

Romans 8:18-39
 Our Home in Heaven
 HH1606

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 Heaven

“Creation Redeemed”

INTRODUCTION: Our understanding of Heaven is informed more by Genesis 1 and 2 than by Revelation 21-22...

1. By Heaven, I mean *The Final Heaven: The New Heaven and the New Earth.*
2. Because the New World is simply the *restoration* of the perfect world God created in the beginning and redeemed through His Son.
3. Turn to Acts 3:17-21; Peter’s sermon in the Temple precincts, after healing the lame man.
 - a. *And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.* (Acts 3:17-21)
 - b. In the previous paragraph, Peter made it clear that the lame man’s *restoration* to health was God’s doing, through Christ, and not his.
 - c. *While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon’s. And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: “Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.* (Acts 3:11-16)
 - d. Then Peter makes an amazing statement:
 - i. *Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.* (Acts 3:19-21)
 - ii. **Key statement:** *“the restoring of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets long ago.*
 - iii. **NASB:** *“the restoration of all things”*
 - e. **The Gist:** The lame man, restored to health, is a portent or prefiguration of what is yet to come.
 - f. *The entire creation restored to what it was “in the beginning.”*

4. The *Creation*, and not just the souls of mankind, has been negatively affected by the Fall. Sin has damaged everything.
5. **We must see and comprehend the ultimate goal of sin:** *to destroy the creation God originally made. This is Satan's grand goal.*
6. Lucifer wanted to replace God as ruler of the universe:
 - a. Isaiah, in what appears to be a prophecy of judgment upon the King of Babylon...
 - b. ...refers to the fall of Lucifer/Satan (Isaiah 14:12-15)

*How you are fallen from heaven,
 O Day Star, son of Dawn!
 How you are cut down to the ground,
 you who laid the nations low!
 You said in your heart,
 'I will ascend to heaven;
 above the stars of God
 I will set my throne on high;
 I will sit on the mount of assembly
 in the far reaches of the north;
 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
 I will make myself like the Most High.'
 But you are brought down to Sheol,
 to the far reaches of the pit. (Isaiah 14:12-15)*

- c. Commentators for centuries have seen these verses as a double-reference, as prophecy often is...
 - i. First: The Fall of Lucifer
 - ii. Second: The Fall of Babylon's King
7. Once cast down from heaven to earth, Lucifer tempted mankind with his own temptation: *Replace God with yourself. Become your own god.*
 - a. *Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. (Rev. 12:7-9)*
 - b. Down to earth. Then Lucifer made his way into *Eden*.
 - c. He possessed a *serpent* and tempted Eve.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that

when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
 (Genesis 3:1-5)

- d. **Gist:** “Become a god yourself. Ignore the created paradigms and limits of creation. Remake the world into what you want for yourself. Test the theory: Eat of the forbidden fruit to prove that you can defy the patterns of nature and not only not die but flourish on your own terms.”
 - e. **Eve tried.** Adam too. Creation began to die – everything!
8. **Key truth:** *When God cast Adam and Eve out of Eden, and removed that Paradise from this world, the creation could do nothing but die, because God had removed the tree of life and its life-giving fruit and healing leaves.*
9. This is **not** my original “take” on the Fall; St. Paul says exactly this in Romans 8:
- a. His climactic chapter, in his climax of the epistle to Rome, in his *magnum opus* – Romans.
 - b. **D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones:** *Romans 7:1-8:4; pp. 258-259.*
- There is general agreement about this chapter, not only from the standpoint of interpretation, but in saying that it is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible. I agree with those who say that it is one of the brightest gems of all. Someone has said that in the whole of the Scriptures the brightest and the most lustrous and flashing stone, or collection of stones, is the Epistle to the Romans, and that of these this is the brightest gem in the cluster.*
- c. The Redemption of the whole creation by the power of the Holy Spirit, the predestined plan of redemption in Christ, and the love of God.
10. Here’s how Romans 8 flows, in thought and in logical order:

- a. God has removed the **curse** of sin from those who believe in Jesus Christ.
 - i. *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*
 (Romans 8:1-8)
 - ii. Jesus obeyed the law that Adam broke.
 - iii. Jesus gave us the *Holy Spirit* in order to bring us back into a life in the Spirit rather than life in the flesh.
 - iv. Spiritual people, no longer “natural man”

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught

by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:12-16)

v. Born-again people = New Creatures in Christ

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

b. In believers is placed the Holy Spirit. This *indwelling spirit* is the “seed” of New Creation planted in each, true Christian.

i. *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:9-11)*

ii. Resurrection life already lives in us.

iii. A guarantee of life, in glory, in heaven

c. This indwelling Holy Spirit does three wonderful things for us.

i. *So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:12-17)*

ii. He *enables* us to lead holy lives free from the power of the flesh = the fallen nature/creation.

iii. He gives us a spirit of *adoption* to overcome the fear we will have in this world, so alienated from God.

iv. He bears an internal *witness* to each of us, believers that we are truly the children of God, bound for glory in heaven, if we remain faithful to Christ.

