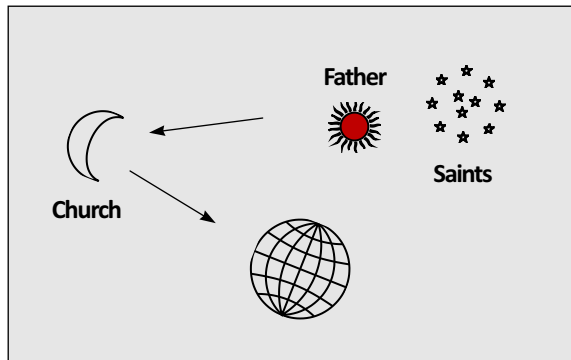


Heavens represent minds on the spirit level of the Word. [Read ML106 “Three Levels of the Word.”] The abstract nature of this symbol makes it a little difficult to prove. So let’s begin by showing some support for this concept.

Joseph, a figure of Christ, had a dream in which he saw the sun, the moon and the eleven stars bow before him [Ge. 37:9]. After telling the dream to his father and brothers, his father Jacob said, “*Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?*” [Ge. 37:10].

In his interpretation of the dream, Jacob saw the sun as himself, the moon as Rachael, and the eleven stars as Joseph’s brothers.

And in this parable, the sun depicts the heavenly Father; the moon depicts the Church, and the eleven brothers depict the members of the church. Thus, the dream shows the whole heavenly family bowing to the Lord.



Now read Ge. 37:11: “*And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.*” [NKJV] This verse makes two points relative to heavens representing minds. [1] The brothers’ jealousy and [2], the father’s awareness.

Not only this, the sun, moon, and stars are celestial. The earth and moon are terrestrial. Thus, the moon is a member of both worlds.

Your body is terrestrial like the earth, but when you turn to the Lord in faith and repentance, it becomes celestial and heavenly, like the moon. You sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus, [Eph. 2:6].

Thus, the jealousy of Joseph’s brothers and the mental awareness of the father relate to the mind. The earth, moon and sun relate to the 3 potential states of the mind:

Earth:	Natural and Carnal minds	H1
Moon:	Mind of Christ	H2
Sun:	Mind of God	H3

These are the three heavens. The heaven of heavens [De. 10:14] is the mind of the LORD Jehovah — H4.

H1 - The Natural Mind

The natural mind knows the common things of this life. These include the aspects of thought, intelligence, memory, etc. For example, if your skill is auto mechanics, your mind knows how to repair automobiles.

The natural mind works like a computer. However, if someone bad-mouths the mechanic’s work, his pride can change his natural mind into a carnal mind.

H1 - The Carnal Mind

After making Adam in Ge. 2:7, God put him in the Garden of Eden [Ge. 2:8]. Then He made certain trees grow out of the ground, one of which is the “*tree of knowledge of good and evil*” [Ge. 2:9].

John interpreted these trees as symbols: “*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world,*” [1Jo. 2:16].

Without the “*lust of the flesh,*” Adam and Eve would not have born children and you and I would not be here. And without the “*lust of the eye,*” you could starve to death while sitting in the middle of an orchard of fruit trees.

At the end of the Eden story, God permitted man to eat of all but “*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*” [Ge. 2:8-17] Now, let’s follow the woman in the 3rd story and watch as the serpent tempts her via the pride of life. Here’s the text:

Ge. 3:4-5: *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

The words “*gods,*” and “*God,*” are the same [H430]. The serpent tempted and pride overcame. Paul identified pride as the lust of the mind: “*... Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,*” [Eph. 2:3].

Now, why is pride part of our nature? Pride is part of God’s nature and He made us in His likeness [Ge. 1:26]. Why? There’s good pride and there’s evil pride. Good pride is self-respect; evil pride is vanity. Self-respect is honorable; vanity is conceit — conceit exceeds the bounds of self-respect.

Heaven-1 Summary: The natural, unassuming mind can excel its host to a great height, but when pride enters, the mind plunges its host into the lowest hell.

H2 - The Mind of Christ

In Heaven-1, pride exalts its host; in Heaven-2, humility reverses the vanity. Paul did the research on the 2nd heaven in Php 2:1-8. Let’s discuss his explanation beginning with Verse-3:

Php 2:3 [Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Vainglory is “empty glorying,” i.e., self-conceit [G2754]. This Greek word is from G2755, its definition includes “desirous of vain-glory.” And G2755 is from two words, one of which means “empty” [G2756] and the other includes the words “dignity, honor, praise and worship” [G1391]. This chain of definitions describes Eve’s mind as she contemplated the pros and cons of eating from the forbidden tree.

Vainglory is the problem; lowliness of mind is the solution. How do you esteem another better than yourself [V3] when the other is not better than you are?

For example, if you are a master on the piano, how can you esteem someone better than you if they only know how to play chopsticks? Paul answers this in the next verse:

Php. 2:4: Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

You stop thinking about yourself and think about your neighbors. What are they good at? I cannot think of a scripture that confirms this, but “There is some good in everyone.”

Php. 2:5: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

You “Let this mind be in you” by following Paul’s instructions. What is the “Mind of Christ? This is an adjective phrase. It describes the way Jesus thought.

