

Heaven

Now and Forever



Class Section 1: What Will You Be Like in Heaven?

You can hardly appreciate Heaven and what it will be like unless you know what *you're* going to be like! Of course, we don't know all the details, as it is somewhat a mystery, but here are some verses and ideas on the subject.

Spirit bodies until we receive our new bodies at the resurrection

When we're talking about how we will be in Heaven, it's important to understand there are two stages. If we die now, before Jesus returns, we are given a type of spiritual body. When Jesus returns, then the bodies of the saved believers (who were already in Heaven) will be resurrected. Those who are still alive at His coming will be instantly transformed to receive their resurrected bodies:

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 - We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.

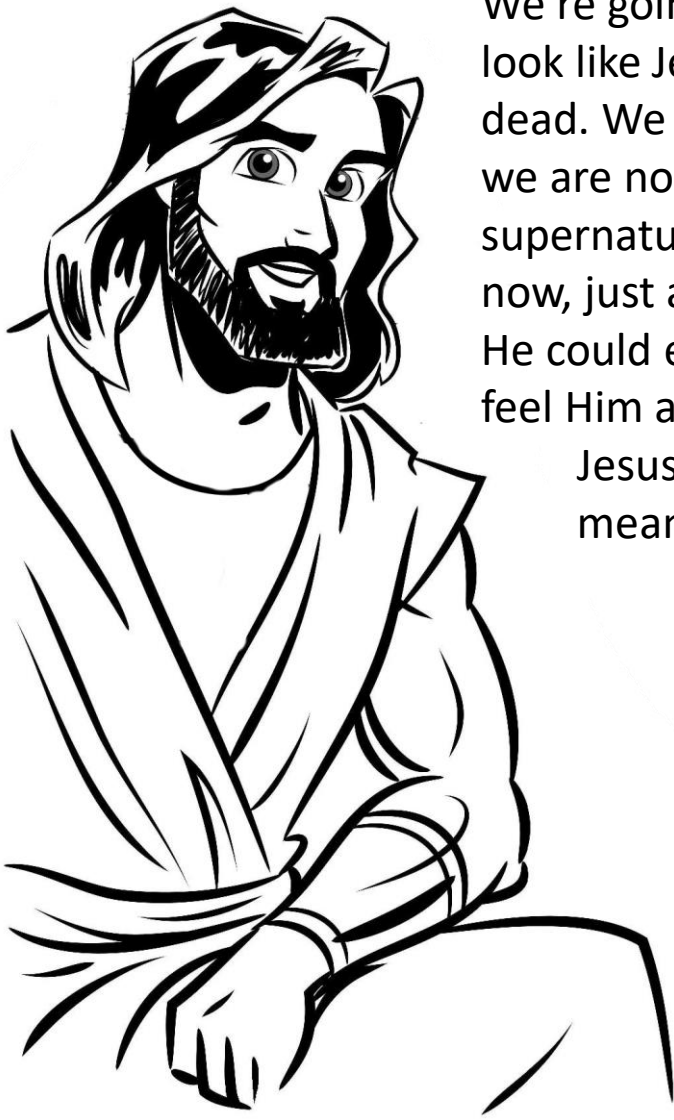


The Bible doesn't say much about the present state of those who die now (before Jesus returns) but tells in some detail our state when resurrected. So now let's look at what we will be like in our resurrection bodies.

When we are resurrected, we will be like Jesus after His resurrection

Philippians 3:21— He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own.

1 John 3:2— We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.



We're going to be like Jesus! We're going to look like Jesus did when He rose from the dead. We are going to be much the same as we are now, except that we're going to have supernatural bodies. We will look like we do now, just as Jesus did after His resurrection. He could even eat and drink and they could feel Him and touch Him as well as see Him.

Jesus took on a physical form, which means it is some kind of a form of flesh.

He was born of woman, of flesh. He died like a man, like flesh dies, but He was resurrected like we'll be resurrected, being in a sense part spirit and part flesh.

The qualities of our new heavenly bodies

Let's look at the qualities that Jesus had when He was resurrected.

- **A new kind of body**

When Jesus was resurrected, He was not purely spirit.

Luke 24:36-39— Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

We are going to have a new kind of a spiritual, resurrected, marvelous, eternal, glorified body; and yet it's going to be material enough and natural enough and recognizable enough and seeable, feel-able, enjoyable enough to actually be constructed as we now are of flesh and bones—but eternal flesh and bones, incorruptible, immortal flesh and bones.—Flesh and bones! Think of it! And that kind of marvelous glorified Heavenly body is going to be able to enjoy all the pleasures that our body enjoys here and now.

- **Recognizable**

1 Corinthians 15:49—And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly man.

Even as we have looked on Earth, we will resemble that same image in Heaven. We will bear the same looks and general appearance—here called "image"—as we have here on Earth, but much more glorious.



- **Powers of movement**

When Jesus was resurrected, He was not only able to do all the normal natural things we humans do, but when His disciples were in a locked room with the doors all barred, all of a sudden He came walking right through the door without unlocking it! Jesus could appear or disappear; He could walk right through walls or locked doors.

John 20:19—Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."

John 20:26—And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being

shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

In your new body, you'll be able to walk through walls, doors, and appear and disappear just like Jesus did.

