

(Hebrews - Part 20): The Majesty in the Heavens

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing the throne of God and the majesty in the heavens, and how this understanding is fundamental to human morality and decency.

Duration: 33:41

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 14:6, Acts 2:1-4, Hebrews 8:1-2, Hebrews 8:5-6

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing and acknowledging God's existence. He argues that without God, our lives become meaningless and our longings for something greater become unfounded. The speaker references the book of Ecclesiastes, stating that the whole duty of man is to hear God and keep His commandments. He also shares a personal anecdote about moving houses to illustrate how Christians often settle for a limited perspective of God, instead of fully embracing their identity in Christ.

Transcript

Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum, that we have such a high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord fits, and not man. Now, I like these passages where the Bible writer sums it up for us, so that if we haven't understood what he meant before, we will now. He said, Now I sum it up, and this is the sum, that we have such a high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.

And I want to talk from that verse a little, and we'll begin with the majesty in the heavens. A year ago now, I spent, I think it was 13 or 14 evenings, trying to focus attention upon God himself, showing what kind of God he was and is, for all that he was, he is, and all that he is and was, he will ever be. And I can do little more now than to say that this is fundamental to our Christian faith, that we see that God is in the heavens, the majesty in the heavens.

This is fundamental to human sanity. If you rule God out of your thinking and out of the universe, then we are simply curious and wonderful relics of what nobody knows. You rule God out of your thinking and out of his universe, and we simply have deep longings for what is not and has never been.

And we have heard a universal tradition of an origin that never existed. So if we're going to keep sane at all, most people manage to keep sane by not thinking about it. But if you think about it, you'll find that if you're going to keep your mind restful at all, you've got to think God into his world and allow him to be in his world and allow him to be in your mind what he is in his world.

And this idea that God exists and that he is the sovereign majesty in the heavens is fundamental to human morality. All that is yet moral in human beings, and there is a good deal that is yet moral in human beings, from human standpoint, there is nothing morally right that God can approve, but there is much morally right that men can approve, that the police can approve, and the authorities, much that we can approve in our neighbors, honesty and courtesy and neighborliness and friendliness. And all that is yet left, that is, that we can approve in human life, came from and comes from a belief in God.

You know the old expression, noblesse oblige, that if you are noble, then you should act nobly? I believe that the belief that we are from God gives to us a certain upward moral thrust that we couldn't possibly have if we didn't believe it. A belief that we must go back again to God and report to God for the deeds done in the body is a strong power, a hoop to hold our soul together, a light on our way. Now we sing a song, a charge to keep I have a God to glorify, a never dying soul to save and fit it for the sky.

And back in the book of Ecclesiastes it says, Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

Now I tell you, there's a lot of difference between the man who's convinced that this is true and the man who doubts it or doesn't believe it at all. For if we believe that we must fear God and that this is our whole duty and that God shall bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or evil, then there's going to be a difference in us. So I say human morality rests upon this belief that there is a majesty in the heavens.

I believe also that it's fundamentally human decency. Decency, you know, is that which is proper or becoming. And human decency depends upon an adequate conception of God, a conception of human nature.

And if we believe that there is no God, then we can't possibly have a right view of human nature. No adequate view of human nature is possible until I believe that I came from God and that I shall go back to God again. So we have faith in God.

This is the rock on which we build. I rise today, said the old saint, to a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity. Through belief in the threeness, through a confession of the oneness of the Creator of creation.

It was old Saint Patrick himself who prayed that prayer every day. And I believe in this. I believe that when we rise in the morning it ought to be in a mighty strength, a belief in the Creator, in the belief in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

Now that's the one thing it says, the majesty in the heavens. And then it says the throne of the majesty. Now the Bible teaches that creation is a universe.

That is, it teaches that all that we see around about us, from the farthest star that might be picked out by the most powerful telescope, down to the tiniest cell that must be seen through a microscope, and all things living and inorganic that make up what we call the world. The Bible teaches that this is a universe. That is, that it is one vast single system embracing matter and spirit and life and mind and space and time

and all beings that are.

And it teaches that these are not separated, independent of each other, but that they are united and working harmoniously. You know, I hesitate ever to mention these things because there's always someone whose body is wracked with it or who has lost some loved one, but the fact of cancer we must recognize as being one of the terrible facts of human life as we know it now. And if you have ever studied about cancer, you've learned what it is.

