

Surprised who is in heaven? (and who isn't) #1 of 3 - 20200509

Hi all,

Before I get started I want to remind you of our Saturday, May 16, Zoom web meeting - 1pm Central Time US/Canada.

Registration is above or at our web site: www.cwowi.org

Surprised by heaven

A man had been in hospice the last weeks of his life, attended by a nurse who was a Christian. Over the weeks of caring for him, she ended up liking the grouchy old man, in spite of himself. He had opened up about his life and his many regrets, especially that he had walked out on two young daughters when they were 7 and 9 years old and had never contacted them over the span of more than 40 years.

The nurse led him to the Lord within the last couple weeks of his life, and he was subtly yet instantly changed. At his request, the nurse and hospice social worker researched and quickly found the two daughters who, upon hearing of their father's illness and his desire to see them and apologize, agreed to come. It was a touching reunion by all accounts, and the old man died in the peace of the Lord and in the presence of his daughters.

One of the daughters commented to the nurse that if she had never been contacted, she would have lived the rest of her life with the assumption her troubled father never got saved and was no doubt in hell.

How many of us have friends or family we similarly wonder about?

Is it possible we will be surprised to find people in heaven we had for years assumed had not made it?

I wonder...

We don't know the full extent of the crimes the 'thief on the cross' did to be sentenced to death, but Luke 23: 39-43 reveals he thought the death penalty what was appropriate for his crimes. Jesus didn't dispute that.

But when he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom", the Lord replied: "Amen. I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." Such grace. But only those at the foot of the cross overheard that exchange.

If you were a victim of his crimes you would think he was destined to hell. If you knew him in his criminal circle of friends, you would think he was destined for hell.

Consider that he was not righteous as measured by the Old Testament Law. He was a criminal so he didn't offer the proper sacrifices and offerings as a good citizen of Israel. He was unrighteous by his lifestyle and by the law - but he is in heaven today. A turn of the heart in the last moments of his life caused him to gain entrance to heaven. How many other people are like the man in hospice or the man on the cross, whose turn of the heart is not overheard nor recorded, and everyone who knew them assumes they are in hell?

Getting ahead of myself here, but I want to encourage any readers who can relate to these situations, to check in your spirit for peace from the Father. If you have that peace in your spirit, that peace is heaven's communication to you that all is well. Stay in that peace.

Surprised to find himself in hell

Luke 16: 19-31 is the story of 2 men, a rich man and a beggar named Lazarus. Jesus said the beggar was laid daily at the door of the rich man's house hoping to eat from the leftovers tossed out (garbage), and dogs came and licked his sores.

Both men died and their bodies were buried. The rich man found himself in hell while Lazarus found himself with Abraham in what was called 'Paradise' or 'Abraham's bosom' and 'Captivity'. It was the place of the righteous dead, held captive until the final sin sacrifice had been made which would allow them to go to heaven.

Paradise, or Captivity, was wholly and completely taken to heaven. So now there is only 1 holding place in the earth, hell. (Ephesians 4: 8, Hebrews 9: 23-24, John 20: 17)

Paul would say in II Corinthians 12: 2-4 that he was caught up to the 3rd heaven, to Paradise, what we call heaven. In Judaism the 1st heaven is the air, the 2nd heaven is space, and the 3rd heaven is where God lives. They believed Paradise was a park-like place with grass, trees, water, etc.

He was surprised because...

The rich man was clearly surprised to find himself in hell, for he asked Abraham to send Lazarus to his father's house to warn them because he had 5 brothers and he didn't want them to come to that place of torment.

But he was righteous no doubt as far as the Laws of Moses described righteousness. He was wealthy enough to afford sacrifices, pay his tithes and offerings, go to temple services, and anything else the Law required. By contrast, the beggar was unrighteous. He had to be carried to the man's gate. He couldn't make a sacrifice, he couldn't go to temple services, he had no income to tithe or give offerings.

Yet Lazarus found himself with Abraham, while the rich man found himself in hell. I wonder how many people we think believe in the Lord, and do all the right things, say all the right things, yet their spirit isn't really born again?

Don't get off the path here...

In Matthew 7: 15-29 Jesus sandwiches 2 teachings about false believers and false prophets with this statement: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven; but only those who do the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, haven't we prophesied in your name, haven't we cast out demons, haven't we done good works in your name?'"

