

Fake News about Heaven
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We are in a sermon series called Fake News. Today I'm preaching on Fake News about Heaven.

I want to ask you - what do you think heaven is like? Some people imagine floating on clouds strumming harps. Others think it will be a church service that goes on forever. For that reason, some Christians don't get very excited about heaven. Floating around on clouds would be okay for a while – but really... is that all that heaven is?

No... heaven is much more than that. In fact, it's much greater than anyone of us can imagine. Most Christians actually don't know much about heaven – so today we will replace fake news about heaven with biblical truth about heaven.

Satan is a liar and some of his favorite lies are about heaven. Revelation 13:6 says:

He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander His name and His dwelling place and those who live in heaven.

Satan slanders God, heaven and those who live there! And he wants you to buy into his fake news about heaven.

Fake News #1 - Heaven does not exist

Some people try to deny the existence of heaven. They say it's a state of mind or it's the best life you can make on the earth. But Jesus said in John 14:1-3

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. 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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for those who believe in Him. It's not an imaginary place - it's a real place. John described this place called heaven in Revelation 21:11-27

It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates...

The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide.

He measured the city with the rod and found its length and width and height were each 1,400 miles. The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone... The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. But I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Heaven is a real place. From this passage we also see that-

Heaven is a Place of Riches

The foundations of heaven are made of precious stones and jewels. The gates are made of pearl and the streets are made of gold. Think about that! There are such riches in heaven that gold is used for pavement! And no one will be trying to dig up that gold and melt it down! You know why?

There will be no poor people in heaven!

There will no one on welfare or food stamps.

In fact, everyone will have their own mansion!

I grew up in a lot of church parsonages – and some of them weren't so nice - but I'm going to have a mansion in heaven!

My wife spent some of her early years in government housing called projects, but she's going to live in a mansion in heaven!

Listen... there will be no projects in heaven! No dumps, no double-wides, no starter homes, no fixer-uppers! Heaven is a place of riches and everyone will have a mansion!

Heaven is a place where we gain a resurrected body

Many people live their lives dissatisfied with their bodies. We try to accentuate our good parts and hide the bad. Let me tell you – there will be none of that in heaven! In heaven, our bodies will be made new and perfect. 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 says:

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

In heaven, we will have glorified bodies like Jesus had after His resurrection. He could pass thru walls – He could instantly appear or disappear - but He could still touch people, sit down and eat...praise God!

Revelation 21:4 says this about heaven:

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.

Everyone in heaven is totally 100% healthy! There will be no sickness, no tears, no pain, no grief, no death, no disfigurement, no disability, no blindness, no deafness, no diabetes, no cancer, no heart attacks, no tooth aches, no joint pain... no pain at all!

There will be no need for glasses, hearing aids, or wheel chairs. There will also be no false teeth, wigs, toupees, hair dye, hair extensions, wrinkle cream, make up or cover ups. Can you say Amen to that!

Heaven is a Relational Place

All of us live in this world of a dissolving family circle. Mother may be gone – Father may be gone, or a child is gone, or our beloved grandparents are gone, or a close friend is gone.

But the circle is unbroken in Heaven forever and ever. Your loved ones who are believers in Christ will be in heaven with you.

Here's another awesome thought –

For years we've heard about and read about Bible heroes and when we get to heaven we'll get to meet them all. We'll get to:

Ask David what it was like to fight Goliath....

Ask Peter what it was like to walk on water...

Ask Moses about parting the Red Sea and Daniel about the lion's den and

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego about the fiery furnace and Mary about being Jesus' mom...

Who are you looking forward to talking with?

One of the most precious experiences we will have in heaven is being approached by someone who says, I got saved because of your witness, your testimony, your missions giving, your prayers.

Heaven will be a Place of Rewards and a Place of Relief

We've spent our lives warring – fighting – standing – hoping – praying – overcoming.

Here's some good news: Satan will not be in heaven!

There will be no spiritual warfare there.

We've spent our lives fighting against temptation and sin and addictions – but there will be none of that in heaven!

We've struggled to make a living and pay the bills – aren't you glad there will be no more bills in heaven!

There will be no divorce, no child abuse, no accidents! No more worry or fear or sadness. Instead of grief –we'll have nothing but relief! Some of us have had some tough times in life, but I believe the more you may go thru down "here", the sweeter heaven will be for you! Romans 8:16-18 says:

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Heaven is a Place of Answers

In heaven – every problem will be resolved and every question will be answered. I've had people ask me a lot of "why" questions over the years.

- Why was my child born with a disability?
- Why did my friend die?
- Why did my spouse or my parents abandon me?

I don't have all the answers, but all those questions will be answered in heaven! It's a place where everything will be resolved.

Heaven is the Residence of Jesus!

If you don't live for Christ – that may not seem like anything to you. If you live for yourself – then to die is loss. But if you live for Christ – to die is gain. Because in Heaven you will be with Him forever. That's what makes heaven, heaven!

And if Jesus is there – I don't care if the streets are gold or gravel!

If Jesus is there – I don't care if the walls are jasper or plaster!

What makes it heaven is that Jesus is there.

And Jesus said He went to prepare room for us.

