

All Things New

Revelation

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Bible Verse: Revelation 21-22
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Well, it's our happy opportunity to return to our study of Revelation here this evening, and I invite you to turn to the first chapter of Revelation just to reread the first three verses by way of introduction, not exposition just yet but just to orient ourselves toward the text in anticipation of what the Lord has for us here this evening. Revelation chapter 1, the first three verses, says,

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Now, as you read there in verse 3, we're reminded immediately of things that we've already seen in our early messages here, blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, blessed are those who hear, and the challenge for the church today, the challenge for each of us in the room and those listening elsewhere, is that John doesn't stop there with simply reading and hearing. He goes on to say those who keep what is written in it, those who obey what is written in it, those who heed it, you might say, to hear and to heed. And it reminds us of what James says, James gives a warning against people who hear and do not do. He says the one who reads the word and then walks away without change is like one who looks in a mirror and forgets who he is when he walks away from the mirror; you forget the impression of it all. That's a great, great challenge. I think that it's struck a chord with many of you to realize the emphasis that Revelation puts on spiritual qualifications and spiritual goals and spiritual aspirations in the word. I know that many people were expecting to just jump into things related to the rapture and related to the millennium, and that's a very serious, profound mistake to make, as shown by the first three verses that we just read. The promise of blessing is upon those who come with a heart desire and an intention to obey and if Revelation is simply reduced to a fodder for theological debate and social media posts, we've really missed the point and God is not going to unveil and communicate the blessings to people like that, and there's probably a lot that could be said about that.

What we said early on in the second message, really the first full message on the book, is that Revelation has an intention to cultivate personal holiness in us, and the principles that we identified from looking at the book broadly is that there should be a desire for the glory of Christ. that is evident, a fear of God in judgment, a worship of God in response to his revelation, and a serious commitment and practice of repentance from sin, and those four spiritual attributes really frame the personal holiness that marks those who want to keep what is written in this book, who want to embrace it. There's no avoiding the centrality of repentance in Revelation because it's mentioned to five of the seven churches; Jesus commands five of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 to repent of different kinds of immorality and false doctrine and false practice that they are involved in. You know, you can judge for yourself—let me leave it at that—you can judge for yourself whether there is a resounding note of repentance coming consistently from so-called evangelical pulpits in our day or not, and the sad absence of that illustrates something really important to us. It's not necessarily so much what a church or a pastor or speaker or teacher says that will expose them as being a false teacher. Even Catholics will have a fairly robust doctrine of God and a Christology, but you get into their soteriology, the doctrine of salvation and the doctrine of the church, and you couldn't be more far off than they are. But it's often what people don't say. It's what people hide or stay silent about, either out of embarrassment or whatever else, when you are listening to someone visiting a new church perhaps in other parts of the country, listen for themes like the wrath of God, listen for themes of repentance from sin and calls to repentance, not simply promises of Jesus and let's love Jesus and all of that, but to get serious about what Scripture actually says as in what it communicates to us. The opening of the gospels is repent and believe in the kingdom of God. Repent, repent, repent. John the Baptist, "Repent." Jesus, "Repent," in Matthew 4.17. The Sermon on the Mount, "Repent, repent, repent." And you come to Revelation and it's the same theme being emphasized over and over again, and the fact that men don't say that in order not to turn people away does not commend their ministry. Their silence is deafening on that, and you need to just be aware of those things broadly speaking and also as we come to the book of Revelation and see the emphasis that it makes.

