

What will Heaven be like?

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Preacher: Rob Attridge

[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. So nice to see you all this morning. So last month, we went on a family trip to Germany. We went to Germany with a group called Greater Europe Mission.

And we were down in the Black Forest area. And I don't know, has anyone here been to the Black Forest area, but Olive has. It's a beautiful part of the world. It really is down in southern Germany. In fact, the little town that we were staying close to was the home of the cuckoo clock. So the first ever cuckoo clocks came from this town. So there was all sorts of woodwork and craft and all sorts of different things to look at. It was a beautiful part of the world. But anyway, one day, there wasn't a cloud in the sky. So we decided to head to this outdoor community swimming pool. Well, at this pool, as you kind of come around the corner, you're greeted by quite the sight. In front of you, as you kind of come around the corner, there's all sorts of swimming pools in front of you, all sorts of different shapes and sizes, all sorts of water slides and fountains. There is connected to this place, places to play volleyball and mini golf and basketball.

And of course, there was all sorts of snack stations and ice cream stations around the place. And it was kind of etched into the woods. So all around the edge, there was these massive kind of big, huge trees. And around the edge, there was all sorts of flowers and all sorts of things.

And there was just people everywhere enjoying themselves. Well, when Isaiah, my six-year-old, kind of came around the corner and he got a glimpse of it all, he just couldn't keep his excitement in.

[1 : 58] And he said, Daddy, this is heaven. And it was kind of funny because there was people around us in the queue kind of smiling and laughing. It seems like a lot of them spoke English. Well, then we went off and we went down some slides and we had some ice cream and things like that. But later on that day, the conversation came back around and Isaiah asked, So what will heaven be like?

He was looking for some details. What will heaven be like? So we kind of freshly considered what heaven will be like. And you know, it just did me the world of good to freshly kind of look into it together.

It just did me so much good to freshly consider what will heaven, what will our eternal home be like? Because as believers, it is just so encouraging as we face the challenges of this life when we look to and we do remember what is to come. I think it's so encouraging as believers, as we face the ups and downs of this life, when we remember that the best is yet to come.

And I think that is why the Apostle Paul encouraged believers in Colossians chapter 3 to set their minds on things above where Christ is. Because it's such an encouragement, I think, to keep pressing along in this fallen world when we do remember what is to come. When we remember that the best is yet to come. So this morning, just for a few minutes, we're going to do what the Apostle Paul encourages us to do as believers. We're going to set our minds on things above.

We're going to set our minds on where Christ is by considering what will heaven, what will our eternal home be like? And as we do, I just hope that it will be an encouragement to us in whatever it is that we are facing, just to keep pressing along, knowing that the best is yet to come.

[4 : 30] Well, in thinking about what is to come, just to say to start with, of course, there's an element of we will have to wait and see in order to fully grasp what it will be like. Our minds now couldn't fully take it in or couldn't fully comprehend what it will be fully like.

So there is an element that we'll have to wait and see. But nevertheless, in Scripture, we are told a few things in relation to what our heavenly home will be like that can really encourage us. In Revelation chapter 21, the Apostle John was in a very special way allowed to get a glimpse or allowed to experience at least part of what heaven will be like, the new Jerusalem, the holy city will

be like. In Revelation chapter 21, John was taken in the Spirit by an angel, and he was kind of given what some call a tour of heaven, or at least a tour of part of heaven.

Now, what's interesting, in this experience, John both sees with his eyes, and he hears with his ears. So John gets both a visual and auditory, I think that's the word, experience or glimpse of what heaven will be like. And in Revelation 21, he tells us a little bit about what he sees and hears. So very simply, I'm going to read some verses from Revelation chapter 21, and then just share a few thoughts in relation to what our heavenly home will be like from what John saw and heard. So Revelation 21, starting at verse 1.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Look, God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them.

They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There'll be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, I am making everything new. Then he said, Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true. He said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty, I will give water without cost from the springs of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God, and they will be my children. Verse 9, One of the seven angels who came had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and said to me, Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

[7 : 59] And he carried me away in the spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south, and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be twelve thousand stadia and lint, and as wide and high as it is long.

The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was a hundred and forty-four cubits thick. The wall was made of jasper, and the city as pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass. I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives its light, and the Lamb is its lamp. Amen. So looking at these verses, what can we say in relation to what will our heavenly home be like? We will be there long enough. We will be there forever.

