

YOUR FUTURE IN CHRIST #4

Death is the beginning of a fantastic adventure!

Cathy and I honeymooned in the seaside town of Carmel. This was before the internet and Yelp. I wrote a couple hotels for brochures. The brochure of the hotel I picked showed pictures of the ocean and the coastal pines and the pretty rooms. It looked romantic and peaceful; a perfect place to spend our first married days after the busyness of the wedding.

But the brochure left out some very important information.

Our first morning we were shaken out of bed by the sound of hammering on ¼ inch steel plates! The brochure failed to mention the hotel backed up to a steel fabrication business!

Needless to say, my vision of a romantic, peaceful get-away was vastly different than the reality.

I think the same is true when it comes to our vision of our future in Christ. I don't mean in the negative way of my illustration, but in the fact that our vision of the future may be very different than the reality. If asked, most Christians would say they are going to spend eternity in heaven. But that's not correct. The Bible does not teach that we will spend eternity in heaven. In fact, we will spend very little time in heaven....

In this series, we are discovering that for a Christian...

DEATH IS THE BEGINNING OF A FANTASTIC ADVENTURE!

Genesis 1 teaches we are created in the image of God.

I AM CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

God created us a body / soul union. Our bodies are mortal; our souls are immortal.

I AM A BODY AND A SOUL

MY BODY WILL DIE, BUT MY SOUL WILL LIVE FOREVER

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 reveals that, when your body dies, your soul goes to be with Jesus in the 3rd heaven (God's home).

WHEN MY BODY DIES, MY SOUL GOES TO BE WITH JESUS

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 reveals you will get your new body at the *Rapture*.

I WILL GET MY NEW BODY AT THE RAPTURE

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 reveals that your new body will be awesome!

MY NEW BODY WILL BE AWESOME

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 and the *Parable of the Talents* (Matt. 25:14-30) reveal that you will give an account of your service to Jesus and receive from Him what you are due.

I WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF MY SERVICE TO JESUS

AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, JESUS WILL GIVE ME MY DUE: REWARD FOR FAITHFULNESS; REBUKE FOR SLOTHFULNESS.

Once you receive your due, you will return to earth to serve in the Messianic Kingdom.¹

REVELATION 20:4-6 (ESV)

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Revelation 20:4-6 reveals you will serve in the Messianic Kingdom here on earth.

¹ Before we return to the earth to serve in the Messianic Kingdom, we, the Church, the Bride of Christ, will be wed to Him (Rev. 19:6-8). This speaks to the unique relationship of the Church to Jesus which follows the Jewish wedding system as practiced in Jesus' day. In the *first stage* the father of the groom made the arrangement for the bride and paid the bride price. In the *second stage*, known as *the fetching of the bride*, the father of the groom gives permission for the son to fetch his bride and bring her to the home he has built for her (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). This was often done as part of the wedding procession. The *third stage* was the *wedding ceremony* to which a few would be invited (Rev. 19:6-8). A ritual purification immersion of the bride preceded the wedding ceremony (1 Cor. 3:10-15). The *fourth stage*, the *marriage supper* or *feast* could last up to seven days and included guests not invited to the wedding ceremony (Rev. 19:9).

I WILL SERVE IN THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM ON EARTH

What will the Messianic Kingdom be like? It will be much like the world is today. There will be grocery stores, restaurants, gas stations and schools. There will be cars, trucks, ships and planes. Farmers will plant crops and grow food. Contractors will build houses and commercial buildings. There will be law enforcement and courts and judges. People will marry and raise families. There will be hospitals and cemeteries.²

And in Jerusalem, Jesus will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. The resurrected King David will reign over Israel. The Twelve Apostles will govern the twelve tribes of Israel.

You and I will serve Jesus as He reigns and rules over the nations. It will be a fascinating time living under Jesus' administration. What kind of economy will He establish? What policies will He put in place to restore the environment after the devastation of the Tribulation? How will He reform the judicial system so that justice is administered swiftly, but accurately? How will culture and technology advance under Jesus' administration?

What will it be like, as immortals, to relate to and witness to mortals who will need to trust in Christ to be saved?

You will serve in the Messianic Kingdom for a thousand years.

Revelation 21:1-4 reveals God will create a new heaven, a new earth and a new Jerusalem.

REVELATION 21:1-4 (ESV)

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ 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."

² For descriptions for the Messianic Kingdom cf. Isaiah 9:1-7, 11:6-9, 65:17-25.

I WILL LIVE WITH GOD ON THE NEW EARTH

This is our future in Christ.

This is why we need not fear death.

I encourage you to review these four lessons often until you have them memorized. Only through review will these truths become deeply imprinted upon your heart and mind; once imprinted, they will set you free from the fear of death to live and serve in peace and joy.

Remember, for a Christian...

DEATH IS THE BEGINNING OF A FANTASTIC ADVENTURE!