



# ESCHATOLOGY 101

An Exploration of the Christian's Hope

12 Lessons for Large Groups,  
Small Groups, or Individual Discipleship

# ESCHATOLOGY 101

An Exploration of the Christian's Hope

12 LESSONS FOR LARGE GROUPS,  
SMALL GROUPS, OR INDIVIDUAL DISCIPLESHIP

Eschatology 101  
12 Lessons for Large Groups, Small Groups, or Individual Discipleship  
Bennett W. Rogers  
© Reformed Youth Ministries 2020

RYM  
1445 Rio Road East  
Suite 201D  
Charlottesville, VA 22911

[www.rym.org](http://www.rym.org)

Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All rights reserved. Except as permitted by the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced for profit in any form or by any means without prior permission from the publisher.

Download, duplication, and distribution of up to one hundred (100) copies of this material is permitted free of charge for individuals, Bible study groups, and churches. Contact Reformed Youth Ministries to receive licenses for greater numbers.

# CONTENTS

Introduction	5
1. What is eschatology?	7
2. What is death?	10
3. What happens when we die?	14
4. How should we face death?	17
5. What is the fate of the unevangelized?	20
6. When will Christ return?	24
7. What will happen when Christ returns?	27
8. The Destruction of Satan	30
9. What is the General Resurrection?	34
10. What is the Last Judgment?	38
11. What is Hell?	41
12. What is Heaven?	47



# INTRODUCTION

There are few subjects that generate more interest and more confusion than eschatology. Announce that you will be speaking on hell this evening and you will immediately have everyone's attention. If your church advertises a new sermon series on "the end times," and you are sure to attract a crowd. In my experience, God's people – even God's young people – are deeply interested in eschatology. They want to know more what the Bible says about death and judgment, heaven and hell, the return of Christ and the final destruction of Satan. It is only natural that they do. The Christian's DNA is made up of three bases – faith, hope, and love – and eschatology is simply the study of our hope.

It is hard to imagine a more relevant topic for God's people. We are beset with discouragements, bombarded by temptations, and bruised by suffering. When we look to the horizon, our prospects seem increasingly bleak. The future for God's people does not seem bright. But nothing could be further from the truth. Christ is coming to rescue his people, judge his enemies, and renew the world. Death may come first, but the New Testament describes it as "gain" and "far better" for the believer – not because it is necessarily pleasant but because it will usher the Christian into the immediate and glorious presence of our Savior.

Sadly, what should be a source of unspeakable hope has, for many, become a source of confusion. End times speculation coupled with unbalanced and unhelpful teaching discourages many interested Christians from studying eschatology. The multiplicity of end times "views" or "schemes" only adds to the perplexity. As a result, "our blessed hope" becomes "our neglected hope." This ought not to be the case.

There are some eschatology-related issues that good and godly Christian teachers have disagreed on throughout church history, the nature and duration of the millennium of Rev. 20:1-3 being chief. The millennium, however, is not the sum and substance of eschatology. With respect to the millennium, I am in the amillennialist camp. However, those convictions only come through in two of the twelve lessons at most. The rest of the lessons focus on aspects of eschatology that all orthodox Christians agree upon.

Eschatology 101 is broken down into twelve weekly lessons. It is an introductory study, hence the title "Eschatology 101." It is aimed at middle school and high school students, though I've personally taught it to adults as well. You know your church and your students best, so feel free to tailor this material to find the best fit.

Each lesson is designed to fill a 30-45 minute time slot. I have tried to anchor each lesson in one particular Bible passage. My reasons for doing so are twofold: it requires less context work on the part of the teacher, and it requires less page turning for the students. For some lessons, however, this was a practical impossibility. Thus, you and your students will have to move around the Bible more in some lessons than others.

Some lessons include optional readings and questions, which may allow you to go further or dig deeper into a particular topic if time permits. I've also included some quotes from the likes of J. I. Packer, J. C. Ryle, and C. S. Lewis to illustrate or apply certain truths. The major leg-work has been done for you; now you can make it your own. Add your own quotes. Find your own illustrations. Come up with your own application questions. Cicero argued that every oration must be tailored to suit the audience, speaker, and occasion. The same is true of an eschatology study.

It is our prayer that you will be encouraged by this study of the Christian hope. We also pray that your hope becomes contagious to the student's in your class. We hope that both teacher and students develop a deeper grasp of, "our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Lastly, Eschatology 101 is completely free. When we say "completely free," that means not only monetarily free, but with no strings attached. That means you don't have to sign up for our newsletter, you don't have to share this on a social media platform, etc. Reformed Youth Ministries seeks to spread the good news of the gospel by reaching and equipping students for Christ. Part of that goal is fulfilled through the production of resources.

Bennett W. Rogers/April 2020



# WHAT IS ESCHATOLOGY?

## LESSON 1

[Opening prayer]

Introduction: \_\_\_\_\_

Today we are going to begin a study of eschatology.

What is eschatology?

Open with this question. You can break students up into groups or just ask them as a large group. Give them time to answer.

Do you know what the word “eschatology” means? (allow answers).

- Break the word up into its Greek roots.
- The word “eschatology” is the combination of two Greek words:
  - *eschatos*, which means “last,” “last in a series,” or “final”
  - *logos*, which means “a word,” “a word about,” or “the study of”
- **So, eschatology is the study of last things.**

What comes to mind when you think about eschatology – i.e. the study of the last things? (allow answers).

- Many associate eschatology with popular Christian books (*The Left Behind Series*), apocalyptic movies, or specific books of the Bible (Revelation and Daniel), which describe the dramatic end of human history.
- The study of the end of human history is called **general eschatology**.
  - General eschatology describes a series of divine acts which will transform the entire created order and bring it to its God-ordained end or goal.
  - These include the Return of Christ, the General Resurrection, the Last Judgment, and the establishment of the Eternal State (heaven and hell).
  - We will take a closer look at each of these events in the coming weeks.
  - Thus, the study of general eschatology is not merely about how the world ends, but how all of God’s redemptive plans and purposes will reach their ultimate fulfillment in Christ.

Can you think of anything else besides general eschatology that might fall under the umbrella of the study of “last things”? (allow answers).

- The study of last things also includes the end of human life. This is called **personal eschatology**.
  - Personal eschatology discusses the end or goal of human life and the fate of individuals after death.
  - This includes physical death, the intermediate state, and the general resurrection, as well as the individual’s participation in the Last Judgment and the Eternal State.



- We will be taking a closer look at these in the coming weeks as well.
- As is the case with general eschatology, personal eschatology is not merely the study of the end of human life, but the ultimate fulfillment of God's redemptive plans and purposes for his people in Christ.

## Review and Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

So what is eschatology?

- Eschatology is the study of last things.
- It includes both general eschatology and personal eschatology.
- Eschatology is not about the end of individuals and the world – it is about the realization of God's redemptive plans and purpose for the entire created order.
- Therefore, eschatology is ultimately a study of the Christian's **hope**.
- And hope, along with faith and love, are essential Christian virtues (1 Cor. 13:13)

Turn with me to Titus 2:11-14, where we will consider the Christian's hope in greater detail.

The Apostle Paul speaks of two "appearings" in this passage. What are they? (allow answers)

- First, "the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people."
  - What event do you think Paul is referring to here? (allow answers).
    - He is referring to the **First Advent of Christ**.
      - How did Christ bring salvation during his first Advent? (allow answers).
        - He did so through his Incarnation, obedience, death, Resurrection, and Ascension.
        - That is the first appearing.

What is the second appearing Paul refers to in this passage? (allow answers)

- Second, "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."
  - What event do you think this is referring to? (allow answers)
    - He is referring to the **Second Advent of Christ** or the return of Christ.
      - What does the Apostle Call this event? (allow answers)
        - He calls it "our blessed hope."
      - So what is the Christian's hope? (allow answers)
        - The Christian's hope is the return of Christ.
          - ◇ We will talk more about this in the coming weeks.
          - ◇ It is worth noting that it is mentioned more than 300 times in the New Testament alone.
          - ◇ It is discussed, on average, once in every thirteen verses.

When do we live? What is this "present age"? (allow answers)

- We live in the time between the First and Second Advents of Christ, between the

coming of Christ in *grace* and the return of Christ in *glory*. Christ has *already* accomplished redemption, but he has *not yet* consummated or perfected it. This is called **inaugurated eschatology**, and it is a prominent theme in the New Testament.

*How* should we live in this “present age?” How does the coming of Christ in grace in the past and glory in the future impact the way we live in the present? (allow answers)

- Paul says that it trains us to do 4 things:
  - 1) It trains us to **renounce ungodliness and worldly passions**.
    - What do you think that means? (allow answers)
  - 2) It trains us to **live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives**.
    - What do you think that means? (allow answers)
  - 3) It trains us to **wait patiently for Christ’s return**.
    - What do you think that means? (allow answers)
  - 4) It trains us to **pursue good works with zeal**.
    - What do you think that means? (allow answers)

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

What have we discussed today?

- We defined **eschatology**. It is the study of last things.
- This includes **personal eschatology**, which is the study of the end or goal of human life and the fate of individuals after death.
- This also includes **general eschatology**, which is the study of the end or goal of God’s creative purposes for the entire created order.
- We discovered the **Christian’s hope**, which is the return of Christ.
- We defined **inaugurated eschatology**, which refers to the fact Christ has already accomplished redemption, but he has not yet consummated or perfected it.
- And we’ve seen how our future hope impacts the way we live in the present. I want to close with a quote from C. S. Lewis about this very thing.
  - “Hope is one of the Theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth “thrown in”: aim at earth and you will get neither.”<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), 134.

