

## W420\_Heavenly\_Places.mp3

[00:00:00] Not merely in hours or days or centuries, but we have light years. I don't know whether you can understand them. As far as I remember at school that went round the earth eight times in a second. So if a thing so many light years away or it's beyond all computation as to how far it is, isn't it? They tell you that that star that you can see shining in the sky just now may have been blown to smithereens millions of years ago. And all that time the light's been still travelling and it'll go on, perhaps for me, peculiar to the epistle, to the Ephesians, because you can find the word heavenly in Matthew and John and in Corinthians and in Hebrews, and if you can find it scattered all through the New Testament like that, how can you possibly say in the selfsame breath that it belongs only to the epistle, to the Ephesians? Well, you see, the nearer a statement is to the truth and not quite true. The more dangerous it is, isn't it? We have never said that the word heavenly is peculiar to Ephesians. What we have said is the phrase in the heavenly places in twice if any OS and those terms occur five times in the New Testament and every one of them are in the epistle to the Ephesians. So as you see, it's not good enough merely to turn to Matthew and say the word means our Heavenly Father. It's not good enough to turn to John, it's not good enough to turn to Corinthians, but it speaks about a heavenly body.

[00:01:40] Oh, that's all right. We know that. But we are still saying that there is only one book in the whole Bible that speaks about a sphere called Heavenly Places. The next thing is, and it's a legitimate objection. There is no word for place. You see, the word place is the Greek word, *topos*. We got our topography and so on. So once again, we're back. Well, it's heavenly sounding, isn't it? Now, I suppose you do know that w h e r e Where? At least in the Greek New Testament. Is that adverb of place an adverb of place? So when the apostle wrote to the Colossians and said, Set your affection on things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Without limiting ourselves to saying that heaven is just above us because it must be above the Australians as well, if you can have it that way. We know that well enough. But it is where Christ Sitteth at the right hand of God. So again, you see whether we say heavenly places, heavenly spheres, heavenly. We've still got to come back to the fact that this expression occurs here and here only. And so when we look at the epistle to the Ephesians, we find that the blessings are peculiar because nowhere else in the whole word of God are

blessings called spiritual. Although you may think so, it's not what we think, it's what's written.

[00:03:24] Nowhere else do we find a company chosen before the foundation of the world, nowhere else but there and nowhere else do we have a sphere of blessing where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Well, now let's turn, shall we, to Ephesians and notice the occurrences. Oh, before we do that, I'll refer to one passage which are touched upon in passing without quoting John the third chapter. Now you say, What's John the third chapter got to do with Ephesians? Well, there is a statement there which we do well to ponder. Verse 12. If I have told you earthly things and you believe not. How are you going to believe? If I should tell you heavenly things? It doesn't say I am telling you heavenly things. But if you will not even believe the first rung of the ladder, how are you going to get to the top one? But it does show you that when John wrote his gospel, it was possible for him to remind his readers that although they begin with John 3:16, for God so loved the world. A door had been opened in the purpose of God. That made it possible for a person who simply believed Christ as their savior to go on and believe that he was the head over the church and that they were members of the body. Nothing to stop them. Although it doesn't teach it here. That's all right. But still, this is not the word.

[00:04:54] Heavenly places. This is still true that the expression occurs only in the epistle to the Ephesians. Well, I think perhaps we better look at those five statements first, just to get them before us and then see what comes out of it. Ephesians chapter one. We quoted it, but we'll give it its context. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints, which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus, Grace be to you and peace from God, our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. For the moment, it doesn't matter to us whether He wrote to the Saints at Ephesus or whether they were written to anybody who cared to get the Epistle. I mean, there's a real hullabaloo because in some manuscripts there's a gap left. And you think that anybody with any common sense would say, no. Epistle could be written to the Saints, which are. That's what they try to make out. This this to the apostle said when you read this epistle, when you read the one at layer the year and the later things read you yours when you wrote to the Colossians. It was like it was one that could be circulated among these believers. So as copies were multiplied, so they left it open. And then you wrote in what we do to this very day, if some of you receive a postcard telling you the date of the

women's meeting, you will see that the postcard has got dotted line so that it can be written in.

