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The Eternal State of the Saved



Beyond End Times - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg discusses the eternal state of the saved based on his interpretation of scripture. He asserts that the eternity of heaven is unthinkable for non-Christians, and even the happiness of the rich and famous pales in comparison to that of the saints. While some may hold the view that death is an unconscious state, Gregg argues that Jesus and Paul spoke of death as sleep, indicating that it is not a permanent state. He highlights that the eternal state will involve the worship of God, learning and discovering new things, and the possibility of being rewarded for one's sacrifices on Earth.

Transcript

The title of this lecture is The Eternal State of the Saved. Now, what I'm talking about, of course, is where we go after the judgment, if we're saved. The common traditional view that most Christians take by default is that, of course, where we go is to heaven.

And it's in the hymns and the songs and the common speech of Christians that, you know, everyone's going to spend eternity either in heaven or in hell. But that's not necessarily taught in scripture. We are going to live forever, but the Bible does not say we'll live forever in heaven.

So, but you won't be disappointed with the alternative. It's not going to be hell. It's going to be, in my opinion, better than heaven.

But we'll talk about what the scripture says on this. A lot of Christians just use the word heaven to speak of the eternal state. Although heaven technically is a place.

Heaven is where God and the angels are. And even where the departed saints are, in my understanding of scripture. Some people disagree.

We'll talk about the different ideas about that in a moment. But I've been a Christian since I was a child. I remember when I was a child asking my dad what heaven will be like.

And I remember very distinctly, he said, well, heaven is a place where you can have whatever you want. Now, is that a good answer or a bad answer? Well, for a little kid, it might be as good an answer as you give, because the child doesn't have the frame of reference to appreciate much more than that. But obviously, it's an answer that that isn't very sophisticated.

Because I believe that we in eternity, we will have everything we want. I believe that when God made Adam and Eve and put them in the garden, they had everything they could possibly want. And he's not going to give us less than what Adam and Eve were given in the first place.

We'll have all that we want. But what we want will probably not be the things that we now imagine that we would want. Because our desires and wants now are based on partially on the cravings of our flesh and partially on our attachment to money and status and pride and things that are sinful that won't be in us at the time.

And so what we want will be different. But I think it would be a correct thing nonetheless to say that you will have no unfulfilled desires. You will indeed have everything you want in each eternity.

I mean, after all, some human beings have everything they want even now. To think that the saints in eternity would have less happiness than some non-Christians even have now who are rich, famous and have all they want would be unthinkable. It's clear that our happiness in eternity will be complete and unbroken, uninterrupted and not lacking in any area.

But what exactly is the, what actually does happen after death and after the judgment? Now, there's two different questions there. What happens when I die is one question. The other is what happens after the judgment.

Because unless I live until Jesus comes back, there will be an interval. I will die and then at some point later will be the judgment. What in the interim? What is the intermediate state of the person who's died? Now, I'm going to reserve discussion of the non-Christians intermediate state for our lecture tonight about hell and so forth.

It depends on certain variables to say what exactly happens to the non-Christian when they die. But I believe that the New Testament teaches that when we die, we go, our spirits, our conscious selves go into the presence of God immediately. Now, that's not held by all Christians.

There are many Christians who believe in something called soul sleep. And there is some basis for their saying so. They believe that when you die, you simply lose consciousness completely.

And then at the resurrection, when Jesus comes back, you come back to life again and

you face the judgment and then you have eternal life after that. And that eternal life begins at the resurrection. They would use as their primary arguments for this, the fact that death in the Bible is often referred to as sleep.

We've already seen that in some of the scriptures we've looked at in previous lectures in this series. Paul said, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. He said, I don't want you to be ignorant because those who sleep in Jesus, those who sleep in Jesus, will he bring with him when he comes.

Even Jesus, when he talked about Lazarus having died, he said to his friends, you know, our friend Lazarus is asleep. I'm going to wake him up. And they said, well, if he's asleep, he'll get better.

And Jesus said, well, no, he's dead. And likewise, when he came into the house of Jairus, when Jairus's daughter had died, it says to the he said to the mourners, why are you weeping? She's not dead. She's asleep.

And it says they laughed him to scorn knowing she was dead. So, I mean, Jesus and Paul referred to death as sleep on many occasions. And this fact is what has caused many people to believe that when you die, you go to sleep, you're unconscious.

Now, this is not really, in my opinion, a right inference from that data. For one thing, sleep does not really convey the idea of an unconscious state at all. Sleep is, in those verses, definitely a metaphor for death.

But what is the metaphor there to convey? What is there about death that is like sleep? Is it that it is an unconscious state, like sleep is an unconscious state? It can't be because sleep isn't. I mean, some of you may not remember your dreams when you wake up in the morning, but probably you dream. And you're not 100 percent unconscious if your alarm clock can wake you up because you're asleep when you hear the alarm and it wakes you up.

So you're not totally unconscious. Well, some of you may be at times, but sometimes maybe. But in general, sleep is not really the kind of an unconscious state that these people say death is.

And therefore, to use sleep as a metaphor for death in order to convey the idea that death is unconscious is not apt, is not correct or useful. Sleep, however, is, as all know, a temporary state from which people wake up. And when you find Jesus or Paul speaking about death as sleep, it's in the context of waking up from the dead, that is, getting up, that death is not permanent.

It's more like sleep in that it's temporary. The metaphor of sleep doesn't convey, in my opinion, unconsciousness. It conveys the idea of a temporary state rather than a final state.

Death is not the final state of anyone. Just like when you go to sleep at night, it's not final. You wake up the next morning.

So also people who die are going to wake up someday. That is, they're going to rise again in the resurrection. Now, what is their conscious awareness level in the interim, after they die and before they rise again? As far as Christians are concerned, I think there's a fair bit of biblical data to suggest that those who die live on in heaven.

For one thing, Jesus said, I am the resurrection of the life. He that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

Now, I live and I believe in him. And he said, I'll never die. Jesus was actually criticized for making the comment that those who believe in him will never die.

Because his critics said, well, you know, Moses died, Abraham died, and all these great guys died. How can you say that anyone who believes in you will never die? Well, Jesus did in fact say that those who believe will never die. He didn't say they will die and then come back.

He said they won't die. And because of that, I believe there is a part of the Christians being that lives on from the moment they're converted till forever and never dies. But obviously, when you're dead, you're not living in your body.

