

Heaven - The Person and the Place

Part 1

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[00:00:01] Tonight, the Lord helping me, this is my subject.

I wish to speak about Heaven, bearing in mind that little line of the hymn, for Jesus is Heaven there.

Bearing in mind that the person who is in Heaven supersedes the place.

So I'd like just to read tonight, seven very short scriptures.

First scripture is in the book of the Psalms, Psalm 14.

Verse two.

The Lord, he looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, [00:01:06] to see if there were any that did understand and seek God.

They are all gone aside.

They are all together become filthy.

There is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Now, we'll go to the New Testament. The verse in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel. John, chapter six.

Verse 38.

For I came down from Heaven, this is the words of the Lord Jesus. For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

[00:02:09] Same Gospel, chapter three.

Verses 12 and 13.

If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly

things?

A no man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in Heaven.

A verse or two in Luke's Gospel, chapter 10.

[00:03:07] We'll just read two verses.

Verses 20 and 21.

Notwithstanding in this, rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven.

In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, or I praise thee, O Father.

I praise thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast heard these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto the brave. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

[00:04:02] Verse or two in the Acts, chapter one.

Book of the Acts, chapter one.

We'll read two verses here.

Verses 10 and 11.

And while the elite steadfastly towards Heaven, and as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into Heaven.

[00:05:08] Chapter seven of the same book.

Here we have the account of the stoning of Stephen. Verse 54.

And when they heard these things, they were caught to the heart, and they gashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, he looked up.

He looked up steadfastly into Heaven, and he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens open, [00:06:01] and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him, and the witnesses laid down their clothes at the young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Lastly, a few verses, well-known verses in the first epistle to the Thessalonians.

Chapter 4, verse 16.

[00:07:13] For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven over the clouds, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 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.

First of all, comfort one another with these words.

The Lord was done from Heaven.

[00:08:02] The person supersedes the place.

The Lord, Jehovah.

Three times in the Psalms we get this similar quotation, how the Lord looked down from Heaven.

And you know, when David summed it up, he seemed to burst into an ecstasy first of thanksgiving and worship and praise.

For in the 136th Psalm, there are 26 verses in that Psalm, and each verse finishes with, His mercy endures forever.

But in verse 2, this is what David says, God, he is the God of God.

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, [00:09:02] the glory, the majesty, the power, and the victory.

How much appreciation and affection David had for God, the eternal God.

From eternity to eternity, thou art God.

He says, he is the God of Gods. The God of Gods.

The God of Gods.

And at the end of that Psalm, the last verse, verse 26, he bursts into a doxology, so to speak. And he says, we'll give thanks unto the God of Heaven. He's the God of Heaven.

But we can thank God tonight. But the scripture doesn't stop here. The Lord looked him down.

[00:10:02] And what a sight he saw.

There was none good, no, not one.

None righteous.

But you know, when you come to John's gospel, chapter 6, and I want you to come with me to this gospel, Jehovah of the Old is the Christ of the New.

He saw there was a great need. David says, is there not a cause?

You remember when his brethren complained about him coming down from watching the sheep? And he could say, is there not a cause? There was a great cause for David coming down to slay the life. There was a greater cause for the Lord Jesus to come down from Heaven. Who was he?

He was none other than God, manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, [00:11:03] seed of angels, priest unto the Gentiles, believed on in this world, received up in the glory. Oh, that the greatness and the glory and the dignity of the person of Christ tonight, my fellow hearts, with joy and delight. And here he has left us in no doubt as to who he is.

John's gospel, before Abraham was, I am, the seven I am.

Ah, the word became flesh and dwelt amongst us. We beheld his glory. The glory is of the only begotten with a father, full of grace and of truth. And it's very striking, I want to draw your attention to this. It's very striking that in this chapter, chapter six, the spirit of God is pleased to pen those words seven times. [00:12:02] I came down from Heaven.

