God** which is **given to me** for you (Colossians 1:25).*

Since it was given to Paul it never could have been in existence before him. Peter knew nothing about this Dispensation when he preached on the Day of Pentecost.

This Dispensation was "hid in God," along with the Mystery.

*And to make all men see what is **the dispensation of the mystery**, which from the beginning of the world hath been **hid in God**, who created all things by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9).*

**THE GOSPEL OF
THE GRACE OF GOD**

This wonderful Gospel emphasizes and magnifies the *grace of God*.

Although the phrase, "The Gospel of the Grace of God," is found only once in Scripture (Acts 20:24), there are several other names for this wonderful truth.

The Gospel of the Grace of God – Acts 20:24

My Gospel – Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8

The Gospel of Christ – Romans 1:16; 15:19, 29; Galatians 1:7; I Corinthians 9:12, 18; Philippians 1:27; II Corinthians 2:12; 9:13; 10:14; I Thessalonians 3:2

The Gospel of peace – Romans 10:15; Ephesians 6:15

The Gospel of His Son – Romans 1:9

The Gospel of God – Romans 1:1; 15:16; II Corinthians 11:7; I Thessalonians 2:2; 8-9

The Gospel of the Uncircumcision – Galatians 2:7

The Gospel of your salvation – Ephesians 1:13

The glorious Gospel of Christ – II Corinthians 4:4

The glorious Gospel of the blessed God – I Timothy 1:11

Paul used the word "grace" over one hundred times in his epistles. He has far more to say about the cross, the blood, the death, and the resurrection of Christ than any other Bible writer.

Salvation is by GRACE.

*For **by grace** are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

*That being justified **by His grace**, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7).*

*Being justified freely **by His grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24).*

This Gospel is the preaching of the cross.

*But to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the **cross** of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the **cross** is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us who are saved **it** is the power of God (I Corinthians 1:17-18).*

*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the **cross** of our Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:14).*

And, having made peace through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:20).

**THE TEMPORARY
SETTING ASIDE OF ISRAEL**

"The Revelation of the Mystery" gives the only scriptural answer as to why God is not now dealing with the Nation of Israel. It is because He has set the Nation ►



aside (at Acts 28) for the remainder of this Dispensation.

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this Mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in (Romans 11:25).

The phrase “in part” shows that it is only a temporary setting aside **until** the “fullness of the Gentiles [which refers to the completion of the Body of Christ] be come in.” After this, God will once again resume His program for Israel.

This blindness is seen very clearly.

*For the heart of this people [Israel] is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and **their eyes have they closed**; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the **salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles** [Nations], and that they will hear it (Acts 28:27-28).*

With the quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10, God temporarily sets aside Israel and now deals with the Gentiles. This setting aside of Israel is called a “fall,” the “diminishing,” and the “casting away.”

*I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their **fall** salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the **fall** of them be the riches of the*

*world, and the **diminishing** of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? ... For if the **casting away** of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? (Romans 11:11-12, 15).*

According to *prophecy*, the Gentiles were to be saved through the *salvation* of the Nation of Israel (Isaiah 11:1, 10; Romans 15:8-12). Yet according to the *mystery*, salvation has come to the Gentiles through the *fall* of Israel.

Certain events in the book of Acts show that a change did take place in God's plan and program.

- 1.) The resisting of the Holy Spirit by Israel in Acts 7:51 – “YE do always resist the Holy Ghost (Spirit).”
- 2.) The salvation and commission of Paul to go to the Gentiles in Acts 9:15 – “To bear My name before the Gentiles, and Kings ...”
- 3.) The giving of the Holy Spirit *before* being baptized in water (Acts 10:44). At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was given *after* they were baptized (Acts 2:38).
- 4.) The killing of the Apostle James in Acts 12:2, thereby reducing the 12 Apostles to eleven – “And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.”
- 5.) Paul starting out on his first missionary journey among the Gentiles in Acts 13:2.
- 6.) The decline of Peter's leadership over the Apostles. Another James, who was not an Apostle, was the spokesman in Acts 15:13-21 and made the decision in :19.
- 7.) A definite change in the Gospel message from



See order form.

