

GLENNA SALSURY

# Heavenly Treasures

*Heaven*



*Discovering the  
Sovereign Grace  
of God Hidden  
in the Richness of  
His Word*

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GLENN A SALS BURY



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## *Dedication*

To the great saints of old who loved the Word of God with all their hearts.

To Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892), England’s “Prince of Preachers” whose *Morning and Evening* devotionals have fed my spirit for more than four decades.

To the apostle Paul, whose writings reveal the mystery of grace and whose grasp on the sovereignty of God is unparalleled.

To the Holy Spirit, the One Who leads us into all truth and anoints our minds and hearts with understanding.

To the Lord Jesus Christ, Who called me out of darkness into His glorious light and gave me a hunger for His Word.

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# *Heaven*

*Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens  
belong to the Lord thy God....*

*—Deuteronomy 10:14a*



# *What Do We Know about Heaven?*

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.  
—Genesis 1:1*



It is amazing to me to realize that heaven is a created place, separate from the Creator. God Himself is so majestic, so infinite, so incomprehensible that He is not limited to a place called heaven, though we know the Scripture says He is indeed in heaven (and beyond heaven) and on earth residing in the believer! Theologians, of course, call that God's omnipresence. "Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee" (1 Kings 8:27).

Sometimes it seems refreshing to ponder anew some biblical passages and enhance our sense of awe about all that we do not know or really comprehend regarding the majesty of the Lord and the mysteries in His Word.

For example, another shocking biblical proclamation is that heaven has an ending. Heaven has a beginning, and heaven will

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come to an end. Jesus described His coming to earth again and said that at that time, “Heaven and earth shall pass away...” (Matthew 24:35).

The apostle Peter gave us a few more details. “Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat” (2 Peter 3:12).

The Hebrew word for heaven is *shamayim* and is a plural word, heavens. There are at least three heavens. They include the open expanse above the earth (the firmament), the realm of the celestial bodies (the sun, moon, stars, planets) and then the place where God is revealed (but not contained) in His glory. The apostle Paul described being “caught up to the third heaven” and seeing the glories of God (2 Corinthians 12:2).

Paul also told us that Christ “ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things” (Ephesians 4:10). Can our minds even imagine somewhere beyond heaven? In Hebrews we read that Christ is our High Priest and has been made “higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26).

Oh, the magnitude of the One we worship. “Eye has not seen nor ear heard...the things God has prepared” for those of us who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9). And to stretch us even further, our Creator has promised to create a new heaven and a new earth after the first heaven and the first earth are gone (Revelation 21:1).

*Help us, oh, Lord, to grasp how incomprehensible You are. May our awe be enlarged. And may we rejoice to think You have ordained us as believers to share in Your glory, which extends beyond heaven!*

# *The Heavenly Roll Call*

*These names all come from ancient records.  
—1 Chronicles 4:22 NLT*



Isn't it amazing to see how the Word of God scrupulously records the names of people? There are long lists of people and families, especially in the Old Testament. As we read these, they can often seem boring and somewhat useless.

But I believe the Lord is sending us a very important love message through these "ancient records." An "ancient record" of names determines our eternal destiny. Christ told the disciples that the single most important joy-producing fact of their entire existence was to know that their names were written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

The Lamb's Book of Life records the names of all those for whom Christ died. Paul described his coworkers in the gospel as those "whose names are in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3).

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This eternal life is the inheritance of the saints, those who have discovered Jesus Christ to be God in the flesh. Peter described this inheritance as “reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4).

This Book of Life, the ancient record of the names of those who will live in heaven forever, was written “from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). This list of names is the most critical, incredible, important roll call in the universe!

The names of all the lost sheep whom the Shepherd has promised to find are on this list. Jesus tells us in John 10:3 that the Shepherd “callesh his own sheep by name.” The sheep know His voice. The Shepherd gives His life for His sheep (John 10:12, 15). He knows His sheep. He is not willing that one of His sheep should perish (Matthew 18:14). Christ explains that He has come for the express purpose of saving these lost sheep whose names are in the record book (Matthew 18:11). He has promised to find each and every one. Not one whose name is in the book will be lost. He taught that clearly in the parable of the ninety-nine sheep as the shepherd sought the last sheep, number one hundred. The entire flock was shown to be saved and protected.

As Peter wrote, we are being “returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop” of our souls (1 Peter 2:25). This is, of course, the Lord Himself, the very Shepherd who chose us “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4).