"But I will admit to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me you who work iniquity.'" (Iniquity is a lifestyle of sin, whereas 'sin' is a single event, so these people lived a lifestyle of sins).

Many Christians fear for their salvation upon reading this passage, forgetting that the teaching which led up to the above statement, and the verses after, have to do with false prophets and false believers.

Do not believe the claims of those evil people rather than the claims of Jesus. Jesus said 'I never knew you'. That doesn't mean 'I knew you once but you fell away'. He never knew them. If we are to believe Jesus is the Truth and always tells the truth, then when He said, 'I never knew you', it means exactly that. When Jesus said these people actually 'work iniquity', that is live in a lifestyle of sins while pretending to be righteous, that is true as well. He never knew them.

It means their claim that they prophesied and cast out demons and did many wonderful things in his name, is a lie. There will come a day when people will make their case to Jesus for their salvation, but the deciding factor will be whether Jesus knew them or not.

And that is why the man who died in hospice and turned his heart to the Lord, is in heaven. That is why the thief on the cross is in heaven. The factor is, 'Does Jesus know you?' (The false believers above know who Jesus is, for they call Him, 'Lord, Lord', but He never knew them. They know OF Him, but they don't know Him.

So there are people in heaven, and hell, who are perhaps surprised to find themselves there. If they are surprised, then it tells us we will be surprised who is there in heaven, and perhaps, who is not. What is important for us is to refrain from saying, 'They are certainly in hell', for that is not our realm to judge. We are to judge the fruit of a person's life, but the heart is God's realm, not ours. That means we are often left wondering about the fate of those we know or hear of...and we have to go with peace in our spirit as He puts it there, heaven's assurance that person is with Him.

Next week other examples including suicides, a couple stories of Roman Catholics, and more...until then, blessings,

John Fenn

www.cwowi.org and email me at cwowi@aol.com

Surprised who is in heaven? (appearances can be deceiving) #2 of 4 - 20200516

Hi all,

I wanted to remind you about Saturday's Zoom web meeting, May 16, 1pm US/Canada Central time - hope you can join us. I will have a handout for the meeting on the Feast of Tabernacles. Understanding this feast will give understanding to John 7 and 8, and the Millennial age.

I wonder...

A woman in one of our house churches shared her story, about how she was in a coma for about a year before regaining consciousness. She said during that time she heard everything. Everything. But she said her mind worked so very slowly it would take a week to formulate in her mind the answer (for example) to what her mother asked during each visit. She said if her mother visited her on a Tuesday and asked, 'How are you doing?', it would take until about the next Tuesday before her brain had formed the answer, 'My back hurts' - but it never came out her mouth.

Her mother was part of the house church too, so it was interesting to hear from both perspectives. On the one hand was the anguish of the mother not knowing what was happening to her daughter, yet praying and being positive when visiting her. At the same time was the inability of the young woman to respond physically, yet hearing and responding in her mind, and even joining in prayer with her mother.

While in that twilight zone between life and death, she said the Lord came twice and talked to her of her future, took her to heaven once, told her that her time was not yet, and so forth. She always knew she would 'wake up'.

But what if she had died? No one on this side of heaven would have known anything about how she had been aware of her surroundings, heard every word, had joined in prayer with her mother, and had seen the Lord twice in that year. If she had died, none of that would have been known to us. How many stories are out there that we will learn on the other side, of similar situations?

Knowing that every single person gets the same opportunity of choice that Adam and Eve had, life or death, I wonder how many people with their own mortality staring them in the face as they lie unconscious, make a last second decision to call upon the name of the Lord? If they did so, no one on this side of heaven would know they did.

I remember a person in a coma on their death bed, and a person prayed for them, and led them in a 'sinner's prayer', pausing after each sentence, allowing time for the person in the coma to pray along - though the person was unable to respond audibly of course. That person reported upon saying 'amen' immediately the Holy Spirit's presence filled the room, the comatose person got the very slightest of upturned corner of the mouth as if to smile, and then passed. In another nearly identical situation the person on their death bed had tears running down their face. I've seen this several times.

I think there are many like the thief on the cross who make last second decisions for the Lord that we won't find out about until we get to heaven. (I hope I don't ask upon seeing such a one, "What are you doing here?" or "Wow, you made it after all!" or "So they let you in, did they?" or something else that would give away my surprise at God's grace.)

