

~Other Speakers S-Z: Classic Christian Writings:

Shortly before His crucifixion and in anticipation of His resurrection and ascension, the Lord Jesus said to the disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1,2) . . .

The Lord Jesus has returned to heaven to "make ready" a place for His people. What are the essential features of heaven, wherein Christ is preparing a place for His own?

Heaven is a place of ineffable beauty. The wall of the New Jerusalem is of jasper. Its foundation is garnished with precious stones. The city itself and the street thereof are of pure, transparent gold. The twelve gates are of pearl. The river of life is pure, clear as crystal, and proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb. The city has no need for the sun or the moon, for the glory of God is the light of it, and the Lamb of God is the lamp of it (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

Heaven is also a place of joy. In Revelation 21:4 we read, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

Heaven is likewise a place of rest. According to Revelation 14:13, God's people will rest from their earthly labors. However, it will also be a place of heavenly service. "There shall be no more curse," writes John, "but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him" (Rev. 22:3). Butler expresses the matter beautifully,

"Resting, but not in slumberous ease,
Working, but not in wild unrest.
Still ever blessing, and ever blest."

Abundant life will be yet another characteristic of heaven: "I will give unto him who is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. 21:6, cp. 1 Tim. 4:8).

It will also be a place of holiness. In Revelation 21:27 we read the solemn and sobering words, "There shall in no way enter into it anything that defileth, neither he that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Unspeakable glory will be an integral part of heaven. The apostle John summarized this anticipated glory when he wrote, "We know that, when He [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). "The glory of expectation," writes J. Dwight Pentecost, "is that we shall be transformed into His likeness, being sinless, deathless, and experiencing the perfection of development" (Things to Come, p. 582). See also 2 Corinthians 4:17; Colossians 3:4; Philippians 3:20,21; Revelation 21:4,5.

The believer's occupation, however, will not be with his or her own position and glory but with God Himself. In the ultimate sense, heaven will be a place of worship. Every child of God will proclaim, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever" (Rev. 5:13, cp. vv. 12,14; 7:12).

Heaven Is A Prepared Place For Prepared People

Not everyone will enter heaven. Only those whose names are inscribed in the Lamb's book of life will be there (Rev. 21:27). What must one do to have his or her name entered in the Lamb's book of life?

First he (or she) must recognize that he is a sinner and therefore under divine condemnation (Psa. 51:5; Rom. 5:12,18,19; 3:10,23; John 3:18,36).

Next, he must realize that he cannot enter heaven by his own merit or effort (Eph. 2:8,9; Tit. 3:5).

Third, he must repent of his sins (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 20:21). Repentance is a change of mind and heart which causes one to turn from sin unto the Saviour.

Last, he must receive Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour, the One who died for his sins upon the

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cross and rose again from the grave (John 1:12; 3:15,16; 5:24; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9-13; 1 Cor. 15:14).

Are you prepared? If not, personally trust in the Lord Jesus Christ today. If you are prepared, then live and testify for Him who loved you and gave Himself for you (Gal. 2:20).

From Christian Victory.