

# OUR ETERNAL (never to return to earth) 'HEAVENLY' HOME ?

## Preface

Recently I was contacted by a preacher who is involved with a so-called unity conference for grace believers scheduled for later this year in a southern state. He initially asked if I knew of a 'pastor' for a grace church that needed a 'pastor.' When I replied to his e-mail request, I wrote to him about the KJV word 'bishop' .... rather than The Living Bible's word 'pastor.' We had some correspondence back and forth about that issue. Then he invited me to speak about it and make a presentation at the conference. I declined. But I did notice one of the topics to be preached there is "Where will my soul spend eternity?" This is quoting from his advertisement:

*"There are 3 views on this topic:*

- A) The first view teaches that after the rapture, we (the body of Christ) will come back with the Lord at the second coming.*
- B) The second view teaches we will come back when the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven at the end of the 1,000 year reign.*
- C) The third view is that we will stay in the third heaven for all eternity."*

I thought it would be interesting to take a close look at the last view listed. We'll examine the verses .... and then you decide.

## OUR ETERNAL (never to return to earth) 'HEAVENLY' HOME ?

This study will examine verses that are used .... to teach that the body of Christ is destined to spend eternity in heaven --- and not return to earth:

**2 Cor 5:1** For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, **we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.**

**Phil 3:20** For **our conversation is in heaven**; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

**2 Tim 4:18** And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will **preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom**: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**1 Cor 15:49** And as we have borne the image of the earthy, **we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.**

**1 Thess 4:16,17** For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds, **to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

**Col 1:5** For **the hope which is laid up for you in heaven**, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

**Eph 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings **in heavenly places** in Christ:

Now let's go back and either look at the context of these verses or examine more closely the words of the verses.

It is important to always let the verse say what it says .... and not change it. If a change needs to be made --- it must be with us .... not with God's word. **We must listen to what the verse tells us.**

The context of 2 Cor 5:1 is the issue of the resurrection of our bodies:

**2 Cor 4:14-18** Knowing that he (God the Father) which raised up the Lord Jesus **shall raise up us also** by Jesus, and shall present us with you.  
 15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.  
 16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.  
 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;  
 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the **things** which are not seen are **eternal**.

With **eternal** things in mind, we'll ignore the chapter division and go on into chapter 5 .... to see our hope for the redemption of our body:

**2 Cor 5:1-10** For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (our physical body) were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands (our spiritual body), eternal (our spiritual body will never die) in the heavens (that's where our heavenly body will come from).

2 For in this (our physical body) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with **our house which is from heaven:** (we'll get at resurrection)

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. (Naked is the **intermediate state between death and resurrection .... after we leave our physical body --- but before we get our spiritual body.**)

4 For we that are in this tabernacle (our physical body) do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. (That will happen at the resurrection of the dead.)

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body (our physical body), we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. (Also in the context of the resurrection .... is the judgment):

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

That verse (2 Cor 5:10) is in the same context with the resurrection of our body. Thus, we conclude that resurrection and judgment will be in the same time frame.

2 Cor 5:1 is used to say that our home is eternal in the heavens:

**2 Cor 5:1** For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, **eternal in the heavens.**

**However, when it is read with verse 2 .... we see that our new body will 'come from' heaven:**

**2 Cor 5:2** For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is **from heaven:**

Using 2 scripture passages, (1 Thess 4:15-18 with 1 Cor 15:51,52), we will meet in the air, when our change comes. Thus, we cannot prove that we stay in heaven for eternity with 2 Cor 5:1.

The next verse we'll look at .... also is connected to the resurrection.

Neither does this verse say that we will stay in heaven for eternity:

**Phil 3:20,21** For our conversation (like the commonwealth of citizens, the administration of civil affairs) **is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:**

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. (That will happen at the resurrection.)

Reference Heb 11:13-16, 2 Cor 6:16, and Rev 21:2,3 to see that the country-city will come down from heaven to the earth, and God will reside with His people. We'll make the connection with us to Jerusalem in a minute.

In this next context, there is no mention of 'how long' God's heavenly kingdom will 'stay' in heaven:

**2 Tim 4:16-18** At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. (1 Pet 5:8, Ps 22:21)

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and **will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever.**

Amen. Where is the Lord's kingdom at this hour? Where are Abraham, Moses, Paul and all the saints now? They are all in heaven. 2 Cor 5:8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

We do know that Jesus told His disciples to pray for God's heavenly kingdom to come to earth .... and one day it will:

**Matt 6:10** Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Daniel also prophesied God's heavenly kingdom being set up on earth. Actually, we also know that it will be on the earth for eternity:

**Dan 2:44** And in the days of these kings shall **the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed:** and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and **it shall stand for ever.**

John witnessed the revelation of God's heavenly kingdom coming to earth:

**Rev 21:2** And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Paul told the churches at Galatia .... where there is neither Jew nor Greek (Gal 3:28) .... that God's heavenly city will come to earth ....

and it is connected to all of us saints. It's no 'us and them' theology:

**Gal 4:26** But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

The verse (1 Cor 15:49) is surrounded again by resurrection:

**1 Cor 15:35** But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

42 **So also is the resurrection of the dead.** It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

49 **And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.** (no time element of staying in heaven forever)

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep (we will not all be dead when our change comes), but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (still there is no reference as to us staying in heaven for all eternity)

In this next passage, we have divided the verse in the wrong spot.

