

Key:

Purple – Introduction, Conclusion, Main Points, and Sermon Thread

Blue – Explanation/Exposition

Red – Application

Green – Illustration

Brown – Quotation

Yellow – Sermon Notes

Final Things Lesson 3: “The Eternal State”

Revelation 20:11–21:8

Let’s take our Bibles together and turn to Revelation 20. We are in the midst of a series called “Final Things.” And we have been looking for the last few weeks at the book of Revelation. And we’re seeing in advance how it’s all going to end. In other words, we’re going to see how God is going to bring this world to a close and set up eternity.

The first week of our study we saw Christ’s second coming in Revelation 19. Last week we saw the millennium in Revelation 20. Today we will explore “The Eternal State.”



Today in Revelation 20 and 21, we are going to see the end of the end. In other words, this is after the tribulation. This is after Jesus’s second coming. This is after Jesus’s millennial kingdom. This is after Satan’s final rebellion, when he gets obliterated and thrown into the lake of fire forever and ever. This is the last of the final things.

And the question we want to ask today is what happens at the end of the end? In the eternal state? What happens to the souls of those who have rejected Christ and by default have allied themselves with Satan? And what happens to our earth after Jesus reigns on it for a thousand years? And what do heaven and earth look like in eternity? Is it the same as what we see today or will it be different?

Well, our passage today will answer, at least in part, those questions. And before we get too far down the road, let’s stand together for the reading of God’s Word.

Church I’m going to read for you, today, Revelation 20:11–21:8. Church of God, this is the Word of God.

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

^{21:1} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

What is interesting when you look at the book of **Revelation** is that the heaven and the earth that God creates at the end of the end is a new heaven and a new earth. God makes all things new. And the word for “make” in **verse 5** is in the present tense in Greek,¹ so some have suggested that God will continually make all things new. Nothing will ever wear out. Nothing will ever age or deteriorate. There will be no “depreciation” category on our tax forms. Won’t that be awesome? And there won’t be any tax forms. Won’t that be awesome? God will create all things new, and nothing (not even our bodies) will ever wear out.

Now I like “new stuff.” How many of you like new stuff? I just got a new lawn mower for my house several years ago. And I was afraid that I would be a little sentimental for my old lawn mower. But I wasn’t. I told Sanja, “I should have done this a long time ago.” I was euphoric about my new lawn mower. The only thing that made me sad was that in a few years, my new lawn mower won’t be new. And I’ll have to get a new one.

We all like new stuff, don’t we? Now here’s the rub. What does Jesus say about stuff on earth compared to stuff of heaven? Do you remember? Jesus said, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (**Matt 6:19–20**). This is one of the most practical things that Jesus ever said. Jesus wasn’t being abstract or philosophical here. No, he was being practical... “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (**Matt 6:19–20**).

Now if all we had was Jesus’s statement to keep our minds on the stuff of heaven vs. the stuff of earth, that should be enough. But God in his grace has also given us these closing chapters of **Revelation**, where the stuff of heaven is presented as fantastic beyond description. As you read the last few chapters of **Revelation**, you get the sense that John runs out of words to describe how beautiful everything is. You get the sense that the new heaven and the new earth is going to be beyond our wildest dreams.

Everything is always new. We dwell forever in the presence of Almighty God. Holiness is the air we breathe. And we experience unlimited peace, love, joy, and happiness like we’ve never experienced before for 10,000 years and then forevermore. How does that sound, church?

Now that’s the good news. Here’s the bad news. Before God can create all things new... before God can create a new heaven and a new earth that is devoid of all sin, stain, and rebellion, he’s got to first remove evil from the universe permanently. And that’s what we see at the end of **Chapter 20**.

