

Message from
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Trinity Baptist Church, High Rolls NM

Sunday March 22, 2020

Its hard not assembling together due to the Covid 19 Virus, however we don't want to be foolish and risk putting our church family or community at risk.

So Trinity has decided not to have public worship services during this time.

Remember even when we can't GO to church, we are always to BE the church.

Revelation 21 talks about what's next. Let's begin in verses 1 "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murders, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Heaven really is the final frontier. It's the culmination of everything.

God's people have looked forward to heaven since becoming God's people. When we die as Christians we expect to go to heaven because that is what The Word says.

We sing of the hope of heaven, dont we?

When We All Get to Heaven *what a day of rejoicing that will be, when we all see Jesus, We'll sing and shout the Victory.*

I know we miss our loved ones when they go home to be with the Lord, but when we are saved by grace through faith we naturally should be looking forward to Heaven.

I newer song by MercyMe. "I Can Only Imagine"

Surrounded by Your glory
What will my heart feel
Will I dance for You, Jesus
Or in awe of you be still
Will I stand in your presence
Or to my knees will I fall

Will I sing hallelujah
Will I be able to speak at all

How about "Mansion on a Hilltop"

*Don't think me poor or deserted or lonely
I'm not discouraged I'm heaven bound
I'm just a pilgrim in search of the city
I want a mansion, a harp and a crown*

So many songs have been written about heaven, our eternal home.

Lets be cautious about our grip on things of this world, because it can lessen our hope of heaven.

Lots of books have been written about angels, But where do angels spend most of their time? Heaven.

If you can believe it there are people that believe heaven would be torture, the idea of sitting around on the clouds with golden haloes with nothing to do but play harps. But they have it all wrong.

Paul said our citizenship is in heaven. Our home because our Father is there, our Savior is there, our Comforter is there. All the saints of all ages will be there. Our reward is there.

The Apostle Paul said for me to live is Christ, to die is? Gain.

It's going to be so much better than it is here. Just in Revelation, Heaven is mentioned over 50 times.

In the letter to Philadelphia in Revelation 3, verse 11: "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name."

Chapter 4 verse 1: "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

From this point forward, John talks about the tribulation period all the way through to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ from a heavenly perspective.

Today we are in chapter 21. This is after the Second Coming, after the thousand year reign of Christ on the earth (the millennium). Literally we shift dimensions, We leave time and we enter the eternal state.

The heavens and the earth are wiped out at this point and God creates all over again.

In Isaiah, it describes God as high and lofty and the One who inhabits eternity.

The chapter opens up "Now I saw". We hear that a lot throughout Revelation.

And I saw, and I saw, and I saw, He receives a vision, from Jesus Christ, who received it from the Father, and he writes down what he sees.

This is what he saw, this is what he meant by what he saw, this is what is going to happen. After all, Jesus died, rose from the dead, and still lives. So this comes from a very reliable source. You can count on it.

The Bible speaks of heaven three ways. The Bible speaks of the atmosphere around the earth as heaven. Jesus spoke about the birds of the heaven. Isaiah, talked about the rain that comes from heaven. That's the atmospheric heavens or the terrestrial heavens. So that's the first heaven.

Secondly, the celestial heavens. That's the stratosphere. The place where the moon, the stars, the heavenly bodies reside. Psalm 19:1 says the heavens declare the glory of God.

But then there is the third heaven the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12. I was caught up into the third heaven. That's the heaven of heavens---the abode of God.

The atmosphere, The stratosphere, and The third heaven.

Now where is heaven? Revelation 4, and I heard a voice saying come up here and I'll show you things which must take place after this. Paul was caught up into the third heaven.

How far? In terms of time and space the moon is over 200,000 miles from the earth.

It took about three days in a space ship to get there. At the speed of light 186,000 miles an hour it would take about 1 1/2 seconds to get to the moon, at that speed you could reach Venus in 2 minutes and 11 seconds. Jupiter in 35 minutes and 11 seconds. It's only 367 million miles away.

To get to the nearest star which is Alpha Centauri. It takes 4.3 years traveling at the speed of light because it's 25 trillion miles away. That's just the beginning of the universe.

Isaiah said our God measures and marks out the universe with the span of His hand. God says yeah, it's about that big.

So when we say heaven is up, it's really up. How long does it take to get there? Jesus said to the thief on the cross, today you'll be with Me in paradise. God is not limited by time and space.

Paul's encouraging words, "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." So the trip to heaven is instant.

At the rapture of the church it says in the twinkling of an eye. That's pretty quick. The twinkling of an eye. The time it takes for light to hit the eye and bounce back for you to see it. A twinkle. That's pretty quick.

What do we know about heaven? We often think of the words in 1 Corinthians 2:9

But as it is written:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”
But don't stop there,

Verse 10 But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. So we can know more.

Revelation 4 & 5 gives us some information about the throne room of heaven.

Jesus Himself said I am going to prepare a place for you. An actual place that He goes to prepare for us. Really sparks our imagination. What is He preparing for me?

In the first 3 verses of today's text.

