

Will Heaven Be Boring?

1. Warm-up Question: On Sunday, Jeff joked about his ultimate career objective to become a Ghostbuster. What would be your best fantasy occupation?
2. Heaven is often pictured as a glorified rest home in the sky, a place of eternal repose where people float around on clouds and play harps, causing some to wonder, why would I want to go there? If heaven was a place of perpetual rest and nothing more, would that appeal to you? Could you be happy without having any responsibilities or work to do for eternity? Why or why not?
3. On Sunday we explored what the Bible says we will (or won't) actually do in heaven. In various places, the Bible talks about us wearing crowns. For example, I Peter 5:4 says, "When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away." Some people believe we will literally wear crowns in heaven. Do you? why or why not?
4. When the Bible was being written, crowns were worn by those who had the authority and responsibility to govern. As such, crowns were a universal symbol of governing authority. Thus, Bible verses about us wearing crowns in heaven were probably meant to convey that we will be partners with God in governing the cosmos. Jesus elaborates on this concept. Read Matthew 19:23-30.
 - a. What is Jesus trying to tell us in this passage about rich people and heaven? Do you think God considers you to be rich?
 - b. Look closely at verse 28. The Greek word translated as "judging" is *krino* [KREE-no], which meant "to rule, to govern, to decide, to judge." Given what Jesus says here, what role do you think the twelve disciples will have in the life to come?
 - c. We might be inclined to think that the twelve disciples will have a more exalted role than the rest of us, but take a look at the three Bible verses below. What do these verses indicate the role of ordinary believers will be?

I Corinthians 6:2. "Do you not know that the saints will judge [i.e., *krino*] the world?"

Revelation 3:21. Jesus says, "To the ones who conquer I will give a place with me on my throne."

Revelation 20:6. "Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection They shall reign with Christ a thousand years."
 - d. When we get to heaven, it looks like we're going to be thrust into some pretty significant roles. Try to think of a time in your life when you experienced something like that – maybe the first time your parents let you drive, or a

promotion you got at work, or something else you did for the first time that felt exciting, but scary because it carried so much responsibility. What comes to mind and how did you feel?

5. To help us grasp the magnitude of what we'll be doing in heaven, Jesus offers another example. In Luke 20:36, he says, "Those who are worthy of a place in the age [to come] and in the resurrection of the dead . . . cannot die anymore, because they are like angels. . . ." So here Jesus indicates that we will be like angels in the life to come.
 - a. What's your understanding of the role and function of angels?
 - b. Have you (or someone you know) ever encountered an angel? If so, what happened?
 - c. Let your imagination soar for a bit. Try to imagine yourself having the power and responsibility of an angel in the life to come. What might be your role in helping God govern the cosmos? What kind of angelic assignments could you imagine God giving you?
 - d. How do you feel about the prospect of having the power and responsibility of an angel in the life to come?

6. If we're going to be thrust into roles of great significance in heaven, we'd better make sure we use our time here on earth to get ready, so we can hit the ground running and don't have to go through "remedial training." ☺ II Corinthians 4:17 says, "[Our] slight momentary affliction [here on earth] is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure." In other words, every challenge we face here on earth presents an opportunity to learn lessons and build spiritual capacity not just for this life, but for the life to come. In Matthew 25, Jesus teaches that when we're faithful in small things, God entrusts us with even greater things now and in the life to come.
 - a. Jeff suggested that our experience here on earth is kind of like playing minor league baseball in preparation for ascending to Major League Baseball. How do you feel about that analogy?
 - b. Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do with all your might." Dr. King said, "If it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures. . . ." Jeff said, "I challenge you to see all that happens right now in the light of eternity. Whatever you face, face it with as much pluck and positivity as you can muster. Be faithful. Make the most of whatever comes your way. And God who sees in secret will reward you in the open, now and in the life to come." Tell us about something you're experiencing right now that isn't easy. How can that experience help prepare you for your responsibilities someday in heaven? What might it look like for you to respond to that situation in a way that impresses God, shows soul growth, and demonstrates that you can be trusted with even greater challenges in heaven?