Go ahead and write this down as a first point from our message:

1) At the end of the end, the lake of fire will be **populated** (20:11–15)

John MacArthur writes of Revelation 20:11–15, “This passage describes the final sentencing of the lost and is the most serious, sobering, and tragic passage in the entire Bible. Commonly known as the Great White Throne judgment, it is the last courtroom scene that will ever take place. After this there will never again be a trial, and God will never again need to act as judge. The accused, all the unsaved who have ever lived, will be resurrected to experience a trial like no other that has ever been. There will be no debate over their guilt or innocence. There will be a prosecutor, but no defender; an accuser, but no advocate. There will be an indictment, but no defense mounted by the accused; the convicting evidence will be presented with no rebuttal or cross-examination. There will be an utterly unsympathetic Judge and no jury, and there will be no appeal of the sentence He pronounces. The guilty will be punished eternally with no possibility of parole in a prison from which there is no escape.”²

If you remember last time we saw Satan cast into the lake of fire forever. At the end of Jesus’s 1000-year reign, Satan gathers an army of millennial insurrectionists, and John says, “their number was like the sand of the sea” (**20:8**).

¹ Present, active, indicative of ποιέομαι meaning “to do” or “to make” or “to perform.” See James Swanson, *DBL Greek* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), #4472.

² John F. MacArthur Jr., *Revelation 12–22*, MNTC (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000), 245–6.

This, army by the way, will be made up of humans that live in Christ's perfect kingdom. There is no injustice in this kingdom. Christ will be a *perfectly* just and *perfectly* righteous ruler, yet still the people rebel. **It just goes to show you, whether it's in the Garden of Eden or whether it's in Jesus's millennial reign or whether it's in San Antonio, Texas—human beings have an innate desire to usurp the authority of God.** God will destroy that army with fire from heaven, and then Satan will be cast into the lake of fire that is already populated with the antichrist and the false prophet (20:10).

Now after all that is accomplished, what follows is what's called the Great White Throne Judgment. This is that moment in time when every knee will bow before a sovereign God (see Phil 2:10–11). This is that moment in time when every human being (other than those who have been saved by Christ's blood) will be judged. And John gets a glimpse of this future judgment in verse 11.

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it.

The person seated here must be some manifestation of God the Father. Obviously God is spirit and God is omnipresent, so it's difficult to imagine him seated on the throne. So I would assume that this is similar to God's presence in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Some manifestation of God the Father is present. And Christ is here as well seated at his right hand of God the Father, or enthroned at his right hand.

I say that because the Bible makes clear that Jesus will be the ultimate judge of humanity. Jesus said in John 5:22, "For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son." Jesus said, "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man" (John 5:26–27).

Jesus did say in John 3:17, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." Jesus also said in John 12:47, "If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world." Those statements, of course, in context, deal with Christ's first coming. They are not relevant to his second coming or the Great White Throne Judgment where Jesus will indeed judge the world and all who are in it.

Just to give additional support to this, in Acts 10:42, Peter says, "And he [Jesus] commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead." The Apostle Paul warned the pagan philosophers of Athens that God "has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy, "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim 4:1).³ And that which is not explicitly stated here by John is implicit in light of other passages of Scripture.

And as God the Father and Jesus Christ are mounting this throne, look at the end of verse 11.

[and] From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

The entire universe will vanish at this moment. 2 Peter describes it this way, "... the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (3:10–13).⁴ So before God can create the new heaven and the new earth, he's got to eliminate the old heaven and the old earth, and also judge all of humanity.

Look at verse 12.

¹² And I saw the dead, great and small,

Both significant and insignificant. Both mostly good (by human standards) and mostly evil. **Hitler will be there. Julius Caesar will be there. Alexander the Great will be there. Osama Bin Laden will be there. But so will your neighbor, Jim, who's an Atheist, who volunteers at the homeless shelter. So will your**

³ MacArthur Jr., *Revelation 12–22*, MNTC, 249.

⁴ So also 2 Peter 3:7: "But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly."

uncle Pete, who lives a seemingly moral life but thinks Christianity is a crutch for weak people. So will that little old lady who goes to church every Sunday, yet never made a decision to follow Christ. It was all a sham. She was just going through the motions. They will all be there, both great and small.

By the way, there does seem to be some suggestion by Jesus in the NT that there will be varying degrees of punishment in the lake of fire. Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town [i.e., the town that rejects his disciples]” (Matt 10:15). Jesus said, “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you” (Matt 11:21–22). **Does that imply that there will be varying degrees of punishment for unbelievers in the lake of fire? Not sure I’d take a bullet for that, but I think so.**

Nevertheless, John writes in **verse 12**.

¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.

