

Heaven, the Believer's Marvelous Eternal Home pt. 1

By Charles Feinberg

Charles Feinberg:

The subject for our study at this time is heaven. The believers eternal home I'd like for you to follow with me in the Bible as we read Second Corinthians chapter 5 verses one to ten "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 for verily in this we grown longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from Heaven. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked for indeed we that are in this Tabernacle do grown being burdened not for that we would be unclothed but that we would be closed upon that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God who gave unto us the earnest of the spirit. Being therefore always of good courage and knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord for we walk by faith not by sight. We are of good courage I say and are willing rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord wherefore also we make it our aim whether at home or absent. To be well pleasing unto him for we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he hath done whether it be good or bad." Second Corinthians 5 verses one to ten on our theme heaven the believer's eternal home.

Now many think this subject of heaven is one of pure speculation and surmise sort of the Hope So situation. Some even speak of heaven here on earth they tell us this earth is all the

heaven that there will ever be. It's what we make it what heaven this earth is with sorrow sickness and death everywhere and sin rampant and Satan doing his will on every hand. Since believers are going to inhabit heaven, though they ought to want to know more about it. We surely ought to know where we're going since life here is so short and eternity so long. The only valid reliable source of information for heaven mind you is the bible and just as the Bible reveals many things about God and man and the universe that, we could not know otherwise. Therefore, it speaks plainly and authoritatively about heaven when you come to read the Bible with this theme in mind you will find that the Bible has a great deal to say about heaven. What does the Bible say about this marvelous place we call heaven?

Well first, it reveals that heaven is a definite place. There is a threefold usage of the word heaven in the scriptures. The first use of Heaven is the atmospheric heaven. There are many passages that speak of the rain of heaven and the birds of heaven the clouds of heaven. Therefore, that's the atmospheric heaven the second Heaven which the Scripture speaks of is the abode the dwelling place of angelic beings Ephesians 1:21. There are other passages as well but Ephesians 1:21 speaks of Christ being raised far above all rule and the authority and power and dominion. And every name that his name not only in this world but also in that which is to come. There is an abode of angelic beings. They are called principalities. These angelic beings are they are called principalities and powers. Now the third heaven is the abode of God where God Himself dwells. We read when God raised Christ from the dead he made him Ephesians 1:20 God made Christ to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places.

That's the abode of God, the third heaven is the abode of God. The second is the dwelling place of angelic beings. The first is the atmospheric heaven. You may say well I always thought that there were seven heavens. We hear people say I was just in the seventh heaven. Well those

extra four heavens are not in the Bible at all. They come from untrustworthy sources outside the Bible but there are three heavens indicated in the Bible. Now we are talking here in this study concerning the third the abode of God and the believers' eternal home. So it is a definite place so indicated in a number of passages. We know heaven is a place because three were there and have told about it. Christ tells us and John 3:13 that no man ascended up into heaven except the one who has come down from heaven. Even the son of man who is in heaven. The same Blessed Lord in John 14 said Let not your heart be troubled you believe in God believe also with me in my father's house. That's heaven in my father's house. There are many abiding places many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you I go and prepare a place for you. I go and prepare a place for you. I will come again and will receive you to myself where I am there.

You may be also not only was our Lord Jesus Christ. There came from there as you know from the glory out of the glory into our human sphere. But the Apostle Paul tells us about a remarkable experience that he had when he visited heaven. We have it in Second Corinthians. The very same epistle from which we read our basic scripture Second Corinthians 12:1-4 here Paul says I must need glory. He is here countering. He is here answering to those who would minimize and degrade his apostleship boasting on things that really didn't matter. His enemies did and he shows that if they had something to boast he had more and his boasting was valid. He comes finally to the utmost rank the highest plane of boasting he said I must needs glory though it is not expedience not wise but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ fourteen years ago. He means himself. I know a man in Christ fourteen years ago parenthetically we read whether in the body I know not or whether out of the body I know not God knoweth. I'd like to stop just long enough to say that the wrench between life and death seems to be such a tremendous one. Such a traumatic experience.

And yet here amazingly enough and Paul will say it again. Verse 3 that whether in the body I don't know or whether out of the body I know not as if it were that immaterial. Not knowing whether he was in the body or out of it. That's a wonderful comfort to the believer to see that he just passes over smoothly out of this life. God gives him a wonderful entrance because Christ has slain death his resurrection is the very death of death. He says of this one such a one was caught up even to the third heaven. Notice third heaven and I know such a man. Whether in the body or apart from the body I know not God knoweth how that he was caught up into paradise the abode of the righteous and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Paul was there. He says he was there. Paradise, of course English for a Persian word. Pairidaeza, which means Garden just as the Garden of Eden, was a place of perfection. So there is a paradise in the glory and heaven we have a name for it.

