

The Future Life - Occupation of Heaven

by W.B. Dunkum

The sermon emphasizes the importance of preparation for death and the nature of heaven, where God's will is perfectly done and there is no sorrow, pain, or suffering.

Scripture: Hebrews 11:16, Revelation 4:8, Revelation 21:4, Revelation 21:21, Revelation 22:1

Topics: "Heavenly Life", "Eternal Worship"

Description

W.B. Dunkum preaches about the glorious home of heaven, where man will be surrounded by holy beings, experiencing peace, joy, and eternal blessedness. The prominent characteristic of heaven is praise, with heavenly beings worshipping God continuously. Heaven is described as a place where God dwells, manifesting His love and glory, providing uninterrupted happiness and holiness for the saints. It is a city free from sin, sorrow, and death, where Jesus reigns as King, angels guard the gates, and the saints enjoy eternal happiness and perfect health.

Transcript

Heaven was made for man and man for heaven. When man passes into that glorious home, he will be surrounded by holy and heavenly beings. Peace, joy, and satisfaction will abound with its immeasurable blessedness and an eternal weight of glory.

The prominent characteristic of heaven will be that of praise. They rest not day or night but say holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty which was and is and is to come. They worship Him who sitteth upon the throne and cast their crowns at His feet saying, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by His blood out of every kindred, tongue, and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." We shall be arrayed in white robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. We shall be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain for the former things are passed away. We shall cast ourselves at His feet and worship Him forever.

Heaven is a Place and a State or a Condition.

1. We speak of the clouds as being up in the heavens.
2. The sun, moon, and stars are beyond the clouds. We refer to them as being up in the heavens.

3. Heaven is the place where God is. For when God dwells in the heart manifesting His love, revealing His glory, there is heaven. In this sense, the way to heaven is heaven all the way. In heaven, we will not be conscious of one thing to interrupt our happiness. Nothing unholy will ever enter to disturb the happiness of the saints.

In heaven, the sun will never set; death shall be swallowed up in life. The saints shall possess all that is essential to their happiness. They shall dwell amidst pleasures forevermore, free from sorrow and death and shall mingle with the saints around the throne. "There the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

Our enjoyment there will depend largely upon the development of our capacities here.

I like to think of heaven as a place where God's will is perfectly done. Then, I like to think of heaven as a four-square planet made by God and swung out into space. A city free from sin so different from our cities. No sin, no death, funeral processions are never seen and graveyards are unknown in heaven.

In every serious thinking person, there is a longing for a better country. This world is not our home. We are seeking a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. We are pilgrims and strangers here, but we are looking up for our redemption draweth nigh. The heavenly city is a prepared place for a prepared people. They all shout there, and not one holiness fighter in all that city.

1. Heaven is a great city none other like it. It is the Metropolis of the Universe.
2. It is a well built city. Builder and maker is God; foundations eternal. Its walls are of jasper, gates of pearls, streets of gold; it has twelve gates.
3. It is a well guarded city. At the twelve gates are twelve angels.
4. It is a well governed city; no disturbances; no lawlessness.
5. It is a well peopled city. Saints of all generations have gathered within its walls, population is as the number of stars. No man can number them.
6. It is a glorious city. The glory that fills it is the glory of God.
7. It is a holy city. Nothing that defileth can enter there.
8. It is a well-lighted city. The Lamb is the light thereof.
9. It is a well watered city. A pure river flows through' the streets and around the throne.
10. It is a well provisioned city. The tree of life with its twelve crops of fruit and leaves for the healing of the nations grows there. They will never be sick there or ever feel another pain.

II Cor. 5:1, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Heaven is a place we have thought about, read about, and talked about all of our lives. We may know but little about it, but what we do know makes us anxious to know what we don't know. How gladly and willingly children gather around their mother to hear her tell them about heaven. And brethren, if we ever get inside the gates of pearl, we must become as humble and as obedient as the little child.

Heaven should be preached on until people have a desire to get ready. In the early days of the country, it was said that the preacher preached on hell until you could smell the brimstone and then preached on heaven until you could smell the fruit. The preaching of the doctrine will stimulate and encourage those who are in the way.

The "Narrow Way" leads to the Christian's goal, that is the heavenly world. But to make it in, you may expect to wade through grief, slander, reproach, heartaches and misunderstanding. Some have been starved to death while others have gone to the chopping block, but they will be awaiting our arrival.

