

The High and Holy Place

“Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”
—Isaiah 57:15

OUR FINITE HUMAN MINDS

can barely grasp the fact that at one time our Heavenly Father existed all alone in the vast realm of space. This was long before there were any stars or the sun, and before there had been any spiritual or material creation. Neither can we fully comprehend the concept of eternity, and the fact that our loving Heavenly Father had no beginning and will never have an end.

IMMORTALITY

God possesses immortality—the very highest form of all life, and intelligence that exceeds all others. The basic meaning of the word immortality is deathlessness. It is perpetual and self-existent. In Paul’s letter to Timothy, he wrote, “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise

God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (I Tim.1:17) From God comes the source of all life. The psalmist said, “With thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.” (Ps. 36:9) “LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”—chap. 90:1,2

From God’s bountiful treasure-house of truth it is recorded, “Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.” (Gen. 21:33) Further we read, “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”—Deut. 33:27

Our loving Heavenly Father is the eternal “I AM” as written in the second book of Moses. “God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” (Exod. 3:14) We further read, “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”—Ps. 90:2

THE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY

Our Lord Jesus did not possess immortality before his death and resurrection. He became the first created being to be given immortality, and it was received by him as a reward for his faithfulness even unto death. He had carried out the most important and central feature of his Father’s plan and purpose for the reconciliation of the human family.

This fact is explained in the words of the Apostle Paul, who said, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." (Rom. 6:9) The revelator also recorded the words of God, saying, "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [the grave] and of death."—Rev. 1:17,18

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S WILL

The wonderful plan and purpose of God includes his desire to have a divine family. This invitation to a select few is a mystery to the worldly-wise. When speaking of this mystery that has been hidden for centuries, the Apostle Paul said, "Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."—Eph. 1:8-10

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, the apostle spoke about the eternal purpose and hidden mystery of God. He said, "To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal

purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”—Eph. 3:9-11

GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE

Our Lord Jesus died for the sins of the entire human family to be testified to all in due time. He is the main character in the Heavenly Father’s eternal purpose for the world’s future reconciliation. “All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (Rev. 13:8) The Master also had to be tested as explained by the Apostle Paul. “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” (Heb. 5:8,9) “But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:7-11

THE FAMILY OF GOD

The Heavenly Father desires to have a family on the same divine plane of life as he has. This new family will be immortal beings endowed with the highest of all mental resources, and with whom he can have spiritual fellowship in the most complete

sense. Special emphasis is given concerning the mystery of God, and the fact that the faithful followers of Jesus will be brought together as body members in the divine family. The bride of Christ will thus share in the special and intimate family of God's marvelous and eternal purpose.

The outworking of this ultimate plan will reveal the manifold wisdom of our loving Heavenly Father, and will demonstrate throughout all eternity the beauty and wisdom of his great love and tender care. All beings on all planes of life will come to appreciate the full meaning of his glorious name as once revealed to his servant Moses. It is again recorded, "And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."—Exod. 34:5,6

THE DIVINE SECRET

The calling to the heavenly nature has gone forth to a little flock of Jesus' faithful followers throughout the long centuries of this present Gospel Age. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) The world of mankind has not heard this call. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory."—I Cor. 2:6,7

The heavenly call continues to be a mystery to the world and to the worldly-wise. "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written [Isa. 64:4], Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."—I Cor. 2:8-11

SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL

To receive such a high reward, each called one must be thoroughly tested and motivated by supreme heart loyalty to God. To be raised to the divine nature and to the same nature of life as our Heavenly Father, there must be a total submission to God's will in our lives, and a crystallization of our character in righteousness.

