

Come, Lord Jesus - Part B - 25 min Q&A; on Heaven

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[0 : 00] this. Have I got the right one? Yes, I do. There's a lot of other worldliness in the interpretation of a view of heaven which could be thought of as the new heavens and new earth of revelation being like a new planet or refreshing of the present earth, which raises questions about the known finite nature of the universe in our present reality as we experience it.

From the example of Jesus' resurrected body, can you clarify what we might make of the reality this might represent and our understanding of overlapping of our present state of being in the spiritual realm?

Yes or no? I'll hand it to Mr. Heaven. I think in terms of understanding the present heaven and the new heaven, our bodies now and our resurrected bodies, it is good to look at Jesus' body as an example of what the transformation will be like.

I think it's really important to think in terms of continuity between this earth and the new earth, our bodies now and our bodies then, continuity with obvious difference.

difference. And it gets a little bit confusing and the Bible doesn't tell us everything about this. I think we need to remember this with all of these questions. The Bible is silent in some areas and so we need to be as well and make sure that we're not making up for any perceived lack.

[1 : 35] There's no lack in what God has given us in this Bible. So I think continuity is the key. So this earth will not be completely done away with.

It will be redeemed to be the new earth, the new heavens and the new earth. Our bodies will not be completely done away with. They will be redeemed. So people who have been, you know, completely disintegrated in, you know, some kind of atom bomb like tragedy, their bodies by God's glorious sovereign power will be recreated in the new heavens and the new earth.

And so I think in terms of understanding how this earth and our bodies now correspond with the newly created ones, I think continuity is the key.

Continuity with a difference. And so, for example, by way of kind of an analogy, before you became a Christian and after you became a Christian, there is continuity between who you are, pre-conversion and post-conversion.

You are a new creation. You have been reborn, but we can still recognize who you are. You have similar personality and so on. And so I think there's a, that's kind of an analogy of the new heavens and the new earth, that they will be redeemed, converted, if you like, reborn, born again, but they will hold a lot of similarities to now as well.

[3 : 00] So I hope that makes sense. Yep. Second question is about the intermediate state. What happens to us between when we die and Christ's second coming?

If you're not a Christian and what happens if you are? I forgot this. Good. I actually had a friend, I had a friend from my old church bring me up yesterday and say, my mum has just died, and tell me, Wayne, where is my mum?

And I'm really nervous about that. This is an intermediate state at the moment between the question and the answer.

Microphones don't like me. Yeah, so my friend rang me, just, she was waiting for her mum to die. She was coming for weeks, her mum was a Christian, but the actual experience of actually letting go of her mum really brought home, where's my mum now?

So I'll tell you what I shared with her off the cuff on my mobile phone on my way to Geelong. Philippians 1, there are several texts that say, when the believer dies, they go to be with Christ.

[4 : 30] So, in Philippians 1, Paul is juggling, what should he do? He's old, should he stay and do ministry on earth, or should he, you know, to live his Christ, to die his gain? And he's juggling, you know, what's better?

And he says, he actually says, I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. And there are, 2 Corinthians 5 has texts like that, the idea that the believer, when they die, they actually have an experience with Christ, before judgment day.

So therefore, it's not, it's in spirit, or their soul is with Christ. It's before getting their resurrection body. You've got texts like, there are some texts in Revelation 6, you've got the souls of martyrs under the altar, that is, they're near God, calling out to God, how long do you avenge us?

So you've got this idea of, a kind of fellowship with God in spirit, longing for judgment day, and to get your body, and to see God face to face, when you've got a face, and to dwell in the new Jerusalem, it hasn't arrived yet.

So there is a sense which, if you die in Christ, you can have assurance, you go to be with him, but that state is actually not, not the ideal state. The ideal state is to get past judgment day, and to get to the new Jerusalem.

[5 : 51] So, it's a temporary thing. If unbelievers ask me, I want to talk about judgment day, I guess for unbelievers, you would say, they go to, what we would call, the Old Testament, Sheol, or Hades, and they would actually, that their souls would be, in the beginnings of a punishment, maybe like Jesus describes, in the parable of Lazarus, and the rich man, in Luke 16, where, kind of in spirit, he's being punished, before the day of judgment.

It's very hard, the Bible is very clear, on the day of judgment, and on an eternity, in hell or heaven, and we've only got kind of clues, on this intermediate state, but that's pretty much what I'd say.