Heaven will be our eternal home where we'll not get any tax card, rent never comes due, never have to pay a grocery bill, gas bill, or water bill. What a privilege it will be to meet those you have promised to meet "over in the glory land." You no doubt held their hand as they crossed Jordan's chilly stream. You promised to meet them and they are still holding you to that promise. Whatever you do or may not do, do not disappoint them.

In this world, you may wear a badge of reproach and scorn and drink from the cup of bitter disappointment and misunderstanding, but there we will be understood and enjoy perfect health. We will not need physicians, hospitals, drug stores, but perfect health will bloom on every brow.

But Heaven: who can comprehend it ? A place where no sickness, no pain, no sorrow, no cloud, no night, no bitterness, no weariness, no remorse, no anguish, no graves, no sighs, no tears, no sad laments, no dying, no broken hearts, no death-bed scenes, never a corpse, never a coffin, never a hearse, and never a grave in that beautiful land. There the sun will rise and go down no more. Heaven will be a gracious treasure, a profound joy and an eternal influence which can never come to mortal man. Oh, the blessed hope of a glad reunion, with the departed saints in the glory land. How they do attract us as we journey thus by the way.

Heaven is a permanent place. Our surroundings here are temporary, transitory, passing, decaying, and changing. Earth is a place, where we are to camp for a while. We desire a better country, one that is heavenly. Heaven is free from sin, sorrow, pain, disappointment, and imperfection of every kind. We have troubles and trials here but none in heaven. The best people who ever lived will be there. John saw multitudes that no man could number. They will be there of all nations, peoples, and tongues. Many shall come from the East and the West and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Heaven will be a place of happiness because Jesus will be there. He is the motive of our actions, and the inspiration of our hearts. We shall see Him, know Him, and serve Him. A place of happiness because of the absence of all sorrow, disappointments, and heartaches, no deaths, no suffering, no misunderstandings, in heaven, no night, no pain, no cemeteries, no funeral processions, no hunger, no thirst, no unemployment. All will be employed doing the will of God. Nothing there to mar the happiness of the redeemed. Every earthly pain will cease, every trial will be over and all tears dried up.

A city without pain and sorrow. A city without deaths and burials. A city without marriage and mourning. A city in which Jesus will be King. Angels will be guards. The saints will be citizens. The walls are salvation. The gates are pearls and the streets are paved with gold.

No tongue can tell,

No voice can sing,

No pen can write,

No brush can paint,

The joy and glory of being with Jesus, angels, and the blood-washed of all ages.

O my friend, if you did but know what awaits the Christian, you would not refrain from rejoicing and even leaping for joy. Labors, trials and troubles will be nothing. You will rejoice in affliction and glory in tribulation and like Paul and Silas sing God's praises in the darkest night and in the deepest dungeon.

People live in this world until they are captured by wealth and position and forget they are but visitors here and must soon leave for eternity Only a few short days, weeks, months, or years until we will all be leaving for the great beyond You see others leave, but some day, much sooner than we expect, we will be leaving never to return.

When Vanderbilt was leaving, he requested some one to sing:

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy Weak and wounded, sick and sore.

Death calls from a life of ease and disappointment to the great beyond. Sorrow and disappointment is a universal malady; it is found in every home from the log cabin to the mansion. Sorrow passes her bitter cup to every son and daughter of Adam's race.

Death alone can set the Christian free from this painful decaying house of clay.

Death calls us to our eternal home where there will be no tempter to annoy. Let us claim our starry crown, our harp of gold, and a house of many mansions. I Samuel 20:3. "There is but a step between me and death."

A warning to every soul on his way to an open grave and the Judgment

I. Preparation needed. We're all creatures of two worlds. Live here and hereafter. God serves notice on us that a settling up time is coming.

II. Prepare because we're sinners. Heaven is a country where there is no sin.

III. Preparation includes conviction, forgiveness, confession, restitution, sanctification, and holy living.

IV. Preparation now. Tomorrow may be too late.

1. Death is certain by God's appointment. We do not know how, when, or where.

2. Death is separation -- From friends and earthly store.

3. Death is a change -- A doorway from time to eternity.

4. Death may be a very happy event - If preparation has all been looked after.

5. Death may be unwelcome and terrible.

(1). If it finds one unprepared.