Now, that's all by way of review. This past Sunday, we asked the question, where is all this going and we saw that there were many different ways to answer that question, but when you come to the book of Revelation, it's important, in my judgment anyway, it's important to have a sense of the end from the beginning. Where is the book of Revelation going? What is its culmination point? Because if you're aware of that, then you can put the other questions that people like to deal with into a proper context. And so we ask, you know, where is Revelation going, which you can expand out and say, where is the Bible going with its instruction and its teaching and its doctrine about the future, you could ask the question, where is all of human history going, and expand it to the ultimate and most important question, where is the purpose of God going, and Revelation answers all of those questions in an ultimate way. And what we saw last time is that everything that is begun in the first three chapters of Genesis finds its end, finds its goal, finds its culmination in the book of Revelation, and that's very, very significant to see. You could do it this way. It would be a very fascinating way to do it and much easier if you had two

Bibles open before you, one on your left open to Genesis chapters 1, 2, and 3, and then another Bible open to Revelation 21 and 22, and then you just read them in parallel, you would quickly see how much that is introduced in Genesis 1 through 3 finds its culmination in Revelation 21 to 22. As we saw on Sunday, it's in a most profound way when you realize that even such fundamental things that we presuppose, like the sun and the moon and the existence of night itself will be overturned and completed and done away with in the eternal state which is revealed to us in Revelation 21 and 22. What Genesis opens up with in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and then we find in Revelation 21 that there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth, and so everything comprehensively about the realm in which we exist, the only realm that we've ever known by direct physical senses and perception, is going to be done away with and God will introduce something completely new for the redeemed after he has judged the wicked, after he has judged Satan, and he introduces the eternal state for the benefit and for the foundation of worship for all of the redeemed throughout all of eternity.

The eternal state is going to be something brand new and that kind of gives you the title for tonight's message. We'll see it in one of the verses that we'll see tonight, "All Things New." And so the title of Sunday's message is "Where Is All This Going?" And tonight's message corresponds to that with the answer, "All Things New." Where is all this going? All things new. And I normally try to avoid doing this, but tonight's message is kind of part two of the first part that we did two days ago on Sunday, because there's 14 total points that I have. We did six on Sunday, and it's just ridiculous to tell people, here's point number 14 of a 14-part message that you started, you know, 45 minutes earlier. No one learns that way. But what I want to do here this evening is just remind you of the six points that we introduced on Sunday and then rapidly go through the final eight points here this evening. And we looked at God's plan for many different things. We saw first of all, his plan for creation on Sunday. We saw the plan for man, mankind, you might say, the plan for night, the plan for light, meaning sun and moon, the plan for death, and the plan for Satan, and we're not going to take time to look at any of the verses that were around that. Creation, man, and night, light, death, and Satan. And so just in those six, you saw something just remarkably comprehensive, staggeringly comprehensive, and beloved, I just don't believe that you can really begin to understand the book of Revelation until you see that purpose in it first. You need to see that first in order to see where all of this is going and to put everything else into perspective.

It's fine for pastors and theologians and lay people to, and I'm going to be unfairly disparaging in what I'm about to say, only to make a point, it's fine to play theological badminton with different views of the rapture and different views of the millennium. It's fine to do that, and we're going to talk about those issues eventually in the course of our study of the entire book as we go through it verse by verse. But beloved, don't you see that these profound issues of the purpose of God and the course of human history and the culmination and the renewal and restoration and change of everything that we know in our personal experience, that all of that's going to be different in the eternal state? Isn't it obvious that there's something transcendent beyond the things that typically engage discussions about the book of Revelation? I think it's obvious and I want to cultivate your spiritual taste buds for these greater issues, these more profound issues, because then

you're in a position to put these other things in their rightful place. And enough said about that.

Let's go into the rest of what we need to see here this evening, and what we'll do is we'll finish this up tonight, and then Sunday we have a Communion service. We'll step away from Revelation for a service or probably two, and then eventually we'll come back to it on the following Sunday, the first Sunday in March but this gives us a good kickoff to what we want to see.

