

## Ecclesiastes 3:11 – Heaven on our minds

- 1) Today we are looking not so much at a specific verse as at a question – What will the life to come be like? And specifically, Will we know each other in that life to come?
- 2) The first answer we must give is, it will be beyond what we can imagine and totally different than anything we know from this life
- 3) Much of what we tell ourselves about the life to come is based on what we know from this life, but that only limits our understanding (see Matthew 22:23-33, especially verse 29)
- 4) We have lots of questions about the life to come, and many of them God does not seem to answer directly – and there are many reasons for this:
  - a) Deuteronomy 29:29: The unknown things are known to God but He only reveals what we are able to know
  - b) Ecclesiastes 3:11: God puts the longing for eternity in our hearts even though we are not able to understand everything about it
  - c) 1 Corinthians 13:11: Our understanding is limited by our vision
  - d) John 3:12: We should focus on serving God in the here and now, trusting the life to come to a God who we know loves us
  - e) John 3:13: No human being but Jesus has ever been to heaven – prophets have **seen** heaven as God chooses to reveal it, but they have not **been** in heaven
- 5) John 16:4: What we **are** told is enough to process for now
  - a) John 16:12: God understands that the grief and limitations of this life can make Truth hard to bear
  - b) Hebrews 5:11: Some things we cannot understand until we have matured spiritually
  - c) John 12:24, 1 John 2:17: Unless we die to self and the things of this world, we will not be able to understand eternity
- 6) 1 Corinthians 2:9: The first thing we must keep in mind about the life to come is this: It will be greater, more beautiful, and more satisfying than anything we can imagine
- 7) Revelation 2:7: The souls of those who die before the Rapture will experience fellowship with Jesus in Paradise before they receive their resurrection bodies
  - a) Note that Paradise is not heaven
  - b) Jesus promised the thief he would be with Him in Paradise that very day, but Jesus was not raised to Heaven until the Ascension 43 days later (Hebrews 1:3, 10:12)
- 8) Revelation 2:17, 3:12: Those who live forever with God in the life to come will each have a unique and fully satisfying relationship with God and with Jesus Christ
- 9) 1 Corinthians 15:35-37: Our eternal body will bear no resemblance to our earthly body
  - a) A seed bears no resemblance to the flower or plant it gives rise to when it ‘dies’
  - b) The butterfly bears no resemblance either to the caterpillar or to the life it experiences as it crawls on the ground or on a branch
- 10) Revelation 21:1-4: Our future is on earth, not in Heaven; God will come to live with us so we will not need to go to live with Him – Heaven is for God and the angels – the earth is for us
- 11) Ecclesiastes 9:5-6, Isaiah 65:17, Revelation 21:4: We will leave this life and its experiences, its joys, and its sorrows behind in the life to come
- 12) The reality of eternal life will be what it will be – our joy will be found not in this or that being true in the life to come; rather, our joy and our hope is that we will know – and be fully known by – God, and that whatever He has planned for us will be beyond our wildest dreams