



Will my dog be in heaven?

I get this question several times a year, most recently a couple of weeks ago. I've also answered that question previously in this column. (In case you don't remember: There *will* be animals in eternity, but the Bible is silent about whether they will include those we had as pets here on earth. In short, "I sure hope so, but I really don't know.")

The interesting thing about this question is that a couple days after I fielded it again, I also found the very same question addressed in a quarterly publication I got in my mail from Concordia Seminary. The point of that article was that at the heart of this "pet question" is really a big-picture question about what eternity is really going to be like.

Articles in academic journals tend to go into great depth in covering the topic at hand - as they should. So, I distilled out a few points about eternity that you hopefully find helpful with your questions about eternity.

The current heavens and earth will pass away.

God attests to this fact through many people in both Old and New Testaments: The prophet Isaiah in 51:6; Jesus in Matthew 24:35. The apostle Peter in 2 Peter chapter 3; and the apostle John in Revelation 20:11 - just to name a few.

The current heavens and earth will be replaced with "new heavens and a new earth"

Again God makes this fact plain in Isaiah 65. 2 Peter 3 and Revelation 21. The current heavens and earth are all marred by sin and will be replaced by a universe that has had all the effects of sin permanently removed.

This new creation will be "new" as in "perfectly restored" not "new" as in "totally different." So we look to the original creation prior to its being messed up by sin for clues about the new heavens and earth. Citing Isaiah 65, the journal article says, "The future new creation will be a reversal of the curse of Genesis chapter 3, a new earth where God's people are active doing constructive activities." Note: In eternity we will inhabit this new EARTH. We will NOT be floating on clouds strumming on harps as some popular myths depict. PTL ! The article goes on to say, "There will be a new creation, established by the Creator himself. The Creator will reclaim His messed up creation, including animals." Isaiah chapter 65 depicts these animals - even ferocious wild ones, like lions - living in peace with each other and with us humans in this future restored creation.

The article concludes with these encouraging words:

"The Scriptures depict life in eternity as active, dynamic, involving worship and work, and all in the immediate presence of the Triune God. Too often we depict the future eternal life as boring. That is not the way the Scriptures depict it.... We Christians have a bright future ahead of us. We will enter the new and greater promised LAND, the new creation, where the crops will abound, the hills will flow with new wine, and the wolf will lie down with the lamb. Then we will see our Creator and Savior as he is, face-to-

face. What a future of eternal joy and bliss. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

Sound good to me!

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net