

IN HEAVEN WILL WE RECOGNIZE PEOPLE WE KNEW ON EARTH?

King Saul recognized Samuel when the witch of Endor summoned Samuel from the realm of the dead (1 Samuel 28:8-17). When David's infant son died, David said, "I will go to him, but he will not return to me" (2 Samuel 12:23). David seemed to assume he would be able to recognize his son in heaven, despite the fact that he died as a baby. In Luke 16:19-31, Abraham, Lazarus, and the rich man were all recognizable after death. At the transfiguration, Moses and Elijah were recognizable Matthew 17:3-4. In these examples, the Bible does seem to indicate that we will be recognizable after death.

However, it may not necessarily be that simple...

People will not be married or given in marriage in heaven...

MK 12:18 Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ¹⁹ "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁰ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. ²¹ The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. ²² In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. ²³ At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"

²⁴ Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?"

²⁵ When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. ²⁶ Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' ^[d]? ²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"

Sadness, Crying and Pain won't be in heaven...

RE 21:1 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

⁶ He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. ⁸ But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

Since there is no mourning, crying or pain in heaven, how could we know who is there and who is not?

Is it possible we can know people and be shielded from the knowledge/memories that might upset us?

Is it possible we may delight in His justice while in heaven more than we do here on earth?

Is it possible we should delight in His justice as Christians – even if it is very troubling to our minds – if we expect to make it to heaven? If so, how do we balance desiring mercy with delighting in Christ’s justice?

2 COR 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows.
³ And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—⁴ was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.

Why weren’t people allowed to talk about details of what they saw in heaven? Was there something or someone there that if it got out might deter people from striving to be there? Is it possible we would be shocked at the full measure of God’s mercy (Would we be surprised at who “made it?”)?