

A Disciple's Hope

Michael D. Biggs

A couple years ago I wrote about why I am a Christian. I shared a little of testimony and described the hope that I have. Much has transpired in the world the last few years that has helped solidify that hope. The unveiling of the true intent of Islam and the violence it has inspired... the rise of unrest and division here in America... and the increase of radical adherents to lifestyles and "choices" that are contrary to God and to nature... have all served to strengthen my faith in the One True God and His Son Jesus.

So again I share this writing with some added thoughts & insights that have been influenced by recent events, as well as the growth of my son, and my own personal experience with the Lord. I may seem to be preaching a little here, but truly these are the things on my heart daily, and the Word stirs my spirit continually, making it harder to remain silent concerning the promises of God.

Once more I feel this is important to share, perhaps even more so now. We are living in trying times. I know the problems many of you have faced or are dealing with even now. Spiritual battles. Physical, mental and emotional challenges. Troubles with relationships. Family difficulties. Financial hardships. The loss of loved ones. Loss of hope. I've prayed with many of you, and encouraged you with God's promises. And it saddens me to know that some of your prayers have seemingly gone unanswered.

Now granted I also know some of you have great lives. Your marriage is strong, your kids are healthy, your bills are paid. You are active in your church, and prosperous in your career. Amen. God has blessed you. I rejoice to see families enjoying life as they walk with Jesus. But even in this can be one of our greatest testings' as a Christian: as the Psalmist pleads with the Lord -

*"Keep deception and lies far from me,
Give me neither poverty nor riches;
Feed me with the food that is my portion,
That I not be full and deny You and say, "Who is the Lord?"
Or that I not be in want and steal,
And profane the Name of my God."
- Psalm 30:8-9*

This happened often throughout Israel's time in the Promised Land. Through the prophet Hosea, God reminded His people whom He had saved and caused to prosper, "*When you had eaten and were satisfied, you became proud and forgot Me.*" (Hos 13:5-6). So, even as presently 'all is well with your souls' let us remain vigilant in seeking the Lord, and keep our lamps trimmed & burning. I pray we always know that if even one member of the Body of Christ around the world is struggling it affects us all.

Some of you reading this have known me for decades. You knew the old Mike from back in Western NY, when I spent the bulk of my time, money and energy pursuing all the wrong things. And truthfully, much of the time when I appeared to be having fun, I was miserable inside. I wanted more, didn't really know what the "more" was, and found myself stuck in what had become familiar. In a sense, I become comfortable in my misery.

A few of you know me from work, where I pray my behavior and speech would be consistent with my declared faith in Christ and obedience to His commands (yet I know I still fail far too often). Others I've met through the Internet over the years, and we've developed lasting friendships. Many of you God has brought into my life through one church or another. And several are my own flesh & blood family. Each one of you has made a mark on my life, and that is why I want to share with you the hope I have found in Christ, why I am a disciple of Christ Jesus.

My past I cannot change. None of us can. But one thing I have learned – we *can* change our future. No matter our age, race or station in life, our daily decisions indeed affect our future and alter our destiny. So why did I change? Why did I turn from focusing my efforts on attaining what this world has to offer, to gaining what I see promised in the Holy Scripture? Why do I now strive to follow Jesus?

Honestly, because this world we live in is a mess. God's original plan for His creation is not this depravity we see around us today, and that has plagued mankind for 6000 years. The news is full of injustice, violence and suffering daily. You don't even need to spend time watching or reading the news. I personally haven't bought a newspaper or had cable TV in my home in over 10 years, but I still see & hear enough to sadly know indeed that the tares are coming to maturity. And it definitely can seem as though this world is a hopeless place. I used to say often in the past – "It's all going to hell in a handcart."

But there is a hope.

Yes, dear friends, what I find the Holy Scriptures teach is that it is the physical realm, not too different from what we are living in today, that will ultimately be inhabited by the fullness (the righteousness, holiness and goodness) of God. There ultimately will be peace on earth, and hearts will be filled with love and joy.

