

# Kingdom Report

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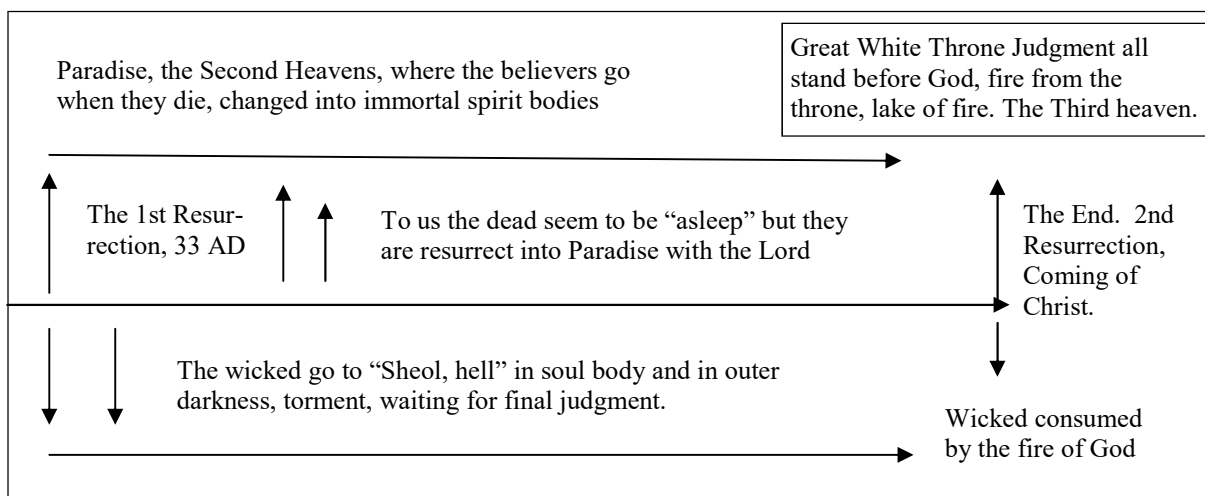
## Death, Hell, Paradise and the Resurrection

Continuing from last week, I want to give you a perspective of what happens after death to the believers, the unbelievers. What is paradise, what is the third heavens and the first resurrection, the second resurrection and God's great plans for you to grow and mature into Christ and inherit all things as His child. I offer my roadmap into eternity as I see it...

I want to create a diagram for you to give you a sort of "roadmap" to after death. There are all sorts of terms used in scripture and concepts around this topic that it gets confusing. Concepts such as "sleep" or "hell or Sheol" or "paradise" and then there are references to the first and second resurrection and the "third heaven" and "fire and brimstone" and "lake of fire"...it can get quite confusing. Then if add in all the debate about "the Coming of Jesus" or mansions in heaven or eternal torture or annihilation which I introduced to you last week, well I think it is time to hopefully simplify matters.

Below is my roadmap chart of "what happens after people die". I want to explore that road with you and hopefully give you some clarification. Let give you a caveat: Scripture justly says "Now we look through a glass darkly". This is my look through the little glimmers of light I see in scripture as to eternity. If it can help you, good. If not don't worry, whatever we do not understand we have this assurance from our Lord Jesus "In my father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am you may be also."

Having that assurance it is perhaps interesting to see how much can we extrapolate from the hints of scripture as to what lies ahead for us.



In my graphic just to explain, the 1st heaven is earth, the 2nd heaven is Paradise, the 3d heaven is where Paul was taken up to the throne room of God. The 2nd heaven, the realm of spirits is where Paradise are and where "sheol or hell are".

Let me give you some background for you to interpret scripture.....

Your creation in the image of God

Genesis says that the Lord took dust of the ground and fashioned a body out of it and then blew the breath of life into it and man became a living soul. So every person on earth consists of a fleshly body that a living soul inhabits.

The soul is you. Your "I am". Your emotions, your personality, your thoughts, your memory, your will. Jesus does not save your body but renews your soul....He requires you to renew your mind constantly through discipleship. He requires you to use your will to repent of sin, use your emotions to reflect His heart. The death of Christ is the sacrifice for the penalty of your sin and being born again provides you with the Spirit of God whereby your soul can now be clothed with His glory, this is the gift of eternal life. You are now a tri-part being with an eternal reborn spirit from God fashioned into a new glorified body in which your soul can live for eternity.

