**A Prepared Place for a Prepared People – Heaven**

*Hebrews 11:16; 2 Corinthians 5:5*

**Introduction**

1. Abraham’s faith **(Hebrews 11:8-16):**
   1. **(v. 8)** – Obeyed God by faith and went out. (Place of inheritance physical land – ***“God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on” – Acts 7:5 – descendants would receive it***)
   2. **(v. 10)** – He waited for a spiritual, eternal city built by God. (**NOTE: *“HAS foundations”*** – already in existence)
   3. **(vv. 13-16)** – Did not call a place on earth home. Looked for the place of God, a ***“heavenly country.”***
      1. They weren’t ashamed of God, and God wasn’t of them.
      2. God has prepared a city for them – already prepared and waiting.
2. Paul’s faith **(2 Corinthians 5):**
   1. **(vv. 6-8)** – His desire is to be in God’s presence.
   2. ***“flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Corinthians 15:50*** – the city prepared by God cannot be received by mere mortal bodies).
   3. **(vv. 1-4)** – The body Paul inhabited on earth was understood as temporary, waiting to be engulfed in immortality by a spiritual body.
   4. **(v. 5)** – God prepared Paul, and all Christians, for such a habitation which could dwell in His presence.
3. God has assured us that heaven is prepared, and that He will allow entrance for those who are prepared by Him for it.
4. **Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.**
5. A Prepared Place…
6. Eternal Plans
   1. Spoken of as already prepared – **cf. Hebrews 11:10, 16.**
   2. **Matthew 25:34** – from the foundation of the world. I.e. since before the world was made.
   3. Jesus spoke of the mansions as already being in existence – **cf. John 14:2.**
      1. **NOTE: *“Father’s house”*** – i.e. in His abode/presence. (Not a physical structure built/prepared – language that we can relate to.)
      2. This is the significance of heaven – it is God’s dwelling place.
      3. **Prepared for us in that it was always God’s intention in creating us for us to dwell in His presence – life eternal.**
   4. **Problem – sin:**
      1. **Cf. 1 John 1:5** – God is light, and cannot have fellowship with sin.
      2. **Isaiah 59:1-2** – sin keeps us from God’s house, His dwelling place.
   5. **Plan – condemn sin:**
      1. **Cf. Romans 8:3** – ultimately accomplished in Christ Jesus.
      2. **Genesis 3:14-15** – Prophesied from the beginning.
      3. **Condemning sin** – judging it worthy of punishment, and meting out that worthy punishment.
         1. **This was done in a way where JUSTICE could be served from a JUST God, while sparing the offenders – man.**
   6. **Planned result – entrance into God’s abode, His rest:**
7. God’s plan from the beginning – **Genesis 2:1-3** – 7th day sanctified.
   * + 1. The 7th day would stand as a representation of the true rest of God in the end – heaven.
       2. **Hebrews 4:3-10** – Using Israelites as an example of apostasy, the Hebrew writer speaks of the rest waiting for the people of God.
8. **Revelation 7:15-17; 21:3-4** – in God’s presence is relief, peace, and rest.
   * + 1. From the sin cursed world – **1 Corinthians 15:21a, 22a**
       2. From sin and temptation – **2 Peter 3:13** – righteousness dwells.
9. Execution of Plans
   1. **God sent His Son** – **John 3:16** – so man could have everlasting life.
      1. **Cf. Ephesians 3:11** – eternal purpose of God accomplished in Christ Jesus.
      2. **1 John 4:9-10** – sent Him to be the propitiation for sins.
      3. **Propitiation** – “akin to *hileos* (‘merciful, propitious’), signifies ‘an expiation, a means whereby sin is covered and remitted.’” “signifying that He Himself, through the expiatory sacrifice of His Death, is the Personal means by whom God shows mercy to the sinner who believes on Christ as the One thus provided.” (VINE)
      4. **Romans 8:3-4** – the law could not provide a sacrifice truly propitious.
         1. **Cf. Galatians 3:24** – it pointed the way to Christ, brought us to Him.
   2. **Christ shed His blood** – **cf. Matthew 26:28** – blood for remission.
      1. **Hebrews 9:22 – no remission without blood.**
      2. **John 14:1-6** – Jesus, shortly before going to the cross – did so to prepare, or make ready a place for believers in His Father’s House.
      3. **Hebrews 10:4-10, 18** – bulls and goats would not suffice, so the Son of God came, and atonement was made.
         1. **Came to do God’s will**.
         2. **Cf. Matthew 26:29** – submitted to God’s will.
      4. **Hebrews 9:13-14** – the efficacy of His blood.
   3. **Christ conquered death** – **Hebrews 2:10-11, 14-15 –** He came as captain (militaristic language) to destroy the enemy, Satan. (*archēgos* – from *archē,* to begin, and *agō*, to lead – not simply leading, but the first into the enemy territory)
      1. **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** – rose from the dead according to God’s plan.
      2. **1 Corinthians 15:20-23** – Became the first of many to conquer death.
      3. **1 Corinthians 15:50, 54-57** – Gives us the victory through His victory, and entrance into God’s abode – eternal rest.
   4. **Christ serves as High Priest to aid us** – **Hebrews 2:16-18** – His blood made “propitiation,” and because He passed through flesh, He can aid us who must endure such.
