

Sermon Series: Heaven As You Never Imagined

January 3, 2021

Update on current events

Sermon Title: This World is Our Future Home

Today's Scripture: Revelation 21:5–8 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." (ESV)

Prayer

Introduction: When Adam and Eve were forcefully removed from the Garden of Eden, and the Garden was guarded by Cherubim who would not allow them to return to the Tree of Life, do you not imagine that since then, there has been a calling, a longing in human hearts to return to what we as a race once experienced? Do you not think that somewhere in our DNA is a strand that says this world was once a Paradise and that is where you belong? I mean, if left to our quiet selves, unencumbered by the worries and noise of life and the political bombs going off all around us, do you not think that every human deep down not only has a sense of a God vacuum hole in their hearts but also a sense that we were made for a world so much better than this? Why do our hearts recoil at graffiti? Why do we turn our eyes away from homelessness and garbage strewn streets? Why do we cringe when looking at shuttered buildings and broken windows and burned out factories. Shouldn't these all be normal? The movie "Back to the Future 2" depicted a world of corruption, decay and ugliness when the bully in the movie took control. Why did we all not like that depiction of the world? Is it because we innately have a conception of where we came from as a human race and potentially where we are going? A Paradise that invites us, no, beckons us with desire to live in beauty, harmony, splendor, and in peace with man and animals alike. I saw a video recently of a man who raised a pride of lions and after a period of time being away, returned to that same pride and the animals including the king lavished him with genuine affection. A sample of heaven indeed.

Main point:

1. The Intermediate Heaven is a physical place with physical properties inhabited by physical people.
 - Plato taught that the material universe is evil and the spiritual world is good. Church fathers such as Origen were influenced by Platonism and taught that Heaven is not a physical place and those that dwelt there are body-less spirits or souls.

- But, what does the Bible say?
 - Revelation 15:8 and the sanctuary was filled with **smoke** from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished. (ESV)
 - Revelation 7:9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in **white robes**, with **palm branches** in their hands, (ESV)
 - Revelation 8:6 Now the seven angels who had the **seven trumpets** prepared to blow them. (ESV)
 - Revelation 19:14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on **white horses**. (ESV)
 - And, the New Jerusalem, which is physical, will be coming down out of Heaven. Revelation 21:2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (ESV)
 - **Paradise**. Jesus told the criminal that he would be with Jesus in Paradise. Where was that? The word paradise from the Persian language means a walled garden. Eden was the original paradise and the Tree of Life was in it. That Tree is today in Heaven. Revelation 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.' (ESV) Genesis 3:24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. (ESV) This same Eden will likely return to earth where it once was.
 - **People**. Will they have physical bodies? Jesus does. Possibly Moses and Elijah and we could guess Enoch as well. Are they exceptions? It appears that residents of Heaven will be given an intermediate body to use while in the intermediate Heaven. Revelation 6:9-11 speaks of souls in heaven given white robes to wear. Spirits don't wear robes. My best guess is that much like angels who are ministering spirits appeared at times in physical forms so our relatives are currently using a similar form.
 - The rich man and Lazarus had physical properties. Rich man asked if Lazarus could dip his finger in water to soothe his pain. Can't just float over across the chasm!
2. Life in Heaven involves awareness of and prayers for what is happening now on earth.
- Revelation 6:9–11 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been. (ESV) 1) Deeds live on in heaven. 2) Unity, one voice. 3) Passion and emotion. 4) Memory. 5) Time lapse. 6) Knowledge and awareness of justice filled or waiting. 7) Requests made. 8) Answers given. 9) Learning experienced.
 - Our rewards (or lack thereof) requires a recollection of what happened here on earth. 2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

(ESV) That memory of what happened will be enhanced with a mind that is no longer cloudy or defiled with sin.

- We will also be watching events unfold on earth (if we are not still here). The Great multitude . . . **Revelation 19:2 for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” (ESV)**
 - Angels know what is happening now on earth, why shouldn't the saints above know what's going on. **1 Timothy 5:21 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality. (ESV)**
 - But if people are aware, would that not make them sad, and there should be no sadness in heaven? No mourning or crying is a feature of the New Heaven and New Earth not the Intermediate of present heaven.
3. This earth we call home will become our future eternal home. **Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. (ESV)**
- The similarities between the old earth and the new earth give us more than glimpses of what the New Earth will be like. The New Heaven and New Earth contains a city The New Jerusalem and many other cities. So if we know what cities look like we can picture heaven. There will be streets, and buildings, and people, and art and concerts, and gatherings and possibly even sporting events.
 - Our old earth has rivers and mountains and valleys and plains and trees and flowers and animals. The New Earth will then also have rivers and mountains and valleys and plains and trees and flowers and animals. The difference will be of course without any curse or disease and all of it enhanced.
 - In the new earth we will have bodies. They will look younger than they do now for most of us and they will function a whole lot better but we will have bodies and we will be able to hug and kiss and touch.
 - We are told that we will work in heaven depending of course on the talents and abilities you have been given here on earth only enhanced. So we will know what it means to work and accomplish something and see finished products and we may even get tired.
 - We will eat in heaven and enjoy food. We all know what that is like.
 - Both Abraham and many OT saints looked forward to the Heavenly City and how could they look forward to it if they could not imagine it? They did imagine it. **Hebrews 13:14 For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. (ESV) 2 Peter 3:13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (ESV)**

Final Word:

If God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day every day, He will most certainly do that with each of us in our future home as well. Live your lives as if you are looking forward to that daily walk.