So having seen those first six points, the plans for those different aspects, let's look at number seven, the plan for defilement. The plan for defilement. Now we know from the end of Genesis chapter 1, that everything that God created was very good. Scripture goes through the six days of creation, the various stages of creation, and you just have this unfolding of this masterful wisdom of God in creating the heavens and the earth, filling the heavens, filling the earth, and then bringing man to reign over the earth, and it's all very, very good, and then so quickly it was all lost in the fall of Adam, and everything was defiled and it was ruined. There was an innocence with Adam and Eve at the end of chapter 2, they were naked and they were not ashamed, and there was just this innocence in this perfect paradise that God had placed them in and you get a sense of what was lost in their communion with God when you go to Genesis chapter 3. And so you're going to want to keep your hand in Genesis 3 and then just kind of move back and forth as we go through here this evening.

In Genesis chapter 3, defilement entered paradise, and you know the story, Satan tempted Eve, she ate of the fruit, she gave it to Adam, he ate, and what happened? We pick it up in verse 6. "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate," in direct disobedience to God, "and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate." Then, verse 7, the colossal consequences began to occur. Verse 7, "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths." There was this immediate sense of shame. Their innocence had been lost and now they recognized there was a defilement that had entered and what once was pure and pristine and lovely and good was now something dirty and wretched and needing to be hidden. Such a colossal loss. They were conscious that they were now unclean and they take these very meager means to try to cover it up, all of course to no avail and that defilement entered the Garden of Eden.

Well, you could say that the next 1,185 chapters of the Bible is the unfolding of the consequences of that defilement entering in, and then you get to the final two chapters in Revelation 21 and 22 and what you find in this new creation, this new heaven and new earth, that there will be no defilement there. There is no possible way that we can understand how brilliantly glorious this is going to be. So look at chapter 21, beginning in verse 23. We've looked at this several times in these two messages, and we'll probably look at it a time or two still yet to come. But watch this...actually, let me just remind you, let me just remind you in chapter 21 verse 1, John "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. And I

saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 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." So you've got this wonderful new environment. As you read on in the last two chapters of the Bible, you find that the filth and the shame and the defilement have been removed. Verse 23 of Revelation 21, "the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day--and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations." Now look at this in verse 27 in light of everything we've said, "But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life." Everything that makes this world unclean will be absent in heaven, will be absent in the eternal state.

We can't even begin to fathom that because defilement and sin and shame are just so wrapped like strands of DNA around every aspect of our existence, but somehow there will be no shame in heaven. Everything that has defiled us here on earth will be gone. It will be removed, washed away by the blood of the Lamb. And there will be none of this shame that in Genesis caused them to sew loincloths and cover themselves up. The motivating factor for that, shame and guilt, all gone replaced by this glorified purity that we will enjoy as a result of our Savior's redeeming work. The souls of just men made perfect. No more guilt. No more covering up. No more things to hide. No more fear about what if somebody finds out the truth about me, my past, my day. All of that's gone. Nothing defiled to diminish our enjoyment of Christ and being in his presence. And so that which defines our existence and has since the fall of our first parents, that kind of defilement, picking up on what we said with the first six points, that very defilement will yield to the glory of Christ. Christ will be preeminent and all of the other things will be banished and there will be, as Scripture says elsewhere, the former things will be remembered no more.

Isn't that wonderful to contemplate? Isn't it wonderful to contemplate? Even as Christians, you know, we think back into our pre-Christian days, we remember things that we did as Christians in our immaturity. At least I know I do. Maybe I'm the only one in the entire room like that. But I just think back to some of the things. I just think, "Oh, that was really me. I really did that. I really said that. I really inflicted that on someone else." And even as a believer, knowing I'm forgiven of that, there's still that sense of remembering the things that caused us shame. All of that's going to be gone in heaven. There won't be any more of that. And the blasphemies, the cursings, the adulteries that are represented in this room from the past, all of it washed away. None of it to be called back to mind. Defilement will be banished and we will know nothing but the glory of Christ in response to his saving work. And so that's the plan for defilement. It has an endpoint, it has an end date, it has a shelf life, and then it will be put away when God establishes the new heaven and the new earth.

