

TIME'S LAST ONE-THOUSAND YEARS

Revelation 20:1, "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished."

In chapter 19 Jesus returned to earth and destroyed the armies of the Antichrist. The flesh of those who followed the beast were fed to vultures. Then Jesus locked the Antichrist and the False Prophet in the bottomless pit. His victory was total. He purchased the earth on the cross. He takes possession at His second coming.

Jesus will return to Earth to establish His kingdom. At the end of the Great Tribulation man's dominion over the earth will be over. Jesus will inaugurate a new period. He'll rule the Earth literally and physically and visibly. His throne will be in Jerusalem, and all the world will bow to Him and obey Him. As we were told in 19:15, "He Himself will rule the world with a rod of iron."

In the model prayer Jesus told us to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done. On earth as it is in heaven." In Revelation 20 this prayer is finally answered. God's kingdom does come. His will prevails on earth as it always has in heaven.

And note- John records the duration of God's kingdom on the earth - it will last a period of 1000 years - or in the Latin, it's the translation of the word "millennium".

After great destruction the Earth will enjoy a golden age! For 1000 years, or a millennium, the Earth will be restored to its original beauty.

Adam and Eve began in a garden called "Eden". The Earth will end up a garden. Romans 8:22-23 tells us all creation groans awaiting its redemption. When Jesus returns, the curse will be lifted and the planet Earth will be restored.

Revelation 20 provides only the duration of Jesus' Millennial Kingdom - but there are a host of Old Testament prophecies that provide us other details - the quality of life, changes in the earth's ecosystem - the lifestyle of folks in the Kingdom...

Remember- one of the plagues in the Tribulation is the poisoning of the waters. Ezekiel 47:8-9 describe how they'll be healed and rejuvenated...

Isaiah 30:23-26 says there'll be longer periods of sunshine to revitalize the planet's vegetation.

Isaiah 11:6 describes how God will remove the

hostility between the animals, "The wolf shall also dwell with the lamb..."

Isaiah 11:8 tells us God will remove the natural hostility between animals and man, "The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den."

Isaiah 35:5-6, there'll be no birth defects.

Isaiah 65:20 comments on life-spans - a man 100 years old will be considered a child.

The best benefit of living in the Kingdom Age will be the access a person will have to Jesus. Isaiah 2:2-4 says people will flow to Jerusalem and Jesus will teach them His ways. Verse 4, "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." Under Jesus' influence the world will finally know peace.

And the peace won't just be nationally, but locally. In the Millennium there'll be no dead bolts or security systems. There'll be no crime. For one reason, there'll be no Satan. He'll be chained in the bottomless pit for 1000 years. The other reason is that Jesus won't tolerate it - He'll enforce righteousness, and punish evil swiftly.

In verse 4 John sees the people, who during the Tribulation, refused to worship the beast and rejected his mark - and as a result were beheaded for their faith in Jesus. He tells us, "they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." We also will reign with Christ during the Kingdom age.

2 Timothy 2:12, Luke 19:17, and 1 Corinthians 6:2 are just a few of the verses that teach us the raptured Church will return to earth to rule with Jesus. Both the raptured saints and the Tribulation saints will help administer God's Kingdom.

During the Kingdom Age a strange mix of people will occupy the planet. Mortal men live alongside resurrected believers. The humans who survive the Great Tribulation will repopulate the earth. Their offspring will retain a sin nature, and even without the devil's influence, from time to time they will need to be corrected.

The resurrected saints will have glorified bodies and redeemed spirits. We'll have the supernatural capabilities Jesus had after His resurrection. We won't be confined materially and spatially. We'll pass through walls. We'll travel at the *speed of desire*. Want to go to Hawaii? Just think it and you're there!

Devotion Box - Heat-Resistant Blessings

earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them." After the Kingdom age, God dispenses with the old order, and ushers in the new. 2 Peter 3:10 describes the meltdown of the universe, "the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." One day it's all going to burn! Don't put your trust in the combustibles - or live for the flammables... Only the blessings of Jesus are all heat-resistant.

