“Will We Know Each Other In Heaven?”

Introduction

As Christians we believe that JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. And we believe that through JESUS CHRIST we have the eternal hope that when this life is over we will go to live in the place the LORD has gone to prepare for us. WE BELIEVE IN HEAVEN!

Many of the great hymns of the faith we sing are about Heaven.

“When We All Get To Heaven”
“When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder I’ll Be There”
“I’ll Fly Away”
“In The Sweet By and By”
“I Am Bound For The Promised Land”
“I’ve Got A Mansion Just Over The Hill Top”

And many, many more........

Where Is Heaven? What Does Heaven Look Like? What Will We Be Doing In Heaven? These are just a few of questions I am sure all of us have pondered from time to time.

But in tonight’s message I would like for us to spend a few minutes focusing on one of the most common questions many Christians ask regarding heaven and that is......

“WILL WE KNOW EACH OTHER IN HEAVEN?”

Before we get into our study, let’s go to God in prayer.

“Will We Know Each Other In Heaven?”

Illustration: On the day of my dad’s funeral, just before they closed his
casket for the final time, I wrote a note to my dad on the back of one of my Church business cards. The note said, “Dad, I love you. See you in heaven.” ----Love, Reg

I tucked that note inside the pocket on the suit coat my dad was buried in and he took it with him to his grave.

We’ve all been there haven’t we? We have all said a tearful goodbye to someone we loved dearly; a husband or wife……..a mom or dad……..a son or daughter……..a brother or sister……..a dear friend……..or a fellow Church member.

And in that hour of intense, unbearable grief, we clung to the hope that if our loved one or friend was a Christian that one day we would see them again. And we still cling to that wonderful hope today!

But will we really know each other in heaven? Will we recognize our loved ones? Will they recognize us? Will they look like they did on earth? Will we know each other by the same names we were called on earth? WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

I. The Old Testament Supports “Heavenly Recognition”

1. There is an encouraging, often-repeated refrain in the Old Testament that supports the doctrine of heavenly recognition.

2. Turn with me in your Bibles to Genesis the twenty fifth chapter.
Genesis 25:8 (NKJV) Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.

Now skip down to VERSE 17........

Genesis 25:17 (NKJV) These were the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.

Now flip over a few pages to Genesis chapter thirty five.

Genesis 35:29 (NKJV) So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Then turn over to Genesis chapter 49......

Genesis 49:33 (NKJV) And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

And this refrain is repeated again and again........

Numbers 20:24 (NKJV) “Aaron shall be gathered to his people.”

Numbers 27:12,13 (NKJV) Now the Lord said to Moses: “Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered.

When you study that phrase, “gathered to your people” you discover it means much more than being buried with family. It referred to gathering with one’s loved ones in the abode of departed spirits without a moment’s hesitation between their memories on earth and their joining their loved ones in a blessed reunion.
3. This attitude was also reflected by King David upon the death of his young son. Turn with me to II Samuel 12:22,23......

2 Samuel 12:22,23 (NKJV) And he said, “While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’ But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

If there is no recognition of loved ones in heaven, why would David take such great comfort in knowing that one day he would be reunited with his departed son?

We also find plenty of support in the New Testament for heavenly recognition.

II. The New Testament Supports “Heavenly Recognition

(A) The Mount of Transfiguration

Turn with me Luke chapter 9.


28 Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray.

29 As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening.

30 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.

32 But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when
were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him.

33 Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said.

This scene at the Mount of Transfiguration is strong evidence that we will recognize each other in heaven. After the death, the spirit is clothed with a spiritual body that is recognizable. Not only were Moses and Elijah recognized by Jesus, they were also recognized by the disciples. This is the fact that Peter wanted to build three tabernacles or three monuments; one in honor of Christ, one for Moses and another for Elijah. And what is interesting is that Peter had never met Moses and Elijah before. They both died long before Peter was ever born. Yet he recognized them.

(B) The Rich Man and Lazarus

Strong support for heavenly recognition is found in Jesus’ account of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke chapter 16. Remember during their earthly lives, the Rich man had lived a life of luxury, while a leprous beggar named Lazarus laid at his gate hoping the Rich Man would have enough compassion on him to give him some crumbs of bread.
When they died, Lazarus the beggar was carried by angels to the bosom of Abraham, while the Rich man went to Hades.

Now listen carefully to verses 23-26, in Luke 16:

**Luke 16:23-26 (NKJV)**

23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 “Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’

25 But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’

Did you notice that the Rich man not only recognized Lazarus, the beggar who had laid at his gate, he also recognized Abraham, who lived and died long before the Rich man was ever born.

