**Bible Lesson: Will We Recognize Others in Heaven?**

I have often heard this question asked of televangelists, and I have seldom heard an adequate answer from scripture. However, the Bible does address this question, directly and indirectly. Let’s begin with an interesting passage from Paul.

* 1 CO 13:12 ~ For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I am known.

Here Paul presents a description of one who looks into a mirror, but the image is somewhat blurred. Paul never saw Christ, though he heard His voice loud and clear on the road to Damascus, after Christ had ascended into heaven (ACT 9:1–9). At first, he didn’t recognize who it was until Jesus revealed Himself, after which Paul knew he would someday see Christ clearly, face-to-face; and he would recognize and know Christ, even as he was already fully known by Him. Paul had seen the light, and heard the Lord’s voice: shadows of the immaculate love and peace he expected to find in heaven. This experience is available to everyone who Christ lets in the door, as long as you opened your door when He came knocking (REV 3:20). The saved will have a genuine encounter in heaven: people will know us and we will know them, from the light reflecting from their eyes (MAT 6:23). Imagine all the faces and races, not to mention angels. Now let us consider another message from Paul to the Corinthians.

* 1 CO 15:41–50 ~ There is one kind of glory in the sun, and one in the moon, and still more from the stars. This is not unlike the glory of the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption but raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor but raised in honor; it is sown in weakness but raised in power. It is sown a natural body but raised a spiritual body; there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. Adam was the first man and he was made a living soul; the second Adam (Christ) is the everlasting Spirit of life. The first was from the dust of the earth and the second from the realm of heaven. There are the many of the earth and there is the one from heaven, as well as those in heaven with Him. Even in the likeness of earthly man, so also, we will bear the likeness of the heavenly man. Mere flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and neither can the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Paul is saying that the saved go to heaven, but not in the corrupt earthly body—in a glorified heavenly body, like that of Christ. The disciples of Christ physically saw Him alive after He arose from the dead, but He looked different; then, realizing Jesus had been raised from the dead in His spiritual body, which radiated like the highest heaven. And still, witnesses could inspect His physical scars and verify it was truly the Lord (JOH 20:24–29). His body looked similar but was noticeably different, just like our bodies will look similar, but will be noticeably different. And Paul was confident that he would know Jesus when he went to heaven, because he would recognize Jesus through the eyes of his glorified body.

This is not unlike the event witnessed by Peter, James, and John referred to as the Transfiguration. Recall, that Jesus took three apostles up a high mountain, where they beheld Moses and Elijah in the sky beside Jesus. And how did the disciples know who these men were, since they’d never met Moses and Elijah? Undoubtedly, the two great prophets were seen in their glorified bodies, while Jesus also appeared in His glorified state. That is how they knew who they were. What a sight that must have been!

* MAT 17:1–9; MAR 9:2–10; LUK 9:28–36 ~ Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the mountaintop to pray. While Jesus prayed, His countenance changed and His clothes shined as lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared with Jesus in glorious splendor; they were conversing about Jesus’s departure from this earth which would occur upon His return to Jerusalem. The apostles had been in a deep sleep and awakened to witness this wonderful sight. The two prophets were preparing to leave Jesus when Peter interrupted, “Master, it is good to be here; let us build three shelters.” Peter had no idea what he was talking about, but while he spoke, a cloud surrounded the mountaintop and the apostles became afraid as it enveloped them. Then a voice spoke from the cloud saying, “This is my beloved Son; listen to Him.” The fog cleared and Jesus stood alone. The apostles kept this secret until after Jesus’s resurrection.
* LUK 24:39 ~ Jesus said, “Behold my hands and my feet that it is me; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as I do.”
* JOH 10:1–18 ~ Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, whomever does not enter through my door, but attempts to enter some other way, is a thief and a robber. Anyone who comes through my door will be allowed inside. The Shepherd will call His sheep by name, and they will recognize His voice and follow Him. The sheep will not follow strangers for they will not recognize the voice of strangers. I am the door to heaven; I am the Good Shepherd who gives His life for His sheep. I am not like the hired hand that runs away from the flock when the wolf comes, causing the sheep to scatter. I am the Good Shepherd; I know my sheep and they know me, just as the Father in heaven knows me and I, Him. And there will be one flock and one Shepherd. The Father loves me, for I will give my life so that I may take it back again. Nobody takes my life away from me for I give it myself. I have the power to give my life and to take it back again. I have received this mission from my Father in heaven.”
* EPH 1:5,11–14,18 ~ We were predestined to become adopted children of God by Jesus Christ, according to His marvelous will. In Christ we obtain an inheritance in heaven, because we listened to the truth and trusted in Him for our redemption and salvation. Everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for light makes all things visible. I hope your eyes will be opened and you will become enlightened, and you will feel the hope of His promise, and experience the glory of the inheritance of the saints.
* 2 PE 1:16-18 ~ We did not follow cunningly devised fables when we testified of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we were eyewitnesses to His majesty. He received honor directly from God the Father, when a voice from heaven announced gloriously, “This is my beloved Son who pleases me.”