In 20:11 John sees the end of the world as we know it. He saw "the

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THE FINAL CONFLICT

Revelation 20:3 closes on an ominous note. When he spoke of Satan's imprisonment John added, "But after these things he must be released for a little while." Verse 8 tells us why - he "will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea."

After 1000 years in hell Satan still lies and stirs up rebellion. Understand that, during the millennium, as before Noah's flood, people will live long ages - up to 1000 years. This will allow even the skeleton crew of survivors who make it through the judgment of the Great Tribulation to repopulate the earth. And among the survivors and their descendants Satan will manage to stir up a sizable rebellion. He gathers together a group of people to fight against God.

And why does God allow this to happen? There's an important reason... The Bible teaches that man sins because he's a sinner - our problem lies deeper than our behavior. Our very nature is corrupt. Whereas modern psychology denies this truth - it blames our deviance on a deficient environment. In other words, men and women resort to evil because they lack resources, or education, or culture.

But here mankind lives in a perfect, flawless environ-

ment for a thousand years. Jesus has taken care of their every need. They've had the best in provision and education and civilization - yet, when given the choice, man chooses to rebel! It'll silence the excuses in hell forever... "If I had a better education... or two parents... or wasn't on welfare... or didn't grow up in the projects..." *"Not so!"*

What happens at the end of these 1000 years is once-and-for-all proof - *at the heart of man's problem is the problem in his heart!* We're rebels from birth, and that's why to be a part of God's Kingdom, Jesus said, we must be born again!

Of course, Jesus puts down this final insurrection in short order. When the rebels surround Jerusalem, fire comes down out of heaven and devours them.

20:10 reveals the devil's final destination, "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever..."

The Greek word translated "lake of fire", or *"Gehenna"*, is different than the word *"Hades"*. Hades was the holding tank for the unbelieving dead at the center of the earth. The lake of fire is the final destination of the rebellious.

JUDGMENT AT THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

In verse 11 John sees a colossal sight. He sees the end of the world as we know it. He saw "a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them."

John mentions the atomic incineration that extinguishes all matter, but what is more vital to him is the great, white throne that he sees in heaven... He says in 20:12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."

This is the Great White Throne of Judgment... one of four biblical judgments...

The first judgment was at **the cross**. There sin was judged in the body of Jesus. He got what I deserved. Trust in Jesus and your sin has already been judged.

The second judgment is **the judgment seat of Christ** - or *the bema-seat* in 1 Corinthians 3. Here the issue is not sin, but service. Our motivation will be tested. Works done out of love will be rewarded. Things done selfishly will be burned up.

The third judgment occurs in **the Valley of Jeho-**

shaphat at the return of Jesus. Joel 3 and Matthew 25 describe how Jesus separates the sheep from the goats. The people who are alive at the end of the age - who survive the Great Tribulation - will be separated - the sheep or the righteous, and the goats or the unrighteous.

And the fourth judgment occurs here - **the Great White Throne of Judgment**. This is not for believers in Jesus. In Revelation 4 the believers were gathered around a throne, surrounded by a rainbow - a symbol of God's faithfulness. Four living creatures - each representing different elements of the work of Jesus - were also present. Numerous features of that throne speak of God's mercy and grace.

But not here! All we have here is a stark, white thorn - representing God's holiness. Remember, if you're in Christ your sin was judged at the cross. But notice in verse 12, people here are "judged according to their works".

Guys, the last thing I ever want to do is to stand before God on the merit of my own works. The Bible says, my righteousness is like filthy rags. If I'm judged according to my works then I'm in trouble! I'm resting - not in my work - but in the work of Jesus!

THE SECOND DEATH

Revelation 20:14 tells us that in the end, Hades and its inhabitants are thrown into the lake of fire. "Hades" was the holding tank. "Gehenna" is the final punishment. We're told, "This is the second death."

Physical death is the first death, but the lake of fire - eternal damnation - is the second death.

Remember the ol' saying, "Born once, die twice; but born twice, die only once." You need to be born again.