# WHAT IS DEATH?

## LESSON 2

[Opening prayer]

Review: \_\_\_\_\_

What did we discuss last week? (allow answers)

- We learned some important definitions:
  - Eschatology
  - Personal eschatology
  - General eschatology
  - Inaugurated eschatology
- We learned about the Christian's hope.

Today we will begin our study of personal eschatology by considering the following question: *what is death?*

So, what is death? (allow answers)

- ANSWER: death is the termination of physical life and the separation of body and soul.
  - Optional readings that illustrate this definition of death
    - Matt. 10:28 – “and do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”
    - 1 Peter 3:18 – “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.”
- How does this subject make you feel? (allow answers)
- Why is it important to know something about this subject? (allow answers)
  - ANSWER: Ultimately, we will all have to face death one day. It is one of life's certainties.
- Today, we are going to consider what the Bible has to say about this serious subject. More specifically, we are going to discuss the birth of death, the nature of death, and the death of death.

Where can you find the birth of death in the Bible? (allow answers)

- Genesis 3 is the foundational biblical text on two related subjects: sin and death.

Read Gen. 2:15-17. What does it tell us about the birth of death? [(allow answers).

ANSWER: In the Garden of Eden, God promised eternal life for obedience and death for disobedience.)

- Draw attention to the phrase “you shall surely die.” In Hebrew it literally says, “in dying you will die.” The consequences of disobedience will be physical and spiritual death.

Read Gen. 3:1-7. What does it tell us about the birth of death? [(allow answers).]

ANSWER: It tells us that through the temptation of the serpent (the Devil), our first parents sinned, and death was born.]

Read Gen. 3:19. What does it tell us about the birth of death? [(allow answers).]

ANSWER: God is going to keep his word – the man and his wife will die.]

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

So how was death born? (allow answers)

- Sin gave birth to death.

What does Genesis 3 teach us about the nature of death? (Allow answers)

- It teaches us that death is **unnatural**. How do we see that in Gen. 3? (allow answers)
  - Death was not part of God's creative purposes for the world. It is a consequence of sin, not part of the good world God originally created in Gen. 1-2.
- It teaches us that death is **tragic**. How do we see that in Gen. 3? (allow answers)
  - We see it in the terrible reversal that takes place. Before the Fall man was to rule and subdue the earth for God's glory (Gen. 2:15), but as a result of sin, the earth would ultimately rule and subdue man in death (Gen. 3:19).
  - Jesus' response to the death of Lazarus in John 11:28-37 is another powerful illustration of the tragic nature of death.
  - Note that Jesus is not just sad that his friend, Lazarus, died. He came to Bethany specifically to raise him from the dead. Draw the students' attention to Jesus' response to death – "deeply moved," "greatly troubled," and "[he] wept." He responds with both grief and anger over what death has done to humanity.
- It teaches us that death is **punishment**. How do we see that in Gen. 3? (allow answers)
  - Death was the promised punishment for disobedience.
  - It is worth noting that the first doctrine ever denied was the doctrine of judgment. The serpent's lie – you shall not surely die – is powerfully refuted in the chapters that follow.
  - The Apostle Paul makes the same point about death as punishment in Romans 6:23 – "For the wages (think earnings) of sin is death."
  - If you sin, you must die.
- Follow-up question: Do you realize you will die?
  - Listen to this quote from J. C. Ryle and think about what he says. Though he is addressing young men, it applies to all young people. "Young men, it is appointed unto you once to die; and however strong and healthy you may be now, the day of your death is perhaps very near. I see young people sick as well as old. I bury youthful corpses as well as aged. I read the names of persons no older than yourselves in every churchyard. I learn from books that, excepting infancy and old age, more die between thirteen and twenty-three

than at any other season of life. And yet you live as if you were sure at present not to die at all.”<sup>2</sup>

- It teaches us that death is **universal**. Have the students run their eyes over Genesis 4-9 to see the universality of death. How do we see it here? (allow answers)
  - They will find lots and lots of death – the murder of Abel (4:8), the phrase “and he died” (5:5,8,9,11,14, 17, 20, 27, 30), and then the death of the whole world excepting Noah and his family (Gen. 6-9).
  - The Apostle Paul explains why death spread from one man to all men in Romans 5:12 – “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”
- It teaches us that **death will not have the last word**. How do we see that in Gen. 3? (allow answers)
  - In Genesis 3:15 God promises to send a Savior to defeat evil at its source (the Serpent), undo all his works (1 John 3:8), and reverse the curses of the Fall, including death.
  - This is called the **protoevangelium**, which means the first gospel.
- Summary: So what does Genesis 3 teach us about the nature of death?
  - Death is unnatural
  - Death is tragic
  - Death is punishment
  - Death is universal
  - Death will not have the last word

Turn to 1 Corinthians 15:20-28. What does this teach us about the death of death? [(allow answers) ANSWER: death has been defeated by the Resurrection of Christ.]

- Note the **historical fact**: “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead.”
  - Consider discussing the proofs of the Resurrection???
- Note the language of “**firstfruits**.” What do you think this means? (allow answers)
  - The “firstfruits” refers to the first sample of a crop that indicates the nature and quality of the rest. Thus, Christ’s resurrection is both the first of many and the pattern of them all.
- Note the **analogy**. An analogy is a comparison between two things for the purpose of clarification or explanation. What does the Apostle compare and what is the point of that comparison? (allow answers)
  - Just as death comes to men by Adam, resurrection and new life come through Christ.
- Note the **order**: death is defeated at Christ’s Resurrection; it will be destroyed at his return. What definition from last week does this illustrate? (allow answers)
  - Inaugurated eschatology.
- Summary: What does 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 teach us about the death of death? (allow answers)

---

<sup>2</sup>J. C. Ryle “Thoughts for Young Men” in The Upper Room (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2006), 369.

- It teaches us that death has been defeated by Christ's resurrection and it will be destroyed when he returns again.

### Closing Application: \_\_\_\_\_

Few young people ever stop and think about death. Many live their lives as if death is something that happens to *other* people – other *old* people – and not to people like themselves. Sadly, that is simply wishful thinking. Everyone dies, and some people die young. Are you prepared for it? You can be, and you can face it without fear. Christ has defeated death for all those who love and trust him, and he will return again soon to destroy it once and for all.

# WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH?

## LESSON 3

[Opening prayer]

Review: \_\_\_\_\_

What have we discussed in the past two weeks? (allow answers)

- We've learned about eschatology and the Christian's hope.
- We've learned about the birth, nature, and the death of death.

Today we will continue our study of personal eschatology by considering the following question: *what happens after death?*

Read the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). [Ask someone to summarize the parable]

What does this parable teach us about what happens after death? (allow answers)

- 1) It illustrates our **definition of death** from last week.
  - Death is the end of physical life and the separation of body and soul.
    - Both Lazarus and the Rich man physically die and their bodies are buried, but their souls live on and go to one of two spiritual places.
- 2) It introduces us to the **intermediate state**.
  - Can any of you guess what this is? (allow answers)
  - The intermediate state refers to the period between a person's death and the general resurrection of the dead, which will take place when Christ returns.
    - Hint: consider illustrating this using a hypothetical timeline of your own life.
- 3) It refutes a number of **death-related doctrinal errors**.
  - One is the doctrine of **purgatory**. Has anyone ever heard this word? Do you know what it means? (allow answers)
    - The Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory argues that after death believers must undergo purifying punishment to complete their sanctification and make them worthy of heaven.
    - How does this parable refute the doctrine of purgatory? [(allow answers). ANSWER: believing Lazarus is not undergoing punishment of any kind. The doctrine of purgatory cannot be found in the Bible ]
  - Another is the doctrine of **soul sleep**. Has anyone ever heard this word? Do you know what it means? (allow answers)
    - The doctrine of soul sleep argues that the souls of the dead are unconscious during the time between their death and the general resurrection – i.e. the intermediate state.
    - How does this parable refute the doctrine of soul sleep? [(allow answers). ANSWER: the souls of both Lazarus and the Rich man are conscious.



They consciously experience comfort (or anguish) and communicate with other people.<sup>3]</sup>

- Another is the doctrine of **annihilationism**. Has anyone ever heard this word? Do you know what it means? (allow answers)
  - This is the belief that the impenitent, either immediately after death or after some period of punishment, will be “annihilated” by God and they will cease to exist.
  - How does this parable refute annihilationism? [(allow answers). ANSWER: The Rich Man sees no end to his suffering, and thus he asks Abraham to send someone to warn his brothers of what awaits. The eternality of eternal punishment is also discussed in Matt. 25:41, Mark 9:48, Rev. 14:11]

4) It describes the **blessedness** (the happiness) **of believers**.

- How do we see this in this parable? (allow answers)
  - Answers
    - Lazarus is carried by angels – glorious and sinless spiritual beings.
    - Lazarus is carried to “father Abraham’s side” – that is, into the company of the faithful.
    - Lazarus is described as “being comforted.”
- Read Hebrews 12:22-24. What does this passage teach us about the happiness of believers in the intermediate state? [(allow answers) ANSWER: believers are made perfect in holiness and admitted to the worship of heaven].
- Read Phil. 1:23 and 2 Cor. 5:8. What does this passage teach us about the happiness of believers in the intermediate state? [(allow answers). ANSWER: After death, the souls of believers go to be “with Christ” after death and are “at home with the Lord.”]
- Sum: the blessedness of believers is conscious, irreversible, and eternal in the presence of Christ.

5) It describes the **misery of the impenitent**.

- How do we see this in this parable? (allow answers)
  - Answers:
    - The rich man has no association with either angels or the faithful.
    - The rich man is in “torment” and in “anguish” in “flames” of judgment.
    - There is a “great chasm” separating the Rich Man from Abraham, Lazarus, and their blessedness.
    - Sum: the misery of the impenitent is conscious, irreversible, and eternal.

6) It should also be noted that this is **not the goal of redemption**.

