

Two Roads

by Welcome Detweiler

The sermon describes heaven and the two roads that lead to it, emphasizing the importance of trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Duration: 37:34

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Revelation 21:3, Revelation 21:5-6

Topics: "Heavenly Rewards", "Eternal Destiny"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by discussing the concept of bringing glory and honor into the kingdom of God. He then shares a story about a young man who was called into the office of the company president and was offered a promotion and a higher salary. The preacher also mentions a new distraction in the church, the flapping of a chart due to a change in the air vent direction. The sermon then transitions to a discussion of the book of Revelation, specifically chapter 21, and the different levels of heaven mentioned in the Bible.

Transcript

Two weeks from today, John Bramhall will be here after too long a pause in his ministry. Also this morning we have something new to keep you awake, and that is the clapping of the chart. Evidently someone changed the direction of the air vent, and that's the reason you have it clapping as it does.

And that ought to keep you awake. You can count how many times it claps, and that will keep you from going to sleep. Let's turn to the Revelation, chapter 21.

The book of the Revelation, chapter 21. Before we begin reading, let's look to the Lord in prayer. Our gracious Father, it is our desire that Thou wilt speak to us through Thy Word.

We thank Thee for the many different ways Thou dost speak to our hearts, and among them perhaps the best known is through Thy Word. And we thank Thee that Thou hast shown us the way of salvation through Thy Word. Otherwise we wouldn't know how to be saved.

So we thank Thee Thou hast clearly and very simply told us what we have to do to be sure that we'll be in heaven at the end of our journey. We thank Thee, too, that there are many other things Thou hast put in Thy Word that will help us on the journey home. And we ask, our Father, Thy blessing on Thy Word.

We pray that Thou wilt answer the prayers of those perhaps who are burdened. We think of some who have relatives and friends in the hospital and in the rest homes who need our prayers, and we pray for all of these and ask Thy blessing upon them. Some of them perhaps would be at the service this morning but are hindered because of physical problems.

We ask, our Father, Thou wilt graciously hear their prayers and answer them according to Thy will. We ask now, Thou wilt minister to our hearts. Grant, our Father, that no one will be overlooked in the ministry of Thy Word.

If enslaved ones have gathered with us, we pray Thou wilt have something that will create an interest in their heart to turn to Thee for salvation. And for those of us who know Thee, we pray that our hearts may be strengthened and we may be cheered on our way to heaven while we study Thy Word together. We ask Thy blessing in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Chapter 21, and I begin reading at verse 3. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. 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 any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

But the fearful and unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Over to verse 21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, every several gate was of one pearl.

And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth to bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it, and there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh alive, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

God will add his blessing to the reading of this wonderful portion of his precious word. It has happened on a number of occasions when a younger man was called into the office to speak to the president of the company, and he went in trembling, wondering what would happen. But his fears were soon allayed when the president said, I have watched you very carefully, and I see tremendous qualities in your performance, and I would like you to consider the possibility of expanding our work, and I would like to send you to another city to open up another branch of our company.

And I can assure you that the move will all be paid for, and I think I can also assure you that your take-home pay will be just about double what you are getting right now. How would you react to that? Well, it really doesn't make any difference. It's just a story.

However, he comes home, and normally speaking, his little wife comes to the door and smiles and greets him, and the first thing he has to say is, I'm getting arranged. Wonderful! Wonderful! Now we can get that second car, and we can get this, and she names a number of things. Delighted that she can have a raise that will enable her to have a lot of pleasures that she was denied up to this time.

And then, all at once, I see her face sober, and she says, Are there any strings attached? And he says, I'm afraid so. We'll have to move? Yes. Where to? Denver, Colorado.

2,000 miles away from mother? No! No, no, never! Oh, that's all right. We don't have to. This is just an offer that's given to us.

We don't have to move. After the house is quiet and all the rest have gone to bed, I see that little wife going over to the bookshelf and pulling down an encyclopedia under the letter D, Denver. In case we did decide to move, I would love to know something about that city, how large it is, what the climate's like, how hot it is in the summertime and how cold it is in the wintertime.