Prayers of Ephesians, The: We in Christ – Christ in Us

by — E.W. Bullinger

The Epistle to the Ephesians contains two long prayers plus a shorter concluding one. The two longer prayers have a common subject: Jesus Christ and Believers. The first prayer concentrates on Christ's purpose for us, whereas the second focuses on what God has made us in Christ. In other words, the first asserts “We in Christ,” while the second proclaims “Christ in Us.” The first prayer deals with God's power which He wrought in Christ, while the second one deals with God's power which is at work in us.

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“Repent, and be baptized ... for the remission of sins” in Acts 2:38 to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” in Acts 16:31.

8.) The quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10 in Acts 28:25-28.

THE EQUALITY OF JEW AND GENTILE

During the earthly ministry of Christ to Israel, the Jew had *first* place in God’s heart. The Gentiles were looked upon as “dogs.”

*But He [Jesus] answered and said, “I am not sent but unto **the lost sheep of the House of Israel** (Matthew 15:24).*

Note Peter’s words to Israel:

*Unto you **first** God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities (Acts 3:26).*

With “the Revelation of the Mystery” to Paul, a change takes place, for *now* Jews and Gentiles are treated as equals.

*What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved **both Jews and Gentiles**, that they are **all** under sin (Romans 3:9).*

*Now we know that what things soever the Law says, it says to them who are under the Law: that **every mouth** may be stopped, and **all the world** may become guilty before God (Romans 3:19).*

*For there is **no difference**; for **all** have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:22-23).*

*For there is **no difference** between the Jew and the Greek [Gentile]: for the same Lord over **all** is rich unto **all** that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:12-13).*

*For God hath concluded them **all** [Jew and Gentile] in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon **all** (Romans 11:32).*

THE ONE BAPTISM OF EPHESIANS 4:5

The seven unities of the Body of Christ as set forth in Ephesians 4:4-6 are absolutely necessary for the right understanding of “the Revelation of the Mystery.”

*There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, **one baptism**, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

It is important that we understand the phrase “one baptism.” It is also important that we see that there is only one baptism and not *two*. Of two baptisms in the Bible (water and Spirit), what baptism is meant here? Abundant evidence clearly shows us that the baptism by the Spirit is the one that is meant in Ephesians 4:5.

*For by **one Spirit** are we all baptized into **one Body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free (I Corinthians 12:13).*

*Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized into Jesus Christ** were baptized into His death? (Romans 6:3).*

*For as many of you as have been **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ (Galatians 3:2).*

*Buried with Him in **baptism** wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of **the operation of God**, who hath raised Him from the dead (Colossians 2:12).*

We are placed *into* the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. Water cannot place anybody into anything.

Paul is the only one who writes about this baptism by the Holy Spirit. What took place at Pentecost was the baptism *with* the Holy Spirit by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:11; Acts 11:16). Christ continued His ministry to Israel on the Day of Pentecost.

Paul’s testimony concerning water baptism is all **NEGATIVE**. Notice the following verses.

*Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or, were ye baptized in the name of Paul? **I thank God that I baptized none of you**, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized ►*

any other. **For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel:** not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect (I Corinthians 1:13-17).

These verses, coupled with the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5, teach us that baptism by the Holy Spirit is the only baptism associated with “the Revelation of the Mystery.”

A NEW COMMISSION

This commission is clearly set forth in II Corinthians 5:14-18, 20.

For the **love** of Christ **constrains us**; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath **reconciled** us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath **given to us the ministry of reconciliation**; to wit, that God was in Christ, **reconciling** the world unto Himself, not imputing their

trespasses unto them; and hath **committed unto us the word of reconciliation** ... Now then we are **ambassadors for Christ**, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye **reconciled** to God.

“Reconciled” indicates a change of a very radical kind. Reconciliation demands that Jews and Gentiles be recognized as having been *alienated* from God.

