

# ***LIFE AFTER DEATH: HARPS ON CLOUDS OR STEAK ON EARTH? - MATT CANDLER***

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### **I. LIFE AFTER DEATH: MISCONCEPTIONS**

- (1) Is heaven mostly as an ethereal place where we will strum harps on clouds even after “*we have been there 10,000 years...?*” Many love heaven because it is the place where there will be *no more death, sorrow, crying, pain, or tears* (Rev. 21:4). As wonderful as this is, any thinking person wonders, what will I be doing 10,000 years from now? Will I get bored? Will I miss the earth, trees, mountains, books, etc.? Because an ethereal haven on a cloud forever ***does not appeal to most people***, therefore many do ***not think much about heaven*** or life after death. And because they do not think about it, it is ***practically difficult to live for heaven*** (2 Pt. 3:13), especially when we think we might like certain aspects of the earth more but would never dare admit it!
- (2) I have good news! God is going to bring **HEAVEN & EARTH TOGETHER** at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ!,

*“...the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food... a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines.” (Is. 25:6)*

*Having made known to us the mystery (hidden plan) of His will...10 that He might gather together in one ALL things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him. (Eph1:9-10, Col. 1:19-20; Ax3:20-21; Mt. 6:10; Rev 21:1-3)*

- (3) The centerpiece of God’s eternal purpose is for Jesus to come back to ***establish His Kingdom over all the earth*** as ***He joins the heavenly and earthly realms together***. ***Heaven*** speaks of the supernatural spirit realm where God’s power and presence is openly manifest. It is the place believers (their disembodied spirits) have ***temporarily gone for the last 2,000 years*** (the Cross to 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming) until they receive their ***resurrected bodies*** (Heb.12:23). ***Earth*** is the physical realm where human process, emotions & physical sensation have full expression.

- (4) As Gentile believers, our most natural paradigm is to think of ***worshipping Jesus as God*** in the ***supernatural*** conditions of ***heaven***. We emphasize Jesus’ ***deity*** as the ***Son of God***. Whereas, the Jewish paradigm, thinks of ***reigning*** with the Messianic King ***as a man*** in the ***natural*** conditions of the ***earth***. They emphasize the Messiah’s ***humanity*** as the ***Son of David***. ***The full truth is only seen when these two paradigms are brought together.***

### **II. LIFE AFTER DEATH: OUR RESURRECTED BODIES**

- (1) Believers who ***have DIED PRIOR to*** Jesus’ 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming (or those whose bodies are ‘asleep’) ***and*** those who are ***ALIVE*** on the earth will receive their resurrected bodies. However, the ***dead in Christ will rise first*** (1 Thes. 4:15-17) in the time of the rapture (2 Cor. 4:14; 1 Cor. 15:52).
- (2) Our resurrected bodies will be ***conformed to Jesus’ resurrected body***, in ***similar categories & capacities*** (measures) of glory (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Jn. 3:2; Rom. 6:5). The Lord is going to ***transform***, not replace our bodies. The body that we will have then is actually the ***same body*** that we have now. Many believers do not ***really*** believe in the resurrection from the dead. They believe they will get a supernatural body when Jesus returns, but this is not the essence of the resurrection from the dead, which implies the Lord ***actually calling forth our decomposed flesh that is in the ground/sea*** (Paul called a ‘seed’ in 1 Cor. 15:38, Job 19:25-27), ***with our same DNA*** (to the degree that ‘...not a hair of your head shall be lost.’ - Lk. 21:18), ***wrapped in immortality*** (1 Cor. 15:41-53; 2 Cor. 5:2-5; )
- (3) **Nature of Resurrected Body: Jesus’** - able to ascend/descend/fly on clouds of heaven (Jn. 20:17, Mk. 16:19, Ax 1:9; Eph. 4:8; 1 Thes. 4:16; Mt 24:30, 26:64) recognizable (Mt. 28:9, 17; Jn. 20:19–20, 26–28; 21:7, 12) & at times not immediately recognizable (Jn. 20:14-16; Lk. 24:15-31); had flesh and bones (Lk. 24:39, 1 Cor. 15:50); ate bread & fish (Mt. 28:9; Ax 10:40-41); able to vanish (seemingly materialize/dematerialize, Lk. 24:31); possibly walk through walls, though does not say this explicitly (Jn. 20:19, 26); filled with light & glory (Phil. 3:21, Ps. 104:1-2); Light of the world with glory brighter & stronger than the sun (Is. 24:23; Mt. 17:2; Jn. 8:12; Ax 26:13-14; Heb. 1:3; Rev. 1:16, 21:24, 22:3-5); ***Ours’*** - filled with glory of God in ***varying degrees*** (as one star differs from another, there is NOT equality of glory, rewards, or assignments but a vast range in the resurrection) with the same supernatural properties & abilities that Jesus’ body has (Mt. 13:43; 1 Cor. 6:14, 15:41-53; 2 Cor. 4:14; Dan 12:1-3).
- (4) **The Apostles Preached Frequently on the Resurrection:** Ax 1:22, 4:2, 33, 17:18, 32, 23:6, 24:15, 21)

- (5) **Unbelievers will be Resurrected** - Even ***unbelievers*** will receive their bodies back at the end of the Millennium at the Great White Throne Judgment “***...according to their works.***” done in the body and cast body and soul into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15). This “2<sup>nd</sup>” ***resurrection unto eternal punishment*** is referred to as the ‘***second death.***’ As the ***saints*** will live in the rewards of choices/works done in the body, so also the ***wicked*** will live in eternal punishment ***according*** to the deeds in the body (Rev. 20:13; Mt. 10:28; Jn. 5:29; Ax. 24:15; Rom. 2:5-9).

