

# B E Y O N D T H E B A S I C

## CHAPTER 8- LIVING IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM

### **The Reality of the Spiritual World**

As members of the human race we exist in two different realms, the physical world and the spiritual world. We are usually very much more aware of being physical creatures in a physical world of time and space than we are aware of being spiritual beings in the spiritual world. We tend to lose sight of the fact that, in addition to being physical entities, we also are spirits, and have, so to speak, one foot in each world. We were created from the dust of the earth and God breathed His life into us, and made us living souls (Genesis 2:7). He made us triune beings consisting of body, mind, and spirit. The body is made from the dust of the ground, and will return to dust (Genesis 3:19). The mind is trapped in the shell of the body until it is released at death to join the spirit in its eternal abode. The spirit dwells in the spiritual domain, and for Christians, our spirits are presently seated in the heavenly realm with Jesus (Ephesians 2:6). Whether we spend eternity in the presence of God, or in the everlasting lake of fire, we will be spending eternity in the spiritual realm. We need to understand the spiritual environment in which we reside.

What we know best is our physical world, since that is the world our bodily senses are designed to operate in. Our spiritual senses are not activated until we become new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Corinthians 6:17). We tend to be more comfortable with time and space than we are with eternity and infinity, and we prefer the visible to the invisible. Our western way of thinking is science oriented and sees in black and white, right or wrong, with events in chronological order. The eastern way of thinking is more emotional, sees shades of gray, and views events as cause and effect without regard to time order. As a result eastern culture is much more at ease with the spiritual and the invisible. Unfortunately, most people from eastern cultures do not follow Jesus. They are under bondage to the evil side of the spiritual realm. Like wise, those in the western world who have given themselves over to occult practices are much more aware of the spirit world than are most Christians. Those people are also under bondage to the evil side of the spiritual realm. When we are not cognizant of the environment around us, our survival is in peril.

We may believe that since we are primarily aware of living in the physical world we do not need to be concerned with what happens in the spiritual world. The truth is that we presently do live equally in both worlds, and activities in one of them affects what happens in the other. When the end of this age arrives, and we all have our resurrection bodies, they will be spiritual bodies, not physical bodies (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). What happens in the spiritual realm has had, does now have, and will continue to have an effect on events in the physical world. When it was time for the chosen people to leave Egypt, God reached into the physical and intervened on their behalf with ten plagues: blood (Exodus 7:14-21); frogs (Exodus 8:5-6); gnats (Exodus 8:16&17); flies (Exodus 8:20-24); death of livestock (Exodus 9:1-7); boils (Exodus 9:8-12); hail (Exodus 9:22-26); locusts (Exodus 10:12-15); darkness (Exodus 10:21-22); and death of the firstborn (Exodus 12:29&30). Two of the plagues stopped when Moses prayed and asked God to end them: frogs (Exodus 8:8-10) and flies (Exodus 8:29&30). When the Egyptian army had the Israelites trapped at the Red Sea God again reached into the physical and placed a pillar between them that the Egyptians could not get around (Exodus 14:19&20). When Moses raised his hands, God parted the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21&22). When Moses raised his hands a second time God drowned the entire Egyptian army (Exodus 14:26-28), removing the threat forever. When God's chosen people reached the Jordan River, and in obedience, the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant stepped into the flooded and swollen stream, the water backed up a

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long way (Joshua 3:14-17) allowing them to cross on dry land. Interactions between the two worlds were not isolated incidences, and they continued to occur as the Hebrew children fought the inhabitants of the land and God intervened. Our prayers cause actions to occur in the spiritual realm. When we ask in prayer God hears us (Matthew 21:22) and because of prayer demons have to depart (Mark 9:29). Our prayers can be much more powerful than our actions indicate we believe (James 5:13-18). When God prepares to call His people out of this world to His Heavenly Kingdom the children of this world will experience the wrath of God even more than the Egyptians did when the Hebrew children were called to depart. There will be the four horsemen of the Apocalypse (Revelation 6:1-8), plagues similar to those in Egypt associated with the seven trumpets (Revelation chapters 8 & 9), and the plagues of the seven bowls (Revelation chapters 15 & 16). In the meantime, we have some real help from the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26&27) and from Jesus (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25).