You, that were sometime **alienated** ... hath He **reconciled** (Colossians 1:21).

That at that time ye were without Christ, being **aliens** ... and that He might **reconcile** both unto God (Ephesians 2:12, 16).

For if the **casting away** of them be the **reconciling** of the world (Romans 11:15).

For if, when we were **enemies**, we were **reconciled** to God by the death of His Son (Romans 5:10).

We also know that water baptism was not included in Paul's commission.

For Christ **sent me not** to baptize, but to preach the gospel (I Corinthians 1:17).

WWW.URQA.COM Universal Reconciliation Questions & Answers

When approaching this subject from the Scriptures, many honest and sincere questions arise. This site is designed to be an interactive forum bringing members of the Body of Christ together in fellowship and study around the subject of Universal Reconciliation. We start with an initial list of 322 questions. These questions are taken from the New Testament, beginning in Matthew and working through Revelation.

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Look through the list of Answered Questions to find answers to your inquiries, or e-mail us for posting to the list.

For Those Who Have Answers

E-mail us for the list of unanswered questions and send us your answers for posting to the list.



Our commission includes the task of helping others see what is the Dispensation of the Mystery.

The Lord Jesus Christ is also presented as Mediator and Intercessor.

To **make all men see** what is **the dispensation of the mystery**, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9).

For there is one God, and **one Mediator** between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus**; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (I Timothy 2:5-6).

THE HEAVENLY POSITION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

This part of the Mystery thrills those who know about this wonderful truth.

And hath raised us up together, and **made us sit together in heavenly places** in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6).

For **our citizenship is in heaven**; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:20).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with **all spiritual blessings in heavenly places** in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).

If [Since] ye then be risen with Christ, **seek** those things which **are above**, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on **things above**, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

These verses show that our citizenship is in heaven, and nothing can change this.

CHRIST AS HEAD OF THE BODY

And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be **the Head** over all things to the church [ecclesia], **Which is His Body**, the fullness of Him that fills all in all (Ephesians 1:22-23).

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as **Christ is the Head of the Church** [ecclesia]: and He is the Saviour of the **Body** (Ephesians 5:23).

And He is **the Head of the Body, the church** [ecclesia] (Colossians 1:18).

This tells the Body how to function and how to live. These functions for living are found in the *Revelation of the Mystery*.

Who is He that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also **makes intercession for us** (Romans 8:34).

THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE AIR FOR HIS CHURCH

The second coming of Christ is in two parts: His coming *in the air* for His Church [ecclesia] and His coming *to the earth* for Israel. Paul is the only one who teaches that Christ is coming *in the air* for His Church.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto **the coming of the Lord** shall not precede them which are asleep. 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Looking for that blessed hope, and the **glorious appearing** of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

When Christ, who is our life, **shall appear**, then shall ye also **appear** with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4).

This event brings our Dispensation to a close. When the Body of Christ is completed, Jesus will come and catch His Church unto Himself, and then the Head will be united with the Body. This is called the Blessed Hope.



THE BEMA SEAT OF CHRIST

For we must all appear before **the judgment** [bema] **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. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made **manifest unto God**; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences (II Corinthians 5:10-11).

But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before **the judgment** [bema] **seat of Christ**. For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:10-12).

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, **I have laid the foundation**, and another builds thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 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. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire (I Corinthians 3:10-15).

1. This judgment is just for believers.
2. Only some will receive rewards.
3. We must not only build on Paul’s foundation, but what we build must be in accordance with Pauline truth.

A FULL AND COMPLETE REVELATION

“*The Revelation of the Mystery*” is the fullest gospel coming from God to mankind.

For it pleased the Father that in Him [Christ] should **all fullness** dwell (Colossians 1:19).

For in Him [Christ] dwelleth **ALL THE FULLNESS** of the Godhead bodily. And **YE** are **complete** in Him, who is the Head of all principality (Colossians 2:9-10).

*That blindness in part is happened to Israel, until **the fullness of the Gentiles** [Nations] be come in.”* (Romans 11:25).

