

# Beatific Vision

## I. Introduction:

**A. I heard of a story of a man who pulled into a Gas Station:** & While he was filling the tank with gas-- He looked across the state highway→ & Noticed two men about 10 feet apart... The first man was digging a hole→ & Then the second man would follow to fill the hole back up with the very dirt that the first guy had just shoveled out-- In the mean time, the first guy was working on another hole... Well, he watched this for a short while→ & got to where he just couldn't take it anymore: & So he walked across the street→ (& said) "What are you guys doing?"... (& they said) "We're working for the Government"... (& then the guy said) "Well, you're wasting the tax-payers money!"... (& one of the Government workers said) "Well, you have to understand→ Usually there's three of us (Me / Mike / & Joe)...I Dig the hole / Joe comes & places a tree in the hole / & Then Mike comes & fills up the hole... (& at that Mike says) "Yeah, & just because Joe's sick→ Does that mean we're not suppose to work?"

**B. Well, I guess we all can attest to how easy it is for life in this world to become Monotonous (Routine / Boring):** I'm just wondering→ (In all honesty) Have any of you had those very thoughts about heaven?... Well, I have→ & I can tell you that I'm not alone... John Elderidge wrote in his book *The Journey of Desire*: "*Nearly every Christian I have spoken with has some idea that eternity is an unending church service...* (he goes on to write) *We have settled on an image of the never-ending sing-along in the sky, one great hymn after another, forever and ever, amen. And our hearts sink. Forever and ever? That's it? That's the good news? And then we sigh and feel guilty that we are not more spiritual. We lose heart, and we turn once more to the present to find what life we can*"... (I mean after your 10M verse of "Holy, Holy, Holy"→ What do you do?)... Perhaps Gary Larson wasn't too far off in his *Far Side* cartoon: Where it shows two guys with Angel Wings & a Halos→ Flitting around in heaven

talking about heaven... (& the caption read) ***"To be honest, I was a little disappointed... It's hard for a place like this to live up to the hype"...***

**It makes me think of Mark Twains portrayal of Heaven in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn:** Where the pious Miss Watson→ **Has** taken a dim view of Huck's fun-loving spirit... (& in response Huck says) ***"She went on and told me all about the good place. She said all a body would have to do there was go around all day long with a harp and sing, forever and ever. So I didn't think much of it....I asked her if she reckoned Tom Sawyer would go there, and she said, not by a considerable sight. I was glad about that because I wanted him and me to be together"...*** Obviously, Miss Watson had nothing to say about heaven→ **That** appealed to Huck (& if we're honest→ Nothing much that really appeals to us)... **But if** she had told Huck about living in a Resurrected body→ **While** being with people we love in a redeemed world-- **Now That** (I think) would have gotten his attention!... **Given our vague view of heaven as an Ethereal pie-in-the-sky-bye-&-bye:** I wonder how many of us actually wonder if things might get a bit Boring in heaven→ **But** (then again) that's better than being Burned in hell... **It's** No wonder (that for many) heaven hasn't captured our imagination or shaped our lives... **Well**, today I hope to challenge that misconception

**C. Let me start by saying this:** Grasping what life will actually be like in heaven→ **Is God's design** for radically changing our lives here in this cursed world of ours... I Mean, it really does matter (right now) how much you're looking forward to heaven... Listen to what Peter tells us in **2Peter 3:11-14**...

**Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this→**  
**What holy and godly lives you should live-- Looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire→ And the elements will melt away in the flames.**  
**But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised→ A world filled with God's righteousness. And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen→**

**Make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.**

**You See, Peter's Premise: Is that Our Anticipation of the future→ Effects our Sanctification right now...** In other words, our excitement about heaven→ **Impacts** our commitment to the radical lifestyle God has called us too / How much I'm looking forward to the New Earth→ **Determines** how I will live right now on this old earth... **So, let me say this: If we** don't possess a vision of heaven that we can get excited about→ **We'll** find something else to get excited about... & It's hard to get excited about an eternity of playing harps and & polishing halos... **But** these stereotypical views of heaven→ **Are NOT** the vision we have painted for us by God Himself... Heaven isn't a place of Endless Passivity→ **But Rather** a place of Energetic Activity...

