

## **Monday, October 9, 2017 – Are You Prepared for Your Final Trip?**

**Phil. 3:20,21 - For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself**

Death is no respecter of persons. Young, old, rich, poor, ready or not death calls at every home, and sooner or later, at every life.

The fifth anniversary of my parent's death passed just 3 weeks ago and I, shamefully, gave it nothing more than a moments thought. It should have been a time I dropped to my knees and thanked God above that my parents are resting in the bosom of Abraham. That is the vision I want to carry in my heart until I can be reunited with them.

Heaven is at the very heart of true Christianity. The word heaven (*ouranos*) is found 264 times in the Greek New Testament. Jesus taught the reality and beauty of heaven when he said, "**Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven..."** (Matt. 5:12). We need regular reminders of how important heaven ought to be to us. One problem in our own day is the tendency to become so content with this world that we cease to strongly desire to go to heaven.

Even in the days of the apostles, there were problems in people's thinking about heaven

**1 Thess. 4:13-18 - But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.**

A little girl looking up into moonlit, starlit skies said to her father, "**If heaven is so pretty on the wrong side, think of how beautiful it is on the right side.**" A father, longing to be with the 4 year old child he just buried, says, "**I'm going to have to work hard so I can go where my little boy has gone.**"

We don't know when our time on earth will come to an end, but we know it will. We don't know the time when the the Lord will return, but we know he

will. For those who doeth the will of the Father, who is in heaven, Paul gives us a preview of the latter scene when, in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-17**, he says, “**But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...and so we shall always be with the Lord...**” Paul speaks of the dead being raised then the living being caught up in the air. This happens at the end of time.

At Christ's return, consider the events that will take place according to scripture:

\* **Everyone will know the truth of Jesus**

**Philippians 2:10-11** says, “**Every knee is going to bow, every tongue is going to confess.”**

\* **A great separation is going to take place**

**Matt. 25:31-33** – “**But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.”**

\* **After that separation, will be a great judgment scene.**

**Matt. 25:34; 41** – “**Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels’**

**Rev. 20:12** – “**And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.”**

\* **And after that separation and after that great judgment, the destruction of this earth.**

**2 Pet. 3:10 – “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”**

Upon His return, Jesus is not coming to set up a kingdom, and this earth is not going to continue for another 1,000 years; he's going to deliver the kingdom that is already His to the Father at the judgment.

Some people look at death and the subsequent judgment as things to fear. For a Christian the Second Coming was never intended to strike fear in our hearts. Paul says, **“...and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18)**. There is great comfort in these words if your are in Christ. The Second Coming will be the greatest event in the History of the World.

Our fleshly, mortal bodies will not be what inherits heaven. Our natural body will undergo a change putting off our corruptible bodies and changing to a state of immortality. Paul describes the process in **I Corinthians 15:51-55** as he tells the church at Corinth, **“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. “O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?”** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**God provides us Heaven.** He will not force it upon us but will gladly give that crown of life to all who obey him. Please consider the following thoughts about our beautiful home:

**\* Heaven is at the very heart of true Christianity**

**1 Pet. 1:3-5 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

**\* The Scriptures affirm the reality of the heaven for which the Christian hopes.**

**Col. 1:5 - because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel**

\* **Heaven is our true home.** Although we presently live in this world, we are not of it.

\* **We are pilgrims, sojourners, aliens, strangers,** "Our citizenship is in heaven"

**1 Peter 2:11-12 - Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,<sup>12</sup> having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.**

**Phil. 3:20,21 - For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself**

Death is only a termination of our earthly life, but not a termination of life. Paul shows us we have nothing to fear. He states in 2 Cor. 5:1, "**For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.**"

**\* Heaven is where our Father is**

- To "depart and be with Christ" is "far better" (Phil. 1:23). 2 Cor. 5:6-8.
- Heaven is the home of God, our father
- Heaven is the home of Jesus our Savior
- Heaven is the home of the Holy Spirit

**\* Heaven is the home of precious children**

- Every little child that has been deprived of a full life will know the bliss of eternal life, never having to endure the pangs of temptation or the shame of sin, they will know the joy of salvation

**\* Heaven is the home of rest for the weary.** In heaven there will be no more separation. There will be no more tearful "good byes" that force us to wait for the day of resurrection

**1 Cor. 15:51-57 - Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is**

**swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**

We will go home to be with the Lord and “**thus shall we always be.**” It is called “everlasting life, eternal life. We will be there together, together with God...forever. In heaven there will be no more sin. You will find nothing that “defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie” (**Rev. 21:27**). The unrighteous, the works of the flesh and that which warrants the curse of God will be barred from its borders. No more Satan seducing us with our own desires. No more temptations, slips of weakness, shortcomings, failure. In heaven there will be no more “sadness” and “sorrow”. There will be no more battles to fight, no more burdens to bear.

**Rev. 21:4 - And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.**

**It Is VICTORY.** The saved will bask in the victory made possible by the cross (**Jn. 3:16**). Those overcoming will gain the victory of Jesus (**Rev. 15:2**). The born of God overcome the world (**1 Jn. 5:4**). Heaven is the final victory.

\* In heaven there will be rest

**Rev. 14:13 - “Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them’”**

No more death – no more bedside vigils, no more mixed feelings about not wanting a loved one to suffer but not wanting to say goodbye.  
No more mourning – no more sorrow, no more loneliness  
No more crying over the loss of a loved one  
No more pain – no physical or emotional pain.

Heaven can be yours. You are the only roadblock.