

Recently I participated in a discussion on whether Heaven will indeed be perfect and without sin, and also what implications this has for free will in Heaven. One person in this discussion wrote:

To summarize: God creates a perfect world, humans choose to sin, and so the world is no longer perfect. Now let's jump to the common viewpoint that heaven is this place where everything is perfect - ultimately that there is no sin, and so no death, disease, etc. Essentially heaven is what we think existed in step one above. Now comes the BIG question that any rational mind should ask...

So how can God ensure heaven will always remain perfect without changing something fundamental from how things here on earth work (or are)? This leads me to think there can't possibly be free choice in heaven given our beliefs above; and if there isn't free choice there can't be love and what would be the point of worship (which apparently is a big thing in heaven)?

The first thing that I noticed here is the assumption that Heaven will be exactly like it was in the Garden of Eden after Creation, and thus the quandry and question then becomes "If heaven is no different than Eden then what assurance do we have of not falling again as Adam and Eve did?". I will return to this in just a moment but lets examine one of the responses to this question in the discussion.

The first response given was this:

The system is consistent if you assert one of the following:

- 1) There is a very real possibility (even probability) of evil and pain in heaven.**
- 2) There is no free will and therefore no love or relationship in heaven.**

I find that I differ with both of the assertions in this answer. Assertion #1 can be dealt with by clearing up the fact that nothing that has ever been on earth (not even Eden) can be compared to Heaven. Note that God called creation "good" but not "perfect". I would also add that Adam and Eve were not actually created "perfect" as we think of the the word. They were created innocent and initially free from sin, but were not perfect.

Assertion #2 on the other hand makes a false assumption that we will be captives of God's will in some sense, such that we will no longer be able to have free will and thus not be able to love God and choose to worship Him. Yet this latter assertion excludes any observation of how Christ is now in Heaven (perfect and yet has free will and loves the Father), which is relevant since we will also be "as He is" when we are with Him. My response in this discussion was as follows (slightly edited):

Concerning possibility #2, consider the following assertions:

- A) God is in Heaven.**
- B) God is impervious to sin, He cannot sin, and cannot be tempted by it.**
- C) Christ was in the flesh but without sin - as Hebrews says.**
- D) Jesus has a glorified body in heaven right now which he obtained upon his resurrection.**
- E) 1 Corinthians 15 says that believers also shall obtain an incorruptible and glorified body upon their resurrection.**
- F) 1 John 3:2 states "We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is".**

My conclusion is that it is entirely possible that in Heaven we may be like Christ, who cannot sin and has never sinned, and have perfect free will to love God and have a relationship with Him, just as the Son has a relationship with the Father now in Heaven.

Now, what I mean by referring to our "incorruptible" glorified body is that we will be incorruptible not simply in just some "material makeup" sense (which clearly is alluded to by Paul, in contrast to our corruptible physical bodies, in 1 Corinthians 15) but also incorruptible in a spiritual and moral sense as well. I believe that our whole BEING will be incorruptible. In a word "we will be as He is" (1 John 3:2): incorruptible like God yet maintaining our free will.

This in part addresses the question about whether Heaven will essentially be like it was in the garden. The answer is emphatically "NO". Read all of 1 Corinthians 15. Part of Paul's main point is to CONTRAST the existing creation with what we shall be like once glorified . Paul regards whatever form that glory will actually look like as "incomparable" to anything seen or even imagined here on earth. So no, things will be much better in heaven than even Adam and Eve ever had it before the Fall!

I believe that this argument takes into account all that God will do in us and yet preserves the volition of our will to love and worship God freely in eternity. And as a technical note it may indeed be rather the New Earth and not "Heaven" proper where we dwell with God after the resurrection, depending on how you understand Revelation. In fact even the Jews when referring to our future eternal state merely addressed that time as "in the resurrection" (Matthew

22:28, 30) rather than saying "in Heaven". In any case I just wanted to share my thoughts on this topic in case it might in some way be helpful to anyone else who may be asking the same questions about Heaven. I hope it provides good food for thought!