

KING OF THE JUNGLE

THE LION'S ROAR

REVELATION 1-22

For the last six months we've been studying the book of Revelation. We've plowed through chapter by chapter, verse by verse - and left few stones unturned.

But today, we're taking the opposite approach.

Buckle up for a Bible Study flyover. I plan to overview all 22 chapters of Revelation in just 45 minutes.

In fact, I'll do better than that - I'll start by summing up Revelation in one word... *It's not even a word...*

*Here's the last book of the Bible in **a single sound...***

Revelation is the Lion's roar! Look at the world today, and it's a jungle out there, but Jesus is the King of kings. He is the King of the Jungle. He'll roar and reign!

Notice verse 1, "**The Revelation of Jesus Christ...**"

The word translated "**revelation**" is "**apocalypse.**" To the Greeks it meant "**an unveiling or uncovering.**" Think of a famous artist debuting a sculpture. The museum's curator rips off the fabric revealing his masterpiece.

This is "**The Revelation...**" Jesus Christ is alive and well, but we don't see His excellence for He's hidden behind a heavy canvass that separates the spiritual realm from the tangible world. Yet in Revelation John rips away the veil. He reveals Jesus in all His splendor.

Before we're done, John will paint a whole array of provocative details... We'll talk about *falling stars, four horsemen, hailstones, beasts, marks, armies, demons, and the whore of Babylon*... But remember our theme.

As one author writes, "The theme isn't 6-6-6, it's "holy, holy, holy!" The point of the Revelation is not the *unleashing of judgment*, it's the *unveiling of Jesus!*"

John writes, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants - things which must shortly take place." The Greek word translated "*shortly*" is "*tachys*." A "*tachometer*" doesn't measure speed or distance. It measures the immediate burst.

The NT writers assumed they were living in the last days. With the first coming of Jesus and the outpouring of the Spirit, God had revved up the engine. But what happens when He pops the clutch? What comes next?

The answer is Jesus... *not as He was, but in all His exalted glory and authority.* Revelation shows us that Heaven is focused on *Jesus the Lionhearted*, and all humanity needs to be preoccupied with Him as well.

Every US President poses for an official portrait. And at the end of chapter 1 John paints a portrait of Jesus...

In verse 13, he sees Jesus in the midst of seven lampstands - *or seven churches*. This is why I'm so gung-ho on the Church! Sure, we consist of the flawed and fallible. But Jesus still walks among us. If you don't *hang out* with the church, you'll *miss out* on Jesus.

While Jesus was on Earth, John spent three years with Him. But in 1:13-16 he sees Him very differently..

The tunic the soldiers gambled away is replaced with a royal robe... His carpenter's belt has been swapped for a gold, priestly band... Shaggy, black, Jewish hair is now as white as wool... His once brown eyes are aflame with passion... The clay feet of His humanity has been replaced with the strong, bronze feet of deity.

The voice that reasoned, now roars like a waterfall. It drowns out all other opinions... The mouth that taught forgiveness, now slays like a Sword... The face that conveyed grace, now radiates with glory like the sun.

It's 90 AD. The Emperor Domitian has banished John to a labor camp on a rock island called "Patmos."

John's future seems hopeless - *but not so fast...*

What's next for John is the living Lord Jesus! He's "the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last" - Jesus Christ is still the hope of both today and all eternity!

Chapter 1:19 is key. It outlines the book, "Write these things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."

What he's "seen" is chapter 1... Jesus in all His glory.

John was a Church leader, thus "the things which are" - Revelation 2-3 - is an evaluation of seven churches representing 2000 years of Church history.

And "the things which will take place after this" - or chapters 4-22 - what happens after the Church is in Heaven... how God will redeem a run-away universe.

Chapter 1 is all about Jesus - not as a humble Galilean carpenter - but as He is today, King of glory!

Beginning in chapter 2 Jesus dictates letters through John to “**seven churches of Asia...**” At the time there were hundreds of Christians congregations... “*why just seven? - why these seven? - And why in this order?*”

Here’s why... these seven represent the church as a whole - **Individually**, there’re seven types of believers.

Ecclesiastically, there’re 7 kinds of local churches.

And **Historically**, over the last 2000 years there’ve been seven stages of church history. All these insights get packed into these seven letters in chapters 2-3.

