

REVELATION 21:1-8

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Revelation chapter 21 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

We are moving to the eternal state as we have seen all the judgments of God poured out upon a Christ rejecting world. The Seal Judgments. The Trumpet Judgments. The Bowl Judgments.

Then we saw the Battle of Armageddon as our Lord returns, with us, to put an end to the rebellion of man as the armies of the world come against Him. And they are destroyed instantly! No real battle.

We had the judgment of the nations as the sheep entered into the Kingdom Age and the goats were cast into Hell awaiting final judgment.

Satan was bound in the bottomless pit and the Antichrist, and the False Prophet, were cast into the Lake of Fire.

And in the Kingdom Age Jesus ruled and reigned for one-thousand years!

At the end of those thousand years Satan is loosed for a very short time and those who were born during the Millennial reign of Christ will have a choice to make. To follow Jesus or Satan and some follow Satan. That rebellion is done away with very quickly and then we see Satan cast into the Lake of Fire.

We looked at the Great White Throne Judgment where all those who have rejected the Lord throughout history will be judged for what they have done in their life and they will be punished accordingly in the Lake of Fire!

Remember how we ended last time. “**And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**” Revelation 20:15.

But that is not the end, as we will see.

Remember that the church has been gone since Revelation chapter 4 as we were caught up into heaven, the Rapture of the church.

And, like I have said, we return with the Lord for the Battle of Armageddon. We have spent a thousand years with the Lord and now, for those who love the Lord, for those who have received Jesus as their Lord and Savior, believers, they will enter into eternity with the Lord!

That will be our focus in the next two chapters of Revelation and the conclusion of this book.

Tonight, our focus will be a new heaven and the new earth that the Lord will create after all that we have spoken of takes place.

We will also deal with the New Jerusalem that John will speak of a little tonight and will pick up more on this next time.

And isn't it easy to lose perspective, especially when we see all that is going on in this world today. If we have lost perspective, we need to get refocused and as I share this with you, may we all get refocused on the work we are to do and what awaits us.

We are told,

It is true that the church is to be a hospital where people who are hurting can come and be healed through the body of the Great Physician, Jesus Christ (Matthew 9:12), it is also true that the church is to be a school where we can study to show ourselves approved unto God (II Timothy 3:15).

It is also true the church is to be a gymnasium wherein we work out our salvation (Philippians 2:12), and exercise unto godliness (I Timothy 4:7).

But perhaps most importantly the church is to be a travel agency, booking people on an eternal excursion to heaven.

Revelation 21 and 22 constitute a travel brochure for just such a journey . . .

- Jon Courson, Jon Courson's Application Commentary – NT, p. 1788

I like that. May we not lose sight of what we are to do here and now and I think it helps to know where we are going, and no one can take that away no matter how much they may try!

Way back in 1973 to 1974 there was a television show, called "*The Starlost*." You may not have heard of it since it was only on for one season!

But the creation of this show was born from the mind of fiction writer Harland Ellison.

The basic premise of the show is as follows,

Two hundred and fifty years from now, a group of UN scientists predict that the world will be destroyed in a holocaust.

To preserve life, they start constructing a giant space ark between earth and the moon; all units are lifted into space by rockets.

Then small, representative groups of people are lifted aboard - but isolated to retain their cultural identities.

The scientist's predictions prove correct: 300 years from now the earth goes boom!

But the great ark, safe in space, floats on for 100 years.

Then, suddenly, it meets destruction. The different domes are instantly sealed off from one another with a built-in, fail-safe system.

Then separate communities, originally intended to colonize various stars and planets, are suddenly locked within their own environments.

Another 500 years go by - the Starlost drifts through space, out of control.

The end!

- Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, 4894

That is science fiction, and sometimes these shows end on a positive note, and sometimes they don't, like with this show.

It leaves you in a hopeless situation, and really the end of mankind!

Now I like science fiction shows, but I recognize they are science fiction, they are not real, even though some of the things within them may come to pass, may be invented in the future. I guess I should say many things have!

And think about this. Most people today are interested in what the future holds, they want to know how this story of life ends.

Thus, they look to the scientists who tell us a variety of things that will happen to this earth and to mankind. Some say man will evolve to a state where he will communicate telepathically, I think this will be some kind of manipulation with chips in the brain or whatever, but he will be a brain-man!

