

A Study of The Epistle of 2nd Peter

Theme: “Grow in Grace and Knowledge”

Trinity Lutheran Church - Norman, OK.

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Lesson: 24 Chapter 3:13 Date: 2-6-22



BIBLE TEXT and STUDY NOTES

(13) But according to **his promise** we are waiting for **new heavens and a new earth** in which **righteousness** dwells.

(Is 11:4,5; 45:8; 60:21; 65:17; 66:22; Dan 9:24; Rom 8:19-22; Rev 21:1,27)

“PICTURES OF HEAVEN” - Five Biblical Descriptions - Bible Study on “Pictures of Heaven”

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

Books have been written by those who claim to have gone into heaven and then returned. 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 will 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.

1. 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 LSB Hymn 372 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? Where is our true temple in the new Jerusalem to be found?

2. 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) (Revelation 19:5-9; 21:1-3; 22:16,17)

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

Who are the invited guests into the wedding feast? What clothing do all the attendees wear? When the banquet begins, how will our joy be endless and eternal?

3. 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) (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 hymn 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? Since Jesus will walk anew with us in this heavenly garden, how does this reality fill us with joyful anticipation?

4. 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?

5. 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 - Christ Jesus our Lord. In heaven we will finally get to 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 get to see all the angels who protected us. They fill the universe with songs of adoration to the Holy Trinity.

Read (Matthew 25:31-34) 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 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."