

Discussion of

"HEAVEN - AND WHAT IT IS"

For our discussion of "Heaven - and What It Is", we have with us today Dr. Robert D. Hayden, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Hempsted, Long Island and Dr. Arthur E. Steele, Vice-President and Treasurer of Faith Theological Seminary in Elkins Park, Pa. This is, I am sure, a message that has brought a number of questions to your mind today - "Heaven - and What It Is", and I hope we will be able to answer those questions for you at this time.

Dr. Steele: Dr. Rawlings, Heaven is a wonderful subject and it is an exciting subject. You mentioned in the discussion in your message that we are going to have brand new bodies - immortal bodies, incorruptible bodies - but the question I think some people may have, is, "Just when are we going to get these new bodies?"

Dr. Rawlings: That is answered in the Book of Acts, Chapter 1 when the Lord ascended back to heaven to the right hand of the Father. He sent the messengers -- two angels, and they gave to us this word of hope, "This same Jesus which is taken from you into heaven shall so come in like manner." Incidentally, Dr. Steele, the Bible does not set any date on the Lord's return. However, in practically every Book of the Bible His return is mentioned, and of course, He explains that we will get our new bodies when He returns and not before then. We cannot hope to have a body of immortality, a body clothed in light until He returns again, but when He returns, John says, "We shall see him and be like him for we shall see him as he is." And of course, that is the hope of the Christian Church. It is called the "blessed hope", it is called the "living hope" a number of places in the Word of God. And in connection with this, Dr. Hayden, many people are asking the question, "What will we look like?" I would like to put the question like this, "Will I know my mother in Heaven?"

Mr. Hayden: Dr. Rawlings, I think that is one of the prime questions that a lot of people in our churches today are very much interested in for most all of us have some loved one over on the other side and I want to know whether I will know my father or I will know my bothers over there. And there are certain indications throughout the Scriptures that assure us that we will know one another on the other side. For instance, we can think of such a thing as the quality of a voice. You would know the voice of your wife, if she should speak out in the midst of a crowd, and I am sure Dr. Steele would know the voice of his family or loved ones. These are things that I am sure we are acquainted with. For instance, back in the Old Testament when Isaac was old and well stricken in age and blind, his Son Jacob tried to deceive him by dressing like his brother Esau, and when Jacob came in before his Father, the Father felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And again over in the New Testament, when Peter was released from prison he went to the house where the Church was gathered together in prayer. A young lady there by the name of Rhoda heard Peter at the gate and she went in and said that Peter was without. She know his voice - she didn't see him, but she knew the voice of Peter. I believe this is a few of the indications that we will know each other in heaven. There are other things, too, such as the physical appearance that we have. The Lord Jesus Christ was known by the very scars of His crucifixion. The Disciples recognized Him with these and we are not going to lose our personal identity in heaven. While we will lose defects and blemishes, yet our glorified bodies are not going to be so changed and so different from the earthly ones in which we have dwelt that we will have to walk up and introduce ourselves to one another up in heaven.

Dr. Rawlings: You know it is interesting. I was thinking of the Transfiguration in the New Testament where Peter, James and John were with the Lord when Moses and Elijah appeared. I have always been fascinated with that story because it says that Peter