Some Christians believe, in a kind of a soul sleep, but I think that's just a metaphor, you're sleeping Christ, it's a metaphor, that you died as a Christian. It's very interesting, because it would mean, this means, if you have a conscious experience, of God and Christ, or punishment, before judgment day, it actually shows that, judgment day, is not about finding the result, you already know the result.

If you're a Christian, you know the result, and if you're an unbeliever, you already kind of had experience, of punishment, before judgment day. Judgment day, is about the vindication of God, about the glory of God, being shown in judgment, it's not about, getting a this year result, for heaven, you know what I mean?

So, yeah. Do you want to add to that? A couple of people have asked, about gender roles, or even just gender, in heaven. There's no marriage in heaven, we're told by Jesus.

[7 : 21] So, are there male and female? Are we distinguished, in that way, in heaven? I've prepared an answer, but, do you want to have a go, or can I share my answer? Okay.

I actually disagree, with what Paul just said. So, I think there is marriage, in heaven. So, let me, let me start, at the start. The Bible, teaches that, our gender, is a good thing.

It's not something, that's part of the full gender. It's a great thing, to have gender. You should delight, if you're a male, or a female. There's actually text, in the Old Testament, prohibiting, or looking down, on androgyny, or intentional deceitfulness, in hiding your gender.

It's associated, with pagan things. In 1 Timothy 5, Paul talks about, in the church, treat, you know, don't rebuke, an older man harshly, treat younger women, like sisters.

Actually, we're to treat people, in a loving way, appropriate to their gender. I think, the way marriage, in heaven works, is this, is that in heaven, Christ is married, to the church.

[8 : 36] That's not a cop out, because that's actually, the reality of marriage, to which, every earthly marriage, points. So, it's true in Matthew 22, Jesus says, individual people, in heaven, won't be given, in marriage, or married.

That is, that's true. That's because, the reality is, that will be the wedding supper, of the lamb, and whether you're married, or single now, you will have the reality, of marriage, which is Christ, and the church in heaven.

So, I don't actually think, the marriage thing, is relevant to the gender thing, I just, I don't like saying, there's no marriage in heaven, the marriage is in heaven. Yeah. And that's the marriage, that's ought to shape, every marriage you're in now.

One other thing, I'd say in that, and maybe this is controversial too, so I'll stir it up a bit. Jesus was incarnate, as a man, and rose as a man, and went to heaven, as a man.

So we know, there's at least, one gendered person, in heaven, and that's the Lord Jesus. Hebrews 2 says, it's important, because it's his role, as the great high priest, he's our brother, he's one of us, like us in every way, except sin.

[9 : 43] So, his humanity, to be fully God, and fully man in heaven, is very, very important. The incarnation, goes on forever. So, I presume, you know, all those things put together, I think we'd have gender in heaven.

Yeah, fair enough. I agree about the, the real marriage in heaven. That's my wedding day. Why bother with the fuss, the one on earth, go for the real thing.

What about time? Does time exist, in heaven or hell? Yes, of course.

Yeah, good. Space and time, the questions of when and where, I think, no doubt, will exist in heaven. Because only, we, even in heaven, will be finite beings, only God is infinite.

The creation, will be a created place, and will exist, within the realms, of time and space. I'm almost 100% sure. You know, you've got to have time in heaven, to celebrate the gospel, to celebrate the lamb that was slain, that was a historical event.

[10 : 51] You know, the word of the Lord stands forever, so we'll, actually have Bible study in heaven, I think that will be good. And we'll be able to see, looking back, the wonderful glory, the plan of God unfolding in time.

So, but you would want to establish, I think, that the time is actually, it's a different, it's sort of like a different set of time, in that, there's no crossing over, once you get to that time, there's no coming back, there's no sending messages, so, it's a different time zone, so to speak, that makes sense.