So here is what happens when every person dies.

The body dies and returns to the ground, The soul is now "unclothed". When Jesus died His body went into the tomb. His Spirit went to the Father ("Father in thy hands I commit my Spirit" and His soul went into "sheol" or hell.

Psalm 16:10 David speaking prophetically of Christ says "Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell (Sheol) nor wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption"

Upon His resurrection Mary Magdalene went to the tomb to anoint the body but the tomb was empty. Jesus spoke to her but she did not recognize Him. When she did she wanted to embrace Him but Jesus stopped her and said "Don't touch me for I have not yet risen to my Father". Jesus was standing there in His soul body resurrected out of Sheol where He paid for our sins. He then told her "I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God". That night Jesus returned after His triumphal entry into heaven carrying His blood to the altar for our sins and all power in heaven and earth given unto Him.

Jesus returned that evening to His disciples and then He told them "Touch me, I am not a ghost" and He could eat and drink with them now in His glorified Spirit body.

Scriptures for you to meditate on:

John 11:25 "***Jesus said unto her I am the resurrection and the life he that believes on me though he were dead yet shall he live and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.***"

I Cor. 15: 42-44 "***So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.***"

Phil. 3:21 "***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.***"

So here is the lesson:

When every person dies, their soul leaves their earthly body. It goes into the dust of the earth. The soul of the righteous born again receive a new spirit body that the soul enters into and they are taken to Paradise.

The wicked have no spirit body and their soul goes down to Sheol to wait for the final judgment. But there is a real problem here for the wicked with no body. Think of this. When you feel pain or hunger or lust or desire or eat something pleasant...the body feels nothing! All it can do is send an electrical signal to your brain that also can feel nothing and that part of your brain is attached to your soul. It is the soul that feels, that sees, that smells, that tastes...it is the soul that has the ability to translate electrical signals into meaning.

The problem of a naked soul us beyond our comprehension. The Biblical description is terrible but illuminating. Firstly there is no time in that realm. People who have come back from the soul realm feel to have spent years on the other side reviewing their lives but when returning into their body only minutes or hours have passed. You can spend what feels and seems an eternity there. That is why I don't like trying to argue about "how long are souls in hell"....for them it is an eternity.

The other problem they have is that their souls still have these longings and desires but they are unconnected to any reality where these cravings can be satisfied. They are in "outer darkness" where there is "wailing and gnashing of teeth." There is however every indication that a naked soul is like a naked nerve ending in your tooth...the pain is excruciating. And there is no relief. Then there is the problem of other souls with you. That includes the vilest demons and other utterly despicable persons who apparently attack one another to inflict more and more pain (see the Youtube testimony of Harold Storm, the atheist who died and went to hell.)

This state of torment of hell endures until the final resurrection when Christ raises all to what scripture calls the Great White Throne judgment of God. Scripture says of this "and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire". I will say more on this in a moment but let me emphasize that when we talk of the "fires of hell" technically that is incorrect because it is only at the last judgment that "death and hell are cast into the lake of fire". That of course does not minimize the torment of those now in hell.

### The Blessing of Paradise

You notice that I have divided up the universal reality into three heavens which seems to be what scripture indicates. With this earthly universe of planets, suns and galaxies the first heaven. The realm where spirit beings live, the Second Heavens. This second heaven is divided into the realm of the righteous, Paradise, then there is the realm of "Sheol or hell" where the departed souls of the wicked go to. Then also all around us there is the second heaven where "Principalities and powers, spiritual wickedness in high places" are moving about. This is the unseen realm around us that is also inhabited by our guardian angels who protect us from demonic attack and guide us to fulfill our destiny.

I am however fascinated by what I have discovered about paradise, the place where our fellow saints are now living after departing here. This is where Jesus told the thief next to him on the cross "This day you will be with me in Paradise!".

Here I must admit the scriptural references are few and I am relying on eyewitness testimony of prophetic types in the church that I trust when they say they have been there and give descriptions of what it is like. I caution you here, be careful who you listen to...there are many deceiving spirits and you are absolutely forbidden of the Lord to go wondering around there in self-induced "out of body" explorations. You cannot trust anything out there as true, demons are liars, hate you and Satan himself can appear like an angel of light to deceive.

So with careful and prayerful consideration here are my evaluations....

