

*What Will Heaven Be Like (part 2)*

Last week we spoke of heaven as the master reality of which our present earth is only a wounded copy. Our present physical world is an imperfect and sin spoiled copy of heaven. Everything we see in this worldly life has a perfect mystical counterpart in heaven. Much like we are made in the image and likeness of God, yet we are far from being gods; likewise the world we know is an image and likeness of heaven, yet far from being heaven.

The Bible and official Church documents are sometimes not as specific as our curiosity would like. For some of the questions we want to ask we look to the saintly opinions of faithful theologians and good Catholic philosophers. Such answers are not must-believe doctrine but where most of them agree and do not contradict doctrine we can be quite comfortable in prayerfully meditating on them.

We learn that the temporary heavenly experience of our ancestors' souls at present is not the same as the kingdom to come after the resurrection and final judgment. Yet there may not be, a simultaneous, "now," between us and them. We may not be marching to the same sequential time as they. But then a purgatory of souls in cleansing will exist until the resurrection but not after. There is much mystery in this.

Our full attention in heaven is on the glory of God, but we will marvel at this with our friends and family and have godly fellowship with them. Jesus says there are many mansions in heaven. We will have different rewards according to our saintly lives yet we will each be as totally happy as we can be. We will not grieve over loved ones who do not make it because we will totally praise and agree with God's justice and not look back. This life is the time of God's mercy. Judgment day is the time of God's total justice. Now is the time to save loved ones from hell.

Heaven is the destiny for which we are created. Earthly life is simply a journey of choices. Now is the time, with God's grace, to develop and mature our eternal character. Now is the time to cling to Jesus who is the only way to the promised glories of heaven.