**WHAT’S GOING ON IN HEAVEN?**

***Singing The Spirit’s Messiah***

When my dad passed away in 2017 it made the next world so much more intriguing. Suddenly thoughts like, “I wonder what dad is doing right now” crossed my mind far more than before he died. I had preached the funerals of many people and had thought of what they were thinking and doing now, but those thoughts eventually faded as I returned to the here and now. Life must go on. But for the past three years my mind has rarely stopped thinking about the world beyond.

Several Old Testament phrases fascinate me, causing my imagination to kick into overdrive. I read of things like the death of the patriarchs and wonder what it means, *“Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people”* (Gen. 25:8).

Ditto Isaac, *“So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days”* (Gen. 35:29).

Ditto Jacob, “*And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people”* (Gen. 49:33).

Ditto Aaron and Moses, *“…die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people”* (Numb. 20:26; Deut. 32:50).

I picture all the saved gathered together in Hades (“realm of the unseen spirits; the unseen dead”) with a great chasm separating those in *torment* from those in *comfort* (read Jesus’ description in Luke 16::19-30). Lazarus is in Abraham’s bosom, which to a Jewish mind was the essence of glory. He too was “*gathered to his people*.” Over there is Enoch (Gen. 5:24). And over there is Noah and his wife Joan (of Ark 😊). Down the hall are all those listed in the Hall of Faith (Hebrews 11), both named and unnamed (but known by name to God). That “*great cloud of witnesses,*” who will not be made perfect apart from us, are also gathered there (Heb. 12:1). What an assembly!

But wait. I’m not through with the description. When everyone is “*gathered to his people*” what will we all do together? For that answer I turn to Revelation 5. In that text John “*sees*” and “*hears*” singing. Gathered around the slain Lamb (i.e. Jesus) were angels that numbered 10,000 x 10,000 (that’s 100,000,000) and 1000’s of 1000’s (that’s millions more), four living creatures, 24 elders, every creature in heaven, earth, subterranean earth, and throughout the seas all break forth in song with these lyrics:

*“You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”*

Then they sing this majestic chorus in rising crescendo:

*“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!”*

And just when you thought the song couldn’t get any better, goose bumps break out all over as they raise their voices even higher with this climatic finale:

*“Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!”*

The song then concludes with a rapturous “***AMEN***!”

Have you ever sat in a fabulous choral hall with out-of-this-world acoustics and listened to a 200 member professional chorus sing George Frederic Handel’s *Messiah*?If not, go online and find such a recording and prepare to be amazed.

Are you back already? Did that give you chills up your spine and goosebumps down to your toes? Did you find yourself joining in as they reached the climax? “Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Halleluuuuu-jah!” If you didn’t then check your pulse, you are in serious decline.

Now imagine the very chorus mentioned in Revelation composed of millions (yea billions) of angels, creatures, elders and saints throughout history gathered in the very presence of God (Rev. 4) and Christ (Rev. 5) and break forth in perfect harmony to sing, not Handel’s uninspired *Messiah*, but the Holy Spirit’s inspired *Messiah*! Better yet, we will not just be singing *about* Him, but *to* Him! Right there, standing among Paul, Peter, John, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos, Lois, Eunice, Timothy and every saint of God from Adam to the Judgment Day will be Linda Grannes and all who have been “*faithful unto death*.” Side by side, joining our voices together in praise of the Father and Son, we sing these words:

*“power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!
Blessing and honor and glory and power be to
Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb,
forever and ever!”* ***Ahhhhhh Mennnnnnn***!”

I don’t know about you but reading the book of Revelation is about the most stirring reminder and motivator as to why I chose to be a Christian. As a good brother and friend reminds us often, “If you miss heaven, you miss everything!”

I believe with all my heart that my dad, mom, brother and sisters and their families will be in heaven. I believe my godly wife will be there, along with her parents and siblings. I believe my children and their families are also living so as to be there. I believe most of you who read these words are going to be there. Of course only God is the judge and I gladly leave all decisions in His capable hands. But His Word assures me He is faithful to His promise and by His power He holds our heavenly reservation (I Pet. 1:3-5).

So, what’s going on in heaven? The one thing we know for sure is singing.
“What a song of delight, in that city so bright, will be wafted ‘neath heaven’s fair dome;
how the ransom will raise, happy songs in His praise, when all of God’s singers get home.”

Dad, James, Mary – I’m coming. Until then… “sing to me of heaven, let me fondly dream…”

I love you. - Rick