



HEAVENLY MINDED *for* EARTHLY GOOD

Week Five: "A Change of Clothing"

This week we changed our focus from what Heaven will be like to what WE will be like in Heaven. Have you ever wondered how you will fit in such a magnificent place, in such magnificent company? If we can't get our act together on Earth, how will we ever feel at home in Heaven?

God has some good news for those of us: He plans to outfit us from head to toe. A heavenly change of clothing awaits us. Our new wardrobe will include new hearts, new minds, and new bodies. In the biggest moment of our lives, God will present you and I "without fault and with great joy" (Jude 1:24). Now *that's* quite a feat! Let's peek into God's closet to see what He has in store for us.

When considering what our bodies will be like in Heaven, we must divide Scripture rightly between the *Present Heaven* and the *Eternal Heaven*. (Chart on slide: 3x) As we studied previously, instantly upon the death of a believer, his or her spirit goes to be with Jesus. The body, however, is destroyed by death; Scripture describes it as "asleep." Yet a day is coming when Jesus will "awaken" them and resurrect all bodies, of those in Heaven and on Earth, at one time. So, the question of Day One is: do those in Heaven today have some sort of "intermediate" body, or are they bodiless spirits until the Resurrection Day?

In the Present Heaven, are we **no-bodies or some-bodies?**

📖 Let's begin with **2 Corinthians 5:1-5.**

1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.
2 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling,
3 because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.
4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

- **How does Paul feel about the prospect of being "naked", or without a body? (answer)**
- **How do you feel about it?** (Probably none of us have said, "when I grow up I want to be a ghost!")

So, are we no-bodies or some-bodies?

As the Scripture just revealed, **(1) Christianity teaches that we become more than we were before death, never less.**

(2) As far as we know, the human soul has never existed in a **disembodied** state. God gave Adam a body *before* He breathed in His spirit (Gen. 2:7). We can only assume that God follows the same pattern as He knits each babe in the mother's womb (Ps. 139:13). And I think as we go through this lesson AND the rest of the study, we will accumulate more and more evidence that God, has in fact, given those in the Present Heaven, those awaiting the resurrection, a body perfectly suited for the Present Heaven.

➤ How are Moses and Elijah described? What do they do and what do they know?

Luke 9:28-36.

28 About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray.

29 As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.

30 Two men, Moses and Elijah,

31 appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.

Let's list what we learn. Moses and Elijah appeared in "glorious splendor" or in (3) "splendor and majesty and **brightness...**" (Amp) yet they are identifiable as men. Other passages declare that in Heaven the righteous will "shine like the sun" or "like the stars" (Matt 13:43, Dan 12:3).

➤ Any ideas as to why will we shine in Heaven?

No wonder we will shine as the sun and stars—we will constantly be exposed to the Light of the World! The glory of God is back upon us!

Other notable points:

They were (4) **recognizable** to others who had never seen them before. Very interesting and good to know! Somehow, I believe, we will all know one another in Heaven.

Did you notice that Moses and Elijah (5) **knew about God's activity on Earth?** Jesus tells us that Heaven's occupants are aware when *each person* on Earth repents of their sins and joins the family of God (Luke 15:10). They probably *do not* know and see every detail of our earthly lives—that's God's business alone. The "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1) in Heaven are witnessing something!

➤ We get another peek at Heaven's occupants in Revelation 6 and 7. What did both of these scenes reveal about Heaven and the activities of the people?

The residents of Revelation's Heaven:

(6) are identifiable as **martyrs** (sacrifice for Jesus enters Heaven) and retain racial and ethnic distinctiveness;

(7) speak, **pray**, think, learn, celebrate and interact with one another and with God; They remember what occurred on Earth and are passionately involved in God's unveiling plan.

8) They are aware of the **passage of time** and desire God's **justice**.

Their clothes also suggest a physical body. White robes are somehow representative of their righteous acts done upon the Earth.

Every description of people in the Present Heaven involves a normal-looking human body. If these descriptions are not to be taken literally, at the very least we must assume that the soul is visible. Are you relieved to know that you won't be invisible or unrecognizable?

However, there is a good reason why God plans to outfit all His children with their resurrected bodies at the same moment. I think the reason is found in I Corinthians 15, which is our focus in Day Two.

Paul was persecuted severely because of his belief in the resurrection of the body. There was great debate over the issue in Jesus' day. We see this in His discussions with the Sadducees. Look quickly at a few verses in **Mark 12**:

Then the Sadducees stepped forward--- a group of Jews who say there is no resurrection after death. They posed this question...

