

Heaven and the Afterlife

Notes and Outline - 1

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"Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither."

C.S. Lewis

"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."

Jhn 14:2

I. Introduction

1. The history of Heaven

- a. All major cultures have a heaven scenario
 - Zoroastrian (*Paradise*) – Babylonian Epoch of Gilgamesh
 - Hindu (*Bhava Loka* – Good Kingdom)
 - Buddhist (*Nirvana*) – by collecting good Karma
 - Islam (*Jannah* - Paradise)
- b. All, except the Christian concept are based on good works
 - Earned “wages” argument (Rom 4:4; Gal 2:15-21)
 - Sets up “punishment” and “reward”

2. Who is right?

- a. “That’s your opinion”
- b. What is the truth?
 - i. It Exists -- It is self-defeating to deny the existence of truth.
 - ii. It is Unchangeable -- What was true is true and will remain true.
 - iii. It is Eternal -- Even if every created thing ceases to exist, Truth will continue to exist.
 - iv. It is Exclusive – The opposite of true is always false.
- c. Objective standard?
 - i. The Bible is unique
 - a. Intrinsic (Without error, consistent – 66 Books, 40 Authors – vetted)
 - b. Extrinsic (History, Archeology)
 - ii. Jesus said that it is true (Jn 8:31,32; 17:17)
 - iii. The final argument is _____.

3. Everybody wants to Go

- a. Polls - 77% rated their chances of getting to Heaven as "good" or "excellent," while 19% rated them as "only fair" or "poor."
- b. All roads lead to Heaven – do they?
 - Universalism (Rob Bell – “*Love Wins*”)
 - Baha’i

4. Sneaking a Peek

- a. We want to know
 - Biblical revelation is enough (2 Pet 1:3; Rev 1:2)
 - Sure word of prophecy (2 Pet 2:19-21)

- b. **Spiritism – Mediums** (Heb *’owb* – spirits of the dead, and *yid-dehony* – soothsayer – Gr LXX *eggastrimuthos* - ventriloquist)
 - Talking with the dead?
 - a. Forbidden by Scripture (Deut. 18:9-12, 14; Isa 8:19-20)
 - b. What about Samuel? (1 Sam 28:13-19)
- c. **Near death experiences**
 - Be careful of the message
 - Biblical NDE’s
 - a. Stephen (Acts 7:56)
 - b. Paul (2 Cor 12:2-4)

5. What is Heaven?

- a. **A real place where God Himself dwells**
 - **A City** (Heb 11:16; 13:14; Rev 21:2)
 - a. beautiful and glorious: 21:2
 - b. security: Walls and gates
 - c. very large
 - d. Finest, most valuable materials
 - e. Lots of room for inhabitants (Jn 14:2)
 - **A Land** – the New Earth
 - a. The old Earth done away (Isa 34:4; 2 Pet 3:10-13)
 - b. All things new (Rev 21:1,5)
- b. **Not part of this Universe**
 - Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (Jn 18:36)
 - Heaven is not of this creation (Heb 9:11,24)
 - Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God a. we shall all be changed...we will have a new, spiritual body (1 Cor 15:35-50)
 - Not fully describable by human language (2 Cor 12:4)

In coming sessions:

1. Explore
 - a. Death – what is it?
 - b. Architecture of Man
 1. Body, Soul, Spirit – Image of God
 - c. What is the interim state?
 - i. Nature of the resurrection
 - ii. New bodies
 1. What are they like?
 2. When do we get them?
2. Who goes to Heaven?
 - a. Are there many paths
 - b. Who is excluded? Why?
 - c. Will everyone eventually go to heaven?
3. What is Heaven like
 - a. Lots of questions, surprising answers

II. Death and the Grave

“I do not fear death. I had been dead for billions and billions of years before I was born, and had not suffered the slightest inconvenience from it.”
– [Mark Twain](#)

Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death? Job 38:17

1. The Nature of Our Reality

a. Everything we know is Post-Curse

- i. Beyond space and time
- ii. Misconceptions abound

What is normal?