Ephesus was the first stop on the old Roman postal route that circled the region, but in Church History it represented the early church. And Jesus’ first letter indicates how quickly their love for Him had waned.

They served, endured, and sniffed out falsehood.

But verse 4 reveals their fatal fault, “**you have left your first love.**” There was motion, but no devotion.

And Jesus prescribes is cure. Verse 5, “**Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works.**” **Recall** the initial joy of your salvation. **Repent** of the distractions. **Repeat** the first habits: dig into the Word, worship with passion, willingly witness.

Don’t wait until you feel like it, just do it. “**It’s easier to act yourself into a feeling than to feel yourself into an action.**” Do the *first works* and you’ll regain a *first love*.

Smyrna was the martyred church of the 2nd and 3rd centuries - the persecuted church. Between 65 and 312 AD Rome martyred 5 million believers in Jesus.

Jesus says of Smyrna, verse 9, “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich)...” On earth Smyrna was poor, but in God’s eyes she was rich.

Pergamos was a center for idolatry. Verse 13 refers to it as “where Satan’s throne is.” It was a tough place to be a Christian. The temptation was to *compromise*.

Pergamos tried to be *like the world to win the world*.

Historically, Pergamos was the church of the Roman Emperors that tried to Christianize pagan practices. Rather than convert Romans, it corrupted the Church.

Next is the tolerant church. Pergamos compromised, but the Church in Thyatira got cozy with compromise.

Like the OT’s Queen Jezebel, this church conjured up religious sanctions to excuse spiritual compromise.

Here’s a church that went to be bed with the world. It’s no surprise that Jesus says, “I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.”

The word “Sardis” means “escaping ones.” The church is often linked to the Protestant Reformation - the church that escaped the pollutions of Rome.

Sardis was the orthodox Church, but sadly it was a dead orthodoxy. In 3:1 Jesus says, “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”

They carried the name of the reformers - *like Lutherans* - but they lacked the faith and fire of Luther. They're told to **"strengthen the things which remain."**

The church of **"Philadelphia"** was a church of which Jesus had nothing negative to say. It was the church of the open door - an opportunist church. Philadelphia represents the evangelicalism of the last two centuries.

This church had **"little strength,"** but used what she had. Philadelphia kept God's Word. Refused to deny His name... Here's a church we all should emulate!

And the last of the seven churches was **"Laodecia."** Sadly, a church that looks a lot like the modern church.

Neither hot nor cold - only lukewarm - like a room temperature cup of coffee, the Lord spews her out.

This is what Jesus does to the complacent church.

Verse 20 sums up the sad state of Laodecia. Jesus is locked out of His own church. Yet He promises, **"I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."** Here's my suggestion: Let's give Jesus back His church - *and let it start in my heart.*

Chapter 4 begins, **"After these thing."** *What things?*

Well, for two chapters the subject has been the Church! Now John takes us beyond the Church Age.

John, a member of the Church, writes in 4:1, **"I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with**

me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

This sounds like Paul's description of the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4. When the Church Age is over, a trumpet blows, and the Church is caught up to Heaven. Here John's experience parallels that future event.

And God gives Him a glimpse of the Heavenly scene. Don't think of Heaven as a cloud bank, or white halls, or marble stair-steps. It's a kaleidoscope of color.

In 4:3 John sees God dressed in ruby red robes that sparkle like diamonds. Lightning bolts dart from His emerald green throne. A rainbow stretches overhead and flickering flames dance on top of a crystal sea.

The colors on Earth pale compared to the brilliance of the heavenly hues. Everything in Heaven pops!

Around God's throne John sees angelic creatures, and 24 elders representing the Church of all the ages.

These elders cast their crowns at Jesus' feet. *And we'll do the same with any rewards we receive...*

We'll all sing the song, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

Realize, *the priority of Heaven is the worship of God*. Heaven is a party of praise! In Heaven we'll do that for which we were created... *bring pleasure to God*.

Chapter 5 is a pivotal passage. Verse 1, "I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals."

The book God holds is the title deed to the universe. A real estate deal is about to be brokered in Heaven...

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He then gave them to mankind to work and rule.

But man sinned. He fumbled away his authority, *and guess who jumped on the ball?* Possession to Satan.