Jesus replied, "Your problem is that you don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God...."So He is the God of the living, not the dead. **You have made a serious error.**"

Paul began his discussion in a similarly frank manner:

I Corinthians 15:

35 But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"

36 How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

39 All flesh is not the same: Human beings have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.

40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.

41 The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;

43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

45 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

➤ What did you learn about our resurrected bodies?

(9) The heavenly body is **far superior** to the natural body. Yet there is **continuity** between our earthly bodies and our heavenly ones.

- (10) God is clearly able to create bodies ideally suited to every **environment**.
(11) We will have a glorious body like **Christ**.

We spent the remainder of our lesson looking some more at what this Resurrection Day will be like, and some possible foreshadowing of the event in Elijah's departure and the 2 witnesses, all whom were caught up to Heaven, body and all! In both instances, there were eye-witnesses of their departures! Interesting, isn't it, to consider?

- We studied it more fully in the 1 Thes. Passage. 1 Corinthians 15 also describes this spectacular day. What did you learn will herald the day? (trumpet)

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, (or die) but we will all be changed--
52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.
54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

The trumpet will sound and we will receive glorious bodies like our Savior's. In Day 3 we considered Jesus' resurrected body as seen during His 40 days prior to His ascension.

- After all the Scriptures you read concerning Jesus' resurrected body, how you would describe it? (pg. 156)

When Jesus first appeared to the disciples, "*they were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost*"(Luke 24:37). Let's look closely at Jesus' response:

Luke 24:38-41

38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?
39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."
40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.
41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"

- What was He trying to convince them of?

When Jesus first appeared to the disciples, they were afraid. But after He convinces them that He is *not a spirit*, they are overjoyed. Because of their Jewish beliefs, they would not have doubted Jesus would "live on" as a spirit in Heaven. What they did not expect, even after Jesus' repeated revelations to them, was that His *earthly body* would rise from the dead and live forever. This was *truly* victory over death! *This was their Jesus! He was back!*

- I LOVE how Jesus exclaims: It is I Myself! What does that mean for us?

(12) Eternal life is *physical* life! You will be *yourself* in Heaven.

Although Jesus' body looked ordinary and did ordinary things like eating, it was nonetheless extraordinary! We are promised "glorious freedom" in our glorified state (Romans 8:21). Acts 8:39-40 records that the Spirit of God snatched up Philip and transported him to a different city! In Heaven, we will be *completely enveloped* by the presence of the Spirit. Who knows what new abilities will be possible?

And remember, the curse on the Earth will be lifted as well! We will be in harmony once again; ruling and stewarding the Earth as God intended. Creation longs for the day, as Paul wrote in Romans. Water longs to be walked upon! Oh what surprises and glories await us!

Curiously, nearly every appearance of the Risen Christ involved a meal! Although Scripture suggests that our eternal bodies may not require food as our present bodies do (1 Cor. 6:13), it does imply that food will nourish our souls (Rev. 22:2). Mealtimes inspire good conversation and fellowship. Heaven will be an eternity of both!

- How does Jesus' physical state (and therefore, yours) impact your expectation of Heaven? (pg 158)

Glimpses of the ascended, glorified Christ reveals glory is coming to our "ordinary" human form. Listen to a bit of how John attempts to describe Heaven's Christ in **Rev 1:12-16**:

- 12 I saw...
13 someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.
14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.
15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.
16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

Did you notice John's repeated use of the word "like"? John could not find the words to adequately describe what his eyes were beholding! Perhaps the most astonishing revelation is John's first observation is that Jesus was *like* a son of *man*. One of the greatest yet most humbling truths is that **(13) Heaven's Christ remains a man forever!** What glory and honor God has ascribed to the human race.

Yet Christ is so much more than a man. Further study of this passage would show that Jesus' outer appearance represents *who He is*—His character and His position as the Son of God. His appearance changes in the book of Revelation according to the task before Him.

Again, since our glorious bodies will be like His, what might this mean about our physical appearance?

(14) our character and calling will impact our physical appearance in Heaven as well.

This is great encouragement to be heavenly minded! So much of our character is forged in times of difficulty. Paul tells us not to lose heart, for our troubles are achieving an eternal glory that far outweighs them all! So we fix our eyes on what is seen, the eternal, rather than on what is unseen, the temporary. Your character, your acts of obedience, the tough stuff of this Earth is not for naught! It will impact eternity, as well as bear fruit in this life.

- Not only will we have bodies like Jesus, how else will we resemble Him, according to [1 John 3:2?](#) (pg 163) (2 clicks)

All these character traits of Jesus are ours now to the degree that we surrender to His Lordship; and will be ours fully when our eyes behold Him. We are promised such an encounter with Jesus that our sin natures will be obliterated.

