

Yosemite Bible Conference 1991-15 Psalm 8:1

by William MacDonald

Heaven will be a revelation of God's material and spiritual creation, where we will see the wonders of God's redemption and the marvels of His creation.

Duration: 30:51

Topics: "Conference"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses what heaven will be like. He emphasizes that heaven will reveal both God's material creation and his spiritual creation. The preacher also mentions that in heaven, we will hear testimonies of God's grace and how he transformed people's lives. He quotes a secular philosopher who acknowledges the magnificence of God's creation, expressing that it is beyond human comprehension. The sermon concludes with a reference to Psalm 8, highlighting the greatness of God and his mindful care for humanity.

Transcript

Psalm 8, verse 1. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth! You who set your glory above the heavens, out of the mouth of babes and infants you have ordained strength because of your enemies, that you may silence the enemy and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have ordained, what is man that you are mindful of him, of the Son of Man that you visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and you have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of your hands.

You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea pass through the paths of the sea. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth! We've been thinking on this subject, what is heaven going to be like? And the last couple of meetings we were thinking especially of the wonders of God in creation and how in eternity God is going to be revealing to us so much of what we missed down here. We didn't really have a full appreciation of how great the Lord is in his marvelous creation.

I'm a bit worn out thinking about it, and I just want to say a few more things about the wonders of God in creation, and then we're going to move on to other things that we can know about heaven and what it's going to be like. I have always been fascinated by the Gulf Stream. I owe a lot to the Gulf Stream.

If it weren't for that, I probably would be an Eskimo today. How could that ever be? Well, my parents came from an island off the northwest coast of Scotland, and if it weren't for the Gulf Stream, it would be an ice cap, and I'd be an Eskimo. But I want you to think about that marvelous thing, a Gulf Stream.

Imagine a stream of warm water originating down in the Caribbean and going through the Atlantic Ocean, the cold Atlantic Ocean, and it's still warm when it gets off the coast of Ireland and Scotland. Now, I want to tell you that's marvelous, and if you don't think it is, try it in your bathtub when you go home. And you not only have that with the Gulf Stream, but you have the Pacific Stream, the Japanese Stream coming down the Pacific, too.

How does God do that? I don't know, but I worship him for it just the same. Everything in creation speaks forth the glory of God. And, you know, God was way ahead of man in so many of the things that he... Solomon said there's nothing new under the sun, and years ago, Moody Science Films had a film, Prior Claim.

Many of you saw it. Now, God has a prior claim in many of these. It was a Frenchman watching a wasp build its nest.

That's how it was discovered that you could make paper from wood. And, of course, birds flew long before men did, and much more efficiently. And silkworms made thread long before men did.

God was far ahead of us in all of these things. Electric eels came before electric stoves, and octopuses move about by jet propulsion, if you will. Female moths broadcast something like radio signals, and bats have a wonderful system of radar.

What animal is longer than three dump trucks, heavier than 110 Honda Civics, and has the heart the size of a Volkswagen Beetle? The answer is a blue whale. How much food does it take to sustain a blue whale? Well, try four tons of krill a day. That's three million calories, ladies.

Even a baby blue whale can put away a hundred gallons of milk a day. 24 hours. When the blue whale surfaces, it takes in the largest breath of air of any living thing on the planet.

And its spray, when it shoots its spray, goes higher in the air than a telephone pole. You know, I'm just going to close on the wonders of God, because we haven't even scratched the surface. But I'd like to read you something from the philosopher Immanuel Kant, who didn't fellowship in one of the assemblies, or any other church that I know of.

He was a secular philosopher. And I'll read you what he said, and then I'll translate it. He said, The world about us opens before our view so magnificent a spectacle of order, variety, beauty, and conformity to ends, that whether we pursue our observations into the infinity of space in the one direction, or into the illimitable divisions on the other, whether we go out into the starry heaven, or come down to the living cell, whether we regard the world in its greatest or least manifestations, even after we have attained to the highest summit of knowledge which our weak minds can reach, we find that language, in the presence of wonders so inconceivable, has lost its force, and number its powers to reckon.

