

Will there be any sin or sorrow in heaven?

Scripture: Isaiah 53:3–4; Revelation 21:1–7

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No! Heaven will be so dramatically different from the present world that to describe it requires the use of negatives, as well as positives. To describe what is totally beyond human understanding also requires pointing out how it differs from present experience.

The first change from their earthly life believers in heaven will experience is that God will wipe away every tear from their eyes (cf. Rev. 7:17, Isa. 25:8). That does not mean that people who arrive in heaven will be crying and God will comfort them. They will not, as some imagine, be weeping as they face the record of their sins. There is no such record, because "there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1), since Christ "bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed" (1 Pet. 2:24).

What it declares is the absence of anything to be sorry about--no sadness, no disappointment, no pain. There will be no tears of misfortune, tears over lost love, tears of remorse, tears of regret, tears over the death of loved ones, or tears for any other reason.

Another dramatic difference from the present world will be that in heaven there will no longer be any death (cf. Isa. 25:8). The greatest curse of human existence will be no more. "Death," as Paul promised, "is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54). Both Satan, who had the power of death (Heb. 2:14), and death itself will have been cast into the lake of fire (20:10, 14).

Nor will there be any mourning, or crying in heaven. The grief, sorrow, and distress that produce mourning and its outward manifestation, crying, will not exist in heaven. This glorious reality will be the fulfillment of Isaiah 53:3-4: "He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, And we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted." When Christ bore believers' sins on the cross, He also bore their sorrows, since sin is the cause of sorrow.

The perfect holiness and absence of sin that will characterize heaven will also mean that there will be no more pain. On the cross, Jesus was "wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). While the healing in view in that verse is primarily spiritual healing, it also includes physical healing.

Commenting on Jesus' healing of Peter's mother-in-law, Matthew 8:17 says, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sickness.'" The healing ministry of Jesus was a preview of the well-being that will characterize the millennial kingdom and the eternal state. The glorified sin-free bodies believers will possess in heaven will not be subject to pain of any kind.

All those changes that will mark the new heaven and the new earth indicate that the first things have passed away. Old human experience related to the original, fallen creation is gone forever, and with it the mourning, suffering, sorrow, disease, pain, and death that has characterized it since the Fall.

Adapted from John MacArthur, **Revelation 12-22** in *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2000), 269-71.

For more information on heaven, take a look at John's book, *The Glory of Heaven*.

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