

We started this little 'Mini-Series' on Heaven
with a very Strong Truth - Heaven is REAL

& we tried hard to shake up any poss misconceptions
our cartoons & movies & mythology may have infected us with

Lst msg was about the REAL New Earth & our REAL New Bodies -
trying to get a better picture of the REALNESS of eternity

& I'm really enjoying these Msg's - cause you're ENGAGING
with me (& with ea other) about the things of Heaven

But there WAS one thing I noticed this week - & that was:
questions about the TIMING of all these things

WHEN do we GO to the REAL New Heaven & REAL New Earth ??

Are there Saved people there NOW?
Do they have their REAL New Bodies NOW?

& If they're NOT in the REAL New Heaven NOW
then WHERE are they?

& I promise - I am ANXIOUS to move ahead in Rev 21 & 22 -
But this is such a perfect time to Talk about these Truths

& I think we need to be as Clear As Possible
on the Revelation God HAS given us - About HEAVEN ...

BOTH the PRESENT Heaven - AND the NEW Heaven

So today - let's get a **better grasp**
on the **PRESENT HEAVEN** vs' the **NEW HEAVEN**

& then I Promise - we'll **Move Forward** thru **Rev 21 & 22** - **OKAY?**

Let's Pray

Let's TURN over to **1Thes Ch 4** (*NLT for just the 1st few vs's*)

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (NLT)

13 And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope.

If your Bible uses - "**ASLEEP**" - it's a **EUPHEMISM** for "**DIED**"
A **Euphemism** is a "**more pleasant way**" of saying something

Paul says - *We want you to KNOW what has happened to the believers who have died - so that you don't grieve, like people who have NO HOPE*

This Vs is **talking** about **people** who have **died**
*In Christ - **BEFORE** the **Rapture***

& I want you to **know** what **happens** to **those believers** also

Here's the **important clarification**

When a **believer dies** today - they **go to a Heaven**
we are **calling** - The "**PRESENT HEAVEN**" ...

The "Heaven" in Rev 21 & 22 Is what the Bible calls
"The NEW HEAVEN" - often called "The Eternal Heaven"

Are they both HEAVEN - YES !
Are there DIFFERENCES - YES !

But they're BOTH Heaven - because Heaven is primarily defined as
"The place where God Dwells"

& God Currently Dwells in the PRESENT Heaven
& He Will Dwell in the NEW Heaven

The Bible teaches - When a Believer Dies
He goes immediately to be with the Lord

2 Corinthians 5:8 (NLT)

8 Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord.

The formal translation of that vs is
Absent from the Body / Present with the Lord

For a Believer - *Absent from the Body* - is - *Present with the Lord*

& That's what we're ref'g to as - The PRESENT (Current) Heaven

What we call HEAVEN today - IS the place where God dwells -
but NOT the Final Place all Believers will spend eternity with God

Because that Specific place has not been Created (RE-Created) yet

Now - Don't get me wrong - the Present Heaven IS Heaven
Because the Lord is There

& because the Lord is There - it is FAR BETTER than HERE

Paul says in Philippians 1:23–24 (NLT)

23 I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. 24 But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live.

Paul knows - As soon as he dies - He's gonna be with the Lord -
& he knows it's going to be FAR BETTER (for him) - than here

HOWEVER - it IS True - the Present (Current) Heaven
must be described as TEMPORARY or INTERMEDIATE . . .

Which, unfortunately, always brings up the ques - of PURGATORY

Is this Present Heaven what the Catholic church
has made famous as PURGATORY - No . . .

Not that you go there to finish earning your way to heaven
or finish paying for your sins

I read thru a Catholic theology website - catholic.com
on the doctrine of Purgatory

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines purgatory as “a purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven . . .”

Catholic.com acknowledges
that Purgatory is NOT directly taught in scripture . . .

but says that **shouldn't cause** any **concern**, because
The **Catholic Church** has always **believed it**, & **taught it**

Same with **Praying for the dead** who are in **Purgatory**

Which is **mentioned once** in scripture - but is **NOT Instructive** -
meaning we are **NOT instructed** to do it - **Paul** was just
acknowledging that people **DID Do IT**

& that **seems** to be **how** the doctrine of **Purgatory developed** -
From **people** just **thinking** it was **true**

There are **writings** from **Augustine**
ref to **teaching** he got from **his mother**

& there are **writings** from the **Maccabaeans** (inter-testament)
from which the **Catholic church** gets "**The Apocrypha books**"

But - in the end - **Purgatory** is one of **many Doctrines** in the **Catholic Church** that is **clearly based** on **Church History - Not Scripture**

Does the **Bible** talk **plainly** about an "**Intermediate Heaven**"
that will one day be **REPLACED** by the **New Heaven - YES**

But **the idea** that **someone** could become "**More Ready**" to **enter** the
Eternal heaven by **being** in that **intermediate state**
cannot be supported by Scripture

But Scripture **DOES** teach an "**Intermediate Heaven**" . . .

