



What is heaven like?

January's Sunday School lessons made a connection between video games and God's Word. The last lesson was titled "Game Over." It reminded us that every game has an end, and that when the game is over, you start a new game. Life on earth is like that. It will end for all of us at some point. The lesson went on to point out that the "New Game" for everyone who trusts in Jesus is *Eternal* Life. It's the one 'game' that will never end.

The Sunday School lesson about eternal life gave rise to a bunch of questions from the students. Below are just a few, along with the answers.

(Keep in mind that we don't know the answers to all our questions about eternity, because God hasn't told us all that we *want* to know about this "new game" called Eternal Life. He has, however, told us all that we *need* to know.)

Will we be on clouds?

Thankfully, no! I don't know anyone who is really looking forward to floating on clouds and strumming harps as people in heaven are often depicted as doing. I'm not sure where this idea came from. Possibly from passages (e.g. Matthew 26:64) where Jesus talks about the fact that He will return 'on the clouds of heaven.'

Revelation 21:1 tells us that when Jesus returns God will create a 'new heaven and a new earth.' Then it goes on to briefly and symbolically describe the new earth that believers will live on for eternity.

What will this new earth be like?

The word 'new' used in Revelation 21:1 actually tells us a lot. It means 'new' as in "Restored to its original, new condition." It would be similar to describing a formerly-rusted-out '57 Chevy as "Restored just like new."

That means we can look to the original earth as described in Genesis 1 and 2 (before sin came in and messed it all up) for clues about the restored earth.

Will there be animals there?

Yes. There were LOTS of animals on the earth God originally created. In the Old Testament book of Isaiah (e.g. 11:6-9), the restored earth is also described as a place where the animals will all get along with each other and with us humans.

Will we have jobs to do?

Yes. Genesis 2:15 tells us that Adam had the job of working in and taking care of the Garden of Eden. Work was not a curse that resulted from sin. Work is a good thing and part of God's original design. One of the consequences of sin was that work then became difficult and painful.

That's probably enough for now. Next month we'll look at some more of the students' questions, like "Will bullies on earth be bullies in heaven?" and "Will people know us there?" and "What will we look like?"

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net