But Paul, in verses we looked at before, in 2 Corinthians, he said to be absent from the body, he says, is to be present with the Lord. That is, there's something that is me that is either present or absent in the body. The body isn't me.

The body is the venue where I am or am not. I'm either in the body or not. He says in 2 Corinthians 5, we know that as long as we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord.

But we're well pleased, rather, to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. Obviously, we who are absent or present is something other than the body. The body is where we are or aren't.

We are either present in the body or absent from the body. We're either absent from the Lord or present with the Lord. There's something about us that moves out, relocates from the body to the presence of the Lord in Paul's theology.

It's also the same thing is stated in Philippians chapter 1. He says that he's in a straight between two options. He's suffering in prison at the time. And there's a sense which is he has a desire to depart and to be with Christ, he said, which is far better.

So he's talking about dying. He's essentially saying, I'd like to die because I would depart. Then I'd go and be with Christ.

That's in Philippians. I don't have the references because I don't. They're not in the

notes.

I didn't plan to necessarily bring up all these. And these are just scattered data that make me feel that there is a part of us that lives on after death and we're not unconscious in Revelation chapter 20, which is, of course, a controversial chapter. I might just say that according to my understanding of it from the millennial view, when John says, I saw the souls of those who were martyred.

And they were on thrones and they lived and reigned with Christ. They were martyred. They were dead.

They were in heaven. Their souls. He saw their souls.

He didn't say their bodies. They weren't resurrected yet. That's not the time frame of the vision.

They're dead because they were beheaded for Christ, he says. They're not alive and they're not resurrected. He saw their souls and their souls were reigning with Christ.

That would be in the intermediate period after they were beheaded, but before they resurrected, their souls are seen living on in heaven. And so also John sees in Revelation chapter six, the souls of the martyrs under the altar in heaven, apparently saying, Lord, how long before you avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? Now, of course, Revelation's visions are symbolic and therefore we can't be 100 percent sure just on the basis of verses like that, that he's talking about the literal souls are literally saying those things. It may be an impressionistic drama, but I think taken with everything else the Bible says, we have to suggest that if you die, as your body dies, you won't die.

The part of you that's aware of everything, of your surroundings, will simply be aware of being in different surroundings. Right now, your awareness is very much tied to the senses of your body because you're confined to your body at the moment. Death is the release so that you go into the presence of the Lord and your conscious reality will be of a different sort.

And I believe that where you go is into heaven. That's where Jesus is, and I think you go into the presence of the Lord. But the Bible does not say that you will live forever in heaven because Jesus is not going to be forever in heaven.

It says in Acts chapter three, Peter said, the heavens must receive him until the time of the restoration of all things. That is only for a while. Until the time of the restoration of all things, the heavens will retain Christ.

That's where he is until then. Or in Philippians chapter three and verse 20, Paul says, for our citizenship is in heaven from which we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body in the resurrection, that it may be conformed to

his glorious body. Now, our citizenship is in heaven because we're citizens of the kingdom and our king is in heaven.

He's at the right hand of God in heaven, but he's not going to be there forever. We're waiting for him to come from heaven. Where to then? Well, here, apparently.

And as we study the scriptures on the eternal state of the saint, we'll find consistently that the location of the saints will be earth. Jesus said in Matthew five, five, blessed are you meek, blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth. And there are many references to that fact in First Thessalonians four, four, 14, which you've seen previously.

It says, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, then those who sleep in Jesus, we believe he will bring with him when he comes. Now, if they're already in heaven, which I believe is the case, why should their eternity in heaven be interrupted by having to come back here? Well, because he's coming here and that's where he's going to be. If you read in Revelation chapter 21 and 22, there's a new heaven and a new earth.

And the first heaven and the first earth passed away, but then there's this new Jerusalem that John sees coming out of heaven. And if it's coming out of heaven, where could it be coming to? But to earth. And I believe that the new earth and the new Jerusalem on the new earth is the eternal home of the saints.

That's where Jesus is coming back to. He's going to make a new heaven, new earth when he comes. And that's going to be our habitation.

Now, that shouldn't be a disappointment to anybody unless they really. I mean, not everyone has the same things that turn them on as turn me on. But to me, living in the clouds.

Doesn't turn me on, you know, just doesn't push my buttons. But what I understand to be the purposes of God revealed in Scripture are that when God made man in his own image and gave him dominion over the earth. His ultimate desire would have been that man would have continued to live in the Garden of Eden and never died.

He said, don't eat this tree because in the day you eat it, you'll die. And I really don't want that. I don't want you to die.

He made Adam and Eve, it would seem, immortal, at least potentially immortal. We don't, that's, it's a debatable point whether he made Adam and Eve innately immortal or whether they were potentially immortal. They could die if they did the wrong thing, but they could also live forever if they ate from the tree of life.

If they continued from that, they would live forever. The point here is that God intended when he made man for people to live forever in the state that he made them. What state was that? Physical.

Adam and Eve had bodies. And they would have had bodies forever and ever and ever. Immortal bodies if they had not fallen.

And since God's will, I think, was not for them to fall, in my opinion, some Calvinists would disagree, but I believe that he didn't want them to fall. He must have wanted them to live forever in physical bodies. That was his original plan, in a physical earth, a perfect earth, a paradise earth, where there's no, there's nothing to make it unpleasant.

Now, if you go somewhere today like Hawaii or someplace like that, you might think, well, this is like paradise. And it is in many ways very pleasant, although you'll find centipedes and mosquitoes and things like that, which I don't think you'll find in the new earth. Before the fall, there was nothing to make it unpleasant.

God made man to enjoy, and to enjoy without any sadness or any grief, a perfect world. And that is apparently what the Bible suggests is going to be returned to. Because in Romans 8, it says the whole creation is groaning, looking forward to the time when it'll be restored and delivered from the bondage of decay into that glorified state that God has in mind for it.

So the location of our eternity apparently is not going to be in heaven. And when people say you'll live forever in heaven, that's not quite correct. In Revelation 5, 10, individuals who are in heaven are singing and they make this point that God has redeemed from every kindred people and tongue and tribe and so forth, people unto himself.

And it says in verse 10, and he's made them or us kings and priests who are God and we shall reign on the earth. We're going to reign with Christ forever and it'll be on the earth. It won't be the earth as we know it now.

