Chapter Twenty-Four

The Paradise of God

The conversation Christian and Hopeful had with the Shining Ones was about the glory of the place. They told them that the beauty and glory of it was inexpressible. “There,” they said, “is Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels and the spirits of righteous men made perfect. You are now going to the Paradise of God where you will see the Tree of Life and eat the fruit that never withers. And when you arrive, you will have white robes given to you. You will walk and talk every day with the King throughout all eternity. There you will not see the things you saw when you were on earth: sorrow, sickness, affliction, and death. For the former things have passed away. You are now going to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to the prophets, men whom God has taken away from the evil which is to come. They are now experiencing their eternal rest, each one walking in his righteousness.”

The men then asked, “What will we do in the holy place?” They were answered, “You will receive comfort from all your labor and have joy for all your sorrow. You must reap what you have sown, even the fruit of all your prayers, tears, and sufferings for the King. In that place you will wear crowns of gold and enjoy the perpetual sight and visions of the Holy One. For there you shall see him as he is. There, also, you will serve him continually with praise, with

1 “But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel” (Heb. 12:22-24).

2 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7).

3 “Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy” (Rev. 3:4).

4 “There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 22:5).

5 “Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so by the God of truth; he who takes an oath in the land will swear by the God of truth. For the past troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my eyes. Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind” (Isa. 65:16-17).

6 “The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death” (Isa. 57:1,2).

5 “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows” (Gal. 6:7).

6 “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (I Jn. 3:2).
shouting, and thanksgiving - whom you desired to serve in the world, but did so with much
difficulty because of the weakness of your flesh. There your eyes will be delighted with seeing
and your ears with hearing the pleasant voice of the Mighty One. There you will again enjoy
your friends who have gone on before you. And there you will receive with joy everyone who
will follow you into the holy place. You will also be clothed with glory and majesty and ride in a
carriage with the King of glory. When he will come with the sound of the trumpet in the clouds,
as upon the wings of the wind, you will come with him. When he sits upon the throne of
judgment, you will sit by him. And when he passes sentence upon all the workers of iniquity,
whether they be angels or men, you also will have a voice in that judgment, because they were
his and your enemies. When he will again return to the City, you will also go with the sound of
the trumpet and be with him forever.”

Now while they were approaching the gate, behold, a company of the heavenly host came out to
meet them. Two other Shining Ones said, “These are the men who have loved our Lord when
they were in the world, and who have left all for his holy name. And he has sent us to bring them
here. We have brought them this far on their desired journey that they may go in and see their
Redeemer face-to-face with joy.” Then the heavenly host gave a great shout saying, “Blessed are
those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”

At this time, several of the King’s trumpeters, clothed in white and shining garments, came out
to meet them. With melodious and majestic music, they made the heavens reverberate with their
sound. These trumpeters saluted Christian and his companion with ten thousand welcomes. They
did this with shouting and the sound of the trumpet.

Having done this, they surrounded them on every side. Some were in front of them, some behind,
and some on the right side, and some on the left (to guard them, as it were, through the upper
regions). As they went along, they made melodious sounds with extremely high notes. The very
sight of this was, to those who could behold it, as if heaven itself had come down to meet them.

7 “Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who
have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who
have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till
the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come
down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the
dead in Christ will rise first” (I Thess. 4:13-16).

8 “Then the angel said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”’ And
he added, ‘These are the true words of God’” (Rev. 19:9).
So they walked on together. And as they walked, every now and then these trumpeters would let Christian and his brother know how welcome they were into their company by making joyful sounds and by combining their music with admiring looks and gestures. They also made it apparent how glad they were to come and meet them. And now these two men were in heaven, as it were, before they arrived at the gate. They were swallowed up with the sight of the angels and with hearing their melodious music. Here also they had the City itself in view. And they thought they heard all the bells in it ringing to welcome them. But above all, they had warm and joyful thoughts about their living there with this throng for ever and ever. Oh, by what tongue or pen can their glorious joy be expressed! Thus they came up to the gate.

Now when they had come up to the gate, there was written over it in gold letters, “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.”

Then I saw in my dream that the Shining Ones requested that they call at the gate. When they did, some from above looked over the gate, including Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, to whom it was said, “These pilgrims have come from the City of Destruction because of the love that they have for the King of this place.” Then the pilgrims gave them their certificates which they had received at the beginning. These rolls were carried in to the King and, when he had read them, asked, “Where are the men?” He was answered, “They are standing outside the gate.” The King then commanded that the gate be opened “that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith.”

Now I saw in my dream that these two men went in at the gate. As they entered, they were transfigured. They had garments put on them that shone like gold. Those who met them also gave them harps and crowns - the harps with which to praise and the crowns as a token of honor. Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the City rang again with joy. And it was said to them, “Enter into the joy of your Lord.” I also heard the men singing with loud voices, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”

Now just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them; and behold, the City shone like the sun. The streets were paved with gold and many people walked on them with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps with which to sing praises.

There were also creatures who had wings. They answered one another without interruption, saying, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord!” Then they shut the gates. And after I had seen that sight, I wished that I myself was among them.

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10 “Open the gates that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith” (Isa. 26:2).
11 “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’” (Rev. 5:13-14).
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For further information, please contact:

The Jackson Institute  
P.O. Box 500071  
Atlanta, Georgia 31150-0071  
Tel: 770-518-7994  
jacksoninstitute@mindspring.com  
www.tji.org