11. Then, Paul writes this about the *complete redemption (restoration) of the world in which we live.*

a. The Creation will be redeemed and restored just as we are:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of

God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (Romans 8:18-25)

- b. This Redemption of the Creation is predestined by God.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Romans 8:26-30)

- c. This Redemption of the Creation is rooted in the Love of God.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;

We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39)

12. The **hope** of salvation includes the **restoration** of this world to Eden’s glory and grace!

I. WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE CREATION NOW? (Romans 8:18-25)

A. First: *The Creation has been subjected to the futility of sin (8:18-20a).*

1. *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility.* (Romans 8:18-20a)

2. i.e., the creation fell under **the curse** of sin, and now lives in frustration, futility and disorder.

a. *The LORD God said to the serpent,*

*“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.*

*I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”*

To the woman he said,

*“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you.”*

And to Adam he said,

*“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.*

By the sweat of your face

*you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,*

and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:14-19)

b. The snake lost his legs.

c. The ground was cursed and vegetation was warped to bring forth “thorns and thistles.”

d. Childbirth (procreation) would become painful and deadly.

e. Work would be full of frustration and failure (danger).

f. Everything would die and return to dust – animals, plant life, human beings.

g. **All the facets, and every creature of this world, would feel the wrath of God upon sin.**

3. Why? Is this “fair”? Is this just? Why should flora and fauna pay the price for human sin?

- a. Answer: *Because Adam was creation's Federal Head.*
- b. i.e., as Ruler of the World, Adam acted on behalf of the world. If he obeyed God, the world flourished. If he disobeyed God, the world died.
- c. *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

So God created man in his own image,

in the image of God he created him;

male and female he created them.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. (Gen. 1:26-30)

- d. Adam *named* each animal; he even named Eve – a privilege of Lordship and oversight.
- e. When Adam fell, the whole creation crashed with him!

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. (Romans 5:12-14)

- f. **Good News:** *Federal Headship works to reverse sin!*
- g. Jesus becomes our New Federal Head; as all creation died *in Adam*, all creation will live again *in Christ* – the New Adam!

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:15-21)

4. Nothing in our world is as it *should* be, *could* be, or once *really was*: our relationship to animals; our bodily functions, health and longevity; our weather patterns; our produce or our productivity; our work, our marriages, our families and friends. **Nothing is natural. Nothing is normal. Nothing is as God intended.**
5. And, in some strange way, the creation seems to *know* this: It *groans* in the sorrow, suffering and struggles of sin.
 - a. *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.* (Romans 8:22)
 - b. Two verbs...
 - i. *sustenazei*: to groan, moan, grieve
 - ii. *synodinei*: to suffer birth pangs together
 - c. **Thomas R. Schreiner:** *Romans*: ECNT; p. 437.
Both of these verbs signify that the created order has not fulfilled its purpose; the futility, decay, and frustration of the present world signal its incompleteness and failure to reach its full potential. In Jewish literature the fulfillment of creation's purpose is promised when the new heaven and earth become a reality. The creation anticipates the revelation of the children of God because that is the day when it shall be liberated from its own futility and decay.

6. But **note**: These are not death pains but *birth pangs*.
 - a. **John Calvin:** *Commentaries*; vol. 19; *Romans*; p. 306.
The groaning of which he speaks will not be in vain and without effect; for it will at length bring forth a joyful and blessed fruit. The meaning is, that creatures are not content in their present state, and yet that they are not so distressed that they pine away without a prospect of a remedy, but that they are as it were in travail; for a restoration to a better state awaits them. By saying that they groan together, he does not mean that they are united together by mutual anxiety, but he joins them as companions to us.
 - b. The earth keeps trying to bring forth its fruit – as intended in Eden – but it constantly meets with abortion, miscarriage or child mortality.
 - c. It is *groaning, straining, gasping* for Christ to be born, for men to be redeemed, for the creation to be **restored**.
 - d. The creation, unlike mankind, is God's partner in the redemptive plan:

And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. (Revelation 12:13-16)

- e. The Earth (Creation) is absorbing Satan's flood of sin and bearing the painful consequences of that heroic feat.
 - 7. When we get to the New World, we all owe Creation a *grand apology*.
- B. **Second:** *The Creation itself will be redeemed (restored) (8:20b-23)*
1. *...but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.* (Romans 8:20b-23)
 2. In other words: Creation will be restored in reverse order of God's Creation plan –
 - a. *The first shall be last and the last shall be first.*
 - b. First: human beings will be restored (The Image of God).
 - c. Then: the animals will be restored to Edenic glory.
 - d. Next: the earth and its vegetation will be restored from wilderness and waste to a garden again.
 - e. Finally: "A New Heaven" – the restoration of celestial bodies.
 - f. *Genesis 1 and 2 in reverse order of Redemption.*
 3. The *hope* that God gives to mankind, for the redemption of their bodies, is a hope shared with the created order.
- C. **Third:** *The Hope of Redemption brings with it the Hope of Restoration (8:24-25).*
1. *For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.* (Romans 8:24-25)
 2. We have every reason to **hope** for things we've only dreamed of, or wished for, but were afraid to ask about.
 3. i.e., what the Creation will be like *then...*

II. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE CREATION THEN?

1. Before I go any further, I want to remind you that we have a *NeoPlatonic* concept of Heaven, not a *Hebrew* vision of Heaven.
 - a. NeoPlatonic: rooted in Plato's philosophy
 - b. Hebrew: rooted in Scripture and Judaism
 - c. The Greek language: *abstract* (philosophical)
 - d. The Hebrew language: *concrete* (religious)

2. We interpret Scripture like Greeks, Romans, Western Society do, rather than Hebrew and Eastern societies do.
3. We have become *Christoplasonic* in our interpretation of the Bible, because the Church Fathers, Augustine, Aquinas and the Scholastics merged Greek Philosophy with Scripture – *Christoplatonism*.
4. **Randy Alcorn:** *Heaven*; p. 461, 463, 464.

Judged by christoplasonic presuppositions, anytime the Bible speaks about Heaven in plain, ordinary, or straightforward ways, the assumption is that it doesn't actually mean what it says. The plain meaning of living as resurrected beings in a resurrected society in a resurrected city on a resurrected Earth cannot be real, because it doesn't jibe with the Platonic assumption that the body is bad and the spirit good. Consequently, Heaven cannot possibly be like what Revelation 21-22 appears to say. There could not be bodies, nations, kings, buildings, streets, gates, water, trees, and fruit, because these are physical, and what's physical is not spiritual. The prophetic statements about life on a perfect Earth are considered mere symbols of the promise of a disembodied spiritual world. Given the weight of Biblical revelation, I believe that descriptions of resurrected humanity and the resurrected Earth should be understood as literal, and interpreted figuratively only when a plain literal understanding is impossible or highly unlikely. Every believer that would make our resurrected bodies less physical than Adam's and Eve's, or that makes the New Earth less earthly than the original Earth, essentially credits Satan with a victory over God by suggesting that Satan has permanently marred God's original intention, design, and creation.

5. This being the case, allow me to correct three misconceptions people have, and answer three common questions people post to me quite often.
6. **Know this:** *I believe that everything God put in place, in Eden, will be (1) restored, (2) continued, and (3) enhanced in the New Heaven and New Earth.*

A. First: *Will there be marriage in heaven? Will I still be married to my earthly spouse?*

1. **Randy Alcorn:** *Heaven*, p. 335.

Receiving a glorified body and relocating to the New Earth doesn't erase history, it culminates history. Nothing will negate or minimize the fact that we were members of families on the old Earth. My daughters will always be my daughters, although first and foremost they are and will be God's daughters. My grandchildren will always be my grandchildren. Resurrection bodies presumably have chromosomes and DNA, with a signature that forever testifies to our genetic connection with family. Heaven won't be without families but will be one big family, in which all family members are friends and all friends are family members.

2. *The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.' Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. So too the second and third, down to the seventh. After them all, the woman died. In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her."*

But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: 'I

am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living." And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching. (Matthew 22:23-33)

Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong." (Mark 12:24-27)

And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him." (Luke 20:34-38)

3. The **Sadducees** did not believe in the resurrection, so they set a trap for Jesus: "If we rise in our own persons/bodies, then who will be the husband of a woman widowed 7 times?"

