

“Heaven”

IX. “What Will Our Lives Be Like?”

Recap important points:

-There are two stages of heaven: Intermediate and Eternal Heaven (New Heaven and New Earth)

-When mankind fell, creation fell. Both are under the curse of death.

Therefore, both were redeemed through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

-Jesus’ physical resurrection is the model for our physical resurrection.

-This present Earth will not be annihilated, rather restored, resurrected, redeemed, transformed from this *prototype* to the final New Earth.

-We will rule with Jesus, under His authority, on the New Earth.

-God’s original plan had no “oops” in it. Redemption was part of His original plan, and God’s original plan will be realized (Revelation 21:1).

-When we (the Church, the Bride of Christ) are presented to him, we will be wearing our acts of service, ministry and righteousness, as our Fine Linen (Revelation 19:8).

-We will rule with Christ on the New Earth. God’s Kingdom continues to expand, and we will be given dominion over it.

-The Capital City of the New Earth, is the New Jerusalem. It is a real city, with real dimensions and features.

In part 9 we will focus on answering “What will our lives be like?” by addressing 5 main questions:

- 1. Will we be ourselves?**
- 2. What will our bodies be like?**
- 3. Will we eat and drink on the New Earth?**
- 4. Will we be capable of sinning?**
- 5. Will we know and learn?**
- 6. What will our daily lives be like?**

As we discussed last week, by now, all that you previously thought of heaven has certainly been challenged in this study. We will continue to tackle some very common questions about our existence in heaven. It’s one thing to have an understanding of our environment, but we need to have just as firm of understanding about ourselves. After all, we, who have placed our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, are the ones who are going to be there forever! So let’s dive in!

Will we be ourselves?

Unless we grasp the reality of the resurrection of Jesus, and our bodily resurrection, we will not believe that we continue to be ourselves in the afterlife. Just as Jesus resurrected a physical being, so will we. If Heaven is a disembodied state, then our humanity will be diminished. This diminishing of our person does not happen in Heaven; this only happens in Hell (2 Thessalonians 1:9)!

Consider Job's words, "In my flesh I will see God..." (**Job 19:26**). The Risen Jesus said, "Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have" (**Luke 24:39**).

Jesus called people by name in Heaven:

-Lazarus in the Intermediate Heaven (**Luke 16:25**)

-Abraham, Isaac, Jacob in the Eternal Heaven (**Matthew 8:11**)

A name denotes a distinct *identity*, and *individual*. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel are written on the Holy City's gates and foundation of its walls (**Revelation 21:12-14**). The fact that people in Heaven are called by the same name as they were known on Earth (**Revelation 20:15; 21:27**) demonstrates that we remain ourselves – only a perfect version!!!

**If we remain ourselves, will we be unique?*

Are you unique on this earth? YES! If we lose nothing and gain everything in Heaven, then we can reason that we do NOT lose our uniqueness, but we gain PERFECTION!

Heaven's inhabitants don't rejoice over the multitudes coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus, they rejoice over each and every person (**Luke 15:10**). What a powerful affirmation of Heaven's view of each person's life being viewed and cared for.

Matthew 8:11 describes a banquet that we will enjoy in Heaven, and we will enjoy it with individuals such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We are not gathered with a bunch of nameless faces who are carbon copies of each other. We are uniquely enjoying an experience with other unique individuals. We will not be genderless in heaven. Jesus remained a man after his resurrection. No one mistook Him for a woman. In **Galatians 3:28**, the Apostle Paul says that in Christ there is neither "male nor female." He is addressing equality, not gender. Again, we remain ourselves – only a perfect version!

*Many think that we become angels when we die. Not true. WE DO NOT BECOME ANGELS WHEN WE DIE!! Death is a relocation of the same person, from one place to another. Angels are angels. Humans are humans. Angels are unique beings, created by God, for a purpose: to serve us on earth (**Hebrews 1:14**). Angels have names (identity) and we know some of these names: Michael (**Daniel 10:13, Revelation 12:7**), and Gabriel (**Luke 1:19,26**). According to **1 Corinthians 6:2-3**, humans will govern

angels in heaven. **Matthew 18:10** says that we have angels who watch over us from childhood. In Heaven, imagine how much fun it will be to talk with the angels who watched over us and our activities while we were on earth!

We must be very careful to NEVER ANGEL WORSHIP! They are not beings worthy of our worship. Only God is (**Exodus 20:3-5**)! Angels are not the wisdom-givers, only God is (**James 1:5**).

