

The Kingdom of "Heaven"

The Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom of, or out of heaven. There is perhaps no subject in the Bible about which there is such shallow thinking, such dullness of understanding, and so many distorted notions, as the subject of heaven. Where is heaven? What is heaven? Is it a place? Is it a planet? Is it a galaxy? Is it beyond the stars? Is it a condition of life? Is it a different dimension of living? If our very Father is in heaven, then we ought to know something about heaven, for it is the source of our life, the realm of our origin. We know this because the Father who begat us dwells in heaven; therefore we are out of heaven and from heaven. If He is our Father and heaven is His natural environment, His habitat, we should understand what that realm is really like.

By saying God is in heaven, Jesus does not mean to localize or locate God. He is not telling us of a place where God is and where God lives apart from any other place in the universe. If that were the case then there would be no God anywhere outside of that place called heaven. Those who think of heaven as a place, usually think of Him as being very distant. Somehow we have gotten the idea that heaven is a long way off. This error has crept into many songs sung by the church world. In the Pentecostal Church where I was raised as a boy two of the favorite songs were "When We All Get To Heaven" and "Won't It Be Wonderful There." Another with which many who read these lines will be familiar says, "There is a happy land, far, far, away." And even in that popular hymn, "The Old Rugged Cross," we sing, "He will call me some day to that home far away..." How did we get that conception? Certainly not from Jesus or the apostles! When Jesus was talking to Nicodemus, He said, "No man hath ascended up into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (Jn. 3:13). That is, Jesus claimed that while He was sitting and talking with this rabbi, He Himself was actually in heaven. This means, of course, that heaven is here and now.

The easiest way to understand heaven is to realize that it is where God lives. The question follows: Where is God? Is He on a planet thirteen trillion light years beyond the farthest star? Or, is He everywhere, omnipresent? The Psalmist David posed this intriguing question: "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thine hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. 139:7-10). Is there some point out in the universe where you can draw a line and say, "God comes to this point. Beyond here God does not exist. If you cross this line you will leave the presence of God." Ah, the scriptures testify that God is before all things, all things were made by Him, He upholds all things, He fills all things, and He is greater than all things.

It is abundantly clear that wherever there are things, there you will find God. Is there any place where there are no things? If there is, man has never found it. There is no scientific evidence that such a place exists. As far as man can see with his telescopes, including the new and most powerful Hubble telescope, there is no end to the universe. Man is unable to find the outer perimeter of the cosmos. The galaxies and the swirling nebulae stretch out into infinity. Since God

both created all things in Himself, and fills all things with Himself, it is an absolute certainty that to find the end of creation would be to discover the limit of God. God is infinite, unlimited, boundless, unending and inexhaustible. The creation is co-extensive with the Creator, therefore, there is no end to the cosmos for there is no end to God. Certainly that answers the question of the Psalmist, "Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?"

Will you agree with me that everything everywhere is made up of things that are visible and things that are invisible? And is it not true that visible things never remain the same but are always changing, and that invisible things always remain the same and never change? "The things which are seen are TEMPORAL," says the Lord, "and the things which are not seen are ETERNAL." This is the wisdom of God in a mystery. But it should be clear that the realm of the unseen is the realm of the INVISIBLE GOD! That which you cannot see is called Creator, Origin, Source, Cause. That which you can see is called creation, effect, form, matter, things.

The wonderful attribute of omnipresence is one of the foremost parts of God's glory. God's omnipresence — that is to say, God's presence everywhere and wholly everywhere — is rooted in the fact that He upholds all things and fills all things and is higher than all heavens. That is the testimony of scripture. God's presence is with all His creatures of all kinds, and in all places of His dominion. Give strength, then, to your understanding, and give wings to your imagination, and give holy fear to your heart, as we try to enter upon those great matters — "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man...but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." When you try to do it, you cannot limit the presence of God to any one place on earth, or in heaven: no, nor to all places on earth and in heaven, taken together. Place, precinct, locality, situation — when you attempt it, you soon find how absolutely impossible it is to limit and restrict God in that way. Heaven and earth, time and eternity, all worship their Maker in these adoring words, and say: "Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Thee: how much less this house which we have builded." And then, if anything could add to the awe and the wonder of all that, it would be this other all-transcending truth — that He who is everywhere is also wholly everywhere. Now that the almighty Father is wholly, and is continually, with every one of us in all the completeness, and in all the totality, of His Godhead — what an absolutely staggering thought is that!