Watch carefully as we read 1 Thess 4:17 for the following thoughts:

We will not ever be 'in the air' .... in other words, in heaven.

We will be ever 'with the Lord' .... so **where** will HE be?

We know He will be coming back to earth .... to live in new Jerusalem:

**1 Thess 4:16,17** For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds, **to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

Because of the 'colon' (:) .... the air is where we will meet the Lord

when He descends from heaven .... then we will always be with Him.

Where will He always be? You know that. Well, we will be with Him there.

In the next context, we see that our hope is stored in heaven. In a previous message, we studied that our hope is our glorified body --- which we will get when we are caught up in the air, at the last trump:

**Col 1:3-6** We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

Verse 5 does not say that we will live in heaven for all eternity.

Our hope being in heaven .... is actually not **unique** to Paul' revelation.

The point can be made .... that Israel's hope is also in heaven:

**Heb 10:34** For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that **ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.**

In heaven, there is another Mt. Zion and a new Jerusalem. Also, the church's names are written in heaven:

**Heb 12:22-24** But ye are come unto **mount Sion,**  
and unto the city of the living God, **the heavenly Jerusalem,** (We already saw that 'heavenly' Jerusalem is the mother of us all - Gal 4:26.)  
and to an innumerable company of angels,  
23 To the general assembly and **church** of the firstborn, which are **written in heaven,** and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,  
24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Peter wrote about Israel's inheritance ....

that it also is waiting for them in heaven:

**1 Peter 1:3-5** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a **lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**  
4 **To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,**  
5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation **ready to be revealed in the last time.**

Israel's treasure is stored up in the heavens:

**Luke 12:33** Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, **a treasure in the heavens** that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

So, our 'hope' and 'conversation' being in heaven .... is not only 'ours.'

To the church at Phildelphia, Jesus promised the overcomers:

**Rev 3:12** Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is **new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven** from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

A large group of believers, killed because of their faith, will be in heaven:

**Rev 6:9,10** And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

There will be too many people to count .... **believing, martyred Gentiles,** who will be killed during great tribulation, whose souls will be waiting **in heaven** for God to avenge their blood on their murderers still on the earth:

**Rev 7:9** After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

During the last half of Daniel's 70th week .... the beast, which we understand to be anti-Christ .... will curse the inhabitants of heaven:

**Rev 12:12** Therefore rejoice, **ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.** Woe to the inhabters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

The point here is .... there will be a group of people in heaven:

**Rev 13:6** And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and **them that dwell in heaven.**

When Christ returns from heaven to earth .... heaven's armies will accompany Him:

**Rev 19:11-14** And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And **the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.**

His armies may include the saints .... which are referenced a few verses before Rev 19:14 .... in:

**Rev 19:7,8** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and **his wife** hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed **in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**

Rebellious unbelievers on earth .... will fight against Christ and His army:

**Rev 19:19** And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, **and against his army.**

The prophet Ezekiel wrote of the valley of dry bones. The armies which were in heaven .... may also include the house of Israel:

**Ezek 37:10-12** So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, **an exceeding great army.**

11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, **these bones are the whole house of Israel:** behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

12 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, **O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves,** and bring you into the land of Israel.

Next, we'll read several verses that tell 'who' will come with Christ.

Paul, Moses, Zechariah, and Jude prophesied about them:

**1 Thess 3:13** To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, **at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.**

When Christ returns, He will be accompanied by angels and saints:

**2 Thess 1:7-10** And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven **with his mighty angels,**

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When **he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe** (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

**Deut 33:2** And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and **he came with ten thousands of saints:** from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

**Zech 14:5** And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and **the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.**

**Jude (1:)14,15** And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, **the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,**

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

When the Lord comes .... it will be His day .... His day of judgment:

**Psa 50:3-6** **Our God shall come,** and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

4 **He shall call to the heavens from above**, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

5 **Gather my saints together unto me**; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.

The Lord will also return with His angels (Matt 16:27; 24:30,31; 25:31).

In this next verse, we see our heavenly blessings .... but we are not told that we will spend eternity in heaven:

**Eph 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

In a similar way, Paul repeated the information about our heavenly position in Christ .... that we presently have .... as indicated by the word 'hath' in both Eph 1:3 and 2:6.

**Eph 2:6,7** And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

We 'grace believers' use the phrase 'the ages to come' in verse 7 very often. When we carefully examine what the verse actually says .... it is wonderful .... but it does not indicate all that we have been making of it .... by fixing a separate destiny for the body of Christ .... as being in heaven for all eternity.

*This is David Dowell, saying, "Think about it!"*