*Which is His Body, the **fullness** of Him that **fills** all in all”* (Ephesians 1:23).

*And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that ye might be **filled** with all the **fullness of God*** (Ephesians 3:19).

*According to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, **to complete** [fulfill] the Word of God* (Colossians 1:25).

There is no fuller gospel in all of the Word of God than the “*Revelation of the Mystery*.” It does not need to depend on any other gospel in the Bible. It can stand on its own merits.

CONCLUSION

The Lord Jesus Christ is the *center* and the *circumference* of “*the Revelation of the Mystery*.” It all revolves around Him and it is all about Him. He is the source of “*the Mystery*” as well as the object of its message. When one preaches “*the Revelation of the Mystery*” in all of its fullness, the Lord Jesus Christ is being presented in all of His fullness. ■

[edited]



The Really Bad Thing About Free Will

A Critical Look at the “Salvation by Willpower” Doctrine

by — Martin Zender

The most destructive doctrine in the world is that of human free will. The doctrine of free will denies Christ’s death for sins, it starts with the premise that your sins still stand against you. Your sins are still keeping God from you, and you from God. This is a direct denial of the work of Christ. In spite of what John 1:29 says, Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary (according to modern-day “evangelists”) did not remove your sins. This is the essence of the free will teaching: Your sins still count against you. It’s the heart of the doctrine. This is why people are forced to make a free will decision to accept Christ. It is your free will decision, not the sacrifice of Christ, which finally removes sin and paves the way to God.

[*See order form*](#)

The Casting of Lots

by — James Wesley Stivers

The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord (Proverbs 13:33).

And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; And he was numbered with the eleven apostles (Acts 1:26).

In an age which denies the sovereignty of God, we should not marvel that the casting of lots has lost its luster as a method to settle disputes.



Lest we be tempted to ascribe this practice to an earlier and less enlightened dispensation, we should remember that the division of the Holy Land during the Millennium will be done through lots, just as it was during the times of Joshua:

In biblical times, the final court of appeals was the casting of lots: the use of stones (Urim & Thummim) or other dialectic tokens for “Yes” or “No” which were chosen randomly by a neutral witness to settle a question. ...

This is the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are their portions, saith the Lord God (Ezekiel 48:29; cf. Joshua 23:4). ■

In the case of the apostolic replacement of Judas Iscariot in Acts chapter one, the field of candidates was narrowed to two by a vote and then prefaced with a public invocation, the final one was chosen by lots. ...

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The Supporting Cast

by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

The earth is the stage on which the tragedy of the eons is enacted, and men are merely players in the drama of reconciliation. Not all of God's creatures are called upon to endure the harsh winds of adversity, the smashing power of evil. We learn this lesson in ourselves through sad experience, but others are allowed to learn it through us and our sorrows and afflictions. Yet we are only the supporting cast, whose duty it is to act as the foil for the great Principal, Whose might and mercy, wisdom and love are the great theme of



creation and revelation. The show is already going on; but the play is progressive. The first act, now on the stage, is a display of God's multifarious wisdom. The audience is composed of the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials. It would be a great help to us if we realized the part we play and the characters we portray. Then we also would see the wisdom, and worship the Wise One. ■

Every Knee Shall Bow
Unsearchable Riches Magazine, Vol. 40

What Is Heaven Like?

by — Rick Longva

Heaven is My Throne (Isaiah 66:1).

Many teach that the Bible gives us dozens of illustrations of what Heaven looks like, and will be like for those who will spend “eternity” there.

Some say that heaven is a planet, with pearly gates that welcome you to streets paved in gold, with mansions bordering them, with Angels ministering to your every need. They also say there are millions of people in heaven, enjoying all of the benefits that they deserve for making earthly sacrifices and the decision they made to follow Jesus.

