

Final Events at the End of Time pt 2

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Revelation chapter 20 this morning. Go there with me and we'll continue with part 2 of the final events at the end of time. One of the things that is good for us about opening the word of God and letting these glorious truths pierce us and hopefully shake us just a little bit is this: church and your religious experience must not be just a cleaner form of the enjoyments, entertainments that are in the world. Did you hear me? Church and your religious experience must not be just a cleaner version of what the world offers and that's what we see a lot of in Christendom and we see it in every generation. They do just a whole lot of things the world does to encourage, to amuse, to motivate, to stimulate, to give you hope but just a little cleaner version of it. When we study the end times return of Christ, here's what startlingly pierces us: that there is coming something that isn't just a cleaner version of what we have known, it's a radical transformation of everything that we've known which is fitting of who God is. God is not just a little higher, cleaner version of us, he is infinite in holiness. He transcends us in every way and I want to stir the men of this church who are the heads of the households to strive to teach your children and your children's children that God is radically unique. He is so different. God is not subjective, he is objective. He has to be discovered and we are in that continuous warfare and battle in our own thinking to let God be God and all of our false and fallen notions of him must be cast aside. Those are all idols, amen? Let's let God be God. So as we look at the return of Christ and the things that I want to unfold this morning from the word of God, let's be renewed in our conviction that he is the holy, transcendent, unique God.

First of all, last time we were together as we looked at the final events of the end of time, we talked about the final kingdom in the earth. There is coming a day when the final earthly kingdom will be established and it will be established by Jesus Christ himself. It will begin with the binding of the evil one. The Bible tells us that Satan will be bound for 1,000 years. It will continue on with the blessings of the holy one. Everything in it will be holy. Now, we know that there will be those born later on that will not be genuinely converted to Christ but the Bible says that they will give feigned obedience. They would not dare to outwardly in any way uphold or thwart or come against the holy truth and standards of Jesus' rule. Then the Bible tells us about the wonders of this glorious final earthly kingdom. Remember we talked about things like Jerusalem will be the capital; the desert will turn into a garden and blossom like the rose; the lion will lay down with the lamb; and children will play by the viper's den; the machinery of war will be dismantled

and converted into implements of peace; no prison; no hospitals; no old age homes; no homes for the infirm; when a man is 100, he will be like a youth. On and on. It's going to be a glorious, final, earthly kingdom.

Number 2: we talked about the final rebellion and the final war. At the end of this kingdom, at the end of this thousand years, Satan will be released and Satan will one final time enact his strategy for rebellion. If you've been under my preaching and teaching very long, you know that we are strong on honoring biblical authority. Children should honor their parents' authority. Wives should honor their husbands' authority. Employees should honor their employers' authority. Churches should honor their elders' authority. Why? Because rebellion is Satan's modus operandi. Rebellion is of Satan. He's been behind all of it forever and God is saying, "At the end of the reign of my Son on the earth, I'm going to let Satan lose one final time to show what he is and he'll begin his strategy one final time to seduce and allure the leaders of the earth with this, 'Don't you want power? Don't you want control? Why shouldn't it be your way? Why should you bow to Christ? He wants to rob you. He wants to deny you of something that ought to be yours,'" and he'll play that ploy and that lie one final time.

This will be the culmination secondly, of human rebellion and sin. Human rebellion and sin has been festering on the earth from the time Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden. God will put it down and hold it back and then he will allow it to fester once again. He'll put it down and hold it back but the day is coming when he'll not put it down and hold it back anymore, he'll let it come to its full culmination. Then at the end of that full culmination, there will be the universal exposure of man's sin and of Christ's righteousness. What God was accomplishing was infallibly and undeniably one final time, show what man is apart from Christ and he will illustrate irrevocably and undeniably that absolutely nothing will stand apart from Christ. So in this final rebellion, mankind marches on Christ who sits on the throne. Satan is behind it all and God will say, "You see, this is what you are. Even after 1,000 years of a glorious, peaceful, beautiful reign of Christ, man still has wickedness in his heart."

