

then shall I know even as also I am known

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“...then shall I know even as also I am known.” (1 Cor. 13:12)

It is quite normal and understandable for us as Christians to wonder if we will know our loved ones in heaven. While there is no Scripture that deals specifically with the subject, there are several lines of reasoning that lead us to a positive conclusion.

First of all, the disciples recognized Jesus in His resurrected, glorified body. His physical appearance was unchanged. There was no mistaking that it was “this same Jesus.” This suggests that we too will have our own distinctive features in heaven, though in a glorified form. There is no suggestion that we will all look alike. When it says in 1 John 3:2 that we shall be like the Lord Jesus, it means morally like Him, i.e., forever free from sin and its consequences. But certainly we will not look like Him so as to be mistaken for Him. Never!

Second, there is no reason to believe that we will know less in heaven than we know down here. We recognize one another down here; why should it be thought strange that we should recognize each other up there? If we shall know then as we are now known, that should be decisive.

Paul expected to know the Thessalonians in heaven. He said that they would be his hope, joy and crown of rejoicing (1 Th. 2:19).

There are indications in the Bible that people have been given and will be given the ability to identify people they have never seen before. Peter, James and John recognized Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:4).

The rich man in Hades recognized Abraham (Lu. 16:24). Jesus told the Jews that they would see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God (Lu. 13:28). We are told to make friends through the wise stewardship of our money so that these friends will welcome us to the everlasting habitations (which assumes that they will recognize us as their benefactors) (Lu. 16:9).

But one word of caution should be added! While it seems clear that we will know our loved ones in heaven, we will not know them in the same relationships that existed on earth. For instance, the husband-wife relationship will no longer be in effect. That seems to be the clear meaning of the Savior's words in Matthew 22:30, “...in the resurrection, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage.”

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