Pre-Fall (Genesis 1:26- 2:25)	Post-Curse (Genesis 3)
<i>Dominion over the Earth</i>	<i>Ground cursed, thorns</i>
<i>Fellowship with God</i>	<i>Banished from the Garden</i>
<i>Harmony and Peace</i>	<i>Fear, excuses, blame, sorrow</i>
<i>Innocence</i>	<i>Knowledge of sin and evil</i>
<i>Industry and purpose</i>	<i>Toil and sweat</i>
<i>Everlasting life</i>	<i>Death</i>

2. Architecture of Man (Matt 22:37; 1 Thes 5:23)

a. The Body (Heb *basar*; Gr *soma*)

- i. Gen 1:26 – “make” (Heb - *asah* – make, cause to be)
- ii. “Formed” – a hint of something different (Heb - *yatsar* – fashion from existing material) double “yud” – from the first letter of YHWH – the “I AM that I AM (Ex 3:14) – Indicates individuality (DNA?). (cf. Gen 1:21, Psa 139:7-18, Isa 41:10,13)
- iii. From the dust of the ground (Gen 2:7)
- iv. A “Tent” or “Tabernacle” to dwell in (Jn 1:14; 2 Pet 1:14) Jn 14:2?
- v. Returns to the Earth (Gen 3:19)

b. The Soul (Heb *nephesh*; Gr *psyche*)

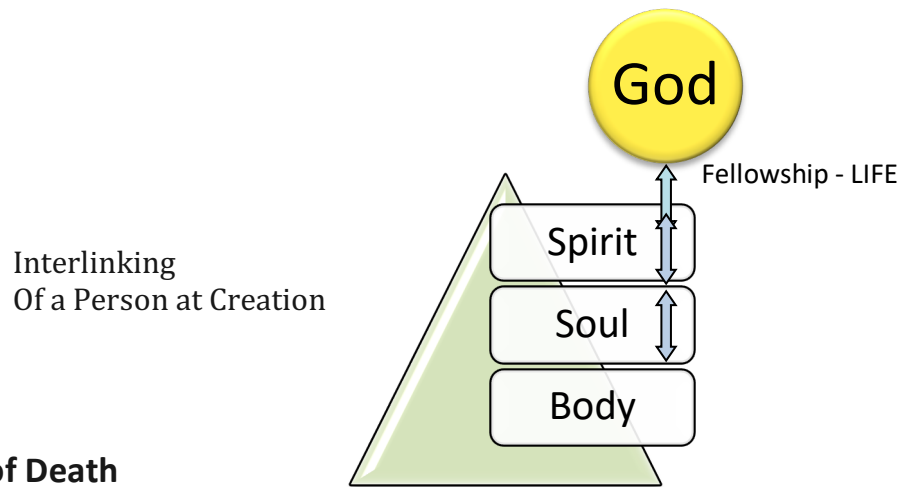
- i. Gen 1:27 – “created” (Heb – *bara* – make out of nothing) -- Soul/Spirit
- ii. Characterized as person, life, mind
- iii. Heb – *nephesh* – living creature. All animal life - Gen 1:20
- iv. Synonymous with “mind” in the New Testament
- v. The interface between body and spirit.

c. Spirit (Heb *ruwach*; Gr *pneuma*)

- i. Is imparted to Man – not animals (Gen 2:7 *neshamah*)
- ii. Breath, wind (cf. Jn 3:8)
- iii. Non physical (Jn 4:24; Heb 1:14)
- iv. Synonymous with “heart”
- v. Seat of will, character, nature (Jn 4:24b; Matt 15:18; Rom 6:17; Eph 6:6)