Well, let's go to number eight, the plan for communion with God. The plan for communion with God. In some ways, this all just gets better and better. You know, we've talked about the nature of the physical universe, we've talked about death and Satan and those things being banished and put away, defilement being put away. It's almost like there's a cleansing that's taking place before we get to the positive, glorious purpose of it all, starting with the plan for communion with God. And going back to Genesis chapter 3, simply reminding you of things that you know well, you know how the communion that Adam enjoyed with God was disrupted. Chapter 3 verse 8 of Genesis, "they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.'" Instead of the evident prior communion that they had enjoyed, Adam's now hiding from God. The pristine fellowship that man enjoyed with God had been disrupted and corrupted and lost.

And if you go on to Genesis 3:23 and 24, you see that there was even a geographic component to the separation. In verse 23, we read, "therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life." Man driven out as a result of his guilt, driven out from communion with God, driven out from paradise. And I mean, that's really stark, and the loss is just incalculable, isn't it? And then we come to Revelation 21 and 22, and we find that communion with God is not only restored, it is made permanent, it is made, even better stated, it is made eternal and unalterable so that we read again in Revelation 21 verse 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.'" In Genesis 3, God, as it were, says, "Get out. Get out." And it echoes in the 65 books of the Bible that follow. Here in Revelation 21, God speaks to his people and says, "Come in. We're together and we'll never be apart." He will dwell with them. They will be his people. God himself will be with them as their God.

And so this separation from God that was established, recorded, enforced in Genesis 3 is reversed and the separation from God will yield to the glory of Christ and full reconciliation, full communion in the immediate presence of God. We have a foretaste of that now in our union with Christ. We have a foretaste in our present life as Christians, but what you need to see, what you need to have the Spirit of God cultivate in your heart is the sense of anticipation that at best here in this life, we have a very tiny foretaste of what the fullness of that communion is going to be when we're in heaven. And if there is any fellowship with Christ, if there is any love of the Spirit, if there is any kind of comfort in Christ that we know in this life, beloved, understand that it will be geometrically, exponentially, infinitely, much, much greater in the eternal state that God has prepared for those who love him. And so the banishment of Genesis 3 is ended in the eternal state, and we are with God in this perfect communion forever and just recognizing, just remembering that this was the plan of God and the intention of God all

along and you see, you get a little bit of a foretaste, you get a little bit of a sense, you get a sense of anticipation of how good God must be, how gracious, how loving, how kind he must be for his rebel subjects to be on the receiving end of a plan that blesses them with this kind of communion in the end.

And it's just so very critical for you, if you're going to understand your Bible, is to realize that there is an intimate connection between those first three chapters of Genesis and the outcome in Revelation. God planned that end from the beginning. He appointed the end from the beginning. He didn't figure this out as some kind of Plan B along the way. This was the intention all along and to know that this is the outcome of our sorrows on earth, that this is the culmination of the love of Christ for our souls is a rich thing to contemplate. Words fail me. But separation from God will yield to the glory of Christ and so defilement in a negative sense will be banished, yielding to the glory of Christ. In a positive sense, communion with God will be established in an eternal way as the outcome of the end from the beginning.

Let's go on to point number nine, the plan for sorrow. The plan for sorrow and let's go back to Genesis 3. We'll just let Scripture kind of speak for itself. Sin introduced pain and sorrow to the human race and when God judged Satan, judged the woman, judged man, pain was part of what he introduced. So we read in Genesis chapter 3 verse 16, "To the woman he said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.' And to Adam he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it," cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'" Pain, pain, pain, curse, all introduced there as the righteous judgment of God upon the sin of man. And again, the subsequent 1,185 chapters of the Bible show the outcome of that.