It'll be the earth that's been purged and cleansed and redeemed from the curse. And it'll be a perfect earth. So the most perfect place you've ever been on earth is probably the closest thing to heaven that you can find in this life.

But there's still imperfections in the place you've been because it's a fallen earth. And just remove everything that's imperfection and you'll have an idea of what it's like. Now you might say, well, my favorite place on earth is the ocean and there's no sea in the new heaven and new earth, right? And we won't be able to surf and we won't be able to swim and splash in the waves.

There won't be any sea there. Well, I don't know. Maybe there's lakes instead.

Maybe they have waves. You got a lake nearby here that has waves probably. So you probably can understand how that could be.

But actually, I'm not sure there won't be any sea. When God made the earth in the first place, the sea was a factor and it would have always been a factor if there had been no

interruption in things. My impression is that God likes the ocean.

He actually made the earth covered at what? Two thirds or so with it. So he must like the ocean a fair bit. So where do we get the idea there's not going to be any oceans? Well, that's based on a single verse, which does indeed sound like it says that it's Revelation 21, 1, which says, Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

Also, there was no more sea. Now, it sounds like you're saying the new heaven, earth didn't have any sea. But there is another way to understand it grammatically.

And that is the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and so had the first sea. But there was a new heaven, new earth and by implication, a new sea also. What had passed away was the first heaven, the first earth and the sea that belonged to the first heaven, the first earth.

Whether there's going to be a sea in the new earth or not is not stated directly. This verse doesn't necessarily say the new earth doesn't have a new sea. It's in the context of the old earth and heaven's passing away that there's no more sea.

That is the original sea, just like there's no more original earth or heaven. And whether there's a new sea or not will have to remain to be seen. But if there isn't, I'm sure we will not have occasion to be disappointed.

It'll be the right environment, the perfect environment that God made human beings to enjoy forever. Now, the state we will be in will be very different than our present state. And like I said, if someone would say to a child, heaven is where you can have everything you want, that would not be untrue.

But the child would not have any way to process what that really means. When my dad told me that when I was little, I thought that meant that I'll have magical powers that I always wished I could have. You know, when I played with my toys, when I was a little kid, when I played with my toys, I wished I could shrink down to the size of my toy trains and cars and things like that.

And I wished I could be invisible sometimes. I mean, there's a lot of things that as a little kid, you think, well, wouldn't it be cool if you could just fly, if you could just be invisible, if you could just be any size you want to, if you could morph into anything you want, turn into an animal. I mean, those are the kinds of things as a little kid that you think, well, that'd be really cool.

And so when my dad said, you can have anything you want when you go to heaven, I thought, wow, I can turn invisible. I can turn into an animal. I can do anything I want.

Cool. But in fact, of course, while I believe it is true that I'll have everything I want, I'm

going to be a different kind of being, even as I am now a different kind of being than I was when I was a kid. Although I'd still like to be invisible sometimes.

But maybe we will be able to. Jesus disappeared sometimes in his resurrection body. Maybe that's going to be one of the things we can do.

Maybe he likes being invisible, too. He spends a lot of time doing it. But as far as shrinking and turning into an animal, I don't think he ever did that.

I think that some of the childish things that Paul said when I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child and I understood as a child that when I became a man, I put away childish things. So also, even now as an adult, I'm still childish in view of my eternal state. I'm still in my infancy and the things I desire now may be things that have no value to me and in which I would have no interest whatsoever in the state that I will be in because I'll be glorified.

I'll be a different kind of being than now. We saw some of this in our study of Romans this week, but not all of you were present. I just want to show you a few verses about the glorification of the saints, which is what we're going to have for eternity, is a glorified state.

It would hardly matter whether it's in heaven or earth or anywhere else. It's the glorification of our existence that is the main appeal, I think, at least to Paul and to writers on this subject in the scripture. Paul speaks more about it than most.

Of course, he wrote more than most. But in Romans 8, verses 17 and 18, Paul said, if we're children, then we're heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. If indeed we suffer with him, that we also may be glorified together.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Now, the glory that should be revealed in us, as Paul states in other contexts, is, I believe, the likeness of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 3, 18, Paul said, we all with unveiled faces beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed from glory to glory into that same image, even as by the spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 3, 18, we are changed. We behold the glory of the Lord and we're changed into that same image from glory to glory through the working of the spirit of God. Now, ultimately, our glory will be perfect because we'll see him as he is.

It says in 1 John 3, we will be like him when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. We see him in measure now and we are transformed in measure into his likeness from glory to glory. But it's still as in a glass.

It's still as in a vague image we behold his glory. But we'll see him as he is and that will change everything about us. We'll be just like him.

Not just like him in the sense that we'll be gods. We're not going to hold the status he holds. He'll still be the Lord and we'll still be his servants.

We'll serve him day and night, the Bible says, but we'll have his glorified nature. We saw Philippians 3, 21, that he'll change our vile body into the likeness of his glorious body or his glorified body, which I take to be his resurrection body. In 2 Corinthians 4, oh, we've already talked about that.

I want to look at 2 Corinthians 5. And we've seen this too, but I would draw a different point from it. 2 Corinthians 5, 1 says, for we know that if our earthly house, this tent is destroyed, and he's speaking metaphorically of our bodies, if we die, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Now, doesn't it say we're going to live eternally in heaven? No, it says the house that we have is an eternal house and it is in the heavens.

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, great is your reward in heaven. But Jesus is my reward and he is, in fact, in heaven right now. Wherever he is, is going to be where my reward is.

If I die now, I go to my reward in heaven. When my reward comes here, because Jesus is my reward, then I'll have my reward here. Right now, the house that I plan to put on in place of this tent is reserved in heaven.

I don't want to take your mind off of 2 Corinthians, but I want to just, as an aside, mention 1 Peter 1, verse 4. 1 Peter 1, 4 says that we've been preserved for an inheritance, which is incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you. Again, it sounds like, oh, you're going to heaven forever because their inheritance is immortal and it's reserved in heaven. It's reserved in heaven because that's where Jesus is right now.

He's keeping it for me. Right now, it's in heaven. There's no sense in it being here because the earth isn't ready for it.

This is this earth. It's going to be in another earth that we experience it. But it's right now, Jesus, who is in heaven, is our hope.

He is our reward. He is our salvation and our salvation is being held for us, reserved in heaven. But the scripture says that he's not going to be there forever.