d. Some Distinctions

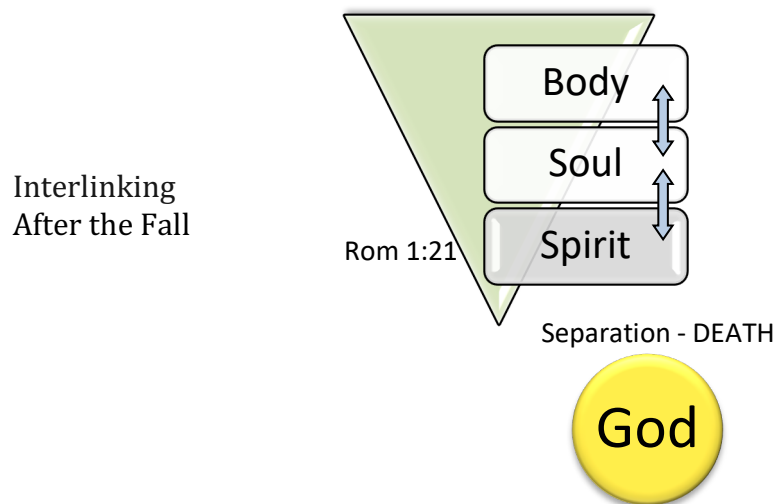
- i. The body can die, the soul cannot (Matt 10:28; Lk 8:52-56) in Sheol (Ps 16:10)
- ii. The soul can be in distress *apart from* the spirit (Ps 42:6) – a battlefield of emotions
- iii. Soul and spirit can be separated (Heb 4:12)
- iv. The **body** is replaced (1 Jn 3:2; 1 Cor 15:12-22; 35-49) (2 Cor 5:1-9, v. 8 Gr *oiketerion* cf. Jude 1:6)
- v. The **soul** is renewed (Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 2:16; Eph 4:23; 1 Tim 1:7)
- vi. The **spirit** is reborn (Jn 3:1-8; Heb 12:22-24)



3. Nature of Death

a. Separation From God

- i. God to Adam - “In dying, you shall die” (Lit. Gen 2:17)



b. Separation of Soul/Spirit and Body (First Death)

- i. Spiritual Nature of Man departs at death
 - a. Souls departed at death, return (1Ki 17:20-22 – widow of Zarephath’s son; Lu 8:49-55 – Jairus’ daughter; 23:46 – Jesus dismisses His Spirit [cf. Ps 16:10; Act 2:27])
 - b. Joined with others at death (2 Sam 12:19-23 – David’s son)
 - c. Departing (Paul – 2 Cor 5:1,6,7; Phil 1:21-23; Peter - 2 Pet 1:13-15)
- ii. Body “dissolves” goes back to the ground.
 - a. Body without the soul is “dead” Jam 2:26
 - b. “Sleep” (Jn 11:11-13 – Lazarus; 1 Cor 11:30; 1 Thes 4:14; 5:10)

c. Separation from God (Second Death)

- i. The unsaved are already “dead” (Eph 2:1, 5; Col 2:13)
- ii. Permanent separation from God (Rev 2:11; 20:6; 20:14; 21:8)
- iii. Death and Hell (body and soul) are cast into the Lake of Fire (Gehenna) (cf. Mat 10:28)

"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Mat 10:28

4. State of Consciousness

a. Continued Existence (cf. Job’s children – Job 1:2; 42:13 –note 1:3 & 42:12)

b. Lazarus & the Rich Man (Lu 16:19-31)

- i. Not a parable – Named participant
- ii. Aware
 - a. Of surroundings
 - b. Pain
 - c. Others (Abraham & Lazarus)
 - d. His fate
- iii. See (“lifted up his eyes”)
- iv. Speak, hear
- v. Reason – give me water, argues with Abraham
- vi. Remember – his brothers, the Law & Prophets

c. Souls in Heaven (Rev 6:9-11)

- i. Aware of events on Earth
- ii. Wear clothes

d. Paul’s Arguments

- i. Departing is “far better” (Phl 1:23)

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain... For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Phl 1:21;23

- ii. Caught up and aware (2 Cor 12:2-4)

e. Jesus

- i. To the thief on the cross (Lu 23:43)
- ii. “Preached” to the souls in Hell (1 Pet 3:18-20)

f. Other References

- i. Enoch and Elijah (Gen 5:24; Heb 11:38; 2 Ki 2:11)

III. Our Destination

"I don't like to commit myself about heaven and hell - you see, I have friends in both places"
– [Mark Twain](#)

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...