*Oh Lord, let us treasure this “ancient record.” We fall down at Your feet in utter gratefulness as we discover You as Lord of all, and the One Who has found us and known us before the world began and placed us in Your ancient record.*

## *He Looked for a City*

*He looked for a city which has foundations,  
whose builder and maker is God.*

*—Hebrews 11:10*



Abraham, the patriarch, is the epitome of what it means to live by faith. Abraham simply believed the Word of God and left his home and country to follow the Lord. “He went without knowing where he was going” (Hebrews 11:8 NLT).

But we discover that Abraham had a destination; he had a vision of what his destination would look like. That vision sustained him during the years his faith was being tested. He knew he was on a journey to a city built by God Himself.

In the passage from Hebrews 11:10, the original Greek says “He looked for the city...” not just a city. The city is the capital of a country. Those who live by faith are said to be seeking a country as well as a city. The saints of old “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth...they desire a better

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country, that is a heavenly one...and God has prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:13, 16).

Faith is about believing in what we cannot see physically, but what we know to be true in the invisible realm. In fact, because we are living in a realm over which Satan currently reigns (2 Corinthians 4:4), much of what appears to be real is pure deception.

If we know Christ, then we, too, are to be looking for the city. The city is the city of God, Jerusalem, the city of Zion. This city exists right now, at this very moment. No wonder Abraham looked for the city “which hath foundations.” He must have seen the city. “And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven.... It sparkled like a precious gem.... The wall of the city was built on foundation stones inlaid with twelve gems” (Revelation 21:2, 11, 19 NLT).

The psalmist experienced pure joy when he thought about his destination. “On the holy mountain stands the city of Jerusalem.... O city of God, what glorious things are said of you!” (Psalm 87:1-3 NLT).

The prophet Ezekiel, while in exile, saw the city of God. “The heavens were opened to me, and I saw visions of God... and I felt the hand of the Lord take a hold of me” (Ezekiel 1:1, 3 NLT). He went on to say, “The Lord took a hold of me...he took me to the land of Israel and set me down on a very high mountain. From there I could see what appeared to be a city...” (Ezekiel 40:1-2 NLT). Ezekiel then described the city in detail over the next eight chapters of his book. At one point he wrote, “And the Lord said to me, ‘Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place where I will rest my feet. I will remain here forever...’” (Ezekiel 43:7 NLT).

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The Lord Himself spoke of this place to the disciples, “Let not your heart be troubled.... In My Father’s house are many mansions [abiding places in Greek].... I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3).

Isn’t it interesting that the Lord suggests that one of the significant elements in not having a “troubled heart” is to focus on the place to which we are going? Paul knew this to be true. “If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on this earth...when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then you also shall appear with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:1-2, 4).

How much time each day do we spend thinking about the incredible joy ahead of us? Do we really believe the city exists, complete with diamond-studded walls and gates of solid pearl? Do we picture the future that is ours, living in that awareness, hour by hour and day by day? Our joy level is in direct proportion to our continual awareness of our true home, the country of heaven.

The Scripture says we have been born “from above,” we are citizens of heaven. “And of Zion it shall be said, ‘This and that man was born in her’ [Jerusalem, the city of Zion]... the Lord shall count, when He writes up the people, ‘This man was born there’” (Psalm 87:5-6).

The apostle Paul said that the heavenly city, Jerusalem, is the “mother” of all believers (Galatians 4:26). This is our true home. Our inheritance is stored in the city. We have been born into an inheritance that is “incorruptible...reserved in heaven for you...ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3-5).

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The author of Hebrews described the faith of Abraham and numerous saints, naming them one by one (Hebrews chapter 11), who were headed for “Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven...and to Jesus...” (Hebrews 12:22-24).

*Lord, help us live today in the vivid hope of our certain future. Help us, like Abraham, to live by faith in Your promise regarding our glorious destination.*

# Heavenly Beings, Not Earth Dwellers

*Having been born again, not of corruptible seed,  
but of incorruptible....*

—1 Peter 1:23



Most of us know at least a little about our family heritage. If you have an Italian background, you may well tend to talk with your hands. If you have a little Scottish in your genes, you may be prone to pinching pennies. Our DNA heritage impacts us in the here and now.