Now there are many young people here tonight. I want to draw your attention to those seven expressions. Words from the mouth and the lips of the Lord Jesus. Here we are, verse 33.

For the bread of God is he which cometh down, cometh down from Heaven.

Verse 38.

For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And in the fourth chapter, John finishes that verse, doesn't he? And to finish his work.

Verse 41.

Here we have the third expression. End of the verse.

I am the bread which came down from Heaven.

[00:13:05] Verse 42.

I came down from Heaven. End of the verse.

Verse 50.

This is the bread which cometh down from Heaven.

Verse 51.

I am the living bread which came down from Heaven.

And lastly, verse 58.

This is that bread which came down from Heaven.

Now why does the Holy Spirit end those words time and time again?

It's to remind us as to who this person is.

It's to remind us as to where he came from. He came down from Heaven.

[00:14:03] He says, I came forth from the Father into the world, and I leave the world and go back to the Father.

So there is no doubt in the minds of the believers as to who he is, as to where he came from, and as to what he came to do to finish his work. But there are four little touches I want to leave with you on this scripture. First of all, he looked down. He looked down.

And only touch on the downs before we touch on the ups. He looked down.

And I'm sure every one of us in this room, how thankful we are that he not only looked down, but he came down. Came down to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Came to do the Father's will, and in love with him did all things well. [00:15:03] He came down. Oh, we can thank God he came down. But he did not only come down, but he says he laid down. He laid down. You want a scripture for it? John 10.

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life.

No man taketh it from me. I have power to lay it down. I have power to take it again. He laid down his life for you and for me. He laid it down.

He willingly died in our stead. But he not only laid down, he was raised. On the fourth day he was raised again. But that's not the point. The next down is, after he had made purgation for sin, he sat down. He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. [00:16:03] He's gone back, you see, to heaven.

The works well done.

So we have looking down, coming down, he laid down, and he sat down. What a glorious Savior we're linked up with.

Shall we turn to our next scripture? John 3.

If I have told you, verse 12, earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And you know, when I was meditating upon this coming down in the tree, this verse in particular, [00:17:01] I thought about a young man, not a young man, an old man, he's an old man

now, but a young man many years ago who was in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and in Edinburgh University coming out for a medical student. And you know, he was a very bright Christian lad, and some of his chums, you know, they said to him, you're too heavenly minded to be any earthly use. That was the expression he used about him. You're too heavenly minded to be any earthly use. But you know, when the deed came, when the examination papers came, and they were spread out, he was stuck in between. It was quite evident the Lord was with him. [00:18:02] You know the secret of his success? He had said his affections and things above where Christ said it.

He gave Christ the first place.

He was like the faithful servant our brother was speaking about this afternoon, and he got the well done, you're good and faithful servant. The Lord was with him. I tell you this, young people, the Lord is no man better. You give him the first place in your life, and he'll carry you through. And I tell you this, this brother's living today, and he's very heavenly minded. And he's been serving the Lord very faithfully all those years. Heavenly things.

[00:19:01] Next verse. You know, I think this is one of the wonderful verses of John's Gospel. Who is in heaven? There he was. There he was standing amongst them. And you can quote this, the son of man who is in heaven. What does it mean? I'll tell you what it means. The boy was down here, he was in continual communication with heaven. He was moving in the light of heaven every day. I'll tell you more.

He was in touch with the Father continually. No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is? [00:20:04] Who is in the bosom of the Father? He has declared him. He was in continual communication with the Father and with heaven. And he moved on and moved on. You know, we've been going through the sufferings of Christ in Matthew's Gospel 26, 27. And you know, our hearts have been moved as we've thought of this wonderful, glorious person coming from heaven. Going through the sufferings that he did go. Into the darkness.

Into the distance.

Into the deeps.

