

THERE IS A HABITATION

The church sings a song with these words, “There is a habitation built by the living God, for all of ev’ry nation who seek that grand abode.” (L.H. Jameson) Are you seeking that grand abode?

Hello I’m Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ. Good morning and welcome to this program.

Without Heaven religion is meaningless! That’s right! Every person knows there is coming the end. How many years can you live here on this planet? Some of you may live to be 100 years old. But will you want to? The health professionals can teach us and treat us so that we can live a long time on earth, but what is that in comparison to eternity? Jesus knew eternity. He had lived in eternity. He came on God’s mission from eternity to live about 33 years upon the earth. He accomplished what He came to do, and now Jesus is in eternity once again, never to die anymore. “There is a habitation built by the living God.” Jesus came so that every nation could seek that grand abode. Are you seeking Heaven?

Mankind has always believed in eternity. Every religion in the world has some kind of teaching about eternity, life after death. Jesus’ apostle Paul wrote that Jesus “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel...” (2Timothy 1:10 ESV) Jesus did not abolish death in the sense that no one can physically die, but Jesus made it possible that spiritual death would not come to those who follow Him. Jesus brought life and immortality to light.

Prior to Jesus’ coming there was only speculation about eternity. For instance, Job asked the question, “if a man dies, shall he live again?” Job believed that mankind could live again, for in the next sentence, Job stated, “all the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come.” (Job 14:14 ESV) Job called life after death, renewal.

In the New Testament book of Hebrews the Holy Spirit pictures life after death as coming to the “city of the living God.” In that spiritual city an uncountable number of angels are gathered. Also in that city is found the church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit says that this

city is the “kingdom that cannot be shaken.” It is the eternal kingdom of God and His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

On one occasion Jesus was prompted to talk about eternal life when “a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him a question, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, **“Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’”** (And the man said to Jesus), “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, **“You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”** Disheartened by the saying, [the man] went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. [Then] Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, **“How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”** And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, **“Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”** And [his disciples] were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, **“With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”** Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.” Jesus said, **“Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.”** (Mark 10:17-30 ESV)

The man asked Jesus a question about eternal life. Jesus responded by talking about laying up treasure in heaven, and entering the Kingdom of God. You see, the kingdom of God, heaven, and eternal life are all the same thing. And all of this is located “in the age to come.” If you talk about heaven, you are talking about the kingdom of God. If you are talking about the kingdom of God or heaven, you are also talking about eternal life. In fact, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are just one kingdom, and it is an eternal one. Your entrance into this heavenly kingdom and your citizenship in Christ’s heavenly kingdom begins in this life on earth. In this age of “time” you must decide where you will live “in the age to come.” Are you longing for the “city of the living God?”

There is a habitation built by the living God. That great city is for every nation who will seek that grand abode.

The night before He was crucified Jesus told his disciples that he was the only way to His heavenly Father. Jesus said to his followers, "There are many rooms in my Father's house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you with me, so that you can be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." [Jesus disciple Thomas spoke up and said], "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. The only way to the Father is through me." (John 14:2-6 ERV)

Friends, the religions of men try to show us the way to eternal life, to the city of the living God. But only Jesus knows that way. The way has been prepared by Jesus Himself. You see, no one can enter the city of God without the forgiveness of sin. That's right! God must forgive your sins before you can enter the eternal kingdom of God. It is said that Abraham "was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God." (Hebrews 11:10 ESV) Even Abraham cannot enter that city without God's forgiveness of his sin. But God is perfectly JUST! How can God justly forgive sin? Forgiveness is an attribute of love; Forgiveness is not an attribute of law. The law condemns the lawbreaker to punishment. But forgiveness pardons. How can a lawbreaker be forgiven when the Judge knows perfectly well that we are guilty? This is where Jesus breaks into the world. Jesus became our advocate, our lawyer. Jesus Himself became the substitute for our punishment.

The old prophet Isaiah foresaw what Jesus would do: "Surely," the prophet wrote, "he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; ...he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned--every one--to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa 53:4-6 ESV) "By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isa 53:8-11 ESV)

Jesus, the offspring of God, died on a Roman cross so that the living God could forgive your sins and still be just. Throughout the Old Testament era our heavenly father taught the world about sacrifice. Sacrifice is substitution. A sacrifice is a substitute for the person who is really guilty. The animal was not guilty, but the owner of the animal was guilty of sin. So the animal was the owner’s substitute before God for the punishment that the sinner rightly deserved. But God also taught that animal sacrifices were only temporary, to teach us about substitution. When Jesus came into the world, inspired men called him “the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) You see, God Himself has offered His own lamb as a substitute for your punishment.

And what is your punishment? What if you refuse this offer of forgiveness? What if you do not want God to count you as a righteous person? What if you do not want Jesus to bear your iniquities? Then there is no forgiveness for you! That’s right! Jesus is the only way that you can be forgiven of your sins! Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except by me.” (John 14:6)

The apostle John saw a vision in which he saw people in God’s heavenly city. He asked an angel about those people. John’s tour guide replied, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:14 ESV)

Metaphorically speaking, when a person obeys the gospel of Christ he is having his robes washed clean of sin by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. Only then can we enter the kingdom of God and become heirs of eternal life. There is a habitation built by the living God. It’s for all of every nation who will seek that grand abode. If you believe that Jesus is indeed the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, then you can repent of your sins, confess your faith, and be baptized into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Jesus then adds you to

his church, his kingdom upon this earth. Then, in the words of Jesus, “be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10)

Friends, there is a habitation built by the living God. It is a city with foundations, as firm as the eternal throne of God Himself. No night is there, no sorrow, no death, and no decay; no yesterday, no morrow, but one eternal day. Within its pearly portals, angelic armies sing, with glorified immortals the praises of its King.

Are you looking for an eternal home? Visit a church of Christ near you and begin today traveling the way Jesus has prepared.