The following is a description I read on a fellow’s site of what heaven will be like. It is purportedly taken from “eyewitness” accounts. These are supposed to be from humans old and young who claim that they have had visions from God or died and gone to heaven, and in most cases hell as well, who were told by Jesus to go back to earth and tell their stories of these two places to all of the rest of humankind, so that we will understand that there are two places (destinies) made ready for us by God, and that there is one choice which we have to make that will seal our fate. I condensed it and put it into my own words; every highlight these humans wrote about heaven is there (I will comment on the visions of hell in an upcoming article):

THE STORIES AND VISIONS

Much can be determined about heaven from the Bible. Heaven is a place where God lives. The moment that you die, your eyes will open and you will be in light – not the kind of light that makes you squint, but the kind of light that makes you feel warm and fuzzy, like the feelings you had when you were four years old, before you realized that there was a world out there ready to train you in its ways.

Heaven is without alarm clocks and deadlines, people pulling you in every direction, bills, sickness, sadness, regret, wars, nightmares and death. On planet heaven there are white pearly gates that lead you into a beautiful city (actually many cities)

with beautiful mansions lining streets paved with gold. This new place oozes with life and peace and laughter.

The love that you feel is like nothing you have ever felt before. You have never felt so alive. Beautiful beings (Angels) with white wings and seamless white robes come up to you, not speaking, yet you hear their every word – words that only make this place brighter. “Where am I?” I asked. The white being answers, “On the planet Heaven.”

Others were there with me, and we were all given seamless white robes like the Angels wore. As we walked around we picked fruit from beautiful trees and put the fruit in our pockets to bring back to earth.

After our walk we were given harps and taught to play them. Later we were brought by the Angels to meet Jesus. Meeting Jesus was the highlight. “How long will we be here?” we asked. The answer: “Eternity – but for now you are only a visitor: you must return to earth and tell others about this place.”

Heaven was so real that we envied those who had died. Days after these visions one person told us that he saw an Angel who waited by the bed of a dying Christian, waiting for his soul to be released. When it was, the Angel escorted him through the heavens past the demons who were waiting to hinder the Angel and his charge. When they arrived in heaven they were greeted by more Angels who welcomed the Christian to heaven. We who heard these stories asked ourselves: “When will our time be?”

End of the story.

What a nice story. They seem to have taken the teachings of the Talmud (Angels escorting the dead to paradise) and applied it to (twisted) teachings from the Scriptures (New Jerusalem), as well as a little story telling from Walt Disney.

Do the Scriptures describe heaven in the above descriptions?

WHAT DOES HEAVEN LOOK LIKE?

The Heaven which this article is about, we are told from the Scriptures, is the celestial realm – which makes it a vast area of stars, planets and galaxies, not a single location. It is not “a” planet, not “a” city, or cities – that description is earth. We are told that a city descends out of the heavens (more on that later).

In the Scriptures, Heaven is called the throne of God (Isaiah 66:1; Matthew 5:34; Acts 7:49). It’s not a literal throne, as if God is a human and has a throne on which He sits (God is Spirit: John 4:24; I Timothy 1:17). It is the glory of the celestials that are adorned as His throne, and the earth is said to be His footstool (Isaiah 66:1; Matthew 5:35).

At the time of Stephen’s stoning he is said to have looked up and saw the heavens opened, and he saw the Glory of God with Jesus standing next to Him (Acts 7:55-56); no other description is given by him.

There is a literal throne of God, not for Him to sit on, but for Christ. Presently, Christ is said to be sitting next to the throne of God on the right-hand side of it (Hebrews 8:1; 12:2). At the time of Christ’s coming, Christ will be the One sitting on the throne of God (Matthew 19:28; Revelation 3:21; Hebrews 1:8) ruling and reigning. At the end of the eons, when all is subject to God through Christ, Christ abdicates the throne and hands all over to His God and Father (1 Corinthians 15:22-28). God is nowhere said to be sitting on a literal throne, the celestials are an emblem of His glorious throne.

Many have taken the words that describe the New Jerusalem and the New Earth and have applied them to heaven, because heaven cannot be found in descriptive terms like those from “eyewitness accounts.” For them it seems that faith is not enough; God’s promises through the Apostle Paul for us are not enough; so, like apostate Israel of old, something has to be added to God’s Word (or made up).

