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# Caught Up To Heaven

by Carol Hooley



Carol Hooley was brought up in a Christian home, her father being a Presbyterian minister, and her life reflects the reality of a living Saviour, Jesus Christ. Carol and her husband, Robert Hooley, are engaged in the full-time work of the Lord, and they reside in Denver, Colorado. This testimony, shared many times with Christian audiences, is now written in booklet form in order to bring encouragement and blessing to God's people everywhere.

## CAUGHT UP TO HEAVEN

*"Our Father, we thank and praise you this day. May thy name be lifted up and glorified through this testimony. Help me not to glory in this, but humbly kneel at the foot of the cross, that thy glory may be seen. We thank you this day for the presence of the Holy Spirit, who leads and guides us into all truth. Amen."*

Please open your Bibles with me to Isaiah 33:17 — *"Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."* What a privilege it is to have the Lord show us things to come. The reality and impact of being taken up in the spirit and beholding a portion of that which is spoken in this verse is still burning fresh in my heart today. Before I share with you portions of this glorious experience, let us look at another verse found in this same chapter, Isaiah 33:13 — *"Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might."* This verse presents the deep personal feelings of my heart. I want to acknowledge the greatness of my God in that which He has done for me personally, and my prayer is that this testimony will be an encouragement to many others as they put their faith in the unchanging promises and realities of the Word of God.

I grew up as a Presbyterian minister's daughter, and for several years I heard my father proclaim the Word of God. He faithfully expounded the message of salvation by grace through one's personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking back, I can recall many of the great truths which he taught us about the second coming of Jesus Christ, heaven, and so forth. I had a knowledge of many great truths of the Bible, but how much was really in my heart I'm not sure. Thank God, I can now look back with thanksgiving and know assuredly that the things which I was taught are very real. This all came to pass in my life after a period of heartache and sickness from which I was restored by the mercy and grace of God.



I was married in the Presbyterian Church which my father pastored in Denver, Colorado, and shortly thereafter my husband and I moved to San Jose, California, where we spent most of the next thirteen years. During this time, God blessed us in many ways. We enjoyed our two lovely daughters as they grew up; we had a nice home; my husband was blessed in his work; yet, spiritually, our lives steadily drifted away from God and the Christ-centered life. Finally, through a difficult time of physical affliction and heartache, God lovingly drew our family unto Himself and set us upon a new glorious course for our lives.

Without going into detail about my bodily affliction, let me just emphasize that I was brought to the place where I was broken both physically and spiritually. It was at this time in my life when I began to seriously call upon the Lord. I will always remember the day, during those difficult times, when my Lord appeared to me in our home at San Jose, California. That personal revelation of a living Christ transformed my life. I didn't say, "Lord, is that you?" — because there is something about our Lord that when He appears in His glory you don't need to ask questions, you just know. The Lord began to encourage my heart in those days, and soon afterward I was suddenly and miraculously healed in my body at a Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship convention in Turlock, California. Through this miracle, my husband and both our daughters soon experienced the deep reality of Jesus Christ in their lives. In the days following, we began to feel the call of God upon our lives for full-time Christian service.

This brings us to the time in my life when I experienced the heavenly vision. After being restored to health, my relationship with the Lord became so precious and full of love. I wanted so much to please Him and to see our family find His perfect will for our lives. I often prayed, "O Lord, if I could just see you and talk with you, then I could reach out for all the things I know I should believe." Why it happened to me I don't know, but my Lord did hear my cry and see the deep desire of my heart.

Before I go further, let me say that it hasn't always been easy to share this testimony — because of the

fear of people. "What will they think?" "What will they say?" For several years I held back in fear; yet, I always knew my experience was real and also completely within the revealed Word of God. The Lord has since encouraged me that even though many people will doubt the validity of such an experience, many thousands will believe and receive great encouragement. I have found this to be true.