The truth is that though we are in this world, we are not to be of this world; we are transients. We are not to act like the children of this world, but become like Jesus (Romans 12:2). Jesus told us that He was not of this world (John 8:23) and that He was going to depart from this world and go to the Father (John 13:1). Jesus told us that He chose us out of the world and we no longer belong to the world (John 15:19). We are not of the world any more than Jesus is of the world (John 17:14). Jesus said that those who serve Him must follow Him and be where He is (John 12:26) and that He would personally come back to bring us there (John 14:3, Colossians 3:1-4, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). We are intended to be citizens of God's kingdom, and that kingdom is not of this world (Daniel 2:44, John 18:36). We will be one in spirit with Jesus, and therefore a new creation through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:4-6). We are definitely different from those of the world (1 John 4:4-6). In fact we are sojourners, aliens in this land (1 Peter 2:11&12).

### **The Inhabitants of the Spiritual Realm**

If we are planning to live someplace for a very long, long time, we usually desire to be aware of who or what else lives there. The leading citizen of the spiritual realm is God, the Eternal Spirit (Psalm 93:2, John 4:24). He is the creator and sustainer of the spiritual realm as well as everything else that exists (Colossians 1:16&17). God is in fact, supreme over all that exists (1 Chronicles 29:11, 12). God is almighty; all-powerful, and is absolute sovereign (Genesis 17:1). Best of all, He is working for our eternal good (2 Peter 3:9). Our God is merciful, gracious, and long suffering (Exodus 34:6&7), holy (Leviticus 19:2), ready to forgive (Psalm 86:5) and does not change (Malachi 3:6).

There are also spirit beings that were created by God (Genesis 2:1, Nehemiah 9:6) that live in the spiritual realm. We usually refer to them as angels. There is only one Hebrew word for angel, malak, which means deputy or messenger of God. Likewise there is only one Greek word for angel, angelos, which means messenger of God. All angels were created to be ministering spirits sent to serve God's children (Psalm 104:4, Matthew 18:10, Hebrews 1:14). Unlike humans, the angels were not created in the image and likeness of God, and are not called His children (Hebrews 1:5&13). Unlike humans they neither marry nor can they die (Luke 20:35&36). They are mighty beings (Psalm 103:20) that serve God. They are used of God to fight evil (2 Thessalonians 1:7&8, Revelation 12:7&8). An angel guards the Tree of Life until the end times (Genesis 3:24). The angels brought God's messages to the prophets (Galatians 3:19, Hebrews 2:2), announced the births of Sampson (Judges 13:5), John the Baptist (Luke 1:13), Jesus (Matthew 1:20&21), and ministered to the righteous

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(Genesis 24:7, Exodus 23:20-22, Psalm 91:11). The angels also protect God's people (2 Kings 6:15-17). We have powerful allies to assist us throughout life.