The apostle Peter gave us the truth about our spiritual heritage in this verse, describing how we were born again. This heritage is far more significant than our flesh and blood heritage. Peter provided shocking information. He said, “You have been born of incorruptible sperm!” The Greek word for seed is *spora*, which literally means sperm. We have been “born from above;” our true Father is in heaven. We have His DNA, the divine nature infused in us by the Holy Spirit. If we are in Christ, we are no longer earthlings!

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Oh, to grasp what this means to us as we live with our feet still standing on the clay of earth!

1 Peter 1:23 (NLT) says, “For you have been born again. Your new life did not come from your earthly parents because the life they gave you will end in death. But this new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God.”

The believers of the first century seemed to have had a clear grasp on their heavenly citizenship. They were focused on the “new life” they had received, which had transformed them from being mortals. They lived with a concrete awareness of being new creations, heavenly beings.

Paul, like Peter, talked about this “new life.” “Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven.... Let heaven fill your thoughts. Do not think only about things down here on earth. For you died when Christ died and your real life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:1-3 NLT).

We are urged to live with a completely different mindset than that of earth dwellers. We are heavenly beings. Our life is in heaven now. “We are seated with Him in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 2:6 NLT).

What would we do differently if we were to live like the heavenly beings we are? Earth dwellers are preoccupied with worry. They worry about money, jobs, their future, their health, their children, etc. They experience frustration, anger, bitterness, despair, self-pity. And most of these negative elements are a result of fear of not being able to control their circumstances, unable to create a comfortable life for themselves.

In contrast, the Lord Himself explains the life experience of those who are citizens of heaven whose feet are still on earth.

## *Heavenly Beings, Not Earth Dwellers*

In Matthew 6 He teaches us, “No one can serve two masters.... So I tell you, don’t worry about everyday life.... Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?.... Why be like the pagans who are so deeply concerned about these things? Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs...” (Matthew 6:24-25, 27, 32 NLT).

Perhaps we do not really believe what the Lord says about us. He says we are born from above; we are His children. We have a mansion and an inheritance reserved for us in heaven. Heaven is our destination. We are only momentarily spending a little time walking alongside earth dwellers.

Our spiritual heritage includes wealth, purpose, and eternal reward. We have a Father Who is actively working everything in our lives together for good. Nothing can separate us from His love, mercy, care, and plan for us. Do we live each day in the peace of these realities?

The apostle Paul encouraged us to live in this peace. “Remember, the Lord is coming soon. Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all He has done. If you do this, you will experience God’s peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand” (Philippians 4:5b, 6 NLT).

*Lord, please give us the grace and wisdom to live like who we are.*

# *Do You Know the Name of God?*

*I will set him on high because he hath known My Name.  
—Psalm 91:14*



Here is the only qualification for heaven—to know the name of God. Sounds simple, doesn't it? Yet we realize that there are many who claim to know God, who call Him Lord, who do good works in His name, yet Jesus says He never knew them (Matthew 7:21-23).

The Hebrew word for knowing is *yada*, and it means to ascertain by seeing. Yet we know Jesus often chided those who had eyes to see but could “see not.” In Luke 24, after His resurrection, Jesus appeared to two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus. He visited with them, “But they didn't know who he was, because God kept them from recognizing him” (Luke 24:16 NLT).

## *Do You Know the Name of God?*

The Lord then began to teach them from the Word of God, teaching them what the Old Testament says about the Messiah, the name of God in the flesh. “Then Jesus quoted passages from the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining what all the Scriptures said about himself” (Luke 24:27 NLT).

Jesus went home with them to spend the night. “As they sat down to eat, he took a small loaf of bread, asked God’s blessing on it, broke it, then gave it to them. Suddenly their eyes were opened, and they recognized him” (Luke 24:30-31 NLT). The King James Version reads, “their eyes were opened and they knew him.” The Greek word for knew is *epiginosko*, which means to be fully acquainted with, having an intimate relationship.

It becomes clear that seeing and knowing Who God is unfolds as a result of the miracle of revelation. God uses His Word to bring this revelation. Human eyes, human wisdom, cannot know the name of the Lord. “God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never find him through human wisdom...” (1 Corinthians 1:21 NLT).

In Christ’s prayer to the Father we find the secret for knowing the name of God. Speaking of Himself, Jesus said, “For you have given him authority over everyone in all the earth. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. And this is the way to have eternal life – to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth” (John 17:2-3).

Only those whom the Father has given to the Son as love gifts know God’s name. “I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me” (John 17:6). The Lord told His disciples, “You are permitted to understand the secrets about the Kingdom of God. But I am using these stories to conceal everything about it from outsiders” (Mark 4:11).