- Though the intermediate state is “gain” for the believer (Phil. 1:21) and “far better” than our present existence, it is not the goal of redemption – the intermediate state is not **heaven**, properly speaking.

---

<sup>3</sup>It is actually derived from the Apocrypha [2 Macc. 12:42-45]

- Read 2 Cor. 5:1-4. What is the Apostle Paul longing for?
- [(allow answers). ANSWER: he is longing to be “clothed” with a glorified Resurrection body rather than merely being “unclothed” by death.
- The goal of redemption is not the intermediate state but the **eternal state** – i.e. life in the New Heavens and the New Earth (Rev. 21:1-22:5), which will be “heaven” in the fullest sense of the word.

## Review and Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

What does this parable teach us about what happens after death? (allow answers)

- It illustrates our definition of death.
- It introduces us to the intermediate state.
- It refutes a number of death-related doctrinal errors like purgatory, soul-sleep, and annihilationism.
- It describes the blessedness of believers and the misery of unbelievers after death.
- It reminds us that the intermediate state is not the goal of redemption.

## Closing Application: \_\_\_\_\_

There will be no closing application today because next week’s lesson will be devoted entirely to applying what we’ve learned about death and the intermediate state.

# HOW SHOULD I FACE DEATH?

## LESSON 4

[Opening prayer]

Review: \_\_\_\_\_

What have we discussed in the previous weeks? (allow answers)

- We've learned about eschatology and the Christian's hope.
- We've learned about the birth, nature, and the death of death.
- We learned about the intermediate state, that is, the period between a person's death and the general resurrection.
- We learned about some death-related errors like purgatory, soul-sleep, and annihilationism.
- We learned about the blessedness of believers who die in the Lord, and the
- We learned about the misery of the impenitent who die in unbelief.

Today we will talk about how we ought to face death our own death and the death of others.

Why do believers die? (allow answers)

- Read Romans 8:1. What does this teach us about the death of believers? (allow answers). ANSWER: **Death is not punishment for believers** because Christ has paid the penalty of our sins]
  - Potential Objection: what about the death of the Corinthian believers who were abusing the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor. 11:30? [(allow answers). ANSWER: Paul seems to understand God's actions as fatherly discipline or chastisement, not condemnation.]
- Read 1 Cor. 15:20-28. What does this teach us about the death of believers? [(allow answers). ANSWER: **God has chosen not to confer all the blessings of salvation at once.**]
  - Review the definition of inaugurated eschatology – Christ has accomplished redemption, but he has not yet consummated it.
  - When Christ returns death will be destroyed once-for-all (1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 20:14).
- Read Heb. 12:6-12. What does this teach us about the death of believers? [(allow answers). ANSWER: **The Lord uses death to complete our sanctification.**]
  - Follow-up question: how might aging, weakness, and dying help believers grown in grace and godliness? [(allow answers). ANSWER: all these things make is depend more on the Lord and less attached to the world.]
- Read Phil. 3:7-11. What does this teach us about the death of believers? [(allow answers). ANSWER: **the believer's experience of death completes his/her union with Christ.**]

- Consider these verses as well:
  - Rom. 8:17 – and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.
  - 1 Pet. 2:21 – For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.
  - 1 Pet. 4:13 – But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.
- Read Rev. 2:8-10. What does this teach us about the death of believers? [(allow answers). ANSWER: **Through death, believers bear witness to their faith in Christ.**]
  - This truth has emboldened the martyrs throughout church history.
  - Consider reading a brief martyrdom account.
    - Stephen (Acts 7:54-60)
    - Polycarp
    - Fox’s Book of Martyrs
  - This is also true of believers under more ordinary conditions.

How should believers face their own death? [(allow answers)]

- Read 1 Cor. 15:54-57. How does this passage teach Christians to face death? [(allow answers). ANSWER: Christians should face death **without fear**]
- Read Philippians 1:21-24. How does this passage teach Christians to face death? [(allow answers). ANSWERS: Christians should consider death as “**gain**” and “**far better**” because they will be “**with Christ, for that is far better.**”]
- Read Revelation 14:13. How does this passage teach Christians to face death? [(allow answers). ANSWERS: The heavenly voice proclaims a  **blessing** on those who “**die in the Lord.**”]
- Read Romans 8:38-39. How does this passage teach Christians to face death? [(allow answers). ANSWERS: The even death cannot separate the believer from “**the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”]
- Consider this quote from J. C. Ryle
  - This is a fact that in a dying world we should always remember. It is appointed unto men once to die. We are all going to one place, and we naturally shrink from it. The coffin and the funeral, the worm and corruption, are all painful subjects. They chill us, sadden us, and fill our minds with heaviness. It is not in flesh and blood to regard them without solemn feelings. One thing, however, ought to comfort believers, and that is the thought, that the grave is “the place where they Lord once lay.” As surely as He rose again victorious from the tomb, so surely shall all who believe in Him rise gloriously in the day of His appearing. Remembering this, they may look down with calmness into the “house appointed for all living.” They may recollect that Jesus himself was once there on their behalf and has robbed death of his sting. They may say to themselves, “the sting

of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law--but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>4</sup>

- Death of Mr. Stands-fast
  - And he said, This river has been a terror to many; yea, the thoughts of it also have often frightened me; but now methinks I stand easy; my foot is fixed upon that on which the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the covenant stood while Israel went over Jordan. The waters indeed are to the palate bitter, and to the stomach cold; yet the thoughts of what I am going to, and of the convoy that waits for me on the other side, do lie as a glowing coal at my heart. I see myself now at the end of my journey; my toilsome days are ended. I am going to see that head which was crowned with thorns, and that face which was spit upon for me. I have formerly lived by hearsay and faith; but now I go where I shall live by sight and shall be with him in whose company, I delight myself. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of; and wherever I have seen the print of his shoe in the earth, there I have coveted to set my foot too. His name has been to me as a civet-box; yea, sweeter than all perfumes. His voice to me has been most sweet, and his countenance I have more desired than they that have most desired the light of the sun. His words I did use to gather for my food, and for antidotes against my faintings. He hath held me, and hath kept me from mine iniquities; yea, my steps hath he strengthened in his way. Now, while he was thus in discourse, his countenance changed; his strong man bowed under him: and after he had said, Take me, for I come unto thee, he ceased to be seen of them.<sup>5</sup>

How should believers think about the death of Christian friends and relatives? (allow answers)

- Read Acts 8:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13. What does this teach us about responding to the death of other Christians? [(allow answers). **ANSWER: Christians will experience a mixture of joy and sorrow when believers die.**]

How should believers think about the death of unbelievers? (allow answers)

- Read Romans 9:1-3. What does this teach us about responding to the death of unbelievers? [(allow answers). **ANSWER: Christians will feel sorrow only when unbelieving friends and family members die.**]

What have learned today?

- We have considered a few reasons why believers die.
- We have thought about how to face our own deaths.
- We have thought about how to think about the deaths of others.

<sup>4</sup>J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of St. Mark* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1874), 352-53.

<sup>5</sup>John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (London: Penuin, 2008), 312-13.

# WHAT IS THE FATE OF THE UNEVANGELIZED?"

## LESSON 5

[Opening prayer]

Review: \_\_\_\_\_

What have we discussed in the past few weeks? (allow answers)

- We've learned about eschatology and the Christian's hope.
- We've learned about the birth, nature, and the death of death.
- We learned about what happens after death.
- We've learned about facing our own death and the death of others.

Today we will consider an important death-related question that Christians often have or are often asked. What is the fate of the unevangelized, that is, those who live and die without ever hearing the gospel.

Have any of you ever wondered about this questions? (allow answers)

Have any of you ever been asked this question? (allow answers)

It often comes up in the context of evangelistic conversations.

What is the fate of those who never hear the gospel? (allow answers)

- Disclaimer: The Bible does not specifically address this question, but it does address a related issues such as **general revelation, the exclusivity of Christ, and the missions mandate.**

What is general revelation? (allow answers)

- General revelation is God's revelation of himself to all people through creation (the created order), providence (God's governance of the world), and conscience (God's internal witness).
- See p. 5 of Bible 101

Read Psalm 19:1-6. What does this teach us about general revelation? (allow answers)

- Finish the sentence:
  - The heavens declare...[the glory of God]
  - The sky proclaims...[his handiwork]
  - Day pours out...[speech]
  - Night reveals...[knowledge]
- The point: The created order is communicating truth about God to all people all the time.

Read Romans 1:18-23. What does this teach us about general revelation?

(allow answers)

- It teaches us that **creation reveals God's power and glory to all people.**
- It teaches us that **this revelation is "plain" to all and "clearly perceived" by all people.**
- It teaches us that this revelation is **universally "suppressed"** by all people.
- It teaches us that this renders all people **universally guilty and without an excuse** for their idolatry (worshipping the creation instead of the Creator) and unbelief.

Read Romans 2:14-16. What does this teach us about general revelation?  
(allow answers)

- It teaches us that God has written his law on every heart.
- It teaches us that our conscience, what the Puritans called "God's umpire," commends us or condemns us regularly on that basis.
- This helps explain why certain acts – murder, cannibalism, theft, adultery, lying – are nearly universally condemned.

## Review and Summary:

What did we learn about general revelation? (allow answers)

---

- God has revealed himself to all people.
- All people know true things about God.
- All people suppress that revelation and do what they know is wrong.
- Thus general revelation makes all men guilty.

What is the exclusivity of Christ? (allow answers)

- The exclusivity of Christ refers to the New Testament's teaching that salvation is to be found in Christ alone.

Read John 5:23-24. What does this teach us about the exclusivity of Christ?  
(allow answers)

- It teaches us that unless one honors (believes in, worships) the Son of God, it is impossible to honor God.