Now we come to new material. Number 3 in the final events at the end of time: the final end of planet earth. Look with me, if you will, at Revelation 20 and let's begin in verse 1 and then we'll pick up with where we are with new material. John says,

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. 4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and

reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

7 When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 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.

In verse 11, number 3: we see the final end of planet earth. Look at it, it's just very simple there. He says in verse 11, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it," here it is, "from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them." Now, this is one of those simple statements that you and I would like a great explanation on. Well, the Bible gives us a little more. If you would, look at 2 Peter right quick. Turn over to 2 Peter 3, would you turn there? 2 Peter 3 and look at verses 10-13, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people 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 destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."

First of all in this text, he says this is going to come like a thief. that means it's going to come unexpectedly. The mockers and revilers who deny the coming of the Lord are like foolish homeowners who leave their doors unlocked and their windows open thinking, "Nothing is going to happen." But when it comes, it's such an awesome description. It's

going to be a day of unrivaled cosmic destruction. The Bible uses the word "roar." It's going to pass away, everything that is. Just think about everything there is. Not just our solar system, not just our planet, everything that is will pass away with a roar. This word is used for the whizzing of an arrow or maybe for the rustling of a bird's wing. It's as if you had 10 million mighty birds all flapping their wings at one time, an amazing roar as God dissipates the present heavens and the present earth. Heavens will pass away. Not just the sky, but even the spiritual heavens themselves. In other words, God is going to judge and remove everything.

The Bible says here in 2 Peter 3 that the elements will be destroyed with intense heat. The chemical elements, all that are listed on the periodic table, we saw them in grade school, all of those, scientists tell us, will eventually melt under the right amount of heat. All the elements of the universe from the subatomic particles to the vast interstellar emptiness will be destroyed by intense heat. The word "destroyed" there is an interesting word, it means literally "to fall apart." It's as if everything is being held together right now and on God's command, instantly all will fall apart. The entire universe will unravel and fall apart. Hebrews 1:3 says that Jesus "upholds all things by the word of his power." You see, that's what this secular, progressive, liberal world doesn't want us to think about. There is a person who holds this together. These are not impersonal laws that just function, there is a person whose present, persistent, personal power holds all things together. If for one moment he removed his holding power, this whole world, this whole room, everything we know, would go into chaos. The law of gravity is just one of the many laws that expresses his present, persistent, personal power. Colossians 1:17 says "in him all things hold together." No wonder when the kings of the earth make their pledge against God the Bible says that God sits in the heavens and laughs because he knows in one moment he can just mess his power and send you all into utter chaos and disarray. Isaiah 34:4 says "And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as one withers from the fig tree." So this is a blistering destruction of unimaginable vastness.

This rules out two notions that I've heard before myself. First of all, it rules out the notion that there is going to be some kind of earthly renewal and revival and social change and everything will be good one day and then Jesus will just come back because we've done such a good job and everything is so good. That's not what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches right the opposite, that we are degenerating from God, not generating toward God. The second false notion is that there is going to be a global nuclear holocaust that is going to end all this thing. My friend, what the Bible describes is a millionfold more awesome than all the nuclear bombs we have today blowing up at one time. It's nothing compared to the power of God and what he's going to do. Listen, Christ and Christ alone will dispose of this earth. He made it. He'll remove it.

The earth and its works will be burned up. That text is pointing out that our tiny planet will not escape. This will be a once for all end to our time and space home. It's gone forever. What the Bible describes here is literally beyond imagination. That's why, friend, we do not rely on our minds, that's what the revilers do. That's what the liberal

does. That's what the mocker does. If he can't think of it, then he can't believe in it. No, we don't rely on our minds, we rely on the word of God. Mark 13:31 says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away." Isaiah 65:17 says, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind." Isn't that an amazing statement? You won't even remember the former things. They won't even come to your mind. Every citizen of the new heavens and the new earth will have no thought, concern or memory of the former heaven and earth. Think about that. What concerns you today? The day is coming when you'll have no concern like that whatsoever. The new heaven and new earth will be in every way vastly greater and better than the present heaven and the present earth. Look, you're part of the new creation in Christ Jesus, remember that in the Bible, amen? You're not part of this old creation. God has begun a work in you which he will perform until the day of Christ Jesus so you're being fitted for a new heaven and a new earth. You are not being fitted for a cleaned up version of the present heaven and present earth. This is not your best life now by far. You're being fitted and created by the power of God through his Son Jesus Christ for a vastly new, unique and superior heaven and earth, one that can never be destroyed and one that will never pass away. It is so wonderfully unique, now listen to me, even the past is gone. You keep thinking about, "Well, boy, I remember about those days." There won't even be any days to remember about. Everything will be new. In this new heaven and new earth, listen, even the past is new. Wrap your brain around that. There is coming a final end of planet earth at the end of time.

