

Reunion Day In Heaven

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I am often asked. "What will the people be like in heaven?" and "Shall we know each other there?" I suppose there is hardly a person who does not, sometime in his life, give serious thought to that great question of what conditions prevail in the future world that lies beyond the grave. Sooner or later every soul is compelled to give up friends and loved ones to death's silent and cold embrace, and always come those great questions, Shall we meet that one again? Shall we know them when we see them again? Shall we, gaze upon that familiar face and look into those eyes once more? Shall we hear that loving voice again?"

Many persons today are turning to spiritualism hoping to gain an assuring answer to these heart-touching questions. But all who do this, whether they realize it or not are certainly doomed to disappointment and what is sadder still they are exposed to dangerous deception. Spiritualism simply cannot put anyone in touch with those who have gone on before. If we want a sure and satisfactory answer. We must turn to the divine God only knows what lies beyond death. Hence if we would learn anything about it, we must turn to His Word.

Before we can understand how we shall know our friends in the future world, we must first know what will be the condition of those who reach that fair land. Are we going to live in heaven merely in spirit-form disembodied souls, as millions have been taught?

Or, shall we go to heaven in bodily form as real, tangible beings? And will our future existence in heaven be just as real as our present existence in this world? Let us turn to the Guidebook.

In John 14:1-3 we learn that all the righteous will go to heaven at the Second Coming of Christ. Then the righteous dead will be resurrected, and the living righteous translated. The crowning purpose of His return to the earth is to take His people to the mansions above. This is just what He has told us. "And if I go and prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am there you may be also."

In 1 John 3:2 we learn that when Jesus appears to take His people, He will make them like Himself. Listen carefully while I read that scripture: "We know that, when He shall appear we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is." Not only in character, but also our bodies will be like His. For proof of this I turn to Philippians 3:20-21 "Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body."

Now, was Jesus a real being after His resurrection? Did He go up to heaven with a real body, or was He merely a spirit? I shall read the words of Jesus to His disciples when He appeared to them after His resurrection. Luke 24:39 "Behold MY hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: Handle Me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see Me have." He further demonstrated that He was a real being by eating food. It is plain therefore, that although Jesus had passed through the tomb, and had been glorified He was just as real a being after His resurrection as before. We shall be like Him when we go to heaven. Therefore, our condition there will be as real as our present state here. Note, I do not say that we shall be the same in condition, but only that the future condition will be as real as the present state.

Yes, the future state will be a reality. Jesus, you recall, told His disciples that they would eat and drink at His table in His kingdom. (Luke 22:29,30)

In Matthew 26:29 Jesus stated that He and His people will drink the fruit of the vine, the pure juice of the grape in the coming kingdom. This would be impossible for immaterial spirits.

Our bodies will then be perfect. "Behold I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." 1 Corinthians 15:51-53. Then in Isaiah we read: "They shall run and not be weary and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40:31. How wonderful it will be to have a body that will never become weary! A person can be as fresh at the end of a hard day's work as he was at the beginning. Hard work would be a pleasure to anyone if he never got tired.

If your body has become deformed because of physical injury or from sickness then you can be perfectly sure you will be sound in body again. If today you cannot hear the sound of birds or the voice that comes from the lips of a dear one, because of deafness: in that

perfect day your ears will be unstopped and you will hear again. If blindness has drawn the veil so that you cannot see the beautiful flowers or the radiance of the setting sun: in that glad day when this corruptible puts on incorruption you will be able to see again. The bodily senses will be increased far beyond the keenest possessed by anyone at the present time. The mind will be able to comprehend far beyond the summit of the highest intellect of any person living today. Each person will have a perfect body and will live in a perfect world forever.

