

# Reflections by the Pond

THE WRITINGS OF DAVID S LAMPEL

## A PRIVATE AUDIENCE



*No one would question the advantages of heaven over living on earth. Believers look forward to perfect health, perfect peace, joy without sorrow, no more hunger or thirst, no more uncomfortable weather or contentious neighbors, no more tears. And to embrace the thought that we will be breathing the same airspace as God the Father and the Lamb is nigh beyond the comprehension of mere flesh.*

*Much of what we think we know of heaven remains a mystery, but two aspects of that eternal life are spelled out clearly and repeatedly. Our principal occupation, both in heaven and on the new earth, will be the adoration and worship of the living God, Father and Son. Part of that reality will be that each individual worshiper will be just one in a veritable sea of worshipers numbering in the millions.*

*Which, if one thinks about it, tips the advantage just a bit toward our worship of the Lord on earth.*

# HEAVEN

**T**here is much about heaven that we take on faith, trusting that when the day arrives that we suddenly find ourselves there, much if not all of what we now may not fathom will then be common knowledge.

There is a tabernacle, or temple, in heaven the dimensions of which are beyond human comprehension. Its *design* is knowable because it is the template from which the original, earthly tabernacle, as well as the Jerusalem temples were constructed.

Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."

*Hebrews 8:1-5*

In this temple or tabernacle, in place of a secreted holy of holies containing the ark of the covenant, there is a literal throne room where Father God is seated and surrounded by the four beasts, the archangels, the twenty-four elders, and "myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands" of lesser angels.

Then there are the human worshipers.

Just imagine their number: Add up all the saints since Adam who have died and now reside (in some form) in heaven. Add to this the entire population of the living church that will be raptured to ascend with Christ Jesus in brand new glorified bodies. Finally, add to that number all those new Christians who will lose their lives during the seven-year Tribulation. Even this final group, perhaps the smallest of all, is described by the apostle John as "a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes" (Revelation 7:9).

The combined voices in praise are so vast, so loud, they are described as "the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder" (Revelation 19:6).

Whether this temple is an actual room with surrounding walls or is just a seemingly endless area spanning from horizon to horizon, this is a lot of individuals, both angelic and human, worshiping around the throne of God.

A lot. Millions upon millions.

And somewhere in that sea of saints is you, perhaps literally *miles* from God Himself and the Son. ☼

# EARTH

**A**ny place on earth is far more distant from the throne of God than any place in heaven. And in that holy place there is the advantage for the individual worshiper to be breathing the very same air as his or her Lord. No matter the distance, we will truly be *with* Him.

Yet if we are to take God at His word, in heaven each of us will bodily be just one individual in a veritable *sea* of worshipers. That is, each of us will be in his or her physical, glorified body—not an amorphous glowing spirit-orb—and thus taking up the sort of space that bodies take up.

But then, by His grace, here on earth we have the benefit of the sanctuary and prayer closet—even, perhaps, the confines of our motor vehicle, or the tranquility of a wooded glen. Beyond that, however, all believers have their God-given imagination and Spirit-infused creativity to worship, here and now, just inches away from God's throne.

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

John 4:21-24

Part of worshipping "in spirit and truth" is the need to tune the imagery in our mind to the words we are speaking or singing. If our lips are speaking words of worship or praise but our mind is elsewhere, we are not worshipping. (Hence the benefit of closing our eyes in worship as in prayer; without our eyesight we remove most things of earth that distract us from true worship.) All our attention, every part of our being is to be focused on things above. God Himself is enthroned in heaven, and in worship He and His Son are to be the sole objects of our affection.

We are to fill our mind with God.

Contrary to the futile attempts over the centuries of artists to portray God the Father, no mortal on this earth knows the appearance of our God. In worship we picture, instead, His *glory*, His *holiness*, His *majesty*—not His face; that privilege is reserved for our relationship with God's Son, for only He became flesh for our sake. While I am free to imagine a standing, walking, sitting, laughing, frowning, sleeping Jesus, personally I know nothing of the appearance of our Father God beyond His feet, for it is before them, in my mind, I am bowed in worship.

And there I am. Pictured in my mind is the glorious, penetrating light of heaven's throne room. I push wide the heavy golden doors and enter, not presumptuously but

boldly, striding toward the center, the seated God surrounded by the four creatures, the seven archangels, the twenty-four elders, the myriad attending, worshiping angels.

There before me is the God I love, the God who loved *me* first. I don't care what He looks like; I know Him not by sight but by His character, by His actions, by His grace and mercy, His untouchable holiness, His compassion, His righteousness and justice.

By the mysteries of the mind, the nearer I draw to Father God, the more everything else surrounding Him fades away, until at last, in the heady intimacy of His presence, it is just my God and me. My purpose is not to examine Him or to converse with Him. I am there to reverently adore Him, to bow before His sovereign majesty, and to reestablish, for my fleshly benefit, that He alone is God and I am but His servant.

There is no one else around. There are no other sounds or sights to distract. There is just my reverent humility at the feet of my God and Father.

And I depart the experience filled with Him. ☘