1. The New Heaven and The New Earth.
2. The New Jerusalem, the eternal capital city.
3. The New Presence of God. There are more new things we will talk about them next time.

Verse 1: "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea."

Anybody like new things? New car, new phone, new clothes, new opportunities, new experiences, for the kids maybe a new book, or a new toy. But Things don't last for ever, they get old, they wear out, we break them, they get scratched, or maybe just don't take care of them.

New things don't stay new for long.

This is different, This is a new heaven and a new earth.

In other words, everything we know, everything we see on this earth, heaven and the earth are gone. Remember in chapter 20 verse 11: "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them." It's all gone.

Starting over. The old is gone, the new has come. And it's all summed up in Revelation 21 verse 5 where God says behold, I make all things new.

This is a brand new heaven and a brand new earth. An entirely new universe.

The word new means different, fresh, new in quality, new in existence.

See God made the earth for us to live on, to dwell in, to enjoy, but the earth has been under a curse. Sin has covered the face of the earth, but one day it will be destroyed and as Isaiah predicted in chapter 65, behold, I create new heavens and new earth, the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

Psalms 102 says, of old You laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish but You will endure.

Even Jesus said heaven and earth will pass away but My words will not pass away. So this place we call earth, it's not gonna last forever. It is temporary.

2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, the elements will melt with fervent heat, nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells."

Ask yourself those questions, Seeing that all these things are gonna to be dissolved,

How should we live?

What manner of persons ought we to be?

If this is all temporary, where should our focus be? Should it be on the temporary or on the eternal?

In other words, our life should be different from the life of those who don't have a personal relationship with Christ. Our citizenship is in heaven. This is all temporary.

But everybody's doing it. But it's the new trend, 2 car garage and we're still building on.

What manner of person should we be if there's gonna be a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells and all of this stuff will be gone? I'll let you think about that.

What is this eternal state gonna be like? For one thing it says there was no more sea.

There won't be any sea. The earth will be different. Right now, we live in a very watery world. Two-thirds of the earth is water. Most of plant and animal life is water. It's the only planet in the universe, that we know of, that has the amount of water needed to sustain the biosphere that we have that is dependent on water.

If you don't drink water, eventually you'll die. They say you need like 8 glasses of water a day to stay hydrated. So we are dependent upon water. There's water on our earth now, also in the millennium, we're told in many places, there will be an abundance of water, but we're told here there is no sea. It doesn't mean no water.

Revelation 22 says there is a pure river of the water of life.

A new heaven and a new earth and there's no sea. It's gonna be a very different environment. We also know that seas separate people, right? They separate us from one another. In the new heaven and the new earth there will be no separation all of God's people living under the authority of Christ.

Next we come to the New Jerusalem in verse 2: "Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven," this is a different kind of a city, "from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." This then is the capital city of eternity.

There's a new heaven, a new earth, and coming out of heaven this city called New Jerusalem. We even told its dimensions later.

Fifteen hundred miles wide and deep and high.

Just a little smaller than the moon. It's certainly different than anything we've ever known. So are these literal measurements?

If they're not literal, then I have no idea what this means.

I think it means what he said. That's what he saw. That's what he wrote. Is it any harder for you to believe this as it would be for you to believe God parting the Red Sea or that He created the heavens and the earth the first time.

It's a New Jerusalem.

This is a new city. God has desired such a city. There has never been a city like this.

Abraham looked for it! It says that Abraham, in Hebrews 11, looked for a city that had foundations whose Builder and Maker is God. That's the New Jerusalem. We know that in the millennium, Jesus Christ will rule from Jerusalem. But there will be a rebellion at the end of the thousand years. Here now is a New Jerusalem, not an earthly city. Notice what it's called here: the holy city, New Jerusalem. It's just as new as the new earth. There's a new heaven, a new earth, and a new city coming out of heaven, descending. We have never seen a holy city. Why will it be holy? Because all of the occupants in it will be holy. Every single one will be holy. We read that earlier in verse 8: "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." It's a holy place.

And it's described as a bride prepared for her husband. Why is it described that way? It's a city. It's a place. It's given dimensions, but it's seen as a bride adorned because, though it's a place, it is described in terms of the people who live there. It's a bride city. Because the bride lives there. The people of God inhabit it. And it's adorned. It's beautiful. Just like a bride on her wedding day.

And we're gonna get more into the New Jerusalem because it's given in detail in verses after this. Finally verse 3 the new presence of God. This has got to be the best part. "And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.'" Now that is big.

It has always been God's heart to hang out intimately with His people, to have fellowship with His people, but Sin has been in the way and it has infected everyone and everything, all of creation.

In the Old Testament, God set up a tabernacle. God's presence dwelt in the tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies, in the ark of the covenant, in this pillar of fire and smoke guiding them through the wilderness? In the temple and it says the Shekinah glory or the glory of God dwelt within that place, His Shekinah glory inhabited that place.