“But.” I hear somebody say, “tell us Mr. Burnside, shall we know each other there?” I heard of an old Welsh preacher who was asked this question and replied. Do you think we will be bigger fools in heaven than we are down here?” Well I suppose that is one way of answering this question. However I will read the answer to you right from this dear old Book of God. 1 Corinthians 13:12- “For now we see through a glass darkly: but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

Is that not clear? The disciples knew Jesus after the resurrection so we shall know our friends. His resurrection was a type of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Jesus. So if we can find out how Jesus was recognized by His disciples after He came from the tomb, this will give us a key as to how we shall know our friends on the glad resurrection morn.

Here are three distinct ways by which Jesus was recognized. First, it was by His voice. You will recall, Mary came early to the tomb, and she was weeping because the body of Jesus was gone. When she turned round from looking into the empty tomb. Jesus was standing by her side. Her eyes were swimming with tears and in the pale light of early dawn she did not recognize Him, she supposed He was the gardener. Then Jesus spoke her name, “Mary.” Just the moment she heard that familiar voice she knew He was the very same Jesus.

We all know what it is to recognize different people by their voices. Our friends call us on the telephone and while we cannot see them yet we instantly recognize them by the sound of their voice. Scores of my radio friends when I have had the pleasure of meeting them have instantly recognized me by my voice. So my friends, we will know our loved ones in heaven by their voices. Surely here is genuine comfort for- the sorrowing children of God. That loving voice, now silent in death, will be heard again. On the resurrection morn babies will be restored to their mothers arms by angel hands and their little voices will be instantly recognized.

Secondly Jesus was recognized by Thomas because of His personal appearance. (John 20:27-28). In the glorified body of our Lord, His personal identity was preserved.

Thirdly, Jesus was recognized by His manner of returning thanks. Prior to eating the evening meal at Emmaus. (Luke 24:30, 31). In fact, so easy was Jesus to recognize after His resurrection, that it took supernatural power to keep the disciples from recognizing Jesus on this occasion, until He had spoken His message to them. So we shall know our friends by know an ache or pain; an incorruptible body, that will never them that sleep. His resurrection is but a sample, a glorious sample, of what all the righteous will experience in due time. Surely it is a thrilling thought. We shall be like Him. Just as He was known to His disciples by His countenance, His speech and His manner. So there will be the three ways of recognition in heaven.

Oh think of the grand prospect that lies before the child of God. How thrilling to look forward to that day, when this sin marred body will, be changed like unto His glorious body.

Think of the joy of having a perfect body that will never their own peculiar habits. Christ was but the “first fruits” of grow old; an immortal body that will never die. Is it any wonder that David exclaimed as he looked forward to this glad time: “As for me I will behold His face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied. when I awake, with Thy likeness.” (Psalm 17:15).

The place of gathering has nothing but attraction. Jesus, the fairest among ten thousand is there. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Isaiah, Job and Daniel, prophets, apostles and martyrs, the perfection of heavenly society are there. Visions of beauty are there: flowers that never fade, streams that never run dry; products in a variety that never end. Fruits that never decay; crowns that never dim; harps that know no discord and all else of which, a taste purified from sin and raised to the plane of immortality can form any conception or think desirable are there.

We must be there. We must bask in the forgiving smiles of God, to whom we have become reconciled, and sin no more. We must have access to that exhaustless fount of vitality, the fruit of the tree of life, that never dies: we must repose under the shade of its leaves which are for the service of the nations, and never grow weary again: we must drink from the life giving fountain, and thirst nevermore; we must bathe in its silvery spray, and be refreshed. We must walk the golden sands, and feel that we are no longer exiles; we must exchange the cross for the crown, and feel that the days of our humiliation are ended. We must lay down the staff and take up the palm branch, and feel that the journey is done. We must put off the rent garments of our warfare for the white robes of triumph and feel that the conflict is ended and the victory gained. We must exchange the toil worn, dusty girdle of our pilgrimage, for the glorious vesture of immortality, and feel that sin and the curse can never more pollute us.

O day of rest and triumph and every good, delay not thy dawning! Let the angels at once be sent to gather the elect. Let the promise be fulfilled which bears in its train these matchless glories. “EVEN SO. COME LORD JESUS!”