

Glimpses of Glory

Class #1

*... no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him ...*

1 Corinthians 8.9



*There have been times when I think we do not desire heaven, but more often I find myself wondering whether,
in our heart of hearts, we have ever desired anything else ...*

*All of our lives an unattainable ecstasy has hovered just beyond the grasp of our consciousness. The day is coming
when we will wake to find, beyond all hope, that we have attained it, or else, that it was within our reach & we have
lost it forever ...*

*If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy,
the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.*

CS Lewis, "The Weight of Glory"

I. Answering a Question

"What happens when we die?"

Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 32

Of the State of All After Death, and the Resurrection of the Dead

The bodies of all, after death, return to dust, and see corruption;^a but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence,^b immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies;^c and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day.^d Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledge none.

a. Gen 3:19; Acts 13:36. • b. Eccl 12:7; Luke 23:43. • c. Phil 1:23 with Acts 3:21 and Eph 4:10; 2 Cor 5:1, 6, 8; Heb 12:23. • d. Luke 16:23-24; Acts 1:25; 1 Pet 3:19; Jude 1:6-7.

A. The present heaven is promised (& therefore should be anticipated)

... the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Ecclesiastes 12. 7

Jesus said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Luke 23.43

My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

Philippians 1.23

Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5.8

B. Though temporary, the present heaven is real

But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."
Acts 7. 55-56

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption ... For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

Hebrews 9. 11-12, 24

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³ if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴ For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

2 Corinthians 4. 16-18; 5. 1-4

C. Though the final heaven awaits, present heaven is “far better” than life on earth

²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain ... My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.
Phil. 1. 21, 23

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. ³ And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— ⁴ and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.
2 Corinthians 12. 2-4

*You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

Psalms 16. 11

*I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents
than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.*

Luke 15. 7

II. Studying a Passage

⁶ And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice,

*“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth
and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”*

¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

*“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor
and glory and might forever and ever!”*

¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. ¹⁰ They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” ¹¹ Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

Revelation 5. 6-14; 6. 9-11