Paul exhorts the believer to learn not to be disposed above what is written (I Corinthians 4:6). Good advice.

THE NEW JERUSALEM

The descriptions that many believe and teach to be heaven is the New Jerusalem on the New Earth (during the fifth eon), which John describes in Revela-

tion 21-22. The New Jerusalem is said to descend out of the heavens to the earth. It is never called a place where those who are of the Body of Christ (believers) will dwell (the name “Jerusalem” should be a clue). It is promised to those who are the Bride (Israel), who are the people to whom Jesus came during His earthly ministry (Matthew 15:24). These are the people to whom He promised a new abode on a new earth (Isaiah 65:17).

Jesus told His disciples (Israelites), on the evening before His trial, about this place of many abodes (not mansions) that were being made ready for “them”:

In My Father’s house are many abodes; yet if not, I would have told you, for I am going to make ready a place for you. And if I should be going and making ready a place for you, I am coming again and I will be taking you along to Myself, that where I am, you also may be (John 14:2).

Jesus doesn’t say that when the disciples die they will be with Him in heaven, in a heavenly mansion; He tells them that He is preparing a place for them, and that when He returns with His Father’s house with many abodes, they will be there with Him.

The Apostles are on this present earth with Christ during the Millennium, after their resurrection (Matthew 19:28; Revelation 20:6), before the New Earth.

This place of many abodes is the New Jerusalem; it takes place on the New Earth, after the Millennium, after the battle with the Adversary who deceives the nations and makes war on the saints, and after the Great White Throne Judgment. This is the coming of Christ to the New Earth with the New Jerusalem (The Fathers House). This is when God dwells with mankind (Revelation 21:3), when His presence will be upon all.

You can read about the fulfillment of this promise to them, about which Jesus spoke (John 14:2; Revelation 21:9-27; 22:1-3; note whose names are inscribed on the city, and where those of the nations are located).

And one of the seven messengers who have the seven bowls brimming with the last seven calamities came, and he speaks with me, saying, “Hither! I shall be showing you the bride, the wife of the Lambkin” And he carries me away, in spirit, on a mountain, huge and high, and shows me the holy city, Jerusalem, as it is descending ►

out of heaven from God, having the glory from God. Her luminosity is like a stone most precious, as a crystalline jasper gem, having a wall, huge and high, having twelve portals, and at the portals twelve messengers, and their names inscribed, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. From the east are three portals, and from the north three portals, and from the south three portals, and from the west three portals. And the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lambkin. And he who is speaking with me had a measure, a golden reed, that he should be measuring the city, and its portals, and its wall. And the city is lying four square: and its length is as much as the breadth. And he measures the city with the reed to twelve thousand stadia. Its length and breadth and height are equal. And he measures its wall of a hundred forty-four cubits of a human measure, which is that of the messenger. And the building material in its wall is jasper, and the city is clear gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every precious stone, the first foundation with jasper, the second lapis lazuli, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh topaz, the eighth beryl, the ninth peridot, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh amethyst, the twelfth garnet. And the twelve portals are twelve pearls. Each one of the portals was respectively of one pearl. And the square of the city is gold, clear as translucent glass. And a temple I did not perceive in it, for the Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lambkin. And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon, that they should be appearing in it, for the glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lambkin. And the nations shall be walking by means of its light, and the kings of the earth are carrying their glory into it. And its portals should under no circumstances be locked by day; for there shall be no night there. And they shall be carrying the glory and the honor of the nations into it, and under no circumstances may anything contaminating, or one who is making an abomination and a lie be entering into it, except those written in the Lambkin's scroll of life.

And he shows me a river of water of life, resplendent as crystal, issuing out of the throne of God and the Lambkin. In the center of its square, and on either side of the river, is the log of life, producing twelve fruits, rendering its fruit in accord

with each month. And the leaves of the log are for the cure of the nations. And there shall be no more any doom, and the throne of God and of the Lambkin shall be in it (Revelation 21:9-22:3).

