

IMAGINE HEAVEN

The Highlight of Heaven

Saturday, 10/10/20 at 4:00 | Sunday, 10/11/20 at 9:00

Introduction: Dear believers in Christ: So far in this series we have learned many things about heaven; for example:

- God sees us from heaven ([Psalm 33:13](#))!
- People who die in Jesus are gathered to their own people in heaven ([Genesis 28:8](#); [2 Chronicles 34:28](#))!
- Some details about the New Jerusalem: ♦shape, ♦size, ♦gates, ♦street, ♦river, and ♦tree ([Revelation 21-22](#))!
- Those in heaven now ♦are at peace and ♦are very richly blessed ([Isaiah 57](#); [Revelation 7](#))!

Our focus today is on JESUS, *who is the Highlight of Heaven!* As we focus on JESUS, let us remember ☞who He is, ☞how much He loves us, ☞what He has done for us, and ☞how much He desires an eternal relationship with us!

The passages in this sermon are basically laid out in chronological order...

1. **The Son of God – Before Creation:** ^{NAU} [John 1:1](#) **In the beginning [right before creation, compare [Genesis 1:1](#)] was the Word [God the Son], and the Word was with God**

[God the Father], and the Word was God. // God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are from eternity, from before the creation of the world!

2. **Isaiah's Prophecy of Jesus – Around 700 BC:** Let us marvel at what God planned for Jesus, His Son – *because of His immeasurable love for us!* These words, *written around 700 BC*, point ahead to the †life, †suffering, and †death of Jesus: ^{NAU} **Isaiah 53:2-8:**
- a. Unexpected and ordinary: **...He [Jesus] grew up before Him [God the Father] like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground [He unexpectedly came forth, pointing ahead to His virgin birth]; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him [pointing ahead to the Messiah being an ordinary looking man].**
 - b. Disliked and rejected: **He was despised [disliked very much by some] and forsaken of men [abandoned (John 6:66)], A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face [pointing ahead to the difficulty of some to look at Jesus on His cross] He was despised, and we did not esteem Him [honor Him].**
 - c. Confusion about Jesus' Suffering: **Surely our griefs [illnesses] He Himself bore, And our sorrows [troubles, burdens] He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken [wounded], Smitten [struck hard] of God, and afflicted [distressed with pain].**

- d. **The Reason for Jesus' Suffering: ...He was pierced through [nailed to His cross] for our transgressions, He was crushed [punished] for our iniquities [wickedness]; The chastening [humbling] for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging [great suffering] we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray [into sin, rebellion, trespass, wickedness], Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. // God the Father – by the Holy Spirit, through Isaiah – told us what would happen; then Jesus perfectly followed the Father's will to remove all sins and open heaven!**
3. **The Son of God Put on Flesh:** ^{NAU} **John 1:14 And the Word [the Son of God] became flesh [when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary], and dwelt among us [from the day He was born], and we saw His glory [when He was transfigured], glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. // Just as promised in the Garden of Eden, so – in the fullness of time – the Descendant of Eve came into the world!**
4. **Jesus' Transfiguration in Matthew 17:** ^{NAU} **Matthew 17:1-2 ...Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them [that is, His outward appearance radically changed]; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. // Many things pointed to Jesus being the Messiah – as He fulfilled over 300 OT prophecies written about the Messiah! However, His**

transfiguration is the only time when Jesus showed His glory; in heaven, *WE will finally see His glory!* In the book, *Imagine Heaven*,¹ *you can read what others saw!*

5. **The Necessity for Flesh and Blood:** ^{NAU} **Hebrews 2:14-15** ...since the children [*the people of the world*] **share in flesh and blood, He Himself** [*that is, the Son of God*] **likewise also partook of the same** [*flesh and blood*], **that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.** // Since Jesus has now won the victory over sin and death, *we – by grace through faith in Jesus – need not fear dying nor being condemned. Do YOU have sins? Are YOU afraid of meeting Jesus face-to-face? Many have said, “Yes,” yet they were so amazed by two things: (1) Jesus knows everything about me and, *at the same time*, (2) Jesus unconditionally loves me! A Bible example is the woman caught in adultery (**John 8:1-11**); she deserved condemnation, *yet Jesus loved her and forgave her!* See the book, *Imagine Heaven*, for other examples!*