*"Justice will dwell in the wilderness,
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.
¹⁷ And the effect of righteousness will be peace,
and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.
¹⁸ My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."*
– Isaiah 32:16-18

*"Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore.
⁴ But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree,
And no one shall make them afraid;
For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken."*
- Micah 4:3-4

We've probably all read these passages many times as we've read through our Bible. Do they stir your heart as they do mine? I pray we would see the great promises in these and many other passages that speak of God's plan for eternity. When I looked past, and set aside, the oversimplified, and somewhat misleading, modern teaching of heaven & hell and really looked at what the Scripture says, seeking God's wisdom on these things, He began to open up such verses to me. His Holy Spirit is leading me into all Truth, and revealing the understanding of things that Jesus taught concerning the Kingdom of God.

*“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall graze;
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole,
And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den.
9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
As the waters cover the sea.”*

– Isaiah 11:6-9

*“They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;
the sun will not strike them,
nor any scorching heat;
17 for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”*

- Rev 7:16-17 NRSV

Amen. I love these verses. In these passages we catch a glimpse of what God has in store for the world.

I am a disciple, a follower of Christ, because I want to be a part of that new world. I want to experience forever the wonder of God’s creation in a peaceful, pain-free environment. I want to help usher in that Kingdom: that new world of righteousness that is coming.

I have traveled all over this country and seen some of the beauty of God's creation; from Niagara Falls to Multnomah Falls; from the Adirondacks to the Rockies; from the Atlantic to the Pacific (visiting with many of you along the way). And I’ve seen the glory of God; in the birth of my son; in the salvation of loved ones; and in the agape love of God in many people, whose acts of selfless kindness and compassion reveal a taste of our Creator’s intent for the behavior of mankind that will one day come to fruition in Christ.

And sadly I've also seen the destruction that man can do: to God’s creation in the name of progress, and to people: physically, emotionally and spiritually. My heart grieves for the 3000+ babies murdered each day here in America, for abused and neglected children, and for the innocent victims of many other senseless acts of violence and selfish manipulation. Families torn apart by divorce, as couples who once loved each other find themselves at odds because one or both have allowed lust or pride to reign in their heart instead of Christ. I've experienced the consequences of sin - both my own and the sins of others. And I've felt the sorrow that pain and suffering and death bring.

The government cannot fix these problems. In many cases it actually facilitates them. Manmade laws legalize many activities and behaviors that God calls abominations. The growing antichrist Liberal mindset, with its hatred of the moral laws of God, can be disheartening. Political correctness nonsense has infiltrated both major parties. And believe me, the increasing corruption going on in our government really gets me worked up sometimes. Injustice, division and apathy grows daily.

Religion is not a solution. In an attempt to make people happy and feel loved, the church at large has compromised the Word of God in many ways, enabling people to remain in their sin instead of setting them free. There is discord and disharmony in every church, with which I am increasingly disappointed. Many seem more concerned with sticking by their particular denominations beliefs and statement of faith than they do with looking to God's Spirit to teach us all things.

These things grieve the heart of God as well.

*“These six things the LORD hates,
Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:
¹⁷ A proud look,
A lying tongue,
Hands that shed innocent blood,
¹⁸ A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that are swift in running to evil,
¹⁹ A false witness who speaks lies,
And one who sows discord among brethren.”*
– Prov 6:16-19

As in the days of Noah, the heart of God is grieved with the way people treat each another, especially those He has called to be part of His Church whose lives are difficult to distinguish from those in the world. Although God says, *“Come out from among them and be separate... Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you”* (2Cor 6:17), we seem to increasingly be bringing the world into the churches. In the name of ‘winning souls’ we’ve compromised and softened God’s requirements for acceptance into His Kingdom. He did warn us *“the time will come when (many in the churches) will not endure sound doctrine... and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”* (2Tim 4:3-4), and we see that happening today. In fact, this very day in which I am writing this a brother turned his back on me because I spoke Truth to him which he didn’t want to hear. Political correctness and tolerance has changed his heart just over the last year and he found *“teachers to suit his own likings.”* I believe these “teachers” are among the *“many false prophets”* Jesus said would *“rise up and deceive many.”*
¹² *And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.”* (Matt 24:11-12).

To my natural man’s eye, this is very disheartening. But in following Jesus I have found comfort and hope, and even some understanding about why these things happen. And why they *must* happen.

“For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!” – Matt 18:7

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2Tim 3:1-5).

