

What Will We Do in Heaven? - Part 1

Revelation 1, 4, 21, 2 Corinthians 3

Slide 1

Today, we're considering the question: What Will We Do In Heaven?

Cliff Barrows and Billy Graham were in conversation on one occasion discussing what they would do when they got to heaven. Cliff told Billy, "I'll have a job in heaven, but what will you do?"

He was inferring that because Billy was an evangelist, and since everyone will be a Christian in heaven, there'll be no one to win for the Lord, but there'll be plenty of praising God.

But even that little story raises a number of questions concerning how we imagine what we'll do in heaven. Will we feel like singing all the time?

Some believers think we'll be sitting on a cloud with a harp, singing praises to God constantly throughout all eternity, or just resting all the time.

While others believe we'll be lying prostrate before God's throne crying out: Worthy is the Lamb!

Now, I don't mean to belittle them, but I feel that if we were to do this for eternity, heaven would lose much of its attraction.

Ignorance of what the Bible teaches about heaven has hindered our anticipation of what heaven will be like. It has dampened our spirit in looking forward to it.

We have such a limited or ludicrous concept of what we'll be doing in heaven that we're led to the conclusion that there is little to do; that heaven will be a pretty boring place. This is a lie!

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Regardless of our understanding of what we'll do in heaven, one thing is sure: no one will be bored.

I don't know who coined the idiom: Variety is the spice of life, but they didn't realize the extent of the wisdom and truth in that statement. Because, from heaven's perspective, Variety is the spice of eternal life!

Though the Bible doesn't specify what individual responsibilities will be, it does provide general descriptions of the roles in which we'll be engaged. In fact, there are eight different occupations that we'll participate in throughout eternity.

Now, these eight are not exhaustive, but they give us an idea of what we'll do in heaven. Today we'll look at the first four. But before we look at these, let's deal with what we won't do in heaven.

Listen to Revelation 21:27, *"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."*

The first thing we won't do is sin. Sin won't be found in heaven. Just imagine what it would be like to never be tempted. Never struggle with the flesh, the world, or the devil.

Never to have that sense of guilt for having committed sin. Never having to confess sins to God. No need for a conscience!

As far as we relate, not only to God but one another, there'll be no more apologies, because there'll be no need for apologies in glory.

You won't have to repair anything or replace anything, because there'll be no brokenness – literally.

There'll never be the sigh of loneliness in heaven, there'll never be the sigh of sadness, there'll be no more hurt, no more illness.

In Revelation 21:4 we read: *"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

You'll not need to be cured of anything because you won't have anything. There'll be no more need of counselling. You'll not need to be protected, because God will be your shield and your reward.

Now, we could spend a couple of Sundays on what won't be in heaven - but our consideration today is: What will we do in heaven?

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The first thing I want to bring to your attention is that Scripture tells us that we'll be engaged in service in heaven.

One of the most significant testimonies regarding the activity of the redeemed in heaven is found in Revelation 22:3, it says, *"His servants shall serve him."*

Now, that's interesting! Those who serve Jesus on the earth, will be the ones who'll feel at home in heaven, since in heaven we'll serve the Lord forever.

But I'm concerned. Many who call themselves Christians don't do anything in the service of the Lord. Now, I know we all do our bit, day by day, in our own testimony, but I'm talking about in the life of the church.

Heaven is not an eternity free from work. If you're wanting to be free from work forever, don't go to heaven!

Some people think that work is something that came from the curse after man fell into sin. That's not the case at all. God created work as something good in His original creation. So, we'll be engaged in work.

That's all the more reason why we should be engaged in it here as a believer. It should be part of our preparation for our existence of service in heaven.

Now, what type of work will we do? Well, I'm sure there'll be many types, but one imagery given to us in the book of Revelation is that of priestly service.

Revelation 1:5b-6, *"To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever!"*

Prior to Jesus, no ordinary Israelite could go near anything that symbolized the presence of God. Only a priest could enter into His presence.

But, through Christ, we're able to come directly to God, and it'll be the same in heaven. Because, in heaven, we'll all be engaged in the service of a heavenly priesthood.

