

The purpose of God

"To me, less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations, and to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God, in accord with the purpose of the eons."

—Ephesians 3:8-11

The wisdom of God and the purpose of the eons is to give the fullest possible delight to every creature of His hand for all eternity. To do this, it is essential that God first estrange these creatures from Him, enshroud Himself in nearly impenetrable glory

God's purpose is to give the fullest possible delight to His creatures.

(granting hints of it now and then), reveal His heart through a Son, prime the creatures for endless bliss by the temporary experience of evil, then reconcile these same creatures—that is, pull them to His bosom—at the same time gifting them with an almost unendurable appreciation for the deliverance from sin and death, a thing wholly impossible apart from the aforementioned distance.

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"It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens."

—Colossians 1:19-

Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

Heaven & Earth

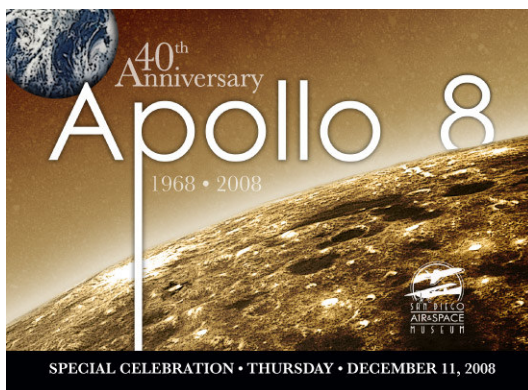
I am one of those irritating people who has to know why things are the way they are. It's not enough for me to know that God created the heavens and the earth. Were it enough, my life would be much easier. (And so

why did You create the heavens *and* the earth?"

Thank God for His infinite patience. Could it be that He is flattered by the questions?

For as the heavens are loftier than the earth, so are My ways loftier than your ways, and My devices than your devices.

—Isaiah 55:9



would God's!) Instead, I follow God around like a troublesome reporter with a microphone in hand, querying: "God. Please. Pardon my impertinence, but: Why did You create the heavens and the earth?" When God answers, "My goal throughout the eons is to make Myself known and bless My creatures, and these are the stages—if you will—for these operations"—I *still* refuse to go away. I ask the same question, but with altered emphasis: "Yes. Thank you, God. That is wise and glorious. But—pardon my impertinence once again—

The earth is an arena of humiliation, lowness, and smallness. Apollo 8 was the first manned space voyage to escape Earth's gravitational field and actually view the earth from an orbit around another celestial body—Earth's moon. Not until then did we begin to realize how small we were in relation to the heavens. And where are these heavens? Everywhere our feet are not.

There are only two parts to the constituted universe: the heavens and the earth. Whatever is not of earth, is of the heavens. How amazing that this pinprick of rock on which we suffer is counted worthy, by God, to be reckoned as the second part of all that exists.

Our planet is the only place in this universe habited by human beings. And *human* beings are the only beings chosen by God to one day administer His counsels in both spheres. As a

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...reconciled to God — Colossians 1:20

HEAVEN & EARTH

Nations
Paul
Uncircumcision
Body

Eph. 2:6-7

Israel
Peter
Circumcision
Bride

Rev. 5:10



...heaven and earth

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pledge of this, the Son of God became one of us.

A related question will help us understand why God required both a height (heavens) and a depth (earth). Q: *Why the tabernacle system?*

The tabernacle system of Moses brought a small piece of heaven to earth and enthroned it between the wings of human-crafted cherubim (angels) in a square chamber enclosed by heavy drapes called the holy of holies. Here, an emblem of the presence of God dwelt in the form of a small globe of supernatural light that miraculously hovered in thin air. Only the high priest had access to this room, once a year, and gained it only by following God’s instructions to the letter. Any priest who approached unworthily was struck dead on the spot. Why?

God is so high and so inaccessible—and so removed from us in glory and character—that not

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only does gazing into the heavens strike us dumb, but we can barely abide His presence even when He lowers Himself to dwell in a tent. If we can barely abide His presence in a homemade shelter of wood and animal skin, how can we even hope to approach Him in His magnificent abode above the stars?

Christ.

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Oh, the necessity of Christ! Christ makes God accessible to us. Were it not for the heavens that shrink us, or for the earthly tabernacle that, in all its humiliation, *still* isolated us from Deity, we could never appreciate the need for an Intercessor, or be able to thrill to the following statement from the pen of Paul:

And, coming, He brings the evangel of peace to you, those afar, and peace to those near, for through Him we both have had the access, in one spirit, to the Father.

—Ephesians 2:17-18

ACCESS TO THE FATHER!

Again I say, only those who have gawked at the stars or seen a dead priest dragged from the holy place by a rope, can appreciate the gift of Christ and the privilege of having access to God—not *only* access, but “access with confidence” (Eph. 3:12).

Confidence!

Thank God for His indescribable gratuity. ■

Earthly tabernacle a model of “the big boy”



Okay, I really shouldn’t have written “the big boy” above, but these were the first words that came to mind to describe the glorious celestial temple on which the Mosaic tabernacle was apparently modeled. From Heb. 8:4-5:

“Indeed, then, if He were on earth He would not even be a priest, there being those who offer approach presents according to the law who, by an example and shadow, are offering the divine service of the celestials, according as Moses has been apprized when about to be completing the tabernacle. For see, He is averring, that you shall be making all ‘in accord with the model shown to you in the mountain.’”

