

CrossRoads Baptist Church
January 10, 2007 6:30 p.m.
I Corinthians 2:9-10
Eternity: Heaven or Hell #10

“What Does God Have in Store For Us”

There is no other Biblical doctrine that is more widely believed than the belief in an afterlife called Heaven. Gallup polls consistently reveal that a large percentage (some as high as 75%) of the American people polled believe in a place called Heaven where people who lead good lives will live after this life.

As Christians, we most certainly believe in such a place. However, I have discovered through the years that even some Christians have a shallow or wrong view of Heaven. Some believe:

- (1) We will sit around on clouds and do nothing in heaven.
- (2) We will have wings, a halo, and play harps in heaven.
- (3) We will be greeted by Saint Peter at the pearly gates and he will determine if we get in to heaven or not.
- (4) The music in heaven will be dull, heavy and boring.
- (5) We will be admitted to heaven based on whether our good works outweigh our bad works.

But all of these are false.

As I conclude the series on Eternity: Heaven or Hell, I do so with four messages on the subject of Heaven. We will examine why these statements are false and see what the Bible teaches about Heaven.

Many times Christians are ridiculed for being “escapists” or centering our lives on “wishful thinking” because of our belief in heaven. The truth is those who did the most for this present world were ones who thought the most of the next world. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one. C.S. Lewis said, “Aim at heaven and you will have earth thrown in, aim at earth and you will get neither.”

Our text quotes Isaiah 64:4 about the hope of a place called heaven. Isaiah was speaking of hope and Paul picks up that theme in I Corinthians to let us know our God has things in store for us that is beyond our imagination. To that we say....

I. Our Hope in Heaven is Indisputable.

Heaven is a real place. Twice Jesus called heaven a “topos” place. In 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there will be also.”

Heaven is not some state of mind, or dream, or abstraction. Jesus did not tell us to pray to our Father which art in a state of mind. The Bible does not describe Jesus as being received up in clouds of a dram. Jesus did not say I go to prepare an abstraction for you. Stephen as he was being stoned did not have a sentimental emotional experience. He saw a place! Heaven is a real place.

There are actually three different heavens described in the Bible:

A. The Immediate Heaven

This is the moment a sinner gets saved and they immediately experience heaven inside of them.

“Heaven came down and glory filled my soul.”

Dr. Adrian Rogers said, “The greatest miracle of salvation is not getting man into heaven but getting heaven into man.”

B. The Intermediate Heaven

This is the place where believers go who die before the culmination of history. This is where all those you have known who have died in the Christ are presently. Its called “Abraham’s bosom,” “Paradise.” Jesus is there.

II Corinthians 5:8 “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.”

This heaven differs from the final heaven as much as the bud differs from the full flower.

C. The Infinite Heaven

This is the final abode of God’s people. “I will make a new heaven and a new earth for the old heaven and the old earth will pass away.”

This is the heaven that is described in Revelation 21 with streets of gold and walls of jasper. We will look at this in a later message.

II. Our Hope of Heaven is Indescribable.

Heaven is mentioned some 559 times in the Bible. But interestingly enough it is never described in complete detail.

Ezek. 1:1 “The heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

John 1: 51 “Verily, I say unto you that hereafter you shall see heaven open.”

Acts 7 “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing upon the right hand of God.”

Acts 10:11 Peter was on the rooftop and saw the “heavens opened.”

But in all of these instances the place is never described until John on the isle of Patmos is given a peek preview of coming attractions. What he described is too much for human language to convey but gives us a glimpse of the glory of the infinite heaven.

This is the reason for the Holy Spirit telling Isaiah and reaffirming is through Paul in our text. The greatest theologian has never understood the greatest of what God has done for us in heaven. The most skilled preacher has never been able to describe it. The most skilled song writer has never been able to describe it musically.

Dr. R. G. Lee said, “I saw heaven and I never did it justice.”

III. Our Hope of Heaven is Undeniable

God has promised us this wonderful place and His promises are true. He tells us:

“Our citizenship is in heaven.” Phil. 3:20

“Our names are written in heaven.” Luke 10:20

“Our treasurers are in heaven.” Matt. 6:20

“Our eternal home is in heaven.” John 1:42

David said at the death of his son, “He can’t return to me, but I can go to him.”

Isaiah 25:8 “He will swallow up death forever and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces.”

We are enhanced by the Scriptures and the songs about heaven. Some wonderful songs have been written about heaven:

“I feel like traveling on”

“Heaven’s Jubilee”

“When We All Get to Heaven”

“Ring the Bells of Heaven”

“On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand”

“In the Sweet Bye and Bye”

“O That Will be Glory”

“Face to Face with Christ my Savior”

“Shall We Gather at the River?”

“The Unclouded Day”

“How Beautiful Heaven Must Be”

“Where We’ll Never Grow Old”

“We’re Marching to Zion”

Heaven is a real place. How can you be sure you are going? By placing your faith in Jesus Christ alone.