

**Experiences With
The Eternity
To Come**

*Welcome to
Your Home!*

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A Hungry Being

The human being is truly amazing. God offered him this amazing world and gave him authority over it – and he even attained the ability to reach outer space. And with all that, he is still a hungry being - so long as he lives here on earth. A person's wishes, desires and curiosities never end! In the Roman parties of the past, many forced themselves to vomit after becoming full so that they may eat more and more from what they desire. No matter how many properties, honors, talents or successes someone attains; he still thirsts for more - even to attain immortality!

It is not a strange matter that a person lives to be hungry; for he is the image and likeness of God, who has no boundaries. He is not satisfied unless his picture becomes like the Original, and until he enters into his eternal and heavenly home. When St. Augustine came to know God, he cried out confessing that his soul will remain lost and will not find a resting place until it departs to the Godly bosom. Also, while we live on earth, we feel we are strangers until we hear the voice of our heavenly Groom saying, "Welcome my bride to your house of marriage!"

Preparing the House of Marriage!

When a young lady is engaged, she wishes that her fiancé would ask her to look at their first house that they will live in together - their marriage house - which he has prepared for her. With this house, the groom expresses his care for his bride and what he has sacrificed for her sake.

A couple of years ago in Jersey City, a young man with a bitter soul came to visit me. His fiancé, who was in Alexandria, insisted on canceling their engagement if he did not rent a place for her, buy her a car and various other necessities. She further demanded that he provide evidence of having attained these items by sending her pictures and a videotape of what he has prepared for her. At the time she made these demands, she knew that she will not be able to enter the United States for another year - and she still insisted on her requests. How important it was for her to ensure her marriage house and to know that her fiancé cares for her. On the other hand, it is difficult for a young man to prepare a house of marriage within one year in America. How can he bare the great expenses while not seeing the benefit from it?

As for our Groom, out of His love for us, He has foretold us for our sake on the night before He died: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself" (John 14:3). He said this about 2000 years ago

and He is still preparing the house of marriage for us, which He started to prepare before the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34). And after all this time I cannot imagine what has been prepared for us by this magnificent Creator. When He says let it be done - it is done; a heavenly marriage home prepared for us! Our heavenly Groom is involved with our eternity. He wishes for us to enjoy the heavenly matters, which we cannot even imagine!

I Don't Care!

While the heavenly Groom prepares the heavenly place for us to rest, we find many people do not care for it. A couple of months ago, a doctor from Holmdel, New Jersey called me as she was greatly troubled. She said to me that her work supervisor, who is also a doctor, said to her, "I am not different from a cat: it eats, drinks, lives and then it dies." She tried to speak to her about the eternal glory which has been prepared for mankind; but the woman made fun of her and repeated, "let us eat, drink and enjoy all of our desires; we will live this life then we will die and be extinct!"

O how amazing! God wishes to form out of a person an eternal being to share His glory with Him. The individual lives carrying the icon of His glory and the heavenly hosts hail him. And yet the human being finds his delight in living like a cat - wishing to have rest for his body and to enjoy the vanishing desires. The word of God promises us: "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne" (Revelation 3:21). And all the human being wants is to bury himself in dirt!?

The Tent of the Sojourner Versus The Heavenly Home

The Apostle says, "For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven" (2nd Corinthians 5: 1, 2).

There is no comparison between the tent with which we travel in our temporal lives, where everyone is shouting in a futile pursuit of stability, and the heavenly home not made by human hands, but by God, who is the Lover of mankind. In our temporal tent, we thank God for all the gifts which He has given us: a beneficial body to support the soul, a beautiful universe and all the beauty of

nature, which was made by the hands of our Creator. God did not let us become in need of any of his glorified works. But, because of our sins, the body has been corrupted. The world has turned into a harsh master that wishes to have control over our hearts; and even nature turned against us. Our timely life has turned into “a river of tears” - but not without hope. For when we leave this body to enter into the bosom of the Father, and there - in complete glorified freedom of the children of God - we will find stability and rest.

Our Christ has opened the doors of heaven in front of our eyes. Then, our finite life now has a sweet goal and having its own value. We use it, and it does not use us. We enslave it, and it does not enslave us. Truly we have become free.

What Will We See In Our Heavenly Home?

The beauty of our heavenly home will be complete when we meet with God, who has prepared this home with His hands and for our account. St. John the Beloved looked upon it and he said the following in Revelation 21:1:

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.”

When St. John the apostle looked upon the heavenly home, his soul and his body enjoyed the heavenly glory, which is a reflection of the glory of Christ upon them. He looked upon himself, “the first heaven,” and to his body, “the first earth,” and found them no more. However, he was enjoying a radiant and angelic soul – a spiritual body similar to the body of Christ which resurrected from among the dead. Also the sea, with its endless waves resembling many afflictions, will no longer have a place inside the depth of his soul or his body.

Likewise, not only do we enter into a new home made by the hands of God, but also we ourselves become new creatures having a new nature which compliments the new home. There, the soul will not complain of pride, or envy, or hatred, or any other shameful matter. The body will no longer complain of hunger, thirst, nakedness, weakness or sickness.

Through this beautiful depiction, we experience the warranty of our heavenly home, while we are in this body as the first earth and the first heaven. Truly, how glorified is our whole being in the new home in which we will unite with our eternal Groom, and enjoy the fellowship in the divine nature (2nd Peter 1:4).