A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

In 21:1 John says, "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away." Understand, this universe is not eternal. It will come to an end, and God will create a new heaven and new earth.

In Isaiah 65:17 the Lord says, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind." The Hebrew word translated "create", or "bara", means "to create out of nothing".

God will start over again with an entirely new heaven and new earth.

People today are into recycling – *paper, metal, plastic, even motor oil* – everything is being recycled! My wife recycles newspapers and milk cartons – and I have mixed feelings... Yes, perhaps we're no longer polluting the earth, but in the process *we're really cluttering up my garage...* I guess I'm not as gung-ho!

And it comforts me to know that God isn't all that gung-ho about recycling either! The earth is a no-deposit, no-return planet! God will not recycle it!

He'll design a new heaven and earth. A new world – that will resemble the old in many respects – but it will have an entirely new molecular composition.

When we think about the past, and what conditions

were like, we can make pretty accurate assumptions until we reach two impasses. Two events serve as walls that are difficult to see over and examine what life was like before they were erected. The first wall was the flood of Noah. The global flood made dramatic alterations in the earth's ecosystem. What life has been like from Noah to the present is easier to envision than the conditions from Adam to Noah.

The second wall is the fall of man – and if you think our understanding is vague and hazy before the flood – it becomes more so, before sin entered the universe. Sin so permeated our environment that it's impossible for fallen minds to imagine what life was like before world's contamination. Adam and Eve lived in a utopia.

Now when we think into the future we can also do quite well imagining how life will change and develop until we reach two walls. The first quantum leap forward in the history of the universe is the second coming of Jesus, and the establishment of God's kingdom on the earth. It boggles the mind to imagine what conditions will be like when Jesus rules a redeemed earth from His throne in Jerusalem.

But the second barrier in our understanding is the creation of a new heaven and earth. Here we can only stand with dropped jaw – and gaping mouth – and wonder. *John tries to help children of time grasp the realities of eternity!*

THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

In Revelation 21:2 John "saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

In John 14:2 before He ascended into heaven Jesus told His disciples, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." We can assume for the last 2000 years Jesus has been preparing us a place. The carpenter has been hard at work building for us a heavenly home.

Now we see it coming down out of heaven... *as beautiful as a bride!* This city is decked out! It's dressed to please. I've never met a groom who was disappointed with his bride on his wedding day! Likewise, you won't be disappointed with your heavenly home! If you think there's an aspect of life on earth you'll miss – forget it! Eternity will more than compensate! The eternal city will satisfy your every desire!

Verse 4, "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There

shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." According to Isaiah 65:20, death in the Millennial Kingdom will be rare, but existent. Here, though, death is finally abolished! No more undertakers and gravediggers! There'll be no cemeteries on the new earth! *Death is dead!*

Recently, I heard of a tombstone that simply reads, "I told you I was sick!" Apparently, no one heeded his warning. Which reminds me of a gravestone in Richmond, Virginia where the body of Margaret Daniels is buried. Its inscription reads, "She always said her feet were killing her, but nobody believed her."

Sin created a fallen world that makes us vulnerable to sickness, pain, and death. The cause of death is sin, but here in chapter 21 sin is no more. And now its results can be abolished... *Grief goes! Tears dry.* Psalm 30:5 proves true, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." The morning has now come! Jesus says in verse 5, "Behold, I make all things new."

Devotion Box - The End Of Religion

John mentions an important detail in verse 22, "But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." Here's the end of religion... The Jewish Temple epitomized the do's and don'ts, rules and rituals, symbols and sacrifices of all religion – but in the end, none of that will be important. When it's all said and done – all that matters is the Lord and the Lamb!