Today, Satan has run of the planet. The mess we're in, is not God's fault. Blame it on satanic management.

But God has plans to redeem (*or buy back*) the Earth. Rules for redemption were imbedded in the OT Law. If a family lost its property, they could buy it back.

And John understands what he sees. Mankind needs a relative who can buy back the world that was lost.

This is why John weeps. He sees **“no one worthy to open... the scroll.”** Until one of the elders steps in. *And John knows you should always listen to your elders...*

He says in 5:5, **“One of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.’** Jesus is the lion! He's King of the Jungle. He alone is worthy to retake custody of God's creation.

It's interesting the elder introduces Jesus to John as **“the Lion”** - but in verse 6 when John turns his head to look, he sees **“a Lamb as though it had been slain.”**

At His first coming, Jesus humbled Himself. He became a sacrificial Lamb. He paid the ransom for sin.

But Jesus is coming again. This time He'll flex His muscle and roar like a Lion. He'll subdue the jungle, and take possession of all that belongs to Him.

This is what the rest of Revelation is about...

How Jesus pries the world from the hands of the rebellious squatters, and returns it to God's authority.

The scroll John saw - *the title deed to the universe* - was sealed with seven waxed seals. And opening that scroll was the equivalent of possessing the property.

But as He opened the scroll He broke the seals. And in chapter 6 when each seal snaps a judgment pops.

In fact, from chapters 6-19 twenty-one judgments get unleashed. **Seven seals are broken, seven trumpets blast, seven bowls slosh with God' righteous wrath.**

The first four seals in chapter 6 reveal the infamous **four horsemen of the Apocalypse**. They'll ride onto the stage of history, their hoofs kicking up destruction...

The white horse represents a false peace. The rider is the Antichrist. He deceives man with lying promises.

The second **horse is fiery red - the horse of war.** The third **horse is black, which speaks of famine.** The fourth horse is **pale with death.** Through these horsemen a quarter of the world's population will die. If it happened today the death toll would be 1.5 billion.

You don't have people deceived, and fighting, and starving, and dying without some innocent casualties.

That's what the fifth seal reveals. John sees souls under the altar in Heaven. They're martyred for their faith in Christ. Now they cry out for God's vengeance.

They echo our cry today! This world is out of order.

Wrongs go unpunished. The innocent get preyed upon. Politicians pad their pockets... We long for a day when someone will free the oppressed and punish evil.

This is the cry behind all the Great Tribulation.

Do you really think that God just sits back in some Heavenly recliner, and ignores what's going on in this world?... When people *mock His name*, and *break His laws*, and *violate each other*, and *shake their fist in His face* - do you think He doesn't see - He doesn't care?

I promise you He cares! After the martyrs cry out for vengeance, the sixth seal strikes a devastating blow.

Read 6:12... *a great earthquake, the sun flames out, the moon turns blood red, asteroids and meteorites pelt the planet like acorns falling from a wind-blown tree. The sky rolls up like a run-away window shade.*

Verse 14, **“every mountain and island was moved out of its place.”** The physical universe comes unglued.

And in its wake rebels run to the caves, and try to hide in the rocks. They'll say to the mountains, **“Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne**

and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

They'll learn, “You can run, but you cannot hide.”

And notice the provocative phrase in verse 16, “*the wrath of the Lamb.*” A lamb isn't a hostile animal, but this one can be! The Lamb of God will roar like a Lion.

He'll pare His claws, and attack the rebel planet.

When John saw judgments earmarked for man, I'm sure his reaction was to cover his eyes to the horrors.

That's why the book of Revelation shifts vistas back and forth from Earth to Heaven. The awful reality of God's wrath is balanced with the glory of His grace...

And *Chapter Seven* takes us back to *Heaven*. It's the eye of the storm. Winds of judgment are howling. But John sees angels standing in the east, west, north, south - holding the winds. There's a pause - a Selah!

So that God can seal 144,000 Jewish witnesses.

This is stunning... God is angry with the inhabitants of planet Earth. It's time to clean house. But even in the midst of His awful judgment, God still loves people.

So much so, he recruits an end time army to preach the Gospel and extend His grace to harden sinners.

The sixth seal unleashed such devastation chapter 6 closed by asking the question, “*who is able to stand?*”

Chapter 7 answers that question. The 144,000 and those who receive the message that they preach.