Read John 14:6. What does this teach us about the exclusivity of Christ?  
(allow answers)

- It teaches us that it is impossible to come to God for life and salvation apart from him.

Read Acts 4:12. What does this teach us about the exclusivity of Christ?  
(allow answers)

- It teaches us that salvation can be found in "no one else" but Christ.



## Review and Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

What did we learn about the exclusivity of Christ?

- It is impossible to honor God without loving and trusting his Son, whom He sent.
- It is impossible to come to God for life and salvation apart from Christ.
- Salvation can be found in Christ alone.

What is the missions mandate? (allow answers)

- The missions mandate refers to the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20) to make disciples of all nations.

Read Romans 10:13-17. Explain the logic of this passage. (allow answers)

- One must call upon the name of the Lord to be saved.
- One must believe the gospel to call upon the name of the Lord.
- One must hear the gospel in order to believe it.
- Someone must proclaim the gospel in order for it to be heard.
- Evangelism → Hearing → Faith → Calling Out → Salvation.

Read Romans 15:20-21. What is Paul's holy ambition? (allow answers)

- His ambition is to preach the gospel where Christ is not known.
- Follow-up question: why would this be a priority to the Apostle if the unevangelized could be saved apart from faith in the gospel? (allow answers)
  - It wouldn't be.

## Review and Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

What does the missions mandate teach us about the exclusivity of Christ? (allow answers)

- It teaches us that one must hear and believe the gospel to be saved.

[Time Permitting] Read Acts 10. What does this teach us about the fate of the unevangelized? (allow answers)

- Though Cornelius was devout and sincere – he feared God, gave alms generously, and prayed continually – he still needs to hear the gospel to be saved.

Return to the opening question: So, what is the fate of the unevangelized? (allow answers)

- As mentioned earlier, the Bible does not specifically address this question, so we should be humble in our response.
- However, the Bible does clearly address a number of related issues, such as general revelation, the exclusivity of Christ, and the missions mandate.
- The Bible seems to suggest that one must hear and believe the gospel in order to be saved.
- Therefore, we must take the gospel to those who have never heard so that they can believe and be saved.

## Concluding Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

In addressing the question of the fate of the unevangelized, professor Todd Miles makes the following observation.

“Rather than philosophizing and theologizing about the possibilities of salvation apart from faith in Christ, we would do better to recognize that the biblical response to the question of “what about those who have never heard?” is a forceful call: “Go tell them!”

# WHEN WILL CHRIST RETURN?

## LESSON 6

[Opening prayer]

Review: \_\_\_\_\_

Opening Question: When do you think Christ will return? (allow answers)

Turn to the Olivet Discourse of Mark 13:1-27. Read Mark 13:1-4.

- Make sure students have a bible opened to this chapter.
- Briefly introduce the passage.
  - The Olivet Discourse is one of the most important discussion about the return of Christ in the Bible. Think of it as “the Last Days According to Jesus.”
  - Jesus answers two important questions for his disciples:
    - When is the end coming?
    - What signs will precede its coming?
  - The Olivet Discourse can be divided into 3 parts:
    - 1) **The Last Days** according to Jesus (Mark 13:5-13)
    - 2) **The Last of the Last Days** according to Jesus (Mark 13:14-23)
    - 3) *The Last Day* according to Jesus (Mark 13:24-27)

Read Mark 13:5-13. What will characterize this period of time – i.e. the Last Days? (allow answers)

- ANSWER: Jesus says that there will be:
  - 1) false teachers and false teaching;
  - 2) wars and rumors of wars;
  - 3) natural disasters;
  - 4) Christian persecution;
  - 5) Christian evangelism.

What period of time do you think Jesus is describing? (allow answers)

- ANSWER: Jesus is describing the time in which we NOW live. This is a general description of the time between the Resurrection and Return of Christ.
- Point students to Acts 2:17 and 2 Tim. 3:1 for confirmation. Both Peter and Paul describe the time they are living in as “The Last Days.”

Follow-up question: do these signs characterize our times? (allow answers)

- Point students to contemporary examples of false teachers/teaching (the prosperity gospel, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, etc.) wars and rumors of wars (war on terror, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, North Korea, etc.) persecution (Christian persecution in Africa, the Middle East, China, examples at home, etc.)

Read Mark 13:14-23. What will characterize this period of time – i.e. the Last of the Last Days of Human History? (allow answers)

- Answer: Jesus says that:

- 1) A great antagonist will arise (he not it).

- He will be an abominable desolator.

- This is a reference to Dan. 9:27, 31.

- Daniel is probably referring to a historical named Antiochus IV Epiphanes (215 BC – 164 BC)

- He was the King of the Seleucid Empire, which ruled over Jerusalem and Judea from 175-164 BC.

- He was a terrible persecutor, outlawed the worship of God, and desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem.

- Jesus seems to be saying that this figure will be like Antiochus – only worse.

- For another description of the same person see:

- The Man of Lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:3-4)

- The First Beast (Rev. 13:1-10)

- He is the anti-Christ.

- 2) A great apostasy will take place.

- There will be powerful false teachers who produce lying signs and wonders.

- They will convince all unbelievers, and nearly able to convince the elect – i.e. true believers.

- For more on the great apostasy see:

- 2 Thess. 2:9-12

- Rev. 13:11-18

- This passage seems to indicate that a single individual – a great and final false prophet – will lead this great apostasy in conjunction with the anti-Christ.

- 3) A great persecution will take place.

- There will be unprecedented persecution.

- Consider, by way of contrast, the Great Persecution (303 AD).

- 1st edict: confiscate churches and church property.

- 2nd edict destroy ministers, bibles, liturgy.

- 3rd edict arrest and/or kill everyone else.

- This persecution will be even worse.

- It will result in the near extinction of the Church.

Read Mark 13:24-27. What will characterize this period of time – i.e. the Last Day of Human History? (allow answers)

- ANSWER: Jesus says that:

- The world will be dissolved.

- Christ will return with great power and glory.

- He will rescue his people

## Application: \_\_\_\_\_

I want to close by making a point of application here. Jesus' teaching about the future helps us live in the present. It helps us calibrate our expectations about the Christian life. It lets us know what is coming so that we will "be on guard," "keep awake," and persevere. And it summons us to set our hope on what the Apostle Paul calls "our blessed hope," – the return of Christ to judge and save.

# WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN CHRIST RETURNS?

## LESSON 7

[Opening prayer]

Review: \_\_\_\_\_

What did we discuss last week?

- We discussed Mark 13 and the last days according to Jesus.
- We discussed the last days.
- We discussed the last of the last days.
- We began to discuss the last day.

Opening Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Today we are going to return to the Second Advent of Christ and think more about what will take place when he returns.

Read Mark 13:24-27. What will the return of Christ be *like*? (allow answers)

- The return of Christ will be PERSONAL.
- The return of Christ will be PHYSICAL.
- The return of Christ will be VISIBLE. It is
- The return of Christ will be GLORIOUS.
- The return of Christ will be TRANSFORMATIVE – i.e. it will transform the entire cosmos.
- The return of Christ will be TRIUMPHANT. He will gather his people and judge his enemies.

[Transition statement] The book of Revelation describes the return of Christ in greater detail, so turn to Rev. 19.

Read Rev. 19:11-16. What does this describe, in general? (allow answers)

- It describes the return of Christ in especially vivid detail.
- Let's take a closer look at the various parts of the vision.

What are the various **names** or **titles** of Christ in this passage? (allow answers)

- He is called "**Faithful and True.**"
- He has a **secret name** – i.e. "a name that no one knows but himself."
- He is called "**The Word of God.**"
- He is called "**King of Kings and Lord of Lords.**"

In the Bible, names represent a person's nature, essence, or character. What do you think these names mean?

- Faithful and True (allow answers)
  - He is faithful to his people and true to his word.
- The secret or inscrutable name (allow answers)
  - It reminds us that his glory is incomprehensible – it can never be fully or exhaustively known.
- The Word of God (allow answers)
  - Christ is both the Incarnate Word (John 1:1,14) and the sum and substance of the Bible.
- The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords (allow answers)
  - Christ is the supreme monarch of the universe.

Do you notice anything else in this vision? (Allow answer)

- Notice the **white horse**. It is a symbol of victory and conquest even before the Final Battle begins.
- Notice his **fiery eyes**. He is the all-seeing judge, who can see through all facades.
- Notice the **diadems** (crowns). It is a symbol of majesty and glory; He is the real king, the real authority, the real power.
- Notice the **armies of heaven**. It is a picture of the bride of Christ – i.e. the glorified Church. God's people – you, if you love and trust Christ – will participate in this victory.
- Notice the **sharp sword**. (Ps. 2 allusion) Christ will defeat his enemies by his Word.
- Notice the **blood-stained robe**. It is a visible reminder of his suffering, death, and resurrection.

You could make the case that Rev. 19:11-16 is the most complete portrait of Christ in the entire Bible!

Read Revelation 19:17-21.

What does this describe? (allow answers)

- It describes the **Last Battle**, that is, the final climatic battle between good and evil, Christ and Satan.

How does the Last Battle begin? (allow answers)

- It begins with an invitation to a “grim feast.” An angel summons the birds to prepare to feast themselves on Christ's soon-to-be-slain enemies.

What does this tell you about the outcome of the upcoming battle? (allow answers)

- It lets us know that Christ's victory is assured from the outset.



Who is arrayed against God's people on earth? (allow answers)

- The beast, the false priest, and those loyal to them – i.e. all unbelievers.
- Remind the students that you discussed these enemies and events when they studied the Last of the Last Days (Mark 13:14-23; Rev. 13:1-18; 2 Thess. 2:3-4).

How does the Last Battle go? (allow answers)

- It is so one-sided it is almost anticlimactic. Christ simply returns and all his enemies are defeated.

