

To be so Earthly good is to be so Heavenly minded

Col 3:1-4

27th December 2015

My intention is to give you a biblical picture of what awaits us after we die, when we go to Heaven, what the New Heavens and New Earth – which is where we will live for the rest of our **eternal lives** – what this New Earth will be like...

The only reason we can come to have a hope in a life of **eternal inexpressible joy** after this life, is because Jesus Christ has bought this future glorious life for us.

The approach I will take will be;

- To start with our passage which is an exhortation on what we should **seek** and where we should **set** our minds –
- And then see if I can show you a **glimpse** of the New Heavens and New Earth using biblical texts.

QUESTION

If I was to ask you; “**What is your greatest expectation in your life?**”

I doubt many of us would say, death.

It is only when we become so heavenly minded that we can truly be any Earthly good.

Colossians 3:1-4

1 If then you have been raised with Christ,

Immediately we see this as a conditional statement...**If** this is true **Then** this is what should proceed.

So, Paul is exhorting us;

If then you have been raised with Christ,

- **Have you been raised with Christ?**
- **Have you been born-again by the Spirit of God IN Jesus?**

- Do you believe that Jesus being God, died on Calvary for your sins?
- That Jesus has bought you with the shedding of His blood on that Cross?
- Do you believe that Jesus the Christ is your Lord and God?

This is what this condition means;

If you have been raised with Christ...***Yes Paul I am raised in Christ...what then?***

We continue with the verse...

seek the things that are above!

Well, what does that mean? *Things that are above?* Well Paul thinks we may need some clarification so he adds

where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

This is God's command for those who have been raised in Christ. Let me ask you again; Do you think of yourself raised in Christ, are you a new creation in Jesus...? Well this is for you!

Colossians 3:1

1 *If then you have been raised with Christ, **seek the things that are above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*

Do you remember Acts 1...

Jesus has given His last commands to the disciples and then He ascends into the heavens, and two angels then say this to them;

Acts 1:11

11 ... "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? **This Jesus**, who was taken up from you **into heaven**, will come in the same way as you saw him **go into heaven.**"

Heaven is emphasised three times here as Jesus' destination. This is where Jesus is.

What about the passage we will be uncovering in the coming weeks. The dramatic martyrdom of Stephen...As Stephen is being stoned to death we read;

Acts 7:55

55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

Here we have Stephen peeking into Heaven and he sees Jesus there but also Jesus in the same position of our text...*Jesus at the right hand of God! its a position of power and authority!*

It is like our own vernacular – the person second in charge – well that my right hand man!

Jesus is in Heaven, at the right hand of God!!

And here in Colossians Paul exhorts us to seek these things...

We are to chase after heavenly things!

And before we can make any excuses Paul interrupts us with the next verse;

2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

If your reading the NIV you would have read in verse 1;

set your hearts on things above and then ***set your minds*** in verse 2...even though the word heart is not in the original... it is an acceptable interpretation...for the word to seek means;

to desire...**to try and reach for something we desire**...How can you desire anything unless your heart is set upon it?

We hear Jesus speak in this manner; He said;

Matthew 6:20-21

20 lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 For where your treasure is, **there your heart will be also.**

The rest of this passage and into the remaining verses we have the reasons why...we should set our hearts and minds on the things that are above?

3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

CLARIFICATION

This doesn't mean that we no longer care about the things of this Earth, of course we do...**God is in Heaven and He cares** about the things of this Earth...but we live on this Earth with our hearts and minds yearning and concentrating on the place **where we will live for all eternity** – IN the New Earth!

CORRECTION #1

1. **The Heaven we know of now is not the final Heaven.** When the bible speaks of our final resting place - Shalom – Our eternal rest...It is not up in the skies up there some where!
 - Our final resting place – The Promised Land is in the New Heavens and New Earth...**Our Eternal homeland** is this Earth in a renewed form.

The Apostle John tells us this in;

Revelation 21:1-3

1 Then I saw a **new heaven** and a **new earth**, for the *first heaven and the first earth had passed away, ...*

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, **coming down out of heaven from God**, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice **from the throne** saying, "**Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.**

John sees a New Heaven and a New Earth and down from Heaven comes this Holy City – The New Jerusalem – as the bride of Christ...But pay attention that **verse 3** says that;

“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

Revelation 21:5

5 And he who was seated on the throne said, **“Behold, I am making all things new.”**

God is recreating this Earth so it is renewed. There is no total recreation, but this Earth will be renewed by the abolishment of sin...

The Apostle Peter makes the same point;

2 Peter 3:13

13 ... according to his promise **we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth** in which righteousness dwells.

Romans 8:21-22

21 ... creation itself **will be set free from its bondage to corruption** [*creation will be also be freed from sin*]

and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

CORRECTION #2

1. **We won't be like angels or the like**...nor have wings or fly around like spirits or ghosts.
 - a. Are bodies will be glorified bodies renewed, re-created to live in this New Heavens and New Earth and **we won't be part of an eternal choir singing hymns** to God for all eternity.

We will be the **same person** that we are now, only with resurrected bodies which will be able to behold the glory of God!

It why Job spoke this way;

Job 19:26-27

26 And after my skin has been thus destroyed [**This is His death**], yet in my flesh **I shall see God**,
27 whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!

But what flesh, what body will we possess in our resurrection?

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

20 ... in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, **the firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep [**that's all believer's who have died**]

23 ... **Christ the firstfruits**, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

Luke 24:39

39 See my hands and my feet, **that it is I myself**. *Touch me*, and see. **For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.**"

Just like Jesus we will have a body that will be made with flesh and bones...

Luke 24:41-43

41 ... "Have you anything here to eat?"

42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish,

43 and he took it and ate before them.

John spoke of our glorification after the likeness of Jesus!

1 John 3:2

2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and **what we will be** has not yet appeared; but we know *that when he appears we shall be like him*, because we shall see him as he is.

Philippians 3:20-21

20 ... our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

21 who will transform our **lowly body to be like his glorious body**...

1 Corinthians 15:35

35 But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”

1 Corinthians 15:42-44

42 So is it with the **resurrection of the dead**. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Our resurrected bodies will be;

1. Imperishable
2. Glorious
3. Powerful
4. Spiritual

Here we read spiritual and we think ethereal, ghostly – see through...but this means that our bodies will be animated by the Spirit of God. Just like we say that we are spiritual creatures in Christ now – and yet you see me in physical bodily form.

Matthew 13:43

43 the righteous will **shine like the sun** in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Isaiah 65:17-25

17 “For behold, **I create new heavens and a new earth**, [this is in the OLD TESTAMENT BY THE WAY] and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.

18 But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, *I create Jerusalem **to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness***.

19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; **no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. [NO MORE CRYING OR DISTRESS]**

21 **They shall build houses and inhabit them**; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

22 ...and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

24 Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food.

The wolf and the lamb will graze together...beautiful harmony.

They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the Lord.

Amen.