He's going to come here. And we'll look at a scripture about that in a moment. But back in 2 Corinthians 5, then he says, we want to we're not we're not concerned about putting off this tent that we're in now because we have a house we're going to put on in its place.

And he says in verse three, if indeed having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.

For we who are in this tent that is in this physical body grown, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed. That means we don't want to be disembodied spirits.

That's not our goal. Our goal is not that we can spend all eternity as disembodied spirits in heaven, but rather to be further clothed. That mortality may be swallowed up in life.

Now, mortality swallowed up in life is a term Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 15 of the resurrection body. This mortality shall put on immortality. He's talking about the resurrection.

When we die, we put off this clothing, this tent that we're living in, and we will be unclothed temporarily. We'll be disembodied spirits, but not forever. We're not we're not groaning for that disembodied state.

We're growing something beyond that, where when Jesus comes back and raises our bodies from the dead, this mortality will put on life. And that's the further clothing. The body that we will put on is the permanent.

See, it's like into a building instead of a tent. A tent is a temporary dwelling place. A building is permanent.

And so our present bodies are like comparable to a tent that we're living in. But when in the resurrection body, it'll be indestructible. It'll be immortal.

It'll never wear out. And so it'll be like a building that we put on and we live in instead of this tent. But the building is our resurrection body, I believe he's talking about.

And it is enjoyed when this mortal body puts on immortality. So we'll have immortality and glory and likeness of the body of Jesus at his resurrection. And that's going to be good.

I mean, that's real good, because I mean, even in this present state, a lot of people like their bodies, but there's times you don't when you have a headache or injury or when you have to go under the knife for surgery or, you know, when there's something else about your body that's uncomfortable or as you watch your body get older and uglier and you think, well, you know, I used to be so used to be so good looking. Now, look at me. I'm an old geezer.

You know, I mean, these those things make your, you know, your enjoyment of your body somewhat. It tempers it, let's say. Well, you know, it makes our enjoyment of our body not altogether positive.

But when we have all of those undesirable things removed and we are in bodies that are perfect and glorified forever, that's that's that's that's a good thing. Now, I've already pointed out that the location of this is not heaven for eternity. Heaven is where we go if

we die until Jesus comes back.

But when he comes back, we come with him. And let me show you in John 14. I know what I have to say about this passage is well known to some of you students.

So I think it's come up before, but not everyone here has been in classes. And this is relevant because it's a very a very favorite verse of many people about when Jesus comes back and what was going to happen to us at that time. In John 14, one, Jesus said, Let not your heart be troubled.

You believe in God. Believe also in me and my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again to receive you to myself that where I am there, you may be also now. Jesus was going away into heaven.

He was on earth when he said this is going away into heaven. But he said, if I go, I'm going to come back. So he predicted that although he was going to be in heaven for all, he wasn't going to be there permanently.

I'm going for a while. I'll be preparing a place for you and I'll come back and I'll receive you to myself. Now, many Christians see this as him coming back and rapturing the church and then taking us back into heaven.

To live with him. But that's not the case. And they think these many mansions that he speaks of are in heaven.

This is a really amazingly misunderstood passage, because so many Christians, they say my father's house are many mansions. They assume the father's house is heaven and the many mansions is where we're going to be living. You know, and so he's going to come back and receive us to himself and take us back to heaven to live in these mansions.

The passage has an entirely different meaning and it's misguided. First of all, the word mansions is a strange, bizarre translation. The word in the Greek doesn't mean mansions.

It doesn't mean houses, but it comes closer to houses. The word house would be an OK translation, though not exact. But mansion is a really strange translation because a mansion is not only a house, but a particular kind of lavish house.

The word that is translated mansion simply is abiding place, a dwelling place. Now, of course, that could be a house. But some translations even say rooms, because you said in my father's house are many of these abiding places.

But the point here is he's not talking about us going and abiding in these places. Who lives in the father's house? The father, it's his house. And he abides in many abiding places in his house.

How do I know that he means this? Well, if you look just later in the same chapter and in verse 23, Jesus said, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. Now, the word home there is the same word that's translated mansions in verse two. And the word is found only in these two places in the Bible.

This particular Greek word is not found anywhere in the Bible except these two places in the same chapter. Strangely, the first time it was translated mansions and here home, but in both places, it means abiding places. In fact, it's a noun form of the Greek word to abide.

Jesus and John says, abide in me, abide in my words, if I abide in, if you abide in me and my words abide in you. The word abide is a verb. Then the word that is a noun here is the noun form of that word.

It's an abiding. In my father's house are many abiding places. Well, who abides in them? Us when we go to heaven? No, God abides in those abiding places.

It's his house. He lives in his house and he abides in many abiding places in this house. Well, what is God's house? According to Scripture, God's house is the church, the house of God, not the building.

We are living stones as individuals built up into a spiritual house, Peter says in first Peter two five. In Hebrews three, six, it says Christ is Lord over head, over his own house, whose house we are, us people. We are his house.

Collectively, all the Christians on the planet are God's house. And in that house are many individual abiding places where God lives. Where are they? Well, if anyone loves me and keeps my word, my father and I will come and make our abode with him, he says in verse twenty three.

The point here is the many abiding places in God's house are many individual Christians in the collective body of Christ, which is God's house. Now, I would say if this is a strange concept to just get a concordance and look up all the places talking about God's house or the house of the Lord. In the Old Testament, the house of the Lord is always the tabernacle or the temple.

It's not heaven. God's house in the Old Testament is the temple of Solomon or the tabernacle that Moses built before that. That's God's house.

In the New Testament, the church, the collective body of Christ, the community of saints,

is the temple of the Holy Spirit, is the tabernacle, is the house of God. And you'll never find it otherwise in the Bible. You'll never find the house of God a reference to heaven.

Now, God lives in heaven, but the term house of God always refers to something on earth. God dwells with his people in his people. And so Jesus said, my father has a house.

Well, that's the church. There are many abiding places that God abides in, all parts of his house. And each of you, if you love me and keep my commandments, can be one of those abiding places, part of the church.

And I'm going to go away and prepare a place for you that is in my father's house. When Jesus left, he sent his spirit back and the spirit placed us, each of us, in the body of Christ, according to 1 Corinthians 12. Each of us has a place in the body as the spirit has placed each one.

But the spirit wouldn't come if Jesus didn't go. So I have to go away so that you can occupy a place in my father's house, in the church. And after I've done that, sometime later, I'm going to come back and receive you to myself.