But you couldn't go into the inner court. Nobody could except the priest. There were separations. There were ritual sacrifices. So there was a distance between God and man. So ultimately in speaking to man, God sent His Son into the world. Immanuel---God with us. And it says the Word became flesh and literally, in Greek, and tabernacled among us and we saw His glory.

But this is completely and entirely different.

No more veils. No more ritual. No more cloth tent in the wilderness. No more, even. God dealing directly with His people, in intimate fellowship with His people. Now He's with us today whenever two or three gather in His name even as we gather through the internet, as we gather online or on our phones. He said He'll be with us. He's is also with us individually. Lo, I am with you always to the end of the age. But in the future, it will be different. He is with us now but He'll dwell directly with us.

Remember what John wrote? Beloved, we are the sons of God and it doesn't yet appear what we shall be, but we know this, when He appears, we'll be like Him for we will see Him as He is.

God will be directly with His people. Jesus said blessed are the pure in heart, they will see God. There will be no long-distance communication. It will be one-on-One, it will be face-to-Face. You know, I think that no matter how sophisticated you are or theological you may be, you have a basic desire to see God. David said I will be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

People have always had trouble with the invisible God. Have your kids ever asked you questions like this: what does God look like? How big is God?

You have probably asked the same questions! Even Moses did. Moses saw miracle after miracle after miracle, but at Sinai, he said God. I want to see You! Show me Your glory. God said Moses, if you see My glory, you'll die. You can't see Me as long as you're in this body of flesh.

Philip when Jesus was talking about the Father said, look, just show us the Father! That'll be enough.

Then there was Peter, James, and John who saw the glory of Jesus as He was transfigured with Moses and Elijah in bright radiant light. And of course, Peter wanted to build a monument right there.

What did they see? They saw a preview of Heaven.

Like Moses, like Philip, like Peter and the other disciples, you will never be totally satisfied until you see the face of God. Its fine to desire and look forward to your heavenly home.

Just knowing that you have a new heaven and a new earth, this eternal state, in the future, after the kingdom age, ought to whet your appetite.

With our smartphones we can take a lot of pictures. Pictures of just about everything. And its fun to go back through photos and be reminded of where you have been, to see pictures of family and friends. But its not the same as being there. Seeing a photo of a person is not the same as being with that person. Calling on the telephone and you hear my voice and I hear your voice. Its not the same as being together in person. In seem that type of contact can just make you miss someone more. Even with all this social distancing, we are encouraged not to shake hands or not to give hugs. But for many of us thats a hard adjustment. Somethings. Missing.

Every single experience you have now as a Christian, every great worship experience you have, every time you say I felt so close to God at that moment, those things were never meant to completely satisfy you---only to whet your appetite for heaven. If those experiences were enough, why would you want more.

You want to get closer to the Lord. And worship does that---it whets our appetite. Speaking to each Christian, I pray that the grip of this world would be loosened in your life and that you would see or be reminded that all this stuff is temporary in the light of eternal stuff.

And if you're not a Christian this morning, I would pray that this message would whet your appetite for heaven. What better place is there?

So how can you be assured of Heaven?

Before I share the good news, I have to tell you the bad news.

The bad news is that we are all dead in our sins, having broken God's commandments and turned away from Him. And God is holy, set apart from anything sinful, so we cannot enter God's presence or have a relationship with Him in our sinful state. The payment for sin is death, eternal separation from God.

But the good news is that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God showed His love for us by sending His Son, Jesus Christ to die for our sins. Though the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Salvation is a gift—we do not earn it or deserve it, but God gives it freely to all who believe in Him, and through Jesus we have peace with God.

But the good news gets even better! Jesus didn't stay dead—He came back to life on the third day, and God exalted Him to the highest place, and He rules as Lord over all. When we choose to accept Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf, we receive God's forgiveness of our sins, and we surrender control of our lives to Jesus.

What happens then is our dead spirits come to life, and we begin a relationship with God that continues for the rest of our lives and into eternity. We are adopted into God's family as His children, so we no longer fear God but instead run to Him as our Father. God welcomes us into His presence every day, and His Spirit lives inside us, empowering us to accomplish God's work here on earth and teaching us more and more about our heavenly Father. We can now boldly approach God's throne of grace to find help in our time of need.

And though we may still miss the mark of God's perfection and holiness, when we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all wrongdoing. He frees us to live the life that He created us to live, filled with amazing projects, dreams, and good works that God prepared in advance for us.

The Christian life is not a set of rules, but rather a relationship, and God wants us to grow deeper and deeper in our intimacy with Him by intentionally seeking Him every day in prayer, worship, reading the Bible, and fellowship with other believers.

If you want to begin a relationship with God you can pray something like this from your heart.

Dear God, I realize that I'm a sinner and my sin separates me from You. I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins, and that He rose again on the third day. I accept Jesus as the Savior and Lord of my life, and I believe, based on what You promised, that I am saved from my sins. Thank You for the gift of eternal life, for sending Your Spirit to live inside of me, and for welcoming me into a relationship with You. Teach me how to grow deeper with You, and I look forward to heaven and an eternity of getting to know You more. Amen.