In the early 1600's the Christian mystic, Jacob Boehme, wrote: "If you want to know about Heaven and what Heaven is and where it is, you do not need to cast your thoughts many thousands of miles off, for that place, that heaven thousands of miles away, is not your Heaven. The true Heaven is not a created place but an uncreated place, and it is not found in a particular place but everywhere, even in the very place where you are standing and going. For when your spirit within you is able to penetrate inward through and beyond your own flesh and life, and is able to catch hold of the innermost moving of God, then you are clearly in Heaven. Moreover, if your eyes were but opened, you should see God everywhere in His Heaven, for Heaven is found everywhere. For instance, when Stephen saw Heaven open, and the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God, his spirit did not suddenly transport itself into outer space, but rather Stephen's spirit had moved inward, within, into the innermost place where Heaven is found everywhere, for God fills all things. So you must realize that this world with all of its physical properties is in union with the vast vistas of the heavenly spaces above the earth. There is only one Heart, one Being, one Will, one God, All in all."

I know that these words seem to be incredible but they are truth. I point you today, dear child of God, to another world, spiritual in content, which lies beyond the immediate grasp of the physical senses. It is a world that exists within and beyond our physical existence, with its own structure, modes of behavior, patterns of communications, knowledge, wisdom and power. It sees without being seen. This spiritual realm bears the same relation to the sensible world as the Creator does to the creation, as the spirit does to the body. This realm is heaven. Heaven is not a place, not a geographical or astral location — it is a sphere or realm of reality. It is a dimension of life. It is a level of God-consciousness. It is the invisible realm of Spirit that transcends this gross material realm. It is as omnipresent as God is omnipresent. It is co-existent and co-extensive with the physical universe, but on a different level of reality and being. It is the dimension of spirit reality, of being where God is all that He is. Heaven is also the realm in which God is revealed by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God is known by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God can be touched in the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God can be experienced in the Spirit. Heaven is everywhere. Heaven is closer to you than the air that you breathe, closer even than the blood that courses through your veins.

Let all who read these lines clearly understand that God's heaven is not the inexhaustible universe of stars and suns and planets and swirling nebulae. Heaven has nothing whatever to do with the time-space continuum or matter in any form. The true heaven is beyond it all, above it all, before it all, yet in it all. Heaven is that high and holy and invisible realm of SPIRIT, the pure and divine and eternal and incorruptible realm of GOD HIMSELF, which existed before ever a star or a planet appeared. Heaven, therefore, can only be entered BY THAT WHICH IS SPIRIT. Is that not why Jesus spoke of heavenly things to Nicodemus and said, "Except a man be born again, except a man be born from above, except a man be born of the Spirit, he can neither see nor enter into the Kingdom of God."

Let every man know for a certainty that carnal eyes cannot pierce the invisible realm of Spirit. The Russian astronauts returned from space and said, "We have been up there, we have looked around, we didn't find or see God." Of course not! Natural minds know nothing of that realm, for we perceive only those physical things recognizable by the physical senses. Natural ears are unable to hear that which is spoken in the realm of the spirit, for spirit vibrates on a frequency higher than and superior to the low vibrations of matter. Heaven is all around us, in us, through us, but we must be raised out of our natural consciousness in order to touch it. But the dimension of heaven is ten thousand times ten thousand MORE REAL than this gross material realm to which our mortal form has been subjected.

Heaven is our Father's native realm, and the realm in which the sons of God shouted for joy in that blessed day when they were chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. Heaven is our Father's natural environment. It is His home and habitat. Heaven is heaven by virtue of the fact that His presence, nature, power, wisdom and glory make it such. If God dwells in me, then heaven is within me, for He is my Father "in heaven." When teaching His disciples that magnificent prayer called The Lord's Prayer, Jesus was not thinking of a distant Being in some remote area of the universe. He was referring to One whose existence was the very essence of His life. What was true of Jesus Christ as He lived in Palestine twenty centuries ago, is equally true of all sons and daughters of God today. Our Father is in heaven and also in our hearts. The word "also," however, is superfluous — GOD IS OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN IN OUR HEARTS! That is the truth of the matter. To know this is to know a new and deeper dimension to life. To know the presence and person of

God our Father within is to experience heaven in the here and now, to be in heaven. But even more than that, we will cede our lives now as the residence and habitation of the Most High. We will know ourselves to be the home of our heavenly Father, the base of His operation, just as Jesus did. “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works” (Jn. 14:10). The Father who dwelled in Jesus is the Father in heaven. Thus, we and heaven are one. To say that God is in heaven and also in my heart, and to then separate between the two, is to entirely miss the mark. Once God’s DOMINION has been established by the Spirit in any human heart, the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven is accomplished in that life. Heaven rules there! That is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. And the Kingdom of Heaven, my beloved, is at hand!

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