## BEING CAUGHT UP

I will always remember the day the two angels appeared and said, "Carol, your Lord has heard your prayer, and we have come to take you to Him, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords." I was shocked and overjoyed, and I remember responding, "Really, really?" The two angels lovingly assured me. They gave me instructions that we would be ascending upwards through the heavens, and that a path was laid out before us. I was told not to struggle, but to remain still and rest in their strength. I've been asked about the angels, "What did they look like?" I can tell you that these two angels were rather large and masculine looking.

I wondered about the instructions I was given, for I knew little at that time about the powers of evil which inhabit heavenly places. In Ephesians 6:12, the Apostle Paul speaks of spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places. He also refers to Satan, in Ephesians 2:2, as being the prince of the power of the air. I had some understanding about Satan and his angels, but it wasn't all that real — until now. I'm sure that my loving Lord had well instructed the two angels about the one they held in their hands. I experienced the feeling of ascending swiftly upwards. There was darkness all around us; yet, there was also the light of God, a pathway which we were following. Up, up, up we went — and those angels had such strength. I can certainly appreciate Psalms 103:20 now, "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength. . ."

I have often thought about precious texts in the Bible which relate to this portion of my experience. In Genesis, Chapter 28, we read about a dream which Jacob had. He saw a ladder set on the earth, with the top reaching to heaven. The Lord stood above it, and



the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it. Jesus referred to this same activity of angels between earth and heaven, in John 1:51. And we read in Psalms 91:11 that God gives His angels charge over His earthly children.

The following words of the great Apostle Paul, in II Corinthians 12:2-4, have been more than a blessing to me, for they bear witness to that which I experienced: *"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."* Being caught up was absolutely so real to me that I can only say as did Paul, "Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell."

Paul states, in II Corinthians 12:2-4, that Paradise is located in the third heaven, and this has been made so clear to me. Somewhere out beyond the clouds and atmosphere of this earth — even beyond the second heaven, which includes the realm of the planets and stars — in that realm of the universe which Nehemiah 9:6 terms *"the heaven of heavens,"* is the Paradise of God. And it was here, in the third heaven, that the angels brought me.

### THE THIRD HEAVEN

In the Lord's prayer, our Saviour taught us to pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. I remember the joy of entering into the realm of the third heaven, that portion of the universe where God's will is continuously being done. The manifestation of light and glory was precious to behold. The angels took me to a definite location in the third heaven, where we entered into a city through a beautiful gate. I was then permitted to walk with the angels upon a street that was gold in appearance and like pure glass. The angels escorted me as we went; I wasn't free to roam about. I beheld the great beauty of the flowers everywhere, and I wanted to go slower to observe more, but the angels said, "Come, come!" They took

me to a beautiful mansion, an ivory palace, and I was taken into a room and told to be seated.

This portion of my experience I have relived innumerable times while reading confirming texts from the Word of God. Jesus told His disciples, in John 14:1-3, *"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: If It were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."*

I know that I saw many of these mansions, and I was taken by the angels into a particular one. This palace was ivory in appearance, and you can imagine the joy I later experienced in finding confirmation of this in the scripture. Psalms 45:6-8 is clearly in reference to the Son of God: *"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God (the Father), thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they (the stringed instruments) have made thee glad."*

I would like to make reference to other verses of scripture found in Revelation, Chapters 21 and 22, which describe heavenly scenes which I saw. Revelation 21:12 says, *"And (the city) had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates. . ."* It was through one of these gates that the angels brought me. I could tell that the city was immense in size and that I had only seen a small portion. John tells us, in Revelation 21:16, that the heavenly Jerusalem lieth foursquare and is 1500 miles in length, breadth, and height. He states, in Revelation 21:21, *"...and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."* I also beheld a segment of a beautiful river flowing through the city, which John writes about in Revelation 22:1-2.

I have been asked the question, "Carol, how did you communicate with the angels? Did they speak to you in English?" My answer is that they communicated with me through my means of understanding,



but I did hear another language of purity spoken in heaven which I did not understand. In I Corinthians 13:1, Paul refers to tongues (or languages) of angels.

