

STANLEY FAITH EV FREE

Pastor Michael Thompson Sunday September 10th, 2017

Heaven and Hell Series
Part 4

Questions With Biblical Answers

<http://babylonbee.com/news/breakfast-hell-actually-average-says-report/>

INTRODUCTION / REVIEW

This is the fourth and final week of our Heaven and Hell series. Week One we introduced a more realistic idea of what heaven might be like. In week two we introduced the terrible reality of hell. Week three we laid out a clear mean provided by Jesus Christ to be saved from hell and to spend eternity with Him in paradise. And this week we are finishing up with questions that have been collected along the way.

QUESTIONS

Question: ***Cremation (should a Christian be cremated?)***

1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 50-52

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.50 I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

1. The bodies of people who die deteriorate
 2. Some think it better to perform a conventional burial so that the body will not deteriorate (displeasing God and preparing us for resurrection).
 3. A conventional burial will result in deterioration.
 4. Accidents war and fires can deteriorate the body in ways similar to cremation.
 5. It would not be consistent with salvation by faith in Jesus Christ to keep a person out of heaven if he or she died in a house fire and his causing bodily deterioration.
 6. The resurrection of our bodies is based not on our manner of bodily disposal but on the capacity of God to find our remains and create a new spiritual glorified body for us. This in conjunction to the condition of our soul is the basis of resurrection and salvation from death.
 7. Therefore cremation is a matter of personal conviction.
 8. **In plain language:** No matter how damaged now or in death you find yourself; God can find you, God can fix you; God can raise you from death to life. Trust His ability to raise you from death to life. Stop trusting your own efforts to save you.
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Question: Why look forward to going to heaven?

Because of the way Hollywood has portrayed Heaven it looks boring. No one would possibly want to go sit on a cloud for eternity. God gave us eyes to distinguish colors, so the false notion of heaven as a world of white clouds subconsciously puts us to sleep. Our bodies are made for working. The harder we work the more tuned up our bodies get. Yet the false Hollywood notion of heaven has us laying around on a cloud strumming a harp looking bored. Here is a quick taste of the real thing that God has waiting for us in the real heaven that He will bring down to meet us when He returns.

Backdrop

Revelation 22:5 *There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever.*

PHYSICAL ELEMENTS OF HEAVEN LISTED IN SCRIPTURE

DEMONSTRATE HEAVEN AND EARTH HAVE JOINED UP

Banquets: **Revelation 19:9** tells us we will eat and drink at the marriage supper of the Lamb

Wine: **Luke 22:18** tells us that wine is drunk with the disciples in the heavenly kingdom. And there will be no abuse of wine.

River of Waters of Life: **Revelation 22:1** Tells us there is water and rivers in heaven. The river of the water of life will flow from the throne of God through the middle of the street of the city of God. And there could be a lot more rivers and bodies of water as well.

Tree of life with Fruit: **Revelation 22:2** Tells us there will be a variety of fruits and probably all kinds of vegetables and tasty things. The tree of life **will bear twelve kinds of fruit yielding its fruit each month**

Likely Activities: Walking, running, dancing, shouting, eating, drinking, taking

Question: Why doesn't marriage exist in heaven?

First, there is no need for more children. Marriage is the protective covenant that provides companionship and a safe environment to raise children.

Matthew 22:30

At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

God invented sex and it is a gift. But we will have glorified bodies like angels according to Jesus. So there are other pleasures that we don't know about that are new gifts to be received when Jesus returns. (Perhaps it will be like the lady on the commercial who eats the chocolate bar and it tastes so good she goes wild. Maybe that is the new pleasure in heaven.)

Question: God talks about making a new heaven and new earth. What is the reason for making a new heaven? What's wrong with the one right now? Is there not enough space?

That is a great question Maria. What I would like to do is teach through a passage and answer about 4 questions with one text.

Isaiah 65:17 (NIV)

17 “See, I will create new heavens and a new earth.

The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.

This Isaiah passage finds its fulfillment in Revelation 21. Let's work through the first eight verses of Revelation 21 which will give us a great deal of information.