It is simply cells that no longer take orders from the rest of the body. The cancer is composed of free cells, anarchic cells. They are not subject to the balance and order of the rest of the cells of the body.

They go wild and pretty soon they've brought the victim to death. And if the world were, everything in the world were to be independent of everything else, you would have universal cancer throughout the vast universe. So God brings everything together and interlocks them and makes them interdependent, not independent.

One man said that you couldn't move a stone on the seashore, but what you'd change in some manner the balance of the world. Another man said that there couldn't be a leaf fall from a tree, but it changed the order of nature a little bit, just that much. There isn't a baby born into the world, but it makes the world a little different.

And there isn't a man or woman that dies and goes out of the world, but it's changed the face of the world just a little bit. For all things interlock and depend upon each other. And the Bible further teaches that this universe, that is this uni, this meaning one, this one great interlocking system has a central control.

And that control is called the throne of God. That it's controlled from that center. Now this seems to be logical to me.

An organism that has no central control, such as the human body, you know what would happen to the human body if it had no central control? There have been lots of fables and stories told, made up and told about the body that wouldn't obey the head, and you can imagine what it would be like. And there must be a head on every organism or else there could be no harmony, no coordination, no cooperation, and no life. And it's logical also because every organization has to have a head.

If you organize anything, you have to have a head. Anywhere from the simplest little literary guild consisting of a half a dozen ladies who have nothing else to do, they always have to have a president. And the president must preside.

If there are only half a dozen there, there must be someone there. And it goes right on up to the largest empire that ever touched the world, right on up to the great nations of the world, there must be heads to a head to an organization. That's logical.

Or like a machine, there must be a head to a machine. When I travel by airplane, for instance, I'm very grateful for the man up front. I don't see him after he swaggers quietly down the aisle with a friendly smile, carrying his little bag, locks himself in there, that's the last I see of him.

But when you're landing, particularly if it's New York or Chicago, the two worst places in the world to land in. Mountain is an easy, smooth landing compared to those two horrible places, New York particularly. And I look down and wonder always, where is LaGuardia? Where is Idlewild? Is there an Idlewild? Is there an

airport down there at all? Because there are flat rocks, water, mud, buildings, an ocean out there, and everything.

And I think to myself, and sometimes say good-naturedly to somebody sitting beside me, well, I'm glad the boy up front knows more about this than I do. Because I don't know where I started for, I know where I bought my ticket for. But how to get down is his problem.

And I'm glad to leave it with him. He's younger than I am and studied machinery. And so we have in every airplane one head, not four or five.

You'll have a co-pilot, but he takes over only if the first fellow has a heart attack. The man who runs that machine runs it. And if you had a great machine weighing tons up there in the air with gravitation screaming for it to come down, and you suddenly had no head up there, you know what would happen.

There would be crash after crash until they were all down. So if it means that an organism has to have a head, and if it means that a machine has to have a head, and if it means that an organization has to have a head, then is it not logical to believe that somewhere in this vast universe there is a throne where somebody sits who runs it? I believe that. And I believe that one is God, the majesty in the heavens.

Now the Bible, I say, calls this central control the throne of God. And from that throne God governs his universe. He governs according to an eternal purpose.

And that eternal purpose embraces all things. Two little words that are used so often in the scriptures, all things. And yet they are bigger than the sky above.

They are bigger than all the worlds, or as big because they take in all things. So we have the majesty in the heavens sitting upon his throne, and then we have someone sitting on the right hand of the throne. Why? And who is he? Well, he is Jesus Christ, the minister of the sanctuary which God made and not man.

And the reason for his being there briefly is this, and I'll talk to you for a minute as if I were talking to people who have never heard this before, though I know of course you all have, that there is a province which has revolted, a province revolted in this that we call the universe. In all this interdependent and interrelated and interlocking universe, one province suddenly revolted and said, We don't want to be ruled by the head. We will not be ruled from the throne.

We will rule ourselves. We will build this great Babylon up to heaven. We will not have God rule over us.

