



When I was a child I always pictured Heaven to be this place in the clouds. It was a place where I could jump from cloud to cloud and bounce on them like big trampolines. Even though it was in the clouds it was always sunny. I'm not sure how that works but that's how I pictured it. I envisioned God sitting on a big throne on a cloud. I imagined Him to be very old, much older than your mom and dad, with a huge gray beard. Angels were flying around wearing white robes and holding harps. For some reason the angels never played the harps but they were always holding them.

How many of you have ever wondered what Heaven is like? Have you ever lain in bed at night and thought about what Heaven would be like? Have you ever daydreamed about the sights, sounds and smells you would encounter in Heaven? When you think about Heaven, do you think it's going to be a safe place, or are you afraid when you think about it? Have you ever considered the size of Heaven? Will Heaven be a big place or a small place? These are just some questions, and I'm guessing most of us have questions about Heaven.

Can we all agree that there is something deep inside of each of us that longs for Heaven? The Bible doesn't tell us a whole lot about Heaven, but in Revelation 21–22 the curtain is pulled back wide to give us a vision of what awaits us. Simply put, these chapters answer the question, What will Heaven be like? Some people might wonder if that's even a question worth asking. But as we've already talked about, we think about Heaven all the time. Every person wonders if there is more than just this life. Statistics actually tell us that over 75% of Americans believe there is a Heaven. So let's talk about it!

### Heaven is a Safe Place

How many of you like to be safe? How many of you love to feel protected and know that everything is going to be okay? Me too! The first thing we're going to learn is that Heaven is a safe place.

**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. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.**

**'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" (Revelation 21:1–4).**

Now John, the guy who is writing this letter, gives us a clue about how safe Heaven is going to be. John says of the new heavens and new earth "*there was no longer any sea.*" That's kind of a bummer, don't you think? My wife loves the sea. How can there be no sea in heaven? But in the Bible, the sea represents the forces of chaos. It's unpredictable. It can rise up and wipe out hundreds of thousands of people in one swoop. When we read "there was no longer any sea" it's another way of saying in Heaven the forces of chaos are gone. No more typhoons and earthquakes. No more cruise ships hitting rocks and sinking into the ocean. No more waves knocking you over when you're digging for sand crabs. Parents, we don't have to worry about the ocean sweeping our kids away or making them fall when the waves come in.

You know one way I know Heaven is going to be safe? God will be there. The Bible just told us that God is going to be there! God is going to wipe away all our tears. Think about the last time you fell off your bike or were running and tripped and skinned your knee. Now think how comforting it was when your mommy or daddy was there to comfort you. In Heaven God is going to be there to comfort us. He is going to be there with us. He will wipe away the tears from our eyes. There will be no more death or crying or pain. Heaven is safe.

When my family moved here two years ago we had a goldfish named Mimi. My daughter, Sophie, was two years old when she picked out Mimi at the pet store. That fish lived a great life, and one day we found Mimi upside down. It was hard, but we gave Mimi a good burial in the toilet that morning. Mimi was dead and my kids were crying; they were in pain. In Heaven we're not going to experience that pain because there is no death.

### Heaven is Big

The next thing we're going to learn is that Heaven is big.

**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 it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long (verses 15–16).**

When we translate 12,000 stadia to miles, we get 1400 square miles. Let me tell you what 1400 square miles is like. The Peninsula, where we live, is 50 miles long. From the top of California to the bottom is almost 800 miles. The size of the new Heaven is almost double the length of the state of California.

Jesus told us some pretty cool things about Heaven. Not only is Heaven going to be really big, but God is going to have a huge house there and Jesus is already there preparing it for us.

**“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (John 14:1–3).**

Let me talk with your parents for a minute. Parents, when you go on a vacation do you just throw the kids in the car and start driving or do you plan out your trip beforehand? In my family we plan out the trip. I look at the map, maybe five times, to make sure I know where I’m going. We make sure we have a hotel room to sleep in, and if the girls are lucky we find a hotel with a pool. My wife packs all the right clothes for where we’re going so our kids have what they need. Jesus is telling us that He is already planning for us! God has a big house in Heaven and we’re going to have our own bedrooms there.

