

## SERMON INCLUDED IN A SERIES ON HEAVEN

Title – “Heaven – With the Lord”

Scriptures – Luke 23:43; John 17:24; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 1 Thess 4:17.

### WHO WILL I SEE IN HEAVEN?

I like what John Newton said, “When I get to heaven, I shall see three wonders there – the first wonder will be to see many there whom I did not expect to see; the second wonder will be to miss many people whom I did expect to see; the third & greatest of all will be to find myself there”.

- 1. THINK OF SOME BIBLE CHARACTERS** – In the above readings, on the words of Jesus, we will see one of the thieves who died alongside Jesus on the Cross. In the Book of Acts (see chapter 7) we find a man called Stephen who was stoned to death. His last words were – “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Remember the incident with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration – Moses & Elijah came from Heaven & appeared with Jesus. We could mention Enoch, who “walked with God...& God took him.” (Gen 5:22). *Story told of a little girl, describing this experience of Enoch, to her mother – “Mamma” she said, “one day Enoch & God took a walk together. They walked & they talked & they talked & they walked, until Enoch finally said, “Oh, my , dear Lord, it’s getting late. I’d better go home.” And the Lord said, “Why, Enoch, we’ve been walking so long together, I believe we’re closer to my home than yours. Why don’t you come home with me tonight?” So Enoch went home with God.”*
- 2. THINK OF SOME PEOPLE FROM CHURCH HISTORY** – D.L. Moody said on his deathbed – “*Earth is receding; heaven is approaching. This is my crowning day.*” Think of Jim Elliot, a young man who was killed in South America. He said on one occasion – “*I must not think it strange if God takes in youth those whom I would have kept on earth until they were older. God is peopling eternity, & I must not restrict Him to old men & women.*” We can think of the greats of Church History but what about those who have served the Lord faithfully over many years & have remained unknown to the wider church.
- 3. THINK OF SOME PEOPLE FROM YOUR LIFE** – Grandparents, great grandparents, parents, Sunday School teachers, pastors & ministers that have come into your life. They all died “in Jesus”. You will see them in Heaven.
- 4. THINK ABOUT GOD, THE FATHER** – We mentioned in a previous message that Heaven can be called Home because our Heavenly Father lives there. Think about things that Jesus said (e.g. see Matthew chapters 7, 10, 12, 16, 18) which clearly locates “Our Father in Heaven.” We will be in His Presence.
- 5. THINK ABOUT THE ANGELS** – Michael & Gabriel, will be there. I know of stories where angels have come to people since the Gospels – wonder if we will meet angels who have come to us in our lives, & we didn’t realise they were present. Billy Graham said on one occasion – “*One of the most comforting truths in all the Bible to me as I travel from one part of the world to another is to know that God has stationed His heavenly guards to protect, guide & lead me through life’s dangerous way. I cannot see these beings with my physical eyes, but I sense they are present everyday.*” We will be with the angels who have watched over us & served the Body Of Christ. We cannot expand this truth further but the Bible speaks of seraphims, cherubims etc. We will meet them all in Heaven.

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**BUT IS THERE MORE** – *The famous blind hymnist, Fanny Crosby, attended a mid-week prayer meeting service in 1891 at which Dr Howard Crosby spoke from the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. Later that week, Fanny was stunned when Dr Crosby suddenly died. Pondering the suddenness of death, she asked herself, “I wonder what my first impression of heaven will be.” A moment later she answered her own question with sudden insight – “Why, my eyes will be opened & I will see my Saviour face to face.” A few days later, she wrote one of her most famous hymns & the chorus said this – “And I shall see Him face to face, And tell the story, saved by grace.”*

- 6. THINK – WE WILL BE WITH JESUS.** Jesus said to the thief on the Cross “Today you will be with me.” Read about Stephen’s vision in Acts Chapter 7 – he saw Jesus in Heaven. Find verses in Hebrews & Revelation which clearly states – Jesus is in Heaven & He wants you & I with Him there. I think we should mention this thought – Heaven is a place & it is an awesome place but remember, we are going to Heaven to see a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. John MacArthur writes “The presence of Jesus is what makes heaven Heaven.”

We will see Him, we will hear Him, we will worship Him but the miracle of miracles is this – we will live with Him & not be destroyed. (See Exodus 33:22; John 1:18; 1 John 4:12; 1 Timothy 6:16). God dwells, as the Message says, in light that is so bright that no one can get close. As we read Revelation, we find there are people from every tribe etc around God’s Throne & in God’s Presence, BUT none are destroyed by the brightness of the glory. We will be in Jesus’s Presence – he will be shining in awesome splendour & majesty, He will be in the fullest of His Glory & **WE WILL NOT BE DESTROYED BUT WILL LOOK AT HIM FACE TO FACE.**

### Conclusion - WHO WILL I SEE IN HEAVEN?

- ❑ We will see people that we have read about in the Bible
- ❑ We will see people that we have heard or read about in Church History
- ❑ We will see people that we have known in life
- ❑ We will see our Heavenly Father; the Father we have prayed to & worshipped
- ❑ We will see the archangels & the angels
  
- ❑ **BUT THE GREATEST THRILL IS THIS – WE WILL SEE JESUS “WHO LOVED US & GAVE HIMSELF FOR US.”**

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