

**Explanatory Notes:****WILL WE BE MARRIED IN THE LIFE AFTER DEATH?****Series title:** Will We Be Married in the Life After Death?**Topic:** Marriage in heaven / heaven as a marriage**Table of Contents:**

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**Message #1: WHAT IS THE LIFE AFTER DEATH LIKE?\***

What do you imagine when you think about what happens after you die? People all over the world have many different ideas about the life after death (afterlife).

- Some people say there is no afterlife. Once we die, we no longer exist.
- Some believe that our souls enter a new body and we are reborn as animals or persons depending on their behavior (“karma”) in the previous life. They say we will keep on dying and being reborn again and again, even thousands of times!
- Some people say we are absorbed into God like a drop of water is absorbed into the sea.
- Some people think our bodies are bad. They say that when we die we live forever as spirits or ghosts. Some claim to speak to these dead people. Some even pray to them.
- Some people believe that relatives who die return to visit living relatives to be honored, fed and cared for. These dead relatives may curse and afflict living relatives who ignore them.

How do we know who is right? How can we be sure when there are so many different ideas? Well, we can know for certain what is true. God has revealed his thoughts to us in the

**\*Producers:** We included this message about the afterlife to prepare your listeners for the second message, which is about the question of marriage in the afterlife.

writings of the Bible. Since we have God's thoughts, we don't need to rely on our human wisdom only.

The Bible tells us that when we die, the two parts of us split apart. Our souls leave our bodies and leave to be in God's presence. We say they are in heaven, because that is where God is. Listen to what the Bible tells us:

*As long as we are in these bodies, we are away from the Lord. But we live by faith, not by what we see. We should be cheerful, because we would rather leave these bodies and be at home with the Lord. But whether we are at home with the Lord or away from him, we still try our best to please him. After all, Christ will judge each of us for the good or the bad that we do while living in these bodies.*

2 Corinthians 5:6-10, CEV

The Bible does not teach that our bodies are bad. In fact, it says we will one day have new bodies. When Jesus returns, he will raise all people from the dead and give them new bodies. Listen to this promise from the Bible:

*At the sound of the last trumpet the dead will be raised. We will all be changed, so that we will never die again. Our dead and decaying bodies will be changed into bodies that won't die or decay. The bodies we now have are weak and can die. But they will be changed into bodies that are eternal.*

1 Corinthians 15:52-54, CEV

Some of the last words of the Bible speak of the place where God is. The place where God is will come down to earth from heaven. And God will live forever with everyone who loves and follows Jesus. Listen to the Bible's words:

*Then I saw New Jerusalem, that holy city, coming down from God in heaven. It was like a bride dressed in her wedding gown and ready to meet her husband.*

*I heard a loud voice shout from the throne:  
God's home is now with his people. He will live with*

*them, and they will be his own. Yes, God will make his home among his people. He will wipe all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death, suffering, crying, or pain. These things of the past are gone forever.*

Revelation 21:2-4, CEV

So what can we say about the afterlife for people who follow Jesus?

- They will immediately go to heaven to be with Jesus.
- When Jesus returns to earth, he will bring them with him. He will give them new bodies.
- They will live forever with him on the new earth.
- God will be with them and they will never be sad again.

The Bible calls this joyful future hope “eternal life.” Did you know that Jesus offers eternal life to you? The Bible says we can know for certain that we will live forever with Jesus, if we trust in his words and follow him. We have been reading a number of promises from the Bible. Please listen carefully to one more. They are Jesus’ own words about himself:

*. . . everyone who has faith in the Son of Man [Jesus] will have **eternal life**. God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have **eternal life** and never really die. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn its people. He sent him to save them! No one who has faith in God’s Son will be condemned.*

John 3:15-7, CEV

I would like to invite you to believe in Jesus if you do not already. [Producers: lead your audience in an appropriate prayer of confession and faith].

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## **Message #2: WILL WE BE MARRIED IN THE LIFE AFTER DEATH?**

Last time we talked about the afterlife. We discovered that the Bible says believers in Jesus will live forever with him. He

will raise them from the dead and give them new bodies. The place where God is in heaven will come down to earth. And God will live forever with his people on a transformed earth.