In this visit to the Paradise of God in the third heaven, I beheld some things precious beyond description. Paul imparts this same thought in Chapter 12 of II Corinthians concerning his visit to the third heaven.

## HEAVENLY GARMENTS

While still in the mansion, I was taken into a second room, very quiet and beautiful, where another angel suddenly appeared. I was given a white garment to put on — a beautiful, long, pure white linen garment. In Revelation 19:7-8, John was shown a future scene in heaven when the bride of Christ will be at the marriage supper of the Lamb. John saw the bride (consisting of God's saints) all arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.

The Bible teaches that there is only one way to heaven. We need to be forgiven of our sins and be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Then the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to us. I was permitted to see and wear that garment of righteousness which is reserved for all those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. I am glad that Almighty God has extended His hand of grace to all mankind. In John 3:16 we read, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

After I was clothed in the fine white linen, another angel brought other pieces of glorious apparel containing the colors blue, purple, scarlet, and gold. This was prior to and in preparation for my personal visit with our Lord. I was told to put them on, although I did not understand their significance at that time. I know now that the Lord wanted to clearly distinguish between the two kinds of garments. Since that day, God has enlightened my understanding about these garments through the study of His Word. The fine linen clearly relates to the gift of salvation when Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer, but

the subsequent garments are of a priestly nature and speak of our service in the work of God here on earth.

The scripture urges every believer to present his life as a living sacrifice unto God. In I Peter 2:5, we read about a believer's calling as a priest of God:

*"Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."* Also, Revelation 1:6 says, *"And (Jesus Christ) hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory, and dominion for ever and ever."*

Job 29:14 clearly distinguishes between the two kinds of garments. Job states, *"I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem."* First he speaks of the righteousness of God, which he put on, then he mentions a robe and diadem, which were priestly apparel and relate to the ministry God gave him.

A study of the Aaronic priesthood in the Old Testament has also been a blessing to me. These priests were first robed in fine linen, then in priestly apparel. Surely, those who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus and called to a higher priesthood should also be appropriately clothed. It has been so wonderful to continually find confirmation in the Word of God of that which I experienced when but a babe in Christ.

## A VISIT WITH MY LORD AND SAVIOUR

After being clothed with the heavenly garments, I remember being gripped with a longing to see Jesus, the One who loved me and gave His life for me. Then it happened! I was brought before Him. The glory of our Lord and the holiness surrounding His presence is so awesome. How can anyone possibly describe such a glorious majesty that is unending?

My Lord came near to me, and His head was aglow with the glory of God. He looked at me, and His eyes were like a flaming fire. I had the deep realization that He knew my very inner thoughts. I recall being so thankful for the cross and the mercy of God. I saw the nail prints in the hands of the One who said in Revelation 1:18, *"I am he that liveth, and was dead;*



*and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."*

Jesus is such a loving Saviour. I was privileged to kneel at His feet and talk with Him. I asked Him all about heaven. "What is it like to be here?" "What do the angels do?" "What do the saints do?" Some of my questions He answered, but others He didn't. He told me that my course on earth wasn't finished, that my spiritual walk with Him was just beginning. He told me that I must go back and be a witness for Him, and He encouraged me to study the Bible and yield my life to the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that our family would be used to minister deliverance and healing to many others in the days ahead, and He told me of many things which would come to pass. I praise Him that many of these things have already been fulfilled.

I would like to share three verses of scripture found in Revelation 1:14-16, where the Apostle John is describing the Lord Jesus: "*His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*" These verses have meant so much to me since that day when I saw our risen Lord.

I want to stress the fact that in the presence of the Lord there is constant joy. I saw the angels worshipping and blessing Jesus, and His praise and adoration is unending.