And yet, at the end of it, he could say, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. And here he is here. Sitting before him. [00:21:02] No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he which came down from heaven, even the son of man which is in heaven. And going through John's Gospel, you will notice time and time again. For instance, at the grave of Lazarus, it says, Jesus, he lifted up his eyes.

He lifted up his eyes. Now, where can we look today? Where can we look today? Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven.

His sickness is not unto death, but to the glory of God. Lazarus, come forth! There we see his power displayed. And Lazarus came forth.

In the 17th of John, and you know I love to read the 17th of John, the Lord's Prayer. [00:22:01] It begins like this. And he looked up into heaven and said, Father, Father.

Oh, I love to see and hear from the scriptures divine persons speaking in this way. Father.

Holy Father. Righteous Father.

And you know in the prayer meeting this afternoon we were reminded of this wonderful fellowship you and I have been brought into through grace. We have fellowship with divine persons. We have fellowship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. What a wonderful fellowship we've been brought into. And we're moving on to be with him and like him.

And these are words from the Lord's own lips and how encouraging they are. That we might speak reverently, unfeelingly, unaffectionately to divine persons, the Father and the Son.

[00:23:09] Now we move on to Luke's Gospel. Luke chapter 10.

Verses 20 and 21.

Notwithstanding in this, rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven. The seventy, you know, they were sent out and they came back and they were telling him how they rejoiced that the spirits were subject unto them. [00:24:02] But the Lord Jesus would say, rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Heavenly things.

What a wonderful joy it brings to one's heart when we think that we're living in this present evil world and heaven is our home.

Our names are written there.

You know, when Paul wrote to the Philippians, he seemed to have the spirit of faith in his heart because when we come to chapter 3, I think this is chapter 4, is it? He says that our citizenship, our citizenship is in heaven.

From whence also we look for the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will change those bodies of humiliation and fashion them like unto his own glorious body. [00:25:14] Oh, we're looking for him coming. Our citizenship is in heaven. A man said to me one day, why don't you vote? I said, my mind's in and my citizenship is in heaven. Of course it is. Heaven is our home.

We are but strangers here. We're going home to be with Jesus someday. Our citizenship is in heaven. Now that was Paul's line of thinking. That's what he was encouraging the saints at Philippi. Now what does Peter say about it? Well, Peter says, as he wrote to the Philippians, he says, we have an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled.

[00:26:03] Let's see it another way, he says, it's reserved in heaven for you who are set by the power of God. How little we enjoy these things.

It's too a shame, isn't it? An inheritance, undefiled.

An inheritance, incorruptible.

Death cannot touch it.

Undefined.

Sin can never mar it.

Say it another way, thank God, time will never end it. And it's something we have, we should enjoy, and it's reserved in heaven for you. You know, while reading in the Epistle to the Ephesians, I noticed that we never get the Lord's coming there.

[00:27:09] You know why?

Because positionally, he places us in heaven within Christ now. We're there now, positionally. Heaven is our home.

It's God's grace and mercy that has placed us there. And that's where it's placed us, in the heavenlies. You know, when we preach the gospel, and I'm sure we love to preach the gospel, and a soul comes to Christ, Luke 15 tells us there is joy in heaven. Heaven is still.

Do you call it the joy in heaven? Thank God every one of us has called joy in heaven. The day we trusted Jesus, there was joy in heaven. [00:28:04] I will say so, joy in heaven over one sinner that repented.

If there's a sinner here tonight, you can call it joy in heaven. I tell you, you'll get a joy. You'll never forget the joy of salvation. And mind you, it's a heavenly thing to be exalted. An eternal salvation. An eternal redemption. Six eternal things in Hebrew. Family, death, and a touch.

Friar says, rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Now before I leave this scripture, I'd like to put this child joke. Do you remember in Matthew's gospel, when the Lord was speaking on these things to his disciples, this is what he said to them. This is what he would say to you and me tonight. [00:29:03] Lay out for yourselves treasure in heaven. Could I put this child joke, brethren, tonight? This is the last month of another year, 1981.

