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The Bible is full of stories of heroes who struggled through very difficult times, but came out on the other side much better for having been through the bad times. As one reads their accounts, it is interesting to note how often their goal was their eventual reward in Heaven with their Maker. It is what kept them going in many of the hard times—knowing that they had a greater reward waiting for them one day.

*He has set eternity in the hearts of man*. Think of it as a computer program running in the background. There is a hollow in every heart that needs to be filled with God. We all experience it. Sir Winston Churchill had a file in his cabinet that only he and his secretary knew about. It was titled, “Operation Hope Not”. When Churchill died, his secretary retrieved the file, and the world watched “Operation Hope Not” unfold. Many years before he died, Churchill planned his funeral in minute detail. There would be Christian hymns sung, and at the end of the service, a bugler high in the dome played taps, followed by a second bugler who played reveille. Churchill believed that the last note of history will be reveille, not taps.

And eternity is filled with mysteries. We must live by faith, content that our Father is sufficient. We see but a poor reflection of Heaven. The Bible says surprisingly little about what it is like. But the few passages that contain detail, are absolutely mind boggling. The four creatures described in the first chapter of Ezekiel are without comparison anywhere. The new Jerusalem in Revelation is a city 1400 mile wide, 1400 miles long, and 1400 miles high. To put that into a context, the International Space Station orbits at a mere 240 miles. But it is the length of eternity that we find the most difficult to comprehend. After trillions of years, we will still be living! It very quickly overshadows our few years here on earth.

Solomon ended his book with these words, *Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.* 80 years or so, of obeying God is easily worth the few difficulties we may face. Set your eyes on the future. If you are a Christian, you have an eternity to look forward to.

A few characteristics that we can be confident of concerning Heaven:

We won’t miss our old lives. The perfect beauty of Heaven will completely overshadow anything in our past life here on this earth. The phrase is clearly “a new heaven and a new earth.” That hints of a complete redo of the entire universe. Perfect in every way, it may be similar to what we see now, or God may have made plans to change everything about it.

We won’t become angels. Angels are a separate set of beings, different in many respects from us. As of right now, they are considered to be at a slightly higher level than us. In the future, we will be above them. In fact the Bible mentions that we will judge angels. Whatever that means. So don’t anticipate growing a set of wings anytime soon.

We won’t be tempted to sin—ever! Sin will be done away with and gone. Everything will be perfect forever and ever No sinful thoughts, no sinful acts, not even a hint of wrong anywhere.

We will have work to do. Note that in the story of creation recorded in Genesis, God put Adam into a perfect environment, a perfect relationship with Himself. There was no sin and Adam would have lived forever and ever had he not failed God. God gave Adam a job to do while he was still in his perfect state. To tend a garden. What will occupy our time in Heaven is anyone’s guess. But it will not be boring!

We will still have emotions. The negative ones will be gone forever, but joy and laughter and peace and contentment—will all be there. God created us in His image and through the Bible we read of God’s emotions. He is never changing. His emotions will flood Heaven and ours will respond in kind.

We will probably not know everything automatically. God has always encouraged man to be inquisitive and searching and learning. He could have created Adam and placed him in an environment of high technology and computers and vast libraries of knowledge to access. But He placed him in a garden and said, “Go and figure things out.” (That is a rough translation by the way).

We will recognize each other. What age we will be is anyone’s guess. Our physical selves will each be unique and perfect. We will not be a wisp of air or a spirit floating through the universe. The Bible talks of our enjoying food and eating meals together. But the best feature of all may be that we will all be likeable and best friends throughout eternity!

There is a verse we quote often a Christmas time. It comes from the book of Isaiah. It says there that “*of the increase of His kingdom, there shall be no end.”* Note the word *“increase.”* Heaven is not going to exist in a completely static condition, unchanging and the same through eternity. I take the word “increase” to imply that Day One in Heaven will be an absolutely incredible experience. Day Two will increase and be even better. Day Three—even better. I firmly believe God is capable of accomplishing such a feat.

Let us live our lives with a very real expectancy of our reward in Heaven. It is truly something to unashamedly look forward to, no matter what your age is presently. It’s not just something for the future. It is an anchor that we can hold on to in the “here and now.”