How many of you share a room with your brother or sister? Do you have bunk beds in your room? Do you ever get mad at your sibling for leaving toys out on the floor, or their dirty clothes on your bed? In Heaven, you are going to have your very own bedroom and Jesus is preparing that room right now. Since Heaven is so big, I like to think there is a huge backyard there where I can BBQ with my family and have all my friends over. There might even be a huge swing set there or a slip-and-slide in the backyard for warm days. Jesus confirms how big Heaven is going to be big and the best part is that Jesus is waiting there for us!

### **Heaven is Magnificent**

So far we’ve talked about Heaven being a safe place and a big place. The next glimpse we get into Heaven is that we find out Heaven is a magnificent place.

**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 first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass (Revelation 21:18–21).**

What is another word for magnificent? John describes the magnificent beauty of heaven as having walls of precious gemstones, streets of pure gold and gates of pearls. Think about how beautiful this will look. Now boys, you might not be super impressed with the gemstones or pure gold in Heaven, but girls, are you in awe of all the pretty jewels there?

Have you ever been to Disneyland? Last year I took my family to Disneyland and we had a great time! Disneyland is magnificent. It has all these cool attractions, fun rides, great food and all the toys one could ever desire. In Disneyland you can meet princes and princesses, you can eat junk food and never throw up, and your cheeks hurt from smiling when you’re done! Guess what? Disneyland is going to seem lame compared to how magnificent Heaven is!

Let me tell you what will make Heaven the most spectacular place—the radiant glory of God will replace the sun’s light. Glory radiates from God. It’s what makes him God. Verse 23 tells us more where this glory comes from.

**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.**

It’s like John is dazzled by the glory that lights up the city but he can’t figure out where it all comes from. He looks high and low and finally he sees a figure out of which all this light is pouring forth and he cries out with recognition, “It’s the Lamb! The light is the Lamb!” It’s the crucified Savior! There is no higher affirmation of the person and work of Jesus Christ than to say that He’s the source of the glory of God!

### **Heaven is a Satisfying Place**

How many of you love to drink fresh water on a hot day? Have you ever bitten into an apple and it was so satisfying? The next thing John talks about is that Heaven is a satisfying place.

**Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month (Revelation 22:1–2a).**

We learn that Heaven has abundant provisions: the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, and the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. Not only will Heaven not have loss, it will not have lack. Every need will be met. Today, 870 million people will go to sleep hungry, many of them children. These things will not be so in Heaven. Heaven will be a place of life, fruit, fresh water and fullness; there will be no one lacking anything in Heaven. The most satisfying part of Heaven will be seeing the face of God.

**They will see his face,... (v. 4a)**

## **Heaven is a Real Place**

Hearing all of this may make you super excited for Heaven or it might make you wonder if a place like this could exist. We see some tough things here on earth and it can be easy to wonder if a place like Heaven is real. I want everyone to leave here knowing this: Heaven is a Real Place. I'm convinced Heaven is real. Of everything we've talked about the most important part is knowing that Heaven is real. One way we can know Heaven is real is that when Jesus rose from the dead He had a real body. The Bible tells us He ate food and He drank with people. His disciples were able to see Him and they really touched Him,

**On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord (John 20:19–20).**

Jesus had a real body and now He lives in Heaven. So we can know that Heaven is real because Jesus lives there.

This morning we talked about Heaven being a safe place, a really big place, magnificent, the satisfaction we'll find there, and we ended with talking about it being real. Knowing all of this may leave you with one last question, How do I get to Heaven? Let me answer that for you. The way we get to Heaven is by trusting in Jesus Christ with our whole heart. The Bible tells us that everyone has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The Bible also tells us that God demonstrates his own love for us that while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). The Bible is clear that if you confess with your mouth and believe in your hearts that God raised Christ from the dead you will be saved (Romans 10:9-10).

Our response to this is to say: Jesus, I trust you.

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*

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*Catalog No. 1400-FC/WT*

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This message from Scripture was preached on Sunday, April 20, 2014 at Central Peninsula Church  
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