

Discovering Heaven

What Heaven Will Be Like

Discovering the Supernatural Series - Part 8

1st Corinthians 15:35-58

12/10/22-12/11/22

Introduction

- **The Yearning and Longing Pre-Christ** - when we do not yet know the Lord and our spirits lie dormant, there is a yearning that is more felt (emotionally) than known (mentally). It's a longing for more. It's a longing for meaning and purpose. It's a longing to be loved. It's a longing to no longer be deeply alone. We begin to finally feel purposeful and meaningful. We finally know we are loved and will never be abandoned. The core needs of our lives are met and there is a sense of a wholeness that comes over us in time.
- **Eternal Life starts at the moment of CONVERSION, not death.** Did you know that? Did you know that from the moment you cry out to Jesus Christ to be your savior, repent of your sins and give your life over to God, **new life erupts in your spirit, and you become more alive than you've ever been. Your spirit is awakened. Your soul is impacted. Sometimes the spiritual earthquake is so dynamic that you can feel the reverberations in your body** (chills, freedom, alleviation of darkness, joy, etc.). What you were built for, connection to God, fires up and a new quality of life begins.
- **BUT, all is not fully peaceful.**
- **The Yearning Continues** – with our new life the stakes are raised. The hope is elevated. The expectations increase and suddenly we find ourselves with a taste of what's possible and we realize how far we still have to go to be fully complete in Christ. A newly realized crisis emerges when we learn of the goodness of God and the perfection of heaven. The new crisis is that we look at this broken life and realize the chasm between who we are currently and the glory of who God is going to make us. We realize the gap between the life down here on earth and the far surpassing one in heaven.
- **Discovery of Christ's Process** – it's then that we dig further into Scripture looking for more hope and a greater understanding of how God is going to get us from here to there, from this reality to the next. And what we find is that even now God is doing things to draw us near. Even now He's breathing hints of heaven into us. Even now He's preparing us for the next life. Even now...

GOD Is Making Us Fit for HEAVEN

- **Recap of Last Week** – Last week we talked about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and how important it is. We are in the part of the Corinthian letter where Paul is talking through some key theological matters that have come up. Some bad teachers were messing up everyone's mind and freaking them out. Paul's putting the foundation stones back in place. It started with the Gospel, then Resurrection, now Heaven.
- **Seed-ology**
 - **The Natural Principle of Life Process**

- **1st Corinthians 15:35-38** – *“But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”³⁶ You foolish person!¹ What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.³⁷ And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.”*
 - **Someone will ask** – Again we see that we are reading someone else’s mail, a correspondence conversation between this young church in Corinth and Paul the Apostle who is in prison in Ephesus. There was so much challenge against him from this church and it was happening from bad leaders who were messing with people’s minds. It was turning the church upside down.
 - **How does Resurrection work and what kind of bodies will we have? You foolish person!** – Paul seems to be saying that arguing that we can’t raise from the dead because it’s impossible and our regular bodies won’t work in heaven, is absurd². Maybe the argument against resurrection was that our bodies were ready for heaven. Paul’s response is ‘duh!’
 - **What you sow doesn’t come to life unless it dies (Seed-ology)** – what is Paul talking about? Paul knows that most of them are familiar with agricultural laws of nature. They know that **you drop a seed in the ground and if it stays at it is, it can’t produce anything. But it’s in its ‘death’, it’s breaking down, that the life within it, is released and grows into what we’ve been looking for the whole time.**
 - **What you start with isn’t the final form. There’s more** – when you see a pack of seeds they don’t look anything like the harvested product. **You don’t start with the final form. There’s a process. That’s the same with us. We have one type of body that we live in right now, but it’s not even close to be being the same type that is going to come alive when we pass from here to there. We too have a dying process where the inside is freed to come alive. We too are living in a very limited and restrained existence that longs for exploding freedom and life.**
 - **God gives the unique bodies** – **Just like there’s a ton of different seeds that grow into wildly different and unique plants and trees, so too are we all unique and God has something special that’s going to blossom in each of us for heaven.**
- **Perfectly Tailored**
 - **How God Designs for Environments**
 - **1st Corinthians 15:39-41** – *“For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.⁴⁰ There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory³ of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another.⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.”*

¹ “The implication is not simply that such questions suggest one to have taken leave of his senses, but that one stands as the “fool” in the OT sense—as the person who has failed to take God into account.” NICNT

² “there still remains the philosophical objection that must have lain behind their denial of the resurrection in the first place... highly probable that Paul knew by firsthand information that this is the real issue. Inherent in their denial of the resurrection was the assumption that it had to do with reanimating corpses. Therefore, because they could not handle the *how*, they had given up the *that*—the resurrection itself.” NICNT