[00:06:32] But it doesn't need to say you're invited to come to a dotted line or a dotted meeting, you see. So we won't bother about that. If anybody wants to go into it some time or another with all the manuscript evidence, if it's worth it, we might do it. But we're coming to this first statement. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. You notice it doesn't say, Oh, bless me. It says all, bless God. So we are we are getting our voice in that hallelujah chorus of Psalm 148. Of course, the sun and the moon. They have a different way of praising him than intelligent, reasonable beings. That we have something to say to in this mighty orchestra. Blessed be God who hath blessed us. And it says, These blessings are all spiritual. And as we said before, that's not a common expression, even though you might think so. And you might say that Abraham was a spiritually minded man and David was a spiritually minded man. They may have been. But if you keep to the language of scripture, you will find the word spiritual occurs only once in the whole range of Old Testament teaching. Now. I didn't. I forgot to put it down. It's because it didn't obtain. It has a special meaning. The only occurrence of the word spiritual is the spiritual man is mad. And if you want to take that to you, to yourself, I won't object.

[00:08:03] That's all it says. So it doesn't occur at all, you see, in our meaning. So God means what He says He said to the children of Israel, If you keep my commandments and obey this covenant, I will bless you in basket and in store. I will make your land fruitful. Your cattle shall not perish and so on. But you're not going to sniff at that if you're going to have an earthly inheritance. What's the good of spiritual blessings on a farm? You see, it's all right. But there came a moment when God lifted and spoke about a heavenly position, a place where Christ sits at the right hand of God. And if had gotten if he'd forgotten to make our blessings all spiritual, will we never get there. And if we did, we couldn't stop there. So it's all right blessed then. It's not really all spiritual blessings. The literal rendering is blessed us with every blessing that is spiritual. Now, if you know me at all, you do have many blessings at all. But oh, dear. How are we going to get this? Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every blessing that is spiritual because our inheritance is spiritual and we have to have ourselves made all sufficient for the inheritance of the saints in light. Now it comes to

the next statement in heavenly places. And then the one thing that matters most in Christ, for if they're not in Christ, there'll be neither spiritual nor in heavenly places.

[00:09:37] So now we've got in the heavenlies the places out of your wish. What do you say to be? Well, where are these heavenly places? What are they like? Well, I say I no more. No more than you do. Well, what are you doing up there? Oh, I'm only opening the book. If this book tells me anything about where they are. I pointed out to you. But where it stops, I must stop. So will you look at the end of this same chapter and see the next occurrence of these heavenly places? I think it wouldn't do us any harm to see the prayer that leads up to this. He says, I pray for you, verse 17, that the father of glory may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. Which might better read that you'll get a wise and revealing spirit in the acknowledgment of him. That carry comes then, shall you know, as you go on to know the Lord, you see the eyes of your understanding being enlightened. That has to be taken for granted. Otherwise you want to go back to the beginning that you may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us. Ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ.

[00:11:05] When he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. So I do know where heavenly places are. At least I know this. They're at the right hand of God. And I'm sure the right hand of God is somewhere not located on the earth. We see that presently abundantly. But it is so these heavenly places are at the right hand of God. But then it says something further and it is far above all, not some far above all principality and power and might and dominion. And they because there's so much to say, he says at every name that is named not only in this age old world, but also in Asia to come. So there's nothing left out. And has put all things under his feet. So he's part above all. And if he don't believe that all things under his feet, that's heavenly places. Well, the objector may say, Oh, well that's where Christ is. But he says to me is to be. You're telling me that that's where you are going to be? And you object to that? I do, Most certainly. There has been in this chapel a believer. A genuine believer who accused me of blasphemy. Because I quoted Ephesians two. Verse six. Difficult to be accused of blasphemy from quoting the scriptures, isn't it? But he would not tolerate the idea that anybody could possibly be reckoned to be seated together with Christ.

[00:12:51] It wouldn't have it. But we are not made of that. We say if God has said so, even though it's a staggering thing, we must accept it, mustn't we? So shall we look? It says in verse five, Even when we were dead in sins that quickened us together with Christ. Then he slips in and hallelujah, as it were, before he goes on, he stops himself. He says, By grace, you are saved and hath raised us up together. Now, that's true of the Roman Epistle. But he is an additional bit found nowhere else. Nowhere else do you get this expression? They're now seated together in Romans. But now it says that's the one thing more and have made us sit together. You might have wondered if we were permitted to stand. In the heavenly place, he says. Now sit together. Where Christ sit is at the right hand of God in those heavenly places, in Christ Jesus. So where Christ is, is the goal to which we press all the idea of being unworthy of it is beside the mark. We are unworthy of any of it. We are equally unworthy to be blessed in the paradise of God on Earth. So if God offers us something better, we might as well take the best of the worst because we're not worthy of either of them. So we've got now we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Those heavenly places are where Christ was raised, from the dead and ascended far above all principality.