Now, to myself doesn't mean to heaven. It just means to where he is. And we were told in scripture he's going to be here.

So we're going to be gathered to him. There's nothing here about us going to heaven. There is something here about Jesus going to heaven.

But there's nothing in this passage about us going to heaven. While he is gone, he has given us a place in his body, in his father's house, the church, the temple of God. When he comes back, we'll be gathered to him here.

Now, of course, that doesn't discuss the question of what happens if we die. That's discussed elsewhere. And we do, in fact, go to heaven to be with Jesus when we die, if we die before he comes back.

But he is not here discussing that, of course. And he's not even discussing us going eternally to heaven or even eternally living in a house or a mansion somewhere. That's an entirely different concept than what he's teaching here, it seems to me.

Now, one of the great features of our eternal state is, according to scripture, that we will see God. Now, seeing God isn't something you're excited about. You might need to get converted.

You know, Rodan is out there. Pterodactyl, I heard it. But, you know, if seeing God doesn't turn you on, you don't have any switches because that's what it's all about.

That's what Adam and Eve lost. They walked with God in the cool of the day before they fell. And then they were lost to that privilege and God has been invisible to man, not

accessible to man.

But Jesus said in Matthew 5, 6, he said, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. That is the blessing that comes to the Christian ultimately, that we will see God. And in 1st John 3, we've already talked about it.

Beloved, it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, because we will see him as he is. That's the great privilege of our eternity, is that we live in the presence of Jesus and of God and we can see them on a moment, day by day basis. There won't be individual days, I don't think, but the point is we can forever be in their presence and see him.

Which I wish I could now, frankly, but I'm looking forward to it very much. Dying is actually going to be good, too, in that respect, because I'll see him then, too. But in eternity, we'll see him forever.

It says that in Revelation 22 also, in verse 4, it says, They shall see his face, this is the people in the New Jerusalem, they shall see his face and his name shall be in their foreheads. So this is one of the features of our eternal state that is the big draw, the big incentive, is to see God and to see his face all the time. So we'll have glorified bodies, we'll have a physical state in a physical world that is perfect.

And you probably won't even have to work out with weights and stuff to keep your body perfect. You know, we'll all look like Arnold and us guys and and we'll live in a world that just doesn't have any centipedes or mosquitoes or bad stuff. That's that's what the Bible apparently teaches.

Now, of course, we always wonder what are we going to be doing all this time? You know, sometimes when I have extra time on my hands, I get bored just having an hour free and I don't have anything to do. What are we going to do forever? Certainly, you know, that affords a lot of opportunity to get bored. But the Bible certainly indicates that there won't be any occasion to to be bored.

Bored is a negative experience. We're not going to have any negative experiences. We're going to have a perfect existence.

And so boredom won't be a part of it. But but there will be activity. It's not entirely clear what that activity will consist of, but there are hints of it.

One thing is, of course, the question of everyone wonders, you know, when we are in eternity, will we recognize our friends and so forth? I think I think we will. I mean, if Peter, James, John recognized Moses and Elijah, whom they had never met previously, I would think we'd be able to recognize people that we have met previously. It seems to me, I mean, Paul said now in this present life, we know in part and we prophesy about.

But he said later, this is first Corinthians 13, 9 and 12. He says, but then I shall know even as also I am known. That is, when Jesus comes back, he says, now we see through a glass darkly.

But then face to face, he says now, you know, I know in part, but then I will know as also I am known. My knowledge will not be less, but more. That is to say, there aren't things I know now that I won't know then, I don't think.

Except maybe unpleasant things. But I believe that being with God for eternity will be one of the great attractions for me is to be united with the whole family. And I mean, frankly, I don't know if you've had an awful lot of Christians that you've been fond of.

My whole family, my whole my whole biological family are Christians. So I expect to be with them forever. And I expect to be with the Christian body forever.

And the most wonderful people I've known have been Christians. But more than that, there's Christians I've never had a chance to know because they died before I got here. I'm really looking forward to spending time with, you know, Paul and Peter and those guys.

And as well as the martyrs and as you know, you know, Jim Elliott, George Miller, some of my heroes, you know, guys that I really admire. That I'd love to be around if they were here, but they're not. They're in heaven and they'll be with us in the new earth and they'll be our companions.

It's not going to be boring at all. I mean, if you like the people you're at the school for nine months because you find conversations with them edifying and uplifting. Well, just multiply that by several millions with people a lot better than what you're here with.

It's very interesting, very fun, I think. But of course, an aspect of our eternal existence will be worshipping God. And that's probably where the imagery of us having halos and wings and sitting on clouds and playing harps and stuff, which is so, so classic.

I'm sure it arose from the fact that in the book of Revelation, the 24 elders had harps. And of course, they didn't have halos as far as you know, or wings. But the point is, there's a bunch of imagery that that has entered into the traditional mythology of heaven.

But there will, I don't know if there's any music. I'm sure there probably will be. I think God really likes music.

And when John was caught into heaven, he heard a lot of music going on, a lot of singing. But worship isn't just singing. Now, I think that maybe if we spent all eternity just around the throne singing and worshipping Jesus, it would probably never get boring.

But that's not all we're going to do, because worship is more than just singing. Worship is more than just going to a church meeting. Worship is, in scripture, always likened to offering a sacrifice.

But we offer spiritual sacrifices now. Jesus said God's looking for those who worship in spirit and in truth. And our spiritual worship is comprised of things we do every day.

We offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. That's an act of worship. It's our reasonable worship, Paul said.

But what does it really mean, offering my body as a living sacrifice? It means I live for God. It means when I'm at my job or when I'm at the store or when I'm with my family. I am consciously doing in my life what I've yielded myself to God to do.

And, you know, it doesn't mean I'm doing religious things all the time. Worship of God is not strictly a religious activity. Living for God is a form of worship.

In fact, one of the main words for worship in the Hebrew Bible is simply the word for service. And the Bible says that we are going to be serving him perpetually. Over in Revelation 22.3, one of, you know, a number of places we could look at.

Revelation 22.3 says there shall be no more curse. But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it and his servants shall serve him. Now, what do his servants do to serve? It depends on what needs to be done, I suppose.

But I serve Jesus now. So do you. And it doesn't mean, you know, that we do something that we can't relate to.