³ “Rather, the heavenly triad of sun, moon, and stars is described in terms of the “glory” (here = radiance) of each.” NICNT

- **Let's talk about living things like animals and people** – Each type are given very unique bodies to interact with this world on earth. Some have hair, fur or wool to keep warm. Some are given scales for navigating the water. Some are tough on the outside and some are squishy. Some thrive in the light and some are better in the dark. Each creation of God has been given what it uniquely needs for its environment.
- **Let's talk about space stuff** – If you talk to anyone that studies astronomy they will tell you that there's a reason why **Pluto got bumped off the planet list in 2006.**⁴ I am personally against it. I think that they should have allowed their failure to be locked in forever. The reason it got bumped was because under greater scrutiny and observation, they found that it was not the same type of mass as other planets. Unlike the other planets it is not 'gravitationally dominant'. It has other large items in its area that it hasn't gotten rid of. Well, it had a good 76 year run. The bottom line for Paul is that he's explaining, without a telescope mind you, that the sun isn't the same as the moon or the stars, or even star to star. His point was the **creativity and diversity of God's creation. God makes different types for different reasons.**
- **God always designs properly for environment and purpose** – **you and I are who we are because God wanted us that way for a very specific purpose. We are not accidents. We are not meaningless. We are valuable and specific.**
- **Pod People**
 - **The Transformation That Occurs in Resurrection Transition**
 - **1st Corinthians 15:42-58** – *“So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.⁵ It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*
 - **A Body Fit for the Earth** - In a similar way **the bodies that we have here in this reality**, on this planet, in this universe **are tailored for HERE**. We may all be relatively unique but we are all built for here. So, **when it's time to leave** here, when it's time to die and graduate from one type of glory to a greater glory, **we will need some adjustments to operate and live THERE**.
 - **A Body Fit for Heaven** – **Heaven is a different reality**. Different laws and rules apply there. Although it will be relatively familiar because it's the handiwork of God, the Bible is clear that no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor mind conceived what it's going to be like. That means that **our bodies are not currently appropriate. They need to be changed in key ways**. Here's a sample list that Paul came up with off the top of his head:

⁴ <https://www.loc.gov/everyday-mysteries/astronomy/item/why-is-pluto-no-longer-a-planet/>

⁵ “The second set picks up the theme of “glory” from vv. 40–41 in order to describe the resurrected body. But now it does not mean “radiance.” Rather, this reflects Jewish eschatological language for the future state of the righteous. Paul has already used it of Christ’s personal reign (1 Thess. 2:12). In Phil. 3:21 it is the word used to describe Christ’s resurrection body. This usage is what here controls Paul’s thinking. Its opposite is “dishonor” (better, “humiliation”). This, too, the Corinthians would readily agree to. For Paul, it is not so much a pejorative term to describe the body as shameful, as it is a description of its present “lowly” state in comparison with its glorified one.” NICNT

- **From Temporary to Eternal (perishable to imperishable)** – our bodies are constantly in a state of decay and breaking down. They are not able to continue for too long. They are temporary. They are limited. They are temporal. They are flesh. But **in heaven, there is no time. There is no decay. There is no degradation, so we need bodies that will continue to thrive and that means a significant adjustment needs to be made.** We need dwellings for our spirits that are better suited for FOREVER.
- **From Dishonor to Glory (from common to beautiful)** – Paul’s point here is not to diminish what we are today, God built us in a way that the Psalmist described as ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’⁶. Paul himself referred to us as God’s *poema*, masterpiece. So it’s not that we aren’t glorious now, but in light of what we are becoming it’s the difference between common and extraordinary. It’s the difference between practical and beautiful. It’s the difference between some embarrassment and absolutely none.
- **From Weakness to Power (full expression)** – The Bible describes human beings as a little lower than the angels⁷. And we know that as complex as God has made us, we are still quite fragile when compared to celestial, heavenly beings. We are called ‘men of dust’ describing how we are of this earth. When you have the Angel of the Lord (likely Jesus, but could be an angel) who can slaughter 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night⁸, or angels darting back and forth in the spirit, you see why we are woefully equipped to battle them. But in our exalted state, we are made stronger, more powerful, no longer subject to decay, complete and mature, lacking nothing.
- **From Natural to Spiritual (supernatural)** – Built from dust and returning to dust is the lot of life for human bodies, but in the next life we are more than human, we are spiritual and human. We are supernatural in our total reality. We are able to engage with spirit as we too will be spirit. The full integration of the spiritual part of us unleashes a whole new way of life. Yes, we are still tangible but we are so much more.