Warning: This may mix up your theology, it did mine

I was ministering in a church near Spencer, Tennessee - a small church, maybe 40 people present. As I taught, my attention was drawn by the Spirit to a woman sitting about half way back on the left side, with a couple children sitting next to her. Suddenly I saw a vision with my eyes wide open, taking place above this woman like I was watching a scene on a TV show. I saw a man with dark hair, clearly distraught from the look on his face, in great anguish, sitting in a rocking chair on a porch of a home, and the man had a pistol in his hand. The vision ended as he lifted the pistol to his head.

The Father spoke to me while I was seeing this: "This is her husband. He killed himself with that pistol, but he is with Me and I want you to tell her that, for she has been very afraid for her husband's salvation and I want to give her assurance." Just then I saw him standing above and to the side of where the woman was sitting in the pew, smiling hugely as he looked down on her and his family; looking at his family with such love and compassion and sorrow for the pain he had caused - it was all so clear on his face, aided by the Holy Spirit letting me feel what he felt in the same way the Lord will, as we are in

intercessory prayer, often let us experience the emotions or pressures of the person we are coming alongside in prayer to carry the burden with. The level of regret was intense; it was bringing me to tears.

I asked the Father, "How is this possible? I've always wondered about people who commit suicide from the verse in I Corinthians 3:17 that says if we destroy the body we will be destroyed." He replied: "Different context. He was not in his right mind. He was emotionally ill. Would you condemn him for being sick in his mind any more than you would for someone who died sick in their body?" "Oh, sorry, you're right. That makes sense."

I shared from the pulpit what I saw and what He said, and tried to communicate as accurately as I could the guilt he was feeling over the harm he had caused her and their children. Of course she burst into tears as she confirmed that's where and how she found him when she returned home that day, and later told me she had been so worried over him, not sleeping, so afraid due to his alcoholism and anger and suicide. She said it weighed on her every waking moment, because she loved him so much and so wanted him to be in heaven.

If you were not part of that service and just knew of the alcoholic, abusive, angry husband and that he had killed himself, you might assume he was in hell. Suicide is murder, and murder can be forgiven. Just ask Moses and King David. Rejecting Jesus is the unpardonable sin, for to reject the work of the Holy Spirit who brings salvation, is to reject Jesus.

Sometimes the problem is us, not them

A member of our church was born into Roman Catholicism, but was later born again and Spirit filled. To her mother however, Roman Catholic was the church, the real church, and that was that.

Her mother started declining and was moved into a nursing home, and the number one thing on her daughter's heart was to make sure mom was going to heaven. She wasn't sure because while her mom said she believed in Jesus, she also obeyed the priests and prayed to Mary, lit the candles, attended confession, and never missed Mass.

I went to the nursing home, meeting the woman from our church there, and meeting her mother. I was respected because I was a 'man of God', though I'm sure in her thinking I was below the level of her parish priest. My role was to listen to the mom and determine for the peace of mind of the daughter, that her mom would be in heaven.

Because she was comparing her salvation experience to her mother's life in the Catholic Church, she was worried for her mother's salvation. I talked to the mom with her daughter sitting next to her. She proclaimed a strong faith in the Lord, said that she had known Jesus since she was a young girl. Yes, she did pray to Mary and the saints as the Church said, but she believed Jesus was her Lord and she felt His presence in her heart. Closed case.

The whole reason for the visit was the daughter's fear for her mother's salvation because she had greater knowledge than her mother. We worry the eternal destination of ones we've loved and lost sometimes because we are like this daughter who had a higher level of knowledge in the Lord and she saw the idolatry and error of her mother's church. Thankfully the Lord judges the heart, not on the basis of church membership, and ignorance does play a factor.

And that's where I'll pick it up next week - what about...? Until then, blessings,
John fenn

www.cwowi.org and email me at cwowi@aol.com

Surprised who is in heaven? But what about...religion? 3 of 4 - 20200523

Hi all,

I've shared how the thief on the cross was not righteous by the law of Moses, yet found himself in heaven, as did the beggar named Lazarus who was also unrighteous.

Roman Centurion

In Matthew 8: 5-13 a Roman Centurion asks Jesus to heal his servant, but when Jesus said He would go to his house, the man replied: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant will be healed."