Revelation 7:9a

1. Where do we Go?

a. The Physical Body - "The Grave"

- i. Heb. "Qebuwrah"; Gr. "Mnemeion"
 1. Is often plural – graves (Eze 37:12; Mat 27:52, 52)
 2. Is a physical place – tomb (Gen 50:5; Rev 11:9)
 3. Can be purchased (Gen 25:10)

b. Spirit/Soul

- i. "Hell"
 1. Heb. "Sheol"; Gr. "Hades" or "Tartarus"
 - a) Is always singular
 - b) Down – the pit
 - c) Cannot be purchased or owned
- ii. Heaven – Into God's Presence

2. The Description of Heaven

*For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
"I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones."*

Isaiah 57:15

a. The Throne of God (Mount Zion – Heb 12:22)

- i. The sea of glass like crystal (Eze 1:22; Rev 4:6; 15:2)
 1. "firmament, expanse" (Heb "raqiya" cf. Gen 1:6, 14; Ps 19:1,150:1)
 2. "Sea of Glass"
 - a) A foundation
 - i. Upon which to stand (Rev 15:2)
 - b) Placement of the Throne of God (Rev 4:3)
 - c) 24 Elders Thrones (Rev 4:4)
 - d) Lamps of Fire, and the Living Creatures (Rev 4:5)
- ii. God on His Throne (Eze 1; Rev 4)
 1. Like a man (Eze 1:26)
 2. Upper body, amber
 3. Lower body, fiery purple-red
 4. Rainbow round about
- iii. Temple in Heaven (Ps 11:4; Rev 11:1,19, 14:17, 15:5)
 1. Earthly temple is a replica (Heb 8:5)
 2. Alter (Rev 6:9, 8:3, 9:13, 11:1)

- b. The City of God** (New Jerusalem) “Descending out of heaven...” (*It is not stated that it comes to the earth*)
- i. Dimensions (Rev 21:15-16)
 1. Wall – 140 cubits high, approx 210 feet.
 2. Lateral - “foursquare” (Gr “*tetragōnos*”)
 - a) 12,000 “stadia” each ≈ 600 ft. Approx 1,400 miles
 - b) Assuming 6 billion inhabitants: 1.7 cu mi/person.
 3. Height
 - a) Equal to the sides BUT, is it a cube?
 - i. “height” (Gr *hypsos* - summit)
 - ii. Materials
 1. Wall
 - a) Foundation - 12 precious stones - named for the Apostles (Rev 21:14,19,20) - cf. Eph 2:20
 - b) Structure of “Jaspar” – diamond
 2. Gates
 - a) 12 pearls – named for the 12 Tribes of Israel (Rev. 21:12, 21) cf. Rom 3:1,2)
 3. City – Gold, clear like crystal
 - a) Nature of God’s light
 - b) Nature of our new bodies
 - iii. Features (Rev 22)
 1. River of Water of Life
 2. Tree of Life
 - a) Fruit – different each *month*
 - b) Healing of the Nations?
- c. New Heaven – New Earth**
- i. New heaven and new earth (Mt 24:35; Isa 65:17; 66:22; Heb 11:13-16; 2 Pet 3:7-13). “...in earth as it is in heaven” (Mt 6:10). Redeemed, not eliminated.
 - ii. Outside of “time” => Eternity (Heb 1:10-12; 12:26, 27).
 - iii. “...no more sea”: Why? Not needed for its cleansing action: 70% of earth covered to an average depth of 2.3 miles, antiseptic salinity (3.5%) purges, cleanses, and preserves our planet.
 - iv. There will be water (Rev 22:1).

d. Eternal Kingdom

Of the increase of [His] government and peace [There will be] no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. Isa 9:7

“And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” Lu 1:33

The Millennium of Christ

There are passages in scripture that refer to “Heaven” while others refer to the “Millennium”. We don’t want to confuse the two because they are different. In essence, the Millennium will occur immediately after the Second Coming of Christ. He will reign on the Earth for 1,000 years (Rev 20:1-10)– in fulfillment of His promises to Israel and David.