We are seeing that come to pass with AI or artificial intelligence!

Other scientists believe that in a few billion years the earth will burn out and this earth will be destroyed, put into a deep-freeze!

We see global warming or now, climate change where they are scaring people into thinking we are causing this. We are not, the climate changes. Just live in Wisconsin and you will see that things can change very rapidly!

And you have all kinds of scientists, common people, making all kinds of predictions of what is going to happen with man and what is going to happen with this earth, and their ideas are nothing more than science fiction or fairy tales!

But there is this tremendous hope for a world that has lost hope. That hope is only found in Jesus and His precious promises that He has made to us.

So let's look at what is in store for us, what God is going to do, and it is amazing. But also understand, if you reject Jesus, you will not enter this eternal state with Him, but an eternal state apart from Him in the Lake of Fire.

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Revelation chapter 21, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

REVELATION 21

VERSE 1

John opens up this section by saying, "**Now I saw**" and what he saw is glorious compared to what he has seen so far.

Moffatt puts it like this for us. He wrote, "*From the smoke and pain and heat it is a relief to pass into the clear, clean atmosphere of the eternal morning where the breath of heaven is sweet and the vast city of God sparkles like a diamond in the radiance of His presence.*"

Amen to that!

A good illustration of this for me is when I was living out in Mesa, Arizona.

In the valley, many times, there would be this heavy smog, brown in color just hanging over the city. It blew in from California!

But, if you went northward, into the mountains the air would be clear, clean, fresh.

Now let's put that into perspective of the Tribulation Period. With all the ugliness of the Tribulation Period now over with the return of the Lord, the Kingdom Age is over as well, and now we see a new heaven and new earth!

Revelation chapter 21 is completely different from what we see now, and in the Tribulation Period and even into the Kingdom Age. Why is that?

Because we are now moving into eternity which has no beginning and no end. Even the Millennial Kingdom had a beginning and an end, it was not eternal!

Think about it. Every trace of sin, the curse, the Devil, is gone forever! Not even one ounce of depravity or defilement will be around. Everything will be new as we are reading about!

Now let me say this. Please understand that God is not going to refurbish the heavens and the earth, but He is going to create a new one!

The Hebrew word for "**created**" is **BARA** and it means to call into existence from nothing or to make something out of nothing. Folks, only God can do that!

What man can do is take existing materials and assemble them together.

Thus, the Hebrew word **ASAH** means "*to make*" and **YATSAR** means "*to form.*"

Now, does the Bible speak of this taking place?

You bet it does!

Keep in mind that the Greek word that John used for “**new**” here in Revelation 21:1 is *KAINOS* and it speaks of being new in a qualitative sense.

This is something that is brand new, completely new!

Now, let me give you some Old Testament scriptures to show you what I mean, that this will take place.

In Isaiah 65:17-18 we are told, “**For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy.**”

What I want you to notice is that the word “**create**” in Isaiah chapter 65 is the same Hebrew word found in Genesis 1:1, *BARA* or God will create a new heaven and a new earth from nothing, or He will not use any existing materials!

Also, we are told in Isaiah 66:22, “**For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me,’ says the LORD, ‘So shall your descendants and your name remain.’**”

Now you may be wondering what happens to this present heaven and earth? The Kingdom Age things were awesome, so what happens to all of this?

POOF!

I guess that is not an exact quote, but Peter tells us in II Peter 3:10-13, **“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”**

You see, God will burn up this earth, you might say a thermal nuclear explosion as God lets go and all the energy in the universe goes up in smoke – *POOF* like I said!

We read of what our Lord is doing now, holding all things together in Colossians 1:17, **“And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”**

When the Lord lets go, we will see what Peter spoke of in II Peter chapter 3 and it is then God will create a new heavens and a new earth!

Now we see here in Revelation, also Peter and Isaiah mention the creation of a new heavens and a new earth, but why?

First of all, let me say this. The word **“heaven”** is used almost 600 times in the Bible, and it can refer to three different places.

I will speak about the three places that heaven refers to in a minute.

I find it interesting that we don’t hear many Christians speak about heaven today, many pastors don’t preach on heaven. And if it is spoken of there is not much passion to it when it is presented.