Well, what do we find in Revelation? What do we find in the eternal state? You find that sorrow and pain will be no more. Sorrow and pain will be no more. Look at Revelation 21, verses 4 and 5, "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.' 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.'" My aching friend in Christ, my aching brother and sister in Christ, those of you that have lived long enough to know something about the cumulative weight of pain and disappointment and sorrow and affliction, who know something of things not turning out the way that you hope, relationships going south that you had such high hopes for, and just the accumulated pain of all of it, look to what lies ahead. And if there were a way to personify the pain and to have a conversation with it, to be able to declare to it, "You're not here for long. This is temporary. You are a temporary aspect of my existence because in the eternal state, God will wipe away every tear, God will do away with every pain. No more crying. No more mourning." You would say that it's too good to be true and yet,

almost in anticipation of that response, because it's so endemic to the way that our life existence is, God says there at the end of verse 5, he says, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And so whatever pain occupies your mind, whatever disappointments occupy your heart, whatever plagues you, whatever the temptations are, all of that, gather it all up and realize that God has declared in advance, "The time is coming. No more," and that aspect of our existence will be banished and sorrow, the very existence of sorrow and pain itself will yield to the glory of Christ. Christ will drive it all out so that there is no remainder left.

Often people will ask me, "You know, what about my loved ones that died without Christ?" And people, you know, sometimes will outwardly reject the gospel because, "Well, you know, I don't want to go to heaven if my loved ones aren't there, and what about that, this and that?" I can't tell you exactly how God will sort all of that out for us, and certainly I have, you know, my heart's heavy standing before you thinking about loved ones gone, loved ones for whom I have concern, and I have no promise of outcomes that I would choose in this life for that. But I can tell you this, beloved, those of you that share in that with, you know, with loved ones gone and still with us, somehow, based on his own promise by the God who cannot lie, the God whose word is trustworthy and true, God says and promises us that there will be no pain associated with those things in heaven. Will it be that we have no memory of them? Maybe. Will it be that we'll just be so enraptured with the glory of Christ that it will drive out every other thought? Probably. Will there be a sense that if there is a memory that we'll be completely satisfied with the wisdom and righteousness and justice of God? You add it all up, add it all up, and the equation comes out that there's no pain, no sorrow, no crying. Our hearts will be fully satisfied with Christ and everything that has weighed us down in this life will not have an effect on the glory that will be ours in the eternal state.

It's remarkable. It's staggering to realize that even the very principle of pain and sorrow will be removed in the eternal state, and this is kind of outside the scope of tonight's message and certainly outside the scope of the text in Revelation 21 and 22, but I need to say this just by way of comparison's sake. In hell, there's another theme for you to see, listen for, does this teacher, does this church ever mention that, wrath of God, repentance? What about the doctrine of hell? Can we have, go to a new pastor, "Can we have an honest discussion about hell? Tell me what you think about that. When did you last mention that from the pulpit?" That would be a good conversation for a lot of people. But in hell, it's going to be the reverse. There will be no comfort in hell. There will be no relief in hell. There will just be intense sorrow, intense pain, intense crying, intense mourning, probably for many under the sound of my voice and within the circle of my affections, intense, enormous, everlasting regret at squandered spiritual opportunity, hardening hearts against the gospel, hardening hearts against earnest pleas to come to Christ, hardening hearts for a preference for intellectual pride and sexual sin and whatever else that would harden people against a loving call to repentance from the Lord Jesus Christ. And to have an eternity like that, an eternity to remember that forgiveness and eternal life were offered and promised to you if only you would come to Christ and you foolishly rejected it for the sake of something here on earth, it is crushing to contemplate the eternal regret that will accompany everyone in that condition and to

know that the most severe punishment is reserved for those who heard the gospel and rejected Christ.

Now look, beloved, and again, let's just come back to what we've been saying about these overarching, surpassing themes of the gospel. We can play theological badminton on dispensational issues if we want to, but if we neglect these weightier matters of heaven and hell, comfort and pain, forgiveness and communion with God and judgment, and we marginalize those things for the sake of stimulating our intellectual curiosity? No. No. No. We're not going to do that. We need to set these things before us and see what the very profound issues really are and respond to them and for us as believers in Christ to realize that there will be no more sorrow, and to appropriate and to enjoy and draw into our possession and the comfort of our hearts the promise of God that the sorrow that plagues us today will be gone tomorrow. And however he does that, you know, and part of me, we said, "How could he do this? Will it be the glory of Christ? Will it be righteousness and justice?" There's a sense in which I don't even, in one sense, the means don't even matter. How God does that is secondary to the greater promise that he will do it. And, you know, when it starts to sink in, how magnificent this will be, you know, you just want to say, "Where is this? I want to run to it. I want to run and be there, because this is going to be magnificent."

