

Heaven

by Anton Bosch

Heaven is not about material things or personal glory, but about being in the presence of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Philippians 1:21, Colossians 1:18, Revelation 3:20, Revelation 21:1

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Jesus Christ"

Description

Anton Bosch emphasizes that many people, including Christians, have misconceptions about heaven, often focusing on creating a heavenly experience on earth or materialistic rewards in heaven. However, the true essence of heaven lies in being in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ for eternity. Bosch highlights the importance of centering our lives, church activities, and aspirations around Jesus, rather than secondary aspects like comfort, possessions, or personal vindication. He challenges believers to examine their hearts and motivations, emphasizing that heaven is only for those whose lives revolve completely around Jesus.

Transcript

Most people, whether Christians or not, have some ideas about a future life that could be called heaven. Many of those ideas are misguided or plain wrong and sadly, even reasonably well taught Christians may have wrong ideas of what heaven is all about.

In a recent Time magazine article, the author said that many Christians are beginning to understand that heaven really is about making this earth a better place. I think he is right - that is what many people believe. But they are wrong. We cannot make this earth into heaven. Unfortunately, that is the agenda of much of the church today. They believe that the purpose of the church is to create heaven on earth and they work very hard to change the various structures of this world.

This world is simply too corrupt, sinful and contaminated to ever become heaven. People who are trying to save the planet and change governments to create God's Kingdom on this earth are wasting their time. Yes, one day Heaven will be back on this earth, but in order for that to happen, God will completely destroy the present heavens (sky) and earth (Revelation 21:1, 2Peter 3:10-13). In fact, the process by which He will do that can be described as "uncreating" - He will reverse the whole process of creation and the present creation will cease to exist. He will then create a "New heavens and a new earth" and then the New Jerusalem will descend out of heaven and be located back on the New Earth (Revelation 21:3, 10).

So what will heaven be like? Modern gospel songs do not sing about heaven because their writers are looking for heaven in this creation. But if I have to believe the old gospel songs, then heaven will be about streets of gold, a mansion over the hilltop, crowns and an eternity of comfort. That is actually how most Christians see heaven and of course those ideas are actually based on the Scriptures.

But there is one problem. All these ideas about heaven miss the most important part of heaven - The Lord Jesus Christ!

We have missed the point regarding the purpose of the church. We believe church is about worship, preaching, fellowship, evangelization, meetings and so on. Most churches have forgotten that all those things we do every week is secondary and that it should really all be about Jesus Christ. Paul put it this way: "And He is the head of the body, the church... that in all things He may have the preeminence." (Colossians 1:18). Thus church has become a whole bunch of activities and Jesus finds Himself outside His own church (Revelation 3:20).

In the same way we have created a Heaven in which Jesus is simply a curiosity. Just like when you go to Paris, you have to see the Eiffel Tower and when we go to heaven, we will get to see Jesus. But we are really more interested in the big mansion and wonder if we will have air conditioning, a big screen TV in the living room and a barbeque in the back yard. We wonder if our crown will be bigger than our neighbor's and if my mansion will be the grandest on the block.

Because of our materialistic worldview we have turned heaven into a place of things, houses and streets. Because of our sinful pride we have re-created heaven into a place where I will be the big deal, with the big crown and mansion and where I will eventually be vindicated.

Heaven is not about you or me, or even about Paul or Peter - it is about Jesus. He is the center, the focus and the purpose. We will spend eternity simply being in His presence and worshipping and serving Him. And here's the problem. For the majority of Christians that is not very exciting. If God told us that heaven would be a squatter camp but Jesus would be there, would you still want to go? If Jesus is what your life is about you would agree with the hymn writer:

Oh, hallelujah, yes, 'tis Heav'n,

'Tis Heav'n to know my sins forgiv'n;

On land or sea, what matters where?--

Where Jesus is, 'tis Heaven there.

The same Christians who say they long for heaven complain when the service goes five minutes too long or the pews are too hard. Friend, if you find an extra five minutes in the Lord's presence a challenge or if you cannot sit through a one hour service without checking your cell phone, I have news for you. Heaven will be a long hell for you!

Do you find that shocking? Well, it is supposed to be because it's the truth. If you cannot wait to get out of the prayer meeting or don't even bother to go to the prayer meeting, or wonder why the hymn could not have a few less verses, I seriously doubt that you will enjoy heaven. If you find reading the Bible or attending the Bible study boring, you will be very uncomfortable in heaven.

If Jesus is not the real center of your life - I mean that everything you do and think, revolves around Him, then heaven really has nothing to offer you. Heaven is not about streets, mansions and crowns. It is about simply being in the presence of Jesus for ever and ever. If you find that idea scary, I am concerned that you will be disappointed with heaven. Actually, you won't even see heaven because heaven is only for those who love Him with all their hearts and whose lives revolve totally around Him.

Be honest now: Are you looking forward to heaven because you are tired of this life or because of the secondary attractions of heaven, or is it simply that you want more of Him? If your answer is anything except you want to see Him face to face and be in his presence forever, then you need to check your birth certificate.

If, on the other hand, you enjoy this life so much that you hope Jesus will not come too soon, you also have a serious problem. You are probably not fit for heaven either.

Paul said: "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain... having a desire to depart and be with Christ... is far better." (Philippians 1:21, 23). His highest goal was simply to "be with Christ". That is heaven!

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