Why is that?

Because I don't think they believe it or care about heaven and thus, no passion and no interest.

I like what Charles Spurgeon had to say as he was addressing a group of young preachers. He told them, *“Whenever you speak about Heaven let your face light up with heavenly glory. When you speak of Hell your normal face will do.”*

May we keep that in mind. Heaven is a wonderful place!

In fact, we should be heavenly minded as Paul wrote in Colossians 3:2, **“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”**

Look at what we have done today as Christians focus all their attention on worldly things, what is happening here, what they are doing over there, this conspiracy or that conspiracy and what about heaven, our home, because this is not our home – ***PRAISE GOD!***

And if you want to be earthly good, you better be heavenly minded!

Let me throw this out to you for you to think about.

Maybe God is trying to shake us up, awaken us by all these things happening in this world and we just don't have control over them. And the reason being may just be that He wants us to loosen our hold on the world or the hold that the world has on us, and the Lord is getting us to think about the life to come, thinking about heaven!

Heaven is our true home, and we should long for it, but many Christians have lost that perspective as one writer tells us. He wrote,

Sadly, that is no longer true for many in today's church. Caught up in our society's mad rush for instant gratification, material comfort, and narcissistic indulgence, the church has become worldly.

Nothing more graphically demonstrates that worldliness than the current lack of interest in heaven. The church doesn't sing or preach much about heaven, believers seldom discuss it, songs are no longer written about it, and books about heaven are few and far between.

Believers who do not have heaven on their minds trivialize their lives, hinder the power of the church, and become absorbed with the fading things of this world.

- John MacArthur, Revelation 21:1

Remember what John wrote in I John 2:15-17, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”**

Keep that in mind. This world is passing away! May we focus our attention heavenward and upon the Lord!

Now let me deal with the three heavens the Bible speaks of. They are,

THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE

This is a place where the birds fly, where the clouds are and-so-on. Obviously, this will be destroyed, and God will create a new atmosphere or heavens, so this does fit.

OUTER SPACE

This is the place where the sun, the stars, the moons, the planets, the galaxies and-so-on are located. This too will be destroyed and if it is created again, and I think it will be, it will be vastly different than what we have today. There will be no sun or moon out there in the eternal state, and we will see that as we go through Revelation.

GOD'S DWELLING PLACE

Obviously this is the place where God dwells. Why would God need to destroy it and create a new one? Is it possible that heaven is not clean? How can that be?

Let me clarify this. You see, what I mean by that is Satan has access to heaven, to the dwelling place of God until Revelation 12:10 when he is cast out of heaven to the earth, he will no longer have access to heaven!

Also, in Job 15:15 we are told, “**. . . And the heavens are not pure in His sight.**”

So from this it would seem that a new heavens as well as a new earth will be created as the old heavens and the old earth have been polluted. That means the earth, the universe and even heaven itself will be recreated!

Also, in this new earth there is no more sea, why is that?

Remember in the Scriptures the sea represented humanity from which many evil people have emerged, including the Antichrist.

Thus, in the eternal state you don't have the masses of humanity, the flesh is gone, therefore the sea representing evil is gone!

VERSES 2-3

Along with a new heavens and a new earth we see this New Jerusalem descending down out of heaven!

Keep in mind that this is not the old city of Jerusalem, nor is it the city of Jerusalem where the Lord will reign in the Millennial Kingdom.

This is a New Jerusalem, prepared by God and to be the center of the new heavens and the new earth.

Paul, in Hebrews 12:22-24, **“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”**

We also see that this New Jerusalem is described **“as a bride adorned for her husband.”**

I remember our wedding day as I stood at the altar waiting for my bride to come down. She was so beautiful, and she still is, but the beauty of that day as she was adorned in her wedding dress, that still impacts me today.

That is like the New Jerusalem – it is beautiful. It will be a city filled with great joy, joy that is overflowing because we will be dwelling with our Lord, the one we love so much.

It is as David said in Psalm 16:11, **“You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”**

One last point here. When God created the heavens and the earth and everything was very good, what brought Adam and Eve great joy?

Some may say that it was the beauty of creation, which is true.