Nay, even thought fails to conceive adequately, and our conception of the whole dissolves into an astonishment without powers of expression, all more eloquent than it is dumb. Translation. The creation is so marvelous that it's beyond the power of words or numbers to express, and beyond human thought to take it in.

That's good, isn't it? Coming from an ungodly man. He recognized it. What is heaven going to be like? Well, I said it's going to be a revelation of God's material creation.

It's also going to be a tremendous revelation of God's spiritual creation. Down at the beach last night, you heard testimonies. I believe in heaven we're going to hear testimonies.

We're going to see God's marvelous dealings in grace, how he controlled people's intellects, and their emotions, and their wills even, and how he brought them under the sound of the gospel, and how the Spirit of God came and convicted them of sin, and how lives were transformed. It's going to be wonderful. It's going to be wonderful.

In heaven, God's going to show us the behind the scenes of prayer, how every one of our prayers was answered, answered according to infinite wisdom, and infinite love, and infinite power. So many of the riddles of life will be revealed then, will be answered then. The mystery of suffering.

Not till the loom is silent and the shuttle ceased to fly will God unroll the canvas and explain the reason why the dark threads were as needful in the weaver's skillful hands as the threads of gold and silver in the pattern he had planned. How God guided his people. What a marvelous thing is the guidance of God.

I never can get over it, and he's doing it for so many people all at the same time. Makes me think of the little girl who became ill and had to go to the hospital. At home she said her prayers regularly, and faithfully, and then she goes into the ward, and she's placed, she goes into the hospital, she's placed in a ward with I don't know how many beds in the ward, and her mother came and said, now did you pray? And she said, oh no mother, she said there are so many beds in the ward.

In other words, God couldn't possibly hear the prayers of so many children in that hospital. Well, there are a lot of beds in the ward, dear friends, and God is hearing their prayers, and God is guiding. What a marvelous thing.

Think of a God who never slumbers nor sleeps, and there he is guiding his people. The hymn writer says, we shall read the tender meanings of the sorrows and alarms as we trod the desert leaning on the everlasting arms, and his rest will be the dearer when we think of weary ways, and his light will shine the clearer when we muse on cloudy days. In heaven we're going to see more clearly than we've ever seen the connection between the physical and the spiritual.

We're going to see, for instance, how everything in God's creation had a spiritual meaning if we had only had eyes to see it. The Lord Jesus gave us clues of that when he was here on earth. He talked of grass and wind and rain and fig trees and fair weather, and he made it his delight to bring heaven and earth together, didn't he? He could look at anything and draw a spiritual meaning from it.

He spoke of lilies, vines and corn, the sparrow and the raven, and words so natural yet so wise were on men's hearts engraven. Of yeast with bread and flax and cloth, of eggs, of fish and candles. See how the whole familiar world he most divinely handled.

Now, won't that be wonderful to be in heaven and be able to look back and see all the marvels of his creation and realize they were screaming out at us with the spiritual lesson. If we hadn't been so busy, if we had just had time to stop and listen. I believe in heaven we will see how we were protected by God's invisible army as well.

Like the young man in Elisha's day, the Lord opened his eyes and he saw the mountain filled with horses and chariots. And then it will be clear to us that those who were for us were more numerous than Satan's hosts that were arrayed against us. Is it too much to think that when we get to heaven we will see the whole panorama of bible history exactly as it happened? Is it too much that we will actually see the creation, Genesis chapter 1, Adam and Eve, the fall, the flood, the Tower of Babel, the Passover, the exodus, the whole divided kingdom, your friends, is it too much to think that in heaven we'll see Bethlehem's manger, Gethsemane, Gavassa, and Calvary? The light rays are still in the universe.

It would be a small thing for God to harness them and bring them to our attention. I rather think we will. We've seen these things by faith but the vision is so dim and indistinct.

What a wonderful thing it would be in heaven to see Calvary. Our hearts would overflow in a way they've never overflowed down here. See God's lovely son hanging there on that cross of shame.