      1. **Hebrews 4:15** – He can sympathize with us.
   5. **All things necessary for us to get to heaven have been prepared, and executed. Heaven is prepared for us, but we must do as God requires to prepare ourselves to get there 🡪**
10. …for a Prepared People
11. Those Who Seek the Righteousness of Faith
    1. **Understand what (where) heaven is – the abode of God:**
       1. **Cf. 2 Peter 3:13** – where righteousness dwells.
       2. **Isaiah 6:1-5** – Isaiah’s vision of the throne room of God – He is unworthy to be in the presence of the HOLY GOD.
       3. **Romans 3:9-12, 20, 23** – there is NONE righteous.
       4. **We are unworthy of God’s presence because of our sin, and cannot be where He is except by grace.**
    2. **Our entrance into heaven MUST be by the righteousness of faith:**
       1. Not by works, i.e. perfect keeping of law, because then it isn’t of grace – **Romans 4:4; 11:6**
       2. **Romans 3:21-26** – God’s plan of righteousness is revealed in the gospel. It is a righteousness through faith.
          1. **(v. 25)** – Jesus’ blood serves as the propitiation for sins, but it is accessed “through faith.”
          2. **(v. 26)** – God can only justly justify those who have faith in Christ!
       3. Justification by faith takes boasting away – **Romans 3:27-28 – In order to be just before God, we had to rely upon, and trust in the sacrifice of His Son.** (If there was room for boasting, then there is not a need for Jesus’ death.)
12. Those Who are Washed in Christ’s Blood
    1. Faith accounted for righteousness is obedient – **Romans 1:5, 16-17; 16:25-26** – faith that saves is faith that obeys God’s gospel.
    2. Christ’s blood is the propitiation, but only those washed in it will benefit – **Revelation 7:13-14** – those privileged to worship before God’s throne forever.
    3. **Where does the gospel say we are washed in Christ’s blood?**
       1. **Hebrews 9:14; 10:22** – Christ’s blood cleanses, and such is contacted when our bodies are washed with pure water. (**NOTE: 9:14** – “dead works” are the works of the flesh, i.e. sin.)
       2. **Revelation 21:2; Ephesians 5:25-27** – The church, Christians, the bride of Christ, is prepared and purified through the washing of water.
       3. **Acts 2:37-38** – Peter said baptism is for the remission of sins.
          1. *Eis* – to or into (STRONG)
          2. **Baptized “to or into” the remission of sins.**
          3. Same construction – **cf. Matthew 26:28** – blood of Christ shed “to or into” the remission of sins.
          4. **Two things equal to the same are equal to each other.**
    4. **Mark 16:15-16** – The gospel says to believe and be baptized.
    5. **Cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9** – Those who don’t obey the gospel will not be prepared for entrance into heaven. (Because they aren’t washed in Christ’s blood.)
13. Those Who are Being Transformed
    1. **Romans 12:1-2** – those who are recipients of “the mercies of God” are to be transformed by the gospel.
    2. Because our present state cannot inherit the kingdom (**cf. 1 Corinthians 15:50**), we desire the body that can – **Philippians 3:7-11** – Paul wished to attain to the resurrection.
       1. All will be raised, but Paul seeks the resurrection to life.
       2. **Cf. Romans 8:17-18, 23** – Seeking to be glorified with Christ in the resurrection, and eagerly waiting for that redemption.
       3. **1 John 3:1-3** – This eager waiting involves purification of self – this is the transformation.
    3. God prepares us for this glorious habitation – **2 Corinthians 5:1-5** – but how has He prepared us/is He preparing us?
       1. **2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:6** – Paul speaking of his ministry in the gospel as an apostle – the gospel transforms those who behold its glory.
       2. **2 Corinthians 4:16** – The inward man is renewed daily by the consumption of God’s word.
    4. **We must understand that, while the transformation and resurrection come at the judgment day, our transformation must begin now!**
14. Those Who Long for Heaven
    1. The invitation into God’s abode is for those who so DESIRE it – **Revelation 22:17** – WHOSOEVER DESIRES.
       1. **Matthew 5:6** – We must hunger and thirst.
       2. **Matthew 6:19-21** – What we value must be heaven – that is where our hearts must be!
    2. We must seek heavenly things – **Colossians 3:1-4** – We want to appear with Him in glory.
    3. Those who truly long for heaven are those who are actively growing in faith **– 2 Peter 1:5-11** – We must not be “shortsighted.”
    4. Those who are prepared to gain entrance are those who are diligent, faithful, and patient – **Hebrews 6:11-12**
    5. We must acknowledge by word and deed, as Abraham, that this world is not our home – **Hebrews 11:13-16** – God has prepared a city FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO SO LONG FOR IT.

**Conclusion – We must understand that Heaven is prepared for those who are prepared. God has given us guidance regarding His side of the preparations, and our side. We must comply to reach heaven.**