- a. Their question was predicated upon death, remarriage and resurrection.
- b. Jesus answers them: "*In the resurrection people don't die, so there won't be a need for remarriage.*"

4. **J. M. Killen:** *Our Friends in Heaven* (pp. 152-153).

Marriage in this world is the ordinance God hath appointed to repair the ravages of death; but as in heaven there will be no death, so there is no such compensatory institution as marriage will be required to counterbalance the effects of dissolution. When rightly understood, then, we see that our Lord's answer does not in the least militate against future recognition against future recognition or renewed companionship in heaven; nay, it rather supports it. For, if no such recognition or fellowship existed, would not Christ most completely have silenced them by saying, "Ye do err, for your question proceeds upon the supposition that not only will marriage continue in heaven, but also that your knowledge of each other and mutual fellowship will be there perpetuated; but such will not be the case, for all remembrance of earthly things and relations will then be forever obliterated, and an entirely different condition of life will there prevail?" but the great Prophet did no such thing.

5. Look carefully at what Jesus *actually said*, in Matthew, Mark, and Luke –

- a. *For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.* (Matthew 22:30)
- b. *For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.* (Mark 12:25)
- c. *And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.* (Luke 20:34-36)

- d. Jesus **did not** say, “In heaven your spouse will no longer be your spouse because death, divorce, polygamy, and adultery have messed things up so much that marriage in Heaven would rob us of bliss.”
- 6. No! Jesus simply said, “*In the resurrection (The New Heaven and New Earth) people neither marry (i.e., get married) nor are given in marriage* (as a father gives his daughter to another man in marriage). *They are like the angels* (they do not procreate, they do not die and need to remarry, and they live in perfect fellowship.)” Jesus did **not** mean to say –
 - a. We lose our **gender** and our **sexuality** in the resurrection, and become **asexual** beings like angels.
 - b. That is **NeoPlatonic** thinking: body and sex are bad; soul and spirit are good; so people become angels. **Not so!**
 - c. We uncontract the sacred unions we make in marriage because marriage is only good for procreation. Really?
 - i. *Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.* (Genesis 2:18, 24-25)
 - ii. *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.* (Ephesians 5:31-32)
 - iii. A marriage is designed for one **purpose**: friendship, mutual help and intimacy in love – like Jesus and His Church.
 - iv. Procreation is an **activity** and **rationale** of sexual relations but not the formative purpose of marriage.
 - v. A marriage is neither validated nor nullified by the presence or absence of children.
 - vi. God did not need marriage to **procreate**; He needed only a male and a female.
 - vii. He designed marriage for spiritual **companionship**!
Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” (Genesis 2:18)
 - viii. And He confined sexual relations and procreation to a family in marriage
- 7. If marriage was one of the **basic parameters** of life – like food or water, animal life, a garden existence, opposite gender and marriage...
- 8. And if God said, “*This is very good!*”...
- And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.* (Genesis 1:31)
- 9. Then I believe our marriages *in Christ* will continue in heaven –
 - a. Not to have sex and procreation. No new souls will be born in heaven.

- b. Divorce will be overcome by the presence of grace and the glorification of individuals – no jealousy, resentment, or sorrows for sin. All is forgiven. All is new.
- c. Widowhood will be overcome by the joys of resurrection.

10. **Key point:** *Our fellowship and relations will be like that of God and the angels – not gender-determined, but deep and satisfying.*
11. **I believe** our marriages will continue in heaven – Jane will be my wife forever – but what will change is the nature of our marriages. They will be *glorified!* And perfect!
12. Adam and Eve will still be the first married couple, and we will be their children. Mike and Jane will remain married with all their children and grandchildren around them.

B. Second: *Will we be able to talk to the animals?*

1. Answer: I think so; yes!
2. Look again at Genesis 3:1-3...

- a. *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.*

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” (Genesis 3:1-3)

- b. Amazingly! **Eve is not surprised to speak with the snake. She does so quite naturally, as if she'd often spoken with other animals.**
- c. I believe the restored creation will include talking animals!
3. Here's why I believe this wild (i.e., non-Platonic) idea...
 - a. God created a world and populated it with animals *prior* to creating man! He called this world “very good.”
 - b. When God saved mankind from the flood, He also saved two (male and female) of every species of animals, to repopulate our world with creatures.
 - c. Animals were created to help/serve mankind –
 - i. First, as companions, then as workers, after the flood as food, and finally, as sacrifices for our sins.
 - ii. They have been mankind's earthly cohabitants for 10,000 years or more.

