

The Traveling Pulpit

Published Quarterly By

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Volume 14, Number 2

April

Spring 2019

The Blessed Reality of Heaven Part II

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there ye may be also.*

(Jh. 14:1-3)

Introduction

In the previous edition of "The Traveling Pulpit," I began a two-part message on the subject of Heaven. In that edition, we looked at Heaven as being a Perfect Place. Now, we continue to build upon the foundation we laid in that first Bible study.

Heaven is a Prepared Place (v.2)

The same Architect (Jh. 1:1-5) Who designed the Universe has designed the eternal home of God's redeemed children. As you have traveled around the country and perhaps around the world, I'm sure that you, like myself, have seen some beautiful majestic sights and scenery. After beholding the beauty of this world, we wonder how anything can be more beautiful. Based upon the Word of God, let me assure you that Heaven is more beautiful than any human mind can possibly comprehend. Our feeble conceptions of Heaven cannot even begin to picture its eternal glory and splendor. I'm sure that when we get to Heaven that we'll say the same thing the Queen of Sheba said when she visited Solomon, "the half was not told me" (I Kings 10:7). When we stop to think about it, very little is actually said about Heaven in the Bible, but the description we do have is glorious.

There are only four people in the Bible who got a peek of what Heaven might be like, and only one out of the four gives a hint as to what we might expect. “Jacob” (Gen. 28:12-13) saw “a ladder” that “reached to heaven” with “angels ... ascending and descending on it” and “the Lord” standing “above it.” “Stephen” (Acts 7:56) saw “the heavens opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” “Paul” (II Cor. 12:4) was caught up into “paradise” and heard “unspeakable words” that he was forbidden to “utter.” “John” (Rev. 1:1) was the only one of the four who was permitted to give even a brief insight of what he saw in Heaven. Our next three quarterly Bible Studies in “The Traveling Pulpit” will deal with it.

While exiled on the Isle of Patmos, God revealed unto “John” the promised “place” that Jesus had “prepared” (Rev. 21:1-27). The description of “heaven” that we have in the Book of Revelation is simply the best that could have been written by the mortal hand of man even under divine inspiration. Revelation, chapter 21, gives a description of the splendor that God’s people can expect when they are described as the eternal “city” referred to as the “new Jerusalem” found in the “new heaven and new earth.” Some interpret that chapter to be literal and some figurative, but most likely it is some of both. This “holy city” that is called the “new Jerusalem” is no doubt the redeemed church in her perfected state appearing in the imagery of a “bride adorned for her husband.”

If your focus is merely on streets of “gold” and gates of “pearl” then you’ve missed the point by a long shot. It’s going to be wonderful to be free from pain, disease, suffering, and sorrow, but the most wonderful thing about this “city” is that Christ Jesus, the “Lamb” of God, will be there in the midst of His redeemed people. There will be no need of a “temple” because the “Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” (Rev. 21:22). There will be “no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it” (Rev. 21:23) because Christ the “Lamb,” the “light of the world” (Jh. 8:12), will be the “light thereof.” Therefore, we need to understand that the point of Revelation, chapter twenty-one, is to major on it being a description that portrays the beauty and splendor of God’s eternal “city,” the “new Jerusalem” (Rev. 21:2), where Christ will dwell with His people in the “new heaven and the new earth.”

Heaven is a Precious Place (v.3)

The most wonderful thing about Heaven is that Jesus will be there and He’s promised to “come again and receive” us unto Himself. Christ has not promised to send for us, but to personally “come again” to take us to be with Him. Just because we don’t know the day nor hour of His coming doesn’t mean that it may not be imminent. There’s no doubt this is referring directly to His second coming, but I can’t help but be reminded that He will also come and take us home when it comes time to die. He may come to take us home in death at any moment or He may come to take us home in His second coming, but He is coming for us if we’re one of His redeemed people. It’s my belief that when the Believer dies, that it will be the indwelling Holy Spirit who ushers the soul and spirit into the presence of our Lord.

Heaven will be a precious place because our Precious Redeemer will be there. The songwriter said it well when he penned the words that reminds us of the price Christ paid for our sins on the cross and that we'll give him praise throughout all eternity. He wrote, "Up Calvary's mountain one dreadful morn, Walked Christ my Savior, weary and worn, Facing for sinners' death on the cross, That He might save them from endless loss, Blessed Redeemer, precious Redeemer, Seems now I see Him on Calvary's tree,

Wounded and bleeding, for sinners pleading, Blind and unheeding, dying for me, Oh how I love Him, Savior and friend, How can my praises ever find end, Through years unnumbered on Heaven's shore, My songs shall praise Him forevermore."