Well, what can we say in relation to what will it be like? Well, number one, just starting off, looking at these verses, I think we can say that heaven is an actual place. These verses, I think, highlight in several ways that heaven is not just some sort of a state of mind. It's not just some sort of a fantasy. It's not just some sort of a dream or some sort of a vision. Heaven is an actual physical place. We read in these verses that it has walls, it has foundations, it has gates, physical things that we could touch and we could feel. And this, I think, is emphasized by the fact that an angel came to John with a measuring rod to measure the city. Verses 15 and 16, the angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod. The angel measured the wall using a human measurement and it was 144 cubits thick. I think with this, the impression that we are given is if we went there today, you know, if we went to heaven today, we could touch it, we could feel it, we could measure it. You know, maybe sometimes we think of heaven as just some sort of a vision or just some sort of a dream that we're just kind of floating around kind of in our minds, so to speak, floating around in spirit or something like that. We don't fully know what it's going to be like, but

heaven is an actual physical place that can be physically measured, it can be physically touched, a place where we can and will be doing enjoyable physical things forever and ever.

So when we do talk about going home, we're talking about going to a place, an actual place, where we will be forever present in the fullest possible sense, just enjoying being physically there. I think to start with, heaven is not just some sort of a dream or a vision, it's an actual place. Well, not only is heaven an actual place, to add to that, number two, heaven is a beautiful place. Of course, it's a beautiful place and it will be far more beautiful than we could ever imagine. It will be far more beautiful than anything that we have ever seen in this world. I mean, just going back to what John said in verse 11, speaking about the beauty of the place, it shone with the glory of God and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. And then John continues in verses 18 to 21, he says, the foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. And then we have all the stones, we've got jasper, sapphire, emerald, ruby. Then going down to 21, the 12 gates were each made of a single pearl. I mean, pearls are, from what I understand, this big, but each of these gates are made of a single gigantic pearl. So we've got the walls and the streets made of the purest gold and jasper, the most precious of stones, gates made of gigantic pearls.

[14 : 26] And all of this, the walls, the foundations, the gates are all being lit up. They're all being illuminated by nothing less than the light of the Lamb, who is Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

John said in verse 23, the city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. I think what John saw here, it transcends any beauty that we could ever imagine. We can only imagine what all of this, the gold, the precious stones, the pearls, will look like being illuminated by the glorious light of Jesus. We can only imagine what extra beauty the light of Jesus will reveal in whatever it illuminates. And if we just think about that, if you think about the beauty that the light of the sun reveals to us here on earth. For example, when the light of the sun catches the water at certain times, or when the light of the sun illuminates a flower that's freshly blooming, or something like that, the beauty that the light of the sun reveals to us here on earth. Well, we can only imagine what the beauty of what the light of the one who created the sun will reveal as it illuminates everything in heaven. I think if we think about it, everything being lit up by the light of Jesus will reveal a far greater beauty than what is lit up by the light of the sun. You know, we can only imagine what things will look like, what things will be like being lit up by the light of Jesus.

It will be a beauty that we have never seen before, or never even imagined. And it's really hard to say anything in relation to what it will be like, because whatever is said just does not do it justice in relation to just how beautiful it will be. But I think of all the things that I have heard, I think this one little girl maybe summed it up best. I love the story of this little girl who was out for a walk with her grandfather. And they were walking around one night. And as they looked up, there wasn't a cloud in the sky. And they saw all of the stars. The stars were just kind of out in full display. And as they looked up, you know, they were kind of lost in the stars. And the grandfather started to name some different stars. He started to point out some different things.

And then they just looked at them for a while. Well, then after just a few minutes, the little girl kind of pulled on the hand of her grandfather. And she said, Grandpa, if the bottom side of heaven is just beautiful, just think of how wonderful the top side must be.

And you know, we as believers, we don't know what that top side, so to speak, is going to look like. But I think what we can be sure of is this. What we can be certain of is this. As believers, we have seen nothing yet. Because what's it going to be like?

[18 : 21] When we see the beauty of heaven. We have seen nothing yet. So heaven is an actual place. Heaven is a beautiful place. It's a stunning place. Or as someone said to me during the week, as the cool young people say, it's a stunned place. It's going to have this beauty that we can't even imagine what it will be like. We'll just add another thing. Heaven. And again, this is incredible.

This is something hard for us to understand. Heaven is a perfect place. A perfect is hard for us to understand because none of us have ever lived in a perfect world. None of us have a perfect heart. None of us have a perfect mind. So we really don't have any idea what it is to be living in a perfect world, in a perfect place. But heaven is a perfect place. You know, we won't be going around the place in heaven saying, I hope you have a good day. Because in heaven, there'll be no such thing as a bad day.

