

HEAVEN

There Are No Hot Dogs in Heaven

Discussion

In our Bible Study class at Southview, we recently completed a study of Heaven. It was a terrific study; and as a result of our findings, we have all come to see heaven in a different light. Looking forward to our eternal home, the New Heaven and New Earth promised us in Revelation Chapters 21 and 22, we closed out the study with a new sense of excitement about the work Christ has set before us. Knowing that someday we will be reunited with family, friends, and of course Jesus our Savior; and knowing that we will be living everyday in the presence of God as He dwells among us, provides us the hope and peace that we need to face the struggles and challenges here on this earth until Christ comes again.

As we studied through the many references to the New Earth and New Heaven we were struck by the numerous similarities with God's original creation, and how it gives us a pattern of things to come in our new home. We also noted from our examination of Revelation Chapter 21 that there will be a great holy city, the New Jerusalem, and out of the center of it, from God's throne, flows a crystal river and on each side are trees that bear fruit, fruit for us to eat. We will have homes; we will live in an active Kingdom where kings come and go passing through the twelve great gates of the city, gates that never close; we will know everyone around us; and we will be in God's constant presence.

Scripture tells us that the earth itself will be new, the old things will have all passed away and we will live on a new earth, brightened by the glory of God. What an exciting place! Isaiah also had much to say about the New Heaven and New Earth. In Isaiah 65:17, God says, *"Behold I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind."* [NIV] He also declares in Isaiah 51:3, *"The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing."* [NIV] What a marvelous place our new home will be!

And, in Isaiah 65:25 God says, *"The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,"* says the LORD. [NIV] This, too, will be like it was in the days of Adam and Eve and life in the Garden of Eden; man, animal, and all of creation living at peace and in perfect harmony.

As I reflected on this and thought about life on the New Earth I realized that it is going to be so new and so different that we can hardly comprehend it. Living in resurrected bodies, walking along the crystal river and on the streets of gold, we will be eating from the Tree of Life. But then it occurred to me that there won't be any hot dogs in heaven. Man and animals will be at peace. We will all be vegetarians again, just as man was before the flood.

Wow! No hot dogs! I love hot dogs! I then realized that I was looking at things from the perspective of fallen man. The reality is that we will be eating like we have never eaten before. I can hardly wait! Fruit from the Tree of Life, Bread from the Bread of Life, drinking water from the Water of Life – and something that we have never experienced before – food in the form of manna. Won't that be great!? Psalm 78:24 tells us manna is the "grain of heaven." In Revelation 2:17, it is promised that the man "who overcomes" will be given some of the "hidden manna," and I am willing to wager that the "wedding feast" will have it featured on the menu as well.

I wonder if one of the jobs that some of us will have is growing and harvesting manna, or pruning and caring for the Tree of Life, a tree which Revelation tells us grows all along the crystal river. Given that the New Jerusalem is going to be 1,500 miles high, this would mean a river at least that long, and probably a lot longer. There will be plenty of room to grow everything that we will need for the millions upon millions living on the New Earth with us.

For sure, we will have a lot to do, and joy will fill every day; and even though I won't find a hot dog there, I know Heaven will exceed my every expectation. Now if I can just redirect this excitement to fan the little light of mine that is my testimony, perhaps someone else will learn about heaven and will know that Jesus the savior that wants everyone to join him there.

Have a great week working in the kingdom!

In Christ,

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