We can all relate to what we do on a daily basis. If you're a servant of God, when you go to school, when you work, when you do anything. If you're doing it unto the Lord, that's your service and worship.

You're presenting your body as a living sacrifice. You're offering yourself, your activities, the members of your body, yielding your members as instruments of righteousness. That's all part of your spiritual worship, Paul said.

And so our lives in the new earth needn't be depicted as in some kind of sterile church type meeting where we're all just singing and stuff. That is, of course, how the book of Revelation in chapters four and five depict what John saw. But John was not viewing the eternal state.

Nor probably was he viewing anything in literal. He's being a symbolic vision. Obviously, what is conveyed there is that after we die, we continue to worship God continually, but the worship may take as many forms as it takes now.

There is a number of places in Scripture that indicate we're going to reign with him or

rule with him. And I've always wondered, I guess, who we're going to rule over. And the answer is not really exactly clear in Scripture.

There's a number of possibilities. But the point is that ruling is an activity that when God made Adam and put him in the garden, he gave him dominion over the garden. He ruled over the world, over the animals, over the plants.

He used to dress the garden and keep it. I mean, in other words, he's involved in animal husbandry and horticulture and things like that. That's part of his ruling in the world.

But I believe there will be also some people ruling over other people. I don't know exactly what form that will take because some of it is expressed in parables and not in necessarily literal teaching. But remember, there's that one story and it might be worth looking at because it certainly addresses this, though perhaps not literally because it is a parable.

But in Luke 19, verse 12 and following, Jesus said, a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So that's Jesus going away, going to heaven before he returns. But he does return.

And this talks about what happens when he returns. So he called before he left, he called 10 of his servants and delivered to them 10 minas, which would be an increment of money, and said to them, do business till I come. The idea was for them to take his money and as stewards to invest it and increase his riches so that when he came back, they would have brought profit to him, just like a manager of a store.

If he doesn't own the store, he's hired by the owner to increase the profits of the store that accrued to the owner. So these are managers given, they're entrusted with some of the master's money in order to enrich their master by intelligent use of it, by increasing it so that when he comes back, they can say, here's what I've earned for you. Here's the profits your business has made under my management.

So they weren't all given exactly the same amount. It says. His citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him saying, we will not have this man reign over us.

That's, of course, a reference to the fact that the Jews rejected Christ. And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him and that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first saying, Master, your mina has earned 10 minas.

And he said to him, well done, good servant, because you were faithful over little, have authority over 10 cities. And the second came saying, Master, your mina has earned five minas. Likewise, he said to him, also be over five cities.

Then another came saying, Master, you know, here's your mina, which I have kept and I haven't invested and didn't make any money for you. And he was not pleased with that. But the point I want to bring out is that those who invested his resources well and brought profit to him, the reward they had was to be over to rule over cities.

Now, again, the ruling over cities may simply be part of the trappings of the story and may not correspond exactly to that exact activity in what it's alluding to in heaven or in the new earth. But it is possible because if Adam and Eve had not fallen, they would have still had a lot of kids, of course. God told them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

And their kids probably lived in organized communities of some sort. And there might well have been some delegated, you know, leadership over different activities. And for all I know, in fact, I frankly kind of expect, though I couldn't press the parable too far since it is a parable, I expect that with the millions of people living in the new earth who are redeemed, that they will be organized.

We will be organized into some kind of communities, cities or whatever. And some people will rule over other people. Now, I don't know if this just means that the Christians who paid the ultimate sacrifice in martyrdom or people who've lived more sacrificially than others are going to have positions of authority over others who didn't as much.

I mean, let's face this. We have a lot of people who make it into heaven who didn't sacrifice or suffer as much as others did. The Bible says if we suffer with him, we will reign with him.

Obviously, our suffering is related to our reigning. Our affliction is related to the glory. It works for us.

And he turned away the glory, the glory and the authority and the reward and so forth that we have is somehow associated with the degree to which we sacrificed and suffered for Christ in this life. And so I believe that there probably will be like human society on the new earth that's organized, not entirely unlike that which we're familiar with. Only there will be crime.

There won't be sin. There won't be unhappiness. There won't be anything that makes any life unpleasant at all.

It'll be just like, you know, leave it to Beaver or something, you know, and be perfect and flawless families, flawless communities. And there will be people in charge. So some will rule over others.

Now, it's possible that all will rule in the sense that Adam ruled over the creation. That all who live at all as human beings in the new earth will have authority over it. I mean, there's different degrees of authority.

Almost everyone has authority over something, you know, whether a father and mother have the authority of their children or the children have authority over their dog or something. You know, there's some everyone rules. The human the human condition in the image of God is to rule over something, to have dominion over creation and sometimes over other people in some sense.

But there won't be any domination. There won't be any ego trips. There won't be any, you know, oppression.

But insofar as there is organized society of any kind, there will have to be some organization and and probably people who have responsibility. And that may be hinted at when Jesus says, OK, this person is going to rule over 10, say, this is your rule over five, because he was very faithful with what he was given to do in this life. And this suggests, of course, I mean, this suggests something not so much about what eternity is going to be like as what now should be like, because Jesus' parable is telling us the dealing with these menas is what we're doing now.

And, you know, on the day of reckoning, when Jesus says to some people, rule over 10 cities and someone else rule over five cities. And even if that's not literally ruling overseas, if that refers to something else, there's definitely a difference in status, a difference in privilege that those who got the five cities are going to say, dang, I wish I had been more diligent to produce 10 menas so that I'd have 10 cities, too. I'm not saying there'd be jealousy.

I'm saying there'd be a sense that I could have done better. With my opportunity, I didn't think to do so, you know, I was more interested in being comfortable in this life, I was more interested in having things my way in this life. And if I had invested my life more thoroughly in the things of the kingdom of God today, I'd be getting the reward for it.

And that's forever. From the time we go in, I don't think there's going to be changes after that. Now, I could be wrong.

Maybe there'll be advancement after that. But and it's entirely possible, I suppose. But certainly Jesus' teaching has its implication for this life that when we stand before Jesus and he consigns us to our eternal condition, it will be rated and gauged by what we did in this life and how much we were committed to his service here.

In this life, this life that is a probation. This life isn't life. This is probation for life.

Life is when we is at the resurrection. That's when eternal existence enters its eternal mode. Until then, everything we do now is simply a test.

