

## **Is Heaven Boring? No Twelve**

"Time flies, death urges, ... heaven invites, hell threatens," wrote the British poet Edward Young (1683-1765). What is so inviting about heaven? If secular persons ever think about heaven, they imagine a ghost-like being sitting on a cloud playing a harp and singing forever. Or they vaguely remember the images of heaven they heard about in their childhood: walls of emerald, sapphire, and jasper, streets of gold, and pearly gates. Many Christians, when they speak about heaven, present a bland picture hardly recognizable from a Biblical perspective. They usually say, "When we die, we will go to heaven. We will see our loved ones, we will praise Jesus all day long, and we will be happy." But they can't imagine how praising Jesus could be their focus for eternity. And they can't picture themselves being happy when all their comforts enjoyed in life are absent.

Why do we find it so difficult to imagine life in heaven? The core difficulty is that we try to grasp the reality of heaven while we are still bound by earth, time and self. We are tied to jobs, homes, the kids and a pension plan. Our activities have a beginning and an end. We go to bed at night and get up in the morning. But heaven is different. There is no time clock to punch. There is a beginning but no end. It is this endless living that threatens to be boring. And on earth we focus on our careers, our families, our mortgage payments. In heaven all these things are no longer necessary. But how can heaven be boring when we are allowed to experience in all perfection that famous answer in the Westminster Catechism: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever?" Notice that it says that we shall not be enjoying ourselves - but God. Think of the church triumphant caught up in enjoying God forever. When we get to join her, we will be surprised by what it means to enjoy God. Heaven is also a place where the redeemed live together as mature adults, basking in the open sun of God's face. The children of God, who were mentally disabled on earth, awake on the other side of the grave as mature members of Christ's body, healed by the great Physician. In heaven, we won't speak about children or elderly people. As in heaven there is no time, there is neither young nor old. All saints have the same level of maturity. And heaven is a place of infinite continuous expansion of knowledge and discovery. Moral perfection does not do away with progress. Adam in paradise was perfect but not all knowing. He was given the cultural mandate (Gen. 1:28). Jesus, the second Adam, was perfect and yet the Bible says that He grew in wisdom and knowledge (Luke 2:40). Does heaven still sound dull and boring? It is an inviting place!