

ORDER FOR THE CORPORATE WORSHIP OF GOD

A Service of Celebration and Covenantal Renewal

MEDITATION AND PREPARATION—

All the things that have ever deeply possessed your soul have been but hints of it - tantalizing glimpses, promises never quite fulfilled, echoes that died away just as they caught your ear. But if it should really become manifest - if there ever came an echo that did not die away but swelled into the sound itself - you would know it. Beyond all possibility of doubt you would say "Here at last is the thing I was made for". Joy is ... the stab, the pang, the inconsolable longing. It is never a possession, always a desire for something longer ago or further away or still 'about to be'... The sweetest thing in my life has been the longing to find the place where all the beauty came from. (CS Lewis on Heaven)

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM—9:00 A.M.

Charlie James Hanchey
child of Brad and Jennifer Hanchey

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM—10:45 A.M.

Perry Mabel Peterson
Jim and Abby Peterson

INVOCATION—

Elder Todd Hardy

CALL TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 65:17-19 (NIV)

- ¹⁷ "Behold, I will create
new heavens and a new earth.
The former things will not be remembered,
nor will they come to mind.
¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever
in what I will create,
for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight
and its people a joy.
¹⁹ I will rejoice over Jerusalem
and take delight in my people;
the sound of weeping and of crying
will be heard in it no more.

WORSHIP THROUGH SONG

Lyric sheets of today's music can be obtained from the ushers upon request

PASTORAL PRAYER

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

—Pastors Scotty Smith and Scott Roley

The Present and Future of Heaven, Pt. 5

Rev. 21:1-22:6

More of Our Questions about Life and Relationships in Heaven

I. The Unfolding Promise of a New Heaven and New Earth

Isaiah 65:17-19 - "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. ¹⁹ I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.

Notice: God has promised...

- **To create the new Jerusalem to be a delight**
- **To make it's people a joy**
- **To rejoice and delight in the people and city he is making new! What a grand story!**

Isaiah 11:6-9 - The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Revelation 21:1-5 - Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Remember:

- The Bible is telling a story of **restoration**, not **replacement**. Jesus is making all things new, NOT all new things!
- We should expect **continuity, not discontinuity**, as God's Story unfolds through the history of redemption.
- Where the Scriptures speak clearly about the new heaven and new earth, let us be confident and bold. Where the Scripture speaks with less clarity, let us be careful and humble. In all things, let us be expectant, faithful and loving!

GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

MINISTRY OF THE WORD, PART 2

Some General Questions about the Present and Future of Heaven:

Q. Are there different levels in heaven...for the “super-saints” will there be a penthouse, but if you only got in... (Like me!), will we live in the “low rent district” (which I’m sure I’ll be happy with)?

A. No, there aren’t different degrees of blessedness in heaven. We’re all welcome there based on the merits of Jesus’ righteousness, not our own merit. (Eph. 2:1-10). Even the rewards given for faithful service are depicted as crowns we through at Jesus’ feet, for all glory goes to him (Rev. 4:10)

Q. Are there many ways to get to heaven? Aren’t all religions basically the same? How can people go to heaven who have never heard of Jesus?

A. All religions aren’t the same. Jesus is the way the truth and the life for those who could never earn a relationship with God (John 14:6). Even as God is generous in giving Jesus for us, so he is generous in applying the saving benefits of his Son to us (Gen. 11:27-12:3; Isa 65:1; Acts 9)

Q. Will there be animals in the new heaven and new earth? Is there any suggestion in the Bible my pets will experience the restoration of the new creation world?

A. I fully expect there to be every expression of life present in the new heaven and new earth as there was in the first creation, yet refined and glorified (Gen. 1-2; 2 Pet. 3:1-10). So yes, I believe we will fully enjoy the animal world. Will our beloved pets live in that world? We can’t dogmatically say yes or no, but based on the Biblical theme of continuity and restoration, I wouldn’t be surprised. What I do know for sure is that we will not be disappointed in the slightest with the fulfillment of God’s Story!

Q. When we get to heaven, will we know EVERYTHING? I have wondered if science would get all of its questions answered.

A. Paul writes... (1 Corinthians 13:11-13) When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹²Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. The promise we have is not that we will know exhaustively, but comprehensively. We will know as fully as a creature can know everything that can be known! God alone knows exhaustively.

