

Lesson 4

Salvation A Future Experience Colossians 3:1-4

Introduction:

In our series regarding Salvation we have seen that Paul considered it a word with three tenses:

Rom 5:1-2 NASB

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

We have seen what God does for the sinner when the sinner renders obedience to the gospel and how the sinner, once saved, must work out his or her salvation as Paul commands in Phil. 2:12-16. However, salvation also has a future tense for Paul said that ***“we exult in hope of the glory of God.”***

However, we live our lives in a fog of trouble, worry, doubt, depression, health problems, unemployment, financial uncertainty, strained relationships and the loss of loved ones.

To keep our eyes on our goal of heaven becomes difficult as we make our way through such fog. Let me illustrate the real danger confronting us:

In 1952, a young woman named Florence Chadwick stepped off Catalina Island, into the Pacific Ocean. Her goal was to swim to the shore of mainland California, 22 miles away. It was foggy and chilly. She could barely see the boats alongside her that watched for [sharks](#) and were prepared to help her if she got hurt or grew tired. After about 15 hours a thick fog set in. Florence began to doubt her ability, and she told her mother, who was in one of the boats, that she didn't think she could make it. She swam for another hour before asking to be pulled out, unable to see the coastline due to the fog. As she sat in the boat, she found out she had stopped swimming just one mile away from her destination. She was 98% home. At a news conference the next day she said this: “All I could see was the fog....I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it.” Two months later, Chadwick tried again. This time was different. The same thick fog set in, but she made it because she said that she kept a mental image of the shoreline in her mind while she swam.

All of the earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, fires, crime, wars, sickness, and death make it difficult to see through the fog and keep our eye on the goal. We must not quit before we reach our goal of heaven. However, as Christians we have a source of strength and perspective that the world does not have: **Hope.**

The apostle Paul faced hardship, beatings and imprisonment, yet he wrote: ***Phil 3:13-14 NASB***

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies

ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Col 3:1-2 NASB

If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

Paul knew where he was going. He was heaven bound. As a runner sets his eyes on the finish line, Paul set his eyes on Heaven. He was able to see the shore through the fog of life. That is why he could say just before his execution:

2 Tim 4:7-8 NASB

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 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.

The true believer cherishes the hope of eternal life in heaven (Titus 1:2). Webster defines hope as, “*desire with expectation of obtaining what is desired, trust, reliance, a land of hope.*” We hope for that which we may obtain. Paul stressed the importance of hope:

Rom 8:25 NASB

But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

The thought of a future reward gives us strength for our day, and lifts our burdens, and gives us release from toil, and brings showers of blessings.

Isaiah expressed it in the following way: to “*mount up with wings like eagles*” To “*run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary*” (Isa. 40:31 NASB).

It should be our chief ambition to get better acquainted with what the Bible teaches about Heaven, so that when it is our time to leave this sin-battered world, we shall know something, but surely not everything, of what it is like. Let the Holy Spirit be our Guide as we trace out together what the Bible has to say about Heaven.

I. A New Heaven and A New Earth

2 Peter 3:13 NASB

But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Rev 21:1-2 NASB

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

The new earth is not the old earth renovated, as is the case with Isaiah's new heaven and new earth (Isa. 65:17), because the first heaven and the first earth are passed away. The Holy Spirit tells us that the present heaven and earth will ***"pass away with a great noise, the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth shall be burned up"*** (2 Pet. 3:8-13).

Peter is telling us that we should not live for silver, gold, money, cars, houses, and anything material. Why? They are going to be dissolved, destroyed. The grand future is to be a spiritual estate.

When heaven is described as pure gold, with pearly gates, and jeweled foundations, these earthly things are used in order to communicate a bare hint of the beauty of that spirit world, where all things will be made new.

In the book of Revelation there is a logical progression. It begins by showing us the great throne in heaven reminding us that God is in control. The picture continues by showing the lamb that had been slain was then standing indicating the beautiful love of God in giving His beloved Son for mankind. Then is shown the condition of sin that covers the earth and how corrupt government and false religion make life on earth miserable. The spirits of the righteous groan longing to put on the robes of righteousness. Finally, when earth has filled its cup of iniquity, the sharp sickle is put forth, and the vintage of this world is reaped. Then the righteous and the wicked appear before the judgment seat of Christ. The righteous will be ushered into heaven and the wicked will be cast into hell. **The grand consummation is given in the closing two chapters of the Bible.**

II. The City of God

Rev 21:2-4

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

This holy city, New Jerusalem is called the Father's house (John 14:1-3). We often read of our "Father" which is in Heaven (Matt. 5:45, 48; 7:11, 21; 12:50; 16:17; 23:9). We are told that our "inheritance" is reserved for us in Heaven (1 Pet. 1:4-5). Jesus said, "Great is your reward in heaven" (Matt. 5:12; Lk. 19:22). Jesus also said, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven (Maatt. 6:19-21).