Where **Believer's** are **WITH** the **Lord - UNTIL** (Ultimately)
The **New Heaven & New Earth** are **Created** (Recreated) by God

So - Let's look at some of those scriptures

We've already seen TWO Scrip's from Paul - that say - *"To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord"*

But let's take it back a bit - to the GOSPELS - TURN to LUKE Ch 23

In LUKE 23 - Jesus is on the Cross - the two Thieves are beside him
one Railing on Jesus - the other not

& the one thief demonstrates true faith when he says in

Luke 23:42-43 (back in the ESV)

42 And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

43 And he (Jesus) said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

This word translated Paradise is a word used in that day
to refer to the place where the Righteous would dwell with God

& Jesus says - Today - You'll be there with me

& can we get at least SOME IDEA of what that "Paradise" -
or Intermediate Place with God - is LIKE? - Yes, we can

Turn over to Luke Ch 16 - The story of the Rich Man & Lazarus

Some say this IS a Parable - Some say it is NOT a Parable
Because no parable has names like this one

But - in case it IS a parable - we CAN'T DISSECT it
to create super specific teachings out of it

But we CAN get an idea what this PRESENT Heaven is like

Luke 16:19–31 (ESV) - (Jesus speaking)

19 “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day.

20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores,

21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side (bosom). The rich man also died and was buried,

23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

24 And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’

25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.

26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’

27 And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house—

28 for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’

29 But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’

30 And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

31 He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’ ”

What can we learn from this teaching from Jesus?

- 1) There **IS** a **PLACE** where those who die **go instantly**
- 2) It is a place of **CONSCIOUS Existence**
- 2) There is Either **COMFORT** - or **TORMENT** there
- 3) There is **NO Switching Places** - & **NO Coming Back**

Some of the other things this scripture possibly indicates are:

- 1) We will be **Recognizable** - **Retaining our Names**
- 2) We will be able to **Communicate**
- 3) We will have **knowledge** of **HOW** we lived **on Earth**
- 4) We will have **concern** for **those on earth** we've **left**

I say "**Possibly**" on **some** of those things
Because if in fact it is **correctly** termed a **Parable** . . .

Parables are used to teach **ONE BIG POINT**
without dissecting the details

If so - I hope you **can see** here - the **ONE BIG POINT** is:
Be on the **Right Side** of this **CHASM** when **this day** comes for **YOU**

There are **other Scriptures** that also give us a "**PEEK**"
into the **PRESENT Heaven**

In **ACTS Ch 7** - the **1st Martyr** (Stephen) is **about** to be **stoned**

& Acts 7:55–56 says (ESV)

55 But he (Stephen), full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

56 And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

We know in this **PRESENT Heaven** - we'll be **WITH Jesus**
We know **Jesus** is **1st to go** into **Heaven** with a **Glorified Body**

& **Here** - Stephen **SEES** Jesus - in His **Glorified Body**
STANDING - at the **Right Hand** of God

The fact that Stephen **RECOGNIZES Jesus** is **Significant**
& that Jesus is **STANDING** (not floating) is **Significant**

& **how about** when **Moses & Elijah** showed up
on the **MT of Transfiguration** with Jesus

& Luke 9:30–31 says (ESV)

30 And behold, two men were talking with [Jesus], Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

These two are **DEFINITELY** in the **PRESENT Heaven**

& **Here** - They **Appeared** in **GLORY** - & are **COMMUNICATING**
With Jesus - regarding **what's about** to happen

& so **we have** at least a **GLIMPSE** into **SOME**
of **what** the **PRESENT HEAVEN** is **LIKE**

So Now - what about the **NEW HEAVEN** - The **Eternal Heaven?**
What do we **know** about **THAT**

Well - 1st - **BEFORE** the **NEW HEAVEN** is Created ...

Those who have **died 'In Christ'** will have **Received** their
RESURRECTED & GLORIFIED Bodies

They'll **Receive** them - At The **Same Time** **We** who **are still Alive**
Will be **RAPTURED** & Receive **OUR Glorified Bodies**

Let's **turn back to 1Thes 4** - where we **started** -

We'll **pick up** where we left off - **after Vs 13** (we started w/)

1 Thessalonians 4:14–18 (now in the ESV)

14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep (died).

15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep (died).

16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first (bodies).

17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Vs 14 says - **God** will **BRING WITH HIM**

the **believers** who've **already died** - **meaning** they're **WITH Him**

They **get** their **Resurrection Bodies** 1st - then **we** are **Caught Up**
(**RAPTURED**) to **join them** - & **Meet the LORD** in the Air

& **so we** will **ALWAYS be WITH** the Lord

Therefore encourage one another with these words !!

**BTW - When was the last time YOU encouraged someone
with these incredible words??**

So - at **THIS POINT** - **Believers** who have **BEEN with the Lord**
& **Believers** who **have now been Raptured** . . .

