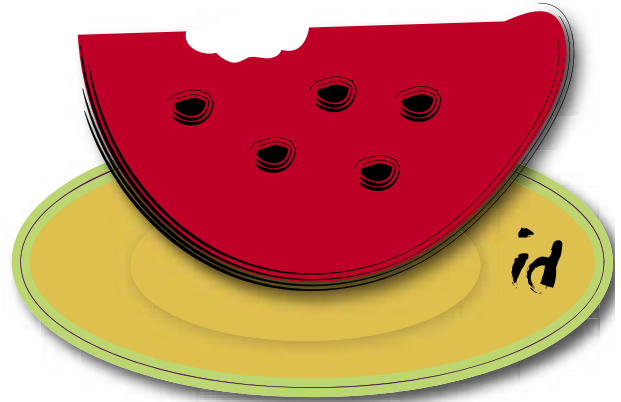


Crazy about Heaven

People have the nuttiest ideas about heaven. The Muslims imagine heaven as a harem with 70 vestal virgins awaiting the martyr. It's not exactly Hugh Hefner's paradise, but for a twenty year old Islamist high on hormones living somewhere between the Middle Ages and the misery of a hopeless life, it's an option. The Mormon imagines God having "relations" with a god-wife in heaven resulting in physical births on earth. Heaven for the Mormon involves becoming the god of one's own planet and populating it with lot's (and lot's) of sex. The Vikings spoke of Valhalla which was a much, much better place and a virtual pillager's paradise.



Then there are those people who think heaven is watermelon. "All da watermelons you kin eat."

We laugh at the watermelon theologians, but we have some nutty ideas about heaven closer to home. First of all, everyone thinks they are going to heaven. They know the "secret handshake" or have said the magic words, or have a papal or protestant indulgence tucked away in some imaginary safety deposit box. They have some man's word on it and you might as well try to tell them they might be mistaken as telling some believer there is no watermelon in heaven. "Wize, day sure is watermelons in Heaven, and catfish-fishin too." To say otherwise is to be a heretic or an infidel in their parallel universe.

I know some assembly ladies whose idea of heaven is having "tea parties" on each other's planet and serving cookies on plates with little paper doilies." That would be hell to me, but that's just me. I know of one dear lady who lost her son and speaks of him as "an angel." She once asked him for good weather for a special outdoor event. There are others who are convinced that their dog "Rover" is in heaven romping in God's back yard and digging up bones.

Jesus said there is no marriage and giving in marriage in heaven. That upsets many people. Why? The reason is they think too low. The Israelites thought it would be "heavenly" to have all the quail they could eat. It did not take long before they became "sick" of quail. Likewise, it would not take long for the most ardent watermelon enthusiast to become "ill" just looking at another watermelon if they had watermelon three times a day. I worked in an ice cream parlor when I was a teenager. For my break, I was allowed to fix and eat anything I wanted. Trust me, there "ain't no ice cream in heaven," and that soots me just fine.

Heaven is going to be living with and learning of God. It will be larger than any Eden with so many trees filled with unforbidden fruit that we will not have time to think of watermelon. To somehow believe that souls "present with the Lord" are looking down here at grave cloths left behind in some sepulchre is to make too little of heaven. Heaven will be an occupation and preoccupation with the glory of God, not seeing how far you can spit a watermelon seed. -id