

Life+

A SERIES ON THE AFTERLIFE

2 – Present Heaven

REVIEW:

In week one we talked about “day one” in Heaven – the heavenly dwelling before the resurrection of the dead.

- A new dimension
- Tangible but spiritual bodies
- Not yet our permanent New Bodies

We learned that The Present Heaven –

- Will be measurable (John was to measure the Temple, the outer courtyard and count the worshipers).
- The residents will have clothes on (white robes for the Elders and Jesus).
- It will not be visible with mortal eyes (exceptions noted in scripture – Elisha’s servant, Steven’s stoning, etc.)

The question for us today is,

Do people in Heaven SEE what’s happening on earth?

There is scriptural evidence that suggests that they can, indeed, see what is happening on earth.

The Transfiguration:

Eight days prior to the Transfiguration Jesus had predicted His impending death and the rejection of the Jewish leaders.

Then, while Jesus, Peter, James and John were on a mountain Moses and Elijah, two of Heaven's residents, were seen stand and talking with Jesus about future events (**Luke 9:21-35**).

The Great Cloud of Witnesses:

The Hebrew writer uses athletic competition to illustrate our life of faith – running with endurance to the finish line.

There is a “great cloud of witnesses” cheering us on as we run the race with our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Randy Alcorn writes: “The unfolding drama of redemption, awaiting Christ's return, is currently happening on Earth. Earth is center court, center stage, awaiting the consummation of Christ's return and the establishment of His Kingdom. This seems a compelling reason to believe that the current inhabitants of Heaven would be able to observe what's happening on Earth.”ⁱ

In fact, let's take a look at **Revelation 6:9-11** and...

Consider the **MARTYRS** of our faith who are in Heaven.

This one small section of scripture leads to many indicators of life in the present Heaven.

⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.” (Rev. 6:9-11ⁱⁱ)

- In this passage the martyrs are fully conscious, rational, and aware of each other, God AND the situation on Earth.
- People in the present Heaven will be recognized for their lives on Earth and welcomed, personally.
- People in Heaven are sympathetic and empathetic - they will remember their *own* lives on Earth and relate to the struggles and the celebrations.
- People in Heaven pray.
People in Heaven now have voices and speak a language that will be recognized, and they “call out” to God.
 - Calling out with “loud voices” indicates passion and concern for those on earth.
- Those in Heaven today know and see God’s attributes (“Sovereign... Holy and true” and the “judge” over the inhabitants of the earth and will definitely have “revenge”).
- In Heaven people are free to ask God questions, and...
- God answers questions in Heaven directly - the martyrs “were told to wait a little longer”.
- People in Heaven have a strong familial connection with those on Earth, who are called their “*fellow servants, brothers and sisters*”.
Paul said we share the same Father, “*from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.*” (Ephesians 3:15 ESV)

But...

How could it be Heaven if people can see the **BAD** on Earth?

Since God’s dwelling place is separated from the evil and bad on earth, how do people see bad and experience unhappiness?

Let’s evaluate this question with human logic over scriptural teaching.

- *The angels* are heavenly dwellers and yet they have direct access to problematic situations on earth, even battling for us through our circumstances, and can see the torment of those in Hell (**Revelation 14:10**).
- *Abraham and Lazarus* saw the rich man's agonies in Hell, but it didn't cause Paradise to cease to be Paradise (**Luke 16:23-26**).
- Jesus was very much aware of Paul's pursuit of Christians to kill them while He was in Heaven – "*Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?*" (my emphasis).

The awareness of ALL things on earth would include the things worth rejoicing!

The residents of Heaven rejoice over one soul that is saved from eternal ruin,

⁷ "I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance." (Luke 15:7 NKJV)

God, in Heaven, knows your **STRUGGLES** even now!

Psalm 10:14 says, "*...you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand.*"

We read in **Psalm 33:13-15**, "*From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind; from His dwelling place He watches all who live on earth – He who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.*"

John tells us that "*God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.*" (**John 3:16-17**)

“He came to His own people, and even they rejected Him. But to all who believed Him and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:11-12 NLT)

“Trust in God, and trust also in Me (Jesus). There is more than enough room in My Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.” (John 14:1-3 NLT)

ⁱ Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 70.

ⁱⁱ All scripture references will be using the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.