Time is simply, a measurement of, order of events, or succession of events, and given that heaven, will not just be the same event, precisely, there'll be a sequence of things, and so on, and there's silence, for half an hour in heaven, in Revelation 8, I think, so, time is, you know, just an acknowledgement, that there is a sequence, of things that happen, so, I would agree, that there is time in heaven, our perception of it, will probably, be a bit different.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's right, and it's mind-blowing, to think, what is eternity like, do you need calendars, in eternity, do you sing Amazing Grace, when we've been there, 10,000 years, do you wait to 10,000 NC, new creation, and to sing that song, all day, that day or something, you know, I don't know, do you need time management books, when you've got eternity, you've got enough time for God, enough time for everyone, it'll be, I guess it'll be nothing, it'll be totally different, in one sense, yeah, another question is, how can we be happy in heaven, if we know that people, whom we love, are not in heaven, or are in hell, I just want to get my answer right, because this is a really sensitive one, have other people thought about this, has it worried other people, I've got a short answer, and a long answer, let's have the short one, the long answer is important too though,

I'll do them both quickly, the question is, this is not yet heaven, we don't have all the time in the world, the first question is, will you sing like in Revelation 12, at the downfall of Satan, because I'll love singing that song, down you go Satan, God wins, I'll be singing that with all my heart, and so then the question becomes, it's about your allegiances, so is your allegiance with God, or are you making some condition to God, that you've got to bring people with you, I think that's an idol of a relationship, if your allegiance is with God, and you've got friends, who've made allegiances in effect, against God or with Satan, then you'll still sing that song against Satan, even if your loved ones are caught up in it, the longer, and the other part of the answer is, I think the goodness you have in your loved ones, is there by the grace of God, and when they rebel against God, God takes that away, all that you love in them, is actually there by God's grace and mercy, so when God says to them, depart from me, they become actually something,

[14 : 08] I don't think you'll want to know, and I've got a very quick quote, C.S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory, fantastic essay, he says, remember that the dullest, and most uninteresting person, you can talk to, say tonight, may one day be a creature, that in eternity, if you saw who they become in eternity, you would either be tempted to worship them, or to recoil in horror, at what they've become, and I think that's a very helpful thing, to think about, people's goodness is actually tied, to their image bearing of God, so when they're cast away from God, that's bad, so preach the gospel to those friends, how do we balance, being judged by our works, or on our works, and being saved by faith, I think the Bible speaks, of two separate judgments, the judgment of faith, and the judgment of works, and so, in, in the judgment of faith, if you're a Christian, you'll pass that judgment, and be with Christ, and, and you will,

I believe that everyone will be judged by works, but, that first judgment of faith, has been predetermined, and it wasn't by your own works, it was by the grace of God, that you have passed that judgment, he looks at you, and sees Jesus' perfect righteousness, and his sinlessness, and it's not anything of your own, that you've brought to the table, that gets you through that, if you're not a Christian, you don't have Jesus' righteousness, imputed to you, all God sees is sin, sinfulness, and, and he is indignant with that, you will not pass that, initial judgment of faith, the judgment of works, is really important as well, and I think, partially speaking, it's really important for us, today, who, I think, see, our conversion, as the most important thing, that could happen, to us, you know, that, that gets us in the door, and then we can do what we like, sort of a fire insurance policy, against hell, that, that's not the way the Bible sees, our Christian life, that's the beginning of something, really important, and, and, something, just as, or perhaps not just as important, but something really important, for us to understand, is our works, what we do on this earth, so, you will be judged, for your works, for those who haven't, don't have faith in Jesus, their works will reflect that, faithlessness, and the Bible assumes, that those of us, who do trust in Jesus, that our works, will reflect that, faithfulness, and so we will be judged, by our works, and that will reflect, the earlier judgment, of our faith, so I think, it's important to see, two distinct judgments, and, and you can see it in the Bible,

I've got a couple of, verses marked out here, this is a good one, 2 Corinthians 5, just after Paul's been talking, about going to heaven, and being away from the body, he says, for all of us must appear, before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive, recompense, for what has been done, in the body, whether good or evil, that's just clear, clear as day, and Jesus talks about it as well, if you don't like Paul, Jesus says, in John 5, 28, he says, do not be astonished, at this, for the hour is coming, when all who are, in their graves, will hear his voice, God's voice, and will come out, those who have done good, to the resurrection life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection, of condemnation, do you want to talk more, about the relationship, I don't think I have, I'll have two cents, I think with, when we pass the judgment, by works, it will be by grace, it will be by the work, of the spirit, sanctifying us in life, so,