- **Somethings Gotta Give**

- **Flesh Can’t Inherit Heaven**

- **1st Corinthians 15:45-50** – *“Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.⁹ ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of*

⁶ Ps 139:14

⁷ Heb 2:7, 9

⁸ 2 Kings 19:35

⁹ “the two adjectives “natural” (*psychikos*) and “spiritual” (*pneumatikos*) are used with the noun “body” (*sōma*) to describe its present earthly and future heavenly expressions respectively. At the same time, however, this use of language must have had special shock value in Corinth, where the word *pneumatikos* is most likely what set them apart from Paul and was a catchword for their antisomatic understanding of Christian existence. They would probably have had little trouble with the description of the present body as *psychikos*. But the use of *pneumatikos* to describe *sōma* must have been troublesome indeed.” NICNT

heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.^{10 50} I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.¹¹”

- **Adam vs. Jesus** – again Paul contrasts Adam with Jesus. **When God made Adam, He made him from earthly stuff, from dirt. He was built with a body for here. When God made Jesus, He was not only placed in Mary’s womb by the Holy Spirit in a very spiritual way, but Jesus was given the authority and ability to make other people’s spirits come alive.** When Jesus died on the cross for our sins, for the first time our spirits were able to come alive and thrive. They had been dead prior.
 - **Our Order of Things** – unlike the angels who we don’t have any account of having a history of being on earth and limited like we are, we have a very definite order of how we were created to interact with God. There was a pre-planned Phase 1 and a pre-planned Phase 2¹². Phase 1 would happen on earth and Phase 2 would happen in what we call heaven. It goes in that order. Different bodies are needed for different phases.
 - **Made Like Jesus** – one interesting thing that we observed down here on earth during Jesus’ earthly ministry was that **His body shifted after the resurrection.** Prior, He was just like us with the same limitations, exhaustion, needing food and water. But after the resurrection we saw that His body could morph (Road to Emmaus), His body could go through walls (entering into the room to see the disciples when the doors were locked). He looked similar but was clear of a different type. Paul’s point is that we too will follow in His footsteps. We will be morphed and transformed for our new reality.
 - **Flesh/Blood & Perishable Don’t Cut It** – earthly stuff can’t cut it in heaven. It has to be changed. There are **totally different rules of reality.**
- **Transformation Option #2**
 - **Understanding the Impact of Christ’s Return**
 - **1st Corinthians 15:51-52** – *“Behold! I tell you a mystery.¹³ We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.¹⁴ For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.*

¹⁰ “The first Adam, who became a “living *psychē*,” was thereby given a *psychikos* body at creation, a body subject to decay and death. This Adam, who brought death into the world (vv. 21–22), thus became the representative man for all who bear his *psychikos* likeness. The last Adam, on the other hand, whose “spiritual (glorified) body” was given at his resurrection, not only became the representative Man for all who will bear his *pneumatikos* likeness, but he is himself the source of the *pneumatikos* life as well as the *pneumatikos* body.” NICNT

¹¹ “The transformed body, therefore, is not composed of “spirit”; it is a *body* adapted to the eschatological existence that is under the ultimate domination of the Spirit. Thus for Paul, to be truly *pneumatikos* is to bear the likeness of Christ (v. 49) in a transformed body, fitted for the new age.” NICNT

¹² Perhaps the angels has Heavenly Existence as Phase 1 and then the fallen angels were cast down out of heaven for their Phase 2. But that doesn’t account for the Holy Angels process. We don’t know if they had a reality BEFORE their heavenly stay.

¹³ “As elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, “mystery” does not refer to what is currently hidden, but to what was once hidden but has now been revealed through Christ.” NICNT

¹⁴ “What marks the Parousia is the blowing of “the last trumpet,” imagery that had been taken up into Jewish prophetic-apocalyptic in a variety of senses to herald the Eschaton: to sound the last battle cry (e.g., Jer. 51:27), to warn of the approaching day of judgment (Joel 2:1), to announce the coming of the Lord (Zech. 9:14), to summon the people of God from the four corners (Isa. 27:13). Since it is such common imagery for the