I'd like to know as much about it as I possibly can know. And this probably would grow until she might come and say, You know, that would be a nice experience. And the thing is settled.

I think that probably all of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior are aware of the fact that Jesus Christ might come at any moment. And we are promised the moment He comes again that every one of us will be transferred from Durham to Heaven. Now, isn't it normal if that fact is true, and I think you believe it, I hope you do, then we should be interested in saying, I would like to know as much as I can know about our permanent address.

It could be before we leave this meeting. There is no time limit as to when Jesus Christ will come back again. But the moment He does, we will immediately be brought into the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and be at home in Heaven.

I don't know if you thought about that this morning. I don't know if you kissed your hound dog when you left the place or your canary or whatever you have that's precious besides your children and said, I believe the Lord is coming again. I might never see you again.

Did you think of that this morning? It's not likely. We are too human to think about that. But the fact remains, at any moment Christians who have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior have entered in by the door and are on the narrow road to Heaven, will immediately be at home with the Lord.

Wouldn't it be nice to know as much about that place as we can possibly know? Now, you may object that I read a portion and the portion that I read describes the new Heaven and the new Earth. I looked for some portion that would describe the present Heaven and I couldn't find it. Maybe little odds and ends and little patches here, but nothing of a consecutive nature.

And I concluded that since God doesn't change, why would His Heaven change? The present Heaven will probably be exactly like the new Heavens that are promised in the Word of God. So, I think we can count on what I have read this morning to be what will be found in the place to which we are headed. When Paul

writes his letter to the Corinthian church in chapter 12, he tells us an interesting story.

Let me read it to you. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body I cannot tell or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth, such an one caught up to the third Heaven. And I knew such a man, whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth, how that he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Paul is talking about a certain man. He doesn't identify him. However, many Bible scholars believe that probably he is speaking about himself.

Fourteen years earlier or approximately fourteen years earlier, Paul was on a missionary tour and he visited a number of cities and included in that circle of cities is the city of Lystra. And in many of these places, he got a wonderful response and also opposition. The devil was using his tactics of a roaring lion.

And in the city of Lystra, this is what I read. And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Many Bible teachers believe that Paul is talking about himself.

Maybe one of the stones hit him at the cranial cavity and it knocked him out into a coma. And during that period, he doesn't know whether he was in the body or whether he was out of the body, but he said, I was carried into the third heaven and I saw things that are inexpressible, that perhaps no one is able to utter. Let's think for a moment of the term heaven as it is used in your Bible.

Because since there are at least three, then we must identify them. First of all, we talk about the birds of the heavens or the atmospheric heaven, that which we can see with the naked eye. Then beyond that, and we have learned in the last 20 years, that there is the stellar heaven.

We can see, of course, the stars and so on, but our astronauts are going beyond the first heaven into the second heaven. And that's tremendous space. And going even unto the moon.

I suppose that some of the things that were settled when men went to the moon and snapped pictures of the earth and saw that ball hanging on nothing and getting smaller and smaller and smaller and from the moon about the size that we have when we look at the full moon. A little ball and everyone could say, that's where I live and hope I will get back there again. That's the second heaven.

However, there is beyond that the third heaven. Moses describes it in the book of Deuteronomy and says, I call that thy holy habitation. Solomon joins him in 1 Kings 8 and he calls it thy dwelling place.

This is the abode of God. The cosmonauts from Russia, when they went up into the second heaven, they took their searchlights along and came back thrilled to report that they looked for God and they didn't find Him, which proves He's not there. And that should satisfy everyone.

The trouble is, they were still in the second heaven and the abode of God is infinitely above that. Now, what we have read this morning does not refer to the first heaven nor to the second heaven, but it does refer to the abode of God. The context of what we read indicates that altogether.

Heaven is described in many other portions of the word of God. Sometimes it's described as a country, perhaps suggesting to us the vastness of that place. Sometimes it's called a city, suggesting to us the innumerable people that will be there.

