

The Beauty of Heaven

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Preacher: Dr. Daniel Heeringa

[0 : 0 0] Revelation chapter 21. You know, heaven's going to be amazing for all of those who are in Christ Jesus when we leave this life.

I believe that'll be instantaneous based on what Scripture tells me. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And I believe it'll be glorious. I believe it'll be beyond our imagination and it'll be better than whatever it is you expect.

It's going to be better. It's better than any language can describe. I want you to understand when Christ or when God through his word tries to tell us how dark wickedness is or how glorious heaven is or how abundant, abundant life is, it's limited to our vocabulary and our frail, fallible minds.

So we only get a glimpse of the darkness as well as the light because there's only so much that we can fathom. And it's important that we understand that when we turn to a book like Revelation and especially Revelation 21 because if you want to know what we can know about heaven here, Revelation 21 is the best place to go.

And I began sharing that last week and today I want to share with you my favorite part of it. There are a lot of thoughts about heaven that are not biblical.

[1 : 5 2] They're kind of cutesy. They may be comforting. They're just not biblical. No one has ever died because God wanted another angel in his garden.

If that gives you comfort, I'm glad. It's just not true. It's not true. Because we don't become angels when we die.

You are not angelic here. And if you don't believe me, ask whoever you rode with. And you will not be there.

We'll be complete. We'll be perfected. But we will not be angels or as some people spell it, angles. We will not be.

If you are a child of God, you'll be glorified and you'll be changed. If you're a child of God, you have something that angels do not have. And that is redemption.

[2 : 5 9] An old hymn says, holy, holy is what the angels sing. And I expect to help them make the courts of heaven ring. But when I sing redemption story, they'll fold their wings for angels never felt the joy that our salvation brings.

We've got something they don't. Instead, as Psalm 40, verse 2 and 3 tell us, we sing the song of the redeemed. That he drew me out from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.

He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. The song of the redeemed can only be sung by the children of God.

And you don't want to die and become an angel. And that's good because you're not going to be. Instead, the imperfect saint will be made perfect, glorified in the presence of God with all of the advantages that come with the promise of eternity.

But let's read about it. Last week, we read the entirety, I believe, of Revelation 21, or at least, no, not all of it, but almost all of it. I just want to read a portion this morning, though.

[4 : 21] It's Revelation 21, beginning in verse 22, and it says this, And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb. And the city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives its light.

And its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. And its gates will never be shut by day, and there'll be no night there.

They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, I ask today that you will give comfort to the Christian today. There may be some who are struggling, dear God.

I pray, dear God, that our future will be a comfort even today. Lord, for anyone here who's never accepted you as his or her personal Lord and Savior, may today be the day, oh God, when you rip the veil off their eyes and help them to see what they can have when they have you.

[5 : 45] Lead us, Lord, today. Help us to respond to you in obedience. In Jesus' precious name. Amen. The promise of eternity includes the beauty of the heavenly city.

Verse 11 says, the glory of God shines in that place. Like Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration, we shall shine like the sun and be clothed in beaming white due to the glory of God.

The gates of pearl that I described last week, the walls of precious stone, 12 stones, by the way, all make for a scene too beautiful for us to imagine.

The walled city, look at the size of that walled city. It says that it is 12,000 stratia. I told you that's about, it is, 1,380 miles.

It's a cube of sorts. And described that way. But I also talked about, a little bit about numerology, and I want to dig a little deeper into that just to, just to wet you whistle, and then I'm going to run from it.

[7 : 01] But, I mentioned four numbers that are brought up, at least in multiples, multiple times in Revelation. Three, which represents the Trinity.

Seven is perfect because it's creation. Without the seventh day of rest, the sixth, six is, makes it an unholy number, and it's tripled at one point, at least used triple times.

We don't do good enough math to triple it six times, so, you just put six, six, six, but it means ultimate evil is what it speaks of. Ten speaks of the Ten Commandments, represents, symbolizes the Ten Commandments because the Ten Commandments are, it's not all the law, but, but when you think of the law of God, you think of the Ten Commandments.