Others may say that there was no sin and even creation itself lived in harmony, and that is also true.

But I believe what brought them great joy is that the Lord, the creator of heaven and earth walked in the Garden with them. Folks, we too long for that day!

VERSE 4

This reminds me of what David said in Psalm 56:8, "**You number my wanderings;**

Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?"

That is life today. The pain, the heartache, the tears! But that is not life in eternity!

But let me touch on what we are going through today and let me ask you a question.

Do you think God loves you and cares for you?

If you don't think God cares for you, that He doesn't love you then look at Psalm 56:8 again. Here's the thing. God knows everything we are going through, and He even places our tears in a bottle, He is aware of everything we are going through!

Now on this idea of putting tears into a bottle, The New Scofield Bible says "*Sometimes, in older days in the east, mourners would catch their tears in bottles (wine skins) and place them at the tombs of their loved ones*" - to show how much they had grieved.

John Bunyan said of this verse, "*God preserves our tears in a bottle, so that He can wipe them away.*"

And how true that is, for in Isaiah 25:8 we read, "**He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.**"

One day all our tears will be wiped away! That is what we see here in Revelation 21:4.

Not only does God keep track of all our tears, but as I have said, God also keeps a record of all we do, all we go through.

Malachi 3:16 tells us, **“Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.”**

Now there is another book that God keeps for those that don't fear Him, the unsaved.

Remember what we read in Revelation 20:12 of the Great White Throne Judgment, **“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.”**

God keeps very good records!

The Bible is very clear, God loves us, He cares for us, He is always with us, but that information is useless!

How can that be?

It is useless if we don't apply those truths to our lives.

What good is it to know something, like smoking is dangerous to your health, if you don't apply that to your life and don't smoke!

And I truly believe it is as we apply the truths of God found in the Word of God to our lives that we are encouraged, we can forge ahead in the work that God has called us to do.

As we look at our lives on this earth, our failures, it is easy to become discouraged.

In saying that, let me ask you a few questions.

Will we take that with us to heaven?

When we look at family and friends who have rejected Jesus as their Lord and Savior, it is sad. Will we take that with us to heaven?

Not at all, can you imagine entering eternity with tears, sadness, remorse and-so-on?

That would be horrible, but it will never happen.

It is as we are told in Isaiah 65:17, **“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.”**

You see, the things of the past will be gone as we live in the present with our Lord in the New Jerusalem. That is what we have read here in Revelation 21:4, **“... the former things have passed away.”**

This is the eternal state where there will be no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain, no more tears –what a glorious time that will be!

Remember what Paul wrote in Romans 8:18, **“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”**

Perspective is everything and that is what Paul is telling us here in Romans. Yes, in this life there is pain, suffering, tears, hurt and so on. But when you compare that with eternity, with being received up into glory with the Lord, there is no comparison.

In II Corinthians 4:16-18 Paul encourages us by saying, **“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”**

I have spoken on this, but where are your eyes focused? On the eternal or on this world?

Paul doesn't want us to lose heart as we go through tough times, and we will, and we have!

He wants us to understand that this body of flesh is not going to last forever, it is perishing, falling apart. But instead of focusing on that, focus on building up the inner man, focus on spiritual things and it will help you to keep looking up!

So whatever you are going through, it will pass! Trust in Jesus, trust in His goodness, and this life is the worst it will ever be for you!

If you don't trust Jesus then this is the best it will get for you, this life and that is not good.

I pray that you are sure that in your long-term future, there are – ***NO MORE TEARS!***
Trust in Jesus!

VERSE 5

This is an authoritative announcement, coming from the throne of God itself. This is one of the few times in Revelation where we clearly see God speaking directly from His throne. And this announcement is in the present tense, "**I am making everything new.**"

Remember what Paul said in II Corinthians 4:16, "**Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.**"

And then in II Corinthians 5:17 we are told, "**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**"

And this is very interesting, as Henry Morris tells us, *“Presumably this means not only that everything will be made new but also that everything will then stay new. The entropy law will be “repealed.” Nothing will wear out or decay, and no one will age or atrophy anymore. . . . All things will be and remain eternally young and fresh and new, just as they were in the week of creation itself.”*

How awesome is that. Our bodies, everything will remain new, it will not wear out and I would think that this is how it was in the Garden of Eden, everything was new, and it was not fading or falling apart until sin entered the world!