So that province we call mankind, and mankind inhabits a little rolling sphere we call the earth. They are asking if man exists anywhere else in the universe, and they are going up to find out. But I don't think he does, because the scripture says, The earth has he given to the sons of men.

I take that. I think the earth belongs to the sons of men. They have not done much with it and they have not done a very good job, but it belongs to the sons of men, and that province is now in revolt against the majesty in the heavens.

What is God going to do? God might have with a wave of his hand swept that province out of existence, but what did he do? God sent his only begotten Son that he might redeem that province and bring it back into the sphere of the throne again, back into the sphere of the kingdom. And that kingdom is called the

kingdom of God. And when a man is converted, born again, he is born into the kingdom of God.

What does that mean? It means he is born out of the old rebellious province into a new kingdom and owns the throne, which he didn't own before. No sinner owns a throne. No sinner owns a throne of God as being valid and the right of God to rule over him.

He will talk about God and he will appeal to God and he will use the name of God, but he will not obey God. And that is why he is worried, that is why he is a sinner, that is why he is called a sinner. And that is why it is said that he will perish unless he repents and be born again.

When he repents and is born again, then he leaves the old world, the old province that revolted and moves into the kingdom of God and comes under the rulership of the triune God again. That's how simple it all is. You see, you can't get there by being baptized, though we all ought to be baptized according to the teaching of Jesus.

We don't get there by joining a church, though we all ought to join a church. You don't get there by praying, you can pray for the end of your life, 24 hours a day and not be there. It is coming into the kingdom by an act of the will through Jesus Christ the Lord that gets me out of the old, revolted province into the kingdom of God and under the rule of the throne of God again.

And now I say God became man in order to rescue men, and this he did by forfeiting his own life that he might bring back to God again those who had revolted. This Jesus Christ our Lord did. And so we have one sitting on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, some months back at a midweek meeting when only a handful of people was present.

I talked a little bit about the man at the right hand of God, and I think maybe that I ought to mention that again because it's so very important. It is Christianity, you see. We have a Christianity now, a dozen or two dozen.

Christianity is intermixing everywhere, and all trying to do a little bit of good. But real Christianity says this. It says, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words.

Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should behold another. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses.

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." So this is the teaching of the New Testament on this subject, and this was the message of the first Christian. Sometimes I get blamed, and particularly they blame our magazine, the Alliance Witness, because we do not do what they say, engage in the contemporary dialogue. Now if you ever find out what they mean, will you please come and let me know.

But all of these egghead preachers are busy doing what they call engaging in the contemporary dialogue. And if you will allow me to resolve it to my terms, I'll tell you what I think. I think it means reading Time magazine and then commenting on the news before the people.

Now, that's not what God sent me to do, ladies and gentlemen. He never sent me to preach on Crucifix or to talk about the Berlin crisis. Never! That might come in as a quick illustration caught on the run, but never become a central part of my ministry.

God told me to tell people there is a throne, there is one on the throne, and the world is revolted from that throne which can come back through Jesus Christ the Lord, and that we have somebody sitting on that throne who is one of us. That's what the early church was thrilled about. If those early men and women who were baptized with the Holy Ghost as recorded in the 2nd Acts, if they were here, you'd never hear them talking about all of the political and industrial questions that excite the ministers now and the church people are so concerned about.

You'd hear them talking about God on the throne and Christ at his right hand and the coming again of Jesus and the consummation of all things and the downfall of iniquity and the purgation of the world and the cleansing of the starry heavens above, as when a man throws an old garment aside. That's what they talked about. And above all things, they talked about that man who sat on the throne, this man whom he crucified.

They said, he is at God's right hand alive forevermore, and he is one of us. And they went out ablaze with that. We were six children in our mother's home, for three boys and three girls.

I was number three. And suppose that one of them gone, but the five of us remained. Suppose that when I was twenty years old, one of the families, say my eldest brother, had suddenly been made President, or had been given a high job, and no United Nations then, but suppose there had been, and he had been given a high position at the sensitive, throbbing throne of mankind.

Why, I'd have certainly been happy about that. I'd have said, my brother is there. I know a missionary whose son is Chief Translator for President of the United Nations, and I know I think still is, and she's a good soul and shows his picture.