As we begin this passage from Paul’s letter to Timothy it sounds like our own nation here in the 21st century. And our initial thought might be that the prophecy is referring to people in the world who need to be saved. But then we realize from verse 5 that the Spirit is talking about people IN the churches. For they have *“a form of godliness”* like the Pharisees of which Jesus said were like *“whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s*

bones and all uncleanness.” (Matt 23:27)

Jesus taught that the wheat and tares must grow together. The good and the evil both coming to maturity. Just as the natural descendants of Abraham could not enter the Promised Land until the iniquity of its inhabitants was full, the true seed of Abraham in Christ will not inherit the earth until sin has been brought to a head and judged. And that judgment begins with those IN the churches. (see 1Pet 4:17)

So we are surrounded by these and many other evils. They are very active here in the US and around the world. And God hates them even more than we do. He hates all iniquity and unrighteousness. They infested mankind when the sin that had begun in heaven came to earth in the Garden. In our modern Christian zeal to obtain heaven when we die, we forget that heaven is where sin first reared its ugly head. Around the very Throne of God is where pride entered satan, and he rebelled.

Most religions, and even much of Christendom, have us going off to some distant spiritual place to live quietly and peacefully in a state of bliss forever, with no pain or taxes, when we die. The bulk of Christian churches preach that heaven is our home, to which our spirit will return when our physical life on this earth has ended. Bible bookstores abound with tales about what heaven will be like when we get there. Cartoons have portrayed the deceased floating on clouds playing harps, while Hollywood movies have the departed traveling toward blinding light as great symphonic music plays, or entering through pearly gates into a city of gold and radiant colors wearing white robes. But what I find conspicuously missing in all these is what the *Scripture* has to say about our bodily resurrection or about that *"city which is to come"* (Heb 13:14): that glorious Kingdom of God that Jesus taught about in His parables.

Personally, neither my goal nor my desire is to dwell as a disembodied spirit, or even in my current body, in heaven for eternity. And from what the Scripture teaches, that is not God's desire for us either.

Friends, He has a far better plan.

"For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³ Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For we were saved in this hope." – Rom 8:19-24a

God's plan is to restore the physical creation back to what Adam and Eve forfeited by their sin. When God created *this* world, He stated *"and it was good."* And when He created man in a physical body, the crown of His creation, He said *"and it was very good."*

The hope that I have; the hope in which we were saved; the blessed hope of the Apostles and the First Century saints, is that Jesus is returning to the earth to put an end to sin and to restore all things as they were in the beginning. We will live again in physical bodies on the earth.

*"For I know that my Redeemer lives,
And He shall stand at last on the earth;
²⁶ And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,*

*That in my flesh I shall see God,
27 Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!*” - Job 19:25-27

The resurrection, our resurrection, is found in several places in the Old Testament. The hope of the prophets, and those who knew God, was to be raised to live again in their physical bodies on the earth.

“But Your dead will live, Lord; their bodies will rise— let those who dwell in the dust wake up and shout for joy— your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.” – Isaiah 26:19

“And He will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. 8 He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken.

9 It will be said on that day, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, that He might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” – Isaiah 25:7-9 RSV

There is so much more than we have known to this incredible plan of God. It seems the Truth of these promises has little meaning in present Christendom, as the focus has shifted to spending eternity in the spiritual heaven. It appears that that veil has concealed this Truth even from many of the shepherds of His people. The Lord calls us to press through the veil to seek Him and the mysteries of His Kingdom.

“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter and the glory of kings to search it out.” – Prov 25:2

I love to search out the mysteries of God. And the more I spend time in the Word, by His Spirit He makes *“known to me the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself.”* Which includes, like Paul wrote – *“10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. 11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”* (Eph 1:9-12)

Throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, everything I read points to the Resurrection of Christ and His saints and the culmination of the physical & spiritual realms into the coming Eternal New Creation.

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then 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 heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.”

– Rev 21:1-3

*“For evildoers shall be cut off;
But those who wait on the LORD,*

They shall inherit the earth.

¹⁰ *For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more;
Indeed, you will look carefully for his place,
But it shall be no more.*

¹¹ *But the meek shall inherit the earth,
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace”*

– Psalm 37:9-11

Evildoers cut off. That deeply touches my heart. Those who abuse children and animals shall be no more. The prideful and arrogant will be found on the earth no longer. Like Abrahams nephew Lot, my soul is vexed often by the lawlessness, depravity and sexual immorality propagated all around me these days. All this will be put to an end, when God removes *all* sin and *all* workers of iniquity from the earth. And those who love the Lord will have peace and joy and no more fear of the wicked acts of the ignorant and fools. Forever. Praise God!