Again, it's spoken of as a kingdom, suggesting to us that there will be absolute peace and righteousness and there will be absolute joy in that place. Then again, it's spoken of as paradise, maybe suggesting to us the beauty and the grandeur of that lovely place. And once more, in John's Gospel, chapter 14, it is spoken of as the Father's house.

I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself. Here it is spoken of in my Father's house, suggesting to us the intimacy of the relationship between a child of God and his Heavenly Father. Whatever means are used, the different avenues or different words that are selected, they all convey to us the beauty of that place which we call God's holy habitation.

In the description that we have this morning, he tells us of things that will not be found there. It's a negative approach. He seems to say, now how will I ever acquaint finite minds with what heaven is like? I don't want to mislead them.

How can I get across to them? About the only way I can do it is take things that they know about down on earth and pull out of that all these things that are not going to be found in heaven. And that's what he does. Did you notice all the negatives that were used? There he says there will be no tears.

He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. No death, no sorrow, no crying. That group of words will remind us that we are still down here on earth and no one has gone very far through this world without having tears, death, crying, sorrow, and such like.

It's a part of our going through this world. I can't imagine a place where these are unknown, not permitted to enter. But he wants to get across to us.

There will be no sorrow there. Do you think it's possible for someone to have gone through this pilgrimage here for 40 years and been able to say I don't know what you're talking about when you talk about tears, when you talk about death, when you talk about crying, when you talk about sorrow? I don't think anyone probably could get through even one whole year without becoming afresh acquainted with some of these. I need not enumerate the various reasons that God may use to make us aware of the fact that we are still down here.

In that group of negatives, no more pain. We are really pain conscious, are we not? And when I visit people in the hospital, it's not uncommon to hear someone in some distant ward, oh, oh, an ugly sound. What do I hear? The groans of this creation.

And there's no way getting out of it. Pain will follow, the whole list of them. There are a number of other things that are mentioned in other parts of the Word of God which will not be there.

For instance, we read that there will be no candles or artificial light. The Son of God will be the light of that place. No temple therein.

No special place of worship. No moth nor rust. No depreciation.

I can't take that in either. No thieves. Justice will reign supreme.

You won't bother locking your doors. There are no locks on the doors in heaven. Some of you older people can look back to the days when you never locked your house when you left it.

Those days are past, I think. Maybe some of you left your house unlocked this morning. You better not advertise it.

But it's possible that we shall enjoy a place where there will be no one, no thieves and so on. No sun to scorch and burn. No moon with its chilly influences.

No night. No need for rest. I can't take these in.

But God is trying to describe to us the fact that this is a wonderful place. Again, in the Ephesian epistle, we are told that there will be no boasters there. Isn't it nice to have some boasters on earth? Every once in a year you hear them crowing just like that rooster in the morning.

And they blow off some steam. We won't be bothered with boasters in heaven. And we can go on.

There are many, many things and God is trying to describe to us what heaven will be like. So much for things that will not be there. Now let me think of some of the persons that will not be there.

In verse 8 of our reading this morning, and I'm surprised that while he is describing heaven, he would inject verse 8. It doesn't seem to belong there, does it? It's not a part of the context. I'm describing to you what heaven will be like. And then he starts with verse 8. But the fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, liars shall have their part in the lake of fire.

Once more he is contrasting and telling us people who will not be there. Thus far we've been talking about the two roads and now we are talking about the two destinies. And the two are brought close together.

You will be surprised when you read in your Bible about heaven and probably just a few verses down you have the counterpart. You have hell mentioned. And here he is telling about people that will not be there.

He starts out by saying the fearful will not be there. I'm surprised that he would put the fearful along with murderers and whoremongers and all the rest of them. But he starts out and says fearful people will not be there.

And I think I know the reason. Because there will be people who can say look at that category of verses and say I'm not a murderer and I'm not one of those rebels. We talked about the three different R's on the broad road.

