

The Fate of the Present Heavens and Earth [concluded from page 2]

by Bill Crews

wrote, "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). The same apostle speaks of "the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens" (Col. 1:5). And the apostle Peter wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:3-4). And listen to Paul in 2 Corinthians 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." The KJV of Hebrews 10:34 reads: "knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."

Now, we can press the language by which the eternal abode of the redeemed is described until we have God contradicting Himself. We can take the beautiful, understandable and appealing language, which is designed to create longing within us, and force it until it becomes nonsensical. But one thing is certain: We cannot take all that the Scriptures teach about our reward, our hope and come to the conclusion that God's redeemed will in any sense dwell upon this present earth. Says the Hebrew writer: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands: they shall perish; but thou continuest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a mantle shalt thou roll them up, as a garment, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, And thy years shall not fail" (Heb 1:10-12).

Springboards

by Wayne Goff

We know what is a springboard -- a strong, flexible board from which someone can jump in order to gain greater height or distance. We see them in the Olympics all the time without necessarily thinking about them.

Figuratively, springboards are those things which lend help to a certain action or development. Two springboards we use in the Lord's church all the time are sermons and Bible class literature.

Sermons do not cover everything in God's Word on a subject, but they do assist in our learning more about that subject. For example, on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) the apostles introduced Jesus of Nazareth to the audience as the "Christ" or "Messiah" Who fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. Their proofs included (1) tongue-speaking as prophesied by Joel which was miraculous proof that the apostles were from God; (2) the resurrected One prophesied by David in Psalm 16; (3) the resurrected Lord in heaven of Psalm 110. These were not all the proofs of Jesus as the Christ, but they were sufficient on that day to convert many souls, and to give them further impetus in their study of fulfilled prophecy concerning the Christ!

Bible class literature -- whether workbooks, question books, visual aids, teacher's manuals, etc. -- are not an end in themselves either. They are a tool or an instrument to facilitate one's study of the Bible. Study the literature thoroughly and it will still only point you in the direction of your continued studies. These tools are not a substitute for your own diligent study, but an aid. Those who do not even study the "springboard" are certainly not going to go very high nor far spiritually, now are they? Yet the Gospel is based upon hearing, studying and learning God's Word. Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me" (Jn. 6:44-45). Are you being drawn to the Father through Jesus Christ and His Word? There is no other way to come to the Father but by studying and learning.

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