



Pictures of Heaven:

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A Bible Study on “Pictures of Heaven”

“When I die, will I see my family members in heaven and recognize them?” “Do we become angels?” “What is heaven like?” Everyone has questions like these.

Books have been written by those who claim to have gone into heaven and then returned. But many of the claims about supposed visions of heaven actually contradict the Word of God.

For Christians, the only sure truths about heaven can be found in Holy Scripture. We do not engage in speculation. We find joy and comfort in the reality of heaven promised by the prophets, apostles, and Jesus Himself.

This study will highlight five descriptions of heaven in the Bible.

The New Jerusalem

Jesus made it clear that His body is now the true temple of the Church. **Read John 2:13-22.** He is our New Temple in the New Jerusalem in heaven. **Read Hebrews 12:22-29 and Revelation 21:1-27.**



In the *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)* Hymn 672 we sing “Jerusalem the golden, With milk and honey blest—The promise of salvation, The place of peace and rest.”

What do these verses say to those who think that the temple must be rebuilt in Jerusalem in order to usher in the return of Christ? Why is this a false hope? Who is our light and our life in the new Jerusalem above?

The Wedding Banquet

God the Father prepares a wedding banquet and feast. His Son is the bridegroom and the Church is the holy bride. This supper has been prepared for all believers. We have a foretaste of that feast in Holy Communion. Rejoicing in the oneness of God’s people of all races and nationalities, we will have eternal table fellowship in the heavenly banquet

hall. **Read Matthew 22:2-14 and Revelation 19:5-9; 21:1-3; 22:16,17.**

We sing in hymn *LSB* Hymn 514, “The Bridegroom soon will call us, ‘Come to the wedding feast.’”

Who are the invited guests to the wedding feast? What clothing do all the attendees wear? When the banquet begins, why will our joy be endless?



The New Garden of Eden—Paradise

The only way back into paradise, where we eat from the tree of life, is made clear. Mankind must move from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil through the tree of the cross in order to approach and eat from the tree of life. Now the angels will welcome us into the new Garden of Paradise.

Read Luke 23:40-43 and Revelation 2:7; 22:1-21.

In the Prayer of Thanksgiving in *LSB* Divine Service 4, the pastor prays, “Yet, in Your great mercy, You promised salvation by a second Adam, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and made His cross a life-giving tree for all who trust in Him.” Also in *LSB* Hymn 561 “The Tree of Life,” we sing, “The Lord invites the world to eat, To find within this cross of wood, The tree of life with ev’ry good.”

Why is this eternal garden in paradise a fitting reversal of what happened in the Garden of Eden? Jesus will walk anew



Five Biblical Descriptions

with us in this heavenly garden. How does this reality fill us with joyful anticipation?

The Peaceable Kingdom

We are at peace with God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only mediator between God and man. Since we are at peace with God, we are also at peace with ourselves and with others. The peace of God surrounds us in the Divine Service on earth each Sunday. In heaven His peace surrounds us forever. **Read Isaiah 65:17-25 and Revelation 7:9, 13-17.**



In the Collect for Peace of the Divine Service, we pray, “Give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give...that we...may live in peace and quietness.”

How does the image of a peaceful eternal habitation give us perspective in enduring the constant chaos and uncertainty of life on earth? Why can we even now have true peace in the midst of the madness and constant warring?

The Whole Company of Saints and Angels

Saints are those who are accounted holy and righteous and without blemish. They are covered by the blood of the Lamb of God. In heaven, we will finally see all the saints who have gone before us. Angels who serve God and minister to man are around us all the time. In heaven, we will also finally see all the angels who protected us. They fill the universe with songs of adoration to the Holy Trinity. **Read Matthew 25:31-34, 46 and Revelation 5:9-14; 7:9-17; 11:17-19; 19:1-6.**

In the Proper Preface of the Divine Service, we hear every week, “Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious

name, evermore praising You and saying, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy...’”

When you gather at the communion rail, you are getting a glimpse of this glorious multitude. You are not far removed from your believing loved ones who are deceased. They gather in heaven as we gather here on earth. We make up one blest communion. Why does this give you tremendous comfort when you are grieving the deaths of your sainted family members?



A Christian recognizes that the truest and purest joy of heaven is being in the presence of God. The beatific vision will become reality. The mystery of our creation by the Triune God, who said let “us” make man (male and female) in “our” image, will finally be understood. We will truly comprehend the words of St. Augustine, “Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee.” 📖

NOTE: A five week Bible study entitled “Pictures of Heaven” with PDFs, Powerpoint, and audio files, written by Rev. Nehrenz, can be found at this link: <http://tlcnorman.org/classes/pastors-bible-class/pictures-of-heaven>.

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