Moses did not invent the design of the tabernacle he brought to Israel from Mt. Sinai. Have you ever read some of the specific instructions for the tabernacle? Here’s a small sampling:

“Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet material...the length of

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What a Revelation!

PAUL WENT TO THE THIRD HEAVEN IN TIME, NOT SPACE

“I am acquainted with a man in Christ, fourteen years before this—such a one was snatched away to the third heaven...he was snatched away into paradise and hears ineffable declarations” (2 Cor. 12:1-4).

What—or where—is the third heaven to which Christ took Paul? Can we know? We can!

Although it is broken up, spatially, into subdivisions (the troposphere, stratosphere, mesosphere, etc.) whatever is not earthly is heavenly. In time, however, there are three heavens and three earths.

The first earth of Genesis 1:1 was destroyed by the disruption of the world (Jn. 17:24). It is the second earth upon which the spirit of God vibrates in Genesis 1:2. The third earth is described by John in Rev. 21:1. Each earth has a corresponding heaven.

Paul went into the heaven that corresponds to the new earth. It is upon this earth that God dwells with mankind in New Jerusalem, also known as Paradise. So Paul not only saw the third heaven—and the body of Christ glorified and reigning—he saw the third earth as well.

Not bad for a former Pharisee.

Q&A

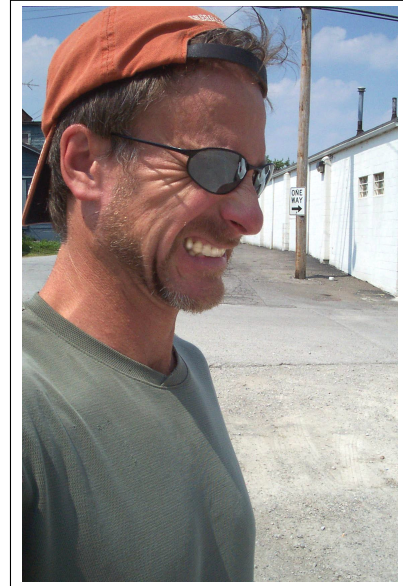
Why is “heavens” plural?

Sometimes scripture has the plural, and sometimes the singular. From the Keyword Concordance of the Concordant Literal New Testament: “In the singular it seems to be confined to the sky or gaseous envelope of the earth—Mt. 16:1. In the plural it includes the three gaseous layers above the earth—Gn. 1:1, Col. 1:16.

There is also a layer included above this, translated in the CLNT, “celestial.” This would be the region of outer space. All three words are related. The Greek word for “heaven” is *ouranos*; the elements are SEE-UP. It is simply that which is seen when looking up. The word translated “celestial” is *epouranion*, or ON-SEE-UP. How picturesque. Outer space heaven sits *on* the heavens that we breathe.

Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we should not murmur (Philippians 2:14). Therefore, I shall rant.



A terrible lack of information—thank God

I have tended to grouse over the fact that not much is revealed of my celestial destination. When I read in Philippians 3:20 that our realm is “inherent in the heavens,” it sets me to wondering why God would withhold so much detail about it.



Imagine my excitement when one of our own—the apostle Paul—went to the third heaven. *At last*, I thought. *Now I’m going to get a first-person report of all I have to look forward to, in Christ.*

The ensuing disappointment was colossal. God takes the trouble to whisk Paul away to the heaven that corresponds to the new earth of Revelation, chapter 21, actually sending the man forward in time, and granting him to witness—most probably—the body of Christ completed. Yes. I suspect that the man literally saw me—Martin Zender—and you, and you, and you, and perhaps even himself, seated at the right hand of God.

And yet, as marvelous as my thought here may be, it is pure supposition. Why? Because, the man, Paul, returns from his Magical Magical Mystery Tour, only to give us this: “[I] was snatched away into paradise and hear ineffable declarations, which it is not allowed a man to speak” (2 Cor. 12:4).

Fantastic! Thanks! Not allowed to speak! Well—glad you went! I didn’t want to know anyway! Thanks for bringing it up!

Sheesh.

This, of course, was my first reaction. And as you can tell from all the exclamation points, it is not a very mature reaction.

Upon mature reflection, I am reminded from the rest of the 2 Corinthians passage that whatever Paul saw and heard was so high and so glorious and so unearthly that he was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. Hm. (*Insert mature reflection here....*) Do I really want another thorn in the flesh? No, not really.

So thank you, God, for making this a walk of faith, not perception. As for the glory of what is coming, I will wait to see it firsthand. It is enough, for now, to know that it exists. ■

...model (continued from page 2)

each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits... (Exodus 26:1-2).

And on it goes for two chapters. My point is that not only was Moses given instructions concerning this tabernacle, *he was shown a model*. Combine this with the startling phrase from Hebrews, quoted on the previous page—“divine service of the celestials,” and we seem to be learning that, before there was a system in place for worshipping God on earth, there was already such a system—though far grander—established in heaven.

Is heaven a wisp of ethereal nothing? I think not. Even now, there is a city kept there—New Jerusalem—waiting to descend to the new earth (Rev. 21:1-2). This literal, physical city, described in Rev. 21:11-27, is 1,500 miles square; nearly the size of Australia. If set upon this present earth, it’s ceiling would reach above the ionosphere, into the exosphere. If this city is merely that which is kept for the coming third earth, then what sort of greater magnificence dots the unseen empyrean?

We are about to find out. ■



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Included assembly instructions
(34 assembly pictures).
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