There'll be no such thing as bad weather either. In heaven, there'll be nothing bad. There'll be nothing wrong. There'll be nothing hurtful in any sort of way. I mean, look at verse 4. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more debt or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. Heaven will be a great place of nothing bad, of nothing wrong, no suffering, no death, no mourning, no pain, no sin. Heaven will be a perfect place. And what hope this can give us, each one of us, as we live in this life, as we live in this fallen world, what hope it can give us, knowing that heaven is a perfect place. And I think for many, many believers, this is what keeps them going, the understanding that a time will come when he will wipe every tear from their eyes, when there'll be no more debt or mourning or crying or pain.

[20 : 43] I remember hearing the story once of a couple who had triplets. And you really couldn't make this up, but all three babies died before they were one. And I think two of them died on the same day, just before they were one from some very rare heart condition. I mean, where would you even begin to try to understand the grief and the anguish and the pain that this must have caused?

But I thought it was very interesting when this couple were asked what kept them going, their answer was one word and their answer was instant. And their answer was heaven.

And I just remember them saying something along the lines of this, that they knew that the rest of their time on this earth, that they would be grieving. They knew that the time while they lived on this earth, that they would grieve until the day that they died. They just knew that that was what was in front of them.

But then they also knew that the time would come when there would be no more grieving, there would be no more crying, there would be no more difficulty, and there would be no more pain. And for them, that is all they felt that they could hold on to. They knew that this life was going to be hard, but that's what they could hold on to.

[22 : 16] Heaven will be a perfect place, and I think that is something that we can really look forward to and hold on to. So from just skimming through Revelation 21, I think that we can pick up that heaven is an actual place, it's a beautiful place, it's a physical place.

But just to say one last thing, and this really is the crowning wonder of heaven, so to speak. The crowning glory of heaven, of the new Jerusalem, is being in the full, perfect presence of our Lord forever and ever.

In heaven, we will enjoy the perfect presence of our Lord forever. John said in verses 2 and 3, I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, beautifully dressed for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, look, God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

Enjoying the perfect presence of our triune God forever and ever is the crowning glory of heaven.

[23 : 43] You know, to be with God, to know him, to see him in the fullest possible sense is the central draw, if you like, of heaven.

The best part of heaven will be enjoying God's perfect presence, being in perfect relationship with him forever and ever. Someone said, being with God is the heart and soul of heaven.

Every other thing, like the beauty of the place and all of that will come from enjoying his perfect presence forever and ever and being in perfect relationship with him forever and ever.

We can experience relationship with God now, we can experience his presence with us now, he is in us, but in heaven we will experience his presence in the fullest possible perfect sense forever and ever and we can only imagine what that's going to be like.

We can only imagine just how amazing that will be. I think sharing about heaven is very challenging and I was even going to kind of scrap it there midweek because I was thinking, sure, whatever is said can't do it justice.

[25 : 05] You know, whatever we try to say can't do it justice, but nevertheless we are told things in scripture to encourage us, so I hope that these simple things said in a very weak way will be an encouragement to us in whatever it is that we are facing just to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and to keep pressing on knowing that the best is yet to come.

You know, this world can be so difficult it can have so much uncertainty and pain and disappointment and suffering and frustrations and worries and fears.

I was talking to some people last week and what they were saying you just you couldn't make it up in terms of how hard and difficult and just painful in many ways life is for them at this moment and for some of you here that sums up your story life is painful difficult exhausting always a struggle but these things won't be forever they won't last forever for us as believers this is what is forever and so much more and so much better for us as believers the best is yet to come and when we remember that I think it can it can only encourage us to keep pressing on in the ups and downs of this life the best is yet to come and hopefully that is something that can encourage us all this morning so let's pray together and then we will sing praises to our Lord together we thank you again for your word Lord and thank you that in your word we can see who you are and what you are like and what you've done for us and we thank you

Lord Jesus because of what you have done for us thank you that you went to the cross for us your body was broken your blood was shed you breathed your last and you rose from the grave we thank you that because of that we can know you and we thank you that because of that we can know you forever and ever and you will come and you will bring us to this place and we will be with you forever and ever Lord I just pray that you'd help us to remember in the really challenging times that we can keep our eyes fixed on you and help us to remember that as believers because of what you have done for us the best is yet to come and that is something that we can really look forward to and be really thankful for so Lord help us to worship you now with a thankful heart that this is our home our home will be with you forever and ever and we know that we're just passing through this life but we will be with you forever and ever and we thank you for that in Jesus name
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