

Six Reasons to Look Forward to Heaven

BY DAVID JEREMIAH

Eternal life with God is a precious thought—it is the culminating expression of God’s love for us. Here are six reasons to look forward to heaven.

1. Heaven Is a Place of Ultimate Residence (John 14:1-3)

Everybody talks about heaven—even folks who don’t believe it is a literal place. They refer to a “heavenly” experience, or the place where parents tell children their pet has gone, or some undefined dimension where people go when they die. But that is not how the Bible talks about heaven. It is not an invention of fantasy writers or a figment of creative imaginations. Heaven is a literal place according to Jesus in John 14.

Heaven is the ultimate residence for all who belong to God’s forever family.

2. Heaven Is a Place of Ultimate Rejoicing (Psalm 16:11)

Psalm 16:11b says, “In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” Wherever God is, there is joy. And because God is in heaven, there will be joy and pleasures there evermore. In other words, heaven is going to be fun!

Mention heaven to someone who’s not a Christian (and maybe to some Christians!) and they’ll say it sounds boring. Not only will heaven not be boring, neither will you and I. We will have experienced an extreme makeover in the image of Christ and will be perfect. It’s hard to image how exciting it will be to live in a perfect environment that has not been marred by sin. But that’s what heaven will be.

3. Heaven Is a Place of Ultimate Recognition (1 Corinthians 13:12)

The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13:12 that “now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”

I am often asked if I believe we will know one another in heaven. And my answer is always the same: “Absolutely!” After His resurrection, Jesus was still recognized by His disciples. He was different in some ways, but He was still Jesus of Nazareth. When Christ appeared with Moses and Elijah at His transfiguration, the disciples recognized Moses and Elijah (Matthew 17). So we will definitely know each other in our post-resurrection bodies. How will we be able to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven” if we can’t identify who they are? (Matthew 8:11)

4. Heaven Is a Place of Ultimate Relationships (Hebrews 12:22-23)

In heaven we will join “an innumerable company of angels . . . the gen-

eral assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven” (Hebrews 12:22-23). Heaven is going to be filled with millions and millions of people and angels. And don’t forget—angels spoke to human beings on earth, so it’s probable that we will speak with them in heaven, too.

In addition to all the people we’ve known in this life who we will know again, think of the ones we have known of—saints who lived in past ages and generations about whom we have only read and marveled. But as wonderful as it will be to cultivate those relationships, they will pale in comparison to getting to know Jesus Himself. There will be no long lines or people pushing and shoving to get next to Jesus. That kind of earthly pressure will have no place in heaven. We will all be able to meet and know our Savior.

5. Heaven Is a Place of Ultimate Responsibility (Matthew 25:23)

Some people imagine that in heaven we will be playing harps all day, but we will have responsibilities in heaven. In His parable of the talents, Jesus portrayed the master as saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matthew 25:23). Our service and responsibilities will be for the Lord when we get to heaven. We serve Him now and we will serve Him then and forever. Revelation 22:3 says, “His servants shall serve Him” in heaven.

We will spend all eternity in the kingdom of God carrying out God’s eternal mission. Our motives and methods will be pure and every project will be a success. There will be no compromises and no sinful agendas. Only work done in wholeness of heart for the glory of God.

6. Heaven Is a Place of Ultimate Reality (2 Corinthians 5:2)

Finally, heaven will be a place of ultimate reality—not ultimate fantasy, as some like to think.

Romans 8:22 and 2 Corinthians 5:2 tell us that Christians and even the natural creation “groan” to be set free from the curse of sin. In our hearts we know that there is something better than we are experiencing in this world. And that is because God has placed eternity in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

We were created in the image of God to be satisfied only with eternal things, the things that satisfy the heart of God. We will never be satisfied in a world that is temporary (1 John 2:17), that is under the sway of the evil one (1 John 5:19), and that is destined to be renovated by fire (2 Peter 3:7).

Our citizenship is in heaven, Paul says (Philippians 3:20), and that is where our heart is. Heaven is the Christian’s place of ultimate reality—Eden restored, if you will. There we will discover what God had in mind “in the beginning” when He designed a sinless Paradise in which He and mankind could fellowship in perfect harmony.