**II. Now part of this misconception of heaven:** Is fueled by the confusion that circulates around the idea→ **Of** heaven being a place of **Rest** (& an eternal Sabbath)... You'll remember how in **Hebrew 4:2** (the writer says)

**For this good news - that God has prepared this rest - has been announced to us just as it was to them.**

**So, there IS a special Rest waiting for us in heaven:** But, how we often translate this-- Is to think that heaven is a place where we just Lounging back & doing Nothing / Or perhaps (at best) a place of Motionless Absorption→ With an Intellectual contemplation of God... **Now think through for a moment: Jesus** being our Preview of the life to come-- Did Jesus do nothing on the Sabbath? / Didn't Jesus not Teach (Heal / & go to Feasts)?... **& In the OT: When** the Children of Israel entered the Promised Land in the book of Joshua... (& Joshua said) "God has given us Rest"... Was there nothing left to do? / Didn't they have Fields to plant (& Animals to care for / & Houses to construct / & Cities to build / & Road to make)?... **& What about Eden?: Which** was initially designed by God to be a perfect picture of Rest-- & Yet, it was a place

of meaningful & enjoyable Work / Abundant Food / & Unhindered Friendship with God & each other... **& So Understand:** “Rest” doesn’t mean a lack of Activity or Labor→ **Rather** it means no more Menial / Tedious / Frustrating / & Meaningless Activity & Labor... **In the next life** you & I are going to engage an Abounding & Wide-ranging life-style (We’re going to have a lot to do)→ **&** none of it will be Monotonous / Boring / & Routine...

**III. So, allow this morning to offer you a Beatific Vision→ Of what I know we’ll be engaged in doing in heaven:**

**A. #1 We will engage in totally Unhindered**

**Worship:** Now everything we do in heaven→ **Will** be as God intends (i.e. For the Glory of God)... **So**, in the truest sense all of our activities will be a form of worship... **But** there will be times of Focused & Passionate Praise→ **& Of** a nature that we have yet experienced... **& We** get a Glimpse of this in **Revelation 7:9-12**...

After this I saw a vast crowd (too great to count)→ From every nation and tribe and people and language-- Standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes And held palm branches in their hands / And they were **shouting with a mighty shout**→ “Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!” And all the angels were standing around the throne / and around the elders / and the four living beings. And they **fell before the throne with their faces to the ground** and worshiped God. They sang, “Amen! Blessing / and glory and wisdom / and thanksgiving / and honor / and power / and strength→ **Belong to our God forever and ever! Amen.**”

**Now that’s what I call “Church”:** **& Yet**, there’s something inside me that feels that we just don’t quite do church like that→ **Perhaps** b/c (in some ways) we’re too Afraid to... **I Mean, don’t you find it a bit of an Irony:** **That** this moment that is suppose to allow us to collectively

unleash our Adoration & Praise to God→ **Often** ends up being defined more by our Fears (our Inhibitions / & our Traditions / & our Thoughts about what somebody else is thinking right now)... **& Am I really that far off the beaten path:** When I say that we train ourselves→ **How** to hold back when we worship??... **Well, to whatever degree that may be true for you, I know this:** You & I are not going to have to worry about that in heaven... Everyone will be “fanatical” about worship in heaven... **& We’re** going to worship God with ALL of our Heart (Mind Soul / & Strength)... **& you know who’s** going to help us through this learning curve – Angels (after all, they’ve been doing this a lot longer than we have)... **I can’t wait** to hear Angels sing... **& I can’t wait** to participate in a Multi-Cultural Chorus of every age that has ever existed... **& We’ll be eternally Refreshed→ B/C God will never cease to be Fascinating to us** (Seeing God will be Dynamic→ Not Static)... **We’ll Never lose** our Wide-Eyed Wonder→ **Of** being in the presence of Un-created Holiness & Love... **In 2003 when they tore down that statue of Saddam Hussein there in Baghdad:** A TV commentator said something rather striking-- (he said) *“These people are use to coming out in the streets→ & praising Saddam....If they didn’t→ They were punished....He had a policy of Compulsory Adulation”*... **Heaven will need no policy for worship:** When the call is announced across the new earth→ “It’s time to meet around the throne to praise God!”-- Everybody is going to be excited / **& We’ll** all loose ourselves in Praise