The rebels, the respectables and the religious are all there. And the rebels. I am not a rebel.

However, the fearful. And I think that would probably come down to some people who are under the conviction of sin. And when I ask them, how is it that you haven't trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior? I can't give you a good answer but it just doesn't fit into my circumstances.

Where I work. If I were to go back there tomorrow morning and I were to tell them or someone else would tattle and say he trusted Christ last night. No, I couldn't.

I couldn't face it. Fearful. Fearful of trusting the Savior.

You know it's hard for an unsaved man to understand the gospel. Necessary. They tell me that your life will be changed.

You will want to go. I don't understand that. I don't think I would ever want to be mingling with Christians all the time and enjoying the Lord.

The fearful. This is keeping people from trusting the Savior. And it could be the number one reason why you haven't trusted the Savior.

If I was to move in another city and start over, I probably could. But where I work. I don't care if you're a policeman, if you're a painter, if you're a salesman.

I don't care what you are. Everyone will say it would be difficult for me to turn. They've known me as a sinner up until this time.

It would be very difficult for me to say I am also trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. I know my sins are forgiven. And I know that I'm on the way to heaven.

I couldn't face it. I just couldn't. The fearful.

Fear of what people would say when I come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Then the second one is the unbelieving. Remember that.

The unbelieving. Immediately we think of an atheist. A man who doesn't believe in God.

Unbelieving does not mean a man who doesn't believe in God. But it means they do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior. Let me read a familiar verse to you in John chapter 3. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.

It does not say, he that believeth there is a God. That is not the case. The unbelieving that are mentioned in Revelation 21 are those who do not believe that Jesus Christ is the only Savior and that he will give me everlasting life.

Forget about the infidel. I heard about an infidel in Victoria. A young man went from door to door handing out invitations and he met a mother and two children in the yard and she handed the invitation to the meetings.

And in a moment or so, the husband came out. And he came out in a rage. I don't want you to invite my family to those meetings.

I'm not interested. I'm an atheist. I want you to leave me alone.

He said he almost scared me out of my boots. And I asked some of the older men. He said, yes.

He said he's the known, the only known infidel in Victoria. But he's proud of it. And he said, I talked to him.

He said, I don't want to talk about it. I don't want to talk about it. That man is either a good candidate for suicide someday or he will come to Jesus Christ.

He's so miserable. Probably the most miserable man in the town because he is trying and only trying to block God out and to say, I don't believe in God. I would love to meet him when he's on his deathbed.

I would like to hear what he will say in those moments. But these that will not be there will include people who do not believe in Jesus Christ. Let me finish that verse in John 3. He that believeth on the Son hath

everlasting life.

That's a promise. That's a guarantee. It doesn't mean that I believe there was a Jesus Christ.

It means that I believe that he died for my sins and I believe that he is the only one that can save me and I have come to that place where I can say, I claim him as my Lord and Savior. And the moment you do that, God gives you eternal life. Now the rest of the verse.

And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. Now that's the other class. The class that will be going down to a lost eternity simply because they did not believe on the Son.

But let me think, too, of persons that will be found there. We've looked at things that will not be there and we've looked at persons that will not be there. Let's think of who will be there.

The Old Testament saints will be there. I would love to meet Abraham. I would love to have a session with him and say, how did you get the faith to be ready to offer your son and draw the sword and ready to plunge it in his side because the Lord told you? I would like to know where did you get that confidence in God? I admire you for it.

And I suppose we'd like to meet Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and all the rest of the prophets. No, I guess that's overdoing it, is it not? But it would be nice to meet all those Old Testament saints. And there will be the New Testament saints.

Of course, we'd like to meet all those who had a part in writing the New Testament. Eight of them. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Peter, Paul, Jude, and James. I'd like to meet all of them and thank them for their contribution to the Word of God and their agreement with all the rest of the Word of God. That's the only way they could write.