It was summarized that way when Moses came down with it off that mountain. And then 12 is that number that is complete because it represents the 12 tribes, the complete people of God.

And so, when you look at the, in the count of the tribes, it's 12,000 per tribe. earlier in the book, it mentions 12,000.

[8 : 05] You add those 12 tribes together, 12 times 12 times 10 times 10 times 10 is 144.

when you look at 12,000 stratia, the size of heaven, it's 12 times 10 to the third power.

So it's 10, 12 times 10 times 10 times 10. Do you get the, the, the, the multiplicity of complete numbers being used over and over and over and over again?

The book of Revelation is a coded book. It was written to seven churches in Asia Minor, which represented because of seven churches and they encompass most of Asia Minor, it, it really represents the church.

it was written to them to give them hope for the day in which they lived. It was not written over 2,000 years ago, almost 2,000 years ago in order for America to have a blueprint of what's going to happen tomorrow.

[9 : 16] Okay? Because if that was the case, it wouldn't have wrote it to seven churches in Asia Minor under the persecution of the Roman Empire. it was to give them hope for that day.

And it was written in a coded language and they do a better job of cracking that code than we do, but we can look back into it and see what those things represent.

So when we see, I said all that to say, 12,000 stratia, 12 times 10, times 10, times 10. Don't think it's, it's ironic that there's 12,000 in each tribe that's represented as well and that every gate on the walls of heaven has a tribe named over it.

The point is there's room, folks. There's room for everybody there. That's the point. It is perfect. That, that walled city is secure. Those walls are thick.

The only way you can get through them is through that gate of pearl and, and they're beautiful and they're open. It says they're always open. Open to all God's children redeemed by the blood of Christ by their personal surrender to his lordship.

[10 : 23] There's room for all. It's perfectly sized for all. So if you're a child of God, your reservation is safe. There is a place that is saved for you.

And if you have never been saved, I encourage you to surrender your life to the Lord Jesus today and you can rest in the security of your eternity.

Now I want you to understand something. If this was all there is, I mean that we died and went away and nothing was there at all.

That was it. It would be worth it to give your life to Christ today and live the rest of your days for the honor and the glory of God, for what he gives us in this life.

And that will always be my focus is the abundant life that he offers us in this life unless I'm preaching a series on heaven and then I'm going to talk about heaven.

[11 : 29] But I'm telling you it's worth it to give your heart and life to Christ in this life. But oh, my friend, what you get with that is an eternal package because all of heaven is given to us and all of it's lit by the glory of God and Christ, the lamp of his glory.

There is no sun there. There is no stars there. There is no night there. We'll get into this a little later, but there's no sun and no night.

There's no chronology either. Figure that one out. Eternity is not just lasting forever. It's a whole different echelon of sorts. Heaven is open.

Gates are open to receive beautiful beyond measure and the light shines eternal because the Lord is all the light it needs. Take a moment, if you would, to imagine the beauty of heaven.

Now, the reality is that silence is enough uncomfortableness for us, okay?

[12 : 45] But my point is this. You can dream it up all you want to and you'll never get a glimpse of how wonderful and glorious heaven is.

Period. I remember years ago, I was watching WGS and somebody on there, they were raising money that day and somebody was on there and had painted pictures based on revelation and based on some things in the gospels of what heaven looked like and what hell looked like and you could buy these for just a monthly gift and get these paintings and maybe that was when I realized fella, you ain't got a clue and then I realized in reality even by the power of the Holy Spirit inspiring John on the island of Patmos to give us the images that he does, we still don't have a clue.

It is beyond what we can imagine. That's the beauty of the city. There's also this beautiful reunion of the church. It's described in Revelation 21 verse 3 as us dwelling with him and I spoke last week of an intuitive knowledge that we gain when we are made like him, when we are beyond this world.

1 Corinthians 13 verse 12 says now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror dimly but then face to face now I know in part then I shall know fully even as I have am fully known.

We shall know each other. We shall know more of him and we shall as the old song says understand it by and by. Scripture is clear that the Christian will dwell with the Lord worshiping him.

