

Elder Bobby Willis



### **Our Hope Is In Heaven**

I Peter 1:3-4, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you...”**

The concept of hope and wherein our hope is based is often misused and abused. There are many people in ‘*Christian Religions*’ today who do not have a clear idea of where eternity will be spent by God’s Children. There are those who believe that only a few will house ‘Paradise’ where God actually dwells and the rest of His children will live eternally here on this present earth, only that it will be a purified earth. The thought is this earth will be purified by fire and it will then be made ‘new’ and ‘pure’ so as to be a ‘heavenly like’ place for the remainder of God’s children to dwell with Christ as king.

If one believes the bible to be true, it should then be clear that our hope is in Heaven above as this earth will be destroyed. There can be no inhabitants because there will no longer be an earth. Peter says, **“...reserved in heaven for you...”** The Apostle Paul alludes to the same premise in Colossians 1:5, **“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;...”** So then, we must study the word of God to determine clearly where heaven is and where it is not.

First, consider the **“heavenly places”** that are found here on this earth which are not eternal, but are timely. Paul, in Ephesians 2:6, relates to these wonderful, spiritual, and joyous places we are blessed with on this earth, **“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:...”** How then do we know that this is referring to places on this earth? Ephesians 3:10 has the answer, **“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God...”** The church is found here on this earth, not in

eternal heaven. Those who occupy the church are blessed to be in **“heavenly places”** every time they come together and worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth.

Christ, in speaking to the thief on the cross, told him, **“Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise”** (Luke 23:43). This surely was not on this sin cursed earth as Jesus said **“Today”**. The spirit of this thief was returned to the Father which gave it and that was in the eternal dwelling place referred to as **“heaven”** and also as **“paradise”**. Paul was blessed to be **“caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter”** (II Corinthians 12:4). This third heaven which Paul spoke of was the same as we call *“eternal heaven”*, or the eternal dwelling place of God. It is the same place Jesus refers to in giving His children comfort in John 14:1-4. The Lord said His Father’s house had many mansions and that **“I go to prepare a place for you.”** In verse 3 He said He was going to prepare a place for us and that **“I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”** Now, simple logic and common sense tells us that if he must go to a place (heaven) and then come back from that place to get us, then He and we must leave this place to return to where He had prepared a place for us and where the many mansions were located. There is no mention of Him returning or us returning to this earth.

Concerning this earth, we find Peter explaining simply what will happen to it in II Peter 3:7, **“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”** Notice that he said, **“which are now.”** The earth and the heavens above us will have something happen to them. Peter said they are **“reserved unto fire.”** Then, in II Peter 3:10 we find this, **“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heaven shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”** If the earth is going to be burned up (consumed), then it is not going to be purified for a future dwelling place of the Saints of God because it will no longer exist.

Where then is our hope? By the abundant mercy of God, our hope is **“reserved in heaven”** where God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit dwell. Christ said, **“where I am, there ye may be also”** (John 14:3). We must remember that these three are one, so where one dwells, they all dwell, and so will all the children of God. **“Even so, come, Lord Jesus”** (Revelation 22:20). **Think About It!**