*“Let heaven and earth praise Him,
the seas and everything that moves therein.*

³⁵ *For God will save Zion
and rebuild the cities of Judah;
and His servants shall dwell there and possess it;*

³⁶ *the children of His servants shall inherit it,
and those who love His Name shall dwell in it.”*

- Psalm 69:34-36

To take a poke at a semi-popular modern doctrine I believe has caused many of God’s people to become lax in their pursuit of His calling on their lives, I *want* to be one of those ‘left behind’. One of those not removed from Christ’s Presence when He returns, but left behind with Him on the earth to care for and enjoy God’s wonderful creation. I know that only by following Jesus will my desire be fulfilled.

Throughout the Old Testament and the New, we find the Prophets, Patriarchs, Apostles and saints all looking forward to the earth being restored to that which God intended in the beginning. None were willing to relinquish the earth, the physical creation, to the devil. None looked forward to going to heaven. Rather, as Peter preached, they eagerly awaited the establishment of God’s Holy Kingdom on the earth.

*“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,²¹ whom heaven must receive **until the times of restoration of all things**, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets **since the world began**.”* – Acts 3:19-21

What is this “restoration”?

In the beginning God gave man to have dominion over all that He had made.

“God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

²⁹ *And God said, “See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.³⁰ Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life,*

I have given every green herb for food”; and it was so. ³¹ Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.” – Gen 1:28-31

That charge to Adam - *“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth, subdue it, and have dominion”* was repeated to Noah after the Flood, and was promised to Joseph after the great famine and to Israel after their deliverance from Egypt.

And it is the end promised to the overcoming saints as well (2Tim 2:12, Rev 3:21, 22:5). To have dominion over the earth, and all the works of God’s hands. *“And they shall reign **on the earth.**”* (Rev 5:10)

Imagine every government leader telling the truth. Each one truly a servant of the people, putting the interests of the people above their own, and ruling with integrity and justice. Imagine every pastor and priest ministering Life to all in their charge, actually bringing them out of bondage to sin into the glorious freedom that is in Christ.

One of my favorite passages that describes God’s eternal plan is found in Psalm 8 -

*“What is man that You take thought of him,
And the son of man that You care for him?
⁵ Yet You have made him a little lower than God,
And You crown him with glory and majesty!
⁶ You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet” – Psalm 8:4-6*

Hebrews chapter 2 repeats this fiat, and explains how through Christ this will be accomplished. I know we don’t see this yet. But one day man will indeed rule over all the works of God’s hands. It is to the victorious saints, who have overcome sin, that Jesus gives this incredible promise -

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” - Rev 3:21

Now that gets me excited! To be able to bring Life to the oppressed and persecuted, Love to the abused children and aborted babies, and Light to those in darkness and hopelessness... Lord, I want to be a part of that.

That is what Jesus came to do. In Luke 4:18-19 Jesus declared He had come to begin to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-7, which ends with “everlasting joy” for the nations in the restored cities of the earth.

To be a follower of Christ, a real Christian, is to partake of that ministry. To proclaim good news to the poor, to bind the brokenhearted, proclaim freedom to those bound by sin, shine Light in this dark world and proclaim the Lord’s favor. Christians are called to follow the example of Jesus, who took all His cues from God in everything He did. When Jesus walked on this earth, everything He did was directed by God, His Father and our Father.

Remember, Jesus’ desire is to lead us to the Father. That “place” Jesus longs to bring us to in John 14:1-6 is not to Heaven, but to communion with the Father. And the “way” Jesus was going was the Cross. Any who would come after Jesus, must, as He says – *“deny themselves, pick up their cross daily and follow Him.”* (Luke 9:23). Like everyone I know, I struggle daily to obey

this charge. My battle is between my will and God's. Will I do what I want, or what God directs me to do. Am I communing with God daily so that I know His will for my life?

Because Jesus did only what God directed Him to do, was He glorified and granted authority to rule. If the church at large today were given rulership over God's creation, we would be in a worse state than we are now. Yet, in the end, it is Man who will indeed have dominion. Jesus is the first Man to meet all the requirements to rule. And He wants others to rule with Him. Those, of which I strive to be, who have laid down their own lives, who have endured the sufferings of this age without compromise, will appear with Christ as He is when He returns and will reign with Him for eternity.