### A SPECIAL REQUEST

I want to tell you about one request which I made of my Lord, and about His response. My earthly father, whom I loved dearly, had passed away only a few months prior to this time. His sudden death was still a source of heartache to me. I asked Jesus if I could see my father, because I wanted to know if my father was happy, and so forth. Jesus told me that he was happily active in the work of God. This truth has been a great lesson to me. Many people think of heaven as a place of rest and inactivity, but this is only par-

tially true. God's people are at rest in their spirits, yet they are and always will be active in the Lord's work. I believe this is one of the great principles of eternity.

Let's look at Isaiah 40:10, "*Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.*" Here is a verse about the second coming of Jesus Christ to this earth. Notice that Isaiah says the Messiah's work is before him. In Revelation 21:1, John speaks about a new heaven and a new earth, which God will create. This principle of constructive activity is a part of the Divine nature.

We, as the children of God, are promised a place of sharing Christ's authority and His work throughout eternity. Whether we are here on earth or with our Lord in heaven, there is always this principle of constructive activity. I was told to put my hands to the plow, to go back and finish my course. I want to encourage each of you that God has something for all of us to do.

The request to see my father was granted. I saw an angel being sent to bring my father, and he moved speedily at our Lord's command. Soon afterward, the angel returned with my father, and I recognized him. You might think, "Oh, boy! I'll bet he ran up and greeted you with a hug." The answer is, "No, he didn't!" He first gave tribute, love, and worship to Jesus, then he acknowledged me with a greeting. I remember emotionally saying, "Oh Daddy, Daddy, it's so good to see you!" I besieged him with a series of questions, like "How are you doing?" "What are you doing?" I told him that we missed him very much and wished he was still with us.

I learned a real lesson at this time. My father made it clear that his work on earth was done. He assured me that he was happy and active in his Lord's work in heaven. Then he said, "I am no longer your father." This stunned me, but he went on to say that when I returned to heaven I would know him, but not as my father. From that hour on, all grief about my father's death was gone. I will always love him, but in a different way. I was introduced to that higher love and fellowship in heaven, which extends beyond earthly



relationships. My father then left, and I continued to fellowship with the Lord.

Something wonderful and glorious awaits every believer in Christ. There will be a gathering together with the Lord and with loved ones. Moses, the great prophet of Israel, was told at the time of his death that he would be gathered unto his people (Deuteronomy 32:50). In Genesis 25:8, we also read that "...Abraham...died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years: and was gathered to his people." Thank God that this truth is clearly established in scripture.

### A BELIEVER COMES HOME

One thing I remember saying to my Lord was this, "Jesus, no one is going to believe me when I tell them I've been here with you." I even wanted to take something back with me; it was all so real. My Lord's response was, "Oh, Carol!" But then He said He was going to share something special with me.

About that time a beautiful angel came before our Lord. He seemed to be in a rush, and I could hear words of rejoicing and praise all around. It just rang out through heaven, and I wondered what was happening. I knew they were celebrating something. My curiosity was aroused, but I did not dare take my eyes off our Lord. I heard the angel say, "He is arriving, he is arriving!" My father had just left, so I couldn't imagine who was arriving.

Then, the Lord gave me the name of a family which I knew in Denver, Colorado, and I was told the man had died on a particular day and time. I was permitted to see the joy in heaven when a saint is brought home. The Lord told me that I would soon testify about this to a family which would come from Colorado to California. This soon happened in our home in San Jose, and it was a joy to tell these brethren about the entrance of this loved one into glory.

### LITTLE ONES IN HEAVEN

I often rejoice about the view my Saviour permitted me to see relative to his love and care for

babies in heaven. This is a truth which is established in the Word of God. We read in II Samuel, Chapter 12, how the baby born to Bathsheba and King David became very sick and died. While the baby was still alive, David fasted and prayed, hoping that God would raise up the child. But after it had died, David "washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped." He then requested that bread be set before him, and he did eat. David's servants questioned him about his actions. We find David's answer in II Samuel 12:22-23, where he said, "...While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

This Bible truth, about babies being with our Lord in heaven, was further impressed upon me by a vision which God graciously gave to my youngest daughter, Cindy. She saw a beautiful room in heaven where a baby was being presented to the Lord by an angel. She saw the Lord put this baby in a bed, and she even told us the color of the blanket. She then saw the angels caring for the many babies there.