Will I live for myself or will I live for God? I've got multiple opportunities every day to do one or the other. And the choices I make are going to have something to do with that day of judgment. And the way I live, the things I do, the sacrifices I make right now,

those are going to be something I'll be rewarded for commensurately in eternity.

And, you know, if I do more, I'll have more to be happy about forever. If I do less, I'll probably have less to be happy about. No one's going to be unhappy, but some will have reason to be happier.

And some will have reason I would imagine to say, well, I could have done better. You know, I mean, we know that we'll be aware of that. I think someone, some preacher I heard back in the 70s said, you know, in the moment that we hear the trumpet sound, we're caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

No doubt one of the first thoughts that will come to our mind is, I wish I'd suffered more, you know, because I know at that moment there's not gonna be any more suffering. If I'd had a little more behind me, I wish I'd kind of, I wish I'd made more sacrifice. I wish I'd made more suffering.

I wish I'd been more devoted. I wish I'd been willing to take a hit more in my comforts, because now it's all over and I'm going forever to have whatever it is, you know, my works have accomplished. I kind of wish I'd worked more even and, you know, suffered more and so forth, because it's the chance to do any more of that is gone.

When Jesus comes back, you're not gonna have a chance to suffer for him anymore. So you get to decide how much you'll do it now. It's gonna be the whole amount for all eternity, because after Jesus comes, there'll be no more suffering for him.

There is another aspect possibly of our eternal existence hinted at in Scripture, though it's not it's not expounded. And that is in Ephesians chapter two and verse seven. Paul said, picking up in the middle of a sentence, but he says that in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace and his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Now, this this is a vague statement and it could mean more than one thing, I can imagine. But it sounds as if it might be saying that in the ages to come, he's going to be showing us increasingly the depths of his magnificence and of his grace and so forth. That is, eternity could easily turn out to be an experience of endless new discovery of God.

And by the way, of perhaps other things, too, because everything will be of God. Just like we can learn about God from studying nature right now, perhaps by discovering more about the universe. Maybe that's why there's all those planets out there.

What in the world are they there for? You know, I don't know. I mean, they're not accessible to us right now. But there is an itch in humanity to kind of know, to discover.

That's why we spend millions of dollars to go out there and see what we can find out. I mean, so much money is spent trying to find out if there ever was life on Mars. What in

the world difference does it make if we find out there was? It hasn't changed anything.

That life isn't in touch with us. I mean, but we're just curious. And we will have all eternity to be learning more stuff, discovering more stuff.

I'm not going to suggest, as some do, that we might be involved in space travel and stuff in the new existence. I don't know that we will. I don't know that we'll want to, but maybe we will.

I mean, there is space out there and it'll belong to us because we'll be joint heirs with Christ and he inherits all things. So we do. I mean, all those planets and all that stuff will belong to us.

Maybe we'll have access to them. I don't know. Or maybe they won't exist.

But the point is, there's a suggestion here that in the endless ages, God will still be showing more things, that our learning doesn't end when we die. As a matter of fact, all the learning we do in our lifetime might be like nothing compared to the expanded capacity to learn and to discover in our new existence. So in other words, it won't get boring, I don't think.

I really don't think we'll get bored. To me, and I don't know about you, but to me, one of the things that makes life interesting is learning something new. I love to study and learn.

I even like it when it corrects something I thought before, because I now know something I didn't know before. I like learning. It's exhilarating.

And I have a feeling that eternity will be full of that. We'll continue learning, continue discovering. I can't prove it entirely from that verse, but that verse kind of hints that way to me.

Now, I put in the notes marriage, sex and reproduction, because marriage, sex and reproduction are very major parts of our earthly life. And it's kind of hard to imagine a life without it. I've heard people say, well, if I'm not going to be married to my wife in heaven, I don't know if I want to go, because I love my wife.

I don't want to be unmarried, you know, and so forth. And it's sort of like people say, if there's not going to be any ocean, I can't surf. I don't want to go.

Well, there's not going to be surfing in hell either, I guarantee you that. And there won't be any marriage there either. But Jesus did say, you know, when he was asked about the resurrection, a question that related to marriage, he said in Matthew 22, 30, that those who attain to the resurrection are like the angels in heaven.

Perhaps it's that statement that conveyed the idea to people that we're going to have

wings and halos. Not that the Bible says that angels have wings or halos, but I mean, you know, some people actually, I forget sometimes how ignorant the average person is who doesn't read the Bible, yet they have ideas. They're ignorant, but they have ideas and their ideas are ignorant ideas.

But I remember now, it just comes to me that when I was really young, I kind of thought we were going to be angels, you know, after we died. We're going to be angels in heaven. And I know there are a lot of people thought that, too, that I've encountered.

But I remember it came as a surprise to find out, oh, I'm not going to be an angel. An angel is something else. It's not a human being.

But we will be like the angels, Jesus said, in at least one respect. And it's one that maybe some of us would think about right now, might find it disappointing, but I'm sure we won't then. And that is, he says, in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven.

Well, the angels of God in heaven don't marry and apparently neither will those who are resurrected from the dead. Now, you might say, how could that be heaven? You know, if we can't, I mean, let's face it, marriage, relationship, sexuality, romance. I mean, these are very much the spice or one of the major things that give, you know, spice to life.

I mean, obviously, all popular songs, popular movies are all about it. And people like to watch them and listen to them because we like those. That's romance and that kind of stuff.

That's what really makes life exciting in ways that it wouldn't be if it wasn't a feature. And yet there's a possibility that the whole purpose of God creating romance and sex and marriage is simply for reproduction. When he made Adam and Eve, there were only two people, there had to be more.

But in the new heaven and earth, there don't have to be any more. There will already be millions, you know, so reproduction won't be necessary. Now, all I can say is, if indeed, I mean, it certainly seems true there won't be any marriage and therefore I'm sure there won't be sex in heaven or in the new earth.

If I admit our existence is going to have to have a different mode than it is now for us to fully appreciate that. But we will be in such a mode that we will fully appreciate that we won't miss it. We won't say, boy, I sure miss those days when I was on earth married before I died.

That's not going to be in our hearts. We will be fully satisfied. It's possible that certainly not the sexual aspect, but the intimacy that is enjoyed in marriage, just being one with another person will be enjoyed with all people because we'll all be one in Christ.

That which makes marriage good when it's good is not the sex, but the sense of being one with another person. That's the thing that makes it so gratifying. And there will be a sense that without sexual oneness, there will be that oneness with all people because the body of Christ is one and we'll all be there.