They were under the influence of the Holy Spirit. But I guess all of us, when we get there, will have to say regarding the Old Testament saints, the New Testament saints, our loved ones, and I'm sure that we'll want to see them. But I'm not sure that we'll want to see them first of all.

It is possible that on the way home we'll change our mind and we'll want to see the Savior first of all. In the book of the Acts, and Rod has been taking us through that, and the stoning of Stephen, you remember the Lord, He said He saw the heavens open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Now, we believe that He probably was seated and when Stephen was entering into the gates, He stood up to greet Him.

Now, we usually say that's what the martyr will receive. A special greeting from the Lord Jesus Christ. I would like to believe, and I don't know of any Scripture that hinders me from believing it, that He will do that for everyone that comes home.

Your loved one who left you and has caused you grief and pain, when He entered in, probably the same one was right there to greet Him, to meet those for whom He has died. It brings pleasure to the heart of Jesus Christ to know that He left that beautiful place, and He came down, and we have a number of hymns that we sing, down from His splendor and glory He came into a world of woe, took on Himself all my guilt and my shame, why should He love me so? And in the former hymn book we used to sing, out of the ivory palaces into a world of woe, only His great eternal love made my Savior go. Think of what He left

to come down here to be unwanted and live here for those 33 years and eventually go to the cross.

However, He did it gladly, don't feel sorry for Him, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down on the right hand of God. Remember too, that after His work was finished on earth, He went back to glory, and you have that in the first chapter of Acts, when they looked up and saw Him depart, and the wonderful affirmation that He went straight to heaven. Remember, that's the third heaven.

One of the things that Christians ask more often than anything else when we talk on the subject of heaven is, do they know what's going on on the earth? I can't answer that. I would like to think that they know some of the things that are going on on the face of the earth. I'm reasonably sure that they do know when people are saved.

And I take that from Luke's gospel chapter 15, and I read, I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance. That's repeated in verse 10. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angel of God over one sinner that repenteth.

I believe that the people in heaven are enjoying the news. One more, trusted the Savior. Have you ever thought of how many people are saved in the world? The whole wide world.

The gospel is being preached. I would like to believe that at least one per second, one, two, three, four, five, sixty in a minute, and thirty-six hundred in an hour, and multiply that. Do you think I'm too high? I wouldn't be a bit surprised.

And that may be one reason that our Lord Jesus Christ has not come back. It would be hard for him to close the door while they're coming. One, two, three.

And it may be that I'm too low. It may be they're coming in five abreast. Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, and so on.

But I do more know one thing, that the number that are going in there is multiplied by those that are dropping into hell at the same time. And if they are one per second, then I believe there are two per second that are dying in their sins and going to a lost eternity. God is offering heaven to every person on the face of the earth.

No one can be too bad. No one can be too good. It's for whosoever will.

And if you ever miss it, it'll be your fault. And no one else's. You will never be able to blame God.

You will never be able to blame Jesus Christ. You will never be able to blame the Holy Spirit. You'll have to blame yourself.

And that will make hell terrible. If only you could find someone else, some hypocrite to blame it on. But you will have to blame it on yourself.

Heaven is a wonderful place. And it's yours for the asking if you will come and say, Lord Jesus, I want to thank you for dying for me. And I will this morning, and I mean it, I will receive him as my Lord and Savior.

I want to thank him for dying for my sins. A lady who lived in Durham formerly came to the meetings in Victoria, and on Thursday night she said, I'm ready to be saved. We had the joy of leading her to the Savior, at least professing, and I hope that she will go on well for the Lord.

One, two, three. Isn't that delightful? I would like to stand at the door and watch them come in. Wouldn't that be delightful? And I think those in heaven are enjoying that much of what's going on in the earth.

That they are seeing souls coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Let's sing in our hymn book number 367. 367.

Come to the Savior, make no delay. Here in his word he's shown us the way. Here in our midst he's standing today, tenderly saying, come.

Let's stand and sing these three verses. And if you are interested in coming and making a public confession of Christ, I'd love to see you walk down the aisle and do that this morning.

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