What pastoral point do you think this might be making? (allow answers)

- No matter how terrible Christ's enemies may seem, they are no match for Christ. When he returns, they will be defeated.

What happens to Christ's enemies? (allow answers)

- The Beast (anti-Christ) and False Prophet are cast into the lake of fire.
- Those that followed them were judged by the Word of Christ.
- All of Christ's enemies will be defeated and destroyed when he returns.

How does this give you hope? (allow answers)

- Christ's enemies, though real and powerful, are living on borrowed time. When Christ returns, they will be fully and finally defeated.

# THE DEFEAT OF SATAN

## LESSON 8

[Opening prayer]

Review: \_\_\_\_\_

What did we look at last week? (allow answers)

- We looked at what will happen when Christ returns.
- We discovered that his return will be personal, physical, visible, glorious, and transforming from Mark 13.
- We also looked at his return as described in Revelation 19.

Opening statement and question: \_\_\_\_\_

Today we will focus on the defeat of Satan in Revelation 20:7-10. Why do you think this is important? (allow answers)

- In order to understand the significance of the defeat of Satan, we need to review his story.

Read Isaiah 14:12-15. A little context. This passage is known as “The Song of the Fallen King.” It was originally a prophetic oracle against the King of Babylon, but many consider it to be a type, pattern, or even an allusion to Satan’s fall. This is where the name “Lucifer” comes from, and what is described in these verses is consistent with what we know about Satan’s character elsewhere.

If “The Song of the Fallen King” is a type or pattern of Satan’s Fall, what does it teach us about his origin story? (allow answers)

- It teaches us about his original **STATUS**. He is initially described in exalted language “Day Star, son of Dawn.” The name implies brightness and glory.
- It teaches us about his **AMBITION**. He desired to rule in God’s place and establish his throne over the world God created.
- It teaches us about his **PRIDE**. He said, “I will make myself like the Most High.” Mark this. This is the language Satan uses to tempt Eve to in Gen. 3:5.
- It teaches us about his **FALL**. “How you are fallen from heaven...” “How you are cut down to the ground...”
- It teaches us to expect his ultimate **DEFEAT**. “But you are brought down to Sheol,” that is, the place of the dead.
- And this is the one – or someone like him – who shows up in Eden in Gen. 3 to tempt our first parents.

Read Gen. 3:1-8. What does this teach us about Satan? (allow answers)

- It teaches us that Satan is **DECEPTIVE**. He appears in the guise of a snake – i.e. a good creature. And he described “more crafty, subtle, cunning.”

- It teaches us that Satan is OPPORTUNISTIC. He speaks to the woman instead of the man. This is not a slight on the woman's intelligence at all. The Lord gave the commands regarding the Garden to Adam, before the creation of the woman, and it was his job to teach God's command to his new bride. In other words, there is one degree of separation between the Lord and the woman.
- It teaches us that Satan is merely a CREATURE. Note that all-important phrase "*that the LORD God had made.*" He is not a co-equal, co-eternal, equally powerfully rival.
- It teaches us that Satan is a PERVERSION of God's good creation. Snakes were not made originally made rational; they were not made to talk or tempt. Satan seeks to corrupt and destroy good creation, especially the pinnacle of creation – men and women made in his own image and likeness.
- It teaches us that Satan is preeminently a TEMPTER. He tempts the woman to:
  - Doubt God's GOODNESS.
  - Disbelieve in God's JUDGMENT.
  - Disobey God's COMMAND.

Read Gen. 3:14-15. What does this teach us about Satan? (allow answers)

- Satan is CURSED. "Cursed are you above all..."
- Satan is HUMILIATED. "On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat..."
  - O. Palmer Robertson notes, "Symbolic of the arch-enemy's ultimate defeat, his tool in temptation habitually licks the dust of defeat."<sup>6</sup>
- Satan is DOOMED. "[H]e shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."
  - This is known as the protoevangelium – the first gospel.
  - The Lord promises to send a Savior to:
    - Defeat evil at its source
    - Reverse the curse of the Fall
    - Reconcile God and man

Outside of the Garden, Satan remains active, though it is usually behind the scene.

Where can we see his work in the rest of the Old Testament? (Allow answers)

- We see him work through the ENEMIES of God's people, like Cain, Pharaoh, Jabin and Sisera, and Goliath, etc.
- We see his work in promoting IDOLATRY and covenant UNFAITHFULNESS. See David census (1 Chron. 21:1-2).
- We see him personally ACCUSE both God and his people in Job and Zechariah.
- However, in the New Testament there is an unprecedented explosion of Satanic and demonic opposition.

Where do we see this in the New Testament? (allow answers)

- We see it in the numerous EXORCISM accounts in the Gospels.
- We see it preeminently in the TEMPTATION of Christ.
  - If time permits, turn to Matt. 4:1-11 or Luke 4:1-13.
  - Though each temptation is different, the purpose is the same: Satan tempts

---

<sup>6</sup>O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1980), 95.

Christ to be the wrong kind of Messiah – a triumphant, regal, and glorious Messiah who abandons the way of the cross, and ultimately, his Father’s will.

- Satan tempts Christ with a similar temptation during his crucifixion.
  - Mark 15:32 - Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.”

Now turn to Revelation 12:1-12.

How is the Satan described? (allow answers)

- He is described as a terrible and powerful dragon.

Why do you think he is described that way? (allow answers)

- His hideous appearances symbolize his destructive POWER, terrible MALICE, and his divine PRETENSIONS.

What happens to him? (allow answers)

- He is defeated three times.
- First, he fails to kill the Messiah at birth and thwart the completion of his Messianic mission.
- Second, he is banished from heaven forever because he no longer has any ground to accuse God or his people. Christ’s atonement silences all his accusations.
- Third, he is defeated on earth by God’s faithful people.

Read Revelation 20:7-10. This describes the events surrounding the ultimate defeat of Satan.

When will Satan be defeated? (allow answers)

- John says, “after the thousand years are ended.” This is called the millennium. Christians disagree as to the nature and timing of the millennium. Amillennialists believe that the millennium simply refers to the time between the resurrection and return of Christ, and that the battle described here is same as the one we discussed in 19:17-21. Premillennialists, who believe that the millennium refers to a literal thousand-year period, believe this is a separate, later battle. Though the author of this study is an amillennialist, both amillennialist and premillennialists – indeed, all orthodox Christians – agree on the outcome of these events. At the end of human history Satan, the author of sin the great enemy of Christ and his people, will be finally and fully defeated.

What will Satan do at the end of human history? (allow answers)

- Satan will DECEIVE the NATIONS. “*Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations...*”
- Satan will RAISE an ARMY. “*Satan will be released...to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.*”
- Satan will make WAR on the CHURCH. “*And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints.*”
  - N.B., we called this “The Last of the Last Days” in a previous study.

- Satan will be DEFEATED when Christ returns. “...*but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,*”
  - N.B. this is the same defeat we witnessed in Rev. 19:17-21, but with a different focus.
- Satan will be CAST into HELL forever. “...*and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*”

What is the pastoral point of the destruction of Satan? In other words, how should this future event impact the way we live in the present? (allow answers)

- Though Satan is real and powerful, he will be defeated forever, and all his works will be undone when Christ returns.

# THE GENERAL RESURRECTION

## LESSON 9

[Opening prayer]

Review: \_\_\_\_\_

What did we look at last week? (allow answers)

- We talked about what will happen when Christ returns.
- We briefly talked about the nature of his return in Mark's Gospel – it will be personal, visible, glorious, transformative, and triumphant.
- Then we looked at that glorious vision of the returning Christ in Revelation 19.
- And we concluded by looking at the Last Battle.
  - Does anyone remember what that is? (allow answers)
    - It is the final climatic battle between good and evil, Christ and Satan.
  - Does anyone remember what we saw? (allow answers)
    - We saw the ultimate defeat of Satan and all God's enemies.

Opening Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to defeating all his enemies, Christ will raise the dead when he returns. This is called **the general resurrection**, and this is what we will be looking at today.

Have we encountered the general resurrection before in our study of eschatology? (allow answers)

- We have! It has been mentioned in a few places already.
- We discussed it briefly in lesson 2 when we considered the death of death in lesson 2.
- We discussed it briefly in lesson 3 when we noted that the intermediate state – that is, the period between a person's death and the general resurrection of the dead – is not the goal of redemption.
- We mentioned it briefly in lessons 7-8 when we discussed the return of Christ.
- In fact, every time you recite the 11th Article of the Apostles' Creed – "I believe...in "the resurrection of the body" you are discussing the general resurrection.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

- Context: Paul wrote these verses to comfort hopeless Christians who feared that the believing dead were lost forever and would miss out on the blessings of the New Heavens and the New Earth.

What will happen to believers who die *before* Christ's return? Will they miss out? (allow answers)

- No! Paul says he will "*bring with him those who have fallen asleep.*"
  - Make sure to point out that the language of "fallen asleep" is a euphemism

for death, not an indicator that our souls will sleep through the intermediate period.

- This may be a good time to remind them of what you learned from the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:9-31).
- We saw the same truth stated in an even more glorious way in Rev. 19:14 – “*And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.*”
  - N.B. – These are not angels, but the “bride of the lamb,” the believing dead.
- Moreover, Paul says that the dead in Christ will “*rise first.*”
- Summary and review: so what will happen to believers who die before Christ’s return? (allow answers)
  - Their bodies will be raised and reunited with their glorified souls and return triumphantly with Christ when he returns.