I don't blame her at all, because her boys are pretty high up, you know, as men see things. Well, the Jews went everywhere, these converted people, these disciples, and they said, Did you know that one of us is in a position equal to the position of God, next to God in power and authority, with all power given unto him in heaven and in earth? And they went everywhere telling it. Now, that's what they told, not that Jesus was God only, but that this God was the man Jesus, and that one of our number had been exalted to Deity.

I said I heard a man one time say that Christ is man, but not a man, and I'd wonder how that could possibly be. How could a thing be a horse and not be a horse? I'd like to ask you. Do you ever see horse nature floating around somewhere like a glutinous, ill-formed mass of cloud? No, no.

Human nature can only be where a human being is. And so, instead of saying that Christ is man but not a man, we must say that Christ is a man. There is one God and one mediator between God and man, himself a man, Christ Jesus.

So said Paul, 1 Timothy 2.5. So this man Jesus is a man, and he is at God's right hand, and he does sit on the throne. So we worship man as God. That is, we worship the man as God.

We worship no other man, but we worship this man as God. And this man was believed to be God by the early church, and they worshiped him as God. And I pointed out that they never could quite understand it.

They said, Now, this man here, Jesus, is God. And then, of course, if they began to refine it metaphysically, they said, But he's a human being, and how can you get on your knees to a human being? That would be idolatry. But they said, This human being is different.

He has union with the eternal Godhead, so that when you worship him, you're not worshipping idolatrously, but you're worshipping God. And after they had gone on happily, joyously worshipping for a century or two, then the old theologians thought out a name for it. They called it the hypostatic union.

And because they found a name, they thought they'd explained it. That was no explanation, that was just a name. If you saw a strange looking creature, feathers in front and hair behind and two tails and three horns and an odd looking thing, it looked a little bit like a duck, somewhat like a cat, and it was waddling about there, and you said, What is that? Somebody would say, I don't know.

And you had all the scientists in Ontario and say, We never saw anything like it. Then some fellow comes along with a name. He said, Let's name it.

So he names it, and everybody says, Now we know what it is. No, you don't. You just named it, that's all.

And so it is with the hypostatic union. They said, How can God and man be one? And nobody knew how, so they said, Let's call it a hypostatic union, which means the hypostasis, which is God, the substance of God and the substance of man united in one, so that when you worship that man, Jesus, you're worshipping God. That satisfied everybody ever since, except the liberals.

You couldn't satisfy them anyway. I heard another name for it, Brother Gray, recently, that I like also. I think this is a good one, maybe better than the other.

They call it a theanthropic conjunction. Now, that's another word here, another phrase. Theanthropic, that's such a beautiful little word.

Theos, God, and Anthropos, man. And so you have man and God in conjunction, God and man united. But that's another way of naming it.

I still don't understand it. But I can kneel before him and cry, My Lord and my God. So there is at the right hand of God the man.

And if we could see into heaven now, we would see there creatures we couldn't explain. We would see six-winged creatures, two is all we're used to. And we would see creatures with wheels in the middle of wheels and coming out of the fire, and we would see broad-winged angels and seraphim that burn.

We would see strange creatures and we wouldn't understand them. Then somebody would say, Now, wait, wait, look, look there, I see something that looks like the form of a man. Sure enough, you could recognize him, he would be Jesus.

He would be one of us. And we could step up to him and say, We're brothers, I know you, you're of my race, you belong to me. Don't you feel good when you're traveling, say, in South America or Germany or Asia, and you see a fellow, he walks up to you and you look at each other and smile and he speaks and you say, You're a Canadian.

He says, Yeah, I'm Canadian, I live in Hamilton or Toronto. You smile and you say, Yeah, I'm Canadian. I still, in the little traveling I've done around the world, I still can't get over wanting to turn a flip-flop

handspring backwards when I see the American flag, or when I see somebody that I know is an old Yankee.

I like them, not because they're any better, and I like some of you just as much, but there's something in you that knows your own people. And I suppose that if I were wandering through heaven yonder and I saw an archangel and I couldn't talk his language, I saw a cherubim and I couldn't talk his language, a seraphim, and I'd be abashful around him, I'd say he burns, I can't go near him. And then suddenly I saw a man and I'd say, Wait, don't I know you? He'd say, Yes, I am Jesus whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead, and I am here for you, pleading your cause before the Father's throne, my brother, Jesus Christ the Lord.

