



IMAGINE HEAVEN

Beauty in Heaven

Saturday, 10/3/20 at 4:00 | Sunday, 10/4/20 at 9:00

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: The topic today is beauty; what can be said?

- We see beauty on earth – *as we look at what God has created!*
- We understand that beauty is in the eye of the beholder – *with each person having a different opinion about what is beautiful!*
- Knowing that even the most beautiful things on earth are corrupted by sin, *let us be certain that there is MUCH GREAT BEAUTY in heaven!*

As we focus today on beauty, *especially the beauty in heaven*, let us **grow** in our understanding, **be** excited about going to heaven, and **invite** others to join us there – *as we journey through this life on earth!*

For anyone who has not yet **read** or **heard** the 9/13 sermon, *please do so A.S.A.P.* – since that sermon is the basis for this sermon series!

Listen: [click here](#); **Read:** [click here](#)

1. **Describing the Indescribable:** Years ago we took a cruise to the southern Caribbean; *here is a picture I took of the island of Antigua...*



It's a beautiful picture, **but it's only 2-dimensional**, so you cannot ✎ experience the depth **or** ✎ see the details **or** ✎ feel the warm air **or** ✎ inhale the tropical smells.

- a. For people who have had an NDE (near-death experience: *that means they were clinically dead, and then were resuscitated*) and saw the beauty in heaven, they have a hard time describing their experience to us. Why? Because the best we can formulate in our mind is a 2-dimensional picture, in comparison to their **amazing 3-D sight and sound and smell and touch experience!!!!**
- b. Right now, let's hear from two such people now: Rev. Don Piper – *who was in a horrible car accident and was pronounced dead for 90 minutes*, and Dr. Mary Neal – *who was dead for 30 minutes in connection with a kayaking accident*; let's hear them talk about the beauty in heaven (**Video clip 1: 00:6 – 1:52**).

2. **Beauty in the Bible:** The term “beauty” occurs 36 times in the NAU version of the Bible [*the 1995 version of the NAS*]. Some of the **positive** uses include the following: ☞The garments to be worn by Aaron, *the first high priest*, were for the purpose of **beauty** (Ex. 28:2); ☞David referred to King Saul as the **beauty** of Israel, *because he was the LORD’s anointed* (2 Sam. 1); ☞Queen Vashti was called upon to display her **beauty** to the people, because she was beautiful (Est. 1:11); and ☞David desired to see the **beauty** of the LORD (Ps. 27:4). On the **negative** side: ☞Solomon warns about desiring the **beauty** of an adulteress (Prov. 6:24-25) and ☞the adulteress is warned about trusting in her **beauty** (Ez. 16:15), *thus not in the LORD*.
3. **Earth Used to be Like Heaven:** Remember, God created a perfect world; however, when the people sinned, *God corrupted His perfect creation*.
- Some of what God created: ^{NAU} **Genesis 2:8-11, 15** The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food... / ...a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden... / Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.
 - The corrupted creation is longing for restoration: ^{NAU} **Romans 8:19-22** ...the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God [*which will take place when Jesus returns*].

For the creation was subjected to futility [uselessness], not willingly, but because of Him [God] who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. // As we should want to leave this sinful world for the perfection and beauty in heaven, *so creation itself is looking forward to being restored to perfection when Jesus' returns!* Did you notice in the text HOW MUCH creation is longing for Jesus' return? *As much as a woman having labor pains desires to have her baby!*

4. Bible Descriptions of Heaven:

- a. The new heaven and the new earth: Right now, heaven is **SINLESS BEAUTY**, while earth is **SINFUL UGLY**. However, *after Jesus' return*, then everything on earth will be purified from sin – *that means everything will be drastically remodeled and made new!* The apostle John, *who was given a glimpse of the new Jerusalem*, wrote this description about its shape, size, wall, gates, street, river, and tree: ^{NAU} **Revelation 21:16-19, 21; 22:1-2** The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he [the angel] measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles [literally 12,000 stadia – 12x10x10x10]; its length and width and height are equal [the shape is a perfect cube. Why that shape? It's the same as *“the holy of holies in the tabernacle and,*

later, in Solomon's temple.... The heavenly Jerusalem is thus the new holy of holies in which God will dwell with his own forever" (Becker, 337)]. And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards [literally 144 cubits – 12x12], according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone.... And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. [And] he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Between its street and the river, there was a tree of life [visible] from this side and from that (Dr. Becker), bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit every month...

- b. Animals and children: These words tell us more about the new heaven and the new earth: ^{NAU}
Isaiah 11:6-9 ...the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain... // *Won't all of those things be so wonderful!*

5. **Let Us Look Forward to What Is Coming:** Hebrews chapter 11 is *the great chapter of faith!* It begins with the definition of faith; then it mentions key people – like Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah – *who had faith AND lived by their faith!* Then the Bible says:
^{NAU} **Hebrews 11:13-14, 16** All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.... that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them. // *The city is the one described in Revelation chapters 21 and 22 – as noted above!*
6. **Brad's NDE Experience:** “Brad Barrows... had been blind since birth [*he had never seen anything*] and had an NDE at age eight.... Brad lived at the Boston Center for Blind Children when severe pneumonia caused his heart to stop for four minutes. [This is part of what Brad said about his experience:] ...coming out into [a] large field, the closest I could tell you about color was that the brightness and brilliance of that whole area was absolutely indescribable.... It's possible that I could have, but I had no vocabulary to describe it.... When I noticed I was walking up this field, it seemed as if I was so exhilarated and so unbelievably renewed that I didn't want to leave.... It was so unbelievably peaceful that there [is] no way that I could describe the peace

and the tranquility and the calm. [The] weather was absolutely perfect...”¹

Conclusion: Have you ever thought about the beauty of heaven, and then drawn a blank? That is common, *but not logical!* Think about this:

- The fallen world in which we live has much beauty; therefore, it’s only natural that heaven has MUCH MORE BEAUTY!
- Why? Heaven is ♣a bit like earth, *but no sin!* And heaven is the dwelling place of ♣God, ♣the holy angels, and ♣the saints – *those who were made holy by grace through faith in Jesus!*
- Therefore, heaven will be familiar to us in many ways, and yet SOOOOOOOOOOOO MUCH BETTER!

Since heaven is certainly the place we want to be, let us continue to ☹be sorry for our sins and ☹trust in Jesus as our all-sufficient ticket to heaven! Then, *as we are living in Christ*, let us reach out to others with God’s saving truth!

Let Us Pray: Dear Father in heaven, we thank You for the beauty in this fallen world, *but especially for the far greater beauty in heaven!* Help us to ♣long for it, ♣live for it, and ♣invite others to join us in heaven through Jesus!

Book Reminder: Imagine Heaven is available in the Narthex; to cover the cost, please put an extra \$10 in the offering plate. Thanks!

CONNECT WITH US → Website: www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com

Podcast: Benefit from the Bible | Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230

¹ John Burke, *Imagine Heaven* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015), 109-112. For much more info, see pages 116-117 of *Imagine Heaven*.