



Do we go to heaven when we die - or to a new earth?

This is a question I received not long ago during one of our studies on the book of Revelation. I think you are going to like the answer for a couple of reasons. First, it will hopefully clear up a lot of confusion about what happens after we die. And second, the answer is a pretty short one.

And the answer is ... Yes.

"But wait. You can't answer 'Yes' to an either / or question. It's either one or the other."

Actually the answer is yes to both parts of the question. Here's how it works:

At death, the spirits of those who trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior immediately go to be with Jesus. We call that place "heaven." Jesus also referred to it as "paradise." When one of the thieves on the cross next to Him said (as recorded in Luke 23:42), "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom," Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

The Bible also makes it clear (cf. John 5:28-29, 1 Corinthians 15) that on the day Jesus returns to earth, the bodies of everyone who has ever lived will be raised from our graves and be reunited with our spirits for Judgment Day. Those who by virtue of their trust in Jesus have their names written in God's Book of Life will spend eternity with Him in total happiness.

The last couple chapters of Revelation indicate that this eternity will be spent with Jesus on a New Earth that God will create. This new earth will be similar to our current earth as it existed prior to the time when sin messed everything up. It will be an earth where everyone will live in the physical, visible presence of God and where there will be no sin - and thus none of the effects of sin, like sickness, pain, evil, suffering, fear, or death.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net