

Sermon Series: Heaven As You Never Imagined

December 27, 2020

Update on current events

Sermon Title:

Today's Scripture: Revelation 21:1–4 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. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (ESV)

Prayer

Introduction: Skywatch T.V. Latest events and indicators show Jesus' Second Coming is likely this decade. (If you want more info we can talk about this in the second hour). But, if your focus is on this world, His Second Coming may not thrill you. If your focus is on Heaven, you will be excited about His return, no matter what stage your family is in right now. When I was engaged I said, please Lord don't come until I can experience married life. Then when we got married, I said please Lord don't come until we have children. Then when children came you get the idea. The next focus is grandchildren, then retirement, then greatgrandchildren. STOP. If you are thinking this way, it's not your fault. It is the church's fault that you have so little interest in Heaven and do not look forward with great anticipation going there soon.

If you have been on the mission field in a third world country, (Pati and I were in Roatan and South Africa on mission trips) you know how difficult life can be for those people. Not only the poverty but the spiritual darkness is smothering. You may have been blessed by your trip but admit it, when the plane finally landed at LaGuardia and then eventually at MSP, you almost kissed the ground when you got off the plane. That is exactly what you should be feeling about Heaven, every single day of your life and it is my goal for this sermon series to give you a much better picture of what Heaven is going to be so that you are longing for it.

Main point: The more you know about Heaven, the less you will love this world. And, the more you love the beauty of this world, the more you will desire the magnificence of Heaven.

1. Satan paints Heaven as boring and Hell as exciting. Don't believe his lies.
 - I wish I knew who to blame for the concept of eternal harp playing on a cloud with nowhere to stand and wearing a silly white robe. First of all I don't like harp music, it puts me to sleep, and I don't want to learn how to play one. Secondly, I don't want to sit on my own cloud with no one to talk to since I can't see anyone else nearby. Third,

this sounds like eternal hell more than eternal heaven. Oh, now I know who to blame. Somewhere Hollywood got this concept directly from a demon who was instructed to pass it along directly from Satan.

- Now I know who to blame for the next lie. Satan has caused most Christians and most non-Christians to believe that Heaven is one eternal worship service. Now am sure that the worst worship in Heaven is a million times more engaging than the best on earth but still, how many can say that they have never fallen asleep in an earthly worship service. If you say you didn't, just know that liars are not allowed into Heaven.
- **Revelation 13:6 It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. (ESV)** Notice what Satan via the Anti-Christ is blaspheming. He is belittling Heaven and slandering it. If he can make beast worshippers think Heaven is a non-stop worship service or much worse, you can see why people would be willing to take the Mark of the Beast when offered.
- What this sermon series is going to show you is the vast beauty and pleasure of heaven. Our imaginations can go there if we let them. God has said a great deal about heaven so there is no lack of information. As we begin our journey, think of it this way in three parts:
 - First, consider everything you love about this earth, its mountains, valleys, horses, streams, meadows, flowers as miniatures of what is next. If a blind person had never seen the sun and through surgery was able to see for the first time and he saw the exam light above his head and he asked the question, "Is this what the sun looks like?" If you were there in that room you would take him to the southern window and say "No, this is what the sun looks like" as he squints and averts his eyes from the brightness. Every tree, flower, plant, and wonder of earth is like a light bulb compared to the sun for their counterparts in heaven.
 - Secondly, consider your favorite hobbies other than motorcycling although there is no reason to believe we won't have motor sports in heaven. What do you find doing that gives you the greatest pleasure on earth? Hospitality? Plenty to do in heaven. Helping people straighten out their lives with wisdom and counseling? Lots of that needed in the future cities. Building things? Yes. Gardening? Absolutely. The talents you have been given in this life will be enhanced and used for far greater purposes and pleasures in the next.
 - Thirdly, know that you will have a resurrected body in heaven that is totally physical and you will not lose those physical senses. In fact they should all be enhanced. This is a lost concept. Satan has done a good job of distorting what heaven will be like for our bodies through false teachings down through the ages and making us think heaven is mainly spiritual and designed for spiritual beings. It is not. It is mainly physical and designed for physical beings.

2. The Intermediate State for Believers and Non-Believers.

- There is more than one heaven and in only one sense there is more than one hell. The heaven which your departed parents or grandparents went to is not the final heaven and we call it the Intermediate Heaven. The place where non-Believers go when they die

today is not the permanent hell spoken of in Revelation 19, but a place called Hades. Let's start there. [Luke 16:19-31](#).

- Now let's look at the Intermediate Heaven as depicted in Scripture where saints who have died are now residing:
 - Ezekiel 1:1 In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. (ESV)
 - Ezekiel 4-28 is a fuller picture but Revelation 4 summarizes what Ezekiel saw: Revelation 4 After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.
 - And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (ESV)
 - This is the same heaven Paul was caught up to in [2 Corinthians 12:1-4](#) I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. (ESV)
 - Where is this third heaven located? If it is in another dimension (likely) then it is right here next to us. When Stephen was stoned he saw the Lord standing up from his throne. Therefore God allowed a fracture in the dimensional universe allowing Stephen to see and only Stephen what was very, very close.

- This would help us to better understand Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (ESV)

3. The Portal – Jesus Christ.

- No admittance for sinners Habakkuk 1:13 You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong,
- Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (ESV)
- Many will think they are on the right road. Matthew 7:13–14 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. (ESV)
- 2 Thessalonians 1:9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, (ESV)
- John 10:1–2 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (ESV)

Final word:

The only robes allowed in heaven are those washed clean by the blood of Jesus.