Paul said, “... we have the mind of Christ,” [1Co. 2:16]. But, read this verse in its text and you see that it applies only to those who are spiritually minded, [1Co. 2:15]. So then, we have “The Mind of Christ” only when we repudiate the pride of life of the carnal mind.

God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble: “And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted,” [Mt. 23:12]. Thus, you ascend from the 1st to the 2nd heaven via humility.

After teaching how to let the “mind of Christ” be in you, Paul taught how Christ let this same mind be in Him:

Php. 2:6: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

Php. 2:7: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

Php. 2:8: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

God is a Spirit [Joh. 4:24]. So then, Paul is talking about the form of Christ’s physical body. Jesus was equal with God because He was the Person of God, made after the pattern of the Logos [Word] in Joh. 1:1. His body, spirit, and soul were the same as every man’s body, spirit, and soul. Verse-7 confirms this. His outer man was like every man’s outer man; and His inner man was like every child’s and saved person’s inner man.

Verse-8 goes to the core. We resist vain pride by thinking of others rather than ourselves. Christ resisted vain pride the same way, but He went the extra mile and gave His life that we might excel in humility.

Having completed Paul’s teaching on what the “mind of Christ” is and how to let it be in us, think of this mind like this: The “mind of Christ” is a humble attitude.

One last point before discussing Heaven-3. Paul said in 1Co. 2:16 that “... we have the mind of Christ.” This mind is not innate within saved adults. Salvation does not give you the mind of Christ; the mind of Christ helps bring salvation. To understand V16, read the two verses before it:

1Co. 2:14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1Co. 2:15: But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

1Co. 2:16: For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Only the spiritually minded have the mind of Christ. Those who put on this mind and keep it on, take up their cross daily and follow Jesus. These live in the 2nd heaven. Now let’s discuss the 3rd heaven.

H3 - The Mind and abode of God

1Co. 2:11: For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Only the Spirit of God knows the things of the Spirit of God. So, to know the things of God, we must be intimate with Him: “But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” [1Co. 6:17]. Christ made this possible by becoming the Spirit He was in the Father’s mind before He descended to become the Son of man: “... the Lord is that Spirit” [2Co 3:17].

Now, we ascend from H1 to H2 through humility. But do we ascend to the 3rd heaven, or does the 3rd heaven descend to us? Paul ascended to the 3rd heaven [H3] but didn’t know if his body was alive or dead. So his experience doesn’t answer the question.

Let's review the disciples' activities after Christ's ascension. Jesus said for them to wait for the promise of the Father. During that time, the apostles appointed Matthias to replace Judas. After ten days in an upper room, they received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

Ac. 2:4: *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

That upper room was likely on a 2nd floor to represent the 2nd heaven. I don't suggest this lightly; God gives dreams and visions in which 2nd stories represent the "mind of Christ."

While teaching one night, a sister in my Bible class told a dream about her dead sister. She had asked the Lord if her sister was saved. In her dream, she ascended some stairs and looked out a 2nd story window. She looked down and saw a long black convertible beneath the window. Her father was driving, and her sister was waving to her from the back seat.

The Lord gave me the interpretation as she told the dream. Passenger cars represent the lives of the passengers. Earthly fathers often represent the Heavenly Father. Thus, the interpretation showed that her sister was with the Heavenly Father. Now read this:

Joh. 16:7: *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

That dream and its interpretation reveal an important point. We ascend from the 1st to the 2nd heaven; God descends from the 3rd to the 2nd heaven. Knowing this, Paul did not know if he had died or seen a vision [2Co. 12:2].

H4 - The Mind and abode of Jehovah

Jesus spoke several times of ascending to where He was before He descended. When leaving this earth, He ascended into a cloud. But most ascents and descents are not to and from the earth. These are figurative of changes from mortality to immortality and vice-versa.

A soldier ascends in rank by promotion; he descends in rank by demotion. Politicians ascend from local, to state, and then to federal offices. And when they displease the voters,

they descend to where the rest of us live.

Jesus told Mary not to touch Him because He hadn't ascended to His Father. He didn't mean that He hadn't gone to some lofty place in the universe.

[Some ignorantly assume that Jesus had not yet left the earth for some far-away place in the universe where He would anoint some heavenly altar with His blood.]

What He meant was that He had not yet changed from mortality to immortality. This would not happen until daybreak. After that, He could be touched according to the law.

Eph. 4:9-10: *(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

Read the underlined part of that text again. "Far above all heavens" is the 4th heaven, the abode of Jehovah when He thought the Logos [Joh. 1:1]. Paul tells us a little more about this heaven above all heavens:

1Ti. 6:16: *Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*

Christ's immortal Spirit is now in the 3rd heaven. For us to see Him when He descends in the Rapture, He will need to descend from Spirit to His immortal body.

1Jo. 3:2: *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

Now, "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" [1Co. 6:17]. After becoming like Him in the Rapture, i.e. ascending into immortality, we will be able to descend to immortal flesh and then ascend to immortal spirit. Jesus did this several times after daybreak on that first Easter morning.

Thus, in the Millennial Kingdom we will be able to ascend from immortal flesh to immortal spirit. We will also be able to descend from immortal spirit to immortal flesh.