That's the plan for sorrow. Let's look at the plan for the curse. The plan for the curse, number 10, if you're keeping score, either in the audience or at home. Tonight we've seen the plan for defilement, the plan for communion with God, the plan for sorrow. What about the plan for the curse? Well, we read it earlier going back to Genesis chapter 3 in verse 17. Genesis chapter 3, verse 17, God told Adam, "cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you." Of course, we know that at the cross Christ bore the curse for us. Christ took the curse. Christ became a curse for us as he hung on the tree. God poured out his wrath upon him. Christ bore the curse so that we could be delivered from it. And what is the outcome of that? Scripture anticipates that the curse itself will be no more.

Look at Revelation chapter 22 verse 3. Revelation 22 verse 3, and actually, let's start in verse 1, just to, again, to just set the context and not just the verbal parallels. Revelation 22 verse 1, "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." And then look at here in verse 3, "No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him." In place of the curse, the curse will be removed, all of its effects will be banished, and in their place will be the throne of the Triune God in the middle of this glorious eternal paradise, and we as the servants of Christ will have the eternal, inestimable, undeserved privilege of falling down and worshiping him there. And the fullness of the greatness of the glory found in verse 4, "They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads." The curse removed, all of its effects banished, replaced by the glory of Christ, replaced by this transcendent, intimate worship, seeing his face and caring for nothing else. And somehow, I suppose,

somehow we will have this overwhelming assurance, if not an intrinsic presupposition that it can never be taken away from us.

This really brings the fullness of everything in Scripture together and everything about the fullness of salvation in Christ together. Listen, beloved, as we read these things about the eternal state and we talk about things that we know that are fundamental to our existence now, like sun and moon and night and sorrow and all that we know is this cursed environment, and that's the environment in which we live, when, follow me here, this is really necessary and invigorating, as we talk about the eternal state in the absence of these things and the presence of these glorious things, it sounds kind of alien to us, doesn't it? Because it's so different from what we know now, it almost sounds a little bit alien. I don't mean that in a science fiction way, it's just so different. And this is the realm we know, and we have some level of familiarity and comfort with it. Understand this, understand this, that when we are in heaven, when we are with Christ, there will be absolutely no sense of this being different, alien, or uncomfortable. When we are in the eternal state which God prepared for us from before the beginning of time, which Christ died in order to bring us into, we are going to have this pervasive, undiluted sense that this is home. Everything is going to be perfectly natural, perfectly right, perfectly congruent with everything in our hearts. There will be no disconnect between the two. We are going to be in this glorious place where there is perfect communion with God, the access to the face of Christ, no sorrow, no curse, no defilement, and everything is going to be, everything within and about us is going to be saying, "This is perfect." The sense of disconnect that we have as we talk about it here in the flesh in this world, that's not going to be a part of it. If we were able to step into that and know that, we'd say this was the alien environment for us in Christ. This world was the alien environment. This was the passing transient aspect of our existence. Now, here in the eternal state, we've entered into the fullness of the glory of it, and everything is right and nothing will ever intrude upon it to take it away. And so the curse will yield to the glory of Christ.

Well, let's just talk briefly about point number 11, the plan for the dominion of man. The plan for the dominion of man. I don't want to spend a lot of time here, but in Genesis 3:19, we read this about the plan for the dominion of man. Adam lost his dominion in the fall. "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." And there's this, that Adam being in this place of dominion has sacrificed the glory of it, but in the eternal state, in the eternal state in Revelation chapter 22 verse 5, that lost dominion is restored as a result of the work of the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. In Revelation 22 verse 5, "night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever." No more of the defilement. No more of the lost opportunities. No more of death. The original purpose of man has been regained by the last Adam, by the Lord Jesus Christ. He himself who reigns and those who are in him reigning with him, the dominion which was lost in the fall of man will yield itself to the glory of Christ and we will reign with him forever and ever.