### III. LIFE AFTER DEATH: AVAILABLE REWARDS IN THE AGE TO COME (NOT COMPREHENSIVE)

There is much unbiblical thinking in regards to how people will be rewarded in the age to come for their lives on the earth. Because we hear it so often, we wrongly assume that most every believer we hear “...*well done good & faithful servant.*” Rewards are external expressions of our internal love for Jesus. That which was not seen by others in the secret place will be seen. (1) Glory of God in resurrected body (1 Cor. 15:41-42, Dan. 12:2-3); (2) Varying measures (capacities) to receive the revelation of God (Rev. 2:28, 3:12, 22:4, 16); (3) Strategic work assignments - The saints will have a position of authority in the governmental infrastructure to make important life enhancing decisions that determine the quality of life for many. Saints with resurrected bodies will be made kings or rulers over different spheres of life (Mt. 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom 8:17); some will receive positions of authority over nations or cities (Mt. 19:28; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; Dan. 7:22, 25-27) during the Millennial Kingdom; (4) Praise from God - saints will receive varying praise or honor from God (Jn. 12:26; 1 Pet. 1:7; Mt. 25:21, 1 Cor. 4:5). Some will be exalted with great honor (Mt. 5:19; 18:4; 20:25-26; 23:11-12; Mk. 10:42-43; Lk. 6:23, 35; 9:48; Lk. 14:11; 18:14; 22:26); (5) Heavenly Crowns & Jewels - Some will receive crowns or jewels to honor and openly manifest our loving obedience to Jesus. This is not the same as the gift of eternal life that all believers automatically receive by faith (Rev. 2:10, 17; Jas 1:12); (6) Heavenly Garments - Jesus rewards righteous living with bright & white garments given to the faithful to express their dedication. Therefore, they differ with each believer (Rev. 3:4-5, 18; 16:15; 19:7-8). White garments are not the same as the free gift of righteousness. Justification is a gift by faith based on Jesus’ worthiness, not ours (Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:4-7). Our garments begin with the gift of righteousness that is imputed to us by faith (2 Cor. 5:21); (7) Heavenly Gold, Riches, & Treasure - Riches and treasures in heaven include the location and design of our heavenly dwelling place, our garments and adornments that exhibit our dedication to God. We are to “*buy from Jesus gold*” that we may “*become rich towards God.*” “becoming rich” (Mt. 5:12; 6:4, 6, 18, 20; 10:41-42; 16:27; 19:21; Mk. 9:41; 10:21; Lk. 6:23, 35; 12:21, 33; 16:11; 18:22; Rev. 2:9; 3:18; 22:12). **IMPORTANT:** Eternal rewards can be lost, therefore we must be faithful till the end (Rev. 3:11; 1 Cor. 3:14-15; 2 Jn.8). Like Paul, we must “*press on...reach forward...*” if by any means we may “*attain to the resurrection from the dead*” or all that is in Jesus’ heart for each of us in the age to come (Phil. 3:11-12) being “*counted worthy*” (prepared, equipped) *of our callings fulfilling all the good pleasure of His goodness*’ (2 Thes. 1:11). Many will be saved in the age to come but ‘through fire’ (1 Cor. 3:15) having no rewards, others will be fruitful in varying degrees, some 30, 60, and 100 fold (Mk.4:8). *Every hour is sacred with this revelation*, invigorating our heart with the glory of how relevant & important each hour of our life is.

### IV. APPLICATION: VISION FOR BECOMING ‘GREAT’ IN GOD’S SIGHT

(1) God invites “whosoever” or everyone (Mt. 5:19; 20:26-27; 23:12), to be great in His sight in the Kingdom, without regard to outward achievements, natural gifting, resources, or impact, but by the development of our heart responses in love and meekness; a main teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:5, 12, 19, 46; 6:1, 4, 6, 18, 20; 7:2). God invites all to greatness. We cannot repent of the desire for greatness b/c God designed our spirit with this longing. We must repent for seeking greatness in a wrong way or neglecting to seek it. (Heb. 11:6).

(2) Our reward is partially given in this life and mostly in the age-to-come. However, when God does release tokens of our reward in this life, it is MOSTLY by a release of His Spirit in our inner man (making us perfect or blameless in holiness (1 Cor. 1:8; 1 Thes. 3:13; Eph. 3:14-19; 1 Thes.4:3; Mt. 6:22) and secondarily it is increased blessing in circumstances (more honor, money and comfort). It is common for the few who do focus on receiving God’s rewards to put most of their emphasis on receiving rewards in this age in their circumstances instead of their heart.

(3) Life on earth in this age can be likened to a 70-year internship (Ps. 90:10) which prepares us for our life on earth in the age to come. Our next stage of life in the age to come starts in the Millennial Kingdom which is the time when our first main ministry calling begins. This primary ministry assignment lasts for 1,000-years (Rev. 20:4-6; 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 22:5). The choices we make in our 70-year internship determine where and how we will function in our 1,000-year ministry assignment. Few believers will be in government (Lk. 19:17; 16:10-12; Mt. 25:21, 23; 19:30; 20:16, 26-27; 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; Rom 8:17-18; Dan. 7:22, 25-27). Most will be in support roles. Our calling in the age to come is far more important than our circumstances now.

(4) Jesus, Israel, David (1 Chron. 28:1-7; Ezek. 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Isa. 55:4; Jer. 30:9; Hos. 3:5) and the apostles (Mt. 19:27-29; 25:14-46; Lk. 22:24-30; 19:11-27) all have more personal prophecies in Scripture about their 1,000-year assignment.

(5) How then shall we live? <sup>24</sup> *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize (stephanos crown)? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown (stephanos), but we for an imperishable crown (stephanos). 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty (lack of focus)... 27 I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Cor. 9:24-27)*