

Two Realms of Habitation

New Life by the Gospel of Grace

It is hard enough learning how to live in one world, this one. Yet, our calling is to learn to live in two realms at once. It's no good saying you can't—God knows you can with His help. In fact, you have already been “seated with Christ” in the heavenlies. You are in this world, but not of it: Like our spiritual forefather Abraham, we are on pilgrimage through this life looking for the “city not made with hands” which God is building with the new creations He is raising up.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:4-6 ESV

Flying with Two Wings

A common complaint against “hyper-religious” people is that they can be so heavenly minded that they are of little earthly good. We certainly want to avoid that pitfall, but it can be just as debilitating to be only earthly minded with none of heaven’s freshness breezing through. Just as a bird needs both of its wings to fly, we need to learn the way of balance when faced with any set of “matched pairs”—especially since we are already living in two realms of habitation.



The truth is that eternal life is in us right now. We are seated with Christ in the heavenlies right now. We have already been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ. We have already come to the city of God. This is surely meant to give some advantages to our life on earth. Why would the Lord tell us these things if it was meant to be nothing more than a pretty thought buried in the pages of a Book?

The truth is stranger and stronger than an ordinary common-sense view of earth would have us suppose. We are eternal beings—entirely new creations—living temporarily in physical bodies. No matter how badly we may have it in the moment, we will outlast the Grand Canyon and our best years have only just begun. Our future is glorious! Now, that’s a heavenly thought guaranteed to lift anyone’s feelings. Reach through to heaven and grab it; see what it does to your heart when you connect with it. We have been given a stake in heaven to keep our hearts encouraged and to give us victories in the battles.

A. Encouragement: A Change of Perspective

Everything on earth looks different and better from heaven’s perspective. The perfect natural analogy for this is the way things appear as you rise in an airplane above the earth’s surface. The jumbled dwellings, crowded thoroughfares and inevitable eyesores of natural decay and



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human neglect slowly take on a different aspect. Soon the sprawling surface looks more lovely, more orderly, and more intelligently designed than when it was thrust in your face. Or think of how stunningly beautiful the earth appears in those photos taken from outer space. Jesus lives with that perspective always before Him. He sees things down here differently from us.

The Lord God has issued a standing invitation for us to “come up higher,” get our eyes back on Jesus, and see things from heaven’s perspective. When should we take Him up on the offer? Anytime we become troubled by gazing too deeply at earth’s woes or our own. Hannah Whithall Smith once wrote that for every “one look at self” we should take ten looks at Jesus. His perspective is truth—unchanging eternal truth—and it is always liberating, if you gain eyes to see it and have a heart to believe it. God’s perspective is so good that He is even laughing at His enemies!

Here are two methods for enhancing your vision:

1) See Earth by “Looking Through” the Eternal Promises

Use the promises of God to open your eyes to see present trouble in the right light. We are promised that our sins are forgiven and not held against us, that all things are being made to work for our good, and that God is loving us every step of the way (no matter how badly we may be doing). The final outcome is always going to be worth the pain of the passage. If God the Father and Jesus see me as someone They always want to love, forgive and make good plans for, then what do I have to complain about? In fact, I want to rise up higher and see not only myself and my life, but everything and everyone from heaven’s perspective.

2) See People by “Looking Through” to Heaven

This is especially helpful for those who have lost a loved one or are afflicted by someone’s stubborn ways. The ultimate cure for grief is to “see” that your departed loved one is truly in heaven, is deliriously happy to be there, has no complaints about how they got there, and actually want you to be happy for them while you wait your turn to come up. This also works incredible well when someone close to you is bound up in ways that are painful to you as well as to them. You can’t see how they will ever change. “Look through” that earth-bound blindness to heaven. See that one Day they will be there, they will be completely set free, and your relationship with them will be fully restored. So relax and thank God that He has good plans for transforming them. Amazingly, in the letting go of our cares by “looking through” to heaven, God often works wonders down here.

B. Battle: Displacing the Enemy

As residents of two realms we have been given authority to affect both earth and heaven.

1) First the Earth Realm

When the New Testament mentions “the flesh” or “the body” in a negative way it is ALWAYS referring to the fallen nature and its effects, such the body’s mortality and subjection to “decay.” Likewise, when the world is described negatively it is that which is fallen about humanity and controlled by the kingdom of darkness, not people themselves

or the earth. Bring the Lord in, get the enemy out, and watch both human beings and the earth respond with beauty and fruitful growth. Don't lose your vision!

2) Now the Heavenlies

The kingdom of darkness has apparently set up operational headquarters above us, not in hell where popular imagination has them. No doubt some are there tormenting the damned, but that is probably not their preferred assignment. They are spread out like weeds all over the earth and, surprisingly, in the heavens. Not the highest heaven—that's God's heaven. Scriptures shows Satan making appearances there, barging in to demand that someone be "sifted" and hurling accusations. Nevertheless, the evil ones are in "heavenly places" according to Paul. Since Paul told us that he was lifted up to the third heaven, the common short-hand for Satan's domain is the "second heavens."

Under the leadership of Jesus, we are equipped to wage a war of displacement against these "second heaven overlords" in two ways. By prayer Daniel evidently assisted an angel fighting his way past second heaven resistance. Something of the enemy's power over Persia was displaced as Daniel fasted and prayed. Additionally, by repentance and righteous living, the enemy loses his ability to set up shop over whole territories in order to curse them with oppression. When true liberty in Christ is restored even the land recovers.

Solomon's great prayer of dedication for the Temple brought a divine response, indicating that with prayer and true repentance the land would be healed. This necessarily means that an accompanying victory would have been won in the heavenlies against the powers and principalities enforcing that curse upon the land which had begun due to the people's disobedience. Our disobedience builds the enemy's empire; our return to righteousness topples it. Jesus said that whatever we would bind on earth would be bound in heaven. Does this have a second heavens counterpart? This is not meant to be a definitive answer, but a goad to get you seeking and praying for your part in the battle.

Two More to Explore

Two Invisible Kingdoms You won't find this in your science books. They don't even have it on their radar. What science reveals to us, however, is the presence of invisible realities we never knew existed. Things like bacteria, viruses, cancer cells, and radioactive emissions threaten our lives even though we cannot see them. It's time to gain eyes to see what science is blind to. Two invisible kingdoms are at war all around you; sometimes you even feel the "tug of war" going on within you. It really helps to know what you are up against.

Two Powerful Motivations It takes passion to "press in" as you reach to go higher and deeper into the intimate embrace of our God. It also takes grit and determination to "stick and stay" when the going gets rough or the temptations get too tempting. To help us stay on course and sail when we can, we have been given two powerful motivations to fire us up: the fear of God and the love of God. No, they are not primarily feelings. Feelings are notoriously flimsy and fickle; these are tough as nails!



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