What will happen to believers who are alive when Christ returns? (allow answers)

- They will “*not precede those who have fallen asleep.*” In other words, neither the living nor the dead will have any advantage over the other when Christ returns. Both will share equally in this glorious hope.
- They will “*caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*”
  - What do you think this means? (allow answers)
    - This verse does not teach a secret or silent rapture.
    - The Greek word “*apantesis*” refers to a joyous and celebratory reception that a dignitary might receive when coming into a city. The inhabitants of the favored city would go out to meet the arriving VIP, joyfully greet him, and then return with him as he enters the city.
    - Paul seems to be envisioning something like this on a cosmic scale. Those believers living at the time of Christ’s return will joyfully greet Christ when he returns in glory.

## Review and Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

What will happen when Christ returns? (allow answers)

- The bodies of the believing dead will be raised and reunited with their glorified souls and return triumphantly with Christ when he returns.
- Believers living at the time of Christ’s return will be transformed and they will greet Christ as comes again in glory and return with him to earth.

What will our resurrected bodies be like? Will our corpses simply be reanimated? Will we be changed into something completely new? (allow answers)

- The scriptures describe the believer’s resurrected body in terms of continuity and change.

To see the **continuity** between the believer’s mortal body and resurrected body, read Luke 24:36-43.



What sort of things does the Resurrected Christ do?

- Allow answer.
- He stands and speaks.
- He sees and recognizes others.
- He has a body that can be touched.
- He eats food.

In a previous lesson, we saw that Paul called the Resurrected body of Christ the “firstfruits” of the new creation. Do you remember that word means? (allow answers)

- The “firstfruits” refers to the first sample of a crop that indicates the nature and quality of the rest. Thus, Christ’s resurrection is both the first of many and the pattern of them all.

So what does the resurrected body of Christ teach us about our resurrected bodies? (allow answers)

- There will be some continuity.
- We will have bodies.
- We will be able to recognize others and communicate with them.
- We will even be able to eat and drink.

In order to see the discontinuity between our mortal bodies and resurrected bodies, read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58. Paul explains this discontinuity using a series of contrasts.

- What are some of the things he compares and contrasts? (allow answers)
  - He compares:
    - A seed to a plant (36)
    - Earthly bodies to heavenly bodies (40-41)
    - The perishable to the imperishable (42)
    - Dishonor to glory (43)
    - Weakness to power (43)
    - A natural body to a spiritual body (44)
    - The first Adam to the last Adam [Christ] (45)
    - The image of the man of dust to the image of the man of heaven (48-49)
- What do you think is the point of these comparison? (allow answers)
  - He is emphasizing the great **change** that will take place.
  - This is called **glorification**.

Would anyone like to try to define glorification for us? (allow answers)

- Glorification is “a work of transforming power whereby God finally turns us into sinless creatures in deathless bodies.”<sup>7</sup>
- And glorification is the goal of both creation and redemption. Romans 8:30 – “*And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*”

---

<sup>7</sup> J. I. Packer, Concise Theology, 256.

What about the unbelieving dead? Will they be resurrected as well? (allow answers)

Read Daniel 12:2. What does it say about the resurrection of the wicked?  
(allow answers)

- They will be raised to “shame and everlasting contempt.”

Read John 5:28-29. What does Christ say about the resurrection of the wicked?  
(allow answers)

- They will be raised to “the resurrection of judgment.”

So, will unbelievers be resurrected when Christ returns?

- Yes, but they will not be glorified. They will be raised for the Last Judgment, which we will discuss next week.

# THE FINAL JUDGMENT

## LESSON 10

[Opening prayer]

Review: \_\_\_\_\_

What did we learn about last week? (allow answers)

- The bodies of the believing dead will be raised and reunited with their glorified souls and return triumphantly with Christ when he returns.
- Believers living at the time of Christ's return will be transformed and they will greet Christ as comes again in glory and return with him to earth.
- We learned that there will be both continuity and change with respect to our resurrected bodies.

Opening Question/Central Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Today, we will be considering what will take place after Christ returns and raises the dead.

Read Revelation 20:11-15.

What is the first thing John sees? (allow answers)

- He sees "a great white throne" and "him who was seated on it."

What is the significance of the great **throne**? (allow answers)

- In the ancient world, the throne was the place of judgment as well as rule. There was no separation of powers in the ancient world. The king was also the chief justice of the supreme court, so-to-speak.

What is the significance of its color – **white**? (allow answers)

- White is generally the color of purity in the Bible. This is especially true in Revelation.

**Who** does John see seated on the great white throne? (allow answers)

- Though we aren't specifically told, it is clear that it is the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The Bible repeatedly declares that Christ will be the one to judge the earth. (Matt. 13:40-43; 25:41-46; John 5:22-30; Acts 10:42; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 9:27; 10:25-31; 12:23; 2 Pet. 3:7).
- 2 Corinthians 5:10 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

What do you think is the pastoral point of this vision? (allow answers)

- On the one hand, it is a serious and sobering vision of judgment.
- On the other hand, it is a comforting and encouraging vision of the Judge.
- The one who will judge the world on the Last Day is the same one who died for his people to save them from the power and penalty of sin.

What else does John see in verse 11? (allow answers)

- He sees the transformation of the entire cosmos – “the earth and sky fled away.”
- There will only be the Judge and those to be judged.

Then what does John see in verse 12? (allow answers)

- He sees “the dead, great and small, standing before the throne.”
- He sees everyone who ever lived standing before Christ for judgment.
- That includes ME and YOU.

What is the pastoral point of this part of the vision? (allow answers)

- It is a *comforting* reminder that none of God’s enemies will escape judgment.

Then what does John see? (allow answers)

- He sees **books** – “*and books (plural) were opened.*”
- Then he sees **a book** – “Then another book was opened.”

What are the books (plural)? (allow answers)

- They are books that represent a person’s deeds – i.e. a record of all their thoughts, words, and deeds.
- Think of these books as the “book of deeds.”

What is the book (singular)? (allow answers)

- It is the “book of life.” In Rev. 21:27 it is referred to as the “Lamb’s Book of Life.”
- Think of it as a “book of names.”
- It contains the names of each and every person who ever loved and trusted Christ.

What will take place in the Last Judgment? (allow answers)

- Christ will judge everyone who ever lived.
- Those whose names are not written in the book of names will be judged on the basis of what is written in the book of deeds. They will have to give an account to Christ for everything they ever did and face the perfect justice of God. In short, they will be declared guilty and condemned.
- But those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will be judged on the basis Christ’s deeds, and they will be justified and accepted as sons and daughters.

Why will some be accepted on the Last Day, while other will be rejected? (Allow answers)

- It is not because those who love and trust Christ have no sins on their record. That is not it at all. They are as guilty as the rest.

- The difference is that Christ, who will preside over the Last Judgment, has obeyed and suffered for each and every person who comes to him by faith.
- He has substituted his record of obedience for their record of disobedience.
- And he has already suffered the penalty for each and every one of their sins on the cross.
- Therefore, Christ the Judge will pardon them on the Last Day.
- If this Judgment were to take place this instance, where would you stand? On the record of your own faithfulness and obedience or Christ's?

What will the Last Judgment do? (allow answers)

- It will establish perfect justice. Every single sin will be punished. Every righteous act will be rewarded. God's justice will be fully and finally established in the universe.
- It will vindicate the faith of believers. At present, Christians are often ridiculed, mocked, and persecuted. Opposition and persecution was a normal experience for 1st century believers. It remains so today. But on the Last Day, their faith in Christ and suffering for Christ will be vindicated and rewarded.

# HELL

## LESSON 11

[Opening prayer]

Review: \_\_\_\_\_

What did we learn about last week? (allow answers)

- We learned about the Last Judgment.
- We learned about the Judge – Christ.
- We learned about the judgment itself.
- Those who love and trust Christ – those whose names are in the Lamb’s Book of Life – will be judged and accepted based on Christ’s works.
- Those who do not will be judge and condemned based on their own deeds.
- We learned that the Last Judgment will establish perfect justice.
- We learned that the Last Judgment will vindicated the believer’s faith.

Opening Question/Central Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Today, we turn to the most serious and sobering subject imaginable – hell.

I want to begin by addressing an important objection to the Bible’s doctrine of hell, and Christianity more generally. It goes something like this: if God is loving, how can he send anyone to hell?

Has anyone ever heard this question? Has anyone ever asked this question? Would anyone like to attempt to answer this question? (allow answers).

There are a few ways to address this objection, but let’s look at one that deals with Christ.

- The Lord Jesus Christ is LOVING, COMPASSIONATE, MERCIFUL, and a “FRIEND of SINNERS.”
- He INVITES all to COME to him for LIFE and SALVATION (Matt. 11:28-30) and WEEPS over the LOST and their UNBELIEF (Lk. 19:41-44).
- And yet NO ONE in the Bible speaks more about HELL than CHRIST himself – 12 times.
- Let’s look at just one instance – Matthew 5:29-30
- He describes it as a PLACE of ETERNAL, CONSCIOUS, IRREVERSIBLE torment for the WICKED.
- Jesus SPOKE about HELL to WARN men and women of the CONSEQUENCES of UNBELIEF and IMPENITENCE.
- Jesus ENDURED hell on the CROSS to rescue SINNERS from the POWER and PENALTY of sin.

- Hell, therefore, is self-chosen. J. I. Packer says:
  - Scripture sees hell as self-chosen; those in hell will realize that they sentenced themselves to it by loving darkness rather than light, choosing not to have their Creator as their Lord, preferring self-indulgent sin to self-denying righteousness, and rejecting Jesus rather than coming to him.<sup>8</sup>

[Time permitting, here is another way to answer this objection. It focuses on the love of God].

- God is LOVING – “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” I John 4:8.
- But that does NOT mean that God LOVES EVERYTHING – pride, cruelty, injustice, evil, abuse, murder, genocide, etc.
- Because God is LOVE, he HATES evil (love’s opposite) and REFUSES to OVERLOOK it.
- God created HELL to deal with evil FINALLY and FULLY.
- Our innate sense of RIGHT and WRONG knows Hell to be JUST.
- But we want God to PUNISH everyone’s SIN but OUR OWN.