[00:14:27] And we are reckoned to be seated together with him. And one day we're going to be there for what God reckons now to our face will be realised, to our hope. Well, the next statement is in chapter three. When the apostle as the prisoner of Jesus Christ for US Gentiles, made known that to him had been entrusted a new dispensation called the dispensation of the mystery. That is, if you're reading the revised version, he says in verse eight unto me. And when the apostle has to emphasize himself, he continually follows it with me. I don't think I'm boasting, don't think I'm praising myself. I'm not worthy to be called an apostle yet I'm not one whit behind any of them. You see two sides. He said. I magnify my office even though I be little myself. You can understand him, can't you? He says unto me. Who am less than the least of all saints is this grace, given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ? When you believe what it says there, you won't find those riches in the Old Testament. You won't find them in the gospel, according to Matthew. They're unsearchable. They're only now being made known. These are riches that have never been revealed. And our version says to make all men see? It's the same word, which gives us the word in verse, which we read just now, verse 18 of chapter one.

[00:15:58] The eyes of your understanding being enlightened. Potato. The word to which gives us a word photography and so on that that I should enlighten all. What if it's true? It's no use going to Peter to discover this blessing. It's no good going to John to discover it. He says it was entrusted to me as the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. So we stress the prison ministry of the Apostle Paul and to enlighten all as to now our version says as to what is the fellowship. Now, once again, there are more valuable manuscripts used today than ever. The authorized version people saw or knew. They go back earlier and they are more attested and there's a little change necessary. You can quite understand that a slave who copied these manuscripts could get tired. But even today, if you gave anybody a book like Ephesians to write out by hand. I'm already certain that when you went through it, you'd find they made a mistake somewhere or the other. Would you believe it? Even I make mistakes. When I quote the scriptures and I look at the manuscript when it comes back, I think, Oh, fancy me saying that? You see just a slip of the mind. Well, the word fellowship begins with the letters. K Oh, I. And the word dispensation begins with the letters o i k. And there you got it. Koinonia instead of oikonomia. You see, So the word should be reading. And to make all men see or enlighten all as to what is the dispensation of the mystery.

[00:17:41] Which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ to the intent that now if something more coming in, that now unto the principalities and powers not to angels are seen in Peter's ministry. All Peter says angels desire to look into these things. But Paul doesn't speak about angels. The only place he speaks about angels in the positive sense is in the epistle to the Hebrews, written to the Hebrews, but not to you and to me. You cannot divorce angels from the people of Israel. Right from the call of Abraham, right up through the Old Testament, right into the Gospels, right into the Acts of the apostles. Angels Minister. And so they do in the Hebrews. And so they do in Revelation. But no angels for you and me. I don't know whether it's going to upset you tonight before Four Corners to your bed, you know, and angels all around that They've got something more. Do you know what we've got? They've got Christ himself, independent of angels, principalities and powers. So he says to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places. So there, there principalities and powers in heavenly places should be known by the church, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God. Now the last reference comes in chapter six. He says in verse ten.

[00:19:17] Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. He's picking up the words that are found in Chapter one. Just let's back to chapter one, will you? Verse 20. Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him in his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion. And in verse ten, What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us? Ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power. Now he's got all those words back again in Chapter ten. They're all going to be put into work, into operation. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness, of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high or heavenly places. The same expression. Now here's a problem. If Christ is raised far above all principality and power, and if where Christ Cities is the very right hand of God. According to this, these wicked powers which are still actively engaged against, are all up there. Well, let's see. So that sounds odd because if they're if he's far above them all and this is the holy place where Christ sits, are these wicked beings up there? Would you say it says so? Well, let's wait a moment.

[00:20:57] Will you turn to a parallel construction in the epistle of Peter? And this is often appealed to this is second Peter Chapter one. Verse 19. This is often appealed to by those who do not believe the personal return of our Savior. You know, there are some lines of teaching which say Christ is not going to come up again in person. Every time a person is converted at a meeting and Christ enters his heart. The Kingdom of God is gradually being built up. And when they're all converted and all blessed, Christ will have come. And you say, Where do you get that from? Oh, he says, It's written in Second Peter Chapter 119. We have also a more sure word of prophecy. Whereunto you do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts. Well, the day star is Christ. He's the subject of prophecy. It says he speaks in this very chapter about making known the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 16, We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But were eyewitnesses of His Majesty. So he's speaking about the coming of the Lord, and it's going to be in your hearts. So what do you do about that? What you see, you can do with a Greek sentence, what you couldn't do with an English one, because so far as we

are concerned, we've rubbed off all the endings or nearly all the endings of our words so that we've got to put them in their exact order.