The thing that surprised me the most about all trips to paradise and which made me skeptical for a long time is how much like earth it apparently is. Everyone comes back with stories varied around mountains and rivers and flowers and trees and cities and mansions and lots and lots of new smells and colours and music and wonderful things to eat and drink.

Everyone there seems about 25-30 years old except for the many children they see who have died early or aborted and need to be raised and cared for. Then there seems to be enormous amount of purposeful activity and culture and arts and discoveries and creativity and oh the endless fellowship and caring and loving environment.

I inwardly objected to this depiction of heaven for a long time and thought "but who needs a mansion in heaven?"...a kitchen? A bedroom? The sheer activity of the place intrigued me. What was everyone doing?

But I think after much meditation and prayer on this amazing place I think I have a good guess about what is going on.

Our life on earth for the average person on earth now is about 70-80 years. For most centuries before us the average age of death was about 45 years old. Then think about the untold number of children through history that never make it to age 5. Think of the millions of babies aborted in the womb. Think of the millions of young men sent into useless wars to die at age 18 or 19.

How many never had time to develop their creative instincts, their personality, their gifts and abilities. But even those of us living into our 70's and beyond, how many of us who die late in life can say I have done everything with my life I wanted to do? Is there not a universal feeling among everyone, even those who live for Christ, "I wish I could have done more?"

In scripture we see in the Old Testament that the Patriarchs after Adam living for hundreds of years. You read of Enoch walking with God for 365 years and then getting "raptured" into heaven. I don't care if you live for 95 years....we are meant by the Lord who made us to have far longer lives here in this realm to fully develop all those unique gifting and personalities that bring such pleasure to a loving Father who enjoys each child for the unique creation they are.

Paradise is for all of us who still have dreams of "I wish I could have done this or I wish I had more time to do that". I think here especially of the many young babies never who have had a chance, of the young children abused and sexually assaulted by adults, the Downs

Syndrome kids so full of love and life who have so much more to give with another chance in a glorified body able to live out their dreams and desires.

Yes paradise is so very much like earth...only better and without the snake in the garden and without the wicked. I even have it on solid prophetic folks who saw their favourite pets in paradise waiting for them!

Here is my scriptural justification for what Paradise is all about....

You all know that famous scripture in Ephesians that says the Lord has given us gifts, the five-fold ministry of prophets, apostles, pastors, teachers etc.... ***"for the perfecting of the saints...till we come into the unity of the faith and full and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the full stature of Christ...that we no more be children.."*** (Eph. 4:12-14) Well it's going to happen to all of us!

I don't believe you can get saved after death. I do believe that there is growth and learning and creating and teaching and advancing from child in Christ to the fullness of Christ for all of God's children and lot of that is going to be happening in Paradise. God is just and faithful to all His children and He does not want one of them to remain in childishness but all must grow and reach their full potential for what He had in mind for them when He planned His family from before the foundations of the earth.

This is not to encourage slackness or spiritual laziness. We must earnestly contend for the faith once delivered by the saints. But the Lord also knows that 80 years is not enough to do all that we are capable of doing or developing. I believe in the endless growth of His Kingdom but with it also the constant growth of His children into the full stature of Christ.

I greatly look forward to Paradise!

### **The Last Trump and the Second Resurrection**

Scripture says that heaven and earth will pass away. Paul writes in Corinthians 15 "And then comes the end when Christ shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God even the Father" (1 Cor 15:24).

This is when those who are in Paradise and those in hell and those still on earth will be changed and all will appear before God the Father in the third heaven, the throne of God. This is what Revelation describes as "the second resurrection". The first resurrection was when we rose with Christ from death unto life eternal. Scripture says whoever partakes of the first resurrection, the second death has no power over him. (Rev. 20:5,6)

The throne of God the Father is beyond description. The Bible says that a river of fire streams from His throne. Scripture says our God is a consuming fire. All will stand in that river of fire. John says that Jesus will baptize us with the Holy Spirit and fire. Anyone without a spirit body and standing before that river of fire will be destroyed. Those who are clothed in the righteousness of Christ will be energized and filled with the power of God, the joy of the Lord and the love of God.

What happens after that great event nobody knows....Paul who saw the 3d heaven says eye has not seen nor ear heard nor has it come up in the heart of man what God has prepared for those that love Him. Please be there with us.....you don't want to miss it!