We'll be one with each other in ways that we will probably sense that we don't now. I'm speculating because the Bible only tells us that there won't be marriage. It doesn't say what we'll have instead.

But it occurs to me that whatever joy there is that God created in marriage and sex and romance and all that stuff, if it doesn't exactly correspond to something in our eternal existence, it must at least be a faint shadow of some comparable joy or pleasure in eternity. And there must be something else that will replace it, that will eclipse it, that will make it not anything we'll miss. Now, I just want to ask one other question because we're out of time, but people ask this a lot.

And if you don't have this question, bear with me. But most people do. So I think I think it should be answered.

If, in fact, Adam lived in a perfect world without a sin nature and had everything just the way a man should be happy to have it, why did he fall? And if he did fall, is it possible that we, when we are in a perfect paradise with perfect bodies and so forth like he had, maybe we could fall? In other words, is there a possibility that this whole story could cycle again? Once we've got the new heavens and new earth, is it possible that it could fall again? If the new heavens and new earth is a lot like the first heaven and first earth before the fall, but it fell, could this one fall? And you don't need to worry about that for a number of reasons. One is one of the things that makes us inclined towards sin, of course, is our sinful nature. And we won't have that in our glorified bodies.

I know Adam didn't have it when he fell either. He got I think he obtained it when he fell. So it is possible for someone without a sinful nature to still sin, but only if he's tempted.

Adam wouldn't have fallen if he wasn't tempted. And there was a tempter there. That tempter won't be in the new heavens, new earth.

Furthermore, there'll be no occasion of temptation because temptation means testing. The word tempt and test are the same word in the Greek and the Hebrew. When we are tempted, we're being tested.

Adam and Eve had to be tested. And we all have to be tested. And this life is where we're tested.

And those who get into the new heavens and new earth are the ones who passed the test. And there won't be any more tests because everyone there has graduated. Everyone there has been tested.

And because they passed it, they're there. The ones who failed the test are the ones who aren't there. There will be no need for there to be a tree there for God to say, don't eat that.

Because that was just a test. And there's no more tests. There probably will be literally nothing that anyone could do that could be sin.

Do you know if Adam and Eve, if God had not said, don't eat of that tree, then there'd be absolutely nothing Adam and Eve could do that would be sin. The only thing that was sin was to disobey that command. They could do anything they wanted.

And it wouldn't be sin. The only possible sin for them to commit was to eat of that tree. That tree won't be there, nor any other comparable restriction.

So that doesn't mean we can carouse and, you know, live wild because, I mean, only our carnality would think, well, that's what would be fun. But obviously, without anything forbidden, there's no possibility of sinning. And therefore, there's no possibility of falling again.

There's also another important thing to note, that even if, you know, if what I said weren't true, and if you could sin, it wouldn't plunge the whole new creation into ruin, because none of us are going to stand in relation to the new creation the way Adam stood in relation to the original creation. Adam was the Lord over the whole thing. And when he fell, it all fell with him.

The Lord over the new one is Jesus. He's the second Adam. And he's not going to fall.

If Jesus could fall, I think the whole thing could go down. But he's not tested anymore, either. He endured his test.

He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, and he passed the test. He's not going to be tested. And of course, he's God.

He's not going to fall. And so, there's really just no worries about that. It'll be as perfect as Eden, but without any possibility of sinning or falling.

No possibility of things going bad again. So, that's what I think the Bible teaches about the eternal state of the saved. What it teaches about the eternal state of the lost is much more ambiguous.

Though, of course, traditionally, it's always been taught they're going to burn and be tormented forever in the flames of hell. There are verses upon which that imagery is, in fact, based. But there are some other alternatives that are seemingly at least as possible from a biblical point of view that you may not have heard about or may not know much about.

And so, tonight, we're going to talk about... I'm not going to tell you what will happen. I'm going to talk about what the options are. And I think the Bible leaves it somewhat unclear.

But there are at least some options that are a little more tolerable to us. Not to the unbeliever, to us. But I find it very hard to tolerate the view that anyone I know who is going to burn forever and ever and be tormented forever and ever, that's hard.

That's hard to stomach. If it's true, I'll have to live with it. But there's a possibility that the Bible teaches really something else than that.

And that the imagery that that is taken from has been misunderstood. But we'll talk about that tonight and examine fairly carefully what the Scripture says and doesn't say about the eternal state of the laws. Since a lot of our friends and relatives may be in that condition, it'd be of value to know.

All right. Are there any questions as we break? Now we're going to stop. OK.

Mm hmm. I think probably and I don't know for sure, but I think probably when we're in heaven, we will not be aware of what's going on on Earth. We might remember, we might remember that there are people that we left behind there.

But if we may, we may not have any awareness of their exact condition. See, that's where I would disagree with the Roman Catholics, who feel like the saints in heaven are all watching us. We can talk to them and they can intervene in our lives and stuff.

And my impression is that, well, I don't know how literally to take the story of Lazarus and the rich man, but the rich man was tormented in flames. He remembered that he had five brothers, but he wasn't watching, paying attention. He wasn't intervening in their lives.

He remembered there were people in his life back at Earth who were not yet where he was going. But he was he wasn't watching them or keeping tabs on them or anything like that. And I think that when we're in heaven, the fortunes of our friends and loved ones here will not be known to us in detail.

I mean, even if we left loved ones behind who were not yet saved, we will have at least the luxury of thinking, well, maybe they will get saved. Maybe they already have. And we don't know it, you know, but we won't have to be plagued by watching horrible things happen to people we love because I don't think we'll be watching.

Missing that, you know, I don't think we will miss them. I think and I think that's, again, partly because of the change in our nature. We will be I think we'll be very fulfilled in in and absorbed in Jesus.

You know, I mean, I don't know if Revelation chapter four and five are describing the way it literally is in heaven or if it's symbolic, but certainly the impression is given that those who have gone to be with the Lord in heaven are focused on him, enamored with him, absorbed, you know, not spending their time worrying about people on earth. Now, it's true the martyrs are said to say, Lord, how long before you judge and avenge our deaths on those who dwell on the earth? But I think that just reflects that they know that the end hasn't come and they haven't the wicked who killed them have not yet faced judgment. But I don't know that it means that they're watching and know the details of what's going on down there.

Some of those questions are not able to be answered with certainty.