

This may be hard to understand from an earthly perspective, but our outlook in Heaven will be entirely different. Experiencing the Beatific Vision will make up so perfectly happy that any sadness over the absence of loved ones is impossible. As the Book of Revelation (21:4) tells us, in Heaven God “shall wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no death or mourning, crying out in pain, for the former world has passed away.

Do animals have souls and will there be animals in heaven?

All living things have souls. There are three classes of souls, vegetative, animal, and rational. The souls of vegetables and animals are incomplete, when they die, the soul dies. Only man has a complete and immortal soul, which is capable of gaining heaven.

What is the difference between the soul of an animal and the soul of a human being?

First, we must address the question, "What is the soul?"

The soul is the life principle:

- It is a spiritual entity which moves of its own volition: being independent of external forces:
- It is a simple substance; having no parts, it is not subject to decomposition, disintegration or dissolution from within:
- It is an immaterial, indivisible, indestructible unit, incapable of extinction, therefore immortal:
- It is the conscious art principle, created by God, not born of man.

Man is capable of making a moral decision, while an animal is not. The animal differs radically from a human being. Humans are capable of building or creating, with the substances which God has given him to work with, all the while hoping for immortality. Animal acts are reflexive, such as breathing, eating, sleeping, and waking.

The soul of man thinks; the soul of the animal does not, although under the guidance of man, an animal can be taught to do many things.

The soul of man is intellectual, it can reflect, reason, and hope.

The soul of an animal is sensitive, it does what its nature compels it to do; it is mortal.

The soul of man comes from God to return to God. The soul of an animal is generated from its parents, and returns with its body to the earth.

As for such "higher animals" -- the ape, gorilla, orang-outang, and the monkey, they are the same as any other animal. They live and act today the same as they did when they were created by God.

On the other hand, man builds, lives, adjusts himself to his changing environments progressively. By the use of his art principle, he discovers new forces of nature, and new means of using the things over which God has given him dominion. Only man can create a symphony.

Pope John Paul II Society of Evangelists

14818 Ranchero Road
Hesperia, California, USA
Telephone: 760-220-6818
FAX: 760-948-7620

E-mail: pjpiisoe@earthlink.net

www.pjpiisoe.org

Pamphlet 320

Questions & Answers About Heaven

Is Heaven a state or a place?

The Bible refers to heaven as a place and as a state (eternal life, eternal rest, the kingdom of God, the joy of the Lord, etc.). In the language of St. Paul, to enter into heaven is to “be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8), which can mean nothing else than a total occupation with God, culminating in the knowledge and love of God.

The Church employs the term *Caelum* to signify the dwelling place of God and the Blessed, with the emphasis upon the *state* rather than the *place* in which they find themselves.

What is the “Beatific Vision?”

It is the clear, immediate, intuitive knowledge of God which results in heavenly joy. By an act of the intellect, as defined by Pope Benedict XII in 1336, the blessed in heaven “see the divine essence by an intuitive vision and face to face, so that the divine essence is known immediately, showing itself plainly, clearly, and openly, and not mediately through any creature” (DS 1000-2). The souls of the just see God as He truly is — Divine, One and Triune. The blessed “see” God because the intellect is enlightened by the “light of glory” which produces a corresponding delight in the will. The happy souls participate in the divine happiness by seeing and knowing God as He sees and loves Himself. Sacred Scripture (1 Cor 13:12-13; 1 Jn 3:2) affirms the reality of the beatific vision,

as did Jesus in His human nature as He lived on earth.

Will we really get to know God?

God's intimacy with us will be so great that He will be in no sense outside us, but within us; we shall grasp His very being within the very powers of our mind.

Will everyone in Heaven receive the same reward?

Heaven is supernatural and eternal, and has various degrees of happiness for the Blessed, corresponding to the higher or lower measure of grace with which each is endowed and in the intimacy and union with God.

Will we be happy in heaven?

Heaven is not the *possible* enjoyment of anything we shall be able to think of; it will be the *actual* enjoyment, never ending, of the greatest happiness we can possess. Heaven will not be a succession of good things; it will be the complete possession, all at once, of the highest, the infinite object of all enjoyment—God. We will be enveloped in the perfect love of God for all eternity.

Will we recognize our loved ones in heaven?

The inhabitants of Heaven do not lead a solitary life, but are associated together in a mystic body called the Communion of Saints. They are members of the triumphant Church and will mingle with the angels and our glorified fellowmen, the Saints.

Do the Saints in Heaven know about us on earth?

Yes, the knowledge of the Saints is not limited to Heavenly things, but extends to Purgatory and this earth. They devote special attention, of course, to whatever pertains to the worship and intercession.

We shall know our friends and relatives in heaven, and we shall know them better than we ever understood them on this earth. Here, our understanding of one another is imperfect. We will also have numberless friends, not merely our relatives and former friends on earth. There is a vast multitude, which no one can count, who will be our companions forever. First and foremost will be the Virgin Mother of Jesus, who received us all as children under the Cross of her Son, and who will gladly take us under the wide mantle of her glory on the steps of the throne of her Son. After the Queen of Heaven, comes the whole army of the Saints of God, Apostles and martyrs, and the vast array of men and women, who reached the perfection needed to enter the beatific vision.

Do the Saints in Heaven care about us on earth?

Yes, here on earth, they have relatives, friends, and descendants in whom they care about, for death does not destroy our earthly relations, but raises them to a higher level, in which the salvation of our souls is the highest consideration. God communicates knowledge of the living to the Saints. The Saints continually intercede before God for the souls

of those of us still living on earth and the souls suffering in purgatory.

Will married people be united with their spouses in Heaven?

Jesus was asked about this very question by the Sadducees, who posed the elaborate scenario of a woman whose husband died and she eventually married his six brothers in succession. "At the resurrection, whose wife will she be?" the Sadducees asked the Lord. "Remember, seven married her."

Jesus replied that there would be no marriage in heaven. "The children of this age marry and are given in marriage," He said, but those judged worthy of a place in the age to come and of resurrection from the dead do not. They become like angels and are no longer liable to death. Sons of the resurrection, they are sons of God" (Lk 20:33-36).

This does not mean that those who were married in this life will not know or enjoy the company of their spouses in Heaven, but they will not be married there.

Will there be disappointment in Heaven if we find some loved ones missing?

While here on earth we have a natural love for family members and friends, this natural love will turn into supernatural love of God when we reach heaven. God will be the focus and the source of all our happiness and nothing will be able to disturb that happiness, not even the knowledge (if we have such knowledge) that some of our loved ones are in hell.