1 Peter 2:9 says, *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."*

We'll have the eternal joy of serving Jesus, experiencing the satisfaction of a job well done. Just imagine being able to look into Christ's eyes knowing that you've done a job perfectly for Him.

We'll serve in God's immediate presence - that's the first thing that we will do in heaven.

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Here's the second thing, and this might surprise you: we'll be served.

Luke 12:35-37, "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them."

Now the imagery Jesus gives us in these verses is of a great lord returning to his palace where his slaves are waiting for him.

Because they have been faithful to watch for the return of their lord, he calls them altogether and rather than resting from his long journey, or retiring for the night, he tells the slaves to sit down.

Where he prepares for them a feast and then, astoundingly, he doesn't order other servants to serve them, but he serves them himself!

Maybe the suggestion that Jesus should serve us is difficult to accept, but let's face it: where would any of us be if Jesus hadn't washed us in regeneration?

Where would we be right now if Jesus wasn't serving us this very moment at the right hand of God as our High Priest and Mediator?

The Bible teaches, in Luke 12:35-37 in particular, that Jesus is going to continue serving us in heaven. What a reward it'll be for us to be served by the Lord forever!

John Nelson Darby once gave a message on Luke 12:35-41 entitled: *The Lord Jesus, A Servant Forever.*

This is what Darby said, *“He comes,”* that is Christ, *“in His second advent, and brings us to heaven to His Father's house; that where He is, there we may be also.”*

“While you were in that wicked world,” Jesus says to us, *“I was obliged to keep you on the watch, in a state of tension, with diligent earnestness to keep the heart waiting, but I bring you to a place where you are to sit down, and it will be My delight to minister to you.”*

Isn't that priceless? Jesus not only served us on this earth by coming in His incarnation and suffering through His crucifixion, but he also served us through His resurrection and ascension.

Where He now serves us through His intercession at the right hand of God, and when He gets us home to His Father's house, He'll continue to serve us forever and ever. That's grace!

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Thirdly, we'll worship in heaven. The most informative insights concerning worship in heaven is unveiled in the book of Revelation.

In Revelation 4 we read of an account of John's first heavenly scene which involves a combined worship of 24 elders and four living creatures.

Then, as we move through Revelation, we see another scene of worship as the Lamb steps into the center of the apocalyptic, prophetic stage.

Then we have Revelation 7:9-12, *“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.*

And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb. All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever."

When we turn to Revelation 14, we see a heavenly orchestra, and 144,000 saints taking up a great song of praise to God, striking up what is described as a new triumphant anthem.

Revelation 14:1-3, "Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth."

Then in Revelation 15:2b-4 another song is found, and this time the song is extolling Moses and the Lamb for redemption's story, *"They held harps given them by God and sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations. Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."*

Finally, in Revelation 19:1-10, all of heaven appears to pick up the song of triumph. This whole weight of evidence concerning worship in heaven illustrates a constant atmosphere of worship.

Worship in heaven isn't restricted to a specific time or place. In other words, there's not a prescribed moment to worship, or a vicinity in which to worship.

One reason we won't need a specific place to worship in heaven is because heaven is described as a temple. Wherever we are, we'll be able to worship the Lord.

Remember, God's original plan in redemption was to purchase, by the blood of Christ, an eternal people, a priesthood who would worship Him forever; a group of eternal worshippers.

Currently, when we try to worship, we struggle with all sort of distractions. That's why Jesus said in John 4:23, *"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks."*

Isn't it thrilling to know that, when we get to heaven, we'll worship the Lord forever in a constant disposition of adoration? Our worship will be perfect and eternally unhindered!

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As an aside to worship, some people ask: Will there be singing in heaven? Yes, there will be.

Revelation 15:3, *"And sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb: Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations."*

Revelation contains more songs than any other book in the Bible except for Psalms. There are 14 songs sung by groups in the book of Revelation.

But, not only will we be singing in heaven, but there'll be music, too!

Music has been called by many *“the universal language.”* If you think about it, music is in every culture. While it's been perverted, depraved, misused and abused, music will clearly have a prominent place in heaven.

1 Chronicles 25:1-7 tells there were at least 288 musicians engaged in service in Solomon's Temple. To augment congregational worship, vocal, choral, and instrumental music was used.