Q. After a few eternities pass along, can sin creep in again? Will God allow it as he did the first Fall? Will we forget His glory again? I know that sin is eradicated FOREVER-but how long was/is forever? Will we forget His glory again?

A. I am so glad to give an unequivocal NO!, to this question. The fall will never happen again. Where Adam and Eve lived an innocent life in the Garden of Eden, we will join them in living a glorified life in the new heaven and new earth! In the first creation world, before the fall, **it was possible for Adam and Eve not to sin.** In the new heaven and new earth **it will not be possible to sin,** by any of the citizens there! (Rev. 21:27)

SONG OF REFLECTION

God’s Story

Out of the nothing, heaven and earth – summer good and Eden birth
In the beginning all was fresh, Word gave love, Word gave breath
Shimmer, and Sparkle and Shine, Joy be three in one divine

Into the broken, autumn chill, Wood and fruit and venomous will
First man Adam, innocent Eve, juice-stained face of the deceived
O Shimmer O Sparkle O Shine, man has traded the divine

Deep to the womb of simple flesh, Hope’s a babe at Mary’s breast
Bread and wine and ringing nails, no winter tomb of death prevails
Shimmer and Sparkle and Shine, Jesus saved this heart of mine

Verdant splendor, new heaven and earth – tongues and tribes in spring
of rebirth

Desire of His bidding, robed in white, to wed and feast and drink
from the vine

Shimmer and Sparkle and Shine, married into Joy Divine

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MINISTRY OF THE WORD, PART 3

Questions about Marriage in the New Heaven and New Earth:

Q. If we won’t be married in heaven, how will we relate to each other as former spouses? I know the Bible says there will be no marriage in Heaven and I am assuming that it is because relationships will be so good there but I do have a hard time imagining that we will not miss having that one partner who is special. I guess if there’s no marriage, there’s no physical intimacy in eternity... am I right? Any insight on that would be good for me.

A. The Scriptures consistently show us that being made in the image of God means that we were made for deeply satisfying, intimate relationships, first and foremost with God. And we see that “shalom has been violated” nowhere more obviously than in our relational life (Gen. 3:1-13). This is why our redemption is so wondrously revealed as a marriage relationship between Jesus and his very broken people. Though we will not live as husbands and wives in heaven, we WILL live out together the most intimate and fulfilling relational life imaginable... reconciliation and redemption of all brokenness! I fully expect continuity and fulfillment to be the theme of eternity. When we are there we will all say with absolute wonder, “God, you have done all things well!”

Luke 20:27-39 - *Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question. 28 “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. 30 The second 31 and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. 32 Finally, the woman died too. 33 Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?” 34 Jesus replied, “The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. 35 But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the*

dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, 36 and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. 37 But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' 38 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive." 39 Some of the teachers of the law responded, "Well said, teacher!"

SONG OF RESPONSE

BENEDICTION—

Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 57&58

57 Q. How does "the resurrection of the body" comfort you?

A. Not only my soul will be taken immediately after this life to Christ its head, but even my very flesh, raised by the power of Christ, will be reunited with my soul and made like Christ's glorious body.

58 Q. How does the article concerning "life everlasting" comfort you?

A. Even as I already now experience in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, so after this life I will have perfect blessedness such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart has ever imagined: a blessedness in which to praise God eternally.



Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What had the most impact on you from our time in God's Word and worship today? What was encouraging, convicting, and/or calling for more clarification?
2. Which of the questions Scotty dealt with today was of special significance to you? How so? What would you like to add to the limits of what he said? How do you disagree or what other questions did his answer provoke?
3. As you further ponder the theme of the future of heaven being on this, renewed earth, what excites you? Why is this starting to sound a whole lot better than clouds, harps and all-day-long song fests? How are you beginning to see the praise of God manifest in a story of making all things new, instead of making all new things?
4. What are some of the things you know in part, for which you long for the day of knowing fully, even as you are fully known?
5. Close with a season of prayer for our family members and friends who have yet to come to rest in the finished work of Jesus. Let us pray expectantly and believingly to the One whose redemptive reach is far, far greater than we even can imagine!