

HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF PRAISE

Meditating on the Nature of Praise that Takes Place in Heaven

Throughout the book of Revelation the apostle John is given glorious glimpses of heaven, and just about all of them include praise choruses. In chapter four, John sees four living creatures around the throne: “and day and night they never cease to say, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’... the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ‘Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created’” (vv. 8-11). Other examples of praise in heaven can be seen in chapters 7, 8, 12, 14, 15 and 19. It’s clearly evident that heaven is a place of praise.

Heaven is a place of praise primarily because God is there, and He is seen not as in a mirror dimly, but face to face. When those in heaven “behold the glorious power of God, they cannot but praise that power; when they see God’s wisdom that is so wonderful, and infinitely beyond all created wisdom, they cannot but continually praise that wisdom; when they view the infinitely pure and lovely holiness of God...how can they avoid with an exalted heart to praise that beauty of the divine nature! When they see the infinite grace of God, and see what a boundless ocean of mercy and love he is, how can they but celebrate that grace with the highest praise!” (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol. 2, p. 914).

Heaven is not only a place of praise; it is a place of *perpetual* praise. If God were to open our ears right now to hear what was going on in heaven at this very moment, we would hear praise. Praise takes place around the clock in heaven: “day and night they never cease to say, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty...’” (Rev. 4:8). Have you ever been so caught up in praise during a service that you wished it didn’t have to end? In heaven it never does and never will.

Furthermore, heaven is a place of *powerful*, perpetual praise. John says, “And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth” (Rev. 14:2-3). Three similes describe the voice of this choir in heaven. First, it was “like the roar of many waters.” Ezekiel 43:2 says that God’s voice is “like the roar of rushing water.” Perhaps this choir sounds like God singing. Second, it was “like the sound of loud thunder.” Not just thunder that you might hear in the distant, but *loud* thunder from a close lightning strike. Third, it was “like the sound of harpists playing on their harps.” This means the singing was melodious and without discord. Heaven is filled with booming, thunderous, God-like, beautiful, harmonious praise.

John piles simile upon simile in an effort to describe heavenly praise which is light years beyond any earthly praise that he had been a part of in the temple or synagogue. The point is not just that the praise was loud—although it was—the point is that this praise was powerful. It came from worshipers who held nothing back. This is because all the obstacles which hinder praise on earth are absent in heaven. Obstacles like a lukewarm heart, a distracted mind, inaccurate thoughts of God, a tired body, an out of tune voice, being unfamiliar with the melody, etc.

Finally, heaven is a place of *progressive*, powerful, perpetual praise. By progressive I don’t just mean ongoing, I mean growing, increasing and expanding for all eternity with literally no end in sight. The apostle Paul said that we have been seated with Christ in the heavenly places “so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6-7). “Immeasurable riches” means that these riches cannot be measured, because they keep growing and increasing. Heaven will not be a flash of excitement followed by years and years and years of boredom. The joy of heaven will never plateau or fade; rather it will increase every single day throughout all eternity as we learn something new of God’s glorious attributes. For example, since God’s love is infinite, our understanding of it can never be exhaustive. When we’ve been there ten thousand years bright shining as the sun...we’ll still be able to say, “I’m learning more all the time about the depth of God’s love, as well as His grace, mercy, goodness, etc. And this knowledge will cause us to burst forth in thunderous praise even more than the day before.

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