



The Bodies of Spirits

FaithBuilder 4 | Lesson 6 | Eternal Life

Lesson Overview

1. Watch a Video

Watch *There's no Pretense in the Afterlife* (1min 21sec), at bitly.com/PretenseAfterlife

2. Discuss

How would knowing what kind of people we are with change life?

3. Read

What do New Church teachings say about the spiritual body after death?

4. Discuss

New Church Concept Heavenly Youth

When people who have lived good lives get to heaven, they all enter the young adulthood of their earthly lives and keep it forever, even though they had been old and debilitated in the world. Women, even women who had become old and frail in the world, return to the flower of youth and beauty. *Divine Providence* 324

Watch a Video

Watch *There's no Pretense in the Afterlife* at bitly.com/PretenseAfterlife (1min 21sec). (Enter the bitly link in the browser bar at the top of your screen.)

Discuss

1. How will we know what kind of people we're dealing with in the life after death?
2. How would knowing more about a person's real thoughts and intentions make life easier—or more challenging?
3. Everyone in the life after death sees the genuine character of others, however this does not happen immediately after death.

Read

What do we look like when we wake up in this world of spirits? In a way we look exactly like we do here. We will be in a spiritual body that will be just as real and just as solid as our physical body.

When we enter the spiritual world or our life after death, we are in a body as we were in this world. There seems to be no difference, since we do not feel or see any difference. This body is spiritual, though, so it has been separated or purified from earthly matter. Further, when anything spiritual touches and sees something spiritual, it is just like something natural touching and seeing something natural. So when we have become a spirit, we have no sense that we are not in the body we inhabited in the world, and therefore do not realize that we have died.

As "spirit-people," we enjoy every outer and inner sense we enjoyed in the world. We see the way we used to, we hear and talk the way we used to; we smell and taste and feel things when we touch them the way we used to; we want, wish, crave, think, ponder, are moved, love, and intend the way we used to. Studious types still read and write as before. In a word, when we move from the one life into the other, or from the one world into the other, it is like moving from one physical place to another; and we take with us everything we owned as persons to the point that it would be unfair to say that we have lost anything of our own after death, which is only a death of the earthly body.

We even take with us our natural memory, since we retain everything we have heard, seen, read, learned, or thought in the world from earliest infancy to the very end of life. See *Heaven and Hell* 461

The Old and New Testaments give numerous examples of people seeing angels in human form. For example, in the Book of Revelation we read that an angel who spoke to John had feet. "John fell at his feet." Also servants of the Lord in the spiritual world "will see His face"—so those that see Him must have spiritual eyes. They must have foreheads too, because it says that the Lord's name will be in their foreheads. The Lord's parable about the rich man and Lazarus mentions the tongue and the tip of the finger, as well as the eyes. We can also conclude that in the spiritual world they must have ears and mouths because spirits talk to one another.

There is another incident in the Old Testament when King Saul wanted to speak to Samuel who had recently gone into the spiritual world as an old man (I Samuel 28). Saul saw him as an old man—in other words, in the human form and of the same age as when he died. The Writings for the New Church tell us that at first people appear to be the physical age at which they died, and that they gradually appear younger, until they look like young adults.

In the Old Testament, when an angel appeared to someone on earth, that angel was often mistaken for an earthly person. The angel did not put on a physical body so that the person could see him on earth. Instead, the person or prophet who saw the angel had spiritual eyes or ears opened. For a while the person or prophet was in the spiritual world and aware of what was going on there. And each time the person on earth mistook the angel for a man on earth. (See Abram and Sarai, Genesis 16; Manoah and his wife, Judges 13.)

These stories confirm that after resurrection we will have a spiritual body with all its senses. And when what is spiritual sees or touches what is spiritual, it is exactly the same as what is natural seeing or touching what is natural—but the senses will be even more exquisite (see *Senses After Death*, to the right).

Adapted from *The Spiritual Body*, a talk by Rev. Douglas Taylor.

Discuss

1. Compare the spiritual body compare and the natural body. What similarities and differences are there between them?
2. The video *There's no pretense in the afterlife* talked about people being able to see what others think in the afterlife. This happens gradually, after a person has lived in the afterlife for a while and adjusted to life there. It is part of the process of progressing towards a permanent home in heaven or hell because what a person thinks to himself becomes aligned with how he acts (see *Heaven and Hell* 502-507). Why is this so important? Could a person go to heaven without this happening? Why or why not?

The difference between our life in the spiritual world and our life in the natural world is considerable.... People who are in heaven have far more delicate senses. That is, they see and hear and also think more discerningly than when they were in this world. This is because they are seeing in heaven's light, which vastly surpasses the world's light, and they hear by way of a spiritual atmosphere that vastly surpasses the atmosphere of the earth. The difference in their outer senses is like that between something clear and something hidden by a cloud, or like noonday light and the dimness of evening. Because it is divine truth, heaven's light enables angels' sight to notice and differentiate the slightest things. Further, their outer sight is responsive to their inner sight or discernment, since for angels the one sight flows into the other and they act as a single faculty. This is why they are so keen. Their hearing is similarly responsive to their perception, which is a function of both understanding and will. So they pick up in the tone and words of speakers the slightest shadings of their affection and thought-shadings of affection in the tone, and shadings of thought in the words.
Heaven and Hell 462a