

97. The Book of Revelation—21:1

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Last week we talked about hell—this week we're going to talk about heaven!

Heaven is mentioned over 500 times in the Bible—and 55 times in the Book of Revelation.

Heaven is a theme that dominates the Bible from cover to cover—but you'd never know it given how little we hear about heaven from pulpits today. Even when pastors do mention heaven in their preaching—it is often a passionless, stoic presentation at best.

Charles Spurgeon was addressing a group of young preachers one day—he told them *“Whenever you speak about heaven let your face light up with heavenly glory!* One student raised his hand and asked, *“What about when we preach on hell?”* Spurgeon replied, *“When you preach on hell—your normal face will do!”*

There should be no subject as dear to us or as joyful for us to talk about and share with others as the subject of heaven.

Maybe you've heard the charge leveled at Christians who like to talk a lot about heaven—*“They're so heavenly minded they're no earthly good.”*

That statement comes from the devil—actually the reverse is true—*“If you're not heavenly minded you are no earthly good (for the Kingdom of God).”*

It is biblical to have our thoughts dominated with the things of heaven—remember what Paul commanded us as believers—

Colossians 3:2 (NKJV)

² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

You see the problem today with far too many Christians here in America is that—*“They're so earthy minded they're no heavenly good!”*

Too many Christians are so wrapped up in the cares of this life with all of its pleasures and possessions that they don't really have a desire to think about heaven—let alone dedicate their life on the earth to work to build the Kingdom of Heaven by saving souls.

So, what we need to do is spend more time talking about heaven, thinking and meditating on heaven and sharing the coming joy and eternal bliss of heaven with others who see life on earth more and more as—a meaningless, empty endeavor containing little joy and having no hope for the future.

I think that God is trying to shake us up through what is going on in our country today to loosen the hold the world has on us to get us thinking more about the life to come—even as Paul admonished us:

1 Corinthians 7:29–31 (NLT)

²⁹ But let me say this, dear brothers and sisters: The time that remains is very short. So from now on, those with wives should not focus only on their marriage. ³⁰ Those who weep or who rejoice or who buy things should not be absorbed by their weeping or their joy or their possessions. ³¹ Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away.

Remember Demas, one of Paul’s ministry team members—*“Demas has forsaken me having loved this present world.”* (2 Timothy 4:10)

Far too many Christians today in this country are more concerned about their bank accounts, houses, and cars than about their spirituality and service for the Lord—I believe the Lord is using this current economic crisis to—*“pry the world out of the fingers of His people.”*

2 Corinthians 6:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Therefore *“Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.”* ¹⁸ *“I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.”*

The reason so many Christians are not longing for heaven is because—they’re having too much fun on earth! (Mention Christians in third-world countries and how they long for heaven)

Heaven is our true home, and we should long for it—

One well known pastor put it this way—

“Sadly, that is no longer true for many in today’s church. Caught up in our society’s mad rush for instant gratification, material comfort, and narcissistic indulgence, the church has become worldly. Nothing more graphically demonstrates that worldliness than the current lack of interest in heaven. The church doesn’t sing or preach much about heaven, believers seldom discuss it, songs are no longer written about it, and books about heaven are few and far between. Believers who do not have heaven on their minds trivialize their lives, hinder the power of the church, and become absorbed with the fading things of this world.”

1 John 2:15-17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

James 4:4 (NKJV)

⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

One pastor gives some of the benefits in the Christian life for those who have a longing for heaven:

- *“A genuine and strong longing for heaven has many important implications and benefits for the Christian. Such a longing is one of the surest indicators of genuine salvation, “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Luke 12:34).*

- *A genuine and strong longing for heaven also produces the highest and noblest Christian character. Those who spend much time meditating on heavenly things cannot help but have their lives transformed.*
- *A genuine and strong longing for heaven also brings joy and comfort in trials. Those who focus on heaven's glories can endure anything in this life and not lose their joy. When they suffer, they can say with Paul, "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" (2 Corinthians 4:17).*
- *A genuine and strong longing for heaven is also a preservative against sin. Those who set their minds on things above are less likely to become ensnared by earthly temptations. "For those who are living according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are living according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (Romans 8:5–6).*
- *A genuine and strong longing for heaven will also maintain the vigor of believers' spiritual service. Those who are negligent in the Lord's work and make only a token, minimal effort to serve Him, demonstrate little regard for eternal things. They foolishly think that the reward for pursuing earthly things is greater than that for pursuing heavenly things.*
- *Finally, a genuine and strong longing for heaven honors God above everything else. Those who focus on heaven focus on the Supreme One in heaven. By setting their hearts on Him, they honor the One whose heart is set on them."*

Revelation 21:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...