As you have read, this all takes place on earth, not in heaven. Its origin is heavenly, its Architect is God, but its location is the earth. Not to be confused with the Millennium temple in Ezekiel 40-43 which is built by human hands. The New Jerusalem has no temple in it: God and the Christ are said to be the temple (Revelation 21:22), and this city (The New Jerusalem) is prepared by Christ (John 14:2).

Inscribed on the portals and foundation of the New Jerusalem are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel as well as the twelve Apostles. All are Israelites, because their allotment is the earth (Isaiah 61:6; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 2:26-27).

The nations whose names were found written in the Book of Life at the Great White Throne will be there, as well as those who were not deceived by the Adversary at the end of the Millennium. They are not immortal, a fact made plain by the presence of the tree of life that is on the New Earth. Its leaves are for the curing of the nations. Immortals will have no need of healing.

The twelve Apostles and many other Old Testament saints who have died in the ages past will be immortal. Their bodies will be similar to the body that Jesus had right after His resurrection (Luke 24:39-43), not the body Christ had when He accosted Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6) – that body is for those who are called His Body, whose allotment is in the celestials; Paul asserts the distinction,

There are bodies celestial as well as bodies terrestrial. But a different glory, indeed, is that of the celestial, yet a different that of the terrestrial (I Corinthians 15:40).

The glory of Jesus' resurrected terrestrial body was seen only by those whose allotment is earthly: Israelites.

Thou dost also make them a kingdom and a priesthood for our God, and they shall be reigning on the earth (Revelation 5:10).

In spirit the Apostle John saw Christ's celestial body also (Revelation 4:2), only because that is the source



from where judgment is to come on the earth. Christ's resurrected celestial body was seen by Paul (evangelist to the nations, with the evangel of the nations – Galatians 2:7-9), who would later write of the heavenly allotment to whom all who have believed "his" evangel will be granted.

For our realm is inherent in the heavens (Philippians 3:20).

SO WHO WILL BE IN HEAVEN?

Paul's name is not mentioned in the names of those inscribed on the foundation and pillars of the New Jerusalem.

Why is that?

The destiny of Paul and those who are Christ's Body – those who have been saved out of the nations and Israel (Jew and Gentile; I Corinthians 12:12-13) according to Paul's evangel – is celestial (heavenly). They have no part in the allotment for Israel and those of the nations who are said to occupy the New Earth with its New Jerusalem.

Paul saw what the believers' heavenly allotment will be, but he said that it was so marvelous that he couldn't speak of it (II Corinthians 12:4). I don't think there were words which he could use that would do it justice (unlike those humans who have claimed that they have been there). He had seen things that the mortal mind never could grasp – unlike those described by John in Revelation 21-22, which are earthly things which earth dwellers can comprehend; although marvelous and heavenly in source, it is still within our ability to understand.

Many speculate and embellish on what Paul saw.

Paul gives us a glimpse of what he did see. , He tells believers,

- We will be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29).
- We will always be together with the Lord (I Thessalonians 4:17).
- Christ seats us together with Him among the celestials, that in the oncoming eons He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us who are in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6-7).
- We will be reigning with Christ (II Timothy 2:12).

- The celestials will be our realm of operation (Philippians 3:20).
- We will judge messengers ("Angels," I Corinthians 6:3).

Other than that, we are not given too many other details of what Heaven will be like.

Paul does tell us that we now live – walk, believe, expect – by faith, not by sight or stories (II Corinthians 5:7).

He also says that, in the oncoming eons, all will be brought to a realization of Christ (Ephesians 3:8-11), and that at the consummation God will be All in all (I Corinthians 15:28).

In Paul's last letter, as he awaited execution, he gave us one last glimpse:

For I am already a libation, and the period of my dissolution is imminent. I have contended the ideal contest. I have finished my career. I have kept the faith. Furthermore, there is reserved for me the wreath of righteousness, which the Lord, the just Judge, will be paying to me in that day; yet not to me only, but also to all who love His advent (II Timothy 4:6-8)

Paul wrote in his first letter to the Thessalonians a word of praise:

*And therefore we also are thanking God unintermittingly that, in accepting the word heard from us, from God you receive, **not the word of men, but, according as it truly is, the Word of God,** which is operating also in you who are believing* (I Thessalonians 2:3).

