

“The Study of Heaven – Part 2”

Dr. Geoffrey Plummer
Calvary Baptist Church

January 21st, 2024

Scripture

1 Corinthians 15:35-52

“But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?" You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.

39All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

42So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

50Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

Questions about Heaven?

- Heaven 101
- The Rich Man and Lazarus

Five Questions:

What happens the moment we die?

- Will we see Jesus and when do we see Him?
- Where do we go?
- What kind of body will we have?
- Will we look like we are when we die or will we look younger (I hope)?
- When will we return to earth?

Lots of interesting questions there, eh?

Does everyone know the answers?

What happens the moment we die?

1) Will we see Jesus?

Matthew 5:8

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

1 Corinthians 13:12

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, **but then face to face**; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.”

This is the love chapter, right? -> Love is more important than spiritual gifts: prophecy, tongues, etc.

“in a mirror dimly” -> literally the Greek is “in a riddle” -> it’s not quite clear to us right now who God is

“then face to face” -> It will become clear to us later

“now I know in part” -> we know a little about God now

“then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known” -> we will know as much about God as He knows about us now

1 John 3:2

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. **We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.**”

We are not like we will be

When Jesus returns in glory, we will be raised like Jesus was raised -> more to come on that later

“We will see Him just as He is”

So, yes, we will see Jesus

We will see Him as He is

We will not see Him as He was - not the human but the divine

Matthew 17:1-3

“Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And **He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light**. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.”

This is Jesus how He is

The Disciples knew who He was – even though it was a blinding light

They were able to recognize Moses and Elijah

They saw His supernatural being, if only for a few minutes

That is what we will see in the future

When do I see Him?

We talked about this a bit last time from 2 Corinthians 5

We discussed Paul noting our current body is a tent vs. a future one that is a building

Much stronger than the current body

Much more energy available -> no need to sleep, etc.

2 Corinthians 5:6-8

“Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord-- for we walk by faith, not by sight-- we are of good courage, I say, and **prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.**”

Paul says that while we are in our body now, we are absent from the Lord

That doesn't mean we do not experience God here -> we do through the Spirit and in prayer

But when we are absent from this body, we will be “at home” with the Lord

This suggests that the transportation is immediate after death

Philippians 1:21-23

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, **having the desire to depart and be with Christ**, for that is very much better.”

Paul expressed that desire to leave here and immediately be with Christ

2) Where do we go?

Some teach “soul sleep” or “purgatory” is the next step after life on earth -> punishment for sins not covered

Yet, we learn of the immediacy of Heaven directly from Jesus:

Luke 23:39-43 (the thief on the cross)

“One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” **And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise.”**

“Today, you will be with Me in Paradise” – no waiting period

Doesn't sound like soul sleep to me

Doesn't sound like there is a purgatory in God's plan for believers

I don't believe there is a purgatory for unbelievers, either

Hebrews 9:27 -> “it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.”

In contrast to soul sleep, John records:

Revelation 6:9-11

“When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, **I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained**; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

11And **there was given to each of them a white robe**; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.”

This shows that after we leave the earth, our souls are active in Heaven

The altar in this case, is the before God’s throne

The Greek word for “rest” is *anapauó* means “to pause during an intermission”

We will pause from our labors for a while

Until “until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also”

When the number of participants in the kingdom of Heaven is reached, rest will be over

Souls are given a white robe

Revelation 3:5 (message to the church in Sardis)

“He who overcomes **will thus be clothed in white garments**; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”

3) What kind of body will we have?

Paul taught that we will first be resurrected as Jesus was:

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“**But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?"** You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.

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Paul taught about the order of resurrection:

1 Corinthians 15:22-24

“For as in Adam all die, **so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming**, then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.”

Christ resurrected first as the first fruits

This event has already occurred, obviously

Then we are resurrected:

Philippians 3:20-21

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; **who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”

We will also be transformed into conformity with Jesus's body - Will we look younger (I hope)?

4) When will we return to earth?

We remain souls in Heaven until the last trumpet call, which is noted in Revelation:

Revelation 11:14

“Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.’”

Post resurrection, we are in our glorified and eternal bodies

Jesus will return with his armies from Heaven following Him:

Revelation 19:11-14

“I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and true, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. **And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.**”

Prayer - Benediction