

PRESENT HEAVEN/PARADISE

Lk 16:19-31; Lk 23:39-43; Acts 7:55-56; 2 Cor 12:2-4; Rev 6:9-11

I. WHERE?

- A. Where Christ IS: “Seated at the Right Hand of the Father”
 - 1. Ascension (Acts 1:9-11)—physical phenomenon
 - 2. Retaining His resurrected body—forever Incarnate God/man
 - 3. Surrounded by redeemed—in the Paradise promised “good” thief—“this day Paradise”
 - 4. St Stephen’s vision: “Son of man standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55-56)
 - 5. St Paul’s visions: road to Damascus (Acts 9:4); in Jerusalem (Acts 23:11)
 - 6. James the Just final vision in Jerusalem (Josephus)
- B. Higher Realm of Reality—described (albeit poetically) in St John’s *Revelation*
 - 1. Angelic beings evident throughout Scripture, regularly appearing in human likeness
 - 2. Supernatural/natural realms revealed to Ghazi (2 Kings 6:17)
 - 3. Physical aspects obvious (suitable for humans)
 - a. Revelation details: ; scroll (5:1-5); altar (6:9); multitude (7:9-17); musical instruments (8:6); eagle (8:13); horses (19:14); martyrs (6:9); clothes (6:4-11); elders (5:12); smoke (15:8)
 - b. Akin to Garden of Eden—Eden still exists, but our access to it prohibited
 - 3. Paul’s vision of “Third Heaven” (2 Cor 12:2-4)—“inexpressible things . . . not permitted to tell”
- C. Not our final home—blessed intermediate state awaiting final Resurrection & New Earth

II. WHO THERE?

- A. Natural Theology arguments for immortality (not eternality, which is true only for God)
 - 1. Metaphysical: soul demonstrably non-material, thus impervious to death of body
 - 2. Teleological: natural desires point to achievable end, thus immortality assured
 - 3. Moral: justice finally attained
- B. Special Revelation suggestive
 - 1. OT: Enoch; Elijah; Moses—Transfiguration portrays embodied Elijah & Moses
 - 2. NT: Lazarus & Abraham (Lk 16:19-31); Good Thief (Lk 23:39-43)
- C. “Relocated” Saints (Rev 6:9-11); taken from Randy Alcorn’s *Heaven*, pp. 65-67
 - 1. People there were “relocated to Heaven”
 - 2. They sustained the same personal identity enjoyed on earth—reason, love unimpaired
 - 3. They remembered their earthly lives
 - 4. They “called out” audibly—thus vocal chords?
 - 5. They can raise their voices, thus speaking
 - 6. In unanimity they called out, joining others—thus sharing life with others
 - 7. They were conscious, rational, aware of others
 - 8. They asked God to intervene on earth
 - 9. They asked God questions—thus able to learn
 - 10. They know what’s happening on earth (Heb 12 re “crowd of witnesses”)
 - 11. They are concerned for justice on earth
 - 12. They remembered their earthly lives
 - 13. They pray for judgment
 - 14. They see God’s attributes
 - 15. They are distinct individuals, each given a white robe
 - 16. They probably have physical forms, inasmuch as they wear robes
 - 17. God answers their questions
 - 18. God promises to answer martyrs’ prayers
 - 19. Time exists—people are aware of its passing—not yet in eternal heaven
 - 20. They have “a strong familial connection” with loved ones on earth
 - 21. God knows all that is happening and will happen