

Remnant Life Church

July 1, 2018

Heaven

(Introduction)

Gen. 1:14-18; Rev. 4:1-4

To be a Christian is to live a life of faith

- Faith is a foundational cornerstone of our lives
- It is a required element of our salvation – faith in Jesus Christ

But is faith also required regarding our death and what comes next?

- Do you have faith that there is a conscious, real existence after this one is over?
- If so, what do you believe it is, where is it, what will we do, what will it look like?

- Pudgy blonde-haired toddlers, with small hummingbird-like wings, playing harps
- A huge gate made of lustrous pearl being manned by one of the 12 disciple's inner-core
- A vast multitude of people walking around unhurriedly dressed in flowing brilliant white robes, halos above their heads, and with a beatific, shy smile always on their faces

These are some common perceptions of what heaven is

- But is this what the Bible says about heaven?
- How much is heaven talked about and is it a real place or, as some people believe, something made up by the early church fathers, along with the concept of hell, as a way of keeping people in line through a promise of reward or punishment for their earthly actions?

Well, the Bible does speak of heaven...often

- NIV – 622 heaven or heavens (142 in the Gospels alone)
- For the Christian, heaven is an anticipated place of joy, beauty, peace, and a total absence of the consequences and ravages of sin – because that nature will be removed from our existence
- But heaven also requires a definite measure of faith because much of it is unknown and, physically, unprovable.

This morning –

- Lay the foundation for what we will be looking at over the next couple of months
- Heaven and the first creation of heaven by God, angels
 - What they are, what they are not, their purpose and activity

The City Bank of Binghamton, New York, sent flowers to the management of their new branch, on the opening of their new facility. Unfortunately, the card accompanying the flowers read, "With Deepest Sympathy." The florist who made the mistake, called later to apologize for the mix-up. But what really worried him, he said, is that the message meant for the bank was sent to a funeral, and it read, "Congratulations on your new location." (for the Christian – this is actually a very appropriate card)

- Scientists have tried to tell us that the moon is a fragment of the earth broken off through a collision with a large meteor or that it somehow evolved in mass
- Its smaller amount of gravity is what governs the tidal action of the oceans keeping them where they are
 - **Prov 8:27-29** – (Wisdom speaking) *I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when he gave the sea its boundary, so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.*
- The Stars
 - The planets
 - The lights seen by the naked eye that were not known in biblical times but we understand more today
 - Science today continues to attempt to explain the universe all to no avail
 - The theories continue to change
- But sin perverted God’s creation in man through idolatry
- God told His people not to intermarry with the foreign, godless nations for this very purpose (problem for Solomon in particular)
 - The Sumerians, Babylonians, Greeks, Egyptians, Romans, Assyrians all worshipped the sun as one of their gods
 - The Canaanites, Hittites, and Mesopotamians all worshipped the moon
 - In **Deuteronomy** chapters 4 and 17 God says that it is a sin to worship the creation rather than the creator

Second Heaven

- Also called the mid-heaven
- This is the realm of the spirits both good (angelic) and evil (demonic)
 - The unseen places of God’s angels and the fallen angels
 - They have direct access to us (the first heaven) but limited access to the presence of God
 - It is the realm of the supernatural
- Mesouranēma (mah-suh-rah-MEE-nah) – the highest point of what can be seen; like the sun at noon
 - *As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!” - Rev. 8:13*
 - *Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. - Rev. 14:6*
 - *And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, “Come, gather together for the great supper of God, - Rev. 19:17*
- It is a place where the spiritual battles take place
- **Daniel 10:13** – the battle between Michael and the ‘Prince of Persia’ (a powerful demonic force) to allow the messenger of God to come and give Daniel the vision from God
- These battles take place in the unseen realm of the second heaven

- Jesus will appear through the second heaven into the first (our realm of understanding and vision) to take His church home
 - Jesus spoke this about Himself at one of His trials
 - **Mark 14:61-62** *Again, the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”*
- The first heaven – the physical, observable
- Second heaven – the place of the spiritual beings both good and evil

Third Heaven

- This the Holy dwelling place of God
 - **Duet 26:15** - *Look down from heaven, your holy dwelling place, and bless your people Israel and the land you have given us as you promised on oath to our ancestors, a land flowing with milk and honey.”*
 - **2 Chron 30:27** - *The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place.*
- John
 - **READ** – **Rev. 4:1-4**
- Paul’s account
 - **2 Cor 12:2-4** - *I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know— God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.*
- In the presence of God means the absence of evil
 - Demons cannot be in the presence of Almighty God
 - Satan can only enter the third heaven at the permissive will of God and we have only one time this occurred recorded
 - **Job 1:6-8** - *One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.” Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”*
 - Whenever God asks a question it is not for his benefit but the one He is asking
 - God never needs information
 - satan was being used by God to accomplish His will in Job

What do we learn from this?

1. The complete and total perfection of God in His creation
 - a. Each level of heaven has a very specific purpose and function
 - b. It works in perfect harmony according to His will
2. The certainty with which we should believe in not only the seen but the unseen
3. God’s Word is true

Believing in heaven does require faith but it is a faith rewarded by the promise of eternity in paradise with our Creator and our Savior

Next week – What do we know of the third heaven – paradise?