[Here is yet another possible way to address this question, which focuses on the sinfulness of sin and the holiness of God.]

- Our estimation of the HOLINESS of God and the SINFULNESS of sin is IMPERFECT at best.
- God is INFINITELY and PERFECTLY holy.
- Sin is INFINITELY and PERFECTLY evil.
- Perhaps the best way to gauge holiness of God and the sinfulness of sin is to consider what it cost God to ATONE for it – i.e. the blood of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God.
- “It is the BLOOD, and not the length of TIME that ALONE exhausts the SINFULNESS of SIN.”<sup>9</sup>
- Instead of asking this question: How could a LOVING God send anyone to HELL?
- We should probably be asking: How could a HOLY God allow anyone into HEAVEN?

Now that we’ve consider this objection to hell, let’s take a closer look at hell itself.

Read Revelation 14:6-13.

What do we see here? (allow answers)

- We a series of three angelic announcements or proclamations
  - The 1st angelic announcer proclaims the ETERNAL GOSPEL.
  - The 2nd proclaims the coming JUDGMENT on the WORLD of unbelieving men.

---

<sup>8</sup>J. I. Packer Concise Theology, 263.

<sup>9</sup>J. C. Ryle, Thoughts on Immortality (London: William Hunt and Company, 1883), 74.



- The 3rd describes the EXPERIENCE of JUDGMENT for the impenitent.
- Let's look at each one of these individually.

**Read Rev. 14:6-7.** Would someone describe this vision? (allow answers)

- An angel proclaims an “eternal gospel” to the world.

What is this gospel? (allow answers)

- It consists of two things.
  - A summons to worship the one true God: “Fear God and give him glory...”
  - A warning about coming judgment: “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come...”

What is the lesson of this vision? (allow answers)

- It reminds us that there are consequences for rejecting Christ and his gospel.
- The consequences of rejecting the eternal gospel are nothing less than eternal judgment.

**Read Rev. 14:8.** Would someone describe this vision for us?

- Allow volunteers.
- A second angelic appears. Apparently, those on earth did not heed the message of the first. They rejected the eternal gospel. The second angelic announcer follows the first to explain why.

So why have the earth-dwellers rejected the eternal gospel? (allow answers)

- In a word – BABYLON.

Who or what is this “Babylon”? (allow answers)

Where have we seen Babylon before in the Bible? (allow answers)

- The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11)
- The Babylonian Empire destroys the Southern Kingdom (Judah), destroys the Temple, and takes the survivors captive (the exile).
- The events of the Book of Daniel take place in Babylon.

So when we put all this together, what do you think Babylon stands for? (allow answers)

- Babylon is Revelation is not a nation or world empire. **It represents the world united in opposition to God.** That is what Babylon is.
- And you and I live there. Do you realize that?
- Give examples of the way our world opposes Christ and his people to drive this point home.

What does Babylon do? (allow answers)

- Babylon seduces and intoxicates. She makes the world drunk: “...she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.”

What do you think this means? (allow answers)

- Babylon seduces the world to engage in sexual sin and sexual immorality.
- “Sexual immorality” can mean more than just sexual sin in Revelation.
- It can refer to:
  - Being seduced by false teaching (Rev. 2:20)
  - Idolatry and false worship.
  - Spiritual adultery against the Lord.
  - The allure of material prosperity and pleasure.
  - Persecuting God’s people (Rev. 17:6)
- How do we see this seduction/temptation in our world today? (allow answers)
  - The world offers us all sorts of pleasures – sexual, material, personal, etc. in exchange for being unfaithful to Christ.

How can we resist this temptation? (allow answers)

- We can resist Babylon’s temptation by considering Babylon’s fate: “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great.”
- Babylon’s doom is sure. Think back to what we discussed in our lesson on what will happen when Christ returns.
- See also Rev. 18

Putting it together: Would someone like to summarize the message of the two angels. (allow answers)

- Though the gospel is proclaimed throughout the world, many reject it because they have been seduced by Babylon.
- The third and final vision shows us the terrible consequences of siding with Babylon instead of Christ.

**Read Rev. 14:9-11.** Would someone describe this vision for us? (allow answers)

- This terrible vision describes the judgment that awaits those who oppose Christ and refuse to repent of their sins.
- Let’s take a closer look.

Notice those in JUDGMENT. Who are they? (allow answers)

- They are those who “worship the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand...”
- There are two and only two sides or teams in the universe: Christ’s and Satan’s.
- In the book of Revelation, Christ people are “sealed”; Satan’s people are “marked.”
- Those who reject Christ and his gospel and his forgiveness – those who side with Satan – are being described here.

Notice the CUP.

- In the previous vision, Babylon seduced men into drinking here “wine.”
- In this vision, those who drink Babylon’s “wine” must drink God’s “wrath.”
- It is both tragic and just.

- It is TRAGIC in that Christ drank the cup of God's wrath for sinners on cross so that they could be pardoned and accepted. Remember his words in Gethsemane.
  - Matthew 26:39 - And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."
- Christ drank the cup of God's wrath so that sinners wouldn't have to.
- But it is also JUST. Those who choose Babylon instead Christ will have to answer for their choice.

Notice HELL itself. What do we learn about it? (allow answers)

- It is a place of UNMITIGATED PUNISHMENT: "...he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger,"
  - Do you know that it means to mitigate something? (allow answers)
    - It means to make less severe.
  - God's enemies currently experience God's mitigated or restrained wrath. Such temporal punishment is meant to punish sin, restrain evil, and call to repentance.
  - The experience of God's wrath in hell will be fundamentally different. It will be unmitigated – i.e. unrestrained, at full strength. The wages of sin will be paid in full. It is a truly terrifying thought.
- It is a place of TORMENT: "and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb."
  - Some of you may be wondering, will there really be fire and sulfur in hell? That's a good question.
  - Once again, listen to this quote from J. I. Packer.
    - The New Testament views hell as the final abode of those consigned to eternal punishment at the Last Judgment. It is thought of as a place of fire and darkness, of weeping and grinding of teeth, of destruction, and of torment – in other words, of total distress and misery. *If, as it seems, these terms are symbolic rather than literal fire, we may be sure that the reality, which is beyond our imagining, exceeds the symbol in dreadfulness.*
  - This torment will be aggravated by the presence of holy angels and Christ.
    - Why will their presence make things worse? (allow answers)
      - The beauty and glory of the holiness of the holy angels will be a perpetual reminder of their tragic choice of sin over holiness.
      - The presence of Christ, with his glorified visible wounds, will be a perpetual reminder that Christ suffered to rescue sinners from this very hell, and yet they rejected him and his gospel, choosing sin, Satan, and Babylon instead.
  - It will be a place of ETERNAL UNREST: "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."
    - It will never end.

- It will never get better.
- There is no hope of postmortem conversion.
- There will be no annihilation.
- Hell is a place of eternal, irreversible, conscious, torment for the impenitent (those who refuse to repent).
- [Optional] Some of you may be wondering: is this fair? Is it fair to punish the impenitent (those who refuse to repent) eternally?
  - That’s a good question.
  - Our justice system, which isn’t perfect but relatively just, operates on the principle that the greater the crime, the greater the punishment.
  - Murder is a great crime.
  - Murdering a police officer or a president is an even greater crime because of who they are and what they do.
  - Therefore, an infinitely great crime deserves an infinitely great punishment.
  - Rejecting Christ, who made you in his own image and sustains you and gives you life, with the very faculties he endowed you with to know, love, enjoy him forever is an infinitely great crime, and thus deserves and infinitely great punishment.
  - Or think about it from another angle – the death of Christ.
  - Listen to J. C. Ryle.
    - “Mortal man is a very poor judge of what is suitable to the character of God, or what is consistent with it. Man’s ideas of the enormous sinfulness of sin in the sight of God, and of the unutterable holiness and purity of God, are sure to be thoroughly inadequate and defective. No duration of countless ages will ever make sin anything but an unspeakable evil before the Being with whom we have to do. Millions of years of misery could never satisfy that breach of God’s law for which the blood of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, was needed to provide atonement. It is the blood and not the length of time that alone exhausts the sinfulness of sin.”<sup>10</sup>

Let’s review what we’ve discussed today.

- We answered at a common objection to the Christian doctrine of judgment by thinking more deeply about:
  - Jesus and hell
  - The love of God
  - The sinfulness of sin
  - We looked at Rev. 14:6-13 and considered:
    - The consequences of rejecting Christ and his gospel
    - The seductive power of Babylon
    - Hell itself.

---

<sup>10</sup>J. C. Ryle, *Thoughts on Immortality* (London: William Hunt and Company, 1883), 73-4.

# HEAVEN

## LESSON 12

[Opening prayer]

Review: \_\_\_\_\_

What did we learn about last week? (allow answers)

- We learned about the Hell.
- We addressed some objections to the Christian doctrine of judgment.
- We looked at Rev. 14:6-13 and considered the consequences of rejecting Christ and his gospel and the seductive power of Babylon.
- Hell itself, which is a place of:
  - Unmitigated wrath
  - Torment
  - Eternal unrest

Opening Question/Central Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Today, we will conclude our study of eschatology by considering the goal of both creation and redemption – heaven.

When you think about heaven, what comes to mind? (allow answers)

- When many people think of heaven, they think of clouds, halos, harps, and wings.
- Let's see what the Bible has to say about heaven.

Turn with me to Revelation 21:1-22:5

- John's vision of heaven consists of three pictures or scenes.
- Each picture or scene is more focused – and in some ways more glorious – than the previous.
- The first is a description of the NEW WORLD.
- The second is a description of the NEW CITY.
- The third is a description of the NEW EDEN.
- Today we are going to work through all of them.