Well, number 4. The Scripture tells us and we're back in Revelation 20 and verse 11: the final judgment. There have been many kings, many rulers, many dictators, many of the judicial realm, many judges, but there is coming one final judgment. Look there in verse 11, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it." Now look down if you will, at verse 13, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds." Then verse 15, "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." So there is going to be the first resurrection of all those who know Christ, all those who are genuine Christians and true believers and they will be resurrected to reign with Christ and to live with him forever. The church is already, I'm convinced, raptured out and with the Lord and they are in a heavenly perfected state with the Lord. There will be earthly saints who were saved during the tribulation, Israel particularly, who will be on the earth and then God is going to push everything away. There is going to be a vast removal and then they'll be the standing of a great white throne and every single soul who has ever lived will be resurrected to stand before the judgment at the great white throne, that is, everyone's that's not a Christian, everyone that's not a believer. The believers will not be here. They were at the judgment seat of Christ. They will not be at the great white throne judgment.

Two or three quick things. First of all, this text tells us this is a great white throne. The Bible says that because it is vastly, vastly superior and different from every other judge and every other throne that has ever existed. It's a white throne which speaks of its purity and its holiness. Sinners who rejected his great salvation must now appear before his

great white throne judgment. The Bible says in Hebrews 2:3, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" Here's the point: you're not going to escape. They will be resurrected, every one of them, and they will face Christ on this great white throne and Matthew 7:2 when Jesus was transfigured, the Bible says, "His face was white like snow." In Mark's account of the transfiguration on the earth in Mark 9:3, "His garments became radiant and exceedingly white." Matthew 28:3, the angel appeared and he had the appearance "like lightning and his garment was white as snow." This shows the absolute purity of this one Supreme Court and it is symbolized by the color of the throne. Isaiah 1:18 reminds us, "'Come now, and let us reason together,' Says the LORD, 'Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow.'" Revelation 3:18 in figurative language says, "buy from Jesus white garments to clothe ourselves with." So the whiteness of the throne means its absolute purity and holiness.

Of course it's a throne because it's the place of rule, dominion and, of course, judgment. Remember the text says that when he comes again he's coming not with a shepherd's staff, he's coming with a rod of iron. Him who sat upon it. When it says it was a great white throne and him who sat upon it, that means Jesus. He will be sitting on the throne. John 5:22, "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son." John 5:27, "and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man." Strauss says in his commentary, "The judicial benches of this world pale into insignificance when placed alongside the staggering scene of this throne and the judgment which issues from it." Of course, he's there to judge the resurrected dead.

I want you to look back at verses 5 and 6 right quick. The Bible says, "The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years." So he's saying, there is the first resurrection of all those who belong to Christ and then there is a second resurrection of all of those who are not of Christ who will stand at the great white throne judgment. All the foolish little delusions behind which men hide today will be gone and men will be confronted by a fate too terrible to contemplate, the great white throne. Men ignored him, they denied him, they cursed him, they disbelieved in him to this day and when he was walking on the earth, they betrayed him and they murdered him but now he's their Judge.

To look upon the face of Jesus is bliss beyond belief for the child of God but for these, the resurrected ungodly, to look upon his face will be the first agonizing stab of hell. Suddenly the unrighteous dead will be resurrected and there they will stand suspended in vast black nothingness before Jesus who sits on a blazing white throne. Verse 12 says the great and the small will be there. Be done with the notions that somehow God favors those who are taken advantage of and not cared for in this world. I wish that didn't happen but listen to me: whether you are of the lowest of the low and the smallest of the small or the greatest of the great and the highest of the high, all will stand before the great white throne. The great and the small, the Bible says, will stand before him. Every president. Every king. Every monarch. Every dictator. Every commander. Every CEO. Every manager. Every supervisor. Every workingman. Every laborer. Every farmer.

Every carpenter. Every ditch digger. Every servant. Every slave. God is no respecter of persons. You do understand that the ground is level at the cross. Any can come. Anyone can come. "Whosoever will may come." The ground is level at the cross. But the ground is also level at the great white throne. You may have lived in the mightiest empire on the earth and you'll be standing equally at the great white throne beside one who was a beggar outside your gate. The great and the small.