(2). If it finds one's work unfinished.

(3) If it finds one without God. Job 14:10. "But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"

I. A Solemn Statement.

1. Death is the end of our earthly career.

2. Death removes from society, business and earthly pursuits.

3. Death is separation of soul and body. Body returns to the ground and soul returns to God.

II. The Origin of Death.

Originated in the Garden of Eden as the result of sin.

III. The Nature of Death.

1. An event absolutely certain.

2. We cannot escape it.

3. The decree from God.

4. The time is fixed by God.

5. We do not know when.

6. Death will overtake you.

7. You may be doped and unconscious.

(1) Past generations have died.

(2) Life may belong but will end.

(3) Methuselah lived to an old age but died.

(4) Strength will not avail or Samson would not have died.

(5) Wisdom will not avail or Solomon would not have died.

(6) Piety will not avail or Abraham would not have died.

IV. The Claim of Death.

1. He visits battlefields and hospitals. 2. He goes into mansions and claims millionaires. 3. He goes into shanties and claims the poor.

V. Death Demands Our Consideration.

1. Its certainty.

2. Its nearness.
3. Its nature.
4. Its terrors.
5. Its warnings.
6. Its powers settle destinies.
7. Because of our nearness to the river's crossing.
8. Because of preparation we should make.

VI. The Important Question:

1. Infidel dies -- Where is he?
2. Gambler dies -- Where is he?
3. Hypocrite dies -- Where is he?
4. Christian dies -- Where is he?

VII. A sinner dying cried, "I am dying and going to I know not where !"

VIII. A Christian dying shouted, "I am dying and going to a place I have wanted to go all my life."

Alexander the Great, while dying, said, "I have given thought to everything but death and that is the most important subject I could have considered."

Spurgeon said, "Do not fail to warn men to prepare for death."

Death is a familiar subject, yet it is not a popular one. All know he is coming but so few are ready to welcome him.

I. Nothing more certain than death.

1. It is the nature of the human body to die.
2. The body is mortal and constantly wearing out. As the automobile has limited life, so the human body soon renders its limit of endurance.

II. Bible proves certainty of death. "As in Adam, all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

1. The educated, illiterate, the old, and the young all must die.
2. Death visits the king on the throne and the poor man in the slums.
3. Death comes down the road of the centuries.
4. The muffled tread of death is universal. Death looks in at every window and comes in at every door. It changes music into a funeral dirge. The funeral procession moves slowly through the streets. Listen to the

sobs and sighs and see that vacant chair. You may escape contagious diseases, but you cannot escape death.

III. Death being certain, all should prepare. To neglect preparation, is the height of folly. If you knew a cyclone were coming, you would prepare. You are out of the road of death nowhere. There are thousands of gates leading to death and generations are passing through.

IV. Death ends forever our opportunities to do here what we should have done. Sermons you have heard may be remorse of conscience. You have flirted with opportunity and trifled with your destiny. Once grace flowed like a river, now its channels are dried up forever.

V. Death has been conquered. Death of Christ struck death with a mighty sledgehammer blow. It lifted the gates of death off their hinges. It made the tunnel of death to bloom like the valley.

VI. Resurrection of Christ assures victory over death. Men conquered armies and nations but Christ conquered death.

VII. Testimonies of dying saints are good evidences. Paul was hounded from port to port, shore to shore, imprisoned, and five times beaten with thirty-nine stripes save one. Hear Paul's valedictory address, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. "This testimony embraces:

1. A victorious past,
2. A peaceful present,
3. A blissful future. "We shall sleep, but not forever, There shall be a glorious dawn ; We shall meet to part no, never, In the resurrection morn."

II Tim. 4:7, Paul refers to his Christian life under three aspects.

1. It is a warfare.
2. It is a race.
3. It is a trust.

Paul lived such a devoted, consecrated and earnest life that in the end he had no regrets. He no doubt made mistakes but he had a heavenly pull and was constrained by holy motives and purposes. This life is a warfare and we must fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. Also it is a race and to finish the course with success we must lay aside everything which would hinder or retard our progress and run with patience the race set before us. In this life, we are on trial and to be true to the trust we must keep the faith. We must not compromise for modern ideas and human philosophies. Paul was courageous and heroic in that he laid down his life for the faith. He looked forward to the time when he would receive a crown, crown of life, crown of righteousness, and at that time there would be no mistakes made and no favoritism shown; not for Paul alone but all that love the appearing of Jesus.