The Lord responded that He had not seen such great faith in all of Israel. Then further commenting on non-Jewish believers such as the Centurion, He said: "Truly I say to you, many will come from the east and west (Gentile nations) and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the children of the kingdom (Jewish people) will be cast into outer darkness where they will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Cultural note: The phrase 'outer darkness' originally described someone kicked out of party. At night the house and area would be lit up with many oil lamps, and a person kicked out for bad behavior or not having been invited in the first place, was cast into 'outer' darkness - 'outer' meant outside beyond the edge where the lamps shone. They would in anger curse and spew hatred at being kicked out, thus the 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' phrase.

If you were Jewish you were taught the Gentiles like this Centurion don't have a place in God, yet this man clearly did; not by the law, but by his faith in Jesus.

Clearly it isn't obeying the Laws of Moses that make a person righteous, but their faith in the Lord.

In Matthew 15: 21-28 we are told Jesus traveled to the coastal Gentile towns of Tyre and Sidon. These were Phoenicians, translated in the OT English as 'Philistines' and transliterated to our day, 'Palestinians'. While there, a woman came to Jesus asking that He deliver and/or heal her daughter who was 'vexed' by a devil.

In verse 22 she calls Jesus 'Son of David', which is a (Jewish) term for Messiah. Not knowing if she was flattering Him by using the term, or if her faith was genuine, which requires revelation from the Father that Jesus is the Messiah, He spoke to her in a parable. If she understood the parable then it was clear she had been shown who He was by the Father, and if not, she heard a confusing story about bread and dogs and scraps of food.

"It isn't right to take the children's (Jews) bread (Jesus' ministry) and give it to the dogs (Gentiles)." "True Lord, but the dogs are allowed to eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." "Oh woman! Great is your faith! Let it be unto you as you will." (And her daughter was healed from that very hour.)

The Samaritan woman

After Solomon died about 932BC, Israel split into 10 northern tribes, called 'Israel', and 2 southern tribes called 'Judah'. (It was a rebellion over high taxes Solomon's son and successor King Rehoboam, set)

The Kingdom of Judah (and Benjamin) also had faithful remnants from the other 10 tribes. Judah kept the temple in Jerusalem and the Levite priesthood as God prescribed, while Israel made Samaria their home and started their own brand of Judaism, keeping their own priesthood and their own law over the next 200 years.

In about 721BC we are told in II Kings 17, Assyria (Syria) conquered the 10 northern tribes of Israel (not Judah) and relocated the inhabitants. The records of Sargon II, king of Assyria at the time, say he deported 27,290 people and resettled them elsewhere in his kingdom, while importing foreigners into Samaria.

That meant over time the remaining Jewish people married these imported refugees, had children, losing the 'purity' of Jewish blood, causing the 'pure' Jews to hate the Samaritans, and that was the situation in Jesus' day.

In John 4 Jesus is in Samaria and meets the Samaritan woman at the well - who ends up becoming a believer and leading her whole town to the Lord. (John 4: 41-42)

Neither her own religion nor the law of Moses made her righteous, but her faith did.

In Luke 18: 18-23 we have the story of the 'rich young ruler'. When he came to Jesus he said: "Good master, what must I do to have eternal life?" Jesus responded with a question: "Why are you calling me good? There is no one good but God." Jesus' question was met with silence.

In other words Jesus was asking, "You call me good master, but there is no good master but God, so are you calling me God?" We don't know how long the pause was between v19 and v20, but clearly the young man did not respond. His silence must have been deafening.

So Jesus tried another way, telling him he knew the law, so obey that. The man said he did that, which was a bit of a trap for it revealed he kept the whole of the laws of Moses yet realized he did not have eternal life. Upon that admission, Jesus circled around to again tackle the question of who he believed Jesus was by telling him this: Sell all you have, you'll have riches in heaven, and come be my disciple." He went away sad, for he was very rich.

The young man failed both attempts by the Lord to discover who he believed Jesus to be. Clearly it wasn't the young man's religion that made him righteous, for he did all that yet still realized he didn't have eternal life. The issue Jesus raised was this: Who do you believe Jesus is?

We can comfort ourselves in the church tradition that the rich young ruler was a man named Barnabus, who later came to the Lord and became Paul's close friend and ministry companion. We don't know for sure, but I'd like to believe that tradition, and glad he answered the question all must answer: Who is Jesus?

Are there people in our lives who are very religious, yet don't have eternal life? Are there people in our life that outwardly are not 'religious', yet believe in Jesus (and their lives reflect a core moral and spiritual structure)? Who can know their heart but God?

