

VISIONS OF HEAVEN AND HELL BY JOHN BUNYAN

John Bunyan's Visions of Heaven and Hell The Happiness of Heaven, Chapter 4 - Part 2 July 5th, 2020

We continue today with John Bunyan's visit to heaven, so please read page 9 starting at the 2nd paragraph and page 10 of the PDF above of John Bunyan's, "Visions of Heaven and Hell" with the title; **Chapter 4 – The Happiness of Heaven.**

In the story, Elijah says the following; "*In heaven our understanding and knowledge is enlarged according to the greatness of what we can observe and think. In the world below light could only shine into our minds through the windows of our senses, so God had to condescend to our limited capacities when revealing His Majesty. Our purest ideas of God were very imperfect, but here the gold is separated from the dross and we can conceive the simplicity and purity of God. We understand about His decrees and counsels, His providence and dispensations. We clearly see here that from eternity God was sole existing, but not solitary, that the Godhead is neither confused in unity, nor divided in number. We see that there is a priority of order but no superiority among the persons of the Trinity, but that they equally have the same excellency and power, and equally are adored. Those ways of God that in the world below seemed unsearchable and beyond our comprehension, we understand so clearly here by His divine wisdom that the truth could not be made more simple.*"

We read in **1 Corinthians 13:9-12**; "9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is [a]perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."

The perfect love of God never fails, but our love and knowledge of Him continually falls short of what our knowledge of Him will be in heaven. We are only experiencing a taste of heaven on earth right now, a fragment of the knowledge of God that only exists because of His Holy Spirit who is the third person of the Trinity Godhead.

Jesus talks about the Trinity in the following verses;

Matthew 28:19; "Go [a]therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

John 14:16-17; "16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another [a]Helper, that He may abide with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."

The apostle John wrote about the Trinity in **1 John 5:6-8**; "6 This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear witness [a]in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one."

When a person rejects the baptism of the Holy Spirit and His gifts for them, they are in essence rejecting God and Jesus at the same time, and the supernatural taste of heaven given by the Holy Spirit on earth is limited and often replaced with religious formalism and rationalism that ultimately never satisfies.

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The story continues with Elijah saying; *“These are some of the things that make our souls happy. However, the happiness of the saints in heaven will not be complete until their bodies are resurrected and united with their souls. I will therefore show you what the resurrection body shall be like: “First, the resurrection bodies of the blessed will be spiritual bodies, like mine. You may better understand this not only by seeing but by touch. (After saying this, the holy prophet was pleased to give me his hand.) They will be bodies that are purified from all corruption, yet will have substance. They will not be like wind or air, as people on earth sometimes foolishly imagine.”*

Most people perceive that those who go to heaven don't have bodies that can actually be touched or have substance. When Jesus rose from the dead, His body was flesh and blood and this will be the same for us when our dead physical bodies are resurrected to join with our souls in heaven.

Jesus was raised in a physical body and appeared unto His disciples but at the same time did some spiritual things that went beyond the physical, such as appearing to His disciples in a room without entering through a door.

It talks about this in **John 20:25-27**; *“25 The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” 26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” 27 Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”*

When Jesus appeared to the two men on the road to Emmaus, His identity was spiritually concealed to them, but then was revealed when He physically vanished from their site. Jesus was in a flesh and blood body after being resurrected from the dead. Although it was all supernatural, He was still in physical appearance with flesh and blood, eating and drinking like everyone else.

We'll only read a portion of **Luke 24:13-35** where it says in verses *“15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.”* This is amazing because these disciples had been with Jesus, they knew what He looked like, yet here they could not identify Him. They were talking to Jesus about Jesus, not knowing it was Him. Jesus restrained their eyes, He didn't cover himself or concealed His image. The scripture continues in verses **30-31**; *“30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.”*

This is the type of body that we receive in heaven after the resurrection of the dead when our bodies are united with our spirit in heaven. Resurrected bodies that operate in the supernatural, that are spiritual and that are pure.

We see too that Jesus ate in His resurrected body in **Luke 24:41-43**; *“41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish [a]and some honeycomb. 43 And He took it and ate in their presence.”*

They weren't talking to a spirit, they were talking to a flesh and blood person, the same one who was nailed to the cross and rose from the dead.

John 21:1-14 similarly says the following when Jesus appears to the disciples at the Sea of Galilee. We'll read starting at verse 4; *“4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not*

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know that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No." 6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish." Then verses 9-10 say; "9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."

Amazing again that Jesus' own disciples did not recognize Him. This is the supernatural side of our resurrected body. If we're not alive when the church is raptured and we die before then, our bodies that are in the grave will be resurrected and joined with our souls in heaven and will be as one. It will be one of the most awesome supernatural events the Christians will experience.

The Bible continues telling us in **Acts 1:1-3** how Jesus appeared in His resurrected body to His disciples over a 40-day period; *"1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which [a]He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many [b]infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."*

When Jesus ascended to heaven, He was in a resurrected body made of flesh. While Jesus was on earth after his resurrection, He continued to operate in the supernatural in His resurrected body. He was the demonstration of the spiritual body like we will receive in heaven. Elijah, who did not die but was taken up to heaven in a flesh body was made into a spiritual body. Somewhere between earth and heaven, there was a transformation that took place with Elijah.