How much treasure have you laid up in heaven this year? Our dear young brother gave us a lovely word in service. I wonder if you are characterized by that faithful service. Laying up treasure in heaven. There are two words very familiar with us today.

Treasure and pleasure.

[00:30:01] The world is marked by pleasure.

Lovers of pleasure know the lovers of God. But where do you find your pleasure? Do you find it in the meetings, amongst the saints? Do you find it in the meetings amongst the saints? Where is your pleasure? The Lord says, where your pleasure is, there will your heart be also. We have a little text in our house, and it says this.

One little life shall soon be past.

All that was done for Christ will last.

For that we might be encouraged to lay up treasure in heaven, [00:31:02] that neither mortal nor lost nor corrupt. Your brother was speaking about Sunday school work, and impressions he got at the Sunday school. You'll bear with me if I tell you a little story about a Sunday school. In a Sunday school in our district, there was a little girl who got saved at Sunday school. Sunday school teachers, keep on your work in the Sunday school. You'll lay up some treasure in heaven. This little girl came home, and her mother was a Christian, but her father was a gambler. You know what a gambler is, gamblers are. But in those days, it's quite a few years ago, in those days you used to go out on a Sunday and gamble away, you know, the minor people in this district I'm speaking about. And they spent their Sundays gambling, gambling their pocket money, [00:32:02] hard-work money, straight away. The father came home, and he's sitting at the side of the fire, miserable, on a Sunday night, miserable. The little girl was singing choruses, dancing round the hall, round the house, and she says, after she sang her chorus, she came up to her daddy, she says, Daddy, Mama and I are going to heaven, but you're not. She used to yell away. She came again.

She used to yell away. When he went to his bed at night, he couldn't sleep. A voice was heard from heaven, They're going to heaven, but I'm not. And before the light of another day, he was gloriously saved. [00:33:01] We are treasured in heaven, joy in heaven, over one sinner, God repenteth. Oh, that we might be encouraged. For service, make yourselves available. Are we available for service? Are we like Isaiah, here am I? Or like Samuel? Speak loud! Our servant might hear. Are we available? What an opportunity there is, the holy priesthood, inside and in the outside. Well, if we go in for these things, we'll lay our treasure in heaven. In heaven. Now, we'll go to the next scripture now. In the first of the Acts. Could you turn to it? I'd like just to draw your attention to this. These two verses.

[00:34:02] Verses 10 and 11.

I'm going to read them again because Four times we have heaven mentioned in those two verses. I want you to notice this. Four times. Now, this is the ascension of Christ. He had tabernacled amongst his own for 40 days. This was the last day he was on or in this earth. He was leaving this world, and he was going back to the Father. He was going back to heaven. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in quite a parlor, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

[00:35:03] What a sight it must have been. What a wonderful sight this was. He was going back to the Father. I came forth from the Father into the world. I leave the world. He leaves the world. And he goes back to the Father. He goes back to heaven. Four times in this chapter we get those two words. He was taken up. He was taken up. We've thought about the downs. How he looked down. How he came down. How he laid down. How he sat down. What about the ups?

I'll give you one or two of them. Four perhaps. Christ also has loved us and delivered himself up, Mr. Davison, please, for us.

The same chapter in Ephesians, chapter 5, [00:36:05] in relation to the assembly, he delivered himself up for it. When it comes to his resurrection, he was raised up, hung amongst the dead by the glory of the Father. The Father was the first to visit that scene. Delivered up. Raised up.

Now he's been taken up. Taken up into heaven. Could I quote a verse in Timothy, which takes us, I believe, a step further. Great is the mystery of godliness. God justified. God was manifested in the flesh.

Justified in the spirit. Sheen of angels.

Preached unto the Gentiles. Believed on in this world. He received up into glory.

He's up into glory.

[00:37:07] His work is done as far as this world is concerned, but you know, the Lord is working. Divine persons are working. My father worked at Hitherto and I worked. The Father's busy. The Father draws.