Each one must be willing to drink of the cup that our Lord drank and which the Father had given him. This is clearly shown in Jesus' discourse with two of his disciples. We read, "James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized

with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.”—Mark 10:35-40

OUR EARTHLY TABERNACLE

Throughout this present Gospel Age, those who have responded to the heavenly calling in Christ Jesus are known as a faith class. They have put their lives in the hands of our loving Heavenly Father and have learned to trust him in all the affairs of their lives and that which leads to a part of the heavenly bride, the church. Paul put this in perspective, when he said, “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (II Cor. 5:1) Our human bodies have become a dwelling place for the new mind, the New Creature in Christ begotten by the Holy Spirit of God. “Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.”—Ps. 119:54

The apostle explained, “For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the

earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight).”—II Cor. 5:2-7

A FAITH CLASS

The Scriptures speak of faith on many occasions, and Paul has provided us with an excellent definition. He said, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1) He also emphasized the importance of faith in the lives of the consecrated child of God. “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (vs. 6) When we study the subject of faith, we learn that it is not only indispensable to establish our relationship with the Heavenly Father, but that he also considers our spiritual growth and faith as being very precious to him.

The Jews had difficulty accepting the fact that no one could keep their old Law Covenant and that no one could expect to receive life under its terms. “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” (Rom. 3:20) God’s purpose in giving Israel the law was to teach them that they were dead in sin. “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by

faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."—Gal. 3:22-26

The apostle was teaching that we can be justified through faith in Christ Jesus, which is the only way to life. He said, "Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."—Rom 3:21-25

The only way to life is through Christ Jesus. Paul clearly stated, "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."—vss. 26-31

THE VICTORY OF FAITH

"Every one who believes that Jesus is the Anointed One, has been begotten by God; and every one

who loves the begetter, loves the one begotten by him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and practise his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not burdensome; because all that has been begotten by God overcomes the world; and this is that victory which overcomes the world, our faith.”—I John 5:1- 4, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

TESTING REQUIRED

The great Apostle Paul stated that all of our experiences in the school of Christ are directed by our loving Heavenly Father. We must all learn, as did the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, that we must first drink of the cup of sorrow before we can receive the cup of joy. “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”—Rom. 8:28-31

Paul’s total faith led him to carry out his covenant of sacrifice in a most remarkable way. He knew that all of his cup-of-sorrow experiences were permitted for his growth and development as a new creature in Christ Jesus. He speaks of some of his trials in his letter to the church at Corinth.

In the apostle's letter, we catch a glimpse of his abundant sacrificial life, "In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."—II Cor. 11:23-28

DELIVERED UNTO DEATH

Paul also said, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." (II Cor. 4:8-11) "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—vss. 17,18

JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST

During this present Gospel Age, invitation has been made to those who will share in the marvelous privileges of dwelling with Christ in his future kingdom. This great truth opens to us our hope in becoming part of God's own intimate family. "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." (Ps. 65:4) The Apostle Paul put this in proper perspective in his letter to the church at Rome, when he said, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."—Rom. 8:16-18

The testimony of God's wonderful Word of Truth will surely come to pass. "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then

say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”—vss. 27-31

THE LORD’S HOUSE

The Prophet Isaiah spoke about the majestic house of the LORD and when it would be established. “It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”—Isa. 2:2,3

IN THE SAME IMAGE

The church’s future heavenly inheritance will be the most wonderful blessing ever given to anyone at any time, and will never be offered again. Let us each say in our heart, as did Paul when writing to the brethren at Philippi, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14) Our determination should be to make our calling and election sure, and especially as the days grow more evil. May we also be strengthened by the apostle’s words of encouragement, when he said, “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”—II Cor. 3:18

In our featured scripture (Isa. 57:15), the Prophet Isaiah spoke about the “High and Holy Place.” This describes the divine habitation of our loving

Heavenly Father, and he has extended an invitation to the church to share that glory, honor and immortality when found faithful even unto death.

I SHALL BE SATISFIED

The psalmist David serves to illustrate the faithful class of our Lord's true followers during this present Gospel Age. Thus, his inspiring words capture the very spirit and desire of every truly consecrated heart who is diligently striving to be faithful to their covenant of consecration, and share in the spiritual kingdom.

In one of David's beautiful psalms, we are given a glimpse of that wonderful scene. He said, "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Ps. 16:11) Again the psalmist wrote, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."—Ps. 17:15 ■