And please understand that this is not just some fairy tale!

We need to understand that when God says this, He means it, not that it will be new, but that it will stay new. Nothing will decay, fall apart, wear out! Once again, I long for that day and I bet you do too!

The Lord also tells John to **“write!”**

Why did He have to tell John this?

Possibly because he is just awe struck at this point.

All that he has seen with the devastation of God’s judgment upon a Christ rejecting world, the Kingdom Age, the new heavens and new earth and he is just standing there with his eyes wide open, and the Lord tells John to write, for **“these words are true and faithful.”**

In other words, the Lord is telling John and us that His Words are true and what He has said He can and will bring to pass.

God will not lie to us, He will not come up short in what He has promised us, but what He has begun, He will complete!

Paul, in Colossians 2:8-10 warns us, **“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”**

You see, man’s ideas, his philosophies, his promises are not always true, and they are not always faithful, but God’s Word is.

Remember what Jesus said in John 17:17, **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”**

And in Luke 21:33 Jesus said, **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”**

God’s Word is unchanging; thus, may we trust in Him, and His Word and rest assured that what He has promised us, He is more than able to bring to pass!

Let me share this true story with you. We are told,

Roger Simms, hitchhiking his way home, would never forget the date - May 7. His heavy suitcase made Roger tired. He was anxious to take off his army uniform once and for all.

Flashing the hitchhiking sign to the oncoming car, he lost hope when he saw it was a black, sleek, new Cadillac.

To his surprise the car stopped. The passenger door opened. He ran toward the car, tossed his suitcase in the back, and thanked the handsome, well-dressed man as he slid into the front seat.

“Going home for keeps?” “Sure am,” Roger responded. “Well, you’re in luck if you’re going to Chicago.” “Not quite that far. Do you live in Chicago?” “I have a business there. My name is Hanover.”

After talking about many things, Roger, a Christian, felt a compulsion to witness to this fifty-ish, apparently successful businessman about Christ. But he kept putting it off, till he realized he was just thirty minutes from his home.

It was now or never. So, Roger cleared his throat, “Mr. Hanover, I would like to talk to you about something very important.” He then proceeded to explain the way of salvation, ultimately asking Mr. Hanover if he would like to receive Christ as his Savior.

To Roger’s astonishment the Cadillac pulled over to the side of the road. Roger thought he was going to be ejected from the car. But the businessman bowed his head and received Christ, then thanked Roger.

“This is the greatest thing that has ever happened to me.”

Five years went by, Roger married, had a two-year-old boy, and a business of his own.

Packing his suitcase for a business trip to Chicago, he found the small, white business card Hanover had given him five years before.

In Chicago he looked up Hanover Enterprises. A receptionist told him it was impossible to see Mr. Hanover, but he could see Mrs. Hanover.

A little confused as to what was going on, he was ushered into a lovely office and found himself facing a keen-eyed woman in her fifties.

She extended her hand. “You knew my husband?”

Roger told how her husband had given him a ride when hitchhiking home after the war.

“Can you tell me when that was?” “It was May 7, five years ago, the day I was discharged from the army.” “Anything special about that day?” Roger hesitated.

Should he mention giving his witness? Since he had come so far, he might as well take the plunge.

“Mrs. Hanover, I explained the gospel. He pulled over to the side of the road and wept against the steering wheel. He gave his life to Christ that day.”

Explosive sobs shook her body. Getting a grip on herself, she sobbed, “I had prayed for my husband’s salvation for years. I believed God would save him.”

“And” said Roger, “Where is your husband, Mrs. Hanover?”

“He’s dead,” she wept, struggling with words. “He was in a car crash after he let you out of the car. He never got home. You see - I thought God had not kept His promise.” Sobbing uncontrollably, she added, “I stopped living for God five years ago because I thought He had not kept His word!”

- J. Kirk Johnston, *Why Christians Sin*, 1992, p. 39-41

God does not lie, what He promises us He will bring to pass and that is what we see here in Revelation, God is faithful, and these things will come to pass!

VERSES 6-7

Now wait a minute. Didn’t Jesus say, “**It is done!**” from the cross of Calvary? So what is this all about?