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The reason eternal life is such a gift is that not everyone has had the Holy Spirit open their eyes to see that Jesus Christ is God. “For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

We will be “set on high” to reign with Him forever because He has revealed His name to us. If we are among those who confess Jesus as Lord of heaven and earth, we can know we have received this miraculous revelation. Let us rejoice and be glad!

*Oh Lord, continue to open the eyes of our hearts that we might see You more fully.*

# *Set Your Mind on Things Above*

*Since you have been raised to new life with Christ,  
set your sights on the realities of heaven, where  
Christ sits at God's right hand in the place of honor and power.  
Let heaven fill your thoughts. Do not think only  
about things down here on earth.*

—Colossians 3:1-2 NLT



Paul exhorts us to think about heaven. It is difficult, however, to think about things we haven't seen or experienced. Perhaps it would help if we considered the clues given by those who have been to heaven and returned to earth to tell us about it.

Paul had seen heaven firsthand. He wrote of this experience in 2 Corinthians 12:1-8. He heard the Lord speaking there. It was such a glorious place he could not find the words to describe what he saw and heard.

It is interesting that when Paul tried to describe the grandeur of heaven he quoted the prophet Isaiah who had also seen into heaven (Isaiah 6:1-13). Paul's account of heaven agreed with Isaiah's account. "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him"

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(1 Corinthians 2:9 NLT). Then Paul said a very strange thing, “But we know these things because God has revealed them to us by His Spirit...” (1 Corinthians 2:10 NLT). He was saying that these secret things of God come to us by revelation. In other words, we can read the Scriptural accounts of heaven, and the Holy Spirit will apply the truths of His Word so that we can get a concrete glimpse of what our heavenly future holds for us!

The apostle John was lifted up to see heaven also (Revelation chapter 4). He gave us more concrete information. “The city was pure gold, as clear as glass. The wall of the city was built on foundation stones inlaid with twelve gems...the twelve gates were made of pearls—each gate from a single pearl! And the main street was pure gold as clear as glass” (Revelation 21:19-21 NLT). John was describing the incredible capital city (the New Jerusalem) of the country of heaven. In addition, he described the multitude of angels, the sounds he heard, and the amazing creatures he saw. We begin to catch a glimpse of the beauty, the magnificence of heaven, through John.

Moses and Elijah have both been in heaven for thousands of years. And these two heavenly citizens came to earth and visited with Peter, James, and John (Matthew chapter 17). They appeared in physical flesh and bone bodies. (Jesus, of course, rose from the dead in a flesh and bone body.) Moses and Elijah carried on meaningful conversations using language the disciples apparently could understand. Their physical bodies, though flesh and bone, were not subject to gravity. They could descend and ascend freely. (Jesus ascended, free from gravity, in Acts chapter 1.)

Perhaps it was through his experience with Jesus as well as with Moses and Elijah that John could tell us, “But we know

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that when he [Christ] comes we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is” (1 John 3:2 NLT). John told us that our heavenly bodies and experience will be just like Christ’s.

Jesus Himself came down from heaven and taught us how to “set our minds on things above.” In Matthew chapter six, we read about what our mindset will be like as we focus on our eternal future. Christ summarizes these truths by saying, “So don’t worry about having enough food or drink or clothing. Why be like the pagans who are so deeply concerned about these things? Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs, and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern. So don’t worry about tomorrow...” (Matthew 6:31-34 NLT).

*Lord, help us focus on the heavenly realities, knowing we will dwell there forever with You.*

# *We Shall Reign with Him*

*If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.  
—2 Timothy 2:12*



The Greek word translated reign in the New Testament is *basileuo*, which means “to be a king.” In Revelation 11:15 we read, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.” This is a description of the Lord coming to reign as King of Kings.

In the Timothy passage above, Paul said that as believers, though we will suffer here on earth, “we shall reign with Him.” The Greek word used to express this reigning is *sumbasileuo*, which means to reign together with Jesus Christ.

The apostle John saw a vision of the future as the Lord revealed the end of earth as we know it. He described the saints

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and said, “You have caused them to become God’s kingdom and his priests and they will reign on earth” (Revelation 5:10 NLT).