“Their standing posture implies they have risen from the dead, a feature that becomes more evident in v. 13. By implication this is the second resurrection (cf. 20:5).”⁵

Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

So there’s the book of life, otherwise referred to as the “Lamb’s Book of Life.” If you’ve repented of your sins and embraced Jesus Christ as your Savior, your name is written in the “Lamb’s Book of Life.” And that pardons you from this judgment.

But these individuals, in **Revelation 20**, don’t have their names written in the “Lamb’s Book of Life,” so they are judged according to their deeds. And all their deeds are recorded. God knows everything. God has recorded everything, from genocide to every little white lie, from the holocaust to every little instance of gossip and slander.

Listen, the Bible says clearly that we are saved by faith, but we are judged by our works. Saving faith absolves us of judgment, but not these individuals. They get judged by their works.

By the way, Christians won’t be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment. We will be judged before that at the time that we receive our eternal bodies. It’s what’s referred to as the “Bema seat” judgment, where God will judge our every deed and reward us accordingly. The Great White Throne Judgment is for unbelievers and unbelievers only.

Look at **verse 13**.

¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

It might seem odd to you that John would mention the sea with Death and Hades. Hades is the holding cell for unbelievers. All the dead throughout the centuries are held captive in Hades. It is a place of fire and torment, but it’s not their final destination. The final destination is the lake of fire.

The sea is symbolic in the Israelite worldview for chaos and destruction. **That may be hard for some of us to understand, those of us who love the sea.** But you have to understand this from the perspective of a landlocked people. For Israelites, the sea was a vast wasteland worse than the desert. There was no fresh water. There was no food, unless you fished it out of the ocean. And it was worse than the desert because there were creatures in the sea that could eat you or destroy your ship.

And the storms on the sea were worse and more frightening than anything on land. Some Israelites even believed that Sheol was located in the sea. If you remember, Jonah after he was thrown off the boat said, “out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice” (Jon 2:2). And God rescued him with a large aquatic sea creature.

In **Revelation 13**, Satan comes out of the sea. In the OT Leviathan and other monsters came from the sea. So this reference to the sea is either a reference to demonic spirits that reside in the pit or Sheol, or those who die at sea and their bodies were never found.

⁵ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1995), 430.

God is making clear that everyone who ever died on earth will be resurrected. And every angel that rebelled against him, as well, will stand before him.

¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

This is the second death. **“Born once, die twice!”** This is the second death. **“Born twice, die once!”** For those who have been born again there is no second death. We go on to eternity with the Lord and are spared this judgment.

Some people like to envision Satan in hell right now. That's pretty popular in art and movies and cartoons. That dates back to medieval art and literature like Dante's *Inferno*. And sometimes Satan is depicted in hell right now torturing people. But that's not true. That's not how the Bible depicts it. Satan is on the earth right now roaming around seeking someone to devour (1 Pet 5:8).

And Satan doesn't get thrown into the lake of fire until after the millennium. And he's not the one torturing people for eternity. He's being tortured right there alongside everyone else after death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire with him.

The famous cynic, **Mark Twain**, said once, **“Go to heaven for the climate and hell for the company.”**⁶ Well the company in hell is Satan. The company in hell is the antichrist. And, let me be absolutely clear on this, every person who rejects Christ, and every person who refuses to bow the knee to King Jesus in this lifetime will be cast into the lake of fire with Satan forever.

And there will be no *partying* in hell. And there will be no *celebration*. Hell is a place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, where sinners “will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (20:10). By the way “tormented” there is a divine passive in **Revelation 20:10**. God does the tormenting. Not the Devil!

This is what the Bible teaches. This is what the Bible says. **And you can't pick and choose what you want out of the Bible and ignore the rest.**

How many of you have heard the song, “My Way” by Frank Sinatra? I did a Google search once for the most popular funeral songs of all time. Guess which song was #1? It wasn't “Amazing Grace.” It was “My Way.”

For what is a man, what has he got?

If not himself, then he has naught

To say the things he truly feels and not the words of one who kneels

The record shows I took the blows and did it my way!