It is during this time that the Lion will lay down with the lamb (Isa 11:6-9). Life spans will increase (again) (Isa 65:20-25). End to war (Rev 20:7-9). There will be an earthly Temple in Jerusalem (Eze 44, 45). Geographical changes to the Earth (Zach 13:1; Eze 47:8-11; Isa 51:3).

Nations will have children, culture, feasts, and death will still be in place.

Heaven continues to exist – but outside of the dimensions of time and space on Earth.

Creation changed:

- Physical changes Zech 4:9,10; Isa 35:1-10
- Curse lifted Isa 11:6-9
- Creation redeemed Gen 3 vs. Rom 8:20-22
- Earth in full of knowledge of the Lord Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14
- Yet, not eternity:** Isa 65
- Death, sin Isa 65:20
- Each to have land Micah 4:15
- Fruitful Amos 9:13

Not “heaven”:

- vs. Eternal State which follows
- Not the “New Earth” Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1
- Not “where righteousness dwells”; limited evil, judged immediately Isa 11:1-16

Millennial Longevity:

- Death for unbelievers only Isa 65:17
- Nowhere is there a resurrection of Millennial saints.
- Tribulation saints complete the “first resurrection” Rev 20:4-6 Ω

- i. There will be “nations” with “kings” (Rev 21:24; 22:2)
- ii. It will continue to “increase” forever (Isa 9:7; Lu 1:33; Ps 45:6; [Heb 1:8]Dan 2:44)
- iii. The saints will possess it forever (Dan 7:18)

3. Our Place in Heaven

a. Clothed in White

- i. Righteousness of the redeemed (Rev. 3:4; 7:14; 19:7-9)
- ii. With colors? Rank? (cf Eze 28:13) Light? (Lu 9:29)G
 - 1. Gold sashes (Rev 1:13)

b. Crowns

- i. Co-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:16-21)
- ii. We Reign with Christ (Rev 2:27; 4:4; 20:6) cf Rev 5:9 and Lu 18:17
- iii. Glorified, like Him

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 1Jo 3:2

c. We are the Bride

- i. “Church” used in Revelation 20 times Ch 1-3
 - 1. Call out of the world (1 Pet 2:9) cf. Gr. *ekklēsia*
 - 2. Is the “body” – representatives of Christ (Rom 12:5; 1 Cr 12:12, 27; Eph 3:9, 5:23; Col 1:24)
 - 3. Undergoing sanctification – holiness (Eph 5:27; 1 Th 4:3)
- ii. “Bride” thereafter
 - 1. Joint ruler (Rev 2:27)
 - 2. Unbroken fellowship and devotion (2 Cr 5:8; 1 Th 4:17)
 - 3. Is sanctified – holy (Rev 19:7)
 Judge the World (1 Cr 6:2) (Gr *krinō* to preside over, govern, rule)
 - 1. Judge Angels (1 Cr 6:3)
 - a) Guardians (Matt 18:10)

4. What will we be like?

a. We will be ... Us (Lu 24:39)

- i. Retained memory, personality, personhood, ethnicity, male and female (cf. Lu 15:4-7; Matt 8:11; 17:3 [Moses, Elijah], Isa 66:22)
- ii. Emotions (Rev 6:10; 7:10) without the pollution of sin

b. Knowledge

- i. Remember everything (Jn 20:10-18, 24-29; 21:15-22)
- ii. “Know even as we are known...” Gr. *gnosko, epignosko*

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. 1Cr 13:12

- 1. New names (Isa 62:2, 65:15; Rev 2:17)
- iii. Continue to learn (Eph 2:7)

c. How will we appear?

