

Q5) Earthly relationships after death.

Question: Will earthly relationships continue in heaven, or will we be so taken up with the Lord that we will not be aware of each other?

Answer: An old lady once asked her pastor, "Pastor, will we know each other when we get to heaven?" To which he replied, "We will be far more intelligent in heaven than we are down here, and if we know each other here, we certainly will have no difficulty in heaven."

Peter, James, and John recognized Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration and they had never seen them before, so why wouldn't we know and remember each other when we get to glory! At the Rapture we will receive our glorified resurrection bodies, and at that moment, those who have been parted by death will instantly recognize one another.

The disciples recognized the risen Lord when He appeared to them in the upper room and shewed them His hands and His feet (Luke 24:39), and when Mary Magdalene saw the Lord, although her vision was blurred by tears, once He spoke, she recognized Him and cried, "*Master!*"

Here we "*see through a glass darkly*" and our vision is obscured by the limitations of sinful humanity, but in that split second of time when the Lord descends from heaven with a shout we will be "*caught up TOGETHER*" in perfection.

What a reunion that will be! "*And SO shall we ever be with the Lord!*" Thus, TOGETHER, we shall be FOR EVER in the Lord's presence.

The memories of earthly relationships do not cease to exist in heaven or hell. The rich man in hell still recognized his family relationships after death. He cried to Abraham in paradise,

"I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren..." (Luke 16:27-28).

Beyond the grave he still recognized his place in the Jewish nation as a son of Abraham, and his special relationship with his brothers.

When a man and woman marry they become "one flesh". That is a physical relationship which does not exist in heaven where there is neither marrying or giving in marriage. However, if family relationships are remembered after death might it not be that believing husbands and wives will continue together in the service of the King of kings throughout all eternity, not as husbands and wives but as fellow servants. Of course the resurrection body will be more glorious than the natural body and there will be a new relationship, but who can dissolve a friendship created by God? Marriage is more than a physical relationship.

Saints in heaven are waiting for saints on earth to arrive. The Tribulation

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martyrs were reminded of this when they cried for vengeance on their persecutors. They were told to

“Rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled” (Rev.6:11).

This Scripture would surely indicate that the relationship of *“fellow servants”* as well as *“brethren”* is recognized in heaven. Those with whom we have been called to labour on earth are still *“fellow servants”* in eternity. Death cannot erase the memory of battles fought and victories won, of comfort in times of trouble and adversity, and of encouragement in times of discouragement. If we have come to appreciate one another down here, how much more in the perfection of the Lord’s presence! Surely we will be eternally thankful for the helping hand and the word of cheer. Heaven would be a strange place if it were not the case.

The mystery of God’s purposes will then be perfectly clear, and we will be able to rejoice **TOGETHER** in the full knowledge of all of God’s wisdom in sending the trials that we shared. **TOGETHER**, we will be able to look back over our earthly sojourn and magnify the Saviour for the privilege of being just a small part of His eternal plan. It would be wrong to suggest otherwise.

Our love for our dear ones will be enriched in the Lord’s presence, not diminished. It will be more intense. It could not diminish, for the *“first and great commandment”* is to *“love the Lord thy God with all thy heart...”* and *“thy neighbour as thyself”* (Matt.22:37-39). Our love for Christ is measured by our love for each other.

The memory of great missionary triumphs through this Church age and during the Tribulation will be preserved in heaven as testimony of the Lord’s faithfulness. Chinese will still be Chinese, Indians will still be Indians, and Australians will still be Australians as testimony to the universal grace of God and the power of the Gospel. How could God allow the memory of such victories over the powers of darkness to be forgotten throughout eternity - the memory of souls being rescued *“from the power of darkness”* and *“translated into the kingdom of his dear Son”* (Col.1:13).

Today we commemorate great victories on the battlefields of the world; how much more the triumphs of grace over the kingdom of Satan!

If family relationships do not continue beyond the grave, why does the Holy Spirit identify the national distinctions of the great multitudes in heaven as coming from

“all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” (Rev. 7:9; 5:9).

In the eternal new earth the saved **Gentile kings bring the glory and honour of the nations** into the New Jerusalem (Rev.22:24-26)

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Of course the confusion of Babel's languages will cease and we will all speak the language of heaven - maybe Hebrew? However, it is clear that the orderly formation of our families, tribes, and nations is not forgotten.

One thing is certain. The saints in heaven are waiting for our arrival! They await the resurrection when **they, with us**, will experience "*the adoption*"(Rom.8:23), "*the redemption of the purchased possession*" (Eph.1:14), the transformation into His bodily likeness (1John 3:2).

Today we may grieve the loss of loved ones. Believing wives miss their life's partner and husbands miss their departed wife. God's grace is the only balm in such times of sadness. We cannot possibly understand God's great purpose in removing those upon whom we relied and with whom we served, but it is a comfort to know we will meet again, and the euphoria of heaven will not diminish the excitement of our reunion.

On that resurrection morning we shall be raised "*TOGETHER*"! And "*SO*", "*TOGETHER*", we shall be forever with the Lord. Our loving Saviour treasures our relationships on earth, and would never divide in heaven those whom He had joined together on earth. We can look forward to a glorious reunion!

For ever with the Lord! Amen, so let it be!
Life from the dead is in that word, 'tis immortality.
Here in the body pent, absent from Him I roam;
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent a day's march nearer home.

My Father's house on high, home of my soul, how near
At times to faith's foreseeing eye thy golden gates appear!
My thirsty spirit faints to reach the land I love;
The bright inheritance of saints, Jerusalem above.

Nearer home, nearer home,
A day's march nearer home.

