Wilderness/Promise #20 Pastor Rick Baker

March 20 2022

Out of the Wilderness of the Fear of Death

***And into the Promise of Eternal Life with Jesus*** *(Pt. 1)*

(Lk. 23:43; Jn. 14:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; 1 Thess. 4:13f; Rev. 2:7; 6:9-11; 19:6-8; 21:3; ++)

Where are they now?

*“Today you will be with me in Paradise.”* (Promise of Jesus to the repentant thief; Lk. 23:43)

7 Stages of Existence:

* Foreknown (Jer. 1:5; Rom. 8:29)
* Conception (Ps. 139:13-16)
* Physical earthly life (Ps. 139:16)
* Body death—separation of material and immaterial (Heb. 9:27)
* Intermediate state (Pre-resurrection heavenly life\* --Ps. 139:18; Lk. 23:43; Jn. 14:2; 2 Cor. 5:8)
* Resurrection of body (1 Cor. 15:50-54; 1 Thess. 4:16)
* Final eternal state on new earth (Rev. 21:1-4, 9-10)

*When a person dies (stage 4), the soul goes to a place (stage 5); that place is an intermediate one.*

* **When a person dies** (Heb. 9:27)

...it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,”

* The immaterial (soul) separates from the material (body) (Jas. 2:26)
* The material dies and returns to dust because of sin (Rom. 5:12; 6:23)
* The immaterial (soul) lives (Lk. 12:4-5)

* **The Soul goes to a Place**—the present heaven

*“****Today*** *you will be with me in* ***paradise****.”* (Lk. 23:43)

* Unbelievers go to a place of torment (Hell) (Lk. 16:19-31)
* Believers immediately go to “paradise”, “a place” (Jn. 14:2), a “heavenly dwelling” (2 Cor. 5:2), a “building from God” (2 Cor. 5:1); “the Father’s house” (Jn. 14:2); “at home with the Lord”

(2 Cor. 5:8)

Where/what is paradise?

The ancient Greek translators of the OT use the word paradise to refer to Eden (Gen. 2:8; Ezk. 28:13) where God was with man.

**Genesis 2:8**

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in **Eden**; and there he put the man he had formed.

**Ezekiel 28:13**

You were in **Eden**, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared.

And in Eden was the tree of life.

**Genesis 2:9**

**...**In the middle of the garden were the **tree of life** and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The apostle John saw the “tree of life” which is in the “paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7; 22:2) in the “new Jerusalem coming down from heaven” to the new earth (Rev. 21:2)

**Revelation 2:7**

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the **tree of life**, which is in the **paradise of God**.

**Rev. 21:2**

I saw the Holy City, **the new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God

**Rev. 22:2**

...On each side of the river stood **the tree of life**,..

The apostle Paul spoke of the “Jerusalem that is above” in reference to heaven

(Gal. 4:26)

**Galatians 4:26**

But the **Jerusalem that is above** is free, and she is our mother.

The writer of Hebrews takes note of “the city whose architect and builder is God” (Heb. 11:10), the “heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22)

**Hebrews 11:10**

For he was looking forward to the **city** with foundations , whose **architect and builder is God**.

**Hebrews 12:22**

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, **the heavenly Jerusalem**. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,

Heaven—shamayim (Heb)—“to above/high” ; ouranos (Grk)—“to cover”

Based on these descriptions, it would appear that “**Paradise**” is a reference to **Eden** which was removed from the realm of physical man’s access (Gen. 3:23,24) and into the “universe next door”, invisible to us now and the abode of God, angels and the faithful departed (2 Sam. 12:23; 2 Kgs. 6:17; Acts 7:55-56; 2 Cor. 12:2)— within the **heavenly Jerusalem**, the present place of the departed believers.

* **The “Place” is an Intermediate State for the “Fallen Asleep” Believer.**

*“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus...and the dead in Christ shall* ***RISE*** *first.”* (1 Thess. 4:14,16)

* Without resurrected bodies until the trumpet of God to join their resurrected bodies and reunite with those still alive (1 Thess. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:51f)
* An “intermediate state” continues until the new heavens and new earth (Is. 65:17-19; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21,22)

Bodies before the resurrection or not?

* The only appearances we have from the other side have bodily forms—Samuel (1 Sam 28:14f—“what is his form? An old man...”); Moses/Elijah (Matt. 17:3,4-- “appeared”); angels (Matt. 22:30--“*in the resurrection...*like angels in heaven”); Lazarus and the Rich Man (Lk. 16:19-31--“torment, agony, thirst, sight, touch, comfort”)
* The Martyrs of Revelation 6:9-11—
* Wear clothes
* Earthly events seem to be known by heavenly citizens—visual accessibility?
* Can call out
* Pray
* Remain as individuals –not different, just relocated
* Time aware—“how long?”
* Still learning from God who is sovereign over the scheduling of martyr deaths
* In God’s presence

What we know for certain when we die

* *We remain conscious*—our body and soul go separate ways—aware, interactive, sensory
* *We go to a place*—paradise/hell—until Christ returns to establish his eternal kingdom currently in the *now, not yet* phase. (1 Cor. 15:23-26)
* *We are forever with the Lord* or forever separated from Him (Jn. 5:28-29)

Are you ready to die?