

## Heaven – Pt. 2: Our Hope and Life

(Rev. 10-2024)

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Today I want to continue to focus our thoughts on heaven because I believe this subject to be very important for the spiritual health of Christians.
  - A. For, without the reality of the resurrection to eternal life with God in heaven as promised in the Gospel we are as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:19 “of all men the most to be pitied.”
  - B. I can say that with confidence not only because Paul said it, but because the gospel is about heaven, about God’s people being with HIM in eternity after this life and its struggles are over.
- 2. So, today I want us to consider more teaching from God’s word on heaven, particularly the teaching concerning how heaven is the hope of Christians and how it is to change our lives.
3. And, as always, it is my hope in doing this for all to gain a clearer view of heaven as well as to grow in appreciation for what it is and what is needed to get there.

### BODY:

#### • I. **Heaven is the Christian’s hope:**

- A. The hope of the Christian is “laid up...in heaven” (Col. 1:3-5 – “We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; <sup>5</sup> because of **the hope laid up for you in heaven**, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel”).
  1. The *hope* given in the gospel for the saved in Christ is found in *heaven* and all its glory!
  2. This hope *in heaven* is the *why* we have a strong faith in Jesus and love for the saints (Col. 1:4-5).
  3. So, we quickly see *why* a strong hope of heaven as our reward is important, considering how it affects our faith in Jesus and how we value our brethren.
- B. Heaven is the place of our hope because:
  - 1. It will be the end of our mortality (2 Cor. 5:1-5 – “For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a **building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.** <sup>2</sup> For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be **clothed with our dwelling from heaven,** <sup>3</sup> inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that **what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.** <sup>5</sup> He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.”).
    - a. All the inherent weaknesses, groanings, etc., of life in this mortal body will be no more!
    - b. When we enter heaven it will be with heavenly, immortal, eternal bodies—life!
    - c. God has poured out the Spirit, as promised, as our guarantee—our assurance!
  - 2. It is the reward for faithfully enduring persecution and trials (Matt. 5:10-12 – “Blessed are those who have been **persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** <sup>11</sup> “Blessed are you when **people insult you and persecute you,** and falsely say all kinds of evil against you **because of Me.** <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for **your reward in heaven is great;** for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”)
    - a. Brethren, suffering for “righteousness’ sake” does not go unnoticed by God!
    - b. Though treated badly and rejected, heaven will make it all worth it.
  - 3. Suffering, even death for Christ’s sake, gives way to a **crown of life.**
    - a. Jas. 1:12 – “Blessed is a man who **perseveres under trial;** for once he has been approved, he will **receive the crown of life** which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”
    - b. Rev. 2:9-10 – “I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup> Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”
  - 4. Heaven is our hope because...

- a. There we receive and **imperishable crown** (1 Cor. 9:24-27 – “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? **Run in such a way that you may win.** <sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games **exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.** <sup>26</sup> Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; <sup>27</sup> but **I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.**”).
  - i. There is a way of life, a difficult race that we must run to receive our eternal crown.
  - ii. Paul understood this well, requiring **daily discipline**, a beating of his body into submission if you will, to achieve it!
  - iii. So, like an Olympic athlete we fight through the weariness the day-to-day struggle brings because the prize we seek in **imperishable!** It will not fade away!
- b. There we receive a crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:7-8 – “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and **the time of my departure has come.** <sup>7</sup> I have **fought the good fight**, I have finished the course, I have **kept the faith;** <sup>8</sup> in the future there is **laid up for me the crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, **will award to me on that day;** and not only to me, but also **to all who have loved His appearing.**”).
  - i. The struggle, the discipline, the difficulty of fighting sin that the faithful face will be over, giving way to a **crown of righteousness.**
  - ii. This is offered to all on that last day—all who have loved Christ’s appearing.
    - i) Though a small statement, it is so important that we understand this.
    - ii) Those who desire this crown know its reception will be when Christ returns. So, they look to that day with joyous anticipation.
- c. Coffman was right when he said of Christ’s return, “It will mean that the glory of Jesus Christ will then be apparent to all men; the time of probation shall have ended; the reward of the righteous shall be received; and God shall rise in holy wrath and cast evil out of his universe.” **What a wonderful day that will be!**