Point number 12, the plan for paradise. The plan for paradise. This kind of overlaps with the idea of communion with God. The plan for paradise. We saw earlier that God

banished man from the original paradise and closed it to him so that he could not enter back in. The loss was colossal. And we read in verses 23 and 24 of Genesis, 3, Genesis 3 verses 23 and 24, "therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life." Sometimes I wonder if Adam, you know, what he lost in his memory, did he carry over any residual memories of paradise? Couldn't have remembered it in its perfection because his mind had been defiled but you look into where he had come from geographically, let's say, and you just realize there's no entrance. You can't enter Buckingham Palace because the Royal Guard is standing outside it and there's no way inside to that place of magnificence. You're on the outside looking in and there's no way to get there. And it's lost. And you turn to do the work of the ground and thorns and thistles and sweat and pain and lost productivity.

But not in heaven, not in the eternal state. Look at Revelation 21:24 and 25, God eternally opens the new paradise to man. Whereas in the old paradise, the gate was closed, shut, locked, barred, no way in, now paradise is freely open, freely available. The city of God has free access for everyone that is there. We read in verse 21, let's say, "the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it," and here it is, "and its gates will never be shut by day--and there will be no night there." The gates are open in this place. There is free access purchased for us by the Lord Jesus Christ. This paradise is available. This paradise has yielded to the glory of Christ. This paradise has yielded to Christ who loved his people, reconciled them to God, brought them to him, and now where God is in this place of utter perfection, his people are free to come as well. Paradise restored, yielded to the glory of Christ.

Well, one of the aspects of the original paradise was the tree of life. This is point number 13, the plan for the tree of life, and Adam forfeited access to that tree of life, didn't he? Look at Genesis chapter 2 verse 9. Genesis chapter 2 verse 9 just to remind you briefly of the tree itself. "Out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." And then in chapter three, verse 24, we read again, "He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life." There is this wonderful tree of life, but you can't touch it. You can't go near it. The access to that is guarded and locked away from you, kind of symbolizing the separation of our current condition as unredeemed men would say, to God.

But what's happened in heaven, what's happened in the eternal state, what has Christ done? Christ has reinstated access to the tree of life. Look at Revelation 22:1 and 2. "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on

either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Look at verse 14, "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates."

Do you see it, beloved? Do you see how everything established and lost in Genesis 1, 2, and 3 finds its fulfillment, finds its goal, finds restoration, or finds its conclusion in Revelation 21 and 22? That's the whole point. That's the whole point of everything that we've been saying for these past two messages is that this is where it's all going. This is the outcome. It's all going somewhere good and glorious for those who are in Christ, including the tree of life yielding to Christ, yielding to his glory. We could summarize it all with this one final point. Point number 14, the plan of restoration. The plan of restoration. We could summarize it in this simple statement, beloved, and I'm reducing a little over two hours of teaching to one single sentence here in what I'm about to say. Our Lord Jesus Christ will regain everything that was lost in the fall and eternally more besides. He regains it all. He manifests his Lordship. He manifests his power as King, his power as Creator, his power as Redeemer by thoroughly, completely recovering everything that the first Adam lost in the fall, the last Adam comes and regains it all back and makes it even better, makes it eternal, makes it so that it could never be lost again.

And so we saw there in those verses in Genesis, Genesis 3:24, we don't need to look there again. How many times do you need to read the same verse in the same message, pastor? God sent Adam away from his presence after the fall, sent him out, banished him from Eden, and yet, in that eternal state, the separation is no more. Look at Revelation 21, verse 5, and 22, verse 4. Actually, I want to look at it in verse 3 of chapter 21. "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.'" Verse 5, "he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new. Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'" And then in chapter 22, verse 4, "They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads."