Devotion Box - The Eternal State

22:11 says, "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." Here's an ominous warning... While on earth there's always hope, but once a person passes from time into eternity they forfeit all possibility for change. In Dante's "*Inferno*" the author puts these words on the gates of hell, "Those who enter here, abandon all hope!" *Walk with Jesus, and you'll walk with Him forever. Don't walk with Jesus now, and you'll never walk with Him at all!*

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - sandyadams@calvarychapel.org
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"They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads."
- Revelation 22:4

Bible Scan
Memory Verse

THE ARCHITECTURE OF HEAVEN

In 21:9-10 an angel shows John the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven. He describes the glory of this city in verse 11, "Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone (possibly a diamond), clear as crystal. Imagine, a huge, glimmering diamond floating down out of the heavens!

I believe that what we know as "heaven" today is actually the finished New Jerusalem. The spiritual realm will materialize, and arrive from out in space. It'll hover over the new earth - then the New Jerusalem will lock into a parallel orbit with the new earth! The holy city becomes a *celestial satellite!*

You've heard of *the Great Wall of China* - well, there's also a *great wall of heaven*. The city has a wall around it with 12 gates - each named after one of the tribes of Israel. And 12 foundations - each named after one of the 12 apostles.

Verse 16 gives us dimensions, "The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: 12,000 furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. This is a huge city! 12,000 furlongs is the equivalent of about 1500 miles. Imagine a city with a base 1500 miles square... If the upper right-hand corner sat in Boston, then the other three corners would land in Miami, Phoenix, and Calgary, Canada. The city would cover about three-quarters the area of the United States. This is a city 2¼ million square miles!

But the most mind-boggling dimension is its height! It's also 1500 miles high! Consider that today the earth's atmosphere extends only 600 miles. That means if it sat down on the earth today the New Jerusalem would extend 900 miles into outer space. More of it would be above the atmosphere

MAIN STREET IN HEAVEN

Guys, every city has a main street, and the same is true for heaven. In chapter 22 John takes us cruising down the main drag in the New Jerusalem...

The street leads to the throne of God. Beside the street flows a crystal river. Growing out of the center line of the golden street, and over-arching the river is the tree of life. Its fruit is never out of season. There's healing in its leaves.

Remember, when Adam and Eve sinned, God closed off access to the garden of Eden, and the tree of life. He dispatched an angel to guard its entrance. If man had eaten of the tree of life in a fallen state, he would have lived forever separated from God. Now that he's been redeemed, he can eat again of the forever fruit!

than below it. The size of the New Jerusalem would be just a little smaller than the moon.

Imagine, too, a city with 3-D living space. Its inhabitants live - not just at the base, but throughout the structure. This increases its living area to 3 billion square miles - more than enough for all the saved through all the ages!

We know the city's dimensions, but we don't know its shape. Some teachers believe the New Jerusalem is in the shape of a dome or sphere, or cube, or pyramid. Whatever the exact shape we know this city is enormous!

Verse 18 tells us, "The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The gold is so pure it's transparent. "The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones:" And note the colors in heaven... "jasper" (perhaps a diamond, or maybe a greenish stone), "sapphire" (blue), "chalcedony" (aqua), "emerald" (a bright green), "sardonyx" (a brownish red), "sardius" (a deep, blood red), "chrysolite" (yellow), "beryl" (another green), "topaz" (yellow-green), "chrysoprase" (apple green), "jacinth" (violet), and "amethyst" (a blue-red, or rich purple).

Five of the 12 colors are some shade of green. Hey, if you're going to heaven, you'd better get used to green! Heaven will be a kaleidoscope of color - a rainbow!

Verse 21 notes the pearly gates. "And the street of the city was pure gold..." Notice it's not "streets" (plural), but "street" (singular). There is only one way to God, and only one street in heaven... It's a street paved with pure gold.

THE HIGHLIGHT OF HEAVEN

22:4 is the highlight of heaven, "They shall see His face..." Moses asked to see the glory of God, and was granted his request. But God put limits on the privilege. In Exodus 33:20-23 He warned Moses, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live..." God knew mortal flesh would never survive His glory, so he shielded Moses' eyes, and showed him only His backside.

But one day all that will change. Paul's promises us in 1 Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face." We'll see God face to face!

Verse 4 describes the one tattoo I won't mind getting... "and His name shall be on their foreheads." In the end the Lord will mark His children as His own.