Do you know what that is, church? That's the theme song of hell. **“I don't care about you, God. I don't care about your Son, Jesus. I don't care about your cross. There's only one person in this world that matters, and it's me. I don't kneel to anybody. I do things, ‘My Way.’”**

And you know what God says to that, **“Okay. You can have yourself forever. And you will be removed from my presence forever (2 Thess 1:9). And you will not be inconvenienced by me ever again.”** And you know what eternity without God is like. No more beauty. No more relationships. No more joy. No more peace. No more communication, because that's a gift from God. No more caring, no more rejoicing, no more pleasure, no more creativity, no more reciprocity, no more life, no more light, no more love. Just you and your God-forsaking friends.

C.S. Lewis said once, **“[The lost] enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded.”**⁷ He says, **“the doors of hell are locked on the inside.”**⁸ That's hell, right there, folks. No God. It's just you. It's all about you forever and ever and ever stuck in a pattern of eternal conscious torment. And there are no second chances. And there is no annihilationism. And there is no purgatory.

You might say, **“Jesus would never do that. Not sweet little baby Jesus.”**

⁶ Daniel Coenn, *Mark Twain: His Words* (BookRix, 2014), Kindle edition, loc. 12.

⁷ C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: HarperOne, 2001), 130.

⁸ Ibid.

Look, Jesus is the one who talked about hell more than any other person (see for example **Matt 5:29; 8:12; 10:28; 13:39–43; 13:50; 25:41–46; Luke 16:16–19**, etc.). He warned you. And now the choice is yours: eternal life or eternal death. An eternity with you doing it your way. Or an eternity with God doing it God's way.

Remember Jesus's parable of the "wheat and the weeds." The farmer sows seed in the field. His enemy comes and sows weeds. And the servants ask the farmer, "**Should we go gather the weeds out of the field?**" The master says, "**No let them grow both together. Then at the time of harvest we'll gather the wheat into the barn, and we'll gather the weeds into bundles for burning**" (**Matt 13:24–30**).

So what does Jesus's parable mean? Well Jesus explained it to us. He said, "The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear" (**Matt 13:39–43**). This judgment in **Revelation 20**, The Great White Throne Judgment, is what Jesus was alluding to with the parable of the wheat and the weeds.

You might say, "**There's got to be something better than that. There's got to be something else. There's got to be some way to have my sins atoned for. There's got to be some way for me to assuage God's wrath and receive salvation.**" **There is. There is a way. But we don't deserve it.**

There is a way. But you're not going to get there by doing it, "My Way." You're only going to get there by doing it God's way.

What is God's way? It's by faith. Romans 10:9 says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." You will be saved *not just* from this rotten life, if you've had a rotten life. You will be saved *not just* from an unhappy existence. You will be saved *not just* from yourself, but *saved from eternal death*. And *saved from the lake of fire* which goes on forever and forever and forever and forever.

This is why I'm preaching this topic. This is part of the reason I want to cover this topic. I don't want anyone to experience eternal death. I believe what God says about hell. And even though this isn't my favorite topic—I'd much rather preach on something else—this is what the Bible says, and I believe it. And I want you to be a part of something better than the lake of fire. And God has prepared something for you infinitely better than that.

So what has God prepared for those who have been saved by faith? Well let's look at that in **chapter 21**. **But first, write this down as a second point from our message:**

2) At the end of the end, all former things will **pass away** (21:1–4)

Here's what God says awaits those who embrace him by faith. Once God has removed permanently those who have opposed him, now he can set up a new heaven and a new earth.

John writes this in **chapter 22, verse 1**.

^{21:1} *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.*

Remember what I just said about the sea. No more chaos. No more fear. No more abode of the dead. No more holding place for demonic beings. There will be water on the new earth, but it won't be seawater. And there will be nothing fearful or inaccessible in the new heaven and new earth.

² *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

In **John 14:2–3**, Jesus said I go to prepare a place for you. In **John 14:2–3**, Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many rooms." As I understand it, this is what Jesus has been preparing for centuries—A New Jerusalem. And this new Jerusalem is described as the holy city. There will be nothing unholy in her. And she is described as a "bride adorned for her husband."

Now we've already seen the marriage supper of the Lamb that included the bride adorned for Christ. Here the image changes to the New Jerusalem as the bride. And I think this means that the holy city, new Jerusalem, will be the habitat for believers forever. We'll live in this city in community with each other and with the Lord.