He's there, the victorious man. Now, I point out, this man at the right hand of the throne and the majesty is not the victorious God. It would have been no news to tell the world God is victorious.

Of course God is victorious. How could the sovereign God be anything but victorious? But what the early church said, there's a man victorious, a man who is joined to God, and that man is victorious, and we are blessed in him, and so if we are in him we can be victorious. You know what I think, friends? I think that we are living on the very outskirts, the far margin of the kingdom of God.

We're in it, but we've just barely got through the door. I think that we Christians ought to recognize that our nature has been joined to God's nature in the mystery of the incarnation, and that when Christ died on the cross and rose again and began to join individual Christians to his body, he meant that we were to have the same victory that he has. He meant that we were to have the same high privilege he has at God's right hand.

He said, "'Ye in me, and I in you, and as my Father sent me, I sent you.' And now he said to God, "'Thou hast loved them even as thou hast loved me.'" Jesus did everything he could do to make his unbelieving people see that we have the same place in the heart of God that Jesus himself has, not because we're worthy of it, but because he's worthy of it and he's our head. So he's the victorious man, and he's the representative man there before God representing us, and he is the example man. God is showing what kind of man he can make, and he's the model man after which you and I are patterned.

That's why the Lord won't let you alone. We lived 16 years in the same house in Chicago, and then came along the war, and the price control bureau or something, and they sold the house. They were renting it, and they sold the house out from under us, and we had to find another house.

One of our boys rode in, and they were scattered all over the world. When I rode in, he said, "Dad's whimpering about leaving that house reminds me of an old dog who is curled up in front of the fireplace on a rug, and he's just stayed there until he can't think of any other way to live." I didn't like it so well when he wrote that, because I thought it was a rather poor view that he had of me, but he was right. Oh, I was sorry to leave that nice place on Prospect Avenue, and we went to another place and got along all right.

But there was that settling down, and we're like that, we Christians. We get used to one little viewpoint, one little tiny, we look at the world and at God and the kingdom of heaven from one little tiny dim crack, the crevice that we're peeking through, forgetting that we'd only dare to rise and have faith, that that man at the right hand of God sitting at the right hand of the throne belongs to us, and we belong to him, and whatever he is, we can be in him. I tell you, it might change our whole lives.

But here we sit, same old, same old. Some of you wouldn't be happy if you didn't look at me from the same direction. I've sometimes said that we could have a little bit of revival of some kind in the Church by just suggesting that everybody sit in a different seat the next Sunday.

You see, there are people who always sit over here, and they've got a sit-over-here psychology. Then there are others that always sit down there, and they've got a sit-down-there psychology, and it's the same over here, sit over here, and you always see the minister, whoever he is, from exactly the same angle, so that there are some of you over on this side that don't know what the right side of my face looks like, because you've never seen it. You just see it from down there and vice versa and what have you.

So I say that if we get shaken up, if we get shaken up, a revival among other things means a shaking up. It means that that neat, carefully made up little pattern of your life has to be changed, and I believe it ought to be changed for the better. I don't go in for change for change's sake, but I go in for change for the better.

So I recommend that we raise our eyes to God, the Majesty in the heavens, and that we look long and hard and reverently at him in faith and see at his right hand one of us, and say, Look, if he's there, I can be there. If he is accepted of God, I'm accepted in him, in the Beloved. And if God loves him, he loves me.

And if he's safe, I'm safe. And if he's conquered, I can conquer. And if he's victorious, I can be victorious.

Change you, my friend. A little startling. You get up some morning and the power of God came on you and you felt blessed.

It would be a little different from what you're used to, maybe, but it would be wonderful. Why not? Why not let's seek the face of God in Jesus Christ. Never go to God as some poet of paganism might go from the outside.

Always remember, No man cometh unto the Father but by me. But always remember, any man can come unto the Father by him. So let us come.

Let's practice it. Let's begin now. And let's move into the heart of God and live in that heart of God, victoriously.

So the things that I've been saying, this is the sum. We have a great high priest who will sit down on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, being a minister of the sanctuary which God built and not man. Amen.

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