Four Things You Must Know About Heaven

Revelation 22:1-5

In Revelation 22:1-5 we read:

1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: 4 and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.
5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

The central feature in heaven will be the throne of God. John saw a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Again, in verse three he calls special attention to the "throne of God and of the Lamb." In Revelation chapter four the apostle John gives more details about the throne of God and the activity that takes place in the immediate vicinity of the throne. Know this today: God is on his throne and he is worthy to receive glory and honor from all of creation. And all those who know him are destined to reign with him forever and ever!

In the remainder of this message, I want to call special attention to four things you need to know about God's heaven: heaven is the home of the redeemed; heaven is a place of reunion; heaven is a place without death; and heaven is our promise land.

While heaven is the home of God's throne it is also the home of all of God's redeemed. In 2 Cor. 5:5-8 we read:

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

With these words the Holy Spirit clearly teaches when a believer dies, he is immediately present, or home with the Lord. While we are living this side of eternity, we are said to be "home in the body." But at the moment of physical death the believer is then "home with the Lord."

My friend Heaven is the home of believers. Currently, as we travel through life, we are like foreigners in an alien land. We are not home. Furthermore, we are like pilgrims who are traveling toward their homeland. One day we will be home with the Lord.

Of course, home is always associated with family. We give God thanks for our families and for a place to call home. Likewise, we give God thanks for adopting us into his family and giving us a place at his table, a place we call heaven—our eternal home.

If you are trusting Christ as your Savior, you are a part of the family of God. It has pleased God the Father to save you by his grace and to call you his son. We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Our earthly homes are not always a good reflection of God's family, but with that said the following things come to my mind as I reflect upon the meaning of home and family. When I think of home I think of unconditional love . . . forgiveness . . . acceptance . . . and no fear of rejection.

What we are learning in measure now about our salvation, when we are at home with the Lord we will grasp fully. We will live with the conscious awareness of God's unconditional love, his forgiveness in Christ, our full acceptance in his sight, and we will live with no fear of rejection. Home! How glorious the thought! Home with the Lord! Fully accepted and living a quality of life we can only taste in part while here in this world. The Word of God says, *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ . . . That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."* This is the future of all who come home to Christ and find their place in his family.

Next, let me remind you that heaven is a place of reunion. There is not a sweeter picture of reunion in the Bible than that of Jacob and Joseph in the Old Testament. You will recall that the Scripture says Jacob loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors (Gen. 37:3).

You may also recall that as a teenage boy Joseph had two different dreams that suggested a time would come when his brothers and even his father would bow down to him. His father was careful to take note of those dreams, but his brothers were outraged and could not speak peaceably with him.

One day at the word of his father Joseph travelled to check on his brothers who were some distance from home tending their flocks. Finally, as Joseph located their camp and approached from afar his brothers saw him coming dressed in the coat of many colors. And they said to one another, "Behold, this dreamer comes. Let us slay him and cast him into some pit, and we will say some evil beast has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

No doubt they would have done just that except Reuben talked them out of it! So, instead of killing Joseph, they mistreated him and stripped him of the coat of many colors. Then they cast him into a pit. After a short time while they were eating, a caravan of Ishmeelites came by on their way to Egypt. So, Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave. They did not care if they ever saw him again. And not only that, but they had no thought of their father and how it would grieve his heart to lose his boy.

After selling him into slavery they killed a young goat and took the coat of many colors and dipped it into the blood of the goat insinuating that a wild beast killed Joseph. They told that lie to their father and proceeded to watch their father grieve over the loss of a son who was not dead at all! How despicable!

Jacob never really got over the supposed death of his beloved son. Then over a decade later, as the family dealt with the hardship of a far-reaching famine that gripped Egypt and the surrounding countries, these same brothers travelled to Egypt to secure food for the family. You know the history. While there, in time Joseph was revealed to his brothers.

The brothers travelled back home and told Jacob saying, "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." The Bible says upon hearing that news, "Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die."

When Jacob arrived in Egypt his son Joseph was waiting on him! The Bible says, "And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father . . . and presented himself unto him; and fell upon his neck and wept on his neck a good while." My, what a reunion that was!

May I remind everyone of you, we have a future reunion day coming when we too will again embrace our long departed loved ones! We know what it is to stand at a grave site and look with love upon the name of a departed father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or husband, or wife, or other family member with longing to see them again. May I encourage you today? Let the Word of God revive your spirit with a fresh sense of hope and anticipation!

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words!"

Jacob said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him." Yes, and I'm telling you that your loved ones who have died in Christ are yet alive! And one glorious day we will go to see them all! Does anybody understand what I'm preaching?

Thank God, heaven is a place of reunion.

Let me move on to the next thing you must know about heaven. Heaven is a place where death cannot enter. The Bible says, *"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."* Praise God, death and corruption can never enter heaven!

The Scripture declares in 1 Corinthians 15:20-26:

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.
21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.
24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Again we read in verses 51-54 of this chapter:

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

My friend, in the new creation death will be swallowed up in victory!

And now I conclude with one final thought about heaven. Heaven is our promise land. Do you remember how at the end of his life God took Moses up to the top of Mount Pisgah? From that vantage point Moses could look over into the promise land. He saw a land flowing with milk and honey. It was to be the place of Israel's inheritance.

The land of promise has always been a picture of heaven. One day we too will settle down into our inheritance. The apostle Peter says, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the*

dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

God has promised us a land if you please. An inheritance that one day we will settle down in! Our Lord Jesus said definitively in John 14:1-3:

1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

What a glorious land the Lord is preparing for his people! It is promised to all who trust him as Lord and Savior.

Heaven is the home of the redeemed; heaven is a place of reunion; heaven is a place without death; and heaven is our promise land. But are you going there?

It is the will of God that you spend eternity in heaven, but you have a choice to make. You must repent and confess Christ if you would enter God's heaven. How sad to think you would miss heaven and the eternal joys of the home Christ is preparing for all who love him.

But you do not have to miss heaven. The Word of God promises that all who call upon the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13)! Pray this prayer and mean it from your heart:

Dear Lord Jesus, I understand I am lost in my sin. But I understand you died to pay for all my sin. I accept your death on the cross and your resurrection from the dead for my salvation. Right now I trust you fully as my hope of heaven. Please come into my heart, forgive my sin, and save me Lord Jesus. I now receive your gift of

eternal life. Thank you for loving me and saving me. Teach me your will as I learn to follow you. I love you Lord Jesus and I thank you for saving me. Amen.

If you prayed this prayer, please share your decision with me. I would count it a privilege to send you some free literature to help you grow strong in your faith. Praise the Lord for His faithfulness. He cannot lie. If you just called upon His name you are saved! Heaven will be your home if death were to claim you today. Rejoice in the Lord Jesus and give Him thanks!