Some people think that when we get to heaven we'll all be living on clouds playing harps in isolation from each other. Where do those images come from? That sounds boring, by the way. I don't want to play a harp in isolation from other people. Boring!

The Bible says we'll be living in community with each other not in isolation from each other, **so you better get to know and love your fellow Christians now, because you'll be living with them for eternity.**

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place [literally the tabernacle] of God is with man. He will [literally tabernacle] with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

We won't be gods like God. That's ridiculous. There's only one God. And he'll be our God, and we'll worship him. And we'll be in his presence forever.

Remember God dwelt with the Israelites in the wilderness in a tabernacle. That was an imperfect situation. And only the high priest could come into the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement.

But when the new heaven and the new earth are created God will dwell openly with his people. And holiness will be the air we breathe. And there are no temple sacrifices to atone for sin. There is no sin. God is our God, and nothing separates us from his holiness.

And watch this. This is precious. Look at **verse 4.**

⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

At the end of the end, all former things will pass away. No more tears. No more heartache. No more emotional pain. No more physical pain. No more anxiety. No more fretfulness. No more murder. No more deceit. No more 6 o'clock news full of violent crime.

No more **"I'm sorry I hurt you."** No more conflict. No more apologies. No more messy breakups. No more interventions with a family member. No more alcoholism. No more addiction. No more sexual perversion. No more killing of innocent people.

No more cancer. No more surgery. No more heart disease. No more doctors. No more dentists. No more root canals. No more hardships. No more unemployment. No more financial stress. No more temptation. No more **"my kids are driving me crazy."** No more lying. No more adultery. No more idolatry. No more infidelity.

No more competing interests with the God of the Universe. All the former things have passed away and we will dwell in the presence of a holy God forever! And we will be holy. And we will no longer see as "in a mirror dimly, but ... face to face" and we shall "know fully, even as we are fully known" (1 Cor 13:12).
Hallelujah.

And every day when I see you up there and I say, "How's it going?" You will never ever, ever, say again, "I'm having a rough day." "I'm struggling." "I'm not doing too well." Never again!

And I'll ask you how you're doing and you'll say, "Everything is awesome all the time. It's better than I ever imagined. Every day just gets better and better and I couldn't be more happy." And you'll ask me in eternity, "How are you doing, Tony?" And I'll say, "It's awesome! I couldn't be more happy."

James Hamilton writes, "I have heard stories of wicked things people have done to missionaries such as people forced to ingest human excrement or women being violated. The unassailable purity of the new heaven and new earth can provide *hope* to sustain you through such horrors, and *believing* that God will do this can heal you from whatever you may experience."⁹ **Will we have memory of the terrible things that have taken place in this world in eternity? Some people say no. I think so. But if we do, it'll be a faint recollection of the past, overwhelmed by our experiences of joy and elation in the presence of God continually.**

And there will be no more crying. No more dying. No more mourning. No more suffering. No more anything negative ever again. Can I interest you in that?

⁹ James M. Hamilton Jr. *Revelation: The Spirit Speaks to the Churches* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), chap. 34 ("A New Heaven and a New Earth," Rev 21:1-8).

Now there's two ways that the new heaven and the new earth are described in **Revelation**. First, there is the negation of every negative thing. And if that was it, that'd be enough. No pain. No death. No mourning. No crying. **Sign me up for that right now!** All those former things have passed away.

But John also describes it by what is present not just what is absent. And that's what we have starting in **chapter 21, verse 5**.

Go ahead and write this down as a third point from the message:

3) At the end of the end, God will eternally make **all things new** (21:5-8)

Look at **verse 5**.

⁵And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

Remember I said earlier, that this is probably God the Father speaking. More precisely this is some combination of God the Father and God the Son on the throne. And if these words are coming directly from God the Father, then these may be the first words that come from the first person of the Trinity in the entire book of **Revelation**.

Usually God uses an angel to speak for him. But not this time. God has something to say. And he says, "I am making all things new."

Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

"Put this down on paper, John. These are the truest words you will ever hear." Remember now, this is John the Apostle writing two-thousand years ago, about our future events. John had a vision and was shown these amazing things on the island of Patmos. Thankfully, as part of God's perfect plan, God had John write them down for our benefit and for the benefit of Christians throughout the centuries of church history.

And God says, **"Put these words down on paper, John."** Why? **"Because the church in your day needs to hear it. There are Christians out there who are getting their heads chopped off because they are faithful to me. There are Christians who are being eaten alive by wild animals in the coliseums because they won't bow their knee to Caesar. And I want those Christians to know, and I want the other Christians who suffer likewise in my name to know, that their suffering is not in vain. And I want them to know that their reward in eternity will dwarf anything they suffered in the present age."**

"Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶And he said to me, "It is done!"

What does that sound like? That sounds like *τετέλεσται (tetelestai)* in **John 19:30!** **It is finished!** But this is a little different. This is done/done at the end of the end!

"It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment."

There will be water in the afterlife, as I understand it. But we won't have to drink it for our survival.

Nevertheless, I don't think that's what God is referring to here. He's speaking of metaphorical drinking and a metaphorical spring not unlike what Jesus told the woman at the well in **John 4**. He told her, "whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (**John 4:14**). This is water that slakes spiritual not physical thirst. And we will have access to that for eternity.

And look at **verse 7**.

⁷The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸But as for the cowardly,

Those who were too chicken to acknowledge me... those who cared more about what their friends thought about them than what God thought about them...

⁸But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars,

This is a description here of unrepentant sinners. There will be people who committed murder in heaven, but they won't be unrepentant murderers. Their sin will be covered by the blood of Jesus. And that's true of all sins no matter how big or small.

There will be people who lied in heaven. But they won't be unrepentant liars. Their lies will be covered by the blood of Jesus. But for unrepentant liars and murderers and sorcerers and idolaters...

their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

But that won't be the eternal abode of Christ's followers. There is no second death for us. There is instead, eternal life. What will that look like?

Well, write this down as a fourth and final point from this message:

4) At the end of the end, we will indwell the **New Jerusalem** (21:9–22:5)

“That’s awesome, Pastor Tony. Tell me more about that. I want to know about the New Jerusalem. I want to know about my home for eternity.” I will tell you about that. I promise. Next week. Unless Jesus calls us home before that.

But let me close with this. I know there are Christians in our world, and even theologians out there, that say things like the following: “Eschatology isn’t that important. It’s not that relevant. Let’s not be divisive over it.” And I think I understand what they mean by that. They mean don’t be divisive over secondary or tertiary issues.

But that statement is inaccurate. Eschatology is important. What we are looking at here today is extremely important. This is the eternal state of all human beings. Either you will be in the New Jerusalem with God forever or you will be in the lake of fire. And there is no third option.

No, I would say that eschatology is incredibly important. We need to talk about this subject. And we need to do more than just get our understanding about eschatology right. We need to warn other people about what awaits us in the afterlife.

Charles Spurgeon said once, “If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. If they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees. Let no one go there unwarned and unprayed for.”¹⁰

I know some pastors have advocated that it’s best to preach only about heaven and to skip hell as an eternal destiny for some. They say, “Just tell them how good heaven’s going to be, and that’ll be enough to win them to Christ.”

Others seem to preach only about hell, and they skip the part about heaven as if to say, “Just tell them how unbearable hell’s going to be and that’ll be enough to win them to Christ.” I find it interesting how when the Scriptures talk about eternity usually it talks about both the eternity of the saved and the eternity of the unsaved. Eternal life and eternal death are juxtaposed in the pages of Scripture, so that we are perfectly clear about the destination of both (e.g., Dan 12:2; Matt 7:13–14; 13:36–43; 25:31–46; Luke 16:19–31; John 3:16–17, 36; 5:28–29; Acts 24:15; Gal 6:7–8; 2 Thess 1:5–12; Rev 20–22).

Let me ask you the following, church: “Do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior and are you prepared for eternity?” If yes, then here’s a second question: “If you do know Christ, are you prepared to let others go to hell unwarned and unprayed for?” May God give us a heart for the lost!

Let’s bow together in a word of prayer.

¹⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, “The Wailing of Risca,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 11.

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