

Monday, September 9, 2013 – They still have the better view...

It was one year ago this week that my mother and father passed away. In many ways it doesn't seem like it could have been that long ago but in other ways it seems much longer. I have thought a lot about them the last few days, not just because of the anniversary associated with their death, but because my wife and I just returned from a vacation to a state my parents loved to visit.

For those of you who have been to Colorado, you understand that it doesn't matter where you are in the Rocky Mountains, the view is always incredible. For the entire time my siblings and I were living at home, we took a vacation each year to the family cabin in Green Mountain Falls right after dad finished with the wheat harvest. We would spend a couple of weeks there with each day consisting of road trips that included picnic lunches and beautiful sites. Once I married, mom and dad would recount to me where they had gone, what they had seen and how gorgeous the locations were that they visited. Many times the conversation would end with the good natured dig that, "our view is prettier than yours." As my wife and I drove the roads of southern Colorado last week, I couldn't help but think how much mom and dad would have enjoyed the scenery. Then I realized that no, they still have the better view.

The beauty of heaven should bring the sense of great joy to every Christian. In speaking of those of great faith, in Hebrews 11, the writer says, beginning in verse 13, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them." Heaven is a place of unspeakable glory where the elect of God live with one another in the immediate presence of God and of the Lamb and where they behold Him in all His glory face to face. It is a place where the curse of sin and all of its effects have been removed forever from all who dwell there; they, being made joint heirs with Christ, inherit all things and live with unmixed joy in a state of perfect happiness incapable of being described or overstated forever and ever.

The saints in heaven shall see God in all His majesty. They shall behold the infinite glory of the Almighty One in as great a capacity as they are capable of. They shall not behold Him only at a distance, but "face to face" (1 Corinthians 13:12). This is what the blessedness of the saints in glory chiefly consists of: the beholding of God. Yet it is impossible that a finite man should comprehend God. Everything the Book of Revelation

says about heaven, though some of it is expressed in figurative language, points to a city of indescribable and unspeakable beauty and grandeur. Revelation 22:5 describes some of the glory of seeing God: "And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them." The glory of God will swallow up the light of the sun as the brilliance of the sun now dispels the darkness of night.

Heaven should be of great comfort to those who are weary, suffering, or enduring persecution in this life. We need to understand we are nearer to our journey's end than when we first began. The time we have left on earth is miniscule when measured by eternity. The Hebrew Christians were reminded of their former victories in the time of trial and encouraged not to throw away their faith in the midst of present sufferings, "knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one" in heaven (Hebrews 10:34).

Many songs have been penned to allow us a glimpse of heavens beauty. One well known hymn is "No Tears in Heaven."

No tears in heaven no sorrows given
All will be glory in that land
There'll be no sadness all will be gladness
When we shall join that happy band.

No tears (in heaven fair) no tears (no tears up there)
Sorrow and pain will all have flown
No tears (in heaven fair) no tears (no tears up there)
No tears in heaven will be known.

Glory is waiting waiting up yonder
Where we shall spend an endless day
There with our Saviour we'll be forever
Where no more sorrow can dismay.

No tears (in heaven fair) no tears (no tears up there)
Sorrow and pain will all have flown
No tears (in heaven fair) no tears (no tears up there)
No tears in heaven will be known.

Some morning yonder we'll cease to ponder
O'er things this life has brought to view

All will be clearer saved ones be dearer
In heaven where all will be made new

No tears (in heaven fair) no tears (no tears up there)
Sorrow and pain will all have flown
No tears (in heaven fair) no tears (no tears up there)
No tears in heaven will be known.

Yes, mom and dad have the better view. We can thank Jehovah God for that.