And Paul was there just as Christ was there who was more than a man. Paul. Only a man but a redeemed man. While he was yet here on Earth was caught up at what specific time we do not know. Some think it was at the time of his stoning. When he was in a state of suspended animation. We do not know but Paul was there and then the Apostle John. Here's a third witness Scripture says at the mouth of two or three witnesses that every word be established. And here we have it, John the Apostle was there in Revelation four one after these things I saw and behold a door opened in heaven and the first voice that I heard a voice as of a trumpet being with me one saying Come up hither and I will show you the things which must come to pass here after and the rest of the revelation shows what the apostle John saw and heard when he was caught up in the spirit while he was still in his life. He was caught up in the spirit to see things marvelous concerning God's unfolding program for the future and for eternity and revelation 5:1, I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne.

He's seeing this while he's in the spirit in heaven and I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back close sealed means tightly sealed with seven seals. So we know it's a place because there are three trustworthy witnesses who were there and told about it: Christ Paul and John. Paul reveals furthermore that heaven is where the Saints have their citizenship. You may be living in one of the states of the United States of America or you may be living abroad but your true citizenship is in heaven. Philippians 3:20 and 21. Our citizenship. We know that our citizenship is in heaven from whence also we look for the savior who was going to change the body of our humiliation and passionate like unto the body of his glory by the power whereby he's able to subdue all things unto himself. Our citizenship is in heaven our present residence may be elsewhere but our citizenship is in heaven on earth believers are pilgrims.

Now the difference between a tramp and a pilgrim is a very real difference. And it's this that a pilgrim has a destination. He's going somewhere. The tramp has no destination. We belong in heaven now and that's precisely where our inheritance is. And the apostle Peter in his first epistle puts it as strongly as any portion of the word of God. He says blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ who according to his great mercy beget us again unto a living hope. How? By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That's when all believers had a living hope they never had before. Unto an inheritance. Notice what we're raised to unto an inheritance incorruptible doesn't decay undefiled it's not full of filth and muck undefiled and that fadeth not away. It isn't just phased out it doesn't just pass out of the picture. It's undefiled that fadeth not away.

Where is it reserved in heaven for you. That's where our inheritance is but someone says well it's reserved in heaven. Suppose I never get there. It's reserved in heaven for us and we are

preserved unto it who by the power of God are guarded are kept through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time we belong in heaven. Our inheritance is in heaven. Now there are two ways for a believer to enter into heaven. We have come into this world through human generation through human birth from our parents but a believer enters into the next life into Heaven one of two ways more than one way of going to heaven. The first is the one that we're all so well acquainted with and that's by death I'm speaking now of physical death. Death was not part of God's original creation. Therefore this strange interjection into the human family must be explained. And since there are three types of death the Bible clearly defines every one of them.

Notice in James 2:26 there is a definition of physical death. The body apart from the spirit is dead. That's a definition of death. And the other two kinds of death are spiritual death Ephesians 4:18 the unsaved is alienated from the life of God. That is a true description and a most thoroughgoing description of spiritual death and one who is in spiritual death in which all the sons of Adam are born. If one goes on in that and out of this life his physical death intervenes when one is still in spiritual death. Then there is the second death and that is defined for us we have a definition of it in revelation 20 verse 14. How does that read. This is the second death the lake of fire physical death James 2:26 the body apart from the spirit is dead. Spiritual death that's alienation from the life of God. Second death. That is the Lake of Fire eternal separation from God. Now the believer today is delivered from two of these deaths. he has been delivered from spiritual death and because he's delivered from a spiritual death into spiritual life he will never see the second death.

But not all believers are spared physical death. Oh, Elijah was spared that in the Old Testament. Enoch was spared it but most of the human family at this point practically all of it has

gone through by way of physical death now there is a second way for a believer to enter into heaven. That's by the rapture or by translation where we read that in a moment. First Corinthians 15 at a moment in the twinkling of an eye the last trumpet we are going to be changed. That's this body is going to be putting on any immortal body and corruptible those who have died. First Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 tells us those who have died. Corrupted of that which is in corruption will put on incorruption that which has decay will be in a state never to undergo or experience decay again. So there are two ways for a believer to enter into heaven, either by death or by translation there is going to be a whole generation thank God when it comes the day will come to heaven without dying. The incident is told of the late Dr. John McFerrin in his day he was a tower of strength among the Methodists of the South.

It told that he was lying on his deathbed calmly awaiting the summons of the Lord to come up higher. His son who had charge of a circuit twenty miles away was by the bedside of his beloved father and when Saturday came, he was quite reluctant to leave his dying father. His duties seemed to require it though so the venerable minister knew what was going on in the heart of his son. He said my son I do feel a little stronger. You'd better return and fit your appointment tomorrow on the Lord's Day. If while you're away John I should happen to slip off, you know where to find me. Yes. He knew he would not be going into oblivion. He knew he would be going to a definite place. I repeat heaven the believers' eternal home is a definite place. We read the method of getting there in Second Corinthians five verses six to nine. The portion we've already read hear it again. Being therefore always of good courage and knowing that while we're at home in the body we're absent from the Lord. Verse 8 we are of good courage I say willing rather be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Think of it. Did you notice what this indicates?