"O Death, where is thy sting?" You are at the crossing of the river. The icy hand of death is upon the brow. You are now sailing between two great shores. Conscience tells you the end is reached. The Almighty has the balances in His hands. Riches take wings and fly away. Your notions, ideas, and opinions are things of the past. Those the world call great are now turning pale. The vain pomp and show of the world is now

worthless. No one now has an argument against holiness. Holiness is popular here. Christian character tells its full value at the station of death. We all arrive at this station on schedule time according to God's time table. And on the Highway of Holiness, we see heroes, seers, and saints. The angels of God are our closest friends. The smoke of the battle and the shout of new born souls have encouraged us many times along the way. We have heard the mighty thunderings of Jehovah in the mountains and on the plains but He has led us through green pastures, and beside the still waters. But the end is reached; we are here; the last enemy is conquered. The sting is gone, and we enter the door of the morning that knows no night.

That the saints pass immediately at death into heaven is taught by the most pious and learned denominations of all ages. We grant that this does not prove it absolutely true; but it does give much weight to the argument. Therefore, this is no new idea and it is not the faith of the few, but it is the testimony of the Church. The influence of such teaching has been very extensively respected and felt throughout the Church world. No doubt, the doctrine has been responded to with a joyful Amen by millions since the organization of the Christian church. People everywhere believe that the saints immediately after death are admitted into heaven.

Again, some tell us that the full effect and consequences of a person's actions are not fully worked out when one dies. (For our actions follow us and will continue their influence until the end of time comes). For instance, infidels, who have been dead for years, yet their labors and writings are still working for evil; while on the other hand, the labors and writings of many good men are still working for good. These must be brought into consideration when it comes to rewards and punishments. Hence, some claim that destiny cannot be immediately decided. But God knows all things, and He knows how these things will work out and is able to give a justice at the day of death the same as He will at the end of the world. Besides, there is nothing unreasonable or unscriptural in the belief that the happiness of the righteous in heaven or the misery of the lost in hell will increase in exact proportion as the consequences of their actions on earth are developing until the Judgment Day. Our enjoyment in heaven will be in exact proportion to our capacity; and as fast as our spirits are Unfolded will our joys increase.

In yonder quiet room shaded with the twilight of mourning and sorrow lies a dying saint. Weeping friends have gathered around waiting for the last breath; the last words have already been heard. Not a look of complaint, of agony, or even a frown is seen upon his face. No doubt, he hears exquisite music and sees heavenly sights never yet made known to mortal beings. The pulse ceases to beat, the last breath has been drawn, and the spirit takes its flight to the God who gave it. Will this redeemed soul, set free from earthly captivity, stop on its way before it reaches our Father's Throne? The last farewell is said, the body lies before us motionless, all is silent. Some may mourn his absence but I feel we will meet again. In the dreadful stillness of the twilight hour, we look heavenward and the honest heart inquires, "Where is the spirit now?" Who would forbid an answer? Who would refuse to give an answer if they could? What answer would Christianity allow you to give? If the Marys committed no sin in seeking the tomb of their Lord "very early when it was yet dark" that they might anoint His body with spices, they asked with tears where they had laid Him, surely it would not be wrong for us to ask with tearful anxiety, "Where are the spirits of our departed dead?" At once, we find ourselves facing the question of all ages. And the only answer the writer has to give is, "As to where they are, depends exclusively on how they lived while among us."

Many are asking the questions, "Will death shut from our view this present world? Do the saints of heaven know of our joys and sorrows? Do they know of our fortunes and misfortunes? Do they know of our triumphs and temptations? Are they as much interested in us now as when they were on earth?" How glad

we would be to have these questions rightly answered. But to be sure, we had better wait until we get there and then we can be absolutely sure. The saints of heaven may know more of our actions and conduct than we think. When we read of the interest the rich man in hell had in his five brethren on earth, we would not want to think of Christians in heaven having less interest or less concern for us who are still entangled with the temptations and dangers of a probationary life. Surely in heaven, we will remember the world and the scenes of His sufferings and of His marvelous triumph and will remember this world as the battleground of the ages. We live in the past by recollections; in the present by consciousness, and in the future by hope. No doubt, memory in the future world will be keener, and more faithful than it was here. This life and the future life stand evidently in close relationship to each other. The future life is a continuation of this life. What we sow here we will reap yonder providing we do not reap it before we get there.

