

Heaven and How to Get There

by Bishop J.C. Ryle

My subject is "Heaven : What Sort of a Place it is, and How to Get There." I am going to tell you what God plainly teaches about it in His Word. True thoughts of the life that is to come, clothe the life that now is, with new beauty and strength. Let us then think awhile about Heaven.

THE PERFECTION OF BEAUTY

It is a place of incomparable external, as well as internal beauty. This appears from such descriptions as we have in the 21st and 22nd chapters of the last book in the Bible. The God of the Bible is a God of beauty. There will be in Heaven the perfection of beauty. Perfection of form, colour, sound, and odour. The beauty that is to be is necessarily indescribable.

But the beauty of Heaven, as good and attractive as it is, will be its least important characteristic. Heaven will be a place of high, holy, and ennobling companionships. The best and wisest and noblest men of all ages will be there. All the purest, noblest, most unselfish the world has known.

The joys we find in the companionship of noble, unselfish thoughtful people here, in the dearest companionships we know, give but the faintest conception of the joys of Heaven's companionships.

Jesus Christ is there. (Acts 7 : 56, "And said, Behold, I see the Heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." Heb. 4: 14, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession;" 8 : 1, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum : We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens"). To Paul this was one of the most attractive thoughts about Heaven.

God Himself is there too. In a sense He is everywhere, but Heaven is the place of His peculiar presence and manifestation of Himself. (II Chron. 6 : 30, "Then hear thou from Heaven thy dwelling-place;" Matt. 6: 10, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven"). We shall hold communion with Him.

A PLACE OF GLAD REUNIONS

Heaven will be a place of glad reunions. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up in the clouds, together with "those who have left us, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4 : 17). The bereaved wife shall meet again the husband she has missed so long; the son shall meet again the mother whose departure left his life so desolate.

There we shall meet again children who were removed from us in all the beauty of their early life, and whom we have never forgotten through all the months and years that have passed since. Ah! what glad days those coming days will be when we meet again never more to part.

There will be no death in Heaven. No breaking hearts as we look for the last time into the faces of loved ones as cheeks grow ashen, as eyes glaze. No watching the undertaker as he screws down the coffin lid on the one we loved, no black dresses and veils, no funerals passing through the streets, no standing by a yawning grave and watching a coffin lowered into it, no listening to the cold clods as they fall remorselessly on the box that contains the form of the one we love so much and whose departure leaves life so cheerless. Thank God there is no death in Heaven.

JESUS THE ONLY WAY TO HEAVEN

Are we all on the way? I fear there are those who hope to be there, but they have not started. When are you going to make a start? You must make a start if you are ever to see the loved ones who have gone before. Remember, there is only one way there, and that is the narrow way.

Jesus is the way, and no man can come to the Father but by HIM. If you reject Him you shut the door to heaven on yourself. Heaven is a prepared place, and you must be prepared for heaven by repenting of your sin and putting your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Saviour.

INVITATION

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