

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today is Part 5 and the final piece to the current series, *The Meaning of Life*. This is a question far too many people have to ask, especially among believers. We would hope that most would have a clearer understanding of all this, hence this series. We must start with our identity, and answer the question, "Who am I?" Hopefully that subject was covered adequately in parts 1 and 2. The next thing we need to know is the purpose of our existence. That was covered in parts 3 and 4. However, neither our identity or purpose come to their completion or end when we leave this world. Therefore, it seems that a part is needed to cast a vision of the future, especially when one of the chief elements of the Christian life is living in hope of better things to come.

Better things are indeed yet to come. How much better will they be? What kind of improvement are we talking about here? This is one thing we are told;

But, as it is written,

**"No eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9**

We could just stop right here and ponder that verse for the rest of our lives. It would almost be enough to get us through. But there is more, so why stop so soon! We do get brief snapshots of the kind of life Jesus will lead us into at our death. Here's one from Revelation;

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." Rev 21:3-5

Politicians are trying to promise us lives along these lines. Of course they can't deliver on those promises. But, thank goodness, God can. Once he has eliminated all the bad, we can enter into an eternity of the good;

**You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16:11**

Should we stop here? Impossible! It looks like the living conditions in store for us are quite desirable. They seem to be everything we could hope for and more. But what about us? What will we be like? St. Paul has that famous line I always read at the gravesite about being changed at the sound of the last trumpet of God. What does he mean? How will we be changed? Again, it's a bit unclear to us here below, but John writes a little about this. He says;

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2-3

We already have our new identity that is hidden with God in Christ. When the angels carry us home to see Jesus, then what is now hidden will be fully revealed. Paul carries the same thought in these words;

Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. 1 Cor 15:49

Who is the man of heaven Paul is talking about whose image we will bear? Of course, Paul is talking about Jesus. We will bear the image of Jesus.

Cartoons about heaven abound featuring people with halos dressed in white robes, floating on clouds and strumming harps. Where did that classic image come from? I'm not sure, but that idea causes many people to think it will be much more fun and exciting to be in hell. Not! Here, too, it's a bit fuzzy. Here's something interesting we are told we will be doing;

Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! 1 Corinthians 6:3

I guess, like us, angels will also get a performance review at the end of time. Will we give them letter grades like A, B, or C? Will we rate them from one to five stars? Probably like us, they will receive honor commensurate with the quality and level of their service. Judging angels is only a small part of our work in the kingdom of God yet to come. Not only will we judge angels, we will rule over all creation;

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. 2 Timothy 2:12

I know you have always wanted to be charge. This is your chance. You will have a place in the royal court with Jesus as the high king. Talk about a promotion! However, it's good to remember that with great power comes great responsibility. In Revelation it speaks about the work we will do in our high and heavenly positions;

**“Therefore they are before the throne of God,
and serve him day and night in his temple; Revelation 7:15**

This, of course, harkens back to our service as God's priests right now. We are to offer the sacrifices of prayer and praise every morning and evening. Doing so, we continue in the line of priests of the Most High drawn all the way back to the very beginning. Interestingly, we will continue to render this service to God in his eternal kingdom of glory. The music will be at another level. The singing will no doubt be profound. No one can yet imagine the beauty and majesty of this heavenly sight. In fact, the whole setting of our lives will be one to be desired. The larger context of this passage gives a bigger glimpse of that new world;

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

**“Therefore they are before the throne of God,
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.
They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;
the sun shall not strike them,
nor any scorching heat.
For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Revelation 7:13-17**

That all sounds quite wonderful and gives us something glorious to look forward to enjoying forever. And - this is as good a place as any to wrap up this series. I think everyone has found some good things to think about. It has probably brought some things to mind that may have been forgotten. Finally, I hope this series has addressed the meaning of life, especially the questions surrounding who we are, why we are here, and where we are headed.

The peace of God guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus as you believe and trust in him. Amen.

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