Not all angels are our friends. A very powerful angel called Lucifer rebelled, decided that he wanted to replace God and sit on the throne of heaven (Isaiah 14:12-15). As a result Lucifer and his rebellious angels were cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:9). One third of all the angels sided with Lucifer (Revelation 12:4) and are now serving him. We usually refer to the fallen angels as demons or devils, both implications of evil beings. They try to keep us from God's Word, spoken, written, or living (Matthew 13:19). They try to inhabit and control humans, sometimes causing madness (Matthew 8:28&29). Diseases are real and physical, but demons can fake the real things (Matthew 12:22, Matthew 17:14-18, Acts 16:16-18). More than anything else they put thoughts in our minds and try to make us believe those thoughts originated with us. They manipulate our feelings and emotions to lead us astray. They will try to make us feel sorry for ourselves and angry with others. Everything they do has only one purpose, to separate us from God and destroy us. We may wonder why God allows it since His desire is that we succeed (Jeremiah 29:11). However, what our enemy intended for our evil God is using to do good (Genesis 50:20, Romans 8:28). He is putting us back on His potter's wheel (Isaiah 64:8,) and remaking us in His own image (Romans 5:3-5, James 1:2-4). Evil beings will eventually be evicted (Revelation 20:10&15). In the meantime, we are being given many opportunities to practice making right choices. Our heavenly Father is not going to allow the demons to push us past our limits (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The only other beings we are told about that dwell in the spiritual realm are we humans. You know, those triune beings that were originally created in the image and likeness of our God, but created a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:4&5). Our spirits dwell in the spiritual realm, our bodies dwell in the physical realm, and it is our decision whether we are heavenly minded or earthly minded. Following the resurrection we will have spiritual bodies (1 Corinthians 15:44) that will dwell in the spiritual world, along with our minds and spirits. In the meantime, having free will, we are allowed to make choices (Joshua 24:15). We do make choices all the time that will affect our eternal habitation. Our Father has presented us with options and told us which option to select. However, all of us, just like sheep, have strayed (Isaiah 53:6). The flesh, the world, and the devil are always trying to entice us to take the wrong road, and for the carnal person sin can be fun (Hebrews 11:25). We need to understand that along with our right to choose comes responsibility for the choices we make. We are not only held accountable for the decisions we make, but also for the influences we make on the decisions others make. Most worldly people, and more than a few church members, will submit their wills to the demands of the flesh. Our souls and spirits were created in God's image, but our bodies were made from the dust of the earth. The flesh was never intended to be in charge. God's order of life is for our spirits, guided by the Holy Spirit, to rule. The soul, or mind, carries out the directives of the spirit. The flesh has neither voice nor vote, just an obligation to be obedient. When we allow the flesh to rule is when we have the greatest difficulties, most misery, and deepest despair.

### **The Activities in the Spiritual Realm**

If we could look into the spiritual realm with our human eyes we would see that there is a fierce battle raging for our eternal destiny. Satan wanted to be God, and he was defeated, naturally. He isn't stupid, he knows he cannot win, but he is consumed by an eternal hatred for God. He hates people just as much because we were created in the image of God. Even though we are now a little lower than the

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angels, we will one day be like them (Luke 20:36) and one day judge them (1 Corinthians 6:3). Satan's desire is not that we be with him for eternity, but rather that we not be with God for eternity. If he can't be there he wants to ruin it for as many others as he can. He is a spoiler. His names are descriptive of his nature. The most common is "The Devil", which means slanderer. He is also called "Satan", which means adversary, accuser, and archenemy. Sometimes he is called "Belial", or worthless, wicked, and evil. He is also frequently referred to as "Beelzebub", literally the dung god. He is also called Abaddon in Hebrew or Apollyon in Greek, both of which mean destroyer (Revelation 9:11). Satan and his fallen angels have a single-minded goal, to destroy us (John 10:10), devour us (1 Peter 5:8), and prevent us from fulfilling God's desire that we be members of His family. They will try to entice us to partake of their worldly ways, telling us "Go ahead, it won't hurt anyone." That is a lie. It hurts us and anyone watching us, waiting for us to fail. God told us not to even appear to do evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). If that tactic doesn't work they will accuse us of being closed-minded and prejudice, saying that we need to have an open mind and be tolerant. If we agree with the world we are calling God a liar (1 John 1:8), not a wise thing to be doing. They will try to discourage us and steal our faith, or just wear us down so we give up and quit.