The Father runs.

The Father quickens. And you know, the Lord Jesus is still serving us. He's not entered into the whole place he's made with hands, which are the figure of the truth. Where has he gone?

He's gone into heaven itself. I'm quoting now from the 9th chapter of Hebrews. He's gone into heaven itself. Now, to appear in the presence of God for us, he's our great high priest. The one who's passed through the heavens and he's still working. As far as this world is concerned tonight, [00:38:02] he's the mediator and the only mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. As far as our weaknesses and infirmities, he's our great high priest.

He's always available. Ever lives to make intercession for us. If we sin, he's our advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He looks after our affairs in heaven. And you know, ten days after he went to heaven, there was another divine person came down from heaven. Chapter 2. I didn't read the verse. I'll read it to you. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as a rushing mighty wind and filled all the house where he was sitting. And the Spirit of God came down from heaven. [00:39:02] And he is a divine person. You know, today people look upon the Spirit as an influence. He's not an influence. He's a divine person. Divine person in the Godhead. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He's the Paraclete. The one called alongside to help. And all his works amongst the saints is wonderful. The service of the Spirit. He guides us into all truth. He guides us into all truth. Takes all the things of Christ and shows them unto us. And he glorifies Christ. That's the work of the Holy Spirit. And when the Spirit of God came down from heaven, three things happened simultaneously. The body of Christ was formed. The assembly was formed. And the house of God was formed. And the house of God and the assembly is still here today. [00:40:01] And I'll tell you more. It's the only place that God is known. It's the only place that God is loved. It's the only place that God is worshipped. And the Father seeketh worshippers to worship him in spirit and in truth. I see my time's about gone. I'll go to the next scripture. There we have the first martyr to die was Stephen.

He had brought false witnesses against Stephen. He bears a true witness against them. He was quoting the testimony of writers they own to be inspired. He speaks. And yet they rejected God and his servants and the nation. And this was brought before them. [00:41:04] Three things I would like just to point out to you. After this wonderful discourse, he gave them a list of the nation's departure from God, so to speak. They refused God. They rejected Christ and crucified him. And they resisted the Holy Spirit. But Stephen was full of the Spirit. And what a lovely touch this is. It says, he looked

steadfastly up into heaven.

What did he see? He saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. There he was standing, giving the nation their last opportunity. But they refused and resisted the Spirit of God. In other words, he was welcomed. He was outstretched arms. He welcomed Stephen into his presence. [00:42:01] Because he fell asleep. Absent from the body, present with the Lord, which is far better. Thinking about this steadfastly looking up. It wasn't just a lunch, you know. Steadfastly looked up into heaven. And this is what he saw. The glory of God and Jesus. Coming down in the train, I took my pencil out. And I wrote on my Bible three thoughts that came before me. Mind you, they're much used amongst the brethren. And a brother stood here just a few minutes ago and quoted it to us. And I said, you know, brother, I wrote that down coming down the train. I showed him it. Here they are. I'll just read them to you. It's in connection with, where are you looking? What are you looking for? Here it is. [00:43:02] If you look in, we get the flesh. For in my flesh there is no descent. When you look out, we get this flesh. We get flesh. You know, man's hearts are filling them for fear to leave. But the Christian, when he looks up, he's delighted. You know why? Because there's a man in the glory. A man, Christ Jesus. And there's only one way we can look up. There's only one way to get on in this world as far as the law things are concerned. And we've got to look up. We see Jesus. Who was made of the Lord and the angels for the sufferings of death. He's now crowned with glory on this earth at the Father's right hand. [00:44:05] Hence we come to our last scripture. It says there, the Lord himself shall descend wherefrom? From heaven with a shout, or a shout that will be. When the dead in Christ shall rise first, we which are alive and remain shall be changed. And we'll be caught up together to meet the Lord.