

Sermon Series: Stand Strong
 To be used with: Session Six: God's Promise of a New Home
 Sermon Title Possibilities: Heaven: Our New Home
 Scripture: Revelation 21:1-8

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study of *Stand Strong: Building Your Life on God's Promises* these sermon outlines will use similar Scripture passages to reinforce the same themes as the study regarding trusting God's promises.

Introduction: Most Southern Baptists, as well as most other Christians, love to sing about Heaven. Our hymnbooks are filled with lyrics of sublime mansions, golden streets, and never-ending joy and praise. To non-Christians, Heaven is either, at worse, a fantasy place or at best, a destination for "good people." As believers, we know it is neither. Heaven is a real place of eternal habitation for those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. You can never be "good enough" to earn your way to Heaven or to be given Heaven as a reward for all the good stuff you did on Earth. It is an actual destination for those who have received the free gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.

1. Our new home will be in God's presence. (verses 1-3)

A. It is the dwelling place of God. His presence is there forever. He will not leave, move away, or abandon us.

B. It is the dwelling place of the redeemed of the Lord. The descriptions of Heaven are hard to understand, but that doesn't mean it isn't real. It is where our true citizenship lies.

C. God and people will live together. The Bride of Christ, believers, will see the Father face to face. We will no longer be hindered by the barrier between Heaven and earth, for we shall reside in the eternal house of God.

2. Our new home will be perfect. (verses 4-5)

A. Heaven is without sin or the consequences of sin. You won't have to worry about someone lying to you or taking advantage of you. No one will gossip. No one will steal. There will be no "bad neighborhoods" to walk through in Heaven. Safety and security will prevail.

B. All relationships will be trustworthy. No awkward interpersonal relationships in Heaven. Each person will be perfect. Any imperfection or flaw in our character or personality will be completely gone in Heaven.

C. No more death means no more goodbyes. Heaven and its inhabitants is eternal. Time won't matter and we will no longer be constrained by the limits of time. It is life lasting forever and ever.

3. Our new home is based on our relationship with Christ. (verses 6-8)

A. Heaven is reserved for believers only. If your name isn't written in the Book of Life, there is no way in. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6 ESV)

B. God will supply all that we need. He will be the light of Heaven. He will regard us as His children because we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus.

C. The unbelievers will not be admitted to Heaven, but will go to the place prepared for the devil and his angels. Described as a lake of burning sulfur, there will be no escape for all eternity. Those who are placed there have no hope.

Conclusion/Application – The language that John uses to describe the things he sees in the Revelation are often confusing and sound incredible. But he was using language from 2000 years ago to describe what only God and angels have seen. We may not understand every word, but we can believe that it is true. If you are in Christ Jesus, your eternal home is Heaven. To prepare for eternity you can:

- Believe that Jesus is the Son of God and ask Him to save you. Put your trust completely in Him.
- Realize that for the saved person, eternity has already started. Strive to build your relationship with Jesus through prayer and the reading of His Word.
- Forsake the things of this world laying up for yourself treasure in Heaven. Make a conscious effort each day to give up an attitude of materialism.

Rick Boyne is pastor of Immanuel Southern Baptist Church in Wagoner, OK. Rick served with IMB in West Africa and East Asia with his wife and two daughters for 10 years.