[14 : 45] we shall be together and thank God for the Christian heaven will be a reunion like we've never seen. I talked about all of that last week.

I want to share with you the best part today. I didn't take the time to share it last week.

I took enough time but I want to share with you the best part and what is my favorite part. I believe the real beauty of heaven and that is our unhindered encounter with the Lord.

our heavenly father is there. The creator Jehovah mighty God Jesus said our father which art in heaven how it be thy name.

Unable to see him now there we will bow before his very throne. Not only that but Christ is there. Hebrews 9 verse 24 says for Christ has entered not into holy places made with hands which are copies of the true things but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

[16 : 00] He is there and he is interceding on our behalf. Hebrews 7 verse 25 says consequently he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he listen to this I love this always lives to make intercession for them.

So not only does Christ represent us advocate for us pray on our behalf he lives to do it.

That's what gets him excited is to bring us before the throne of God. Now it's exciting to think about the glories of heaven and I get excited to think about seeing my loved ones.

I get excited about the crown that I can lay at the Lord's feet and by the way and I'll get to this later but any reward you get in heaven you're just going to lay it at his feet so don't get braggadocious okay. It all goes to him.

He gets all the credit. But the people and the rewards of heaven don't even measure when we see Christ. Man that's where it's at.

[17 : 09] Honestly I believe when we see Christ everything else will pale so in comparison. We won't be concerned about the furniture or the architecture or the people around us. we'll be so enamored with the cause of Christ.

Revelation 7 9 through 12 says this. This image, this vision that God gave to John of heaven says after this I looked and behold a great multitude that no one could number from every tribe, from all the tribes and people and languages standing before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. And they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God.

Now I want you to listen to this because this is used again and again in Revelation. It is a seven, get the number, a seven-fold exaltation of praise. He said, amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving, honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever.

Amen. Ann Ross' cousin wrote it beautifully when she said, the bride eyes, not her garment, but her dear bridegroom's face.

[18 : 44] I will not gaze at glory, but on my king of grace. Not at the crown he giveth, but on his pierced hand. The Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's land.

I'm like that little boy who was trying to learn Psalm 23 when he was supposed to say, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He said, the Lord is my shepherd, that's all I want.

Amen. When I get to heaven, the victory, the glory, and the majesty will be Jesus. Paul got a glimpse of it.

Paul got a glimpse of his majesty on the road to Damascus. And you can understand why he wrote that he had a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better than anything this life offers.

Christ Jesus is the entrance to heaven. that gate of pearl. He is the beauty of heaven. He is the glory of heaven.

[19 : 51] You may look at me this morning and say, preacher, you know, if heaven's that grand, I don't deserve to go. And you may expect me to say, oh, but you're a dear saint of the Lord. You're a fine person.

You may be fine, folks, but you don't deserve heaven. You will not go to heaven because you deserve it. Because not a one of us does.

You will go because you accept it as a gift from God. I've received a lot of gifts in my life that I do not deserve. They were given out of love.

However, I've never received such a precious gift as life eternal through Christ Jesus, my Lord. D.L.

Moody was a probably the greatest evangelist, arguably the greatest evangelist of the 19th century. What God did to a man who wasn't at school was absolutely amazing how God used him really across the world in a time when it was difficult to get across the world.

[21 : 05] There's a plaque on Court Street in Boston that shows where he got saved, working in a shoe store when a fellow came and shared Christ with him.

God did a work in D.L. Moody's life and empowered him with the Spirit of God and used him mightily. Traveled across the country, leading folks to the Lord, established what is now called the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

What we know of Sunday school largely came from D.L. Moody, promoting it, bringing it forth. Wonderful man, used eye God.

He went to London. Spurgeon used him some. He was in London and was preaching and there was a little boy that had heard that D.L.

Moody, the great preacher, was going to preach nearby in that big city. That little boy walked all the way across London that day in order to go see D.L.

[22 : 17] Moody and to hear him preach. When he finally got to the church where D.L. was to preach, he looked up on the hill and that church was sitting on the hill and the sun was glowing off of those windows and he could hear the voices singing inside.