As we come to Revelation 21—we move from time into eternity.

Remember that the Millennial Kingdom is not eternity being that it has a beginning and an end—it is a thousand years in duration which means, because it is measured in years—it is still apart of time.

It is the final thousand years of human history.

It has to be literal because thru it God is tying up all the loose ends, fulfilling all the promises He gave to Israel (and now to us who are spiritually descendants of Abraham by faith and 'grafted in' to the promises God gave to Israel—Romans 11) of a Messiah who would come and reign over a Kingdom that would cover the earth where Satan would be defeated and mankind would regain paradise lost.

The thousand-year Millennial Kingdom will be the culmination and climax of human history—and thus still apart of time.

Revelation 20 focused on the thousand-year reign of Christ upon the earth, and so now as we move from Chapter 20 to Chapter 21—we move from time into eternity.

At this point all of human redemptive history has come to an end—the millennium is over, Satan has been judged—and the wicked have all been raised and cast into the lake of fire, which means at this point—only eternity remains (the 'only' thing we have been waiting for as believers!).

By the time we come to Revelation 21—every trace of sin along with the curse, every ounce of depravity and defilement has now been removed from God's original creation—and now God is going to make a new creation!

➤ “But why if God has removed all sin from His original creation does He want to make a new creation?”

A redeemed creation was a broken creation that God fixed—
the new creation will be one that has never or will ever be broken—
a creation that will be pure and pristine.

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth...”

This is not new in the chronological sense—but new in the qualitative sense.

The Greek word for ‘new’ is kainos—and it means something that is “brand new, fresh, never seen before.”

Some people believe that what’s in view here is that God is going *renovate* the old heavens (you’ve heard of “This Old House”—well they believe that this will be a version of that called “This Old Heaven” where God is going to enter into a giant ‘fixer-upper’ where He simply remodels the old heaven and the old earth making them look brand new. **But, God is actually not going to renovate the old—He is going to totally recreate them from scratch—even as God prophesied thru the prophet Isaiah:**

Isaiah 65:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ "For behold, I **create** new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. (Comment) ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I **create**; For behold, I **create** Jerusalem *as a* rejoicing, And her people a joy.

Please notice how that God, three times in this passage uses the word “**create**”—which is the Hebrew word ‘bara’ and means—“to bring into existence something out of nothing.”

Only God can ‘bara’—man can assemble existing materials into something beautiful and as such be ‘creative’—but we can’t create like God by bringing into existence something out of nothing.

This present *heavens* and *earth* are not some kind of gigantic ‘fixer-upper’ that God is going to rehab—He’s going to vaporize them and create something brand new—something that has never been tainted by sin:

2 Peter 3:10-13 (NKJV)

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. ¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be **dissolved**, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be **dissolved**, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

When Peter says that this “*day of the Lord judgment*” will culminate with the “*heavens passing away with a great noise*”—he has in mind the total destruction of the physical universe.

Peter uses 3 words to communicate this (3 words that are translated in the NKJV as ‘melt’, ‘dissolved’ and ‘dissolved’)—but in the Greek Peter used a single word—the Greek word “luo”—which means “to loose or untie.”

Let me explain where I’m going with this—and for that we need to go back to the creation of the physical universe:

Hebrews 1:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³ who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power...

Colossians 1:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist [the Greek—'*are held together*'].

So, Paul is telling us that not only did Jesus *create* the physical universe He is *holding* it all together—but then Peter tells us that there is coming a time when He will "let go!" (*'no longer hold it together'*—'*luo*')—let me explain.