What is occurring in the spiritual realm is spilling over into the physical realm. At Calvary Jesus took away Satan's authority over all who become Christians. However, the devil still is a powerful spiritual being, and he exercises authority over those who are his disciple, his children. The only method he has to physically affect Christians is through worldly people who believe they are serving themselves but are really serving him. It is through the devil's disciples that persecution is brought upon the children of God. Non-Christian religions around the world may tolerate each other, but they have the devil's hatred for Christians and Jews. As we get closer to the end of the age of the Gentiles these hostile activities are increasing. Satan is so enraged that he is even devouring his own children. Look at the Hindus and Moslems in Sri Lanka, or the Sunni Moslems and the Shiite Moslems in Iraq. If we are interested in future events, coming soon to our neighborhood, God has informed us. There will be false messiahs (Matthew 24:5), wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6), nations rising up against nations (literally, culture against culture), famines, pestilence, and earthquakes (Matthew 24:7), and tribulation and many deaths (Matthew 24:9). People will betray each other (Matthew 24:10), there will be false prophets that will deceive people (Matthew 24:11, 2 Peter 2:1, 1 Timothy 4:1&2). Lawlessness will abound and there will be an absence of love (Matthew 24:12, 2 Thessalonians 2:3). The evil one will be released to work great signs and wonders in an attempt to deceive the elect (Matthew 24:24). The sun, moon, and stars will darken and the heavens will be shaken (Matthew 24:29, Ezekiel 32:7). Finally, King Jesus will return to put an end to it (Matthew 24:30, Daniel 7:13&14, Revelation 1:7). If you want more detailed information read about the judgments of the seven seals (Revelation chapters 6&7), the judgments of the seven trumpets (Revelation chapters 8-11), the events occurring in the heavens and on the earth related to the spiritual battles (Revelation chapters 12-14), and the judgments of the seven bowls (Revelation chapters 15-19:5). The signs of the times have arrived. We don't know when the end will occur (Matthew 24:36-39) but we do know that it is rushing towards us at the rate of sixty seconds per minute.

How much of the end time events you will personally experience in the flesh will be determined by your personal choices made in this world. Jesus was here once before in the flesh as the suffering servant, and He will return here again in His resurrection body as the King of kings and Lord of lords. This time He will not be arriving alone (Revelation 19:11-14). He will be bringing us with

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Him, along with His angels, an army of saints and an army of angels. The reason we are with Him on His return is that before it gets really bad, He will take those who had prepared themselves, were pure, holy, and totally devoted to Him off this earth (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17) to meet Him in the sky and get our resurrection bodies (1 Corinthians 15:50-52, 1 John 3:2). Whether any one person is included in that group or not will depend solely on their choices made in life. If we have a passion for God and put Him first in our life, we will be fine. If something else is first in our life, or we have a casual attitude towards God, or are luke-warm about our commitment to Jesus, we will be in trouble. If we make wrong choices we will have an opportunity to experience first hand the wrath of God, and know how He really considers rebellion. Those who miss the rapture will not be too late to decide for Jesus, but they will have to make some very difficult decisions and wait for His final return to be united with Him (Matthew 24:31).

Our God-given options are very limited. We have a tendency to act like sheep when we should be wise, and often act before we think. Our God did not want to confuse us with a complex set of methods, options, and required choices. He made it very simple by establishing only one way to get to Him. Jesus told us "I am the way" (John 14:6). It is through Jesus that we have access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18). He is the only mediator between us and the Father (1 Timothy 2:5) and the only doorway in (John 10:7-9). There is no other available (Acts 4:12). God's way is too narrow to allow for options (Matthew 7:14). Those who will not strive for the narrow way will end up banging on the gates of heaven but will be cast out (Luke 13:24-28). These are not the devil's disciples, but folks in the church who opted to go their own route instead of God's route. Their excuse is usually that "God understands!" That is a true statement; He understands that you are rebelling and He will not accept it. The wide road that provides room for many options is not of God because it leads only to death (Matthew 7:13). Our Father is calling us to take His route, but the truth is that many will choose the wide easy road to damnation (Matthew 22:14). That does not mean that God has preempted our free will. He still gives us choices. We can choose Him or something else (Joshua 24:14&15). However, it is not acceptable to be double minded and waver between the two, we must choose one or the other (1 Kings 18:21). Neither is it an option to serve both (Matthew 6:24). We are either of God's family or we are not. He does not have stepchildren or foster children, only those adopted into His family (Ephesians 1:4&5) He has presented two ways to go and we can choose which one we will travel (Deuteronomy 30:15-19). Having given us the two choices, He then told us to choose life. He did not give us the authority to define any alternate ways or routes. Why do so many people persist in seeking other methods of salvation?