- d. The New Heaven and New Earth includes animals.
 - i. *And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying,*
- “Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,*

*for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation. (Revelation 5:8-9)*

- ii. And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,*

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb

be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” (Revelation 5:13)

- iii. Living creatures = the Greek word zoon (zoology) = animals*

- e. Balaam's donkey spoke to him, enabled for a brief time to overcome the barrier sin put between us and our pets.
- f. *Communication* in Eden was universal: God, angels, animals and mankind talked to one another, freely.

4. **Randy Alcorn:** *Heaven*; pp. 389-390.

On the New Earth, might God, restore or increase both the intelligence and the communicative abilities of animals? Whales and dolphins communicate in highly specific ways, as do man primates, in varying degrees. These are God-given abilities. We should assume they'll be enhanced on the New Earth or at very least restored to the capabilities they had in Eden, where it's possible more than one animal talked. In a universe teeming with God's creativity, should talking animals or intelligent non-human beings (such as angels and “living creatures” that not only talk but worship) surprise us? If people will be smarter and more capable on the New Earth, should it surprise us that animals might also be smarter and more capable? Remember, both in the Fall (sin) and the rise (resurrection), as goes mankind, so goes creation.

C. Third: *What will happen to a transgender person, who is converted, and rises in the resurrection, into the New World.*

1. This is a **pastoral question** that would never have been asked a pastor even 20 years ago!
2. Answer: *They will be returned to their biological gender at birth, along with a soul completely in harmony with and content in the gender of God's choosing.*
3. **Remember:** Satan's grand scheme is to *ruin* the creation and remake the world into a place full of miserable beings, living in an unnatural, broken and rebellious state of misery. The very condition Satan and the demons live, now and forever!
4. At the heart of human identity is our **gender**.

- a. *Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

So God created man in his own image,

in the image of God he created him;

male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26-27)

- b. **Note:** The *image of God* is not merely “spiritual” (that is a Platonic idea)

- c. The Bible clearly states that *the image of God* includes our gender: male *image dei*; female *imago dei*
5. Satan's desire is to *destroy by mutilation and confusion* the joy, healthy function and spiritual harmony of human gender.
- a. Homosexuality, pedophilia, transgenderism, bestiality, necrophilia, and other abominations are Satan's *handiwork*.
 - b. *Confuse a person's gender and change their sexuality*, and...
 - i. They cannot or will not procreate.
 - ii. Marriage as a spiritual companionship is ruined.
 - iii. God's love for us, as typified in marriage, becomes something unattractive.
 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:31-32)
 - iv. Redemption is resisted because it brings with it...
 - 1. A return to holy gender expressions in this life
 - 2. A future of glorified gender as God ordained
 - v. *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.* (1 Cor. 6:9-11)
 - vi. Why? Because gender-offenders will not "fit" in the New World, restored to Eden's plan, purpose, and patterns.
6. This is **why** the Gospel Church is so opposed to homosexuality, lesbianism, transgenderism, and other re-definitions or revisions of God's male-female distinctions and complement: *Such gender revisions keep you out of a New World of perfect males and glorified females.*
7. Good News! Jesus came to *destroy* Satan's destructive efforts to ruin the creation (and us) and to *restore* God's original design!
- a. *Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.* (1 John 3:8)
 - b. *Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.* (Acts 3:19-21)
 - c. "...the restoring of all things..."
8. **What glorious news!** Someday we'll wake up in what one author called, *A Brave New World.*

CONCLUSION: And this new world will exceed our abilities to conceive of it, even when we see it in the Holy Scriptures.

1. This new world is not the world of Satan, Plato, immoral people, stupid and dangerous animals, or a decrepit earth.
2. This new world is *God's World*: creation as God intended for us – beauty, splendor, harmony, happiness, and blissful communion among all God's created things.
3. As one great theologian, named **Dr. John Dolittle**, a physician, once said –

If we conferred with our furry friends,

Man to animal

Think of all the things we could discuss.

If we could walk with the animals,

Talk with the animals,

Grunt and squeak and squawk

With the animals,

And they could squeak and squawk,

And speak and talk to us!

4. Sound...well...bizarre? Even impossible? Well...

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,

and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,

and the calf and the lion and the fatted calf together;

and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze;

their young shall lie down together;

and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,

and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

They shall not hurt or destroy

in all my holy mountain;

for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD

as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:6-9)

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. (Rev. 21:10)