When we get to Heaven it will be a precious thing for us to praise and worship our Precious Redeemer, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. People often ask, "will we know and recognize our loved ones and friends in heaven?" All I can tell you is that after Christ arose in His glorified body, He was different, but still recognizable. At the time of the transfiguration, "Peter, James, and John" were introduced to "Moses and Elijah" although they had been dead hundreds of years (Matt. 17:1-4). Therefore, in all likelihood, we'll know one another in Heaven, but our earthly relationships will not be the same (I Cor. 13:12). When we get to Heaven, Christians will not "marry" nor be "given in marriage" (Mk. 12:25) because as the Bride of Christ, we'll just be one happy family with equal love one for another. Although, we don't know much about what's currently going on in the current intermediate state of Heaven, there is indication that those "in heaven" might be aware of at least some of the things presently going on upon earth (Lk. 15:7). I just know that it's going to be a perfect and precious "place" where there will be no more sin and even our personalities, attitudes, dispositions, will be perfected, and there will be "no more death" (Rev. 21:4).

Closing

Heaven is a prepared "place" for a prepared people Whom the "Father" has given to the "Son" (Jh. 17:9). The only "way" to go to "heaven" and know God the "Father" is through "faith" (believe) in God the Son (Jh. 14:4-6). Jesus taught that He is the only "way" to "heaven," that He is "truth" Incarnate, and that He is "life" to all who "believe." One does not go to Heaven because they attend church services, become a member of some local church, by getting baptized, praying prayers, or tithing and being charitable. Without trusting Jesus Christ as Lord of life and Savior of soul by faith and repentance of sin, Heaven will never be your eternal home.

When Christ came to earth as the GodMan (God Incarnate), the "Father" maintained the control panels of the universe. That is why Jesus taught us to pray, "our Father which art in heaven" (Matt. 6:9). In a declaration of deity, Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, proclaimed equality with the "Father" (Jh. 14:9). People have often asked, "will we ever see God?" "God" the "Father" is a "Spirit" (Jh. 4:24) and cannot be seen; therefore, the only "way" to see Him personified is in the Person of Jesus Christ the

Son of God. To see “Jesus” is to see “God” and every soul, lost and saved alike, will someday stand before Him (Rom. 4:10-12, Phil. 2:5-11).

Jesus told Nicodemus, that the only “way” to even “see the kingdom of God” is to be born into it by God’s grace (Jh. 3:3). It’s possible to fly over a city or a nation from the high elevation of a plane without ever having set foot on the land that you saw. Jesus said that nobody would even in so much as “see the kingdom of God,” much less be partakers of it without being “born again.” If Heaven is not your eternal home, then you have every right to have a “troubled ... heart.” But, with Heaven being your eternal home, “let not your heart be troubled” because THE BEST IS YET TO COME for the child of God.

Do you have assurance that you have been “born again”, that your sins have been forgiven, washed in the Blood of Calvary’s “Lamb,” and that Heaven will be your eternal home? I’ve only met one person who actually told me they wanted to die and go to Hell. I’ve talked with many people who lived like they were going to Hell, but this is the only man who verbalize it to me. He was dying in a hospital in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Being fully coherent, he said that he wanted to die and go to Hell to be with his son. Most people will tell you that they want to go to Heaven and even think they are going there because they do good works. But, good “works” (Eph. 2:9) will never get you to Heaven, only “faith” in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. By trusting Him as the One Who died in your place to satisfy God’s divine wrath against your sin, you can pass from death unto life. Trust Him today as your Lord and Savior.

A Ministry Update

This year, I’m devoting our quarterly Bible Studies on the subject of Heaven. The first two editions focus attention on John, chapter fourteen, verses one through three. In the remaining quarters of this year, and the first quarter of next year, I’ll be directing your thoughts to the Book of Revelation, chapter twenty-one. I trust that this will not only be enlightening, but also edifying to all God’s people who ponder these blessed Truths of Holy Scripture.

I shared in our previous edition some of the changes taking place in our outreach to the World with the Word. I apologize for the length of time that it is taking to get our website back up to full programming. We encountered some delays in transferring our material from the old to the new format. However, we trust that everything will be more readable and accessible. One of the big changes will be in our book format. We will no longer use e-book, but a simple pdf which hopefully will make the reading easier as well as the printing if anyone chooses to print. Along with changes to the radio message format, there will be an addition of weekly messages from Rekindled Ministries, where Wilson is pastor. As this edition of ***“The Traveling Pulpit”*** goes to press, my goal is to have everything on the website completed by the end of March if our Web Developer can accomplish it. Thank you for your patience and prayers that God will continue using this internet ministry for His Glory. As of the end of February, it

looks like we've had the most activity on our website than ever before. Thank you for partnering with us to take the Word to the World.

Because of His Sovereign Grace.....BWM