How much time, in our day-to-day living, do we think about what our eternal future will be like? Sometimes it seems we get caught up in the world’s focus on the here and now, desiring more material wealth or envying those who seem to have “made it to the top.” This kind of focus is a joy-stealer, causing us to become greedy, jealous, or angry about what we don’t have.

Sometimes it is helpful to turn our eyes upon the future that is ours. We own everything in heaven and earth, even now, because He does. All the riches of creation, all the gold, silver, and precious stones, are ours, even now. We simply do not yet have access to this abundance.

Again and again the New Testament describes the “unsearchable riches” that are ours in Christ, “the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Ephesians 1:18, 3:8). And this inheritance is “reserved in heaven” for you (1 Peter 1:4).

Peter described another reward “reserved” for those who are deceived, “having eyes full of adultery...unstable souls; a heart exercised with covetous practices...they speak great swelling words of vanity...they allure through the lusts of the flesh” (2 Peter 2:12-18). The reward, the inheritance of earth dwellers who are outside of Christ, is the wrath of God.

*Lord, help us to live each day with the awareness of who we are in You. Protect us from the alluring, beguiling world of the enemy (2 Corinthians 4:4). Cause us to see that any current suffering is nothing compared to the coming glory to which You have appointed us.*

# *The Riches of God's Glory*

*And that He might make known the riches of  
His glory on the vessels of mercy,  
which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us,  
whom He hath called....*

—Romans 9:23-24



Can we even begin to grasp what “the riches of God’s glory” would be? Paul told us that we, the called (those who have come to Christ by faith) are the ones through whom “the riches of His glory” will be displayed.

God’s glory is the very essence of God. Whenever God reveals Himself, His glory is what is seen. John wrote, “Yes, dear friends, we are already God’s children, and we can’t even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. But we do know that when He comes we will be like Him...” (1 John 3:2 NLT). In other words, the essence of God, the richness of His glory as expressed in Christ, will be visible in us!

Paul revealed this truth in his letter to the Ephesians. He explained that we have been resurrected with Christ to a new

## *The Riches of God's Glory*

life, seated even now with Him in the heavenlies, so “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us...” (Ephesians 2:6-7).

Again, Paul elaborated on this amazing reality in Ephesians chapter three. “I was chosen to explain to everyone this plan.... God’s purpose was to show His wisdom in all its rich variety to all the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 3:8-9 NLT).

The Lord, in His manifold wisdom, devised a plan by which He would display His character to the entire universe. He created this plan before the foundation of the world. As we read in Romans 9:23, “...which He had afore prepared unto glory....”

Central to His plan is the revelation of the richness of His grace. This will become visible when He reveals that He has chosen you and me, lumps of clay, to be vessels of His mercy. The glorious kindness and mercy of God toward us as sinners will confound the angels, the unbelievers, the demons—all the onlookers in God’s entire creation—forever, in all “the ages to come.”

This is our destiny, our true purpose for existing. We are alive in Christ for the ultimate purpose of being eternal trophies or testimonies of His goodness toward us as sinners.

Some days we get this backwards. We believe it is our goodness He is interested in having displayed. No. It is “the riches of His glory,” His grace, His mercy, His kindness, His goodness that will be on display. He is creating His life in us through the sanctifying work of His Spirit.

Our practical daily response is to join the apostle Paul who wrote, “That He would grant you, according to the riches of

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His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit...”  
(Ephesians 3:16).

*Father, grant us the ability to see that You alone will be glorified  
in the ages to come; help us see that all that is unfolding in our lives  
is for Your glory.*

## *This World and that World*

*And Jesus answering said unto them, "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.*

—Luke 20:34-36



The Lord has revealed some amazing truths to us in this simple teaching. He refers to “this world” and then to “that world.” He makes it clear that these two “worlds” are quite different. Those who are worthy to obtain “that world” will be like the angels in the sense that they will live forever and earthly institutions like marriage will not exist. (As an aside, remember that the purpose of marriage is procreation according to Genesis 1:27-28. The Lord is not suggesting that in “that world” we won’t have very special relationships of love with those we have known here on earth.)

What is the Lord telling us in this Luke passage? The Greek word for world is *aion*, which means age or a duration of time. There are many different periods of time, or ages, which the

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Lord has prepared and arranged in His eternal plan. Each age is unique and defined by His decree.

In Matthew 12:32 the Lord says there is no forgiveness in this world (*aion*, age) or in the world (*aion*, age) to come for those who resist the Holy Spirit. In Hebrews 11:3 we learn that the worlds (*aions*, ages) were framed (prepared) by the Word of God. Thus, we are currently living in a God-ordained age unlike the age to come.