Some wonder, *will we have emotions?*

YES! Remember, we are created by God, in His image and likeness. One only has to read very little Scripture to understand that God expressed *feelings*. The resurrected Jesus expressed His emotions. Jesus is our model for resurrection, so we will indeed express emotion in Heaven. And yes, I believe we will cry in heaven! WAIT! The Bible says in **Revelation 21:4**, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain.” Notice, the tears mentioned in the passage are a result of injustices and evils here on earth. They are not “tears of joy,” rather, “tears of sorrow” from the widowed, the orphaned, the unborn, and the persecuted.

Feelings/emotions are not part of the Curse. Death is. Feelings are given to us by our Creator. We are created in His likeness. If we are created to feel and express feelings on earth, and we understand that we maintain our individuality in Heaven, then we certainly understand that we will definitely feel and express our feelings in heaven: laughter, tears of joy, excitement, wonder, awe, exhilaration, etc. I do not see Heaven as one big continual “high” but a natural rhythm of emotions, much like we experience on this earth. That rhythm is part of being *human* and *finite* – and we’ll always be both!

Along with our feelings, we will have *desires*. As a matter of fact, in Heaven, we will have many desires, but they won’t be unholy, selfish desires. God’s law, the expression of His holiness, will be written on hearts (Hebrews 8:10), and we will continue to delight in the Lord as “he will give [us] you the desires of [our] your heart” (**Psalm 37:4**).

What Will Our Bodies be Like?

This is a very popular question. We’ve already established that we will be resurrected physical beings. We’ve also established that we will feel, express emotion, have holy desires, all the while maintaining our individuality and uniqueness. We’ve already established that we will be a perfect version of our “self” now. We also have established that we will not be genderless. **We must keep all of this in mind as we approach the BIG questions related to what our bodies will be like in Heaven.**

Our resurrected bodies will be free from the Curse of sin, redeemed, and restored to their original beauty and purpose that goes back to Eden.

So will our bodies be beautiful? YES! But, let's define beauty.

We've all heard, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." That is so true! What one person, or even culture, considers "beautiful," another would consider "strange" and "unappealing." We tend to get hung up on terms like: "fat," "skinny," "short," "tall," etc. I believe our bodies will have all that God created our bodies to have (including fat) but it will be in healthy proportions. God will decide what our perfect bodies look like, but we must not assume we will all look alike.

If we remember that we maintain our uniqueness in Heaven, then some part of that means that we will have unique *physical* features. Racial identities will continue (**Revelation 5:9; 7:9**), and this involves a genetic carryover from the old body to the new. We must remember, our bodies will be free from the Curse of sin and death, and anything about our current bodies that are a result of sin will be renewed, restored, resurrected and made perfect, just like the earth! We'll have health and strength, and be perfectly equipped to fulfill God's perfect plan for us for all of eternity.

Our new body will have the same senses we have now, only perfect. Our senses are tainted by the Curse. Our eyes go bad. Our taste buds aren't as keen as God created. Our sense of smell is not even what a dog's is. But it seems in heaven, our senses will surpass our senses now.

Jesus said in **Matthew 26:41**, "The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Our resurrection bodies will never fail us! We will have abilities to accomplish God's perfect plan for us. Jesus, in His resurrected body, was able to appear and disappear (**Luke 24:31, John 20:19**) and defy gravity and ascend into air (**Acts 1:9**). If Jesus is our model for life, death and resurrection, then why wouldn't we be able to do the same thing?

A really BIG question people ask is: *What age will we be in heaven?*

Consider these quotes:

Thomas Aquinas stated, "...human nature will be brought back by the resurrection of the state of its ultimate perfection, which is in the state of youth, toward which the movement of growth is terminated, and from which the movement of degeneration begins."

Hank Hanegraaff suggests, "Our DNA is programmed in such a way that, at a particular point, we reach optimal development from a functional perspective. For the most part, it appears that we reach this stage somewhere in our twenties and thirties...If the blueprints for our glorified bodies are in the DNA, then it would stand to reason that our bodies will be resurrected at the optimal stage of development determined by our DNA."

Jonathan Edwards stated, "The heavenly inhabitants...remain in eternal youth."

Randy Alcorn in *Heaven* writes, “Heaven will be full of children...even if we look like adults. What we love about children is their joy, exuberance, curiosity, laughter, and spontaneity. In Heaven, whether or not anyone is the size and appearance of a child, we’ll be all childlike in the ways that bring joy to us and to our Father.”