Heaven is a real place and not just a state, or condition, in which to exist. Jesus said, ***"I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go and prepare a place for you...."*** (Jno. 14:1-3). Old Testament saints believed they ***"were strangers and pilgrims on the earth"*** (Heb. 11:13). They were seeking a ***"better country, that is, a heavenly:***

wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11:14-16).

It is a gigantic, enormous spectacular city: (Rev.21:2, 15-17)

John tells us that is 1,500 miles on each side and the same distance in height (a cube). There is not a city on earth that equals the description of the size of the heavenly home.

The Walls are Huge... and beautiful! ((Rev.21:17-21)

Its thickness and height was about 200 feet and was made of jasper, while the foundation was made with all kinds of precious stones! We are told the gates are of pearl and the street is of gold.

The City itself is gorgeous: (Rev.21:10-11, 21)

Not only is it great and high, but shining with the glory of God... brilliant like a most precious diamond... and the street made of pure gold... like the most pure, transparent glass, perhaps a diamond. No language could give a more striking or beautiful representation of the heavenly state than what is here employed.

The Lamb is its light: (Rev.21:23-27)

The direct light of God and the Lamb shall make the saints independent of God's creation of the sun and moon.

The City is like a beautiful garden, reminiscent of the Garden of Eden: (Rev. 22:1-5)

In this new creation, God reverses all the tragedies that sin brought to the original creation. The old heaven and earth were plunged into judgment; this new heaven and earth glistens with perfection.

There is the river that flows directly from God's throne, the very source of all purity. After man sinned he was prohibited from eating of the tree of life but in the eternal home, man will have access to the tree of life. The river and the tree symbolize abundant and eternal life in the glorious city.

All that causes tears will have been removed: (Rev. 21:4)

In heaven, there will no longer be sickness, dreaded diseases, physical ailments, and death because there will be no more sin (Rev. 21:8). The Heavenly Father will wipe away every tear.

John T. Cook wrote the song “Heaven”

There'll be no shadows in heaven,

No cares to darken the way;
God's face with light will be shining,
Thru-out that eternal day.
There'll be no weeping in heaven,
No sorrow ever can come;
God's hand all teardrops will banish,
In heaven our home, sweet home.
There'll be no parting in heaven,
For time and space count no more;
God's love will there reunite us,
With dear ones who've gone before.

Heaven is a place of godly, righteous inhabitants: (Rev. 22:14, 15)

Those who have obeyed the commands of the Father will be there. Those who fought the spiritual battles and overcame and remained "faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10) will enjoy life wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Pet. 3:13). Sin will no longer be an enticement potentially ensnaring and destroying us.

Heaven is a place of rest for the weary, earthly traveler: (Heb. 4:9-11; Rev. 14:13)

After our battles on earth are complete, we have endured the trials and temptations, we have pressed on toward the heavenly goal, we have fought the good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith (2 Tim. 4:7, 8) we will experience rest from all our labors.

Samuel W. Beazley wrote:

If for the prize we have striven,
After our labors are o'er,
Rest to our souls will be given,
On the eternal shore.
Yes, a sweet rest is remaining,
For the true children of God;
Where there will be no complaining,
Never a chastening rod.
Soon, the bright homeland adorning,
We shall behold the glad dawn;
Lean on the Lord till the morning,
Trust till the night is gone.

Conclusion:

Heaven is more than a destination, it is a motivation. Knowing that we shall dwell in the heavenly city ought to make a difference in our lives here and now.

The vision of the heavenly city motivated the patriarchs as they walked with God and served Him ([Heb 11:10,13-16](#)).

Knowing that He was returning to the Father in heaven also encouraged Jesus Christ as He faced the cross ([Heb 12:2](#)).

The assurance of heaven must not lull us into complacency or carelessness, but spur us to fulfill our spiritual duties.

We truly deprive ourselves of the greatest motivation to live right if we don't reflect on heaven often. We should give the utmost diligence to make sure that we are faithful to our Lord so that by His grace and mercy, heaven will in fact be our home. Jesus said, **"...he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved"** (Matt. 23:13).