Then the text says that books were opened. This is verse 12, "and another book was opened, which is the book of life." This can be a little confusing. I have to admit that I can't be absolutely dogmatic but I believe I know what he's talking about here. First of all, let me talk about what the Scriptures overall say about these books that are open. First of all, there is the book of law. The book of the law, number 1. Galatians 3:10 says, "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written,'" here it is, "'in the book of the Law, to perform.'" So there is the book of the law. You could in a general sense say the Scriptures, that's the book of the law though obviously this contains the finished revelation of God that includes the grace of God through Christ but it is indeed the book of the law. Secondly, there is the book of human deeds. The last part of verse 12 says, "things which were written in the books, according to their deeds." There is a book written that records the deeds. Then in verse 13, every one of them was judged according to their deeds. So as Ecclesiastes 12:14 tells us, "God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil."

So there's the book of the law, there seems to be another book of human deeds where everything is recorded. Now this could be figurative because God needs no book to remind him, you understand. It could be a figure of speech to remind us of how thorough his mind is. He doesn't miss anything. All the things you've done in the darkness that you wouldn't dare even mention to your dearest friend or loved one, it is recorded in the book. Now, aren't you glad if you are a child of God and believed on Jesus that the blood has already washed that away? But for these folks, it's left recorded in a book of deeds. Now there's a third book, the book of life. Verse 15 says, "if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." So there is another book that I believe every single person who has ever been conceived in a mother's womb, their names are recorded in God's book of life. But I'm convinced your name can be erased out of that book. You are recorded in God's book of life but your name can be removed from that book. Then there's a fourth book and that is the book of the life of the Lamb. Look at Revelation 21:27 right quick, "and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it," that's the new heaven and new earth, "but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

So four books: the book of the law; the book of human deeds; the book of life; and the book of the Lamb's book of life. Here's the way I see it unfolding: all human beings are written in the book of life. When one is saved and places their faith in Christ, they are written in the book of the life of the Lamb. Now, I have to give an addendum on that: the Scriptures give us good reason to believe that the saved, the elect, the chosen, were recorded in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world so it's highly

likely that those who are God's chosen and elect were recorded before the world began. You say, "Pastor, how does that all unfold?" You see, God is eternal. He's not connected to time. You and I have to think about time and how things unfold, this happens and that happens but God is eternal, he sees the beginning from the end. While he does look ahead and see who will believe and be saved, he does more than that, he acts on behalf of his divine prerogatives and those who are chosen and elect, the Scriptures will tell us, were recorded in the Lamb's book of life before the world began.

So all human beings are in the book of life. Those who are saved are in the book of the life of the Lamb and then thirdly, all are judged by the book of the law and the book of deeds and when they are judged at the great white throne, they don't know Christ, by the book of the law and the book of deeds, then they are erased from the book of life. But those who are in the book of life and in the Lamb's book of life, their names can never be erased. They are secure forever. Well, however exactly this unfolds, we can't say dogmatically but whatever is true, this is true: the church is not here. This is the great white throne judgment. This is the resurrected of the ungodly, unbelieving dead. The church is already raptured and secure in grace with the Lord.

He continues on in Revelation 20. In verse 13 he says, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds." He wants you to know that it doesn't matter where the particles that were once one of the sons of Adam might be deposited in this earth, the God who put it all together to start with is going to reconnect it all together and raise them up. There is not a wind that blows down the street in front of this church that doesn't contain some particle of what was once a son of Adam but God will put it all back together and he'll take their departed souls that have been in suffering and unite it with new created bodies and there they will stand soul and body before the Lord in judgment. John 5:25, "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live." After they stand before him, look, they're already condemned. There is no appeal. There is no lawyer on their behalf. As a matter fact, the only advocate that can ever be a lawyer with God for men's souls is no longer a lawyer on behalf of men, now he's the Judge of men. If one were to plead, "I need a lawyer," Jesus will say, "I am a lawyer but today I'm your Judge." You can't go back. The day of grace has departed. The day of grace is over.