**B. #2 We will expand our knowledge & Awe of God:** Heaven will be a place of Endless & Enjoyable Learning-- **& That’s** precisely b/c the subject will be -- God... **Now, does that really surprise you?:** Well, perhaps it does, b/c after all a **Gallup Poll** of people’s perspective on heaven→ **Revealed** that only 18% thought we would actually grow intellectually in heaven... **But think about it:** Only God Himself is Omniscient... **Now Yes**, we’ll live eternally since His Life will be poured into us→ **But** only God is Infinite... **Translated**, that means that God is beyond ever completely knowing→ **There** will always be more of Him... **You See**, now under the Curse→ **We** see Myopically (As Paul says to the **Corinthians**, “Now we see

things imperfectly as in a distorted mirror”)... **But** when we get to heaven→ **Our** vision will be corrected... **& So**, (for the first time in our lives) **We’ll See God Accurately** (Clearly) **But we’ll never know him Exhaustively** (Comprehensively)... **& Understand, that doesn’t mean that we won’t be Perfect: I’m not saying** that we’ll grow toward perfection→ **Rather** we’ll grow IN Perfection... **You** understand (don’t you) that we can be Flawless→ **& Still not know everything?... The Angels Didn’t: Why**, the Righteous Angels that God created are Flawless→ **Yet** they’re still Finite... (& As Peter tells us) **The Angels** don’t know everything God is up to→ **& They yearn to know more... So, when you get to heaven: You’re** not going to be Omniscient→ **But** you’re going to be Ever Learning... As Paul tells us in **Ephesians 2:6-7...**

**And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, (now watch this) In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.**

**We’re going to spend Eternity→ Having God reveal to us His Unsearchable (Incomparable) Grace: Martin Luther** put it this way-- *“If God had all the answers in His right hand→ And the struggles to reach those answers in the left-- I would choose God’s left hand”...* **Why?: B/C** it’s not only the Truth we want→ **But** the Pleasure of learning it (With a perfect mind / & perfect Patience / & with no need to impress anyone)... **& Just imagine of all the Exploration** we’ll get to pursue on the New Earth & the New Heavens-- **& All of it** is going to Reveal the Glory of God...

### **C. #3 We will enter into meaningful Kingdom**

**Service: Do you** realize that you’re currently (right now) in training for your Eternal Career?... **What else** do you think is meant when we say-- “**God** isn’t just preparing a Place for Us→ **But** God is preparing Us for a Place”... **The Promise of heaven: Isn’t** an offer of Retirement→ **But** an offer of your Real Job-- **Right now**, we’re just in Vo-Tech school... **& If you pay attention: You’ll** begin to catch



how often Jesus alludes to this life of Activity→ We'll experience in heaven... (e.g.) In telling the story of the Shrewd Manager→ Jesus tells us this in **Luke 16**

**"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with **greater responsibilities**. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the **true riches of heaven**?"**

**In Other Words:** When Jesus comes back-- He's going to determine how faithful we were with the gifts we were given→ **& Then** we'll enter into His happiness with according responsibilities... **A Primary Reason** God has set in motion this idea of "Stewardship" (i.e. God giving us blessing to use in His behalf)→ **Is B/C** it prepares us to take on more profound Responsibilities in heaven... **We're, (right now) in Training for our Eternal Career**... **& Heaven is a place of Perfect Work & Perfect Rest:** **& So**, we'll never engage life so Joyfully & Purely→ **As** we will in heaven (I mean, it's all for Jesus)...

**Now perhaps this all comes into better focus→ When we realize that Ruling the Universe is the Family Business:** **Just look back** through the **Drama of Redemption**→ **Where** we see how that Rule on Earth was Contested in the Beginning... **& How** all this came to a head at the Cross / **& How** (now) when Jesus returns (& Satan & his angels are thrown into the lake of fire)→ **Jesus** is going to enjoy eternally Uncontested Rule / **& How** (now) in Restoring the Kingdom of God→ **Jesus** has made the decision to Delegate His Rule to His Co-Heirs... **As we're told in II Timothy 2:11-12:** "This is a trustworthy saying: **If we die with him, we will also live with him. If we endure hardship, we will reign with him**"... **& So, we're suppose to grasp what God is in the process of doing:** (& i.e.) **Restoring** what we were created for in the very Beginning... **Remember?:** When God created Adam→ (He said) "I've placed you in a perfect earth→ **& I want you to have Dominion over it**"... **The Break-down** (you see) is that we forfeited our dominion by sinning→ **& So**, Satan Usurped & become the Prince of the earth... **But through the sacrifice of Jesus→ God is going to give us our old jobs back:** We were created to be Rulers / Managers / Caretakers of God's good creation... **& That's** exactly

what God is Grooming us for right now... **Does** this sound boring to you?