Now if the Rich man who was in torment recognized the beggar Lazarus and Abraham, and he remembered he still had five unsaved brothers living on earth, does it make any sense that those in heaven would NOT recognize one another?
The recognition of Jesus in His resurrected body lends further support to the truth that we will recognize each other in heaven.

Mary Magdalene recognized Jesus. (John 20:16-18)

The apostles recognized Jesus. (John 20:19,20)

The two men on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus at first, but then while they were eating with Jesus later that evening, Luke 24:31 says, “then their eyes were opened and THEY KNEW HIM.”

I Corinthians 15:6 tells us after His resurrection Jesus appeared to over 500 people at one time. Those 500 people recognized Jesus as the risen Savior.

Don’t you believe you will recognize JESUS when He comes to get you? He will certainly recognize you.

And Paul tells us in I Thessalonians 4:14 that when Jesus comes He will bring with Him those “who have fallen asleep in Jesus.” In other words, He will bring our departed loved ones who died in Christ. Don’t you believe we will recognize those departed loved ones? What a glorious day that will be!

Another scripture that supports heavenly recognition is that familiar verse in I Corinthians 13
written by the apostle Paul.

I Corinthians 13:12 (NKJV) For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but know just as I also am known.

It just doesn’t make any sense that we would have less knowledge and recognition of each other in heaven than we have here.

Paul is reminding us that it is “here on earth” we have limited knowledge of one another, but in heaven we shall know each other even better than we did on earth.

Face to face! O blissful moment!
Face to face--to see and know;
Face to face with my Redeemer
Jesus Christ Who loves me so.

(E) There is another passage over in I Thessalonians 2:19,20 (NKJV) that supports “heavenly recognition.”

1 Thessalonians 2:19,20 (NKJV)

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?

20 For you are our glory and joy.

There is no mistaking what Paul had in mind when he wrote these words. He fully expected to meet the converts from Thessalonica in heaven,
Will We Know Each Other In Heaven?

I believe the scriptures we have looked at this morning from both the Old and New Testaments clearly affirm we will know each other in heaven.

But over the years I have learned that answering this question typically spawns many other questions that go along with it.

*Well if we know each other in heaven, what will we look like?
 *Will my loved one look like they did the last time I saw them?
 *Will they be old or young?
 *Will my departed baby still be a baby or will they be grown up?

While we may not be able to answer any of those questions with absolute certainty, the apostle Paul gives us a great analogy between our earthly bodies and our heavenly bodies in 1 Corinthians 15:35-44.

1 Corinthians 15:35-44 (NKJV)

35 But someone will say, “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?”

36 Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.
37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain.

38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.

40 There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Think of a “seed of corn.” When you place that seed in the ground it looks like a shriveled up kernel of corn doesn’t it. But then when the seed comes forth out of the ground it produces a new stalk of corn and on that stalk are several ears of corn that bear a far more glorious appearance than that corn seed that was buried in the ground.

Likewise our heavenly bodies will bear a far more glorious appearance than these “old shriveled up bodies” that are buried in the ground.

While the scriptures are silent on this issue, there are many who believe that everyone in heaven will appear as they did when they were 30 years old, which is considered the age of peak physical and mental maturity. Remember Jesus was 30 years old when He began His earthly ministry.

Perhaps those who left this world as babies or children will be fast-forwarded to thirty years of age. And perhaps those who left this world in their advanced years will revert back to how they appeared at age 30.
Again, I emphasize there isn’t any scripture verse that says this, but I wanted to share it with you as “food for thought.”

But there is another question that always comes up when considering this matter of “Will We Know Each Other In Heaven?” And that is, “Will I Know of Loved Ones Who Aren’t There?”

There are two possible answers to this question.

(1) One possible answer is, “No, we will not know or realize our lost loved ones are not in heaven.”

Revelation 21:4 (NKJV)  And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

(2) The second possible answer is “Yes, we will know and realize lost loved ones are not there, but because we will have a greater understanding of God’s righteous judgment of those who rejected Christ, we will realize God’s judgment of our lost loved ones is just.

J.I. Packer offers this interesting thought……….

What we loved in those who died without Christ was God’s beauty we once saw in them. When God forever withdraws from them, I think they’ll no longer bear His image and no longer reflect His beauty. Although they will be the same people, without God they’ll be stripped of all the qualities we loved. Therefore, in a sense they will not be the people we loved on earth.

I believe we can all leave here this evening with the confident assurance that we shall see our loved ones again who died in Christ and we will most certainly know them in heaven, just as they will most certainly know us!

What a hallelujah chorus, what a shouting there will be,
When we gather in the morning, and each others face we see!
At the sounding of the trumpet, when the dead in Christ will rise,
And the brightness of His presence shall adorn the glowing skies,

When the book of life is opened, with our names recorded there,
And with all the saints triumphant we shall meet Him in the air.