[00:22:43] Otherwise we make nonsense. If you were to take an English sentence and throw it up in the air, you couldn't put it together again with certainty. You wouldn't know if it was John who hit Jim or whether it was Jim who hit John because there's no distinction. But if you did that with a Greek sentence, you'd know because John would have an ending that showed him he was the nominative and Jim would have an ending that showed him he was in the accusative or the dative or whatnot. See? So if you've got a language like that that's got its endings that show you where you are, you can sometimes shift a bit to the end to give it distinction. So shall we have a look at it again in this verse? We have also a more sure word of prophecy. Whereunto you do well that ye take heed in your hearts. As unto a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise. Stage star doesn't arise in your hearts. You take heed. And he waits a minute to get them in your hearts and puts out a bit in the middle. We couldn't speak like that quite so well in our language.

[00:23:50] Let's come back to Ephesians and have another look. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood. Neither do we wrestle in heavenly places. You never say. That's the idea. There's no wrestling against flesh and blood down here, and there's no wrestling with heaven in heavenly places up there. These principalities and powers are limited to the darkness of this world. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness, of this world, against spiritual wickedness. So I've put it, as you see on this chart at the fourth line from the top. We wrestle not. With flesh and blood. In the heavenly places? No, no. But we do wrestle with principalities and powers down here. What are the next thing is for us to consider? The way in which this expression must be understood. We come back to the book of the Psalms for a moment. Psalm 148. We read that just now. You remember and I daresay you observed what it said, Psalm 148, verse four, Praise him, Ye heavens of heavens. Ye, heavens of heavens. Well, what does that mean? Heavens of heavens! Perhaps a better look somewhere else. Let's go back to the Second Chronicles, chapter two, where Solomon is dedicating the temple. Second Chronicles Chapter two. And there he says these words, verse six. And who is able to build him a house. Seeing the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. So

according to the Old Testament, Solomon knew that there was the heaven above him, but there were the heavens of heavens which were above those.

[00:26:19] And in the sixth chapter repeats himself. So there was a time for him to be corrected if he made a mistake. The 18th verse. Chapter 618 that will God in very deed, dwell with men on the earth. Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee. How much less this house which I have built. Then you get in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It speaks about our Savior having passed into the heavens. But the word dire doesn't mean into the word Dire means through. And it says in that passage that is passed through the heavens and is above all hymns. So we are getting a consistent statement in the scriptures that while Solomon had no idea that any believer would ever be translated to the heavens of heavens, he knew there were they. And the one who wrote Psalm 148 spoke about the heavens and the heavens that were above. So Paul was perfectly right to tell us that that sphere had now been opened, which had been shut before, so that there will be those blessed with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob who shall inherit the Earth. The Sermon on the Mount doesn't tell a single one of them they're going to heaven. I'm amazed at some people. They speak about the Sermon on the Mount as the quintessence of Christianity, and he doesn't mention the cross of Christ.

[00:27:56] He doesn't mention redemption. It doesn't mention faith in his anything. And it says, the meek shall inherit the earth. And you say that means you and you're going to heaven. Yes. And you're a reasonable person. Yes. Well, I don't think you are for if you're going to inherit the earth and you're going to heaven, you'll have to straddle a bit, won't you? Don't you see? God means what he says. There will be some will be blessed in the paradise of God on the earth. There will be some who will walk the streets of the holy city and there will be some who will be so blessed beyond the dreams of man who will be seated together with Christ, where he sits at the right hand of God. Now, you do know that in Genesis one, there is a distinction made between the heaven that was there originally. Shall we turn to the first chapter just to see for ourselves? Although it may be common knowledge to us, we want to remember those who will be joining in this meeting presently, who will be glad to have a word. I hope so. And if they know all about it, will they sit back and thank God they do that? So we're all right to see Genesis one in the beginning. That's not a date. There is no almanac here, no diary kept here.

This is before any computation of time is possible. We don't know when. As our science advances and as astronomy advances. So the beginning retires. We have to.