**D.** (one last thing) **#4 We will enjoy eternally Fulfilling**

**Fellowship:** **Theologically**, we should remember that we were created in God's Image→ **Who** is Himself a "Community" (F/S/HS)...

**The Point being**, that we're by nature Communal Beings-- (i.e.) **Doing** Life with God→ **Inherently** means doing life with Each Other...

**& The Closest** we get to this on earth→ **Is** when the Church acts like it is suppose to act... **Now, this is going to be difficult to do→ B/C**

**we have never experienced this:** **But** I want you to imagine

Fellowship with **No Pretense--** (i.e.) **When you** do not walk up to a single person-- **& You** don't have to wonder what they're thinking

about you→ **& They're** not wondering what you're thinking about them... **Where** there's no Insecurity / **Where** there's no Judgment of anyone / **Where** there's no Arrogance / **Where** there's no

Communication Barriers / **Where** there's no Discrimination... **& That**

**doesn't mean we'll all be alike in heaven:** **There** will be Diversity in

heaven (A Black person doesn't become a White person / A Gentile person doesn't become a Jewish person)...

**There's** going to be all the Cultures & Tribes of all the nations-- **But** what's going to be Conspicuously absent→ **Is** all of the Fallen Judgment about differences that Mar & Handicap this

world... **As we're told** in **Revelation 21:26** it says-- **And all the nations will bring their glory and honor into the city...** **In 1984**

**President Reagan** was at the 1984 Opening Ceremonies of the **Olympics:** **When** he got back to the White House→ **His** daughter

Maureen asked him what he liked the most... (he said) "**Well**, it's when

they all entered into the Stadium-- **The Germans** came in behind their flag→ **& They** all looked like Germans / **The Chinese** came in→ **&**

they all looked Chinese / **The African Nations** came in→ **& They** all looked like Africans... **But then** came the Flag of the United States→

**& It** looked like the Whole World"... **& That's the way** it's going to be in heaven (all the Diversity)→ **But** this time all under that Banner of

Jesus Christ... **& Everyone is going to Love you:** I can't fathom this

(I'm not being Facetious→ Just Sincere)...

**I have** never lived a day in my life→ **Where** everyone loved me... **Some** people don't love me b/c of



the color of my Skin / Some don't love me b/c of my Citizenship / Some don't love me b/c I'm a Christian / & Some Christians don't love me b/c I don't believe everything just like they do... But in heaven, Everybody is going to love me (& you)... & We'll never be Bored with Love...

**IV. So let me ask you a question:** If this is what we have awaiting us→ **Why** wait to pursue what you were made for?-- If you were made to **Worship** God for Eternity→ **Why** not start today? / If you were made eternally to **Learn** about God→ **Why** not start now? / If you are made forever to **Serve** God→ Why wait? / If you were created to **Love People** forever & ever→ **What** are we waiting for?... **Zig Ziglar** tells the story of an Economics Professor→ **Who offered a rather peculiar Exam:** The test had several sections of questions→ **With** each section containing three categories of questions... & He instructed the students to choose one question from each section on the test... The 1<sup>st</sup> Category in each section was the hardest (& was worth 50 points) / The 2<sup>nd</sup> Category in each section was not quite as hard (& worth 40 points) / & The 3<sup>rd</sup> Category in each section was the easiest (& worth only 30 points)... **When the students had taken the test / & all the papers had been turned in:** The students who had chosen the fifty-point questions→ **Were** given A's / The students who had chosen the forty-point questions→ **Were** given B's / & the Students choosing the easiest questions→ **Were** given C's (Even though their answers were correct)... **Well Understandably, the students were bit confused: & asked** the professor how he had graded the exam... (& the professor explained) "I wasn't testing your Knowledge→ **I** was testing your Aim"... **& By the way, So is God:** God is testing our Aim (Not Perfection→ But Direction)... **& I think it's a fair question: What** impression are Unbelievers getting about heaven→ **By** observing your aim?