### **Survival in the Spiritual Realm**

If the truth is to be told, we humans are more knowledgeable about the physical than we are about the spiritual. We are more comfortable dealing with physical circumstances than we are dealing with spiritual situations. We have managed to figure out at least some measure of survival in school, at work, at home, and even when at play. However, when we enter the spiritual realm the rules change, and our worldly weapons and tactics are useless (2 Corinthians 10:3-6, Ephesians 6:12). Survival in the spiritual realm requires that we know ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5), our strengths, weaknesses, and the tendencies we have developed over the years. Know who you are (John 1:12, 1 John 3:1&2) and whose you are (1 Corinthians 6:19&20). Jesus paid a terrible price for us and has a vested interest in our survival. Understand that, even when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41, Galatians 5:16-18, Romans 7:15-19) and the flesh will moan and groan and cry and demand

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gratification. Above all, we must be honest with ourselves about our weaknesses, which are common to all mankind, especially to the carnal man. People are easy prey for con artists because of their carnal desire to get something for nothing. We should be more ready to give than to get (Acts 20:35). Most people are easily confused and sidetracked. We may have been on the tracks to Gloryland when some sneak pulled the switch and put us on a different set of tracks. By the time we realize we are now on the tracks to Sorryland we are a long way from where we could have been, would have been, should have been if we had been paying attention to activities in the spiritual realm. The truth is that our strengths are not sufficient to prevail. But the strength of the one who dwells in us is (1 John 4:4). When we are under assault from the enemy we should always be as frantic in calling for help as we would be if we were hanging on the side of a sheer tall cliff by our fingernails (Jeremiah 33:3, Psalm 50:15). Even sheep will bleat for the shepherd when in trouble.

Knowing ourselves isn't sufficient of its own accord. It is crucial to also know our enemy, his strengths, his weaknesses, and recognize the same old activities he continues to use, ones that have worked for him since the Garden of Eden. Like the sheep that we are, we continue to fall for them. One of his great strengths is that he is so proficient at pretending to be almost anything good. Remember, before their fall, the demons were some of God's angels, so they are proficient at imitating what they used to be. They are most cunning (Genesis 3:1), and have no moral restrictions, no mercy, no kindness, and are never trustworthy. They lie, accuse, intimidate, confuse, entice, scam, distract, discourage, beguile, enchant, and lead astray. More than anything else they put thoughts in our minds and try to make us believe those thoughts are our own. They manipulate our feelings and emotions to lead us astray. They will try to make us feel sorry for ourselves and angry with others. The real battlefield is in our mind (Genesis 6:5, Matthew 15:18&19). Sometimes they set ambushes by working on the emotions of several different people. Once they get them to the boiling point they bring them together and wait for the explosion. Then they work on righteous indignation or "poor me" feelings, trying to get those involved to share with many how they have been wronged so others can pick up the offenses and join the battle. The ultimate goal is to split the body. They try to discourage, disgrace, or eliminate the pastor, and there by destroy the church. Everything they do has only one purpose, to separate us from God, prevent us from becoming His family, and destroy us. They also have some serious weaknesses. They can neither counterfeit love, nor praise God. They have lost their authority (Matthew 28:18), but continually attempt to convince us they still have that authority. If we are willing to stand against them they will turn tail and run (James 4:7). They cannot take us away from God's love (Romans 8:37-39). All they can do is to endeavor to trick, entice, or frighten us into separating ourselves from God (Isaiah 59:2). To do more than that requires express authority from God (Job 1:12, 1 Corinthians 5:5, 1 Timothy 1:20). When the end of days arrives and we see Satan for what he really is we will be amazed that we ever allowed him to get away with all his deception (Isaiah 14:16&17).