If this is the condition of those who live in the new heavenly home, then what about the house itself?! Even the heavenly beings themselves do not know what to call it. St. John, from his experience on earth, called it “the holy city, New Jerusalem...as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2). Then a heavenly being said with a loud voice that “the tabernacle of God is with men” (Revelation 21:3); for our heavenly home is not simply a place, but a serene and magnificent meeting where the Lord dwells amongst us as our God and we will be his people.

After St. John spoke about the occupants of the home, and the nature of the home; he then speaks to us about its promise, condition and environment in Revelation 21:4:

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

There exists a complete contrast between our earthly tent that is plagued by tears, fears, death and afflictions that do not cease from causing it pain daily; and the new eternal life where there is continuous joy, an everlasting peace, harmony and a true love. We taste the warranty of the new life while we are still in this world, when the tears of sadness are converted into tears of joy; and the groaning of tribulations become the screams of victory. And adversaries become an opportunity to fulfill the mission of love towards our enemies.

But how can we enjoy this new life? “Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5). God, who prepares for us a heavenly home, will establish His kingdom within us (Luke 17:21). Even when we leave this world we will find the coming eternity as a natural extension of our new life in Christ.

Welcome To Your Paradise!

God has prepared His heaven as an eternal home for us, as a bride who does not age and who enjoys unity with her Groom in a godly home, invites us saying, “Welcome to your home!” As for us, we submit to Him our inner beings and raise in them a holy altar for Him and convert our hearts to a rejoicing paradise for Him, for He says, “the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17:21). Also from our viewpoint, we invite Him to His marriage home in our new person, “Let my

beloved come to his garden and eat its pleasant fruits” (Song of Solomon 4:16). As the Groom invites his bride to her paradise, that which He has established with His hands for her sake until she crosses over and sits with Him on His throne, as a queen sits on the right hand of the king (Psalm 45:9), likewise the bride invites Him in this world to enter into His paradise, which He has founded, and to enter with His angels to find the fruits of the Spirit. Then everyone will rejoice and our Christ will be singing along with us saying, “I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones!” (Song of Solomon 5:1, 2)

Heaven Is Joyful!

I will end our talk about this topic of our heavenly home with an incident which took place in 1975 in Melbourne. The father of one of our beloved passed away and we prayed the funeral service after the Holy Liturgy, as it was the norm at that time. I spoke to the congregation saying that we are all one family and all of us should participate in the funeral. One woman came to me apologizing that she would not be attending the funeral, as she cannot bear the emotional trauma. She went on to say that she can’t even visit a hospital, or even see a patient get vaccinated with a needle. In great embarrassment she said to me that she does not wish to refuse any request from me at all, but this is a matter of life and death and it is impossible for her to attend such funeral services.

I spoke to her and asked her to try to attend - just this one time. Indeed, she did attend. After the prayers were over, she came to me and said, “I implore you, whenever there is a funeral service and I am not present, please call me to attend. I was not in a funeral service, rather I felt as if I was in heaven!”

Likewise, my beloved by our evangelical view, we see our Christ welcoming us to become settled in our heavenly home forever.

When Will My Soul Become Settled In My Home?

† *My soul is hungry and it will not be filled except by You.*

It will not be settled, except in the bosom of Your Father.

It will not rest, unless it hears the voice of her Groom saying: “Welcome My bride to your house of marriage!”

† *Is it for me to ask the Groom of my soul?
“What have You been doing all of these
Thousands of years, in preparing a heavenly
Home for me?” I wonder, “What is His heaven!”
When will I see Him that my soul may rejoice!
What have You prepared for me, O You who
Are the happiness of my salvation?*

† *You are amazing in your love.
All the heavenly are yearning to see
Your bride, to whom You have prepared
What no being can imagine! You are preoccupied
With me, and the house of marriage!
And I, in my ignorance, do not care.
I consider the day of my exodus, as a bitter one,
And the day I depart to your paradise as a
Loss, and the day I meet You, as death!
O my ignorance!*

† *Grant me, that my estranged tent may not settle in any place.
I am crossing the river of tears, but Your companionship
Changes my tears into joy, converting my affliction
Into a unique royal blessing.*

† *Lift up my inner being, that I may see You and Your amazement.
You create of me a new heaven and a new earth,
And all the waves of the worldly sea cannot harm me.
I see my home with You in the amazing Jerusalem.
May You stretch out Your hands and wipe away my tears.
May You carry me in your bosom, and then the
enemy will not be able to come near me,
And no mourning will come into my heart.*

† *I will no longer suffer from restlessness,
For with every morning, Your
Mercies are new (Lamentations 3:23),
For with every breath, You make everything new.
For You allow me to taste Your kingdom*

*Inside of me that I may wish for the eternal life
to be an extension of my daily experiences.*

† *Allow me, O You who has invited me to Your home,
To take me into Your paradise.*

*Also, that You may come into the paradise which your Holy
Spirit has established in me.*

*Come, to collect the harvest from the fruits of the
Spirit: Love, Joy, and Peace, Reconciliation.*

All the gifts are from You.

*Come to Your paradise, and create Your
Kingdom in my inner being.*

† *Come forward to my heart,
And carry it to Your heaven,
Which I see even while I am still in the flesh,
What the angels wish to look upon!*