Jesus said in **Matthew 18:3**, “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus was answering a question from his disciples, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” The word the disciples used for “greatest” in Greek is *meizon*, which means *larger, elder, greater, or more*. It’s the same word as used in **I Corinthians 13:13**, “...but the *greatest* of these is love.” In answering a question of prominence, Jesus answered that those who change and become like children are the ones who inherit heaven. The word Jesus used for *change* is in Greek, *strepho* which means, *to twist, to turn around, convert, or reverse*. It’s obvious that children had a special place in our Lord’s heart. While I don’t believe we remain little children in heaven, I do certainly believe we will remain childlike in the sense of being in awe and wonder, loving to learn and explore, displaying curiosity and gratefulness, taking joy in our Father, and regaining our innocence we lost in the Fall.

Alcorn writes, “The New Earth will be a place of both maturity and perfection. Regardless of what age we appear, I believe that our bodies will demonstrate the qualities of youthfulness that Jesus so valued in children.”

Will We Eat and Drink on the New Earth?

When you think of eating, what images come to mind?

- Pleasure
- Fellowship
- Nourishment
- Laughter
- Family
- Celebrations
- Storytelling
- Conversation

All of these things, and more, are promised in heaven. So why wouldn’t eating be part of our wonderful, pleasurable experiences in heaven? Do we *need* the nourishment? We’ll certainly be expanding energy as we explore the wonders of eternity. Perhaps our resurrected bodies won’t *need* food for energy, but simply will desire it for pleasure. After all, God created food for man *before* the Fall.

Words describing eating, meals, and food appear over a thousand times in Scripture. Jesus says in **Luke 22:29-30**, “I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.” The words *eat* and *drink* in the Greek mean to literally eat and drink. Jesus did not use

figurative speech. **Isaiah 25:6** says, “On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine – the best of meats and the finest of wines.” If you read on in Isaiah 25, you will find that Isaiah is speaking about the eternal heaven.

Some would argue that we do not eat and drink in heaven, citing **Romans 14:17**, “The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” But in context, Paul is addressing our walk with God and the importance of not causing other people to stumble over what we eat and drink in this life. This passage is not about the afterlife.

Philippians 3:21 says Jesus will “transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” We’ve established that Jesus is our model for our resurrected body, and Scripture confirms this. In **John 21:4-14**, we read where Jesus prepared breakfast for him and his disciples, and ate with them.

Revelation 19:9 speaks of the *wedding feast* of the bride (the Church) and the Lamb (Jesus Christ).

In **Luke 14:12-14**, Jesus is having dinner at a Pharisee’s house, when he talks about inviting less fortunate people to dinner and giving them a place of honor. He then says when we do this, we will be rewarded at the resurrection of the righteous. A man attending that dinner party responds in **Luke 14:15**, “Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.” Jesus didn’t correct him. In fact, Jesus built on what the man had said by telling a parable about a man who held a banquet and invited many guests. Clearly, the man and Jesus were both talking about *real eating and drinking at a real feast*.

Some Christians have a hard time imagining eating and drinking in heaven because *hunger, digestion, and elimination* are not things typically associated with heaven. **Revelation 7:16** says, “Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst.” This does not mean we will not have an appetite or desire. It means that we will never again have a desire unmet. The very next verse (**Rev 7:17**) says Jesus will lead us to “springs of living *water*.” God created hunger and thirst. Hunger and thirst lead us to take action. Hunger and thirst remind us to desire God as our physical body desires food. God intends for our hunger and thirst to be satisfied, not obliterated.

John Calvin wrote, “If we consider to what end God created foods, we shall find that he wished not only to provide for our necessities, but also for our pleasure and recreation...”

What about *meat*?

In short, death is a result of the Fall. The food chain, as we understand it, was not in place before the Fall. After the Flood, God gave permission to eat meat. In the New Testament, we are told to eat and drink to the glory of God. I do not believe it is sinful to eat meat now. However, since we’ve established there will be no more death

on the New Earth, and we've seen in Scripture where the wolf and the sheep will eat together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox (**Isaiah 65:25**), it would seem on the New Earth we will not kill or devour animals. But we've also seen in Scripture where we will enjoy a feast of the finest wine and meat (**Isaiah 25:6**). Is God contradicting Himself? I don't think so.

Accepting, by faith, that God's plan for ALL CREATION is perfect on the New Earth, and understanding that we LOSE NOTHING AND GAIN EVERYTHING in heaven, perhaps the "meat" God speaks of results from something other than animal death. Can God give us meat without causing death to an animal? Sure. He's God. Could God cause our resurrected bodies not to desire animal meat, like man was before the Fall? Sure. Perhaps the "meat" we will desire and enjoy in heaven is different than the "meat" we enjoy here on this earth. Regardless of the "meat" we can be assured that it will be pleasurable.

Will We Be Capable of Sinning?