Jesus, for whom all things were made, longs to return to the earth to set up God's eternal Kingdom, and bring deliverance to creation. And according to the Bible, *all* creation groans to be set free and restored to its original state, and returned to being ruled by the sons of God, which is Christ, Head and body, the Lord Jesus and the First Resurrection saints. The trees, the mountains, the animals, all creation longs to be set free from the corruption it suffers due to the sin of man. Like in the 'Lord of the Rings' and 'Narnia' movies, we will see nature itself alive. Only it will all be to the glory of God!

*"For you shall go out with joy,
And be led out with peace;
The mountains and the hills
Shall break forth into singing before you,
And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."*
- Isaiah 55:12

*"Give to the LORD the glory due His name;
Bring an offering, and come before Him.
Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!
³⁰ Tremble before Him, all the earth.
The world also is firmly established, It shall not be moved.
³¹ Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
And let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."
³² Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;
Let the field rejoice, and all that is in it.
³³ Then the trees of the woods shall rejoice before the LORD,
For He is coming to judge the earth." – 1Chron 16:29-33*

Beauty, wholeness, contentment. Righteousness, peace and joy. Perfect relationship with each other and with God. Nature in harmony. Again we read -

*"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.
⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze;
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
⁸ The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole,
And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.
⁹ They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,*

*For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
As the waters cover the sea.”*

¹⁰ *“And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, (referring to Christ)
Who shall stand as a banner to the people;
For the Gentiles shall seek Him,
And His resting place shall be glorious.” – Isaiah 11:6-10*

All this takes place on the earth! These passages are not speaking of the spiritual realm, but of the physical.

When the Kingdom of God is restored to the earth, when Christ (Head & body) is ruling all the works of God’s hands from Jerusalem, and God Himself is dwelling among men, then all creation itself will cease to groan. All that was lost when the first stewards of God’s creation (Adam & Eve) fell will be restored to mankind in the end.

*“They shall build houses and inhabit them;
They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
²² They shall not build and another inhabit;
They shall not plant and another eat;
For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people,
And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
²³ They shall not labor in vain,
Nor bring forth children for trouble;
For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD,
And their offspring with them.” – Is 65:21-23*

I’ve been in the construction industry for over three decades, and have helped to build many beautiful homes. Presently I can only imagine a world where every family dwells in a nice home, and where neighbors all get along. Where people actually love one another with no worry about their home being broken into, their children kidnapped, or even just their neighbors coveting their possessions or their wife. No more gossiping neighbors or bickering relatives. No more disobedient children or abusive parents. At this point I can only imagine that world and I try to live like that now; but I truly believe that one day this will be reality. And I follow Christ because of that. For only by Him will all this come to be.

There is a substantial amount of Scripture that tells us what the new world will be like when the New Jerusalem descends from heaven down to earth where God will dwell with men for eternity. How sad it would be if God had to lose the physical creation He had made, because the devil whom He had created somehow had bested his Maker.

Again, in the Revelation of eternity to John we read -

“Then 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 heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” – Rev 21:2-4

And it is here that, along with the multitude raised in the 2nd Resurrection and welcomed into the Kingdom, we will be reunited with many of our loved ones.

*“Lift up your eyes round about, and see;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far,
and your daughters shall be carried in the arms.*

*⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant,
your heart shall thrill and rejoice.”*

- Isaiah 60:4-5

Those whom we lost too early in this life - it is always too early to lose anyone we love no matter how old they are – we will see again. Oh what joy that will bring to our hearts in that day when the Lord says -

*“Fear not, for I am with you;
I will bring your descendants from the east,
And gather you from the west;
⁶ I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’
And to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’
Bring My sons from afar,
And My daughters from the ends of the earth—*

*⁷ Everyone who is called by My name,
Whom I have created for My glory.”*

- Isaiah 43:5-7

We all have lost family members and friends who were dear to us. At their death we grieved, and wished we could have spent even one more day with them. I believe that Day is coming when I will see again those loved ones whose passing left a hole in my heart. And I will not see them as just a spirit floating on a cloud, but I will walk and talk with them in the Garden.

When Adam and Eve sinned, mankind lost Paradise here on earth. We didn't lose Heaven. Adam and Eve were not from Heaven and neither are we. What will be restored is what was lost. Heaven is not our home; the earth is. On the physical earth man was created, and on the physical earth man will dwell eternally with God and Jesus (whom the OT sometimes prophetically called the son of David or David, since the Man Jesus had not yet been born or named).