Then here's what happened in verse 15, "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." The Bible uses that phrase "lake of fire" for that Greek word Gehenna that is translated in the other parts of the New Testament for the place of eternal torment for the unsaved and that is hell. Four quick things about hell. Number 1: hell is factual. Hell is factual. We are raised literal bodies and we will be thrown with literal bodies into a literal hell. The beast is already in there. The false prophet is already in there. Satan is already there and all the unsaved will be resurrected and cast into the lake of fire. Now, we need to remind ourselves that during our Lord's earthly ministry, Jesus spoke more about hell than he spoke about heaven so these happy-jack psychology preachers on television that talk about the goodness of God

and heaven for all, are perverting the teachings of Christ because he spoke so literally and specifically and repetitively on the reality of hell. Listen, you know why they leave that out? Are you listening to me? Because they don't want to deal with an infinitely, transcendent, holy God. They want God to be a lot like us but just a little bigger so that we can "relate to him." But I don't want a God that I can relate to because he's not big enough to save a sinner like me. Are you hearing me? I don't want a God that's like me. He's got to be greater than me and greater in mercy and greater in grace and greater in lovingkindness. But also to those who spurn his mercy and his lovingkindness, he is greater in wrath and greater in retribution and greater in judgment than you can possibly imagine. Hell is necessary because the injustice and offensiveness of our sin to this holy God demands that level of punishment. You say, "That's old-time preaching." There is no old-time preaching. It's either true preaching or false preaching.

Hell is factual. Secondly, hell is fearful. It's a fiery furnace, the Bible says. Everlasting burning. Unquenchable fire. Unimaginable suffering, weeping, gnashing of teeth. No rest day or night. Those in hell are eternally cut off from God's love, God's grace, God's mercy and God's kindness. Can you imagine such a thing? For all eternity, they will never know any good. They will never receive the smallest help nor the smallest comfort. Now listen to me: they will not be cut off from God. God is in hell. Did you hear me? God is in hell. The psalmist says, "If I go up into the heavens you are there. If I descend down into the depths of the earth, to hell, you are there." But he's not there in his goodness. He's not there in his love. He's not there in his mercy. He's not there in his grace. He's not there in his lovingkindness. God will be with them in hell every moment for all eternity in his wrath, in his judgment, in his retribution against their sin. That's terrifying. You see, sinners would like to think, "Oh, but I'll just go to hell and I'll be through with the church and through with the religion and through with preaching and through with God." No you will not. God will be with you every moment in hell in his wrath. And you'd much rather have a world of human wrath compared to one moment of divine wrath. That's what hell is. It's fearful. Fearful.

Hell is factual, it's fearful and it's final. There is no exit. Verse 10 speaks about that the beast and the false prophet are there also and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Between heaven and hell there is a great chasm fixed. Oh, the horror, the loneliness, the agony of hell. My friend, you do not go to hell according to the false doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church to purify yourself that you might get out later. No sir, you go there to stay there. You are not therefore purification. You are there for punishment. The Catholic church used to make enormous amounts of money by going around to pour uneducated people and putting great painted banners up that showed their deceased loved ones in the tormenting fires of purgatory and if they would give enough money to the church they could buy their way out of that purgatory. That is a blasphemous, vile, demonic, ungodly, unbiblical doctrine. It is not taught in the word of God. It never has been taught in the word of God. You don't go there to purify and get ready for something else. You go there for punishment forever.

Hell is factual, it's fearful, it's final and it's fair. It's fair. It's just. These people will be judged at the great white throne. Their deeds were accurately recorded and God is

perfectly just in sending every one of these sinners into an eternal hell. He has given them what they have chosen. They have chosen to live ungodly lives and not put their faith in his Son the Lord Jesus Christ so he confirms their choice forever.

Church, let's remind ourselves that everything that exists for the glory of God. Heaven, that is the new heaven and the new earth, exists so that for all eternity, God will be praised for his love and grace to undeserving sinners. Hell exists that God for all eternity will be praised for the perfections of his judgment against unredeemed sinners. But whether heaven or hell, God will be praised and God will be glorified.

