



REFLECTIONS

February 17, 2019

**And I heard a loud voice from the throne
saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men,
and he will live with them.**

Revelation 21:3

Glimpses into Heaven

In all of God's creation, heaven is among the most mystifying places to imagine. Most biblical references to heaven relate to the celestial body; but when we speak of heaven today, usually the reference is to God's dwelling place. Mystifying or not, it's the place we hope to call home when our life in this world reaches its end. Jesus gave some of his disciples a glimpse of it.

Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. / Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters — one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." / While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" / When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." (Matthew 17:2-7) The three disciples had received a glimpse into heaven.

Paul, Jesus' apostle to be, had a glimpse of the blinding light from heaven too. *As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"* (Acts 9:3-4)

But perhaps the most vivid glimpse of heaven was the look given to John on Patmos island. This one revealed heaven yet to come. He saw Jesus seated on a great white throne judging the dead. And, *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."* (Revelation 21:1-4)

These snapshots reveal Jesus radiantly on his throne; and the voice of God expressing love for his son so profoundly that witnesses fell on their faces in awe of his presence. Then, God's tender touch eases fears, and wipes away tears, death, mourning, crying, and pain. The old order passed away leaving God's perfect dwelling place.

Eternal life begins there.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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