We can see in the gospels that obeying the laws of Moses, whether Jew or Gentile, meant little concerning salvation, but only faith in Jesus. So what about the native in some far off land who has never heard of Jesus? Is there a way they might know Him, even if they've never heard of Him? That's for next week....

John Fenn
www.cwowi.org and email me at cwowi@aol.com

Surprised who is in heaven? What about...ignorant natives? 4 of 4 - 20200530

Hi all,

I added a 4th part to answer the questions: What if a person has never heard of Jesus? Are they doomed to hell because an 'accident of birth' caused them to be born in the wrong time or place?

God must be fair to all, so how does He give someone who grew up in a culture that never heard of Jesus the same opportunity for eternal life as we who grew up in a Judeo-Christian culture? What if they lived long ago, even before Abraham or Moses or before Israel existed, or a nation other than Israel? What about people today who have never heard of Jesus? What has God provided for them to make a choice for Life?

We live in a culture of prepackaged spiritualities

We understand God through those prepackaged spiritualities we personally experience. Many long-time believers can click off the movements of God they've seen or been part of in a sort of spiritual resume': Charismatic Movement check. Word of Faith movement, check. Shepherding, check. Prosperity movement, check. Visiting 'hot spots' like TACF, Brownsville, IHOP, Bethel, check. Jesus coming in 1988, check. Oops, Jesus coming in 1989, check. Apostolic, check, Blood moon scare, check. Messianic movement, check.

Millions have lived their whole Christian lives going from one prepackaged spirituality to the next knowing more about Him than knowing Him, and never thinking outside the spiritual flavor of the month!

Good friends of ours have been ministering to the (at that time very remote) Choco Indians of the Darien jungle in Panama since the early 1980's. When they first arrived and lived among the people they told them of Jesus. They had good success and didn't know why until some of the elders told them in so many words:

"When we first became a people (estimated to be about 900AD) a being in white appeared to our forefathers and told them to worship the Creator who gave them the jungle and all the plants and animals in it, and to love one another; that was what He required. So we've done that, we just didn't know His name until you told us it is Jesus."

(It is not given in the 'church age' for angels to preach the gospel because Jesus didn't die for them, but as a man for man. This is why in Acts 10: 1-6 the angel tells Cornelius how to find Peter 'and he will tell you what you must do', and why the 'being in white' could not preach the gospel to the Choco's.)

The year 900 AD means 900 years after Jesus was in Israel, yet before the Spanish brought Christian religion to the America's in the 1500's. All they knew was to worship the Creator and to love one another. So do we believe all those Choco people who lived between the time the angel appeared in roughly 900, and when my friends told them His name in 1984, who worshipped the Creator and loved one another, are in hell?

Jesus is the means of salvation, but what if they know Him as Creator and not by His Judeo-Christian transliterated name of Jesus? Aren't they still worshipping Jesus? Aren't they still believers in Him, knowing Him as Creator?

Hebrews 1:1 tells us, "God spoke in many ways and in many parts in times past to the fathers...but in these last days has spoken to us by His Son..." What if someone in history knew Him only through one of those ways or parts? Aren't they still counted as believers?

I'm NOT suggesting universalism, for Jesus is the way, truth and life and no one comes to the Father but by Him. I'm merely suggesting ancient people's who lived before Jesus, and those in lands of ignorance, are still given the chance Adam and Eve had, to choose Life or death.

Creator, life or death - the choice - Romans 1: 20-22:

"For ever since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through His workmanship, so that they are without excuse and without defense. For even though they knew God as the Creator, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks. On the contrary, they became worthless in their thinking, and **their foolish heart was darkened**. Claiming to be wise, they became fools"

Notice that Paul says the most basic way of knowing God is to know Him as Creator. When they knew about God, or knew God as Creator, some turned from that knowledge and then and only then, was their 'foolish heart darkened'. But others it is clear, did and do acknowledge Him as Creator. Many of us can relate because we loved nature first, and thought there had to be Someone, God, who designed it all in a general sense, and so believed in God on that level - which had the effect unknown to us of laying a foundation to know this Creator - to know Jesus.

Paul is building the case in Romans that if one acknowledges Him as Creator, it can lead to knowing Jesus. The hearts of those who refuse to know and/or acknowledge Him as Creator have their hearts darkened.