Number 5, the last event at the end of time that we're going to talk about: the final end of death and the grave. That's good news. It's kind of interesting how John saw this and how the Lord wanted this recorded. The final end of death and the grave. Look there in verse 14, if you will, "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire." After God resurrected out of the realms of the departed spirits, the realms of the dead, all those who would stand at the great white throne, he didn't need death and Hades anymore, Hades being a holding place, if you will, of dead, departed spirits. "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire." So the dead body will come to life, the soul and the spirit will be united in that resurrected body and now death and Hades are no longer needed. When we get into the new heaven and the new earth, there will be no death there. There will be no graves there. There will be no tombs there. There will be no graveyards there. These are enemies of men that have been brought about by man's sin. Paul spoke of this very event in 1 Corinthians 15:26 when he said, "The last enemy that will be destroyed is death." Interesting, that's what John is saying here, the very last thing.

Heaven and earth as you and I know it has already passed away with a mighty, penetrating, unimaginable roar of power and God will remove all that we know. All the resurrected ungodly will stand in a vast black nothingness before this great white throne. They will receive their just condemnation. They will be cast into hell where the beast and the false prophet and Satan already are and then God says, "Okay, I've got one more thing I want to deal with." Then God will summon death and the grave. He will say, "Death, grave, your day is over. You're a reminder of the power of sin and my Son has vanquished the power of sin. You're a reminder of the fallenness and rebellion of man and my Son has conquered the grave." Brothers and sisters, every time you read the obituary column, it's to remind you that the times are out of joint. Sin reigns in the human race. But at this point, all the redeemed of God, their sins are covered and removed by the merits of Jesus Christ so the wages of sin is death but sin is no more so death has no place. "Death, your day is over. Grave, your day is over. Death and grave, your power has ended. Begone." And death and the grave, the Scriptures say, are cast into hell. Do you know why I think that is so? Because every soul in hell will always be dying but never die. Death, the power of death, will grip them for eternity but they can never be out of it. It's part of the horrors of hell.

The Bible starts with a God who by his word creates a universe and ends with a God by that same word destroying that universe. The Bible starts with a God who by his word

makes us in his own image and the Bible ends by that same God with his own word remaking us in his image. Isaiah 65:17 says, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind." I love that thought. Think about it. There we are, it's all done now. Satan, the beast, the false prophet, all the ungodly resurrected are judged and death and the grave all banished into eternal hell. We inherit a new heavens and a new earth and the Scripture says that the former things will not be remembered or even come to mind. Listen, it's going to be radically different and new. Every thought, every memory, every concern concerning this present world and this present life, will be gone forever. It won't be just a much, much less better, happier, setting of what we know now. Gone forever. Radically changed. Infinitely better. It can even be idolatry when you try to picture heaven as being this perfect place but better than this. You can't picture it anymore than you can comprehend the infinite glories, beauties and wisdom of God. Listen, what God has in store for his children is literally, are you with me, out of this world. It is out of this world. Every thought, every memory, every concern concerning this present life, gone forever. The word "death" will be banished from our minds and our vocabularies. We will totally forget the entire concept of death and the grave and for that matter, sickness, suffering, despair, anxiety, depression, whatever. Gone. Not even capable of thinking about what it was like. Gone. It won't even be remembered or come to mind, the Bible says.

The new heaven and the new earth will be the true utopia, one with never ending youthfulness, vitality and life. Sin will be no more. Sorrow will be no more. Sickness will be no more. These will not just be relics of the past because there will be no past. Are you with me? There will be no past. There is nothing to remember from the past. Even the past is made new. No bad memories will ever enter into the mind. No guilt. No fear. No anxieties. These were items of a former inferior day that is gone forever.

Now John goes on to give us quite a few details which, God willing, we're going to cover next fall. You say, "Pastor, I won't live until next fall." Well, just go out and enjoy it before the rest of us get there then. He tells us that nighttime will not exist in the new heaven and the new earth. Even the sun will not exist because the Lord God will illumine everything. Then at the end of John's descriptions of the glories of the new heaven and the new earth, John records in Revelation 22:6, the first part, "These words are faithful and true." These words are faithful and true.

We're to labor down here. We're to serve down here. We're to deny ourselves and carry our crosses down here. We're to witness down here. We're to raise our children and our grandchildren and our great grandchildren to honor and glorify God down here. But at the end of the day, this is just a speck of nothingness compared to what we're going to get later in the new heavens and the new earth. I don't know about you, but I feel overwhelmed. But I also feel quite liberated and to a great degree quite ready. These words are faithful and true.

Let's stand together.