Everyone who goes to heaven will arrive in their glorified bodies. Sin is not to be found in heaven. Yours will be the same physical body, with a few colossal changes: it will be without sin, incorruptible, undefiled, glorified, spiritual, and eternal. A body without sin does not die; the reason we die is our bodies are corrupted by sin. But our new bodies will have been washed clean by the blood of Jesus. God will allow those who trust in His Son to keep their soul forever (LUK 21:17–19).

* JOB 19:25–26 ~ I know my Redeemer lives, and He will stand upon the earth on the last day. And though my body may be destroyed by worms, yet in my flesh I will see God.
* PSA 17:15 ~ In righteousness I will see God’s face; when I awaken, I will be satisfied because I will recognize Him.
* ISA 40:5 ~ The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all human flesh will see it together, for the Lord has said so.
* PHP 3:20–21 ~ Christ will change our vile bodies into bodies like His glorified body.
* COL 3:4,10 ~ When Christ appears, who is our life, all Christians will appear with Him in glory. For we have become new people, renewed in God’s image by our knowledge of Him through Christ.
* 1 JO 3:2 ~ Now we are the sons of God, and what we will become is not yet known. But we do know this: when He returns for us, we will become like Him, for we shall see Him as He really is.

Everyone will behold the judgment seat of Christ. The guilty will be condemned for their sin because they did not accept the payment Christ made on the cross. Those who claimed the blood of Jesus will be judged not guilty, and ascend into God’s heavenly kingdom, to live with the Lord forever in a new heaven and a new earth, born again with a new, perfect body: no decay, no death, no evil, only pure love and eternal light!

* PSA 115:17 ~ The dead do not praise the Lord, nor anyone who has gone down into silence.
* PSA 146:4 ~ His breath leaves, and he returns to the ground; in that day his thoughts also perish.
* ECC 12:7 ~ The dust will return to the ground; and the spirit will return to God who gave it.
* ISA 26:14 ~ They are dead; they will not live; they are deceased, they will not rise. God has visited them and destroyed them, and caused all memory to perish with them.
* LUK 16:19–31 ~ Jesus told the parable of the rich man and the poor man: There was a rich man who lived a life of pleasure and luxury. A poor man lay at his gate that was weak, hungry, and afflicted, desiring just the crumbs off the rich man’s plate. The two men died. The poor man was taken to Abraham’s bosom, and the rich man was exiled in Hades. The rich man called out to Abraham asking if he would let the poor man dip his finger into water to wet his parched tongue. But Abraham reminded him how thoughtless and unmerciful he had been to the poor man, and told him that nobody could pass through the chasm separating the two underworlds. The rich man implored that his family be warned, to prevent them from the same fate. Abraham informed the rich man that they would have to rely on the Word of God like everybody else; if they didn’t, not even a visit from the dead would persuade them to change their ways.
* JOH 5:24 ~ Jesus said, “Truly I say, anyone who hears my words and believes that I was sent by God will have eternal life. They will not be condemned, but will pass from death into life.”
* JOH 11:25–26 ~ Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, though they were dead, yet shall they live. Whoever believes in me will never die.”
* ROM 6:8 ~ If we die with Christ, we believe we also will live with Him.

Unmistakably, we will know everybody in heaven. We will not recognize others from their past, but from their glorified presence. All human beings are given this same promise by the Almighty, and the choice is as clear as a face that you will never forget. What we will forget is what we left behind in the old universe. An eternity of learning awaits, while we grow up in the household of the Father as brothers and sisters; disregarding the sinful world we left behind and the lost souls that went with it.

* LUK 20:34–39 ~ Jesus answered them saying, “The people of this age get married. In the next age, those who are considered worthy of taking part in the resurrection will not marry, and will never die, for they will be like the angels. They are God’s children, the children of the resurrection. When Moses encountered the burning bush, he learned that the dead arise, for God referred to the Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for to Him all are alive in His realm.” Some teachers of the Law responded, “Well said, Teacher.”
* ROM 8:1–6, 15 ~ Now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ and walk according to the Spirit and not the flesh. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ has set us free from the law of sin and death. What the law could not do, since its weakness was in the flesh, God made right by sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, to condemn the sin of the flesh. Therefore live, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on evil, but those who live according to the spirit set their minds on God. To set the mind on flesh results in death, but to set the mind on God results in peace and life. You have not received the spirit of slavery and fear, you have received the Spirit of adoption, and for this we cry, “Abba Father.”
* HEB 1:1–2; HEB 2:10–11 ~ God, who spoke throughout history to the prophets, has in these past days spoken to us by His Son Jesus Christ, whom He appointed heir of all things and by whom He also made the worlds. Through His suffering, many people are saved to become glorified with Him as children of God. Both He that sanctifies and those who are sanctified are one; therefore, Christ is not ashamed to call them His brothers and sisters.

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