ALL have their Resurrected & Glorified Bodies

Which we place at REV Ch 4 -

At the **Beginning** of the **Tribulation**

Followed by the **Millennium**

Followed by **Rev Ch 21 & 22** . . . *make sense?*

& **NOW** comes the **NEW Heaven** - *The Eternal Heaven*
Of Which - the **NEW Earth** is an **Integral Part**

This is when **Resurrected Believers** - will be living forever
In a **Resurrected Universe** - with an **UNCHANGING GOD**

US - The EARTH - & The UNIVERSE

Are **ALL Resurrected** - **Glorified** - & **Perfected**

GOD - *on the other hand* - has **NOT changed**

God Remains the **SAME** -

But **HOW** He **DWELLS with US** - **Does Change**

Let's **go back** to **Rev 21** to **Close**

Revelation 21:1 (ESV)

*1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven
and the first earth had passed away . . .*

(We'll deal w/ the sea was no more next msg, promise)

Right now - we're **dealing** with - **THE NEW HEAVEN**

Now - **the Bible** uses the word **HEAVENS**
to **describe** what **we** would call **SKY & SPACE** (universe)

But Heaven is **ALSO** the Place **Where God Dwells**

& **BOTH** the **Heavens** (meaning **Universe**)
& **Heaven** - the **PLACE where God Dwells** - Are going to be **NEW**

Now - We **don't know ALL** it **means** that **God** is going to **Regenerate**
(Make New) **the Heaven** we call the **UNIVERSE**

But **Allow me** to give you - an **ABSOLUTE INFINITE POSSIBILITY**

[VIDEO - HUBBLE DEEP SPACE]

THIS is a picture of **DEEP SPACE** taken by the **HUBBLE Telescope**

HOW MUCH of Deep Space?

Take a **DIME** - put it **75 feet away** from you - & the area that **DIME**
covers (at 75ft) - is the area of **DEEP SPACE** this Image covers

The **EXPOSURE Time** - is **23 days** (to collect the light from ea speck)

So **what** are we **looking at?**

When The **photo** was **first taken** (2002) - the **Hubble people**
estimated there were **1,500 GALAXIES** here

But **after compiling** this same info **for 10 yrs** (with better tech) -
The **Hubble Scientists** now say there are **7,000 GALAXIES** here

That is in **an area** of **DEEP SPACE equal** to **a Dime at 75 ft**
[SLIDE DOWN]

So - if God's going Regenerate - MAKE NEW - Our Universe
& an area of our sky 1MM wide has 7,000 GALAXIES in it . . .

That makes for INFINITE POSSIBILITIES

For our INFINITE GOD, *doesn't it?*

Especially when you consider that:

THO The New Earth seems to be our "Primary Home" -
In Resurrected Bodies we are Def NOT bound to earth

We see that Thru-Out Revelation - -

What does that mean for us *Guess we CAN'T say for sure*

The IMMEASURABLE SIZE of our Current Universe

means the Possibilities of the New Heaven
are going to be ASTRONOMICALLY IMMEASURABLE

But what about Heaven *as in* - WHERE God Dwells ??

How is THAT going to be NEW

Well - The PRESENT Heaven - seems to be more like
an "ANGELIC REALM" for lack of a better term

But the NEW Heaven (where God Dwells) will be Primarily in
what we would a "RESURRECTED EARTH REALM"

I know - this blows our minds

because we always think of US GOING UP to GOD in Heaven
- NOT God coming DOWN to US on Earth

But let's just Read Rev 21 - & be BLOWN AWAY

Revelation 21:2–3 (ESV)

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

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

**I know we always think - of US going UP somewhere
To be with God - - but That is NOT what these vs’s SAY**

The THRONE of GOD - & of the LAMB Is IN - The NEW Jerusalem
(We’ll SEE THAT - If we ever GET to the New Jerusalem)

& the New Jerusalem is coming DOWN From HEAVEN
TO the New Earth

& V.3 Does NOT Say - “The Dwelling place of MAN is With GOD”

It says - *the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them . . . and God himself will be with them as their God.*

The Language here is CLEAR - GOD Coming DOWN to a NEW Earth
To DWELL WITH - A Resurrected People that He loves

HOW did God DWELL with Adam & Eve?

Did He Transport them UP - to HIS World?

Or did HE come into THEIR World - that He created for them?

→ → →

The REASON - the REALITY of the NEW Earth - is SO IMPORTANT

**& The REASON - The REALITY of our RESURRECTED Bodies
is SO IMPORTANT**

Is because the Dwelling Place of God - is coming to BE with Man . . .
IN the WORLD that He CREATED for US -
RESTORED to THE PERFECTION He Originally CREATED it IN

**Heaven is becoming CLEARER & CLEARER
& as it does - it becomes MORE & MORE - MIND BOGGLING**

God CREATED you - For Relationship WITH Him
& God loves you SO, SO MUCH

& HE has a Plan - a Perfect Plan
to Spend Eternity with you in a New Heaven & New Earth

A plan that your mind can't even begin to FULLY CONCEIVE

But the MORE that you CAN Grasp
of What God has in store for you in Heaven . . .

The LESS you'll be CHAINED to THIS WORLD

TAKE HOLD of What God has Planned for you

Start your Relationship with Jesus Christ NOW

**So that He can Start
Preparing a place FOR YOU - For ETERNITY**

Let's Pray