Read Rev. 21:1-8. This is a description of the NEW WORLD. Would someone like to describe it for us? (allow answers)

- In short, here we see the renewal of the entire created order.
- Let's take a closer look.

Note the NEW HEAVEN and the NEW EARTH. What do you think this means? (allow answers)

- The Greek word for “new” is significant. “New” doesn't means simply “another,” it

means “new in kind,” and this word points to the entire transformation of the universe. The first example of this “new” world we see is the “new heavens and the new earth.” When God created the first heavens and the first earth back in Genesis 1, he created them separate. The new heavens and the earth are different. They are not separate: they are joined. In this new world heaven and earth are one. Here we see the ultimate answer to that petition of the Lord’s Prayer in which say, “thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Note the MISSING SEA. What do you think this means? (allow answers)

- John is not saying that there will be no beaches in the new heavens and the new earth. Think about the “sea” in Revelation and its significance. It is the place from which the first beast emerged. It is a source of Babylonian wealth. And it is a place of death and destruction. The sea in Revelation represents hellish chaos and restless evil, and in the new heavens and the new earth they simply will not exist. The new community will be completely safe and secure.

Note the HOLY CITY. What do you think this means? (allow answers)

- Notice that the holy city is also an adorned bride. This will become the focus of the second scene in this vision, and we will talk more about it in a moment.
- It is a picture of the glorified church – i.e. all of the redeemed.

Note the DWELLING PLACE of God. What do you think this means? What is significant about it? (allow answers)

- The EXILE of Gen. 3:24 is finally over!
- This is the HEART of God’s COVENANT promises and the FULFILLMENT of the IMMANUEL principle – “God with us.”
- It was foreshadowed in the TABERNACLE and the TEMPLE.
- The GREATEST blessing of heaven will be ETERNAL and UNHINDERED fellowship with GOD.

Note the COMPLETE REMOVAL of the CURSE. Do you see it? (allow answers)

- “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.”
- Why are there tears and death and mourning and crying and pain in our world? (allow answers)
  - It is because of sin and the curse of the Fall.
- In the new world the curse of the Fall will be completely reversed.

Put it all together. Would someone like to give us a general description of the new world? (allow answers)

- The entire cosmos will be renewed and transformed – “a new heavens and a new earth.”

- There will be no more evil – “the sea will be no more.”
- God’s people will be glorified and transformed – “And I saw the holy city... prepared as a bride”
- There will be no more distance between God and man – “Behold the dwelling place of God is with man.”
- The curse of the fall will be completed reversed and removed – “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes...”

How does this vision of the new world help us live in this world? (allow answers)

- Read verses 5-8 again.
- It should give us CONFIDENCE in the present.
  - The Lord is “trustworthy and true.”
  - He is the “Alpha and Omega” (A/Z).
  - In fact, its future fulfillment is so certain that the Lord can say “It is [already] done.”
- It should also ENCOURAGE us to conqueror.
  - It should encourage us to conqueror or overcome the temptation to compromise or worship idols.
  - The vice list in verse 8 is not random. There is a logic to it.
  - The first two vices point to compromise. The rest point to acts associated with idolatry and the Babylonian order.
- The glories of the new world should give confidence in the present and encourage us to overcome the world.

Read Rev. 21:9-27. This is a description of the NEW CITY. Would someone like to describe it for us? (allow answers)

- This is a picture of the glorified church: “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb... and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.”
- The Bride is the holy city.
- This is an expansion of 21:2.

Note its APPEARANCE. What do you see? (allow answers)

- Appearances are always important in the book of Revelation. They tell us about the character of the person or thing being described.
- The Dragon’s hideous description taught us that he was terrible and powerful.
- Babylon’s alluring description taught us that she was seductive and appealing.
- What does the remarkably detailed appearance of the city/Bride/church in verses 9-14 tell us about her? (allow answers)
  - The opening of verse 11 says it all: it has “the glory of God.”
  - Many of the other elements – stones, colors, etc., - were used in chapter 4 to describe God and his throne.
- Here is the point: in the New Heavens and the New Earth, the city/Bride/church will finally and fully glorify God as we were made to.



- What a thought! We were made to glorify God. We were created to perfectly reflect his glory. But all our lives we have done that imperfectly. Even on our best days, we have only glorified God in part. We are broken mirrors. We are fractured glass. We are cloudy windows for God's glory to shine through...even on our best days. But now, those days are past. They belong to the former things that have passed away. In the new heavens and the new earth, God's people will perfectly glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Note the DIMENSIONS. What are they? (allow answers)

- This city/Bride/church is HUGE. Each side of its foursquare sides were 12,000 stadia in length. To give you some perspective, that is roughly the distance from New York to Houston. That means that if this city were centered, it would barely fit on the North American continent.
- This city/Bride/church is CUBED. Don't miss this important detail.

We are told that its length and width and height were all equal. We are told that its length and width and height were all equal. And it was surrounded by a wall that was 144 cubits or 72 yards tall. This wall seems a bit odd and out of place, since the city is roughly 1400 miles high, but that is not the point. Remember friends, we are not talking about a literal city, we are talking about "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb," the glorified church.

What do you think this is meant to communicate to us? (allow answers)

- In order to understand it, you need to remember the only other cubed structure in the entire bible: The Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple.
- In I Kings 6:20 we are told that "the inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high, and overlaid with pure gold."
- Sounds a lot like this doesn't it? But here it has been vastly expanded to make room for all of God's people. That is why there are all the multiples of 12!
- Friends, these dimensions teach us a powerful lesson: the totality of the glorified church will dwell with the Lord in a perpetual holy of holies. Each and every one of them will have immediate and unrestricted access to the Lord.
- Consider this: Back in the OT, only the high priest had access to the holy of holies on 1 day a year, and even then, there were tons of restrictions and precautions. The sanctuary was to be filled with the smoke of incense. The high priest even had a rope tied around his leg in case he was struck dead for doing something improper. 1 person a year. 1 day a year. And limited access at that. Now all of God's people – every single one of them – have unrestricted and immediate access to God and the Lamb in the fullness of their glory.

Note the INTERNAL FEATURES. What are they? (allow answers)

- There will be NO TEMPLE: "And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb." God's people won't need to go to the Temple to meet God. They will dwell forever in his immediate presence.

- There will be NO LIGHT SOURCES: “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.”
- Its gates will NEVER BE SHUT: “And its gates will never be shut...” There will be no need for them to be shut. With evil finally and fully removed, there is no more danger.
- There will be NO NIGHT: “and there will be no night there.” No darkness of any kind – physical or spiritual.
- There will be NO ABSENTEES: “They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.” All of God’s people will finally be gathered together in God’s perfect place under the rule of God Himself.

Now Read Rev. 22:1-5. Friends, here we come to the NEW EDEN – to consummate goal of our redemption. This is what we were created for. This is what Christ redeemed us for.

Would someone describe the new Eden for us? (Allow answers)

- There will be abundant LIFE: “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.”
  - This is the abundant life Christ promised all of his followers.
- There will be HEALING for the nations: “The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”
  - This is where all of our Lord’s healing miracles point to.
- There will be a complete REMOVAL of the CURSE: “No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it...”
  - This is the fulfillment of all of our Lord’s curse-reversing, kingdom-establishing work.
- There will be perfect WORSHIP: “...and his servants will worship him.”
- The BEATIFIC Vision: “They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.”
  - This is the goal of our salvation – to see God face to face and be perfectly conformed to his image in so doing.

Do any of you see parallels between the New Eden of Rev. 22 and the Old Eden of Gen. 2? There are many of them. (allow answers)

- The RIVER:
  - The 1st Eden had a River of WATER
  - The New Eden has a RIVER of the WATER of LIFE.
- The THRONE.
  - In the 1st Creation God’s throne was in HEAVEN, not earth. Heaven and earth were DISTINCT and SEPARATE.
  - In the NEW Creation God’s throne will be in the MIDST of the new City.

- The TREE.
  - In the 1st Eden there was a (one) TREE of LIFE.
  - In the New Eden there will be MANY Trees of Life with ever-blossoming FRUIT.
- The LEAVES.
  - In the 1st Eden, Adam and Eve sowed LEAVES together to hide their SHAME after the FALL.
  - In the New Eden leaves HEAL humanity from the EFFECTS of the FALL.
- The “Service.”
  - In the 1st Eden our first parents were given soul-satisfying WORK and WORSHIP (service) to perform, but the FALL corrupted both.
  - In the New Eden God’s people will WORK and WORSHIP unhindered by the FALL and its EFFECTS.
- The BEATIFIC VISION.
  - In the 1st Eden our first parents HID themselves from God’s FACE after the Fall.
  - After the Fall, looking on God’s FACE was LETHAL. Exo. 33:20 – “But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”
  - In the New Eden we will see God face-to-face. This is the SUMMUM BONUM – the highest good – and the GOAL of REDEMPTION.
- The Name.
  - In the 1st Eden God made MAN in his IMAGE and LIKENESS, but we LOST that LIKENESS and MARRED that IMAGE in the FALL.
  - Through the process of SANCTIFICATION, this IMAGE and LIKENESS is gradually RESTORED by the Holy Spirit.
  - In the New Eden God’s NAME – his CHARACTER, ESSENCE, and NATURE – will be INDELIBLY imprinted on his people. We will become PERFECTLY and PERMANENTLY holy, never to FALL again.

The New Eden is both the CONCLUSION and GOAL of the Bible:

- ALL of God’s PEOPLE
- In God’s PERFECT PLACE
- Under the rule of GOD’S SAVIOR-KING
- And it was all WON for us by the DEATH and RESURRECTION of the LAMB.

Eschatology is ultimately a study of the Christian hope. This is your HOPE and INHERITANCE in Christ.