We all wonder what life will be like when these things happen. Will we rest? Will we work? Will we look like children? Will we look like adults? There are many questions the Bible doesn't answer. But there is one important question the Bible does answer. It is about marriage. Married people wonder, "Will we still be married in heaven?" This question is very important for people who lose their spouses and remarry. Who will be married to whom? It is not a new question. People were asking it 2,000 years ago in the time of Jesus. Listen as I read a story about Jesus found in the Bible. This story took place the week Jesus was crucified by his enemies. He was speaking to the crowds in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem when some religious leaders named the Sadducees arrived. They came with a question to try to confuse Jesus. Here is what the Bible says:

*The Sadducees did not believe that people would rise to life after death. So some of them came to Jesus and said:*

*Teacher, Moses wrote that if a married man dies and has no children, his brother should marry the widow. Their first son would then be thought of as the son of the dead brother.\**

*There were once seven brothers. The first one married, but died without having any children. The second one married his brother's widow, and he also died without having any children. The same thing happened to the third one. Finally, all seven brothers married that woman and died without having any children. At last the woman died. When God raises people from death, whose wife will this woman be? All seven brothers had married her.*

*Jesus answered:*

*The people in this world get married. But in the future world no one who is worthy to rise from death will either marry or die. They will be like the angels and will be God's children, because they have been raised*

\*This practice is called levirate marriage, and the reference to it in the law of Moses is found in Deuteronomy 25:5-9.

*to life.*

Luke 20:27-36, CEV

Jesus' answer to the question "Will people be married to each other in the afterlife?" is "No." Then he gives a reason for his answer: "*They will be like the angels and will be God's children, because they have been raised to life.*"

What do these mysterious words mean? We will look first at what the words mean. Then we will see how they relate to our question about marriage in the afterlife.

**First, what does it mean that we "will be like angels"?**

Does it mean that we will become angels? No. It simply means that we will be like them in the ways Jesus mentioned. Angels do not marry. Nor will we marry. Angels do not die. We will not die. Angels serve God. So will we.

**Second, what does it mean that we will be "God's children"?** This is an important topic in the Bible. The Bible says that people who believe in Jesus become God's children. Here is what it says:

*Yet some people accepted him and put their faith in him. So he gave them the right to be the children of God. They were not God's children by nature or because of any human desires. God himself was the one who made them his children.*

John 1:12-13, CEV

Sin changed people into God's enemies. But when people believe in Jesus and follow him, God adopts them as his children. He adopts them into his family, the church. Some parents adopt children that were not born to them. They make them part of their family and tell them, "You are now my son" or "You are now my daughter." That is what God does for everyone who believes in Jesus. They become his children. He welcomes them to his family.

**What Jesus is saying is that in heaven the human families we have now won't be important in the afterlife.** Our families will be replaced by one big family of God. God's

family is made up of everyone who believes in Jesus.

Why is that? Why won't our families matter anymore? The Bible seems to suggest that **the love, unity and intimacy we enjoy in marriages and families is only a temporary preview of the love, unity and intimacy we will enjoy in heaven.** Do you want to know what heaven will be like? It will be like the perfect marriage. The healthier our marriages are, the better glimpse we get of the beauty of heaven.

The purpose of marriage is to create an intimate union between two people. Husbands and wives share a deep union of love. They are closer to each other than they are with any other person. Some of the oldest words written in the Bible\* teach the purpose of marriage. Those words say that, "A man leaves his father and mother to get married, and he becomes like one person with his wife."

\*Genesis 2:24.

The apostle Paul, one of the great Christian leaders of the early church, commented on those words. His comments appear in the Bible. He said,

*"As the Scriptures say, 'A man leaves his father and mother to get married, and he becomes like one person with his wife.' This is a great mystery, but I understand it to mean Christ and his church."*

Ephesians 5:31-32, CEV

In other words, the love Jesus Christ shares with his followers (the church), and the love his followers share for each other, is what marriage is all about. **When we are all one big united family of God in heaven, we will no longer need the intimacy of marriage. God will replace the good blessing of marriage with the greater blessing of perfect harmony in his eternal family.** The Bible even describes heaven as a marriage celebration.\*\*

\*\*Matthew 22:2, Revelation 19:9.

What a wonderful vision God gives us of the future! All the sad divisions and conflicts between people will end. All the fighting and wars will be over. People will love each other with a perfect love. Everyone will be a unified, happy family, the family of God on a perfect, renewed earth.

That is why Jesus stressed the importance of love many, many times. He said,

*I am giving you a new command. You must love each other, just as I have loved you. If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples.*

(John 13:34-35, CEV)

In our marriages, in our families and in our churches, we are to obey Jesus' command to love each other. This is the way people can see that we are Jesus' disciples, his true followers. **Our love for each other is the way we can give our world a glimpse into what eternal life with God will be like.** When our churches display Christian love and unity, they give the world a window into the future kingdom of God. They give us a foretaste of the perfect love between believers in the afterlife. And when our marriages and families are filled with love and harmony, they give the world a picture of the future perfection of the greatest family of all—the family of God.