There were two men in the Old Testament who did not physically die but were taken up into heaven supernaturally, they were Enoch and Elijah. We read about what happened to Elijah in **2 Kings 2:11**; *"11 Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."* Between earth and heaven, there was a spiritual body given to Elijah, a transformation took place.

That's why until the resurrection of the dead at the end of days, those who die are souls in heaven that are not complete until they are joined with their physical body that is made a spiritual body that can be touched.

When a Christian dies, they are not going to be complete in heaven until they receive their resurrected body that they lived in on earth and this will happen just prior to the rapture of the Church when Christ comes for His Bride. We know that flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom heaven, but our old bodies will become new bodies that are perfect and according the Bible, are neither male nor female but are as the angels in heaven. There will be no husbands and wives, no pro-creation, no intimate relations in heaven. You will know one another but in a different way than when it was on earth.

Jesus says in **Matthew 22:23-33**; *"23 The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, 24 saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 25 Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. 27 Last of all the woman died also. 28 Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her." 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "You are [a]mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in*

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marriage, but are like angels [b]of God in heaven. 31 But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." 33 And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching."

You will be known as you were on earth, but you'll be as the angels; your body will be supernatural and one you can touch. It will be your body that you had on earth but it will go through a transformation in heaven.

In **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** we read about the comfort of Christ's coming; "13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen [a]asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who [b]sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are [c]asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words."

The hope of all those who have died in Jesus is that their earthly bodies will be resurrected at the sound of the trumpet of God, they will rise first. Then, those born again Christians who are still alive on earth will be raptured, caught up like Enoch and Elijah and will not experience earthly death. But the resurrection of the dead is first.

The story continues where Elijah says; "*Our bodies in the resurrection shall be immortal, and incapable of dying. Below their bodies are all mortal, perishing, and subject to crumbling into dust at any time. But here our bodies will be incorruptible and freed from death forever, for our corruption here shall put on incorruption, and our mortality will be swallowed up of life.*"

So, it appears that our souls in heaven are not complete until they are joined with our resurrected body that is made spiritual and yet at the same time physical to the touch.

Romans 8:11 says; "11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies [a]through His Spirit who dwells in you."

Elijah continues telling Bunyan; "*When I say that the bodies of the blessed here are immortal, I am speaking about the bodies in their resurrected state, that then they are subject to death no more. Man in his corruptible state is mortal and subject to death. And there is nothing more evident to all that dwell in the world below. Even the bodies of all those glorified souls that are here in heaven are at this time still kept under the power of death. At the resurrection day, when they shall be raised up again, they shall then be immortal.*"

Very interesting to read that those who have died and are in heaven, are still under the power of death. Only when Jesus comes back to take His Bride with Him to heaven, that He destroys death once and for all. We know He conquered death, hell and the grave at the cross, but when He comes back for His Bride – the church – that the power of death will be broken forever.

It almost seems like a dichotomy or mystery as the Apostle Paul says, because you think that when the soul dies and goes to heaven, it would come out from under the power of death. Well the soul does but the body is still in the grave and that's what makes you incomplete. That's what makes a person still under the power of death

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because they haven't been resurrected yet. The body in the grave, or the one who's been cremated or been dismembered in an accident or burned in a house fire or whatever the circumstance may be, is no problem for God to put them back together again to resurrect them. In that resurrection then, the earthly mortal body will join the soul in heaven and will become immortal.

We read this in **1 Corinthians 15:50-55**; “50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a [a]mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, **then** shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “**Death is swallowed up in victory.**” 55 “O[b] Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”

Someone would ask, how much more victorious can it get than going home to be with Jesus? That's just a part of it! Apparently, being in heaven without your body is a big deal, big enough for Jesus to come back for it and resurrect it from whatever state it might be in, however it may have died or been destroyed or martyred throughout the ages. It's a very big deal to Jesus to see a Christian restored with their body in heaven. The soul in heaven is longing for the victory, which comes from the resurrection of their dead physical body.

There is no sting of death over the Christian, but your final victory is when your body is resurrected with you in heaven with all of the other saints over the ages. It's pretty overwhelming to think that every saint's body who has ever died is in the grave, from Adam, to all the saints of the Old Testament, all the saints of the New Testament, all of the brothers and sisters in the Lord, will all at the same when the sound of the trumpet of God is heard, will be joined with their bodies in heaven! In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye! Those Christians who are alive when this happens are then raptured into heaven. They don't see or taste death.

However, 'out there' this may sound, it's the Bible and it's truth. It is a very important date and time on God's calendar where death is swallowed up in victory through Jesus Christ. There is no sting of death, hell and the grave for the Christian or all those who had faith in God, death is swallowed up in Jesus.

This is the happiness of heaven. That's why we have peace, joy and happiness while we are alive and wait for the sound of the trumpet! Are you ready? Is there oil in your lamp and is it trimmed and burning? Are you a wise Christian serving the Lord or a foolish Christian? Are you ready to meet Jesus?