- **Still able to eat, although it won't be necessary**

Luke 24:42-43—So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.

Luke 24:30—And it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

Class Section 2: Heaven is a Busy Place

Being in Heaven does not mean an eternity of nothingness, but a whole new life of movement, action, learning, and achievement. When you read the book of Revelation, you'll see there are lots of things happening!—People coming and going, trumpets blowing, singing, praising, people being called in for audiences, sent on assignments, and more!



Helping those on Earth

From the Scriptures we can see that one of the activities of Heaven's inhabitants is helping those of us still alive here on Earth. Those in Heaven are not only observing our activities, but they are assigned by the Lord to actively assist and sometimes communicate with us on Earth.

The cloud of witnesses—Hebrews 12:1

The 11th chapter of the New Testament Book of Hebrews is an inspiring account of the faith and exploits of many of the most outstanding men and women of God who appear in the Old Testament. Immediately following this listing of heroes and heroines of faith, we are told in the first verse of the next chapter,



Hebrews 12:1—Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

The original manuscript of the New Testament was not divided into chapters, so you've got to keep in mind the chapter before this (11) in order to know what "great cloud of witnesses" he's talking about. Those who have already gone on to be with the Lord are watching us, praying for us, and trying to help us.

Hebrews 1:14 - All the angels are spirits who serve God and are sent to help those who will receive salvation.

Revelation 22:8-9—Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration

Another outstanding appearance of two renowned departed saints is recounted in three of the four Gospels, in the description of Moses' and Elijah's meeting with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. These two prophets had left this life hundreds of years earlier, but held what was no doubt an important conference with the Lord shortly before His crucifixion.



Luke 9:28-31—He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Class Section 3: Getting Ready for Heaven

*** We don't have to fear death**

1 Corinthians 15:55-57—"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

Many people in the world say that when you pass through the doors of death, it is over, it is finished, it is the end. They are wrong! You enter into a new life: The life on the other side of the veil. You are still you. You retain your individuality. You continue to live and to mature and to learn. Your spirit carries on.

The distance beyond the veil is not so great, and what happens on the other side is not totally different to what happens on this side, on the earth side. But in Heaven there is the joy, the love, the peace, and the contentment that we who are saved have a taste of here, but which there we will experience in abundance.

Jesus wants us to understand what it is like when we come into the fullness of His love and the fulfillment of the promises that He has made. Heaven is real; death is just the door through which we pass from the life we now live into eternity!

*** We can prepare for Heaven by pleasing the Lord**

Our lives in the world to come depend upon the choices that we make while on Earth. Those who choose to love God and receive Him and try to do good and love their fellow man will be blessed with love in the world to come. On the other hand, those who hate and destroy and kill will be judged in the world to come, and they will suffer for their choices and for their lack of love.

If we want to go to be with the Lord in Heaven, if you have received the Lord into your heart, that's what counts! You're saved!

John 6:37b—And the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.



However, if we want the Lord to rejoice at our arrival and if we want rewards, then we need to do the things that please Him. We have already prepared for Heaven by receiving the Lord. Now our lives need to show and manifest our faith. Remember what Jesus told us:

Revelation 14:13—Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on, and their works follow them.

Matthew 16:27—For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

A good question to ask yourself at the end of each day is: "What have I done with my life this day? What did I do for Jesus? What did I do for others?"

Rewards in Heaven

Matthew 6:19-21—Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on Earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 25:31-40—When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

Psalms 62:12—You render to each one according to his work.

Jeremiah 17:10—I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.

Revelation 22:12—And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

2 Corinthians 5:10—For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

What We Take

We are told that when Alexander the Great was on his deathbed, he commanded that when he was carried forth to the grave, his hands should not be wrapped, as was usual, in the cerecloths, but

should be left outside the bier, so that all men might see them, and might see that they were empty; that there was nothing in them. Alexander, who had been born to one empire, and conquered another; who during his lifetime had possessed two worlds, the East and the West, and the treasures of both; yet now when he was dead he could not retain even the smallest portion of these treasures. In this matter, the poorest beggar and he were upon equal terms.

If we live for this world, we shall go out of it empty-handed, but if we live for the next world we shall depart full-handed, "rich in faith" and soon to enter upon an eternal inheritance.

Why Moses Left Egypt

When you think about Heaven it helps you to bear some of the things you have to go through now. This is one reason that Moses accomplished what he did, because he "looked to the reward, as seeing Him Who is invisible."

Hebrews 11:24-27—By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

He looked past all the troubles he had in Egypt, and he saw the Lord and his reward in the future! He could put up with the present by foreseeing the future. Seeing Heaven helped him endure all that he had to go through here on earth.

He could have been Pharaoh, the king of Egypt! Yet when he looked over Egypt and all of its temporal riches and power and glory, he then looked beyond all that to the World beyond, and "looked to the reward."—He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater than all the riches of all Egypt, the most powerful nation on earth, the richest nation in the world in that day, of which he could have had the most powerful position as its king. He looked beyond this earthly veil, this earthly level, and looked for an eternal Heavenly City whose Builder and Maker is God!

<To think about> *What is the Lord asking you to do in your life? What goals does He want you to strive for?*