Beloved, we've rushed through some of these things. That's okay, we'll have time to review them again when we get back here in a few months. But at the risk of repeating myself, Jesus Christ is the last Adam. Not just the second Adam, as if there might be a third, Jesus is the last Adam. What the real historical man named Adam, who was a real man who really lived some 6,000 years or so ago, everything that he lost through his sin against God this last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, comes and gains it all back. He makes all things new, and as a result of that, he will receive all of the glory. Look at Philippians chapter 3, and we'll close with this passage. Philippians chapter 3, and what I would have you walk out of here from tonight, we've laid a groundwork to have a fresh appreciation of this famous text, this well-known text at the end of Philippians chapter 3. The Apostle Paul says, "our citizenship is in heaven." That's where we belong. That is our city. Nothing here, nothing related to anything on this earth, here we have no lasting city. We are seeking a city to come and what you have seen in these past two messages is the nature and aspect of that city to come. And you can test the reality of your salvation by asking yourself whether there is anything in your heart that says, "I want that more than

anything else. I long for that. I can't wait for that to come. I long for my homeland, and I haven't even been there yet."

"Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," verse 21, "who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." What kind of things are "all things"? What manifests the eternal deity of our Lord? What manifests his omnipotent power to subject all things to himself? Well, just articulate them out what it is that he will subject to himself that will yield to his glory, that will yield to his presence in the end. Creation, mankind, night, sun and moon, death, Satan, defilement, communion, sorrow, curse, man in his dominion, paradise, the tree of life, the restoration of all things. When the Apostle Paul in summary form says that Christ has the power to subject all things to himself, we see the fullness of what it is that he's subjecting in Revelation 21 and 22. And there's a part of us that almost draws back in fear and awe at the majesty of Christ to be able to do all of that, and then we're drawn knowing that it was for our sakes that he laid down his life. It was for the sake of his people that he died and rose again, out of love that they would enter into the fullness of this communion throughout all of eternity and know a state of being far too glorious to be fully expressed by human words, but which will be the full experience of the children of God. Beloved, what a gift we have in Christ. One pastor said as we study this book, we should be encouraged, inspired to serve, and enabled to live clean lives that we might be ready when he returns. If you're a Christian, you've just heard what the future holds for you and the future for those in Christ is incomprehensibly bright. Praise his name.

Please stand as we close in prayer.

O Christ, thine is the glory, risen conquering Son, and we have a sense in what we've seen, a sense of perspective of your promise in John 14 when you said that if you go away, you go to prepare a place for us and if you go to prepare a place for us, you will come again, you will come for us so that where you are, we may also be. We've gotten a taste over these past two hours, O Christ, of the magnificence and the sheer immeasurable nature of your grace and kindness for those that you have drawn to yourself. And we thank you now, by faith we see what is to come, and we thank you in advance for the greatness of the glory that we will enjoy throughout all of eternity as we gaze upon your glorious face. Whatever that's like to see you face to face, Lord, we want to see that more than anything. It will be wonderful to walk streets of transparent gold. It will be wonderful to see gates of pearl. Lord, it will be wonderful to be gathered together with saints throughout the ages and loved ones that we've known even in this life. All of that's just going to be incomprehensibly wonderful but, Lord, gather all of that up and it will all fade in comparison to looking in your face, seeing you face to face, forgiven, restored, glorified with the privilege of falling down at your feet, grabbing hold of your ankles, as it were, whatever that's going to be like in your physical presence, and just to be able to say in person, directly in perfect intimacy, "Lord, thank you for all of this but thank you especially for the blessing of you." We honor you now and look forward to that. We pray, Father, for everyone under the sound of my voice, everyone in our circle of influence, everyone within the affections of each one of our hearts, that as outside of

Christ we plead with you for them, that you would bring them in, Father, that they would not miss this glory and that they would be delivered from the wrath to come. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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