



**New Covenant: Paul Enters the Lord's Paradise Seminary, 2 Cor 12:2-4; Opening the Slave Market of Sin for the "Bound," Isa 61:1**

As we have noted, all those who were detained in Paradise were transferred to the Third Heaven when their souls were released from Hades at the ascension of our Lord. In fact we are able to conclude from Scripture that the entire Paradise compartment was transferred to heaven where all Old Testament saints now reside in interim bodies. This is determined by Paul's commentary in:

**2 Corinthians 12:2** - I knew a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body [ **a vision** ] I do not know, or out of the body [ **interim body** ] I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up [ **aoist passive participle of ἀρπάζω, *harpazō*: raptured** ] to the third heaven [ **τρίτος οὐρανός, *tripos ouranos*** ].

The best biblical indicator of what happened here is physical death caused by the stoning Paul experienced at Lystra in:

**Acts 14:19** - But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

Paul indicates that he does not know if this experience resulted in him experiencing a vision or whether he died and went into the Third Heaven in interim body to be later resuscitated. The use of the phrase "was caught up" indicates that he was taken to heaven in a rapture-like experience.

The verb *harpazō* is used by Paul to describe the Rapture of the Church in:

**1 Thessalonians 4:17** - Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up [ **predictive future passive indicative of ἀρπάζω, *harpazō*: raptured** ] with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Paul was familiar with visions some of which he experienced in Acts 16:9 and 18:9 and he mentions this method of divine revelation in 2 Corinthians 12:1.

The indication is that a vision is difficult to distinguish from events in the natural life. Paul speculates that he may have experienced the Third Heaven *in* the body which implies it occurred through a vision, or *out* of the body which indicates an interim body and his literal transfer into the Third Heaven.

Consequently, we can deduce from this that at physical death the believer will move from the reality of life on this earth to the reality of life in the Third Heaven. That this transfer is instantaneous is indicated by:

**2 Corinthians 5:8** - I prefer rather to be absent from the body [ **physical death** ] and to be at home with the Lord [ **πρὸς κύριον, *pros plus the accusative of *kruios*: "face to face with the Lord"*** ].



Therefore, at death we move immediately out of time and into eternity. This is what happened to Paul. He suffered physical death due to the stoning at Lystra and in interim body he instantly arrived in the Third Heaven and was enrolled into the Lord's seminary where he majored in Church Age doctrine.

We learn further about the specific area of heaven at which Paul arrived in:

**2 Corinthians 12:3 -** And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—

**2 Corinthians 12:4 -** was caught up [ ἁρπάζω, *harpazō*: **raptured** ] into Paradise [ παράδεισος, *paradeisos* ], and heard inexpressible words, which man is not permitted to speak.

In verse 2 Paul says that he was raptured into the Third Heaven [ τρίτος οὐρανός, *tripos ouranos* ]. In verse 4 he states that he was raptured into Paradise [ παράδεισος, *paradeisos* ]. Same place. Consequently, at the ascension, not only were Old Testament saints transferred to heaven, the Paradise compartment of Hades was also.

While in the heavenly Paradise, Paul received instruction that could have only been known by the Lord for as he indicates, no man would be permitted to speak because it was information no man could possibly know.

What Paul learned was secret information never before revealed until then—the mystery doctrines of the Church Age plus supporting information that he was not permitted to reveal.

The last phrase of Isaiah 61:1 is “to open the prison to those who are bound.”

“Open the prison” is the translation of two Hebrew words: קוּ-פֶקַח פֶקַח-קוּח *peqah-qoah deror*.

*Peqah-qoah* means “to open the eyes” while *deror* refers to the “opening of a prison and allowing the prisoners to be set free.”

Those in the prison are said to be “bound”; the Hebrew word is the Qal passive participle of אָסַר *asar* and refers to those who are imprisoned.

Dr. Merrill F. Unger summarizes the meaning of this last phrase in:

**Under, Merrill F.** *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament.* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 2:1322:

The Hebrew suggests “the most complete opening” (of the eyes) to prisoners, who were blind, as it were, in the darkness of the prison of sin.

From all of this we are able to construct the following expanded translation:



**Isaiah 61:1** - The Holy Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me [ **Jesus** ], because God the Father has anointed Me as Messiah to bring the Gospel to those afflicted by material and spiritual circumstances. He sent Me to restore the wounded soul through regeneration, to proclaim liberty to those held captive in Paradise regarding their imminent transfer to the Third Heaven, and to open the eyes of those imprisoned inside the slave market of sin so that those bound there might be set free through the redemption solution;

**v. 2** - to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord [ **First Advent** ]  
...

This passage clearly presents the Incarnation as the fulfillment of the New covenant to Israel with reference to satisfying the eternal life clause required for entry into the millennial kingdom.