Paul told us in Ephesians 1:21 that Christ reigns over all things “not only in this world (*aion*, age) but also in that which is to come.”

In Matthew 13:49 Jesus describes what it will be like at the “end of this world.” He has given us signs of His return and “of the end of the world” (Matthew 24:3.). The Lord clearly teaches that one of the aspects of the world to come is that those who enter that age will have eternal life (Mark 10:30). Interestingly, the Greek word for eternal is *aionian*. In this next age (*aion*), those who enter will be eternal (*aionian*) beings!

Satan is the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4). “This world” is filled with “cares” and “deceitfulness.” Paul said that Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world.

Obviously “this world” is not our home if we are “children of the resurrection.” We are those who are “accounted worthy” to reign with the Lord in the coming age. We are “worthy” because, through the gift of faith, we are hidden “in Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). Because of His worthiness, we are counted worthy of eternal (*aionian*) life. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain” (Revelation 5:12).

*This World and that World*

Because we will reign in the age to come, we are to be “looking for that blessed [happy] hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

*Lord, lift up our eyes by Your grace. May we see You. Free us from focusing on the things of this world.*

# *The End of the Age*

*But now once in the end of the world hath He appeared  
to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*

—Hebrews 9:26



The Scripture says Christ appeared now and now is described as “the end of the world” in the King James Version. Yet two thousand years have passed and “the end of the world” seems not to have come.

It helps to know that the Greek version actually reads “in the end of the ages.” In other words, we are in the end of a series of ages or *aions* in which God has been revealing Himself. We live in the end of the ages that shared some things in common. For example, all humans throughout all the ages since man was created have been mortals. They have the sin nature, and the wages of sin is death.

Yet in the coming age, believers will have immortal bodies. We will never die. Rather, we will be reigning with Christ over

## *The End of the Age*

a new and unique dispensation or age. We will have purpose, specific assignments. We will function as priests with access to the very throne of God (Revelation 1:6). The cares of this world will no longer exist for us (Matthew 13:22).

The Scripture even describes our physical appearance in the coming age. We will shine like the sun (Matthew 13:43). We will appear to be “arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.” Christ’s righteousness will shine through us and our appearance will be like white light. And the Lord’s name will be written on our foreheads (Revelation 22:4).

We tend to say, “I think all of that is just symbolism, and it doesn’t have any practical value for me in the here and now.” Yet the New Testament writers found these realities to be the very essence of their daily joy and strength. They had their minds set on the kingdom to come.

The disciples were eager to know when the end of this age would come. Jesus went into great detail so they would look for the coming kingdom (Matthew 24). He encouraged them to “watch” for this coming kingdom (Matthew 24:42). He taught parables of warning about those who were not focused on and prepared for this coming kingdom. (Five of the ten virgins were not prepared in Matthew 25.)

The apostle Paul continually urged the saints to set their minds on things above. He wrote, “Let us watch and be sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:6). Again he asked, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?” He answered that the hope and joy of his life is seeing the saints gathered at the Lord’s coming. Paul’s daily joy was in gathering people into the coming kingdom (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).

## *Heavenly Treasures*

The Lord's brother, Jude, instructed the saints on how to live their daily lives. He wrote, "Build yourselves up in your faith...keep looking for this eternal life that is coming to you" (Jude 20, 21).

Peter told the saints to rejoice even in their troubles because "when His glory shall be revealed" you will have exceeding joy (1 Peter 4:13). Peter knew that the practical way to get through our challenges is to stay focused on the coming kingdom when Christ will be revealed and the saints will be glorified.

Peter went on to urge the saints to be "looking for" the coming of the day of the Lord. We are to "look for" the new heavens and the new earth. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent..." (2 Peter 3:12-14).

*Oh Lord, You have told us that we are not of this world, even though we are in it. Renew our hunger for the world to come so that we might live each day with greater joy and expectation in You.*

# *Christ's Return*

*When He cometh in the glory of  
His Father with the holy angels.*

—Mark 8:38



When the Son of God came into the world more than two thousand years ago, He came with His earthly father present, without any visible fanfare or glory. Rather, He slept in an animal feedbox with only Mary, Joseph, and lowly shepherds in attendance, hidden from the eyes of the world. On His second visit, the Lord is going to come with worldwide fanfare and in the blinding glory of His heavenly Father.