Whenever we are struggling in an unfamiliar place it is heartening to know that powerful, capable allies whom sincerely desire that we prevail surround us. We could not find a more unbeatable company than our Creator God and His holy angels. The angels are mighty and powerful beings (2 Peter 2:11). There are more holy angels than we can count (Hebrews 12:22) and they outnumber the fallen angels 2 to 1 (Revelation 12:3&4). The Lord has an army of warring angels (Matthew 25:31, Revelation 12:7). They are protective of God's children (Psalm 91:11, Daniel 6:22). They warn us about the evil intentions of the devil's disciples (Matthew 2:13) and they go before us to prepare the

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way (Exodus 23:20). As helpful and comforting as God's angels are, our strongest and best helper is our Creator God. He is not willing that any of us be lost (1 Timothy 2:4). Since the Father was willing to give His Son that we might live, how much more will He now save us (Romans 5:10). There is no one strong enough to go against us (Romans 8:31&32). Our God protects, strengthens, guides and loves us. If we will take the time to know Him we will come to trust Him. If we trust Him He will pour out His love upon us and render the deceit of the enemy ineffective.

We are called to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16&25, Ephesians 4:1). That means to actually live the Christian life, not merely pay lip service to it. We must get our bodies, minds, and spirits properly aligned and surrender our wills totally to the will of God, allowing the Holy Spirit free reign in all parts of our lives. We should never permit anyplace for demons to operate (Ephesians 4:27), because they will always take advantage of any opening we offer. We should never dwell on things that have a negative influence, like anger or bitterness, because they will grow until they overwhelm us. When we allow the Holy Spirit to cultivate His fruit within us, we are living as we should be (Ephesians 4:1-6). God does not desire that His children behave like the village idiots, but to be watchful of what is going on around us in the spiritual realm (Ephesians 5:15-18). We are living in enemy territory and we need to be alert (Matthew 10:16). Our goal should be to cultivate within ourselves the same mind that is in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5-7). We are to allow the life of Jesus to flow through us (John 15:1-4). We are called to be imitators of our heavenly Father, in our thinking, our values, and our actions (Ephesians 5:1). To walk in the Spirit is to walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6) and to live one's entire life in agreement with the mind of Christ. It means to honestly seek God's Kingdom without thought of worldly consequences. It means developing a zeal for God and a diligence in obeying His command, never tolerating even the smallest compromise. It means becoming so much like Jesus in character that the demons fear us, and the children of the world know without the smallest shadow of a doubt that we are different. If we live by the Spirit we will have inside us the power to overcome everything.

### **The Final Destination**

The Lord still has more for us to do in both the physical world and in the spiritual realm. Eventually though, this physical world that we now know will cease to exist, and will not even be remembered (Isaiah 65:17). We have been told what to expect to happen in our physical world until the end occurs. As matters get worse and the end of the time of the gentile's approaches, Jesus will call those who have prepared themselves to come out of this world and be with Him (1 Thessalonians 4:16&17). He will later return to this world and take complete control of everything (Revelation 19:11-16), bringing us back with Him. Contrary to the story line adhered to by many writers of end time fiction, Jesus will not return to put an end to the battle of Armageddon, but to prevent mankind from wiping themselves off the face of the earth (Mark 13:19&20). His return will occur when the anti-Christ reveals his true nature (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3). Satan will be bound and incarcerated for a thousand years of peace while the saints, in their spiritual resurrection bodies, rule with Christ (Revelation 20:2&3). At the end of that thousand years Satan will be loosed for a time, and will rally his troops, those people who survived the thousand years but still did not give themselves over to the Lord (Revelation 20:7-9). There will be a horrific battle at that time, the Battle of Armageddon, and our Creator God will pour out fire from heaven and put an end to all evil (Revelation 20:10). Shortly after that the universe we know will cease to exist, and our God will make all things new (Zephaniah 3:8, 2 Peter 3:10-13). The new earth will have no storms, earthquakes, and because there will be no