In fact, I believe the Bible indicates that heaven is the birthplace of music, not the devil. J. Oswald Saunders comments: *“What glorious music will enhance the pleasure of heaven!”*

No one will be tone deaf or lacking musical appreciation. If choirs and orchestras can elevate us to such heights of aesthetic enjoyment here on earth, just think what will it be when we hear the celestial choirs accompanied by heaven-trained orchestras?

John had a foretaste of heaven's majestic music.. Revelation 14:2, *“And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps.”*

This was a musical sound that was so wonderful that it couldn't be described with words, so much so that John says it was like many waters, like great thunder!

There was music in the beginning, and there'll be surpassing music in the end.

John MacArthur says: *“Perfect praise will be the highest, noblest expression of our perfected being. We will recognize the splendor of God, we will see clearly His Majesty, we will see His glory and perfection; and gazing on God's perfectness eternally, we will be compelled to offer uninterrupted, unrestrained, adoring, loving worship. It will be our delight!”*

Worship down here is preparation for worship in glory and if you have no desire to worship here on earth, what makes you think that you'll want to spend all eternity doing it?

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Fourthly, we'll see God. Some might object to this citing 1 John 4:12 says, *“No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”*

Or 1 Timothy 6:16, *“One who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever.”*

Those verses alone seem to be against the idea that we'll ever see God, but there are other Scriptures that indicate we will.

In Genesis 32:30, Jacob calls the place where he met God, *“Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”*

Samson's father in Judges 13:22, *“We are doomed to die!” he said to his wife. “We have seen God!”*

In Job 19:26-27 Job says, *“And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”*

In Isaiah 6:5, Isaiah says, *“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”*

When we come to the New Testament, we find the same idea of seeing the Lord in the Beatitudes. Matthew 5:8, *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”*

Hebrews 12:14, *“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”* The implication is, with holiness and the purity spoken of in the Beatitude, we’ll see the Lord.

Then in Revelation 22:3-4 John categorically says that, in this new eternal state, *“No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.”*

I believe the explanation to this contradiction is that whenever we see Jesus in heaven, we’ll see God.

We’ll see everything that God is because Jesus was, is, and always shall be the permanent manifestation of Divinity.

He was the Word, declaring God; He was the Christ incarnate, God in our midst, the express image, the brightness of His character and person.

As He said to Philip in John 14:9, *“Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

I believe the principle way that we’ll see God is through the Son. In heaven, seeing Christ will be seeing God, and seeing Christ will be all-in-all.

Whenever we study heaven, we must ensure that our greatest and most joyous anticipation of heaven is seeing God in Christ. Our longing for heaven should be a longing for Jesus!

There are many things that'll cause us to anticipate the new heaven and the new earth, but we must always remember to focus on the Giver. *"He will be their God, and they shall be His people."*

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Conclusion

What will it be like to see Jesus? I can't describe it!

Randy Alcorn, wrote: *"When John saw Jesus in heaven he fell at His feet as though dead. We will see Christ in His glory - the most exhilarating experiences on earth such as white-water rafting, skydiving, or extreme sports will seem tame compared to the thrill of seeing Jesus, being with Him, gazing at Him, talking with Him, worshipping Him, embracing Him, eating with Him, walking with Him, laughing with Him! Imagine it! Not only will we see His face and live, but we will wonder if we ever lived before we saw His face. To see God will be our greatest joy, the joy by which all others will be measured."*

John Dunne, a Christian poet said: *'No man ever saw God and lived, and yet I shall not live till I see God - and when I have seen Him, I shall never die.'*

Sam Stornes, a theologian, says: *'We will constantly be more amazed with God, more in love, and thus evermore relishing His presence and our relationship with Him. Our experience of God will never reach its consummation. Our experience of God will never become stale, it will deepen and develop, intensify, amplify, unfold and increase, broaden and balloon.'*

Renee Pachet, a Bible teacher and theologian, says, *'Here on earth we know what it is like to not be able to take our eyes off a lovely sight. A wonderful flower, a magnificent panorama, or an unusual work of art. So what will it be when we shall see, face-to-face, the Author of all that is beautiful and perfect?'*

What will we do in heaven? We'll engage in service, we'll be served, we'll worship, we'll sing, and more importantly, we'll see God.