“David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one Shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. ²⁵ Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. ²⁶ Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. ²⁷ My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ²⁸ The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.””

- Eze 37:24-28

Forever! Oh Glory! Four times in this passage we find that these promises are forever. When I first realized that I was not destined to float eternally as a spirit in Heaven but actually live forever in a physical body on the earth, is when I first began to get excited about Christianity. Here is something REAL, something I could grab onto! Oh, how I now long for that Day.

*“On that day I will raise up
 The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down,
 And repair its damages;
 I will raise up its ruins,
 And rebuild it as in the days of old;
¹² That they may possess the remnant of Edom (mankind),
 And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,”
 Says the LORD who does this thing.
¹³ “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD,
 “When the plowman shall overtake the reaper,
 And the treader of grapes him who sows seed;
 The mountains shall drip with sweet wine,
 And all the hills shall flow with it.
¹⁴ I will bring back the captives of My people Israel;
 They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them;
 They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them;
 They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.
¹⁵ I will plant them in their land,
 And no longer shall they be pulled up
 From the land I have given them,”
 Says the LORD your God.”
 - Amos 9:11-15*

Again, the earth is where we find the establishment of God’s eternal Kingdom; the restoration of the tabernacle of God among men; and everlasting peace.

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them.” - Rev 21:3

Now indeed there *is* a realm in which our spirits will abide when our physical bodies die, as we await that blessed hope of the resurrection when Jesus returns to the earth at the last trumpet. What takes place there, the Scripture doesn’t really reveal. Yes, I believe that loved ones who have died are currently in ‘Heaven’, but they have not yet received their recompense, and that is not their permanent residence. If they were to stay forever in Heaven, then God failed to fulfill His promise, and Christ has not completed the good work which He began in them. I believe that each one is now awaiting the Day of Lord; when they will either return with Jesus at the First Resurrection to set up His Kingdom on the earth, or be raised at the Last Day (the Second Resurrection) to stand before the Judgment seat – and receive entrance into that Kingdom prepared for them, or be among the few wicked people that will be removed from His Presence forever. I would count none of those I have loved & lost among those deserving of the second death.

A subject matter for another time, but I believe the bulk of current evangelicalism has neglected the greater part of the message Jesus preached, and the reason for His sacrifice on Calvary. Consequently, the Truth of the two Resurrections has been largely distorted, and in error many believe that at the Second Resurrection, at the Great White Throne Judgment, all who appear there are lost.

Those who will reign with Christ in the Kingdom of God, of which I want to be a part of, will rule over the saved nations of the earth we read about in Matthew 25:31-46, who were raised in the Second Resurrection. The Scripture portrays those rulers as those who serve God by serving

mankind, and as those who bring deliverance, healing and Life to those who were oppressed and downtrodden in this life.

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. ⁵There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.”

– Rev 22:1-5

*“For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language,
That they all may call on the name of the LORD,
To serve Him with one accord.*

¹²I will leave in your midst

An afflicted and poor people,

And they shall trust in the name of the LORD.

¹³The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness

And speak no lies,

Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth;

For they shall feed their flocks and lie down,

And no one shall make them afraid.”

- Zeph 3:9,12-13

The curse upon mankind in the Garden will be lifted. The confusion of language at the Tower of Babel will be reversed. All will be made right when by Christ, man is ruling over all the works of His hands. Amen.

And that is why I have chosen to follow Jesus.

Kudos to any who made it all the way through long essay (I kept it as short as I could, having much more to say on these matters!). I know I touched on some things that may not be familiar to you. Much of what I believe differs from what has become traditional teaching in modern Christendom. In my sharing this I do not attempt to persuade, only to plant a seed or bring encouragement, or even to perhaps confirm something that has been on your heart concerning the purpose of this life.

Please feel free to comment, question or rebuke as the Lord leads. My greatest pleasures are quickly becoming times spent discussing the things of Gods Kingdom in fellowship. I love the time each day my wife and I pray and study the Word, and I look forward teaching my little boy about the Lord when he's old enough to understand.

God's wisdom and understanding to all.

Peace & blessings,

Michael D Biggs

Mdb1227t@aol.com

<http://followingjesustolife.blogspot.com/>