Our family prayed about this vision, to find out whether there was anything more than just a general teaching involved. We seemed to feel that in time we would understand it more fully. Shortly thereafter, we received a telephone call from Phoenix, Arizona. We were told that a dear loved one had just lost her tiny baby girl. We asked at what time the baby died, and it amazingly coincided with my daughter's vision. My prayer is that this testimony will be an encouragement to others who have lost young children in infancy.

### A SHOCKING EXPERIENCE

The Lord revealed a scene to me which I shall never forget. I saw a large host of saints, and I began to recognize some of the faces as I was taken near. I knew these people to be believers in the Lord Jesus. Then, suddenly, I spotted the familiar face of an uncle who had died only a short time prior. I was shocked,



because as far as I knew, he hadn't served God. My Lord brought me to even a closer view, and I asked, "Did he make it?" My Lord answered in the affirmative, but He also said, "Carol, don't ever forget what you are seeing."

For some reason I wanted to turn my face, for my uncle was not robed like the others about him. It wasn't the feeling of embarrassment from looking on one who is naked, but my Lord was impressing a great and important truth in my heart. He talked to me very sincerely and in a way which I could understand, and I was made to know that my uncle had just barely made it into heaven. When I returned, I learned from my aunt, who lived in another state, that my uncle had accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour just prior to his death.

This experience has taught me the importance of living daily a victorious life in Christ. My uncle received the gift of eternal life the same as any other believer, because salvation is by grace, not works. Yet, he did not live a victorious life in Christ here-on earth; he did not build upon the foundation of faith in Christ. He waited until the very end of his life to commit himself to Jesus Christ. I saw a definite distinction between my uncle and those who had lived a consecrated Christian life.

The Apostle Paul says, in II Corinthians 5:10, that every believer must "appear before the judgment seat of Christ." We believers will not be judged for sins, because Jesus Christ paid for all our sins on the cross of Calvary. But Paul says the purpose is for rewards, "that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Another text which clearly establishes this truth is I Corinthians 3:11-15, which says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall

suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

It is important that we live daily for the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul made this clear in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Our time here on earth is valuable and precious, so I encourage you to present your life to God that the Holy Spirit might use you in a wonderful way.

## THE BOOKS

In Revelation 20:15 the Apostle John states, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." This reality about a book of life in which the saved have their names recorded was one of the final things about which the Lord spoke to me. I saw this book, and I rejoiced that my name was written therein. There is only one way to receive everlasting life, and that is to receive Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour. When this happens, your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

In heaven there is another set of books in which all the deeds of the ungodly are recorded. There is a day coming when all the lost will stand before God to be judged according to their works. John speaks of that time in Revelation 20:11-12, 14-15, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

I pray that many who read this testimony will accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. You will then experience the joy of knowing that your name is written in heaven in the Book of Life.

## MORE AHEAD

I've been asked many questions about heaven, such as, "Did you see the Father's throne?" "Did you see the Holy Spirit?" The answer is, "No, I did not." I did view a tremendous glory off in the distance, but I was told I could not go there now. I feel that this glory related to that which we read in Revelation 4:2-5, ". . . a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."

I know there is much in heaven which I didn't see. Praise God, there is more ahead. But I do know that heaven is real and beautiful beyond description. I will be eternally grateful for the experience I had. I know that our risen Saviour is in heaven, and the joy, praise, and adoration of the Lord is unending. If you have accepted Him as your Saviour, there is a day coming when the angels of God will carry you into His presence. You will behold the One whose countenance is brighter than the noon day sun.

The future of God's people is glorious. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, ". . . Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Thank God for the presence of the Holy Spirit, who confirms the truths of the Word of God in the hearts of the redeemed. Amen!

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