Ancient people

Don Richardson, in his excellent book, *Eternity in Their Hearts*, details ancient cultures all over the world who worshipped the benevolent Creator. In Inca He was known as Viracocha, but cultures from Alaska to the tip of South America it has been discovered, originally worshipped the benevolent Creator under different names according to their tribe or clan. The Incan king Paschacuti described the Creator he called Viracocha:

"He is ancient, remote, supreme, and uncreated. Nor does He need the satisfaction of a consort. He manifests Himself as a trinity when He wishes, otherwise only heavenly warriors and archangels surround His loneliness. He created all peoples by His word, as well as all huacas (spirits). He is indeed the very principle of life, for He warms the people through His created Son, Punchao (the sun disk). He is a bringer

of peace and order. He is in His own being blessed and has pity on men's wretchedness. He alone judges and absolves them and enables them to combat their evil tendencies." (Eternity in Their Hearts, p32-34)

In 1867 Norwegian missionaries went to the Santal people of northern India to preach Jesus. The Santal were amazed that the God they knew as Thakur Jiu (Thakur - genuine; Jiu - God) was known as Jesus. This 'genuine God' was originally worshipped by their forefathers, believing He created the first man and woman, Haram and Ayo, and placed them west of India in a region known as Hihiri Pipiri. But a being named Lita tempted them. "...the forefathers taught us Thakur is distinct. He is not to be seen with fleshly eyes, but He sees all. He has created all things. He has set everything in its place, and He nourishes all, great and small."

In more recent times Geronimo (1829-1909), the famous Apache Indian medicine man who worshipped the Great Spirit and healed people and prophesied and had prophetic dreams, became a strong believer in Jesus having learned the name of the One who had been speaking to him his whole life.

I could go on and on about ancient people's and their worship of Who anthropologists call 'the sky god', but always, before each culture started introducing other gods and goddesses into their lives, the ancients retained the knowledge of the Creator, who is good and the giver of life.

Other Non-Jewish believers in God in the Bible

The Bible is full of examples of non-Jewish prophets, priests, and believers in God, though many remained outside the covenant of Israel - but were still believers:

Melchizedek, Job and 3 friends, Elihu who spoke rightly of God, Jethro the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, Balaam, Nebuchadnezzar, the Queen of Sheba, the widow of Zarapeth, Naaman the Syrian, the people of Nineveh who repented, and so on. All were outside the covenant of Israel but believed, and were accepted by the Lord.

And there were many not born Jewish who were 'grafted' into Israel by their faith, including Caleb (Numbers 32:12 says Caleb's father was a Kenezite, not Jewish, Genesis 15: 19), Othniel (1st Judge of Israel, and Caleb's younger brother), Shamgar of Anath (3rd Judge of Israel), Rahab from Jericho in Moab, Ruth from Moab, Uriah the Hittite, and so on.

Wouldn't we consider Nebuchadnezzar who repented and worshipped God to be in heaven, though he was outside the Mosaic covenant? Of course. The widow of Zarapeth who helped Elijah certainly believed, yet was outside the covenant.

I certainly don't have all the answers, but the Bible does have plenty of examples of people in times past who believed in Him even though there weren't Israelites. Beyond that, modern stories abound of people dying and being pulled down into hell, but remembering what a praying mom or grandmother said, or a Sunday school teacher, and though unconscious, call out to Jesus and their descent is immediately stopped and their motion reversed.

Those who wake up tell us about their conversion experience, but we must conclude there are many others who don't wake up, but continue to heaven. I think we'll be surprised who is in heaven, from some native from a far off land who only knew to worship the Creator and love one another, to the last second change of heart on the death bed. It is pointless to argue what we cannot ascertain for certain, but we can know God is fair, and all get to choose between Life or death.

I will add some final thoughts to this subject next week. Until then, blessings,
John Fenn
www.cwowi.org and email me at cwowi@aol.com

Surprised who is in heaven? # 5 Final thoughts: Royals and non-royals in the kingdom - 20200606

Hi all,

We are citizens of a kingdom, not a parliament or republic

In a kingdom there is a king and the king's family who are royalty, and then there are the common citizens.

We have a King named Jesus. He rules a kingdom, the kingdom of His Father, and as such they have family: us. According to Ephesians 1: 1-8, we have both been adopted into the family through the agency of Jesus and also born into the family. To understand that we are children of the King and therefore royalty, let us look to His original intent with Israel.