First of all, Jesus said – *TETELESTAI* – from the cross of Calvary! And that word means ***“Paid in full”*** or ***“It is finished.”***

Let me explain it like this in regard to our salvation.

First of all – *We have been saved from the penalty of sin.* We see that in Ephesians 2:8, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”** That is what Jesus was speaking of as He cried out Tetelestai, that we have been saved from the penalty of sin!

Next, as we come to Christ – *We are being saved from the power of sin.* Paul speaks of this in I Corinthians 1:18, **“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”** And this begins at the moment we are saved, and we deal with this until we go home to be with the Lord or the Rapture. The Lord, through the Holy Spirit working in us, helping us to live lives that are pleasing to the Lord. Sin has no power over us, and we are being conformed into His image!

In Philippians 1:6 Paul wrote, **“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”**

And John wrote in I John 3:2-3, **“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”**

And the last point. One day – *We will be saved from the presence of sin.* And that is what we see here in Revelation 21:6 – **“It is done!”**

And we see that as all this is finished, we come to the end of redemptive history and the beginning of the eternal state.

It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 15:24-28, **“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For ‘He has put all things under His feet.’ But when He says ‘all things are put under Him,’ it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”**

The reason He can declare this is because He is the Alpha and Omega, He is the beginning and the end, He is Almighty God! Thus, He can declare this, that **“It is done!”**

The one who started history, will be the one who will end it, and it will all be according to His sovereign plan.

Also notice that anyone who thirsts, He will give them the water of life to drink from.

Remember what David said in Psalm 42:1-2, **“As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?”**

Do you thirst for God? You see, God wants you to thirst, He wants you to partake of Him.

It is as Isaiah 55:1-3 tells us, **“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you - The sure mercies of David.”**

Now, why do we struggle so much with this hungering and thirsting after God?

Because Satan loves to give us things that don't satisfy, but they do tickle our taste buds.

It is like candy; it tastes great but there is not much nutritional value to it.

Thus, we are still hungry and still thirsty because only the Lord can satisfy our lives.

Because of this, because we know this, may we spend time with the fountain of living water, Jesus Christ who will satisfy our thirst.

Remember what Jesus said to the woman at the well in Samaria, **“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’”** John 4:13-14.

May we spend time with the bread of life, Jesus Christ who will satisfy our hunger as John tells us in John chapter 6 where we are told, **“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life . He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’”** John 6:32-35.

May we come to the fountain of living water, the bread of life and partake of Him!

Jesus also tells us that if we will be overcomers, we will be with Him.

What do we have to do to be overcomers?

We make this so complicated, and it is not.

John tells us in I John 5:4-5, **“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”**

The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, **“For whatever is born of God is victorious over the world; and this is the victory that conquers the world, even our faith. Who is it that is victorious over [that conquers] the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God [who adheres to, trusts in, and relies on that fact]?”**

In other words, we are overcomers by our faith in Jesus Christ, not in what we have done but what He has done for us and that we receive that free gift by faith.

Remember what Paul said as he wrote about this, and what we just read, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”** Ephesians 2:8-9.

You see, we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone!

For some, being an overcomer means you just have to work hard enough, do your best, and you will make it.

The only problem with that logic is that it is wrong!

How much do you need to work?

How good to you have to be?

What line do you need to cross to make it in, to be an overcomer?

No one knows!

But, more importantly, it is not by works and thus, we don't have to guess because the Lord tells us what we need to do to be an overcomer and enter in! We enter in by faith in Jesus Christ!

Also, I want you to note that because we are overcomers, because we are children of God, because we have been saved by the shed blood of Jesus on the cross of Calvary, the Lord tells us that we will inherit all things as God, our Father has given them to us!

I like the story of D. L. Moody. We are told,

After the great Chicago fire of 1871, evangelist Dwight L. Moody went back to survey the ruins of his house.

A friend came by and said to Moody, "I hear you lost everything."

"Well," said Moody, "you understood wrong. I have a good deal more left than I lost."

"What do you mean?" the inquisitive friend asked. "I didn't know you were that rich."

Moody then opened his Bible and read to him Revelation 21:7 – "He that over cometh shall inherit all things, and I will be His God."

