

Q&A: In Heaven, those who endured bad things on Earth are comforted... implying we'll remember what we'll be comforted for. Can you add your opinion to this?

Anonymous asks this question and references Luke 16:25.

I don't have much to add to the implication. The comfort of heaven doesn't seem to be a matter of controversy. Neither do I think it's controversial to draw the implication that we'll remember our earthly lives. Those conclusions seem sensible.

I don't know if I'd draw on that Luke 16 passage (the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus) to make the point though. The passage is a parable, a story, not a record of actual events. And it is making the point about the hardness of hearts that "would refuse to repent even if someone rose from the dead."

When it comes to our final state and our eternal hope the best place to go is the end of Revelation where in the account of the new heaven and new earth we have, for example, in 21:4 –

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (KJV)

And in terms of remembering the former things, on a larger scale we are told of the new city of God that "They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations." (21:26, ESV).

It seems that we can invest in things of eternal worth in the

here and now!

The other implication in your question is a sense quid pro quo – bad things here, good things there. While there is a sense of “reward” or “prize” when talking about eternal destiny (Paul uses the imagery in Philippians 3, for instance), and while there is also a sense of justice and wrongs being made right, the comfort of heaven is not a payment for bad things done now. That is, it’s not about being given a hardship’s worth of comfort in order to make up for what we’ve been through, rather it is an abundance, an outpouring, a more-than-enough-ness of comfort into which we enter.