6. **Daniel’s Vision of Jesus’ Ascension into Heaven:** God can do anything; therefore, *God enabled Daniel to see this vision about 600 years before it actually happened!* This is the heavenly perspective of ♦the Son of God returning to heaven and ♦the Son of Man – *Jesus* – being welcomed into heaven! ^{NAU} **Daniel 7:13-14** “**I [Daniel] kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man** [*Jesus,*

¹ John Burke, *Imagine Heaven* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015), chapter 13.

the victorious Son of God] **was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days [God the Father] And was presented before Him. And to Him [to Jesus] was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every language* Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.**

HYMN: *Crown Him with Many Crowns*

See the words below / TLH 341 / LSB 525

- 1 Crown Him with many crowns, The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark how the heav'nly anthem drowns, All music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing, Of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless king, Through all eternity.
7. **Daniel's More Detailed Vision of Jesus in Heaven:** ^{NAU}
Daniel 10:5-6 I [Daniel] **lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz [a region where gold is found]. His body also was like beryl [a gemstone], his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult [the voices of many people]. // As I read the next description, notice how it is nearly identical to what I just read.**
8. **John's Vision of Jesus in Revelation 1:** ^{NAU} **Revelation 1:10-18** I [John] **was in the Spirit on the Lord's day [Sunday, the day of the week Jesus was raised and people gathered to worship], and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches..."**
Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with

me.... *I saw one like a son of man* [like a man, but the God-Man, the One who is both the Son of God and Son of Mary],

What Does Jesus Look Like?

Hair & head white like wool (v16)

Face shining like the sun (v16)
& eyes like a flame of fire (v14)

Sword coming from His mouth (v16)

Jesus holds the seven stars (v16)

Golden sash around His chest (v13)

Clothed down to His feet (v13)

Feet like burning brass (v15)

(Description taken from Revelation 1:13-16)

- a. clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and
- b. girded [encircled] across His chest with a golden sash.
- c. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and
- d. His eyes were like a flame of fire.
- e. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and
- f. His voice was like the sound of many waters.
- g. In His right hand He held seven stars, and
- h. out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and
- i. His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living

One [the source of eternal life]; and I was **dead** [on Good Friday], and behold, I am **alive forevermore** [since the first Easter Sunday], and I have **the keys of death and of Hades** [the power to release people from their graves and punishment]. // **Why are the descriptions of Daniel and John basically the same?** Because that is what Jesus looks like in heaven! See the book, "Imagine Heaven," chapter 13, for more descriptions of Jesus in heaven!

9. **John's Vision of Jesus in Revelation 21:** Regarding the holy city, John wrote:



^{NAU} **Revelation 21:22-27** I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and **the Lamb** [Jesus] are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and **its lamp is the Lamb**. The nations will walk by its light, and **the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it** [because salvation is available to all, from the least to the greatest]. **In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed** [no sunrise, no sunset, no light from the sun; God and the Lamb provide continuous light]; and they will bring the glory and the

honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it [thus none who are without sorrow and faith], **but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life** [those who have received God-given faith and, by God's work and power, continued in Christ to the end].

Conclusion: Think about the Son of God:

- He is the Son of God from eternity (before creation)!
- Many prophecies were written about the Son of God coming into the world to remove our sins!
- At the appointed time He came, put on flesh, and was given the name JESUS!
- He proved He is the Promised Messiah!
- He completed His saving work!
- He ascended into heaven!
- His heavenly glory has been seen by Daniel, Peter, James, John, and others!
- We, *through faith in Jesus*, ♣are forgiven, ♣will see Him in His awesome glory, and ♣dwell with Him forever!

Let Us Pray: Dear Jesus, as You promised, *so You are with us now*; however, **seeing You and being with You in heaven will be SO MUCH BETTER!** Therefore, *regarding heaven*, help us to ♣long for it, ♣live for it, and ♣invite others to join us there through You!

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

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