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VIRTUAL

In the Garden of Eden the Genesis 3:9 “*LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*” He knew exactly *where* Adam was, and saying: *Adam, I miss our walks together; you should have obeyed my instruction; there is no reason for you to hide from Me; We need to talk.*

God had written: Isaiah 1:18 “*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*”

The Lord God loves humanity and wants to have a close relationship with us—He does not want *anyone* to end in Hell and proved that by sending His Son to the Cross—who never committed one sin, so that we could be forgiven of many. Romans 5:8 “*While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” God loves and cares for us—He just wants us to love Him.

God invites us to *repent* and *return* to Him—He wants us to really *know* Him, because He wants to *deliver* us; *heal* our body; *supply* our needs; *change* our attitudes; and *save* our loved ones—but *we* have to decide to let Him *do* those things and *not* use substitutes.

God tells us that if we will *seek* Him, we will *find* Him. He told King Asa 2 Chronicles 15:2 “*The*

LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.” To the *educated* and *uneducated*; to the *big* and the *small*; to the *young* and the *old*, God will reveal Himself to them, so they can *know* Him and *trust* Him, if they will *seek* Him.

Wondering what *Heaven* is like—is like describing something to a person who would have no idea about what you are describing. It would be like telling of the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains to a small child. They would *not* be able to comprehend and our finite minds cannot really understand all the infinite *glories* of Heaven.

The apostle Paul had a unique experience and said this—2 Corinthians 12:2 “*I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*”

The song lyrics express what we may have thought about Heaven and seeing Jesus. *Surrounded by Your glory; What will my heart feel; Will I stand in Your presence; Or to my knees will I fall; Will I sing hallelujah; Will I be able to sing at all; I can only imagine; I can only imagine!*

Heaven is an actual place—it isn’t just an *idea* or a *state of mind*; but an actual *location* and a *city*—like Miami, Chicago, or London. Many think of Heaven as depicted in films or videos—people in white robes, floating on clouds with halos, and strumming harps—but that is *not* the Heaven of the Bible prepared for true believers in Christ.

The Bible describes Heaven as *Paradise*. When Jesus was crucified on the Cross, one of

two thieves, in the last moments of his life, accepted Jesus and put his faith in Him. Luke 23:42 “*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*” Jesus replied: 43 “*Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*”

The writer says—Hebrews 11:10 *Abraham “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”* Further on saying Hebrews 13:14 “*For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*”

Cities have buildings, houses or mansions, culture, art, music, parks, stores and services. We do not know if any of those would be included in Heaven, but we can conclude that Heaven will *not* be anything *less* than what we have experienced here on *earth*—with the *exception* of things that are harmful, evil, or destructive.

Scripture *does* mention some things in Heaven that we understand and relate too; like a *tree of life*; a *river*; *streets*; and *gates*—for example. Heaven is where we would find the *Book of Life*—and our names *must* be written in that book, if Heaven is our goal.

Heaven is described as a *country*—Hebrews 11:16 “*But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*” Whatever we like about earth, will be ten-thousand times *better* in Heaven. There certainly is much *beauty* on earth, but it is not to be compared to the *grandeur* of Heaven.

The *heavenly* country is so much better than any *earthly* country that it is impossible to compare. On earth we have a multitude of good things—we have the love of family and friends, and their companionship. There are many experiences and people we *love* and *enjoy* on earth that God has given to us as blessings. Such things on earth, however, are just a *copy*—*Heaven* is the original.

The beautiful Temple in Jerusalem was a *copy* of the real Temple in Heaven. Scripture says that people on earth Hebrews 8:5 “*Serve in a place of worship that is only a copy, a shadow of the real one in heaven. For when Moses was getting ready to build the Tabernacle, God gave him this warning: ‘Be sure that you make everything according to the design I have shown you here on the mountain.’*”

A Christian writer once said, *All those things that have deeply possessed your soul, have been but hints of Heaven—tantalizing glimpses; promises never quite fulfilled; and echoes that faded away just as they caught our ear* unquote. The real thing is *Heaven* itself—a *Paradise*!

Heaven is so much *more*, that we cannot truly comprehend its *majesty*; its *grandeur* and *magnificence*—we can only *imagine* what it will be like. Humans cannot wrap their finite minds around the splendor of this marvelous place—a place called *Heaven* and promised only to *believers*. Our decision to *follow* Jesus—*listening* to His words and *obeying* His commands—is not only for blessings *here*, but it includes our living *forever* with Him and all other believers already there.

God is preparing a *mansion* for all who choose to believe and faithfully follow His directions in Scripture. The Sermon on the Mount gives amazing guidelines for Christian living. Matthew 5:3 “*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*” Poor in spirit is to be *humble* and *teachable* in heart. If we will humbly submit *our* will to be God’s will, He promises us His kingdom.

4 “*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.* 5 *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.* 6 *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.* 7 *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*” Regardless of the trial or

loss, God promises to comfort us and sustain us through it all.

We are *seeking* a city from above—which is *thirsting* for righteousness—and we are righteous *only* by a trusting *faith* in the perfect work of Christ on the Cross. God promises to fill us with His Spirit, so that we would *seek* those things that are of true *spiritual* value. We are to show *mercy* toward everyone, because *without* God’s mercy, we would *not* enter His kingdom.

Matthew 5:8 “*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.* 9 *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.* 10 *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* 11 *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.* 12 *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*”

It is increasingly *difficult* to be pure in our thoughts, in an increasingly *impure* world today, but God gives us His Spirit to enable us to make *right* decisions about all things, and to *reject* impure thoughts the devil wants us to have. If we will bring *peace* among people, we are a child of *God*; if we are *persecuted* for our faith and it is met in a scriptural way, we are *promised* the kingdom.

If we can *rejoice* when *despised* and *rejected*, we are given the reward of living forever in *Paradise*—in a place called *Heaven*, where faithful prophets are already there and enjoying His presence forever! *We can only imagine!*

The apostle declared the whole counsel of God—which is that God *loves* us, and He *promises* to give us peace, joy, forgiveness, healing, and a place called *Heaven*, if we will choose to *believe* in His Son and *trust* on His sacrifice. If we will receive His Spirit by faith, and continue

to believe in God through any trial, we can enter *Paradise*—it is a promise!

Gospel means *Good News*—but we cannot appreciate that *Good News* until we first know the *bad news*—that we are *all sinners* from birth, and would *not* qualify for that wonderful place called *Heaven*. The sin issue must be *dealt* with and dealt with in a way that only *God* could do.

Romans 3:10 “*As it is written, ‘There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.’*”

Jesus was not born in Bethlehem to give us warm feelings and kind thoughts in December. He came to earth to deliver us from the *wrath* to come—He came to *save* us from eternal *judgment* in Hell. Good things like happiness, kind feelings, peace and joy are *fringe* benefits. The big issue is *eternity*—and how to spend it with God and His Son Jesus.

There is a requirement—well known and easily understood, but it involves much *more* than sending nice cards each year; much *more* than just *saying* we have faith in God; much *more* than proclaiming to be a follower of Christ—it means *loving*; *forgiving*; and *showing* mercy toward everyone concerning everything—because the *merciful* shall obtain mercy.

Truly seeking the City to Come, and entering our new home called *Heaven*—just John 6:29 “*Believe on him whom he hath sent.*” We can only imagine!

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