- i. Adam & Eve were made full grown
- ii. DNA peak efficiency mid 20s
- iii. Glorified – like Christ (Phl 3:20-21; cf Rev 1:14-16)
 - 1. Able to see God face to face (Rev 22:4; cf Ex 33:18-23; Ps 27:4; 1 Tim 6:16)

d. Abilities

- i. Multidimensional (Jn 20:26 cf. 1 Jn 3:2)
- ii. Eat and drink (Yeah!) (Matt 8:11; Rev 2:7; 19:9) cf Lu 22:18, 24:40-43; Phl 3:21)
- iii. Still learning (1 Co 13:12; Eph 2:6,7)

...that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in [His] kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Eph 2:7

e. Rewards, Duties, Position

- i. Book of Remembrance (Mal 3:16; Rev 20:11-13)
- ii. Bema Seat of Christ – we all must appear (2 Cor 5:10)
- iii. Seek Rewards in Heaven (Matt 6:19-21; 1 Cor 3:11-15; 1 Tim 6:19; Rev 2:26-28)
- iv. “Better resurrection”? Heb 11:35
 1. *Gr kreitton* – more excellent, powerful, stronger. Rank? (cf. Lu 19:17)

f. Rest

- i. We will have work to do, but no labor (Rev 14:3; 22:3)

4. Other Questions

a. Free will – Sin?

- i. The Nature of Sin
 1. Root – unbelief
 - a) In the Word of God (Lu 24:25; cf “foolish” is applied to those who do not believe. Rom 1:21; 1 Cor 15:36. Also see Heb 3:12; Adam & Eve – Gen 3:1-6)
 2. Result – disobedience (Rom 5:19 Adam – *Gr parakoē* – failure to hear. Cf Rom 11:30; Tts 1:16; 3:3; 1 Pet 2:7, 8; 3:20)
 3. Reaction – rebellion (Rom 8:7; cf 1 Sam 15:23; Ps 95:8)
 4. Reward – death (separation) (Gen 2:17; Eze 18:4; Rom 6:23)

b. Family

- i. Loved ones not present.
 1. Awareness of absence
 2. God wipes away every tear (Rev 7:17; 21:4)
 - a) An *active* guidance – implies a process.

c. Friends

- i. Special relationships will remain special (cf 1 Thes 4:13-18; 2 Sam 23:23)

d. Animals & Pets

- i. New or old? (hint: Ps 104:24-30; cf Matt 19:28)

e. Activities, Culture (Matt 8:11; Rev 19:9)

f. Seasons – Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall (Gen 8:22; Ezek 34:26,27)

g. Children

- i. Accountability (Ex 30:14; Num 32:11; Rom 7:9)

5. State of the Lost

a. Hell (Hades, Sheol)

- i. Holding place of “spirits” (Isa 14:9, 10; Eze 26:20)
- ii. Duration? Temporary – “saved” brought out (Ps 16:10; Lu 16:23-26; Eph 4:8)

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame [and] everlasting contempt. Dan 12:2

- b. Great White Throne
 - i. Christ the Judge (all judgment given to the Son – Jn 5:22; Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10)
 - ii. Outside of this creation – dimension (Earth, Heaven “fled away” – escape – Rev 20:11)
 - iii. Lake of Fire - Duration? Eternal (Rev 14:10)
 - 1. No annihilation (Mk 9:44, 46, 48; Rev 20:10)
- c. Universalism
 - i. Punishment fit the crime?
 - ii. Rebellion cannot stand – God is Holy

6. Conclusion

- a. Heaven is a real place – not an attitude or circumstance of our own making. (Rev 21, 22)
- b. Those who do not go to Heaven do so by their own choice (Isa 40:5; Rom 1:20)
- c. It is the “natural” place for mankind
 - i. Joy (Ps 16:11)
 - ii. Peace (Rev 14:13)
 - iii. Fellowship (Lu 13:29; Heb 12:22, 23)
 - iv. Purpose (Rev 2:27)
 - v. Worship (Rev 19:6)
- d. The “Gate” is narrow – one way
 - i. God is committed to seeing you through (Jn 10:27-29)
 - ii. You are His treasure (Eph 1:18, 2:7-10)

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn [who are] registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,... Hbr 12:22, 23

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present [you] faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, [Be] glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen Jud 1:24

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