

Meditating on the New Heaven and New Earth

I. Why Yearn for and Think Often about the New Heavens and New Earth¹

A. We are strangers and sojourners on the present Earth (1 Pet. 2:11)

Richard Baxter, “If you were ... banished into a strange land, how frequently would your thoughts be at home? And why is it not thus with us in respect to heaven?” (*Saints’ Everlasting Rest*, 29).

Thomas Watson, “The world is but a great inn [hotel] where we are to stay a night or two and be gone. What madness it is so to set our heart upon our inn as to forget our home” (*Godly Man’s Picture*, 109)

B. The new Earth is where we will live for eternity (Heb. 11:10, 13-14, 16; John 14).

C. A heart fixed on Heaven is a wonderful help in fighting the temptation to sin

1. It reminds us that the current Earth will be judged and cleansed and give way to a perfectly righteous new Earth (2 Pet. 3:11-13).
2. It reminds us that a joy superior to the vain pleasure of sin is to come (Heb. 11:25-26).
Baxter, “You cannot persuade a child to part with his candy while he has the taste in his mouth. O that you would be much in feeding on the hidden manna, and be frequently tasting the delights of heaven! How would this make you despise the foolish things of the world!” (22)

D. Keeping your heart in Heaven will maintain vigor in Christian service (1 Cor. 15:58).

E. Frequent and believing views of heavenly glory motivate us to persevere in affliction and give us comfort now (Rom. 8:18, 5:3-4).

Baxter says, “This keeps the sufferings from the soul, so that it can only touch the flesh” (25). “Could we but clearly see heaven as the end of all God’s dealings with us, surely none of His dealings could be grievous.” (27).

F. There is nothing better to set our hearts upon than Heaven (Ps. 73:24-25).

II. Meditating on Heaven

A. *Baxter calls us to meditate on heaven:* “Is a heavenly rest available to us? Why then are our thoughts no more upon it? Why are not our hearts continually there? Has the eternal God provided us such a glory, and promised to take us up to dwell with Himself, and is not this worth thinking on? . . . [By doing the hard work of focusing your mind on heaven], you will find yourself in the suburbs of heaven and that there is, indeed, a sweetness in the work and way of God, and that the life of Christianity is a life of joy” (13-14). *See also Col 3:1-4.*

B. What is Meditating

Baxter, “As digestion turns food into nourishment for the body, so meditation turns the truths received and remembered into warm affection, firm resolution, and a holy lifestyle.” (58).

¹ Note, several of these reasons are adapted from Richard Baxter, *The Saints’ Everlasting Rest*. Ed. By Timothy Beougher. This version of the book is only three chapters taken from the already abridged version.

C. Meditations on Heaven

- 1. Perfect and unchanging joy (Ps. 16:11)**
 - a. Here we face many imperfections. Here we face changes. We have ups and downs. Today we feel good; tomorrow we might be in pain. Today, we are esteemed by others; tomorrow, we are embarrassed. Today we are surrounded by friends; tomorrow we may be alone.
 - b. But in heaven, all is perfect AND unchanging. Fullness of joy.

- 2. A place of enjoyable vocation/work (Gen. 1, Is. 65:17-25)**
 - a. Here much of our work is remedial – trying to survive in a cursed world. But in heaven, all our work will be as it was before the Fall – no futility. We will work with good ambition – to glorify God and serve others.
 - b. So, when you get a taste of the satisfaction of a completed job, take a moment to think of your future vocation and joy.

- 3. Enjoying a perfect and harmonious creation (Is. 65:17-18, 25)**
 - a. Animals and natural wonders can all be enjoyed without dangers or fears.
 - b. Next time at a zoo – think of what it will be like to play fetch with lions who won't eat you.

- 4. Enjoying wonderfully beautiful places (Rev. 21-22, Rev. 2:7)**
 - a. Next time you are at a beautiful resort, gorgeous garden, manicured golf course, or mighty mountains, think what a paradise the new Earth must be!
 - b. The New Jerusalem - no crime, pollution, traffic, liars, inept rulers, rundown buildings.

- 5. Eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17, 1 Pet. 5:10)**
 - a. We enjoy temporary glories now. Then, we will enjoy the fullness of glory.
 - (i) Good food, a red-carpet event, marital intimacy, a sunset - these are for a moment, a minute, an hour, but we look for the eternal fullness of glory that all these point to!
 - (ii) In Heaven, maximum glory, maximum duration. Nothing outshines it or outlasts it.
 - b. Next time you are at a glorious event think of how we will have an eternal weight of glory.

- 6. Physical health and strength (Is 40:31, Rev. 21:4)**
 - a. Now: Cancer, genetic issues, and declining health as time goes by. Then: we will have perfect vigor and strength.
 - b. When we go to the doctor, or we face aging, remember we will have resurrected bodies.

- 7. Relationship with ourselves – our own character will be perfect (1 John 3:2, Rev. 21:8)**
 - a. What will it be like to not have to second guess our desires but to know that each one of them is rightly ordered? What will it be like to not have to battle desires (temptations)?
 - b. So now, when you face temptation, think, “Oh God, I long for the day when my desires are perfect and the world only entices me to do that which will glorify you and bring me true joy.

- 8. Relationship with others and God – all people will have perfect love for God and others (1 John 3:2, Rev. 21:8, Is. 32:5-6, 1 Cor. 13).**
 - a. There won't be foolish, arrogant people exalted, praised, or leading (Is. 32:5-6).
 - b. Think about common experiences (coldness, jealousy, misunderstanding, anger) and contrast them with the “world of love” (1 Cor. 13).

- 9. Enjoying the unmediated presence of God (Rev. 22:4-5).**
 - a. Now, we have His Spirit in us individually and corporately as the church. But, in Heaven, we will see Him, and we will be surrounded by His light.
 - b. When you feel the sun warm your face on a cool day, think what it will be like to walk in His presence.