## • II. Hope of heaven changes us

- A. Hope of heaven brings confidence.
  - 1. Those of Christ’s church are *enrolled* in heaven (Heb. 12:22-23 – “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, <sup>23</sup> to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are **enrolled in heaven**, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect”).
    - a. That God knows your name, who you are, that you are one of His children should bring confidence.
    - b. For, He has *enrolled* you, registered you, **in heaven itself**, apparently in the Lamb’s book of life (Rev. 21:27)!
  - 2. The born again have their inheritance *reserved* in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-5 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be **born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to obtain an **inheritance** which is **imperishable** and **undefiled** and **will not fade away**, **reserved in heaven for you,** <sup>5</sup> who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”).
    - a. As it resides in heaven, there is no one nor thing that can affect it. It is imperishable, undefiled, and does not fade!
    - b. If that were not enough, God’s power protects those of faith for this coming salvation!
- B. Our hope of heaven drives us toward purity.
  - 1. We must purify ourselves (1 John 3:1-3 – “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that **when He appears, we will be like Him,**

because we will see Him just as He is. <sup>3</sup> And **everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself**, just as He is pure.”).

- 2. We must be diligent to be found in peace, spotless, and blameless (2 Pet. 3:13-14 – “But according to His **promise** we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, **in which righteousness dwells**. <sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, **be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless**”).
- 3. So, hope demands holiness, righteousness, and purity in the lives of those who hold it!
  - a. We are not going to stumble into heaven or enter it by chance.
  - b. It will be received by those who are...
    - i. Looking—living in a state of expectation of their reward.
    - ii. Examined by the Lord in judgment and found to be...
      - i) In peace, in a quiet state...with God...which comes by a right relationship.
      - ii) Without spot and without blemish, as is Christ the Lamb (1 Pet. 1:19).
- C. Our hope of heaven redirects our life’s focus.
  - 1. We live in a world and nation that constantly demand our complete focus, our undivided attention.
    - a. There is distrust here, unrest over there, etc.
    - b. We are in a presidential election year and are not allowed to forget it. And it is so easy to get caught up in it and what it means for this nation and our lives.
  - 2. Yet, the Christian’s hope of heaven changes all of that.
    - a. Our citizenship is where our hope is—in heaven (Phil. 3:17, 20-21 – “Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us...<sup>20</sup> For **our citizenship is in heaven**, from which also **we eagerly wait for a Savior**, the Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>21</sup> who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with **the body of His glory**, by the **exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself**.”).
    - b. Our **focus** is heaven where Christ resides (Col. 3:1-4 – “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup> For **you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God**. <sup>4</sup> When **Christ**, who is our life, is **revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory**.”).
    - c. Our hope...
      - i. Is not a better earthly government, though that would be nice, because sooner or later they are all corrupted and serve wicked desires—even ours!
      - ii. Is Jesus’ return and the transformation of our bodies into God’s glory by the **power** which God has **conquered all things**!
      - iii. Is in the fact that wickedness will not win against those who are citizens of heaven!
- D. Hope of heaven changes what we value (Matt. 6:19-21 – “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> **But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; <sup>21</sup> for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”).
  - 1. Only in heavenly treasures is there real value.
  - 2. And since where our treasures are is where our heart is, we need to examine our hearts and answer this question honestly.

#### CONCLUSION:

- 1. Will you embrace the hope of heaven *today* that is firmly grounded in the grace of God offered in abundance to sinners through the blood Jesus Christ?
  - A. For, that is what God had done in Christ, provided hope of eternal life with Him in heaven!
  - B. It is the only real hope to be had in this world—the only hope that will endure.
- 2. Will you come to Jesus today?