And we would say, for me, it was for me the Savior died with the cross of Calvary. You see down here we're watching things from the ground level, aren't we? And when you watch a parade from the ground level you just see what's passing before you at that moment. But if you could get up on a high building you could look down and you could see the whole parade from start to finish.

And we'll be in a very high building in that day. But I believe we'll see the whole vista of Bible history unfolding before our eyes at how wonderful it will be. Or think of it this way, time as we know it now will no longer exist in heaven.

Our calendar, of course, is based on the relationship between the earth and the sun and that relationship will no longer be relevant in heaven. And perhaps this means that in heaven there'll be no past or future. That everything will be one eternal present.

After all, don't we read in Revelation of the Lamb in heaven as it were freshly slain? Freshly slain. If that's so it means that Calvary in heaven is an ever-present reality. It was slain before the foundation of the earth.

I confess it's very difficult for me to think of a realm in which time is no longer. But sometimes I get a comfort out of it in this way. A loved one dies and goes to be with the Lord and there's no more time.

Well, I don't have words to express what I want to think but the rapture's next. In other words, there's no interval between that death and the coming of the Lord. See, I contradict myself when I use the word next because I'm using words of time.

But it's quite possible that that's the case, isn't it? That our loved ones pass into the presence of the Lord and then they receive their glorified bodies. Because it's a scene in which time no longer exists. Is it possible when we get to heaven that we'll find out that God had other programs going on on other planets? Now, let me be very, very careful.

I'm not talking about mankind. I'm not talking about human life. This is the planet on which God placed man.

The only one. This is the planet on which the cross was erected, in which the tomb was emptied. But after all, we do read in the scriptures of principalities, of powers, of spiritual rulers in heavenly places, don't we? There are spirit beings in the universe.

There are holy angels and there are fallen angels as well. A God so great, a God so magnificent, is it not possible that He has other programs that just transcend our finite powers of thinking? And is it not possible that God, throughout eternity, will be revealing to beings, not human beings, but beings in the universe, the marvels of His redemption? Because it's only on earth that God's redemptive program took place. And angels never know the joy that our salvation brings.

It gives me great thoughts of God to realize that He can be handling a lot of such things at one and the same time. Of course, there are a lot of questions still unanswered. What about a baby? When a baby dies, will it be a baby for all eternity? Or when adults die, what will they be like through all eternity? Well, my Bible doesn't answer the question for me.

And frankly, I don't think my puny mind is able to take it in anyway. But what we do know is that the Lord will handle that problem in a manner that's worthy of Himself. And we really don't have to worry about it.

It's enough for faith to rest on. It's going to be a glorious time for us, and we'll all have to say, as for God, His way is perfect. With all His saints, we'll join to tell, My Jesus has done all things well.

What about the place itself? The place that the Savior has gone to prepare for us. When we open our eyes on the golden shore, what will the Father's house be like? Well, the world's languages cannot do justice to the magnificence of paradise, the third heaven. So, God uses objects of beauty and elegance to convey to our poor minds some faint idea of our native homeland.

If the New Jerusalem is, as many believe, linked with heaven, in most of its particulars, then we can know quite a bit about Emmanuel's land where Christ is all the glory. First of all, there's no night there. Well, of course, night today is the scene when criminals love to operate.

Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. But night is oftentimes, too, for the people of God a long, long time as they suffer on their beds and wait for the first shrieks of dawn to come. So, I think it's wonderful to realize that there will be no night there.

In the land of fadeless day lies the city foursquare. Says the light is like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, and it doesn't emanate from the sun or the moon, but from the glory of the Lord himself. The principal building materials in heaven are gold, precious stones, and pearls.

In other words, it's a jeweler's treasure trove. The building materials of heaven. And gold will be the paving material comparable to our concrete and tarmac.

It shows you the reversal of values. The things that men esteem most highly will be things that you'll walk upon in heaven. Treat it like concrete.

Or tarmac. There's a temple, but it's not a literal building. It's the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.

We mentioned before that there's no more sea. The sea speaks to us of separation of loved ones. Also, in Jeremiah, it says there's sorrow on the sea.

