

Sermon Mark S. Aites
WHAT WILL HEAVEN BE LIKE?

(Some of the source material is from the Sermon Archive: <http://sermons.11net.com/>)

INTRODUCTION:

1. "We read of a place called Heaven,
It's made for the pure and the free,
These truths in God's Word He has given,
How beautiful heaven must be."
2. "This world is not my home,
I'm just a passin thru,
My treasures are laid up,
some where beyond the blue.
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door,
And I can't feel at home in this world any more."
3. These are familiar songs which bring tremendous joy to the heart.
4. And I enjoy so much the sentiments, of thinking of how beautiful heaven truly must be,
and in doing so, reminding myself of how much I want to go home. -- Indeed this world is
not my home.
5. As one expressed it so well: I've never had a horse that I had to force to go back to the
barn. (Taken from the Sermon Archive)
6. Heaven has been the hope of believers in all ages.
 - 1) It is said of righteous Abraham: *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose
builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10).*
 - 2) Moses: who esteemed *the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in
Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward (Heb. 11:26).*
 - 3) Paul who told the church in Corinth: *...we have a building of God, an house not made
with hands, eternal in the heavens.
5:2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is
from heaven (2 Cor. 5:1-2).*
7. Like the righteous of old, we too look forward to Heaven. It is where our thoughts should
be...
 - 1) Paul admonishes us to set our affections there (**Col 3:1-2**).
 - 2) Our conversation or citizenship is there (**Phil. 3:20**).
 - 3) And as we think of it, like Paul, *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling
of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil 3:14).*

DISCUSSION:

I. THE BEAUTY OF HEAVEN.

- A. A number of years ago I was blessed to have worked in my first full time work in
Woodland Park, Colorado.
 1. Woodland Park is actually at an elevation of 8500 feet, nestled in the Rocky
Mountains.
 2. It is approximately 18 miles west of Colorado Springs in which you ascend 2500
feet from the city of Colorado Springs.
 3. What makes it truly awesome to behold, is that it is right next to Pikes Peak,
towering some 14,150 feet over the city of Woodland Park.
 4. From its incredible height, you can see four different states.

5. Its beauty and majesty is hard to describe.
- B. I am sure many of you have been blessed to see some truly wonderful sites in your lifetime.
 1. I have friends who have traveled the world, and who have seen things that I can only dream of seeing.
 2. And yet in all of its splendour and beauty, the beautiful things of this world pale in comparison to Heaven.
- C. In the closing chapters of the great book of Revelation, in symbolic language, the apostle John affords us a glimpse in vivid imagery of what heaven is like.
 1. We know from the nature of the book, that John, in the apocalyptic writing, is seeing but a vision of heaven.
 2. Even so, it is exciting and it gives us a greater feeling of hope.
- D. One of the most exciting and exhilarating aspects of the description is the realization that there won't be heavy hearts in heaven.

Rev. 21:4 *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

 1. If there was no other verse in Scripture to express to me the beauty of heaven, this verse, in and of itself, is enough to make me want to be there!
 2. The delight of being with God is amplified through the removal of sadness.
 - 1) With sin out of the picture, there can only be eternal bliss.
 - 2) *"Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54).*
- E. **21:11** The new dwelling of the righteous is depicted as shining like the Jasper stone with pure, clear light emphasizing God's presence; just as God's presence in the Old Testament filled the tabernacle (**Exod. 40:34**), and later the temple (**1 Kings 8:11**).
- F. **21:12-13** John sees the great city surrounded by high walls and having 12 gates.
 1. The walls throughout the Bible were for protection; here in the holy city there is total, perfect, or complete protection (as the walls are high).
 2. The gates being many stress the abundant entrance for the righteous.

John 14:2 *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.*
- G. **21:14** The walls had 12 foundations; 12 being a perfect number, reminds us that our true foundation is Christ (**1 Cor. 3:11**).
- H. **21:15-17** The city is measured, and is likened to a great cube 1500 miles (12,000 furlongs) long, wide, and high.
 1. It stresses the spaciousness of the heavenly home. (cf. **John 14:2** *In my Father's house are many mansions...*)
 2. **21:17** *And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.*

The walls were 144 cubits. Note that both the furlong and the cubit measurements are a derivative of 12; this symbolizes the perfect size. There is plenty of room for all the righteous.
- I. **21:18-21** *And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.*

21:19 *And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones....*

21:21 *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*

1. The city is described using precious metals and gems. Some are marvels which we have never seen, such as gold being like pure glass.
2. It is a city of unparalleled beauty.

J. **21:22-23** *And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*

21:23 *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

1. The city lacks a temple, which is not necessary since God Himself is there.
2. There is no longer a need for a sacrifice for sin since sin is no more.
3. God's magnificent glory shines, as does the Son and Spirit (**cf. 1 Tim.6:16**); therefore there is no need of a sun or moon.

K. **21:24-27** *And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.*

21:25 *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.*

21:26 *And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.*

21:27 *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

1. The Bible now describes those who dwell within the city. They are referred to as the "nations," since God called men through the gospel from every nation.
2. Even the kings bring to it glory and honor. This was prophesied by the prophet Isaiah (**Isa. 60:10ff**).
3. Whatever authority they had in life has been laid at the feet of the Almighty. All glory belongs to God.
4. **12:25** The gates will be left open. The opposition, that is the devil and the ungodly have been eliminated; therefore there is no reason to fear. (Sort of reminds me of the day when you didn't have to lock your door.)
5. **21:27** All abomination and unrighteousness are not permitted there. The holy city is unpolluted. The only ones permitted there are those written "in the Lamb's book of life."

