

Series: *Heaven: Security. Beauty. Glory.*

Message Title: *The Glory of Heaven*

Date: Sunday, August 6, 2017

Scripture: Revelation 21 and 22

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Location: Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, GA

Introduction

Today marks the fifth week in our “tour” together toward greater awareness and understanding of the place called, Heaven.

With all the misguided imaginations about the eternal destination of heaven in our world, we have made an effort to look and listen to what Scripture has to say about this place and all that is promised there.

In these days, we have examined...

- The Reality of Heaven
- The Community of Heaven
- The Beauty of Heaven
- The Activity of Heaven
- *and today, The Glory of Heaven*



What is Glory?

We have all these words we assimilate into our vocabulary. Although we have a general idea of their meaning, we might struggle if asked to provide a working definition. So let me help to breakdown the meaning of the word, *glory*.

- **Glory can refer to position.**

When someone has an elevated status (athlete, artist, etc.), oftentimes glory is associated with them—something on a pedestal, piece of art, etc.

- **Glory can refer to value.**

When something is of great value, riches bring glory. Example: Crown Jewels at the Tower of London; Hope Diamond, Smithsonian.

- **Glory can refer to appearance.**

Glory is sometimes the only word that can describe the beauty, radiance and wonder of

what is being seen. Example: sunrise, sunset, birth, procession of a bride at a wedding, etc.

- **Glory can refer to action or activity.**

It is the action of giving glory = worship by ascribing honor and glory.

Many passages give example of this:

- > Psalm 8:1; 19:1; 24:7-8; 96:3, 8
- > Luke 2:9,14 (activity of angels)
- > Timothy 1:17
- > Jude 24

Our eternal activity will involve giving glory to God. "Heaven will be an eternal echo of the glory of God."

As we discuss the word, *glory*, it is important to note that this word—common in the pages of Scripture—is repeatedly declared in relationship to God and is used to describe the believer's state in heaven with God in His glory.

In the final chapters of Scripture, we discover ultimate eternal realities:

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I 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 the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’ ... Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, ‘Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.’ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal... And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb... No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His

servants will worship Him. They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever” (Revelation 21:1-4, 9-11, 22; 22:3-5 ESV).

What does the glory of Heaven mean? What makes Heaven glorious?

Having discussed and described the term, *glory*, let’s proceed to see how the Bible describes the glory of Heaven and what is involved in this glorious place called, Heaven.

- **The glory of Heaven means release and removal from sorrow, suffering and sin.**

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4 ESV).

Everything in this list compiles the totality of human iniquity and injury—tears, death, mourning, crying, pain. It’s all listed here!

Isn't it amazing how just a few words can capture the whole of human sin, sorrow and suffering? —injury, adversity, tragedy.

...“probably because no language could adequately depict the bliss of heaven that is described, for the most part, in negative terms; we are told what it is not, and what is not there.” —William Graham Scroggie

“I still can hardly believe it. I, with shriveled, bent fingers, atrophied muscles, gnarled knees, and no feeling from the shoulders down, will one day have a new body, light, bright, and clothed in righteousness-powerful and dazzling... Can you imagine the hope this gives someone spinal cord-injured like me? Or someone who is cerebral palsied, brain-injured, or who has multiple sclerosis? Imagine the hope this gives someone who is manic depressive. No other religion, no other philosophy promises new bodies, hearts, and minds. Only in the gospel of Christ do hurting people find such incredible hope.” —Joni Erickson Tada

This is why Jesus taught us to pray and to think from the heaven-to-earth model, not

the earth-to-heaven mindset that often prevails today.

It is in heaven that we will finally see and understand the fullness of the work of Christ for us.

“But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5 ESV).

Look at Jesus’ prayer at the end of His life and ministry:

“And now, Father, glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed... The glory that You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are one... O righteous Father, even though the world does not know You, I know You, and these know that You have sent Me” (John 17:5, 22, 25 ESV).

We are bound for glory and it is all because of His amazing grace and love acting on our

behalf. Yet of all that is to come, “death shall be no more” (1 Corinthians 15:24-26).

Can you think of anything more glorious than being removed from all of this? —especially death!

“Soon you will read in the newspaper that I am dead. Don’t believe it for a moment. I will be more alive than ever before.” —Dwight L. Moody

- **The glory of Heaven means revelation and reward.**

In heaven, God will disclose both motive and merit.

There will be a day when you stand before God. Things hidden will be made known—the character and quality of things never seen and known by others. What has been overlooked on earth? Look at the widow’s mite in Luke 21. Things like this will be revealed as well as those things that have been done in pride, arrogance and through hypocrisy.