When Paul said in Colossians 1:16, that Jesus created all things '*visible and invisible*'—that would of course include atoms which are the invisible building blocks of all matter—of all things that make up the physical universe.

And we know that atoms are made up of a nucleus that contains protons (positively charged particles) and neutrons (neutrally charged particles) and orbiting the nucleus of the atom is one or more electrons (negatively charged particles).

Now Coulomb's Law of Electricity says that like charges repel (you can prove Coulomb's Law by pushing the positive and negative ends of two magnets toward one another, positive to positive and negative to negative, and feeling them repel each other)—so like charges repel whereas opposite charges attract (negative to positive).

But here's a great mystery: In the nucleus of the atom—protons (positively charged particles) are all packed together.

Coulomb's Law says that like charges repel—so what keeps these positively-charged protons from pushing away from each other like the positive ends of 2 magnets push each other away?

In other words, what holds the protons inside the nucleus of the atom together? —Scientists don't know. Some have postulated a theory they have called "*atomic glue*"—but they really don't know what holds the atom together—however, as believers we know!

We know that, as the Bible says—it was Jesus who created all things—and it is Jesus Who is holding all things together!

Hebrews 1:3 says that He holds it all together "*by the word of His power*"—the same word of His power that brought the universe into existence—holds it together.

However, the Bible says that someday He will let go and no longer hold all the atoms in the universe together—Peter tells us what will happen:

2 Peter 3:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ ...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.

When Peter says the elements will “*melt*” he uses the Greek word ‘luo’ which means “*to be loosed*”.

When scientists invented the atomic bomb—they figured out that if they took slow moving neutrons and bombard the nucleus of an atom or atoms—they were able to upset the molecular balance so that the protons in the nucleus (containing positive charges) began to respond according to their nature and started to repel one another.

The result was that atomic fission was achieved as the atom was split releasing an incredible amount of energy—an explosion the power of which mankind had never seen before! They say that the amount of nuclear material that was used in the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima was only about the size of a dime—and look at the devastation it caused!

➤ ***How does all of this fit into what Peter is talking about?***

The physical universe is estimated to be 12 billion light years in diameter (6 trillion miles times 12 billion).

To think that someday Jesus, who is holding all the atoms in the universe together, will ‘let go’ and there will be a nuclear bomb detonated that is 12 billion light years in diameter big—is incredible to think about!

There will suddenly be a “great noise” and the physical universe will instantly be vaporized as everything will dissolve in zillion-degree “fervent heat” and cease to exist.

(The ‘Big Bang’ didn’t happen at the beginning—it happens at the end!)

Make no mistake about it—this won’t be a man-made nuclear event—it will be a divine judgment from God! — as Isaiah prophesied:

Isaiah 24:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴ The earth mourns *and* fades away, The world languishes *and* fades away; The haughty people of the earth languish. ⁵ The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws, Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant. ⁶ Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men *are* left.

So, as Jesus created all things in the physical universe and has been holding all the atoms together from that time to this “*by the word of His power.*”

But right after the Millennial Kingdom is over—the Lord Jesus Christ will stop holding the atoms together and ‘let go’ destroying the present physical creation in a divine, fiery judgment. Realize that it takes a stronger force to hold all the atoms in the universe together than the power generated when Jesus lets go and they are split apart! In other words, our God is so much more powerful than the coming nuclear explosion that will destroy this present universe.

**This applies not only to everyone here physically—but also spiritually and psychologically as well.
Jesus created you—and He is either holding your life together or it is coming apart.**

Maybe you’ve been living your life for yourself—but it’s been coming apart for some time now.

Our society is full of people whose lives, marriages, families are coming apart!

Maybe this evening you're tired of trying to hold your life together—you've seen counselors—you've tried to numb the pain with alcohol and pills—you've even tried some esoteric remedies like T.M., yoga, hypnosis or other worldly (actually demonic) pursuits and practices—but your life is still coming apart.

The only answer is Jesus Christ!

You need to turn your life over to the One who created you, the only One strong enough to hold it together and start living for the purpose for which you were created—for *His* glory and pleasure and not your own!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

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