

## Armagh Baptist Church – Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2010

### 'Heaven: and how to get there'

John ch.14:1-11

#### Introduction

I want to talk to you tonight about Heaven - and how to get there.

Some of you will know the story of Joni Eareckson. She is now a well-known singer and song-writer and speaker at many Christian Events around the world. But it all started when she was paralysed from the neck down in a diving accident in Chesapeake Bay when she was just 17. She damaged her neck when she hit the bottom, and ever since she had been confined to a wheelchair. But through that terrible life-changing accident, she came to have a strong faith in Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour. One thing she has always been looking forward to, is getting to heaven. Because there she will have a perfect body for once again. She'll be able to run and walk around heaven, and do all kinds of things she can't do here. As I said she became a singer and song-writer, and one of the songs she wrote was simply called: **"There just aren't enough songs about Heaven."** And she's right! Do we really think about heaven enough, and what it's going to be like when we get there?

Derek Hutchinson preached at my Induction to the pastorate of Mullaghmeen Baptist Church away back on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1991 – very nearly 19 yrs ago. I've never forgotten one of the things he preached about. He said:

*"Tell them about Heaven, and then tell them how to get there!"*

That's exactly what I want to do tonight...

#### 1. WHAT'S HEAVEN LIKE? (v.1-4)

That's a question we've all been fascinated with - even from childhood. Nobody really knows in detail - except what God has told us in the Bible. eg. Here in John 14:1-4. From these verses we can deduce certain things:

- (i) It's the place where God the Father dwells (v.2) - *"In my Father's House..."*
- (ii) It's a place with plenty of room. (v.2) - *"...are many mansions." (rooms).*
- (iii) It's a place that is being prepared for us (v.2) – by Jesus!  
*"I am going to prepare a place for you."*
- (iv) It's a place where we can be *with* Jesus. (v.3) -  
*"I will... take you to be **with me** that you also may be where I am."*

Jesus told the disciples these things to comfort them (v.1) just before he left them, went to the cross, and then returned to heaven.

Come with me to Revelation ch.21 and let's discover more about Heaven. (Rev.21:1-5).

(v.3) Everyone in Heaven will have a close perfect relationship with God.

(v.4) In Heaven there will be the absence of many things:

**No more tears** - hurt, separation, grieving, anguish. All gone!

**No more death** - we've all had to stand at our fair share of funerals. No more!

**No more sorrow, or crying** - All sadness, bad news, disappointments. Gone!

**No more pain** - physical pain, emotional pain, any kind of hurt - All gone!

Why? *'Because the former things have passed away!'* (v.4)

All the hurt, pain, heartache, misery that sin has caused in this world will be gone!

Read Rev.21:22-25, 22:1-5 - A bright, beautiful, glorious place awaits us. Let me ask you...

Do you want to go there? Are you ready to go there? Are you able to go?

#### 2. WHY WOULDN'T YOU BE ABLE TO GO TO HEAVEN? (Rev.21)

**(i) Because heaven is a holy place** inhabited by a holy God, who cannot stand the sight of sin, nor allow it to be anywhere near him. Sin will never be allowed into heaven (Rev 21:27).

**How do I know?** (21:5)

*"God is making all things new."*

God is creating a whole new order - A new paradise.

He's doing away with the original paradise that Adam & Eve spoiled by sin and disobedience (this earth), and one day he is going to make a new heaven and a new earth. This time sin will never be allowed to spoil it.

**(ii) Who won't be allowed in to heaven?** (21:6-8)

There's a whole list of obvious exclusions -

murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters.

But did you notice...

*"The cowardly"* – those who were afraid to stand up and be counted for Christ

*"The unbelieving"* - those who have never personally believed or trusted in Jesus Christ to save them. Those who simply neglected, or didn't take the time to trust in Christ!

**Why?** Because of sin. (v.27)

That is the clear distinction. That is the one thing that can keep you out of heaven. Either you have trusted in Jesus' death for you on the cross to deal with your sin once and for all, otherwise, if not, your sin is still held against you, and if you die in your sin, that's what will keep you out of heaven!

### **3. BUT THERE IS A WAY TO HEAVEN. (John 14:6)**

Jesus is the way to Heaven. Notice his 3 claims in this verse:-

*"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."*

This was said in response to Thomas' questions and doubts. (v.5)

**(i) Jesus claimed to be God.** "I am".

Each time he referred to himself as "I am" their minds would have turned back to Moses at the burning bush. (Exodus 3:6, 13-15) - He was taking upon his lips the unutterable holy name of God. - He was claiming to be God. (cf. John 18:5,6).

**(ii) Jesus claimed to be *the* Way to God.**

He said, "I am the Way..." - the way to God.

(cf. John 10:7-9) - "I am the door..."

If you enter by me you will be saved, and on your way to heaven.

How is Jesus the way to God?

Because not only was he fully God, he was also fully man.

A sinless perfect man. He identified himself with you and me, and he went to the cross bearing your sin and mine.

He took our punishment and death as the penalty for our sin.

As God and Man he brought God and Men together at the cross.

He bridged the great gulf that sin had caused between us and God.

And so the way to heaven has been opened up for us because He has dealt with our sin. (See Hebrews 10:19-22).

Now by putting our faith and trust in Christ we can know that we are on that way to Heaven. (See John 14:1, John 1:12, John 3:16.)

But not only did he claim to be the Way, he also claimed to be:-

**"The Truth"** - So either his claim is true, or else, if it's not, he's a Liar!

**"The Life"** - Abundant Life now (Jn.10:10). Eternal Life in Heaven (Jn.3:16).

**(iii) BUT HE CLAIMED TO BE THE ONLY WAY TO GOD.**

Jesus never said he was one of many ways to God – so you could take your pick. As many people or even churches might tell you today.

No, Jesus said he was the **only** way to God.

(v.6) *"No man comes to the Father except through me."*

(See Acts 4:12) *"Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved."*

(See 1 Timothy 2:5)

*"There is one God and one Mediator between God and men - The Man, Christ Jesus."*

### **CONCLUSION**

**So don't be substituting your church, or your minister or priest, or your good works, or any saint, etc, etc as your mediator to get you to God - They will all fail you!**

All these things are like ladders you set up to try to get yourself into heaven, but they all fail because they don't reach the whole way.

**Jesus is the only one who can get you into Heaven,  
Because He is the only one who has died for your sin.**

**Come to Him, and Go to Heaven,  
Try to come some other way, and you'll end up in Hell.**

- Remember Revelation 21:8

- Listen now to 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

We finished with that at the Lord's Table this morning.

Here we have it again tonight.

There is no-one beyond hope: 'Such were some of you!'

But the urgency is for you to respond now.

I've told you about heaven.

I've told you how to get there.

I've told you who can go there.

The question is: are you going to heaven?

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