There should be no need to go beyond what the Scriptures DO tell us, as they are the words of God.

So what will Heaven be like? Look to the inspired words that were revealed to Paul in his letters: only they give us a glimpse.

For now, the realization that the promise that all of creation will be with God should be heaven enough for the believer! ■

[edited]





I wanted to say “hi” and to tell you that I am a new believer in the Body of Christ. I’m 58 and was raised in a Pentecostal environment. All of my questions that I had always been troubled by are answered. I’m a sponge now, I’ve watched nearly all of Martin’s information, and watched virtually all of your Scripture conferences. I can’t get enough. I’m overwhelmed by God and His love and Grace to me. My only question to God is, why me? With the new freedom, I began to desire to stop some of the things that had previously brought me guilt – not because of guilt, but because of freedom!

The Lord is calling me, and I am shocked. I’m surrounded by Christian family members, most of which, if they were honest, would call me the black sheep. Wow, that’s all I can say! THANK YOU. – **WI**

I cry every time I watch your [Christ on Display](#) video. – **MI**

I am so happy about my new found freedom and identity in Christ! Now, “even when it’s bad, it’s good” because God is so in control! – **NY**

I just finished Stephen Hill’s book, [Making the Most of the Bible](#), and loved it. It is a must reading for a serious student of the Scriptures. – **GA**

This is just a quick note to say thank you for the video of your presentation of [Forgiveness or Justification](#). It is far and away the best I have ever heard or seen on that topic. I always tend to avoid teaching about justification because; a) Father had not placed a need for me to appreciate what it is about until I began to view your videos, and b) every other presentation of it was so legal-sounding and dry that the point never penetrated my thick skull. So, I put off watching that one until last of those you’ve posted, even watching part 2 before I watched part 1, which, of course made me want to hear part 1. – **AL**

I finished the video series presentation on [Judas](#) you had given at a conference. I listened to them as I went about my business which involves a lot of driving and so these selections are great for me.

I wanted to say thank you for the fellowship, the sharing and the inspiration as well. I can’t tell you how much the “PA regional gatherings” have changed and redirected my faith and love of God. I am truly blessed to be part of the truth. Bless you all and the work you do! – **PA**

I had some understanding of El, Theos as to sovereignty, so that helped prepare me for what was to come. While I thought my understanding was approaching the deep end, I soon discovered that it was more an intellectual acknowledgment of this reality and I had not fully considered the implications and the wonder of it all. I had not fully taken it to my heart.

In the churches I attended over the years, each communion service began with 1 Corinthians 11:23: “... *That the Lord Jesus the [same] night in which he was betrayed took bread ...*” – month after month – year after year.

In going through the series, I was like a homeless man going to the dentist for the first time. The first session exposed the ugly situation throughout. The probing, drilling, cutting and loosing of the previously unrecognized rot needed to be done over time. It took about a month.

The result was a better understanding of humanity. The depth, breadth and subtlety of our imperfections cannot be fully comprehended. A greater empathy for all has come. It has softened me toward the religious and their plight, recognizing that I am similar. The despised religiousness, to my consternation, was found alive and well in me. – **MN**

A few weeks ago I had posted something about hell, I can’t remember what, I always post stuff about the Evangel. Anyway, a young lady asked me questions and I answered them and gave her lots of resources.

Today at lunch I saw Clyde’s new [Bible Student’s Notebook](#) and thought the theme on Lazarus might pique her interest, so I passed it along to her. She saw the last page and messaged me “I got it!” Apparently Clyde’s ad for [Nothing Will be Lost](#) suddenly made it all click for her. I just loved the sound of her “I got it” coming to me through her Facebook message. There’s no sweeter moment in my day than hearing someone say that. – **Canada**

I just watched your talk on the [Justification of Sin](#). It is outstanding. You made the subject crystal clear. – **CO**





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