

I. Introduction: What is life after life after death?

- **Question:** What will life be like after the history of this world comes to an end?
- Turn to **Revelation 21**. My daughter, Margaret loves books and its most likely the pictures that she likes. She is funny when she picks up books because most times than not she will open a book to the last page and work her way backwards through the book. It is hilarious and not completely crazy.
- Knowing the end of a story or knowing the conclusion of an argument is helpful in tracking the story from the beginning. In Revelation, we receive incite into the end of world history and what's to come after that end. By knowing the end, it will help us understand the rest of Scripture and how it effects us today. I hope it leads us to cherish Christ and love our neighbor.
- Context of **Revelation 21 & 22**:
 - It was written to give insight into what's to come at the conclusion of world history. This insight was given with a purpose. It was originally written to christians who were being persecuted for believing and following Christ. It was written to strengthen these christians so they would not give up and give in, to remain faithful to Christ. It was written to us so that we may cherish Christ and his ways in the face of the temptations to compromise, to refocus our attention to Him who reigns and challenge our commit to this world that is passing away.

II. Restoration of All Things

- **Read Revelation 21:1-4**
- We see, here, in the last two chapters of the Bible the final restoration and advancement of the creation that were introduced in the first two chapters of the Bible.
- **Question:** Take a look at **verse 1**, what did John see?
 - First, new heaven and new earth and the former heaven and earth had passed away
 - **Question:** Does this mean the Earth we live on and the sky above our head will be totally done away with? Will God start over with a totally new creation?
 - No, for 3 reasons:
 - The greek word, *Kainos*, means made new not a “new/other” world
 - Consider **2 Peter 3:10-13**: The first earth and first heaven will be purified with fire of all its sin. It will purified in the sense of renewal not taken completely out of existence. For example, Farms are said to be destroyed in floods but they are not wiped completely out of existence. The first Earth and first Heaven will be burned and renewed but not annihilated from existence.
 - This has implications to what we believe about matter (God does not hate matter that He created but He hates the sin that distorted it) and what our bodies will be like in Heaven. As we said in previous weeks about our bodies, they will be glorified and recognizable like Jesus so will this earth.
 - **Question:** How does this affect how we treat the world today?
 - Second, the sea was no more
 - **Question:** what do you think that even means?
 - The sea is a symbol of unrest and conflict so there will be peace. all will be peace
 - Consider **Isaiah 11:6-9** I.E. no racial strife! Nothing will interfere with harmony.
 - Restoration summarizes the **first verse**- It will pass away not in the sense of annihilation and starting over. He is not taken us out of this world into another. He will make this world anew through glorious renovation. It will be wiped clean of all its evil therefore fitting for an eternity of glory and righteousness and peace.
 - **Question:** Where do you want harmony to exist today?
 - If you want to discuss more verses then consider the **Lord's Prayer, Eph. 1:10, Rom. 8:19-23, and Mt. 24:7-8**
 - **Question:** Take a look at **verse 2**, what did John see?
 - US!
 - 1. We are described as a New Jerusalem (holy & new), coming down out of heaven from God
 - First, The New Jerusalem is us, His people.
 - All of God's children from all of history and from every part of this earth, after being restored, will live together without sin with God
 - Second, John saw us coming down, and coming down from where?

- Out of heaven from God, meaning our lowly bodies will have been transformed into heavenly ones to be completely like Christ.
- The coming to us is encouraging for us because it means we are not going off as a soul into Heaven. Rather Earth will be restored and Heaven will come down to merge with New Earth. We will have a perfect, real, tangible body in a perfect and newly restored Earth.
- If you want to discuss more verses then consider the **Phil 3:20-21**
- **Question:** Knowing that our bodies will be transformed, how does it change the way we treat our bodies today?
- 2. We are described as a bride adorned for her husband
 - **Question:** What does that mean?
 - The idea of human marriage illustrates the ultimate marriage between Christ and His Church. Marriage has always been used to describe God's relationship with His people. The one-flesh union of human marriage points forward and upward to the eternal union with our Savior. We are presently united to Christ but not fully. As a bride is prepared to be presented to her husband, we are being prepared (through obedience & completely through glorification) to be presented to Christ. Then we will be with our Savior.
 - **Question:** Knowing that the adorning process has started in us already, how does this change the way we obey today?
 - Consider **Ephesians 5 & Isaiah 54:3**
- **Question:** Take a look at **verse 3**, what did John hear?
 - God dwells with man
 - Climax of history is God being with his people.
 - World History:
 - **Question:** When was the last time God was with His people?
 - God fellowshiped with Adam and Eve. That was the last time God interacted directly with His people because He is gracious. How is that being gracious?
 - By expelling them from the garden and His presence, God was protecting them. His glory is so powerful that He cannot tolerate sin in His presence. Apart from Christ and a perfect, non-sinful body, you and I would explode.
 - **Question: Then:** When He formed His people into a nation, He directed them to build Him a space in the center of their camp so He could dwell with them. But this wasn't the same dwelling as it was with Adam and Eve. The high priest was the only one who could enter the innermost room where God dwelled. And he could only enter that area once a year and after following an intensive purification process. **Today:** By Christ being in us, our bodies became a temple. The dwelling place of God in His people. Through faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit lives in us. God is in us. **Next:** So will there be a temple in Heaven? If so, describe it.
 - No, there will be no need for a temple because God will dwell directly with us like in the garden.
 - **Question:** Do you desire to be with God? Why or why not?
 - We will talk more about this later in the semester but the important point is this: God will dwell with His people in a tangible way and that is greatest thing that could ever happen.
 - **Question:** Take a look at **verse 4**, what did John hear?
 - Perfection will be the only reality.
 - **Question:** Because there is unmediated, eternal fellowship with God, there will be no tears, pain, sorrow and death. Can you fathom that?
 - Probably not, because perfection is not a present reality. We want it. That's one reason it hurts when we experience pain from all scenarios. We were created for perfection but it is not our experience. It will be our experience. Because it will be our experience, our hope that lies in Heaven changes the way we live today and how we respond to situations.
 - For example, injustice is upsetting because we rightly desire justice for all and peace. Since our hope awaits in Heaven, it changes the way we respond to injustice. Our hope prevents us from wreaking havoc on streets and hating someone because of injustice. We can

peacefully protest if need be and not vandalize. This is how our faith informs our day to day. This is how our hope in the life to come saturates our decision making process today.

- **Question:** Since our hope is placed in Heaven, how does it change the way we treat others that are like us and not like us?