

ANTICIPATION – Waiting on the greatest gift

There are many things in life that fill us with anticipation and excitement. Holidays, vacations, favorite activities, spending time with family are a few you may look forward to. Many are filled with expectation and anticipation as they think of the approaching Christmas holiday. But have you ever noticed how we only look forward to the things we desire? Does the thought of death, eternal life, and heaven fill you with anticipation? Do we really desire the next life more than the things we experience now? If not, why? If so, why don't our lives show it? They should!

THREE SNAPSHOTS - WHERE WE WERE, WHERE WE ARE, AND WHERE CHRISTIANS ARE REALLY HEADING

I. A BEAUTIFUL BEGINNING. GEN. 1-2

- A. All created things are declared good. Gen. 1
 - 1. They're good because they are just the way God intended them to be.
 - a. No death of any kind.
 - b. No disease.
 - c. No sin.
- B. Man is placed in a God made paradise, to be ruler of all created things. Gen. 2
 - 1. Fruit bearing trees of all kinds. Gen. 2:8
 - 2. Tree of life. Gen. 2:9
 - 3. A river flows through the garden. Gen. 2:10
 - 4. A perfect paradise where man has no wants or unfulfilled needs.

II. A PERVERTED PRESENT GEN. 3

- A. Man's sin brings the end of all things being good.
 - 1. Man and woman are cursed. vv. 16-19
 - a. Woman – pain in childbirth and a desire to rule over her husband.
 - b. Man – easy going gardening replaced with burdensome labor.
 - c. Death enters the world, including all created things.
 - 2. Creation itself suffers along with mankind through no fault of its own. Rom. 8:19-22
(¹⁹The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.)
 - a. The animal kingdom becomes survival of the fittest.
 - b. Earth's climate undergoes catastrophic changes. (After the flood of Noah)
 - 1. Earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts, floods.
 - c. Man was to be ruler and lord of all creation. He completely failed and brought the end of all things being good. Today things are far from what they were or should be.
 - 3. God's curse guarantees no matter how hard we try or how clever our plans, we cannot arrange for the perfect life we desire. **It can't be done.**
 - a. Every man is frustrated in work and cannot completely rule over his "kingdom".
 - b. All women will experience relational heartache and feelings of loneliness.
 - c. God makes us completely dependant on Him and in search of something greater.

(INSERT CHRISTMAS STORY HERE)

(INSERT SALVATION STORY HERE)

III. A FANTASTIC FINISH

- A. Our earthly bodies are finite and in need of a replacement. I John 3:2
(²Dear 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.)
1. We'll be like Jesus with a real body.
 - a. Able to eat. – breakfast with the disciples
 - b. Walk through locked doors and yet sit in a chair. – appearing to the eleven
 - c. Sinless – like Adam before the fall
 2. Our true glory will be unveiled for all eternity. Finally the sons of God will be revealed.
- B. The Earth itself will be restored. Rev. 21:1
(¹Then 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.)
1. The word new “kainos” means new in quality or nature. Not new in time or succession.
 2. The same word is used in 2 Peter 3:13.
 - a. The earth is purified with fire.
 - b. All works and scars of mankind are removed.
 - c. Compare “destroyed” in verse 10 with verse 6. The earth was not destroyed in Noah’s flood but cleansed. The word destroyed here is better translated “revealed”. The earth will be restored to better than original condition.
- C. Heaven and God Himself descend to this New Earth. Rev. 21:9-21
1. This is the new Jerusalem where God will dwell face to face with men.
 2. This city is huge, approx. 1,480 square miles, about the size of Rhode Island.
 3. Notice we are not limited to this city. Rev. 21:24-26
 - a. “kings of the earth will bring splendor into it.”
 - b. “on no day will its gates ever be shut.”
 - c. “glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.”
- D. Creation which has been waiting in eager anticipation is restored along with man.
1. The animal kingdom is finally liberated from its bondage. Isa. 11:6-9
 2. A perfect paradise is restored. Rev. 22:1-5
 - a. A river flows through the middle of the city. vv. 1-2
 - b. The tree of life reappears. v. 2
 - c. The sons of God will reign with Him. v. 5

Thoughts to take home:

1. Christ’s death on the cross provides us with more than an escape from Hell and help in life’s trials. We’ll have a new body and will reign with Him on the New Earth.
2. When we have a proper view of the life to come, this present day begins to fade into insignificance. We should have a new sense of urgency in proclaiming the good news and plugging into God’s plan for our life. We only get one chance to store up true riches.
3. Our eternal life will never be stale or boring. No mind can completely conceive all that is to come.
4. When we fail to place proper focus on the life to come and are consumed by the here and now, we make a nothing of eternity and an eternity of nothing. All we do to advance our own kingdoms on this earth, will be useless in the next.