

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Heaven—God’s Dwelling Place

Selected Passages

Keywords: Heaven, New heavens, new earth, eternity, day of the Lord, Day of Christ.

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SermonAudio Blurb:

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I. Introduction.

- A. When we speak of heaven too often it is done not from a biblical foundation as much as it is through vague, human developed ideas.
1. This usually ends up making it very man centered, or simply some abstract idea that really means little to us.
 2. This is why we can be comfortable with statements like:
 - a. Well, he is in heaven now, I bet he is up there happily hunting as we speak.
 - b. Grandma is up there looking down with a smile on her face.
 3. Add to this that there are passages that are hard to fathom and so we give up.
 - a. E.g. Ezekiel 1:4-28.
 - (1) Btw, vs 28 is probably the key to this.
 - (2) The point is the utter, unique glory of God that drove him to fall upon the ground.
 - (a) This sets up the revelations given by God to him and the terrible vision of the glory of God departing the earthly temple.
 - (b) Also, that glory, that radiance that he saw was most likely the pre-incarnate Christ, in Hebrews 1:3 he is described as the ‘radiance of His glory. . . .’
 - (3) Revelation 4.
 - (a) Very similar to Ezekiel.

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- (b) vs 3, jasper, not sure what exactly it looked like, but it appears to be a stone of tremendous beauty. Sardius is a gorgeous red stone.
 - (c) The rainbow again appears.
 - (d) 24 elders who worship him.
 - (e) 5—a Mt. Sinai-like event.
 - (f) seven spirits of God.
 - i) A Revelation way of saying the “holy” Spirit.
 - ii) Another way to look at it is that the Spirit is a seven-fold Spirit, you read Isaiah chapter 11 where the character of the Holy Spirit is described. He is the Spirit of the Lord who is the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of strength, the Spirit of knowledge, the Spirit of the fear of the Lord
4. Or, we may hear someone quote Isaiah 55:9, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.”
- a. They then tell you that you should not concern yourself with heavenly things because they are beyond your comprehension.
 - b. But this fails to grasp that God has revealed himself and what He desires for us to know.
 - c. "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29)
- B. Last week I showed you that there are many terms that are vitally connected to heaven that we don't always connect.
- 1. Eternal life.
 - 2. Inheritance.
 - 3. Before God.
 - 4. The resurrection.

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5. The new heavens and earth.
 6. The day of redemption.
 7. The summing up of all things in Christ.
 8. These help begin to paint a picture of what heaven is all about and why our hearts need to **learn** to long for it.
- C. Various uses of the term 'heaven.' 2 Corinthians 12:2 speaks of Paul being caught up into the third heaven.
- D. The sky
1. Genesis 1:20.
 2. Isaiah 55 verse 9, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts, for as the rain and snow come down from heaven..."
- E. The universe
1. Genesis 1:14-18.
 2. For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light. (Isaiah 13:10)
- F. The celestial/divine
1. "But will God indeed dwell with mankind on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You; how much less this house which I have built. (2 Chronicles 6:18)
 2. For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; (Hebrews 9:24)
- G. But it is obviously this third one that we are concerned with, and at the very center of it is God. And until this is something we can wrap our heads and hearts around it we will stumble in our anticipation and desire for Heaven.

II. Heaven—The Dwelling Place of God.

1. It is an actual place.
2. Isaiah 57:15 and 63:15.
3. Hebrews 9:24 (quoted above)

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4. Colossians 3:1
5. Where is it?
 - a. Don't know.
 - b. Always described as "up" but what that means is not clear.

B. It is God's place. It is the place where God lives.

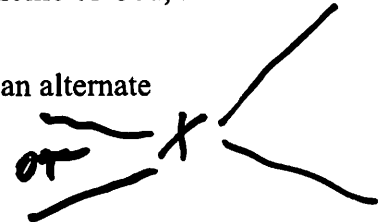
1. Survey of Matthew
 - a. 3:17
 - b. 5:12, 16, 45
 - c. 6:1, 9, 10.
 - d. 7:11, 21
 - e. 10:32-33
 - f. 12:50
 - g. 16:17
 - h. 18:10, 14, 19
 - i. 23:9

2. The idea of heaven is that this is the dwelling place, the home of God, a unique expression of His presence.

It is more than a place, it also represents an age, epoch. Almost an alternate reality.

1. 2 Corinthians 5:17 speaks of these 'competing' ages.
2. This is why Paul says, "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:1-4)
 - a. "keep seeking" is a present imperative. It is an ongoing lifestyle. You can't just read a bit on it and then move on to 'practical'

New Song
WMC
Name C.
All things
new.



still in this
'age'

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- things. It is something we are to be training our minds to focus upon.
- b. It indicates a persevering attitude—not giving up.
 - c. It is an active attitude, staying Christ-focused and heaven bound.
 - d. The term is used of Jesus seeking to save those who are lost.
 - e. This indicates that it requires effort, it is not a naturally occurring thing. Understand that it is in the interests of Satan that believers fix their eyes upon this world and its desires.
 - f. Being heavenly minded is not be unaware of this world, but rather, by having heaven in our mind it causes us to live a different way now.
 - (1) This is seen in Matthew 5:14-16, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”
 - (2) We are setting our minds on heaven when we live in a consistent awareness of God’s rule in our lives. When we lean upon the power of the Holy Spirit to live each day.
 - (3) We set our minds on heaven when we yearn for the day that what is done in heaven is also done on earth.
3. In Colossians you are looking forward to being glorified in the future, though you are already raised with Him. Said a bit differently in Romans 8:29-30, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”
4. Ephesians 2:1-7 speaks in a very similar way as Colossians.
 - a. 1-3 describe our situation belonging to the old age.

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- b. 4 gives us the great word of hope, 'But God. . . .'
 - c. 5-6 describe our new situation.
 - (1) It is all because of our union and connection to Jesus (alive together with Christ in vs 5).
 - (2) vs 6 raised us and seated us with Him (past tense).
 - d. 7 then gives the purpose of it all.
5. This is described a bit more in other places as well.
- a. Matthew 25:34
 - b. John 12:26
 - c. John 17:5, 24.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Heaven, we see, is a real place.
- B. It is where the glory of God is fully expressed and enjoyed.
- C. It is where our Lord is at this time.
- D. It is where we are to set our minds as we live here as aliens and strangers to this age.
- E. It is a place where we will enter into God's joy and be honored by Him.
- F. Now may the Lord awaken our hearts to yearn for it until we can in truth echo John's words in Revelation, "come Lord Jesus."

Small Group Questions

- **What are the types of things that help divert your attention from focusing upon heaven rather than this age?**
- **Was there anything that surprised you in the message, something you did not know before that helps you understand heaven a bit more?**