

Heaven and Home!

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The older I get the more I long for heaven and home and I have good reason to do so. For one thing, the number of friends on the other side of the Valley of the Shadow of death is growing. My wife, my father, my mother are all there. There could soon be more loved ones on the celestial heights than here on earth.

There are men and women over there who taught me about the Saviour and instructed me in His Word. There are those who held the torch of truth high for me to see the way of the Lord and I want to thank them all one day.

It got that way with Paul when he said,

*"I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is **FAR BETTER**: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you"* (Phil.1:23-24).

Nevertheless, the earthly journey has been a grand experience in spite of all its trials. It has been the **time of espousals** when we lived in anticipation of being forever with our beloved heavenly bridegroom. The years on earth have been a learning and a yearning experience knowing that our future is secure, that we are assured of a home in heaven and our names are fixed in the Lamb's book of life. It has been a privilege to suffer for His sake for we know that *"our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"* (2Cor.4:17).

Heaven is far better! Yes far better! Why? Because to be with Christ; is far better than anything down here. What bride would prefer engagement to marriage? Who would prefer to walk by faith more than to see His face? When we see Him *"we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is"* (1John3:2).

Everything is better in heaven; the company, the accomodation and employment are better.

The fellowship is better in heaven. The company is vast. There are millions of holy angels and millions of saints. There are Old Testament saints and New Testament saints. There are martyr's, apostles, prophets, and humble obscure believers

who spent their life in devoted service for Christ. There are godly mothers and fathers who brought up their children in the fear of the Lord: all are trophies of God's grace!

There are Chinese, Japanese, Russian, English, African, Indian, in fact every nation will be there and every one singing in the language of heaven in sweet harmony without the slightest discord:

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev.5:12).

Every soul in heaven will sing from the same hymn book. There will be no rowdy drums to bruise the eardrums; just harps that lead the praise of the redeemed from every kindred and tongue and nation.

There will be one language in heaven. The Babel of tongues will be for ever passed for multiculturalism has no place there. Every soul in heaven was required to take out citizenship in heaven before they arrive at the pearly gates. They are all *"no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God"* (Eph.2:19).

On earth each saint was an ambassador in a foreign land to represent the interests of the King of heaven. As each redeemed soul enters heaven's gates it is treated as a home-coming.

There is accomodation provided in heaven. Every redeemed soul will have their own mansion in the City of God: in the *"Father's house"* (John 14:2). No maintenance will be required for every inheritance is *"incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away"* (1Pet.1:4). Every apartment will last for eternity and never need to be refurbished. Nobody is evicted in heaven.

Every neighbour will be a sinless saint filled with the joy of the Lord and with endless stories to tell of battles fought and victories won. There they *"rest from their labours and their works do follow them"*(Rev.14:13). Every story recounted will be to the praise of His grace.

Nobody arrives at heaven's gate alone for we are triumphantly *"carried by the angels"* from earth to heaven (Luke 16:22). Those ministering spirits (Heb.1:14) who served us well during our earthly journey will usher us into heaven with shouts of

praise to Him who saved us by His grace. The angels that rejoiced the day we repented (Luke 15:10) and shouted, "A sinner has come home!" will again raise their halleluiahs and cry, "A saint has come home!"

Everyone will be fully employed in heaven: all will have meaningful tasks to perform for "*his servants shall serve Him*" (Rev.22:3).

Work in heaven will be interesting and responsible for the redeemed will "*reign for ever and ever*" (Rev.22:5). Angels will serve us for God has promised that "*we shall judge angels*" (1Cor.6:3).

Nobody in heaven is neglected or ignored in the great innumerable multitude for they all "*shall see His face*" (Rev.22:4).

There will be no need for introductions in that city of gold for we will have perfect knowledge and there will be instant recognition just as Peter, James and John instantly knew Moses and Elias on the Mount of transfiguration.

Heaven is far better because it is a clean place:

"there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev.21:27).

People are better dressed in heaven and no soul will be untidy for all are

"arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev.19:8).

Heaven is far better because it will be full of surprises. We cannot begin to imagine all that God has prepared for those that down here, have loved His beloved Son. The glimpses of glory that shine through the pages of holy writ are but a small fraction of all that God has in store.

When Paul was caught up to Paradise he saw things too wonderful to describe; "*unspeakable words*"; things that earthly language was incapable of telling, and he said it was not lawful for a man to utter them (2Cor.12:4).

Heaven is not a static place and there will be new things to experience because God will make *“all things new”* and *“the former things”* will *“have passed away”* (Rev.21:4-5). Everything that caused us grief and pain will be gone forever. If down here we can experience *“joy unspeakable and full of glory”* (1Peter.1:8) what will it be like when *“our vile body”* is changed and *“fashioned like unto His glorious body?”* (Phil.3:21).

Abraham *“looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”*. He desired *“a better country, that is, an heavenly”* (Heb.11:10, 16).

Why wouldn't he? Its far better than anything down here!

The chorus goes:

I'm longing, longing day by day;

Just to see my Saviour's face.

Longing just to hear my Lord's, Well done;

Longing to receive a crown for victory won.

I'm longing, longing, day by day

Just to see my Saviour's face!

Amen!