He could hear the instrumentalist play. He forgot how tired he was from that journey and he ran up those steps and he got to the front door and as he reached for the front door, a big hand put his hand on his shoulder.

Turned him around. What do you think you're doing, boy? He told him how he had traveled all day to be able to hear D.L.

Moody and the doorman looked down at his matted, sweaty head, his unwashed clothes and his shoeless feet, his unwashed face and those raggedy clothes and he said, no, sonny, you're too dirty.

Be gone. Little boy was, took back, needless to say, and went back down those steps but as little boy would do, he said, there's got to be a way in here.

[23 : 45] So he went around back and looked and checked every window and every door to find some way to get in and there wasn't another way to get in. Dejected and beaten down and tired, he sat down on the front step of that church.

Just sat there crying. Just then a carriage pulled up. Beautiful carriage and a stately man stepped out of that carriage, got out and marched quickly up those steps and as he got to where the boy was sitting, he stopped and looked at the boy and ask him, what's the matter, boy?

Little boy explained how he had traveled so far to come and how they wouldn't let him in because of the state of his circumstances and the gentleman extended his hand to him and he said, here, put your hand in mine. And he walked in that church.

When they entered the back door of that church, they walked down the aisle and continued down to the front aisle until he set the boy on the front row and then he walked in up to the stage to get ready to preach.

It was Dr. Dwight L. Moody. When I die, I don't have the merit on my own to walk through the gates of glory.

[25 : 21] I wish I did. But I won't. I've not done enough.

No matter how long God allows me to live, I'll never do enough to deserve heaven. I will not approach the throne on my perfection because I'm far from it.

I'm just a nasty, barefoot, wore-out youngin' at the gate of glory. However, there'll be one on a white horse ride up called the Prince of Peace.

He'll get off and take my hand in his nail-scarred hand and walk me to the very throne of God on his shed blood, on his perfection as his gift for me.

Do you know him? Have you ever put your hand in his? Have you ever surrendered your life to him?

[26 : 44] All of heaven waits for those who've given their heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ. But if you haven't, and you don't, you'll have hell to pay.

With every head bowed and every eye closed, I ask this morning, do you know that you know?

Have you ever given your heart and life to the Lord Jesus? I want you to know there's always an open invitation. My number's on the front of the bulletin. You can contact me anytime you want to.

But I want you to know today's the day of salvation. If you'll admit your sin to the Lord and ask him to empower you and change your life, you'll forever be changed in this life and in the next.

If you don't know the Lord or you're uncertain, don't leave this room without taking care of those matters. Maybe you're here and you're a Christian today.

[28 : 02] But the reality is there's people all around you who do not know the Lord and they don't know the difference from your life. There's things in your life, whether they be private or public, that are shameful before the Lord that you need to clear up.

And you can't do that on your own. You have to surrender that to the Lord. I encourage you to make what's wrong right in your life today by simply asking God to do the same.

If I can help you with that, I'll be happy to. Maybe you're here this morning and God's drawing you to this congregation. You know that this is the place where God would have you to be, would have you to serve.

God's telling you that. Don't you put that off a bit. You come. We'd love to guide you in that process. Last week we celebrated several being baptized in a neat, wonderful service.

If you've acknowledged the Lord privately, but you've never done that publicly and never acknowledged that through baptism, well, you come and we'll line that up. We'll set that up. It'll be the first step of obedience in your Christian walk that you need to take.

[29 : 09] I have no idea what God's speaking to you about or what he's telling you, but I know this, that you'll never be satisfied until you do exactly what he tells you to do.

And so I'll never ask you to do more than he tells you to do. I'll never ask you to do less. Just simply be obedient today as he speaks to your heart and life. Lord Jesus, thank you for the clarity in which you give us.

It's as good as we can understand it about eternity, God. I'm thankful also that you make it very clear how we get there.

And God, I pray today that Christians will celebrate their eternity by living their life for you. And that those without you, dear God, will surrender their life to you, Father.

And that today we'll all be stronger because God's people have been obedient as you spoke to us. Lead and work right now as we sing. In Jesus' precious name, amen.