- **A mystery** – When Paul talks about mysteries, he is usually talking about a God-reality thing that we can't fully understand yet. We know pieces and concepts, but we can't quite get our arms around it.
- **Transformation Option #2** – Paul says, 'we shall not all sleep.' What's his point? Not all humans will die to transfer from this reality to the next. What does he mean? He's talking about the return of Christ. He's talking about when He comes back and closes out this reality. Everyone has to change but some will have it take place in death and some will be alive when it happens. Some say this is the Rapture (raising up of believers, in the air, suddenly, at His return), others say that it's just His return and every believer being changed but it's not sudden, nor in the air.
- **Everyone will be changed** – just because someone is alive when Jesus comes back doesn't mean they take their same body forward. EVERYONE needs a new one. But some will die and get theirs and some will just get theirs.
- **It's super-fast** – Paul uses the phrase, 'the twinkling of the eye'. That's not a blink. A blink is too long. It's the shimmer that comes when the light hits someone's eye a certain way and there's a small flash. **The point is instantaneous.**
- **What's the Last Trumpet?** – The **Book of Revelation** lays out an order to Christ's arrival and the shutting down of this world and final defeat of the enemies of God (Lake of Fire). Prophetically, apocalyptically, metaphorically and illustratively, Revelation lays out the **different parts of Christ's transformation of this world**. Some of those portions are likened to scrolls being opened and decrees being issued. Some are bowls being poured out (judgment). Some are trumpets being sounded. The point on the trumpet is that something is an announcement system to all creation that something important has happened. It's like the **ancient world empires calling to war through a trumpet**, or more recently modern warfare playing a bugle. It's a signaling of a change. In Revelation it talks about a trumpet being sounded (likely by an angel) that says, 'this reality is over, Jesus is back, all things are being made new.'
- **Oh Snap!**
 - **The Prophetic Importance of the Body Change**
 - **1st Corinthians 15:53-58** – *"For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written [Isa 25:8; Hos 13:14]¹⁵: "Death is swallowed up in victory."⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and*

heralding of the End, it may carry no metaphorical freight whatever in this instance. On the basis of the next clause, however, it is arguable that the imagery is that of summoning the dead from their graves. It is the "last" trumpet not because it is the final in a series, but because it signals the End." NICNT

¹⁵ "The citations themselves, both of which vary from the LXX, are brought into collocation by the key words "death" and "victory." It is of interest, therefore, that the word "victory" is not found in either OT passage. At this distance we can only surmise how all of this came about. The citation of Isa. 25:8 is the key and is most likely the "saying" (singular) to which Paul is referring." NICNT

the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,¹⁶ knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

- **The Prophetic Importance of the Change** – when our bodies are changed at the return of Christ (or our death process), **a prophecy comes to fruition**. God told all those who would follow Christ that they would no longer die but be saved. A proclamation was given that Jesus Christ would defeat death and that the great enemy, the Devil, wouldn't be able to hold that over our heads any more in his bullying of us and terrifying us. Now, although Jesus already defeated death on the cross, people still die and it's still a bit scary. But **when Jesus comes back and closes this whole system and reality down, death is no longer a thing**. When we are made immortal, there's no more death or danger.
- **Sin and Death are no More** – how amazing that when Christ returns He gets rid of the very things that terrorize us: Death and sin. **What has caused all the pain and turmoil, struggles and tribulations is no more. We are released from fear. We are released from loss. We are released from destruction. We are FREE and joyful.**
- **Thanks be to Trinity-God (Yahweh) who gave us the victory through Jesus Christ (the Son)** – Paul is always great at clearing up his intention on theology. He wants to make sure that he lets everyone know that he's ALWAYS PROMOTING MONOTHEISM. There is ONE God, Yahweh, who reveals Himself to us in at least three ways: Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Yahweh, came up with the plan and revealed and fulfilled the plan through His three Persons.
- **Thanks** – I'm not sure we have enough **gratitude** and thankfulness in our hearts for being saved from destruction. This is one of those times that we can settle down and reflect on how incredible it is that we won't deal with sin or death forever. **We are not only saved from ourselves and the wrath of God, but from all destruction everywhere!**
- **Therefore** – because all of this stuff that we've been talking about is true: The gospel, the resurrection, the transformation for heaven...We need to let it impact us and live accordingly. This means at least that we:
 - **Be steadfast and immovable** – our ending is secure. The plan is laid out and sure. We MUST NOT allow the enemy to get us off our game. We win with Jesus. We cannot settle for less. We cannot allow for less. We can't lose our faith or diminish our belief. Hang in there!
 - **Always Abound in the Work of the Lord (It matters)** – get out there and do the Christian stuff! It matters. Not only is God pleased when we do it, but it actually changes things. It's eternal value. Go, go, go! We will be victorious,

¹⁶ “Minimally, it may refer more broadly to whatever one does *as a Christian*, both toward outsiders and fellow believers; but along with the next word, “labor,” Paul frequently uses it to refer to the actual ministry of the gospel. Probably in their case it covers the range but leans more toward the former. That is, there are those kinds of activities in which believers engage that are specifically Christian, or specifically in the interest of the gospel. This seems to be what Paul has in mind here.” NICNT

the enemy WILL lose. So get out there and do what God has built you to do. Be who He's built you to be. Fight the good fight and make a difference!

Conclusion

- **Bodies that are new but familiar** – dreaming about heaven and our new reality.
- **Let's Pray about those 2 things:**
 - Prayer for those who need to dig in and become immovable
 - Prayer for those who need openings and motivations to do the work of the Kingdom