This is a question of great importance. This question carries with it a few other implied questions: *Will we have free will? Will we be tempted? Can we really be perfect?*

Jesus promised us that on the New Earth death and the old order of things will be passed away (**Revelation 21:4**). Since "the wages of sin is death" (**Romans 6:23**), the promise of no death means no sin. **Hebrews 9:26-28; Hebrews 10:10; 1 Peter 3:18**, all reassure us that Jesus died ONCE for sin and will never again need to die. **Revelation 21:27** tells us that nothing impure will ever enter God's Holy City, on the New Earth. **1 Corinthians 15:52** tells us that our resurrected bodies will be raised *incorruptible or uncorrupted*.

This, in no way, implies that we will not have "free will." In other words, we will not be "robotic" in heaven, "programmed" to behave a certain way. That would not be human. We've established that we will not lose the essence of our humanity, rather our humanity will be made perfect. (I must note: *perfect* does NOT mean *infinite*.) In heaven, our "free will" will bend towards Jesus Christ. We will desire Him, and will not have the influence of sin, Satan, evil, to persuade us to rebel against God.

The inability to sin is not a violation against our free will, no more than our ability to be a rabbit or a tree is a violation of our free will. Sin will simply not be part of our nature. Theologian Paul Helm says, "The freedom of heaven, then, is the freedom from sin; not that the believer just happens to be free from sin, but that he is so constituted or reconstituted that he cannot sin. He doesn't want to sin, and he does not want to want to sin."

Will We Know and Learn?

As previously stated, we will be made perfect, but this does not mean infinite. There will be boundaries on our knowledge and understanding, and we have an eternity to expand those boundaries! However, we will never know everything. Some would say that Paul's words in **1 Corinthians 13:12**, "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see him face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known," to suggest that we will have full knowledge of everything once we are in the presence of God. However, *know* and *know fully* are based on two different Greek words: *ginosko* and *epiginosko*. The prefix *epi* intensifies the word to mean "to really know" or "to know extensively." However, when the word is used of humans, it never means absolute knowledge. Had Paul meant that we will be omniscient or know everything, he would've used the Greek *ta panta*.

Ephesians 2:6-7 says that God raised Jesus from death in order to show us, in the coming ages, the riches of His grace. The word "show" means "to reveal." The phrase "in the coming ages" implies that there will be a progressive, ongoing revelation, in which we will learn more and more about God and His grace, just as we continue to learn more about people in our life whom we love the more we spend time with them.

With knowledge come skills. Just as our learning increases, our skills will too. We've established in this study that activity on this earth will carry over to the New Earth. If we believe God gave us our desire to learn and to possess skills, why would God erase this from our existence in Heaven? Remember, we LOSE NOTHING AND GAIN EVERYTHING! So what we enjoy here, we will enjoy more fully in Heaven.

What Will Our Daily Lives Be Like?

Just as in the previous section, this question brings with it other implied questions: *Will we rest? Will we sleep? Will we work?*

It's important for us to answer these questions lest we revert back to thinking of heaven as a spiritual realm full of disembodied spirits floating around for an eternity singing praises to God.

As we have gathered from this study so far, we know we will be resurrected, physical, human beings, living in a sinless environment, enjoying God's creation more and more as time progresses, eating and drinking, exploring, learning, traveling, and doing. As activity from this earth carries over to the New Earth, why wouldn't we rest, sleep, work, and have homes?

Heaven is a place of rest (**Hebrews 4:1-11; Revelation 14:13**) and a time for relaxed fellowship and joyful praise. Jesus said in **Matthew 11:28**, "Come to me, all you who are weary...and I will give you rest." Resting affords us the opportunity to think clearly and focus on God. Rest helps remove distractions so we can worship. Just as work is rewarding, so is rest. If it brings pleasure on this earth, does it not stand to reason that it will be part of our lives in Heaven?

Just as rest is pleasurable, so is sleep. Sleep is not a result of the Fall. God created sleep. Jesus slept. Sleep is a necessity because of activity. We've already established that there will be plenty of activity in heaven, so why wouldn't there be sleep?

Just as rest and sleep are not a result of the Fall, neither is work. Work is honorable and pleasurable. The curse perverted work, making it tedious and frustrating. But just like everything else in all creation, work will be redeemed, restored and resurrected. It will be restored to a place of enjoyment, fulfillment, and purpose just like it was before the Fall. Have you ever worked to pull off a surprise party for a family member or friend? Did you enjoy your work? Of course. It had meaning, purpose, and would be an expression of your love. Our work in heaven will serve God, and be an expression of our love for Him!