If this world is for probation and the future world for rewards, then we should know why we are rewarded; and we can only remember why we are rewarded by the recollection of a probationary state. A crown would mean nothing unless we could remember some victory we had won. What would a recompense of a reward amount to unless we could remember some service rendered to God and to humanity?

We shall have the society of the pious of all ages. "They shall come from the East and the West and the North and the South and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven." We will have the privilege of conversing with prophets and righteous men of olden times. We will hear the orations of Enoch and Elijah, of Abraham and Job, of Moses and Samuel, of David and Isaiah, of Daniel, Peter, James, Paul and John. O what inspiration as we listen to the eloquent and immortal tongues as they discuss the wonders of redemption!

It is believed that we will recognize each other in heaven. "Then shall I know even as I am known." To think we will know less in heaven than on earth is contrary to the tenor of Scriptures. The inference from the Bible is that in the heavenly state by an intuitive perception of which we can here form no idea, we shall even recognize those whom we have never seen in this life. Then our knowledge will be wonderfully increased. How it rejoices our hearts now to think we shall be able to greet each other in that bright world of bliss and glory.

O what ineffable joy for a father or mother to meet those who were once prodigal sons and daughters. It would be hard for us to imagine here in this life the intensity of emotion of those who unite with friends and loved ones around the throne. There we shall see the King in all His beauty and He will be known to every saint.

Our employment will be pleasing and no doubt of many varieties. We shall all behold and admire the glories of heaven. He will lead the ransomed millions over all the celestial fields of Immortality and unfold to us the riches and glory of His Eternal Kingdom. The glory of the future life is as real as though we had been wandering over the golden hills of eternal bliss for ten thousand years.

The most exalted conception of the heavenly felicity which awaits the people of God beyond the boundaries of time must be faint and inadequate as Paul asserts, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." I Cor. 2:9. The most vivid description of revelation, and the most sublime metaphors of Holy Writ are feeble vehicles in describing the ecstatic glories of the heavenly world.

In heaven we will have been saved from all evil. We will not be conscious of any defect to interrupt our happiness. It has been said that the pursuit of knowledge there will constitute a part of our employment and will greatly contribute to our happiness. We shall not die and leave truth behind but it will accompany us to the future world; and where we leave off here, we will take up there with renewed and immortalized powers. There we will not get tired any more but there our faculties will flourish in the freshness of youth.

Evil and sin will not be allowed to enter that holy city. All trouble here has been caused by sin. But there "the wicked cease from troubling." The faithful saint of God has had a hard time here but he will get recognition by and by.

Jesus did not want His followers to have a vain hope concerning future blessedness. He said I am going to that state in glory where there is not only a place of supreme importance for myself but there I will have a prepared place for all my followers.

Every negative has its opposite in the material and scientific world; hence this rule obtains in the spiritual world. Hell is exactly opposite of heaven and what one is, the other is not.

In heaven there will be law. In hell there will be anarchy.

In heaven there will be love. In hell there will be hate.

In heaven there will be joy. In hell there will be sorrow.

In heaven there will be rest. In hell there will be no rest day or night forever.

In heaven there will be light. In hell there will be the blackness of darkness forever.

For the saint, home at last. the voyage is over; the tempest is hushed. No more heart-aches, no more tired and wearied bodies, no more disappointments, no more thorns to be extracted, but blessed rest from the toilsome journey of life.

At home with the Savior at last. His arms enclose us, His grace comforts us; His light cheers us; and His presence satisfies us. We are now in the morning of the day that knows no night. He will lead us on, up, in and through and be our guide and light as eternal ages roll by.

The home of the soul will be the final abode of the saints. What permanence and satisfaction await us in that day and not us only but unto all them also that love His appearing. Families broken up for centuries will be reunited in that day never to part again. The martyrs and prophets will be there. The apostles and preachers who have been true to the blood and never betrayed their trust will be there.

Our weary bodies will not get tired any more; no more tears, for God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. We shall eat fruit of the tree of life and behold the sea of glass and drink from the river and fountain of life that flows by the throne of God. We will cast our crown at His feet and crown Him Lord of All and will still be loving Him because He first loved us. We shall see His face and His name shall be on our foreheads. "And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign with Him forever."

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