Some people see rewards as a bad motivation for Christian service. However, rewards are a part of the biblical record and promised for those who live and serve Christ. For example, I am not into bribing children, but I want to give them motivation to do good.

We cannot escape the significance of an accounting before God.

“So then each of us will give an account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12 ESV).

“Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire” (1 Corinthians 3:12-15 ESV).

“Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes,

who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God" (1 Corinthians 4:5 ESV).

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Corinthians 5:10 ESV).

We stumble over good or bad, but the difference is this: enduring vs. worthless. Think about the Macy's Parade. It stops in front of stands for review and broadcast. It is the same with troops and athletes—this is not judgment.

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. From His presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them" (Revelation 20:11 ESV).

Clarification: As a Christian, you will not stand before God to account for your sins, but you will stand to account for your service. In Christ, your sins are covered today and forever.

“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1-2 ESV).

... “but He holds His priesthood permanently, because He continues forever. Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:24-25 ESV).

“For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf” (Hebrews 9:24 ESV).

Christ is our access and our sustained means of acceptance in Heaven.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship,

created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10 ESV).

The problem for many is that they are so consumed with wanting faith to comfort their lives here, they fail to embrace the hope of something far better!

The Bible speaks about rewards:

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12 ESV).

“For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward” (Mark 9:41 ESV).

“And He said to them, ‘Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life” (Luke 18:29-30 ESV).

“For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for His name in serving the saints, as you still do” (Hebrews 6:10 ESV).

“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing My recompense with Me, to repay each one for what he has done” (Revelation 22:12 ESV).

Jesus talked about rewards in the kingdom of God. Don't get more pious and spiritual than Jesus in thinking that rewards should not be a motivation. As we study the New Testament, we find a list of crowns:

Crown of Righteousness 2 Timothy 4:7-8—
saints and martyrs

Crown of Victory 1 Corinthians 9:24-27—
persevere in discipline/purity

Crown of Life James 1:12—remain faithful
under trials

Crown of Rejoicing 1 Thessalonians 2:19-
20—intro others to Christ

Crown of Glory 1 Peter 5:4—faithful
oversight and care

—David Jeremiah, *Heaven's Oscars*

- **The glory of Heaven means recognition and reunion.**

A few days ago I was returning to the Augusta area, glad to be home and eager to make my way beyond security and to the car to head home. Just ahead of me was a man with a backpack. As he neared the end of the secure area, I heard the voices of several children squealing with excitement to see their daddy—a soldier was coming home. They had been looking, straining and waiting to see his face.

I remember how many times in the past I waited to see the faces of loved ones—parents, Dad’s last trip to Augusta and his departure. There is nothing like facial recognition!

“They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever” (Revelation 22:4-5 ESV).

The throne is the focal point of God’s presence in Heaven. Yet, we will not see

a chair, but the very countenance of God. Remember Moses in the Old Testament? He could not see the face of God on earth and live!

“The text says, ‘they shall see His face,’ by which I understand two things. First, that they shall literally and physically, with their risen bodies, actually look into the face of Jesus. Second, that spiritually their mental faculties shall be enlarged so that they shall be enabled to look into the very heart and soul of the character of Christ, so as to understand Him, His work, His love, His all in all, as they never understood Him before...In Heaven, though divine, He is still a man, and therefore material like ourselves. The very flesh and blood that suffered on Calvary is in Heaven. The hand that was pierced with the nail now at the moment grasps the scepter of all the worlds. That very head which was bowed down with anguish is now crowned with a royal crown. And the face that was so marred is the very face which beams brilliantly amid the throne of Heaven. Into that selfsame face we shall be permitted to gaze—Oh what a sight!” —Charles H. Spurgeon, *We Shall See God*

The glory of heaven is Christ! There is no heaven without Jesus and all of Heaven is filled with the presence, power and glory of the risen Christ!

Grace is needed to see and share the glory of Christ.

... "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23 ESV).

Sin has stained our souls and we cannot remove it.

... "but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life" (Romans 5:8-10 ESV).

Christ has provided for my sin and your sin, and we cannot improve it.

We are saved—given the hope of glory all because of grace, saving grace—but all of this is in Christ

“But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Revelation 21:27 ESV).

The book of Revelation ends with an invitation—a call to earthly action and response to the heavenly promise through Christ:

“The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price” (Revelation 22:17 ESV).

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.*

*When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.*

*His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.*

*When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found;
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.*

(Refrain)

*On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.*

—Edward Mote, *The Solid Rock*