

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

The Hope in What Is To Come

Selected Passages

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

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb:

Dismiss

I. Introduction.

- A. Today is an introduction to the nature of heaven.
- B. Importance of this subject.
 - 1. Misunderstood.
 - a. One theologian writing on this subject said that when he was younger he had no desire for heaven. He imagined that it would be an eternal church service where he had to sit still and say nothing.
 - b. The idea of floating on clouds...
 - 2. Vagueness in understanding.
 - a. Somehow there are harps and angels and stuff.
 - b. Streets of gold and big pearls.
 - c. We think of it more as the opposite of hell but really have no idea what that means.
 - d. Eternity is impossible for us to really grasp, usually it is a vague sense of a really long time.
 - 3. A bestseller, *Heaven is for Real*.
 - a. A 4 year old who was close to death supposedly went to heaven and his dad wrote a book on it. He met Jesus, a miscarried sister and his great granddad.
 - b. Everyone has wings and fly around, except for Jesus, He just hovers up and down.
 - c. Will not speak to the book other than that it is contradiction to the bible and yet is embraced by many who profess to be Christians.

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4. A contentment in the “now.”
 - a. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; (Mat 6:19-20)
 - b. Later, in Matthew 19 the rich, young man comes to Jesus. Wants eternal life, told to sell all that he had and then he would have treasure in heaven, then he was to come to Jesus and follow him.
5. Lack of teaching.
 - a. Go to most systematic theology books and you will find but one to two pages on the subject.
 - b. My own theological training had very little time on this subject.

C. Today I want to introduce you to this subject and give you a sense of what I will teach over the next few weeks.

1. What happens when you die?
2. What about our bodies?
3. Is heaven a place or a state of mind?
4. Does heaven involve judgment? And how does that work if we are forgiven of everything?
5. What is heaven like? What will we do?
6. Will we know and remember each other?
7. What about marriage?

D. My premise:

1. A right understanding of heaven is the basis of Christian hope today. The better we see it the greater our hope will be.
2. The greater our hope is, the more different our life in the here and now shall be.

II. Hoping due to heaven.

- A. First, heaven is not just some disembodied place that you go for eternity.
 1. Will show this more fully in another message.

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2. It is true that when one who believes the promise of God in Jesus Christ die they will go to heaven. The bible calls it being "with Christ" in Philippians 1:23.
3. It is also true that when you die, your body does not go to heaven at that time. So in some way you are in heaven and not in heaven. The bible describes this state as being essentially unclothed in 2 Corinthians 5.
4. But heaven in its fullest sense is something more glorious than merely 'not dying and going to hell.'
 - a. It is a recreation of what was to be before sin and death came into being.
 - b. Again, something I will show more fully in another message.
 - c. It is where all things are made new again, where sin and death, our great enemy Satan, sorrow and distress, shame and horror, hate and racism, violence and evil will simply be no longer.
 - d. It is what the bible calls the New Heavens and Earth. And it is what is actually meant when we hear terms like 'salvation' and 'eternal life.'
5. Once you can break out of the idea of living forever or not going to hell, then the bible opens up in many wonderful ways regarding what is to come.

B. Part of the gospel, a key part, is that Jesus is coming again to judge the living and the dead.

1. At that time he will make all things right.
2. 1 Corinthians 15.
 - a. 1-7.
 - b. At the center of the gospel is not the death of Jesus but the resurrection, and Paul makes that very point.
 - c. 13, the resurrection of the dead, this is the hope of the Christian, and if Jesus had been raised, then no hope.
 - d. 15-19.
 - e. 35-44. Here we learn of the changes that shall occur.
 - f. 50-57.

Given Story
of J. P.
Crabtree
by D. J. Crabtree
R. J. Crabtree

The
Cross is the
glimmer of
heaven

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- (1) We learn that the Kingdom of God is the same as heaven.
- (2) This sharing in the Kingdom of God occurs when we are changed, the dead first, then those who are alive in Christ.
- (3) And then, and only then, shall death lose.
- (4) This is a key part of the gospel that often is over looked.

g. The 'therefore' of 58 connects the not yet with the now.

Apostolic anticipation of heaven.

1. As we look at these passages they begin to help form a mosaic of what heaven is to be, in its various expressions.

2. Ephesians.

a. 1:3-14.

- (1) 4—to be 'before' Him.
- (2) 10— summing up of all things in Christ.
- (3) 11— inheritance.
- (4) 14—sealed in the Holy Spirit until a yet day of redemption.

b. The Paul prays....

- (1) 18—we could know the coming inheritance.
- (2) 21—this age and the next.

3. Philippians.

a. 1:3-24.

- (1) 6 and 10—"day of Christ."
- (2) 19—it is deliverance (explain)
- (3) 21—it is gain not loss.
- (4) 23—it is with Christ.

b. 2:12-16.

- (1) 16—the day of Christ.

Every time a
Christian goes to
a gravesite it
is w/ faith
that death
does not
win!

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- (2) We live now in light what we believe and hope in the future.
- c. 3:1-11– Everything is focused on the resurrection from death.
- d. 3:17-21.
 - (1) 17–surround yourself with other faithful people.
 - (2) 20–heaven is something to be eagerly anticipated.
 - (3) 21–our resurrection shall be a time of transformation.
- 4. Colossians.
 - a. 1:3-4.
 - b. Then Paul prays....
 - (1) 9-11–the now.
 - (2) 12–the not yet.
 - (3) 13-22a–the what and how of the inheritance.
 - (4) 22b–“in order that” we can be presented before Him.
 - (5) 23–in light of this great hope, persevere!
 - c. 3:1-3.
 - (1) 1–union in Christ = pursuit of Christ.
 - (2) 2–We are to have a heavenly mind set, why? Because that is where Christ is. (Piper’s question)
 - (3) 3–our hope is to finally be revealed in glory with Jesus.
- 5. 1 Thessalonians.
 - a. 1:9-10–turn to God and wait for Christ’ return.
 - b. Paul prays....3:11-13.
 - c. 3:19–Converts are Paul’s crown at the return.
 - d. 4:13-18–comfort in Christ’s coming.
 - e. 5:1-11–we will live together with Christ, so encourage each other.

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6. 2 Thessalonians.

a. 1:3-10.

- (1) 3-5—the connection of suffering and the Kingdom of God.
- (2) 6-7—it is a time of relief.
- (3) 9—it is in the presence of Jesus Christ and the display of his power.
- (4) 10—it is a time of infinite marveling.

b. 2:14—it is the gaining of the glory of Christ.

7. 1 Peter.

a. 1:3-9.

- (1) 3—we have a living hope now.
- (2) 4—we look forward to an inheritance.
- (3) 5—we wait for a salvation to come.
- (4) 6-8— this salvation and inheritance is such that we can rejoice in the midst of sorrow.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Salvation is not the absence of death.
- B. It is the presence of truth life, life without sin and all that sin brings.
- C. It is life in Christ, before Christ, and because of Christ. It is life in ways we can only dream of at this time.
- D. No wonder the writer of Hebrews calls it “so great a salvation!”

Small Group Questions

- When you think of heaven what are the typical thoughts and expectations that come to mind?
- What question about heaven is most on your mind? Why?