L. **22:1-5** John continues to afford us a description of the holy city that we read of in chapter 21.

22:1 *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

22:2 *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

22:3 *And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:*

22:4 *And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.*

22:5 *And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

1. **22:1** "A river of water of life":
 - 1) Jesus spoke of this water as "living water" in **John 4:10-11**.
 - 2) And elsewhere in this book as the "water of life" (**Rev. 21:6**).
 - 3) Here it is described as being "bright as crystal," symbolizing its purity and beauty.
 - 4) The *water* is not literal, but symbolic for the life which righteous souls can enjoy which emanates from the throne.
 2. **22:2** Along the banks of the river of life is "the tree of life."
 - 1) That which man lost in the garden of Eden is afforded to him again.
 - 2) Jesus promised earlier in this book that those who overcame would be blessed to partake of its fruit (**Rev. 2:7**).
 - 3) The leaves of this tree provide the spiritual healing of all nations, allowing all the saved to enjoy the benefits and privileges of heaven no matter what nation they have come from.
 3. **22:3** "And there shall be no more curse any more."
 - 1) In **Gen. 3** there were curses that God pronounced upon the serpent, Eve, and Adam.
 - 2) The curse in mind here appears to be the one pronounced upon Adam in **Gen. 3:17**; the curse upon the earth.
...cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.
 - 3) All limitations which man had to deal with in life will be gone. God will be present, so no curses will exist there.
 4. **22:4** "And they shall see His face."
 - 1) This is something man has wanted to see for a long time.
 - 2) John writes, "No man hath seen God at any time..." (**John 1:18**).
 - 3) Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (**John 14:8**).
 - 4) That desire will be fulfilled in heaven.
- M. How can one study the last two chapters of the Bible not be excited and intrigued about the joy that awaits the faithful children of God?
1. And yet, Shedd's Dogmatic Theology has two pages on heaven and some 87 devoted to the subject of eternal punishment. (Source: John Hains, Sermon Archive)

II. THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER.

- A. As you consider the writings of John, and from other texts, it is awesome to think of the end of sin.
1. Sin is so heinous, and will cost the souls of billions of people.
 2. It is so nauseating and disgusting when we consider its consequences.
 3. Think again of the statement recorded in **Rev. 21:27** *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*
 4. The end of violent crime, the end of lies, deceit, evil speaking, or any kind of abomination. God will not permit it to be there!

5. **Hab. 1:13** *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.*
 6. Those with the vile and reprobate hearts will not be in that holy city.
 7. **Matt. 5:8** *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*
- B. We also are comforted in the realization that God will be there.
1. One writer expressed some interesting thoughts relative to God's presence in Heaven with the righteous.
(The following is taken from the Sermon Archive)
 2. "His presence must be awesome:
 - 1) No man can see his face and live (**Exod. 33:20**).
 - 2) (**Exod 34:29-35**) Moses' face shone.
 3. Fascinating to know God better...
 - 1) The many-sided overwhelming greatness of the character of God's intelligence, creative genius, power
 - 2) what He has made gives a clue:
 - no computer like the human brain
 - No system like the encoded DNA that directs life.
 - No architect like the spider web, the seashell, etc.
 - 3) Man can only wonder:
 - Naturalist studies God's handiwork
 - The astronomer studies His vast makings
 - the Artist tries to capture a tiny bit of the beauty
 - All men can appreciate it, from the dirt farmer to the king.
 - 4) If we enjoy the ART, will we not enjoy the ARTIST?
 - 5) Christ showed Him to us... (**John 14:7- 9**).
 - Compassion, love, selflessness, gentleness, kindness
 - unlimited POWER, purpose for GOOD, Justice..."
- C. In thinking about heaven we are also reminded that it is eternal.
1. I don't propose to state to you that I can adequately describe the concept of eternity.
 2. We are talking of time without end.
 3. Several years ago in a Bible class, I was talking with students about the highest number in mathematics -- Googolplex.
 4. You say, what in the world does that mean? In mathematics, it is 10 with 100 zeros.
 5. I don't know how to illustrate that except maybe in counting misquotes.
 6. But even in man's number system, if we applied this tremendous number in years, it will still only be "a drop in the bucket " compared to eternity.
 7. As a Christian, that is extremely comforting in the realization of bliss without end.
 8. But for those who refuse the gracious invitation of our Master, it is sheer terror to contemplate what awaits the disobedient.
- D. In thinking of heaven we also need to add that it is described as a place of rest.
- John 9:4** *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*
- Heb. 4:9** *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*
- Rev. 14:13** *And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.*

III. WHO WILL BE THERE?

- A. At first it may be viewed as a silly question, but in honesty, I think that even some of my brethren have an incorrect concept of who will be there.
- B. We know from Scripture that moral goodness is not enough, as even Cornelius, *A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway (Acts 10:2)*, still needed to hear words to be saved (**Acts 11:14**).
- C. There has to be obedience to the will of God:
Matt. 7:21 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*
Heb. 5:8-9 *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;*
5:9 *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*
- D. Based upon these things, just because a person is religious, and attends a church is not sufficient to meet the entrance requirements.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. How badly do you want to go to Heaven?
- 2. How homesick are you? or does the world have a hold on you?
1 John 2:15-17 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*
2:16 *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*
2:17 *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*