On His first visit, the Lord came clothed in the humility of an earthly body. When He comes again He will be clothed in His shining heavenly garments, wrapped in a golden sash, His feet like fine brass, accompanied by “ten thousands times ten thousand, and thousands and thousands” angels (Revelation 1:13, 15; 5:11).

## *Heavenly Treasures*

On His first visit, one angel came to a few shepherds in a field at night and announced the birth of the Savior “which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:8-11). His next visit will be in blazing glory on the Day of the Lord, seen by every eye around the world.

While He was still a toddler (no more than two years old), the Son of Man was visited by “wise men” from the east who came “to worship Him.” These men understood this Child to be a King, King of the Jews. They brought Him gifts and fell down at His feet in adoration, “in the house” where He was with Mary, His mother (Matthew 2:1-11).

When the Lord returns as King of Kings, revealed to the entire world, all the kings and rulers on the earth will bow before Him. This will be a terrifying event for all who are alive who do not know Him. “And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron. And He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:15-16).

As we look back and consider the Lord’s birth in Bethlehem, we are grateful and amazed. For those of us alive in the twenty-first century, it is perhaps even more thrilling to look forward to His next appearance. He arrived in Bethlehem in the still of a dark night; He will return again with the sound of trumpets in the blazing light of day. Are we, like the wise men of old, looking up with high expectations of seeing Him?

May we be among those who are “children of the light, and the children of the day.” To those who are children of darkness,

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children of the night, Christ will come as a thief in the night, unexpected and unwelcomed (1 Thessalonians 5:4-5).

*Father, remind us often, by Your Spirit, to look up expectantly.  
We welcome Your arrival.*

# *The Heavenly City*

*And he showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem...  
having the glory of God, sparkling like a precious gem,  
crystal clear like jasper.*

*—Revelation 21:10*



Several references in the Scripture describe the dwelling place of the Lord. We know He is in heaven, and the capital city of heaven is the New Jerusalem. This city is in existence now. It is solid, constructed on a bejeweled foundation, “inlaid with twelve gems...jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald, onyx, carnelian, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, and amethyst” (Revelation 21:19 NLT). The city itself is “pure gold, as clear as glass” (Revelation 21:18 NLT).

All the saints through the ages have known of the existence of this city, and God Himself built it. Abraham “was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God” (Hebrews 11:10 NLT).

## *The Heavenly City*

Imagine! The Lord Jesus Christ left that glorious city to enter this world, to be “laid in a manger,” the home of animals. And as an adult, Christ had no home at all. “Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have no home of my own, not even a place to lay my head” (Matthew 8:20 NLT).

The saints of ancient times in the Old Testament were, in many cases, very wealthy. They had thriving businesses and large families and they occupied places of power and prestige in their communities. Noah, for example, had lived comfortably for six hundred years in a sophisticated society that had musical instruments, metal works of bronze and iron, large cities, etc. (Read Genesis 4:17-5:32.) Yet the Lord called Noah to leave all of that behind and go live in a wooden boat!

Abraham lived in the wealthy city of Ur of the Chaldees. Excavations of this city show it to have been located on the west bank of the Euphrates with fourteen- to fifteen-room homes containing elaborate furnishings. The time period was about 1900 BC. The Lord called him to leave all that behind. “So Abraham departed as the Lord had instructed him... He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth...” (Genesis 12:4-5 NLT). Eventually Abraham spent his life traveling and living in tents, focused on the “heavenly city” to which he was called.

The Lord Himself taught clearly that our lives here on earth are temporal. Nothing here compares with the glory that is to be ours in the heavenly city. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal” (Matthew 6:19). Instead He pointed us to “the treasures in heaven” that are not corruptible and cannot be

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stolen. “In My Father’s house are many mansions.... I go to prepare a place for you...” (John 14:2). A Christ-built mansion awaits every believer!

Paul was caught up to heaven and actually saw the heavenly city and returned to describe it. Using the words of Isaiah, Paul wrote, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9 NLT). The Savior left the heavenly city to be housed in a stable in order for us to be housed in heaven.

*Lord, help us set our mind on things above, our true home.*

Feel free to contact Glenna for more information or  
to speak at your event, retreat or conference.

Phone: 480-483-7731

Email: [ISpeak4U@aol.com](mailto:ISpeak4U@aol.com)

Website: [www.glennasalsbury.com](http://www.glennasalsbury.com)