

HEAVEN

In this lesson from our study of heaven, we will be examining Section Six (Chapters 17-19) of Randy Alcorn's book, "Heaven". This section is entitled "Celebrating Our Relationship With God".

What will our relationship with God be like once we are in Heaven, once we have our resurrected bodies and we're living in the new earth, the new heaven, and the new city of Jerusalem? How exciting it will be! Today, we cannot see God, and we sense a separation from Him, even though we know that He is with us. How exciting it will be when once again God will walk and talk with us.

Let's have a look at what the Bible tells us about this relationship. Consider the following:

1. Read Exodus 33:18-23 and 1 Timothy 6:16 and compare those scriptures with Hebrews 12:14 and Revelation 22:4.
 - a. Exodus 33:18-23:
*¹⁸Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."
¹⁹And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.
²⁰But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."
²¹Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²²When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."*
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:16:
[God]¹⁶who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.
 - c. Hebrews 12:14:
¹⁴Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.
 - d. Revelation 22:4:
⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.
 - e. ANSWER: These verses indicate to us that although we cannot "see" God in present, when we return in our resurrected bodies to live with Him on the new earth, we will see his face and know Him in ways we cannot imagine today.
2. How can we "see" God today through Christ? Read the following passages and note what each tells us about seeing God.
 - a. Matthew 1:23
 - i. ANSWER: God with us, Christ was sent to show us God in physical form.
 - b. John 1:14
 - i. ANSWER: The apostles testified that had seen Christ and his glory that came from God. Again, Christ, his physical form, his glory, and everything about him reflected an image of God.
 - c. John 14:9
 - i. ANSWER: Anyone who has seen Christ has seen God.

3. In heaven, is Christ still a man? What do the following passages indicate?
 - a. Hebrews 13:8
 - i. ANSWER: This scripture indicates to us that Christ never changes, and that he is the same always. Therefore, why would he change in heaven? He is the same there as here on earth.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 3:18
 - i. ANSWER: This scripture instructs us that we are being transformed into his likeness. Again, we are going to physically have his likeness, which is a resurrected body, just as he now has in heaven.
4. What will it be like to live and walk and talk with God in the new heaven and new earth? What do the verses below indicate regarding the "before" and "after" of our relationship with God, both now as well as what it will be like in the future?
 - a. Genesis 3:8
 - i. ANSWER: This verse indicates that today, God is distant from us.
 - b. Leviticus 26:11-12
 - i. ANSWER: These verses indicate that in the future, God will walk among us again.
 - c. 2 Corinthian 6:16
 - i. ANSWER: This verse indicates that a time is coming when God will live among us and walk among us. We will be closer to God than we could ever imagine. What a glorious day that will be!
5. When we get to the new heaven and new earth in our new bodies, everything will be different, including access to God and Christ's total reign over all things. What can we learn from the following verses?
 - a. Ephesians 1:10
 - i. ANSWER: This tells us that all things will be put under Christ - all things - heaven, earth, all things.
 - b. Revelation 21:22
 - i. ANSWER: We see in this verse that there will be no need for the Temple, as God and the Lamb will already be there. This means that we will have direct access to God and to Christ, with no further need of sacrifice or an intermediary. We will have direct access, because we will be where God and His Son Jesus are.
6. In heaven, we will all be with Jesus. How do we know this, and do we know what this will be like? Note what the following verses tell us about being with Christ.
 - a. John 14:3
 - i. ANSWER: We know this because Jesus made us that promise, that we would be where he is.
 - b. John 17:24
 - i. ANSWER: We see that Jesus wants us to be with him, and he prayed for us to God that it would be so. How wonderful it is that our savior wants us to be with him.
 - c. 2 Corinthian 5:8
 - i. ANSWER: From this verse, it is evident that the apostles knew that if they were not here on earth, they would be present with Christ.
 - d. Philippians 1:23
 - i. ANSWER: Certainly, Paul longed to be with Christ. He knew, as did the other apostles, that to be absent from the earth meant being present with Christ.
 - e. Luke 23:43
 - i. ANSWER: Luke tells us that Christ told the thief on the cross that that very day he would be with Him in paradise.

As we consider what it will be like to be with God and Christ in the new heaven and new earth, we can hardly imagine what a glorious day it will be when we get to "see" God and to worship Him and Christ together. Can you imagine how great the scene – as millions of believers surround the throne and worship our God, King, Lord and Savior?! "What a day of rejoicing that will be" the words of the hymn shout out, "when we all see Jesus" and sing and praise His Holy name.

Have a great weekend everyone.

In Christ,

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