Revelation 21(NIV)

¹ Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

The first thing we see is the first heaven and first earth had passed away. Now there is not enough information to completely understand the details of what that means. Let's go with what we know for sure. There is a new heaven and earth. The old heaven and old earth no longer are sufficient for the new purpose that God has for Himself and His creation. Let's look at this new purpose and we will see why the old heaven and earth are no longer sufficient to serve the new need of God's plans.

² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

AS A BRIDE DRESSED FOR HER HUSBAND

In our current setup heaven and earth are separated. One is physical and the other is a spiritual reality. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit we have a sense God is near to us and it feels like heaven is our home. And when we are not walking with God we do not feel this connection with God and heaven. It seems unreal to us like a sci fi movie or fairy tale.

When Jesus returns the dead will be raised and all believers will be given glorified bodies. And God will bring together His dwelling place with what is technically called the “second earth.” Heaven and earth will join up just and the picture that God wants us to have in our mind is a marriage covenant. God promises that He will come and covenant to be with us and offer protection and provide for our needs and we will dwell together. The glory of God will supply the light and heat and energy to run the new planet. John goes on to describe more of our emotional state.

⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’”

5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

So there will be no more death. No one will die. God has given us procreation now because it balances the losses we experience with death. There will be no need to have children in heaven because the total number of people that are destined to be there will be made it. None will be lost. And none will die. It is a stable number.

Since there is no death and no car accidents or drownings rape or murder or kidnapping there will be no deep mourning of loss. In fact I can throw away my funeral template. I won't have to train any more pastors on how to do a funeral.

6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children."

We have seen this desire from God all the way back to Genesis. I will be their God and they will be my people (or children here). God is a covenant making and covenant keeping God. And in this new covenant God dwells with us directly and a new supercharged earth in which heaven is literally plugged in. God Himself will dwell with His people as His children that he loves. So that is why we need a new heaven and new earth. The old spaces do not work for this function.

Question: How will I not sin for so long or not want to sin?

Jeremiah 32:40: "I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me." Now that is the bottom line new covenant commitment. Let me read it again. "I will not turn away from doing good to them. I will put the fear of me in their hearts."

In other words, it doesn't depend on us. God is going to take charge of keeping us.

"That they may not turn away from me." That is the point of my putting my fear within them. I will not let them turn away from me.

Question: Is there productivity and fruitful labor?

(From Randy Alcorn:) The idea of working in heaven is foreign to many people. Yet Scripture clearly teaches it. When God created Adam, he "took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15). Work was part of the original Eden. It was part of a perfect human life. God Himself is a worker. He didn't create the world and then retire.

Jesus said, "My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I, too, am working" (John 5:17).

Jesus found great satisfaction in His work. **"My food,' Jesus said, 'is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work'" (John 4:34).**

We'll also have work to do, satisfying and enriching work that we can't wait to get back to, work that'll never be drudgery. God is the primary worker, and as His image-bearers, we're made to work. We create, accomplish, set goals and fulfill them—to God's glory.

Question: Will we be naked in Heaven? (Great question!!!)

Revelation 7:9 Speaks of white robes of those Christians who have kept their faith through the Great Tribulation. But they could be symbolic of purity and of the apocalyptic language style. So I would have to say that we do not know about the clothing of heaven. But I am confident there will be no corduroy, bell bottoms, skinny jeans or chafing. They would all violate the “no tears” policy of heaven.

Question: Will more people go to heaven or to hell?

Answer: The question of whether there are more people in heaven or hell is answered by Jesus Himself in one succinct passage: **“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few” (Matthew 7:13–14).**

SUMMARY / CHALLENGE

TAKING IT HOME

1. Having heard this series about heaven and hell, what do you look forward to the most? (OPEN FOR ANSWERS OUT LOUD)
2. How is the Holy Spirit leading you to grow in your faith and gain assurance of heaven? (MEDITATE IN YOUR HEART)
3. What is the next step that God is leading you to take in your walk with Him?