

Sunday, May 23, 2010—What is Heaven Like?

Introduction

- Seeing how we have just spent the last six weeks studying the issue of eternal punishment I thought it would be good to talk about something a bit more positive and uplifting.
- When you think of heaven what images pop into your head?
- How many of you have ever spent time wondering what heaven is like?
- There is no one verse or passage of Scripture that talks about what heaven is like. Therefore, we have to piece together the pieces in order to contrast a full picture of what heaven is like.
- II Corinthians 12:1-2—Paul speaks about the 3rd heaven. There are three heavens in the Bible
 - 1st Heaven—atmosphere around the earth where the birds fly ect.
 - 2nd Heaven—the starry heavens or outer space.
 - 3rd Heaven—the place where God lives

God's Ultimate Desire

- Isaiah 40:21-22—God created the universe as a tent for himself to dwell in.
- Genesis 28:12-17—Jacob came to understand that the land he was on was the very land in which God had established for his residence. It was the very place where God's house would exist on Earth.
- Exodus 15:2—Israel was to prepare a habitation for God. What do you do in a habitation?
- Psalm 132:13-14—God is going to dwell and live in Zion
- Revelation 21:1-3—God will ultimately dwell with men in mount Zion.
- Genesis 3:17—when sin entered into the world God pronounced a curse upon creation that would work against man and his endeavors. How much do you suppose this curse has effected God's created order?
- Revelation 22:3—when that Holy City the New Jerusalem descends upon the earth the curse of sin will be removed from creation.
- God ultimate desire has always been to live on earth and one day he will.

The Key to Understanding Heaven

- Romans 1:20—the invisible things of God are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made.

- Colossians 1:16-17—earth = visible, heaven = invisible
- Consider the example of the Tabernacle.
 - Exodus 25:8-10, 40
 - Hebrews 8:1-5—God built the heavenly Tabernacle and used it as a pattern for the one Moses built on earth.
 - What was on earth was a pattern of what was in heaven. The earthly was created in the image of the heavenly.

Familiar Things in Heaven

- All of the passages we are going to look at I take literally. Many believers teach that these passages are full of *language of accommodation*. What this means is that God does not expect us to take these verses literally. It is often said that when describing heavenly things God is describing something beyond our frame of reference. Therefore, in order to us some realization of what He is talking about, God uses language of accommodation. He describes things in earthly terms using earthly items, so that we can at least have some measure of comprehension.
- Revelation 21:18-21—all of the materials used to build the new Jerusalem are also located on earth. But this city was built in heaven not on earth. Therefore, these same materials must also exist in God's heaven as well.
- In fact, these building materials existed in God's Heaven before they existed on the earth. When God created the earth as the place for his residence, He made it possess the same kinds of materials that were present in the third heaven
- Revelation 4:1-11—notice all the common objects or occurrences that present in John's description of the throne of God in the third heaven.
 - “Crowns of God”
 - “Lightings and thunderings”
 - “Lamps of Fire” “burning” = combustible material and conditions
 - The four faces present on the angelic order which were present at creation resemble animals on earth.
- Revelation 5:1, 4-7
- Revelation 19:11-16—horses are present in heaven (II Kings 6:17). Linen is a cloth made out of flax. In order to have linen flax must grow in heaven.
- Psalm 78:22-25—just as corn grows on the earth Manna is the food and the angels in heaven.
- Genesis 2:15—we need to remember that work only became drudgery after the fall.
- Ezekiel 28:14—Genesis 19:24

- It should be evident at this point that the Bible testifies to a striking similarity between the make-up and environment of the earth and God's Heaven.
- The earth was made in heaven's image. To say, therefore, that God modeled the earth after heaven is not absurd. After all, He created the earth to be His dwelling place in the midst of creation. Therefore, a similarity of appearance and environment is not strange. It would be expected.

Our Eternal Future

- Ephesians 1:3
- Ephesians 1:19-20
- Ephesians 2:6
- Ephesians 1:22-23—the Body of Christ is the fullness that God will use to fill the positions of rank and authority in the heavenly places.
- Ephesians 2:22
- Ephesians 3:21—throughout all the ages of eternity the Body of Christ will be the habitation of God through the Spirit in the heavenly places.