This indicates that whether we are at home or absent we are aiming to be well pleasing unto the Lord. In either case, we are at home and just as much as we feel comfortable and at ease. What the words at home mean just as we are presently at home in this body that's just natural to us is just our normal nature. Therefore, we will be at home with the Lord. Thank God. The method of getting there is being absent from this body and present with the Lord in case of death in case of translation we will have this body changed and it will be changed from a dying body to an undying body. Now Heaven is not only a definite place but it is a definite place for definite people. Heaven is not going to be a place where all kinds of sorts of beings pure, impure, cleansed and vile will live.

No, it is not going to be a place for saved and unsaved alike. Not at all. Moody used to say and very well. Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people. Herbert Spencer, an English philosopher and he was certainly an unbeliever was once asked as a matter of philosophy human thinking what he thought would make a heaven. After thinking a moment, he said a perfect being in a perfect environment that would be heaven a perfect being talking about definite people now in a perfect environment that definite place. That is heaven. It is a prepared place for prepared people the perfect beings there are to inhabit heaven and their catalog for us in Hebrews chapter 12 18 to 24 if you come into a certain city you want to find out whether a certain individual lives, there it's not always the best way to look into a phone book. There numbers of people yet who do not have phones. Best way is to look at the city directory. Did you know that there is a city directory of heaven? Hebrews 12 18 to 24 an enumerable host of angels. The General Assembly and Church of the first born God the judge of all the spirits of just men made perfect and Jesus. There is the roster there is the city directory.

We shall be a people definite people of a particular character. How so. We shall be perfectly holy. Now there is a present progressive conforming of our lives to our position. Our condition is continually being conformed to our position in Christ we are by the word and by the Spirit of God as we look into the word with unveiled face. We are changed from one stage of glory to another by the Lord the spirit Second Corinthians 3 18. That is progressive present sanctification in that day. Thank God it is going to be completed first John 3 we read that we are the children of God. Behold what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God and such we are. Yet he said beloved. Now are we the children of God. But it doth not yet appear what we shall be. You haven't seen anything yet where we know we're not guessing. This is no leap into the dark. We know that what he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is. Yes we are going to be conformed to him spiritually perfectly holy.

We are going to be conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ by being made perfect in knowledge. We read that we shall know even as we are known we are going to be perfect in knowledge conform to him mentally spiritually mentally and then thank God there is this added word that we are going to be conformed to him so that we are perfect in body spiritually then mentally physically Philippians three we've already quoted it in this study verses 20 and 21. We know that our citizenship is in heaven from whence also we look for the savior who's going to change the body of our humiliation. It's not a vile body that's not a good translation but the body of our humiliation. Like he's going to fashion it like onto the body of his glory by that marvelous power which is endless, Philippians 3 20 and 21 perfect in body. Marvelous conformity. Spiritually yes mentally Yes physically. Now this definite place that's inhabited by definite people there are definite provisions there. Oh yes and the most glorious of all.

We cannot go one step further without giving the most marvelous one of all the definite provisions include first of all the presence of Jesus. That's what's gonna make heaven glorious. All else would mean nothing if you were not there the one who loved us and gave himself for us. That's going to make heaven the heaven that it is. We're not going to be afraid of him any more than little children were when they came to him on earth or fallen ones or outcasts of society or even those who were physically outcast as a leper. Who in Israel that would have to face covered cry out unclean unclean and be outside the congregation of Israel. They came to him all came to him. The story is told of a little child. Mother was ill and while she lay very low one of the neighbors took the child away to stay with her until the mother would be well again. Instead of getting better the mother grew weaker and weaker and finally the mother died. Well they thought they wouldn't take the child home until the funeral was all over and they determined they would never tell her about her mother being dead.

So a little while afterward when they thought it was safe they brought the little girl home. First, she went into the living room to find her mother. Then she went into the dining room to find her mother there. She went from one end of that house to the other she could find mother nowhere. At last she turned to the friend and said Where is my mama and when they told her that her mother had gone the little girl wanted to go back to the neighbor's house again home had lost its main attraction to her mother was not there any longer. My dear friends heaven will not be attractive. Believe it it will not be attractive because of the Pearly Gates and the Jasper walls. But because of the presence of the blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And it's there that we'll not only have the presence, the marvelous blessed presence of our Lord Jesus but in him. We're going to have that fulfillment of that eternal life which has already begun. Now we have eternal life. Then we shall be in the fullest in the complete enjoyment of it.

Death will be no more revelation 21 verse 4. We read that God's going to wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more. No more funerals no more mortuaries no more cemeteries. Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore the first things are passed away and then in the 22nd chapter of Revelation verse 2 we read on this side of the river and that was the tree of life bearing twelve manner of fruits yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations the tree of life Adam and Eve were not allowed to get near the tree of life they couldn't. But God has the river of life for us and we are allowed to approach that be not only the presence of a savior not only eternal life but peace. Oh how this world longs for peace how they cry out for it. We're going to have peace. Every tear is going to be wiped away. Not going to be any more pain no more carnage no more slaying of human beings. Those that have been made in the marvelous image of God yes these are three of the wonderful definite provisions presence of Christ eternal life and peace. But there is more yet to come. [End]