The plan of Israel

God told Israel in Exodus 19: 5-6 He intended them to be a "treasured nation above all people, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation". His intent was for the nations to know Him through the royal nation of Israel. They were to have been a theocracy - a nation ruled by God. To no other nation did He extend that invitation. Other nations could know Him through Israel, the top nation of the earth, because God was in covenant with them - not any other.

They were to be the royals, but they failed and rejected their national priesthood...But God got His way, to have a special people above all others, a kingdom of priests when He turned to (primarily) non-Israeli people (Gentiles). Note I Peter 2: 9:

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a royal nation, God's special possession..." It is exactly what God told Israel He intended of them in Exodus 19: 5-6. But now we, you and I, have become that royal priesthood of God, given an assignment to spread the knowledge of God to the nations as Israel had before us....

His plan succeeded after all, as Peter's words are confirmed in Revelation 1: 6 and 5: 10: "He has made us unto our God a kingdom of priests." We are the royals. This is why Paul told the Corinthians in I Corinthians 6:2 that we will judge (rule over, administrate) the world to come and angels. The royals rule the non-royals in a kingdom.

Royals have access to their Sovereign, others do not. We are told to come boldly to the throne. We are told we've been both born into and adopted into the Kingdom. You and I right now are royals - we need to live like it. We have authority to command evil spirits away using His name - why? Because we're part of His family, we can use His name. We command healing into bodies. We live uprightly and holy lives as royals of the King should - it is a process and none of us are perfect (but we aren't accountable to perfection, only to growth).

God wants to expand His royal family

We live in a time when the invitation has gone out to believe, to be born again, to be grafted in to the royal stock of believing Israel. The invitation has been extended since Pentecost, to become a royal: But that invitation has an expiration date.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

In Revelation 19: 5-9 we see the marriage supper of the Lamb. This celebratory feast takes place in heaven while the earth undergoes the tribulation. The marriage supper of the Lamb is with the bride of Christ, (the body of Christ), who, according to the Feast of Trumpets, were 'caught away' to heaven with Messiah at the blowing of the last trump at the start of what we call 'the tribulation'.

"Let us rejoice and exult and give him glory, because the wedding celebration of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. She was permitted to be dressed in bright, clean, fine linen for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. Then the angel said to me, "Write the following: **Blessed are those who are invited to the banquet at the wedding celebration of the Lamb!** And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

When one sends invitations to a party it means some are invited and some are not. We are invited. Others not.

While the body of Christ is in heaven, millions more are getting saved on earth during the tribulation. Millions are being killed for their faith. Many are dying by starvation and disease. Revelation 20:4 does say those in the tribulation who did not worship the beast nor take his number will rule and reign with

Christ for 1000 years - so they will join us in that - but they missed the marriage supper of the Lamb because while we were in heaven they were on the earth in the tribulation. We've been invited to miss the Tribulation because we are royalty, His children, and as Paul told the Thessalonians twice, we have been delivered from the days of wrath and the 'wrath to come'.

Consider also those people who survive the Tribulation will go directly into the Millennium upon His return and the setting up of His kingdom. Zechariah 14: 16: "And it will be that whosoever survives of those nations that came against Jerusalem, will come year by year to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles to worship the King..."

Millions of new believers will survive the tribulation - but they aren't the bride that was in heaven at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

What my angel said

Some will recall me sharing about the time with 'my angel' and the Lord, when I was allowed to ask some questions of my angel. I asked him how he felt about me ruling over him in the next age, and the immediate reaction seen in his face was one of horror that I could even ask such a thing: "It is right! It is proper!" I asked why and he responded more gently, realizing I truly did not understand: "Remember, we know Him as Creator, but you know Him as Savior."

We are in a special time and have been made a royal priesthood, a kingdom of priests. We need to appreciate how special we are in the kingdom of heaven. It should inspire us to live like it. Remember, our King values a cup of water to the thirsty, kindness to children, the giving of food and clothing, and visiting those we care about. Those are kingdom values.

Everything is going to burn away, but people are eternal. That is core to the values of the Kingdom.

We don't know the fullness of the grace of God, but we know He is fair. We know ignorance can play a part in one's entrance into the kingdom, and we know the most basic way of knowing Him is to see Him in creation. We have many more questions than answers, but we know He is just. The heart is in the realm of God and I think we will be surprised who is in heaven...

New subject next week, until then, blessings,

John Fenn

www.cwowi.org and email me at cwowi@aol.com