Heaven is a Place with Plenty of Room

Will there be room for everyone? Sure! The city is 1400 miles wide – 1400 miles long – and 1400 miles high. That's huge! From Maine to Florida over to Colorado...and then, it's that high too! The literal land area of heaven is 2,250,000 square miles. It is estimated that 100 billion people have lived on earth in its history and there would be room for all of them in heaven if they had all been saved.

But there's the problem. Heaven is a place with plenty of room, but...

Fake News #2 – Everyone is going to heaven

Not true! Heaven is a Restricted Place. Satan wants you to believe that all roads lead to heaven, but right here in the middle of this positive, beautiful description of heaven, God gives us a list of some who won't be there. Revelation 21:8 says:

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Why does God include this info? He wants us to be sure we are not among those not allowed in heaven. Now, most of us have fit into one or more of these categories at some point in our life. Some might be convicted right now that they are still living that way.

And that should concern you. But don't miss this truth: any of these people can get saved. Those who don't make it to heaven are not people who never sinned but people who died without repenting of their sins. I want to give you some hope from God's word today. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 says:

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Some of you were that way – but you're not that way anymore!
You've been saved and your life has changed.
Not only that – but your eternal destiny has changed.
You have chosen Jesus and that means you chose heaven over hell.

Revelation 21:27 says this about getting into heaven:

Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

So – that's the ultimate question: is your name written in the Lamb's book of life? How do you get your name written there? Jesus said He was the way the truth and the LIFE – no one comes to the Father but by Him. Those who are in the Lamb's book of life are those who trust in the Lamb for eternal life!

Salvation is by grace alone, thru faith alone, in Christ alone, plus nothing, minus nothing. Put your faith and trust in Jesus alone as your only hope for heaven! Are you looking forward to it?

2 Peter 3:13 says:

In keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

New Testament believers looked forward to this. The Apostle John actually received a vision of it in Revelation 21:1

I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

The earth as it exists now will eventually be no more.
Heaven as it exists now will eventually be no more.
And get this: ultimately – heaven will be on earth!

Right now heaven is full of believers who are singing a new song to Jesus Christ – the Lamb of God. Revelation 5:9-10 says:

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."

Where are these people? In heaven! But where do they say they will reign in the future? In heaven? NO! On earth! And one day all believers will reign on the earth! After this song of redeemed people, Revelation talks about angels singing. This is important because:

Fake News #3 – People who go to heaven become angels

Not true. Angels are angels and people are people. People do not turn into angels. When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, Elijah and Moses appeared with Him. They had not transformed into angels, but appeared as themselves. They had received their glorified bodies, but they were recognizable to Peter, James and John.

Angels are not humans who died and went to heaven. That's impossible because angels existed before humans did. Angels are spiritual beings who were created by God to be His servants. Colossians 1:16 says:

For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities — rank after rank after rank of angels — everything got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him.

According to the Parable of the Minas – the Lord will reward our faithfulness in this life by giving us cities to rule over on the New Earth. Luke 19:16-19 says:

Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

In the New Heaven on the New Earth we will be given positions of authority based on our faithfulness on this earth. 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 says:

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? Do you not know that we will judge angels?

We will reign on Earth under the direction and leadership of Jesus Christ! And that includes judging angels. How could that be if people became angels?

We were created to reflect the image of God and to rule on the earth. Sin messed that up... but Jesus came to restore God's purposes. He will restore us to the image of God and to our place of ruling. We will rule and reign with God on the new Earth!

The New Earth will be the earth made perfect again.

Everything good about earth will exist – everything bad will pass away.

There will be no sin, no temptation, no Devil.

There will be no pain, no sickness, no death.

There will be no problems, no accidents, no traffic jams.

No road rage or old age.

No bad news or sad news.

No recession or oppression.

No getting provoked and no going broke.

There will be absolutely nothing to complain about!

Instead – there will be joy and fulfillment and fun!

You will miss nothing about life on earth because it will be infinitely better there!

Fake News #4 – Heaven will be boring

Heaven will not be floating around all day singing praise songs. There will be praise, but much more. Let me make this very clear: heaven will never be boring.

Heaven will be the most fascinating, exciting, fun, interesting, fulfilling place that ever existed!

- The best day you've had on earth will be nothing compared to your life on the New Earth!
- The most fulfilling job you've ever had will be boring compared to ruling and reigning with Christ!

- The most beautiful scenery you've ever seen on earth will seem drab compared to the beauty of the New Earth!
- The most fun you've ever had on earth will be dull compared to the excitement you will have on the New Earth!
- The closest relationship you've had on earth will seem distant compared to the relationships you will have on the New Earth!
- The best house you've ever lived in on earth will seem like a shack compared to your mansion in heaven!
- The best meal you've ever eaten on earth will seem tasteless compared to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb!
- The most beautiful music you've ever heard on earth will seem like noise compared to the music in heaven!

In heaven - not only can we talk about faith with Doubting Thomas - we can talk inventing with Thomas Edison or football with Tom Landry.

Not only can we talk about God with Father Abraham - we can talk about the Civil War with Abraham Lincoln.

We can talk doctrine with the Apostle Paul and talk about the reformation with Martin Luther and Civil Rights with Martin Luther King.

We can paint with Da Vinci and sculpt with Michelangelo.

And best of all – we'll be able to spend time with Jesus!

My point is this – what you love here you will love there only it will be incomparably better!

Heaven will never be boring!

Are you looking forward to it?

And are you sure you're getting in?