And what did we learn was the description of Heaven most used in Scripture? Joyful! Oh what that communicates to us about our God!

It's important to remember, in all our Christ-likeness, that we will still be uniquely ourselves. Over and over again we see diversity prized in Heaven: individuality emphasized. (15) We will be like Jesus in **character** yet our **personalities** remain uniquely our own. You will be the **perfect** you, yet **perfectly** you!

Sometimes we equate perfection with boring... this life is all about changing and growing... people's imperfections can be the cause of great, horrific harm. But they also can be endearing, funny... so it's good to remember that (16) God has no intention of making us "non-human" in our eternal home; instead He will make us into all He intended **humanity** to be. Blameless. Without fault! Free! And therefore, full of joy.

Some of us have believed the lie that God is joyless and humorless, when in fact all joy originates in Him. He's the one who created the baboon, after all! He made us to laugh! Can you just imagine what God's laugh might sound like? Rom. 14:17: The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Day Five: If I only had...

The Wizard of Oz folks desired new minds, new hearts, new courageous souls... sounds a lot like what is promised to us in Scripture, doesn't it? Again, to the degree we surrender our lives now to the Holy Spirit's work, our minds are renewed; our hearts enlarged; our souls set free. But Phil. 1:6 promises He who began a good work in you will *complete it* when Christ Jesus returns. Does that mean we not have room for more growth in Heaven?

Along with a new heart to love Him, God will give us a *new mind* to know Him.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12.

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part,
10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

- When did we just learn that perfection comes? (when Jesus returns and we are made complete; when we see Jesus face to face)

We now only know God dimly compared to how we will know Him in the perfect light of Heaven. In that day, God's truth will be clear and our present imperfect modes of obtaining knowledge will no longer be necessary.

But again, we won't attain all the wisdom and knowledge we'll ever possess in the "twinkling of an eye." From the moment God breathed life into Adam's spirit, He has purposely revealed Himself precept by precept. His manner of progressive revelation will undoubtedly continue in Heaven. As the created, we will never cease to be amazed by our Creator! (17) God is too rich, too creative, and too generous to ever exhaust. We will never cease to **grow and learn.** We will not only never get bored, we will be thrilled by endless discovery.

Let's look again at verse 12: I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. Eternal life is all about knowing God and Jesus (John 17:3). And not only will we know God as never before, we will also know one another as never before. Consider the context of the verse. Set in the midst of 1 Corinthians 13, the great love chapter of the Bible, it speaks to our relationships with each other in Heaven.

Jesus addressed the issue of marriage in Heaven in *Luke 20:27-40*.

27 Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question.
28 "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother.
29 Now there were seven brothers....
Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"

This is a question many people today have. It can even steal the anticipation of Heaven from those who have remarried after being widowed or divorced. So let's listen carefully to not only what Jesus says but to what He *doesn't* say.

34 Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage.
35 But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage,
36 and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.

- What concerns does this create as well as alleviate? (pg 170)

The fact that we never die puts an entirely new spin on relationships. God has a higher relational order in store for us that will resolve all our struggles and questions. The love we will share with Jesus will outshine all other affairs of the heart; therefore, marriage as we *know it* will cease. But that does *not* mean married couples will cease to love each

other! (18) Our relationships will be **enhanced**, never **diminished**. The closer we draw to Christ, the closer we draw to each other.

In Heaven *all* relationships will be healed and made new---between spouses, children, parents, friends, enemies--- you name them! In Heaven, we will be completely ourselves, our loved ones will be completely themselves, yet all effects of sin will be done away with. We will be the true personality God intended us to be, in all our glory!

Never doubt for a moment that we won't be relational in Heaven! God Himself declared from the beginning, "It is not good for man to be alone." (Gen 2:18) He created us to need one another. He loves our love for each other.

➤ Who in Heaven would you like to sit down with and enjoy a good long chat?

Most people are curious as to how old we will be in Heaven. Perhaps the best answer is that heavenly age is no age *and* all ages.

Without question, God has something incredibly special in store for parents whose young children died or suffered from impairing diseases. Restoring the missed joys of parenthood surely befits God's loving, just, and redeeming heart. God will redeem and restore, comfort and compensate ours sufferings. "He doesn't merely wipe away tears; He replaces those tears with corresponding joys." (R. Alcorn)

Heaven is a place of right relationships with all believers, of all time. So that really impacts our lives today, doesn't it? There are no throw-away, go-away, don't want you in heaven people. Every person you meet is eternal. They will either live forever with God or forever apart from God.

Next week we will explore that issue--- and enter into Hell Week. Don't miss it! Every word in God's Word is there for our instruction and edification. It may well be the most powerful week of the study for you.