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sea, no tsunamis (Revelation 21:1). There will no longer be any need for the sun and the moon, because God will be our light (Revelation 21:23, Revelation 22:5). We will no longer need the universe to reveal God's glory, because we will be living in the midst of His glory. There will be no more strife or fighting because we will all be one family. All who are not of God's family will be gone and all that is evil will be banished forever (Revelation 20:14&15).

God is preparing a new city for us, a new Jerusalem just as different from the old Jerusalem as the new earth will be different from the earth we now know. It will not be of the physical realm, but heavenly (Hebrews 11:16), filled with angels (Hebrews 12:22), and will originate in heaven (Revelation 21:2). It will be so large that the Apostle John described it as 1,500 miles wide, 1,500 miles long, and 1,500 miles high with walls 216 feet thick (Revelation 21:16&17). Suffice it to say, it will be very large. Those things prized by men for their earthly values will become common building materials (Revelation 21:18-21). God will make everything new (Revelation 21:5). There will be no weeping or crying (Isaiah 65:19), no thirst or hunger or bad weather (Revelation 7:16&17), no death or suffering (Revelation 21:4). Nothing impure or shameful will ever be in this city of God (Revelation 21:27). The river of life and the tree of life will be within the city walls (Revelation 22:1&2), as will be God's throne (Revelation 22:3), not hidden in the Holy of Holies, but right in the open (Revelation 21:22). The city gates will always be open so mankind may come and go (Revelation 21:25). The glory and presence of the Lord will be present there.

Carnal man could not survive in the new Jerusalem. The earthly differences between people, those things that are the source of most discord, will no longer exist (Galatians 3:26-28). God's decision made before time was that we should become like Him by becoming like Jesus (Romans 8:29). We are now being renewed in the image of our creator (Colossians 3:10), being transformed into the likeness of Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18) that we may one day participate in His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). We will never fully accomplish the change in the physical realm, no matter how long we live or how hard we try. What God does expect of us is that we persevere, keep working, and continue to make progress. Whatever we do not complete in this life God will accomplish in an instant (1 Corinthians 15:51-54). Our resurrection bodies will be immortal spiritual bodies raised up in power and glory (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). We will be united with Jesus in His resurrection (Romans 6:5), and when we see Him, we shall be just like Him (1 John 3:2). It is true that we do not yet know the details of resurrection life in the spiritual realm, but we do know a little about the resurrected Jesus. He could suddenly appear, and just as suddenly disappear (Matthew 28:9, Mark 16:9, Luke 24:31). His appearance could be changed (, Mark 16:12, Luke 24:16). He even suddenly showed up inside a locked room (Luke 24:36, John 20:19). His resurrection body was solid enough to be touched (John 20:27). Jesus even consumed food with His disciples (Luke 24:42&43). Beyond that we will have to be patient until we arrive and experience resurrection life for ourselves in the spiritual realm in the company of our God and all the other saints that have their names in the Lamb's Book of Life. Expect big things. Remember, even our wildest dreams could not anticipate what God has in store for us (1 Corinthians 2:9).

When this sin tarnished physical universe has been replaced by God's new creation, our Heavenly Father will have consummated His goal of having a large family of beings like Himself to be His companions, His family dwelling together in His presence. He will be our Father and we will be His children (2 Corinthians 6:18), members of His household (Ephesians 2:19). We will then call Him

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## CHAPTER 8- LIVING IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM

Abba, Father, the word a small child uses for a loving parent; daddy (Galatians 4:6). Though we now see dimly, then we shall see Him face to face (Revelation 22:4). We shall live together and belong to each other (Revelation 21:3). Let us cry out with the early church "Maranatha, come Lord (1 Corinthians 16:22).