God will do, what he's declared, he's declared you righteous, in Christ, he will make you righteous, through the spirit, and that process, is happening right now, and so that on judgment day, it's not obvious, to the world now, but believers, will stick out, and they'll pass that test, by the grace of God, by the spirit of God, so it matters, what you do, will there be, better spots in heaven, for those who've performed, more good works of faith, yeah I think so, I don't really have a problem, with this, some Christians seem to, I was trying to think, of a metaphor for this, the arena rock concert, if you love, what's a band, that has an arena rock concert, that's a good band, I don't know bands, U2, I would have said kiss, or something like that, if you love U2, I think you are, just happy to be, at the U2 concert, and you're just loving, and getting into the concert, you're not, the whole concert, staring at the people, who are down on the grass, and you're up in, the southern stand, you're actually just, loving the concert, and loving that everyone's, loving the concert, so it's great to be there, and you're happy that, there are people, who are ahead of you,

I think that's what, it'll be like in heaven, well that's just destroyed, my view of heaven, to think that it's like, a rock concert, we might, if they play Mozart in hell, that's where I'll go, we might need to open, the floor a bit too, that we might be, sparking some things here, and people, are there, are there places of, greater and lesser, torment in hell, then, the converse of that, yeah I think, Jesus spoke a lot about, the more you, the more you know about him, or God's plans, the more harsh you'll be judged, we know, leaders will be judged more harshly, we know false teachers, in 2 Peter 2, darkest blackness is reserved for them, or blackest darkness is reserved for them, so, yeah those who have done damage, or tried to do damage to the kingdom, I think, will be judged harshest, so therefore, there is a sense of levels, in another sense there's not, everyone in hell is, told to separate from God, and so it's sort of, in that big scheme of things, everyone's just separate from God, and every good gift that comes from God, so, you know, it depends how, if you're a details person,

[20 : 39] I guess there are, big picture, not really, we've got time for, maybe just two quick questions, if there are any from the floor, Roger first, and then Connie, the first hands I saw, sorry, but Roger, is there a hierarchy in heaven, or a connection between your obedience on earth, and roles in heaven, I think Wayne's implied, the answer is yes to that, that there are better spots, better roles perhaps, etc, yeah that's right, but you can never take the, we've got to work with biblical data, it says, talks about rewards, 1 Corinthians 3, and judgment according to works, but, you can never take the biblical data, and say, oh gee, I'm going to be resentful in heaven, because someone's going to have a better job than me, no one will be resentful in heaven, it's going to be the fulfillment of every joy, so, we can't take this data, and think, oh no, what if I don't have a good spot, you'll have a brilliant spot, whichever, if you're a Christian, you'll have a brilliant spot, but yeah, there'll be different spots I think, it's one of the pains of a fallen world, that the success of anybody else, is a pain in you, isn't it, but it won't be the case in heaven,

Connie, oh good, okay, yes, here's a bible, any bible references, or do you want to give them to Connie later, keep reading Connie, ask Doug, Doug, looking up on that book, if the works that survive, which are the ones that we've been, according to privilege in heaven, according to Ephesians 2, 10, were planned beforehand by God, the position in heaven, is a result of grace as well, rather than anything we do, so it would not be a reward, because of the very goodness, on our point, yep, as long as your view of God, if those of you who didn't hear Doug, he was saying, God has prepared in advance for us, good works to do, Ephesians 2, we're just doing the good works, God has prepared for us to do, and then we're judged on them, and we pass the test, because that's how God's planned it,

I think that's right, so, in what sense is that a reward, it's just to God's glory, all of it, I think it is a reward in that, we do balance God's sovereignty, and human responsibility, and so, it is also about how we are faithful, in our human responsibility, and in that there is a role we play, so, we can take it and grab it, or we can, not do that.

We probably should finish there, but if you do have further questions, then please do come and talk to us afterwards, or, beyond today, let's pray to finish this section, God our Heavenly Father, we thank you, that by grace, you have saved us, through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that by his death and resurrection, his exaltation to your right hand in heaven, you've opened the gates of heaven, secured the promise of, a sure and certain promise, of the resurrection to eternal life, we thank you that, the power of Jesus' blood, that your blood, not only forgives, but cleanses, and purifies, and sanctifies, and that your spirit, is applying that blood, in our lives, day by day, and that as we, face you, on that judgment day, after the Lord's return, we will be completely free from sin, and perfected, in your glorious presence, give us a deep, and abiding longing, for your perfect heaven, give us an urgency, about asking others, to embrace Christ, with faith and repentance, repentance, we pray that our own faith, will overflow in good works, and we long for the day, when we, with all your people, of every age and place, will be gathered around your throne, and the throne of your son, singing your praises, and singing his, for your greater glory, so we pray, come Lord Jesus, come,

Amen.