Strange, these little verses of Scripture. There's sorrow on the sea. You think of all the tremendous tragedies that have taken place.

Think of the drownings. Think of babies swept out of their parents' arms into the sea. All of those things, accidental drownings, will be a thing of the past.

But I think Spurgeon is right when he says the streets of gold will have small attraction for us, and the harps of angels will but slightly enchant us compared with the king in the midst of the throne. He it is who shall rivet our gaze, absorb our thoughts, and enchain our affections. He it is who will move all our sacred passions to the highest pitch of endless ardor.

We shall see Jesus. Heaven is a place of service, far from being a place of inactivity, a place of service. His servants shall serve him.

And this thrills me to know that we will have enlarged capacities for serving him. Somebody has said, able to go on serving him day and night without any weariness in it. Never a hateful shadow of weariness of it.

Without any interruptions. Without any mistakes at all. Without any thinking how much better someone else could have done it, or how much better we ought to have done it.

Above all, without the least mixture of sin in motive or deed. Pure, perfect service of him whom we love and see face to face. The Bible doesn't tell us too much about the nature of the service, so we're content to realize that it will be a satisfying way of pouring out our love and affection for the one who bought us with his precious blood.

How different that service will be from what it is now. And of course, heaven will be a place of worship, won't it? And just as we will have enlarged capacities for serving him, we will have enlarged capacities for worshipping him. The things that constrain us now will not constrain us then.

Now we have to sing, weak is the effort of our hearts and cold our warmest thoughts. But then, our hearts will just gush out in praise and adoration to him. When we see thee as our heart, we'll praise thee as we ought.

Oftentimes in worship today, we suffer so many distractions, don't we? Do you have that problem? Mind-wandering. I hate it. Hindrances to worship.

And oftentimes now we feel worship and adoration, but we can't express it in words, and that'll no longer be true. In that day, we'll be able to show the Lord Jesus a love that would burst our hearts if it were poured into them now. It pleases me to think of that.

In that day, we'll be able to just tell it the way it is, and yet if that was in our hearts today, we would explode. Heaven will be a place of song. I never realized until recently how much the book of Revelation is a book of song.

I know it's a book of judgment too, but it's just filled with song, and it tells us the lyrics, many of the lyrics that we're going to be singing in eternity. I often think of it this way. If we could assemble all the world's greatest musicians and commission them to fill a concert hall with the most melodious and symphonic music imaginable, the music would be tawdry compared to what it's going to be in heaven.

I think the closest, you won't agree with me, but I think the closest we get to heavenly music today is the Messiah by Handel, and one of the reasons for that because the words are all the words of Scripture, and not only the words are all the words of Scripture, but the music is married to the words. The music is so wedded to the words that it's hard to read those words in Isaiah without hearing the music in the back of your mind. But even the Messiah, even the Messiah when it rises to the hallelujah chorus, cannot compare with what awaits us there in our heavenly home.

The mass choir consists of 10,000 times 10,000, and thousands of thousands, and not a sour note. Not a discordant note. Sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses all singing in perfect tune, in perfect melody, blending their hearts and voices in one vowed eternal burst of praise.

It's going to be wonderful. A chorus from yesterday said, such singing you will hear, never heard by mortal ear, it will be glorious, I do declare. And that's absolutely true.

There'll be instrumental accompaniment too. He says the harps of God in Revelation chapter 15, and if harps, why not all the other musical instruments that have been used to sing the praises of the Lord? Let everything that hath breath praise his name. Our Lord is worthy that everything that can be harnessed be used to praise and worship him in that day.

I'm going to stop there, and tonight we're going to think of the wonders of God in providence. We've been thinking of his wonders in so many ways, and another wonder that we haven't thought of is his control over his creatures, but especially over his people, and how our lives can sparkle with the supernatural, and how our lives can be radioactive with the spirit of God. And I think you'll be thinking too, times in your life when you saw that marvelous converging of circumstances, that you knew that God was working in your life.

So we'll think about that tonight in the will of God.

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