- D. L. Moody

I like that, and Moody is 100% correct.

Now this is in stark contrast to what is being said in Revelation 21:8.

You see, one group of people will enter into the eternal state with the Lord, and we have read about them.

And the other group of people will enter the eternal state outside the Lord, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And it is this last group we are now going to read about.

VERSE 8

Now when most people read through this list of things, they will tend to focus on the abominable or polluted people, those who are murders, those who are sexually immoral, those who are sorcerers or using occult practices and mind-altering drugs, the idolaters of this world.

Thus, as you read this list you can come to the conclusion that they are only getting what they deserve, they are evil. They will spend eternity apart from God in the Lake of Fire; they will experience this second death!

But John speaks of the cowardly.

I struggled with that.

Think about it.

Are you a coward?

Do you struggle with standing up for Christ?

Does that mean we are not going to heaven if we don't?

That is not what the Bible is saying here, that is not what John is talking about when he speaks of the cowardly.

What John is speaking of are those who have rejected Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and have chosen their own ideas, their own desires, their own passions instead of surrendering their life to Jesus Christ. If you refuse Jesus, you are a coward, not willing to take that stand for Him and thus, you are against Him, the free gift of life that is found in Him is not yours because you have rejected it!

In fact, if you think about it, even in Christ we still sin, we still fall short.

John tells us, "**If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**" I John 1:8.

You see, those tendencies are in our heart, and they do come out from time to time.

Then, the big question is, “*Why do I get to go to heaven and why are others left out?*”

Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:21, “**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**”

You see, Jesus paid in full the penalty for our sins and thus it is His righteousness that has been imputed to us by faith.

It is as Psalm 103:12 says, “**As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.**”

And in Isaiah 43:25 we are told “**I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.**”

As God looks at us, He sees us as perfect, as clean, as white as snow because all of our sins were nailed to the cross of Calvary to be remembered no more if we receive that free gift of life that is only found in Jesus. He has given us eternal life!

The blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all our sins!

And as we go to be with the Lord, the flesh will be done away with, we will have glorified bodes, eternal bodies. Sin will be done away with for us.

And as we go on into the eternal state, what we have been talking about here in Revelation chapter 21, it will be glorious, peaceful, joyful and in direct opposition to those who will be cast into the Lake of Fire because of their sin, their rejection of Jesus!

Next time we will focus on the New Jerusalem, and we will finish up this chapter looking at where we will live in this eternal state that has come down from heaven.

Let me share this with you from Ray Stedman. He wrote,

In this passage we find three attitudes which result in five forms of visible behavior.

These attitudes and forms of behavior mark those who are lost and who will not be a part of that Holy City in the new earth.

First are the cowardly - those who are fearful, unwilling to take the yoke of Christ upon themselves, afraid to confess Jesus Christ, unwilling to be in the minority or on the unpopular side of things. Afraid of the risks entailed in being a follower of Christ, they turn their backs on the offer of life.

Second are the unbelieving, those who willfully refuse to believe what their hearts tell them is true. They reject the evidence because they don't want God to invade their self-centered lives.

Third are the vile, those whose way of life has become foul and abominable. They love the stink of their own sin and would scratch and claw anyone who tried to rescue them from it. They feed their minds with vile books, vile movies, and vile music. They speak vile speech and practice a vile lifestyle.

These, then, are the three deadly attitudes: the cowardly, the unbelieving, and the vile.

Out of these attitudes flow evil behavior: murder, sexual immorality, involvement in the occult and demonic arts, idolatry, and lying or hypocrisy. No one who, refusing redemption, gives himself or herself over to such behavior will be found in the city of God.

- Ray Stedman

Let me ask you this as we close this evening.

Have you booked yourself on that eternal excursion to heaven?

If you haven't you will be heading for the Lake of Fire!

And believe me, if that is where you are booked to go, you are getting ripped off, don't be fooled, come to Christ. Don't let Satan be your travel agent, let the Lord guide you.

Think this through. Your sin has separated you from God, and He wants to cleanse you. Thus, come to Him and receive that cleansing in your life and you will never thirst or hunger again!

As Jesus said “. . . ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’” John 8:35.

Come and partake of Him, come and drink from Him and you will never hunger or thirst again!