John sees a crowd in white robes. Verse 14 identifies them as the “Ones who come out of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” God even wipes away their tears.

Even in the Great Tribulation people still get saved. It’s a testimony to God’s amazing and enduring grace.

In chapter 8 we’re back to earth. Seven angels put a trumpet of judgment to their lips and blow a long blast.

A falling firestorm scorches a third of the Earth.

A burning mountain poisons a third of the oceans.

A falling star contaminates a third of the fresh water.

Somehow a third of our solar exposure gets reduced.

And after the first four trumpets God sends an angel through the heavens shouting, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of trumpets of the three angels who are about to sound.” In other words, “you ain’t seen nothing yet!”

One day, Heaven will throw down on planet Earth.

Last week, February 15, a 55’ wide meteor streaked through the sky at 40,000 mph. It exploded over Russia. It’s force was 40 times the bomb at Hiroshima.

That same day, an asteroid 30 meters wide, passed so close to the Earth it slipped under the orbit of man-made satellites - the closest flyby ever of an asteroid its size.

Two cosmic near-misses in the very same day!

I wondered if God wasn't firing a warning shot across our bow. It was a message of love - a Valentine from God. We need to return to Him before it's too late. For one soon the shots will no longer be mere warnings.

In chapter 9 a Pandora's box opens. Smoke, ash, and demonic locust are unleashed from the bottomless pit. No one can escape their sting and torture. In verse 6 men attempt suicide, but death takes a vacation.

The sixth trumpet rallies a 200 million man army who march to Armageddon through a dried up Euphrates.

God is assembling the nations for the grand finale.

In 10:1 John sees a mighty angel straddling the sea and the land. He has "a little book open in his hand."

I believe this angel is Jesus, holding what He had in chapter 5 - the title deed. Now the seals are broken - it's open. God's Kingdom has almost come to Earth...

That's when John is told to eat the scroll.

As he first chews on the idea of a Messianic takeover, and it excites him. Evil is defeated. Jesus is on the throne. The thought of God's Kingdom is *sweet*.

But as he digests the implications, he's reminded of the plight of those lost without Christ. The judgments he's seen - the hell he will see - it creates a *bitterness*.

The Revelation realization was *sweet*, then *sour*.

And that's the reaction you and I should have to this book... We all long for Jesus and a righteous world.

Everyone wants sin to be dealt with, but to do so God has to judge sinners - and that means people we know and love. *You can't address sin, without dealing with the sinners...* Thus, believers need to get busy sharing the Gospel. **This Revelation is sweet, but sour.**

So far this time on Earth is full of *action*. But there're some *actors* in the drama - good guys and bad guys.

God's team includes the 144,000 and two witnesses discussed in chapter 11. They work the miracles of Elijah and Moses - and testify of Jesus in the Temple.

This implies the rebuilding of the Temple. It could be that Antichrist brokers a deal that allows the Temple and mosque to stand side-by-side. Perhaps this is why the angel tells John the outer court is given to Gentiles.

Revelation 11 brings up a timeline. In Daniel 9 God predicted a final seven year period in the history of human government. Revelation 6-19 unfolds during this seven years. Chapter 11 focuses on the midpoint...

God will remove His protection from His two servants. Antichrist murders them, and leave their bodies in the street for all the world to celebrate.

For 3.5 days CNN broadcasts live from the scene.

Then suddenly God resurrects His servants. They ascend to Heaven as an earthquake rocks Jerusalem. Sadly, it's all just one more unanswered wake-up call.

Revelation 12 is full of both good guys and bad guys.

The woman is Israel. The dragon is Satan. The stars are angels. The male child birthed by the woman is Jesus. Verse 5 says He'll "rule all nations with a rod of iron." And was "caught up to God and to His throne."

For the rest of the chapter 12, John plays the role of a war correspondent as he reports on the final throes in the age-old battle between God and Satan...

According to verse 7 midway through the last seven years war erupts in Heaven. Michael the archangel gives Satan the boot. Their battle makes Star Wars look like a dart throw. *But now Satan gets desperate...*

He immediately attacks the woman, or Israel. Satan knows if you want to irk a Father just pick on His kids.

This is why anti-semiticism is satanic. Throughout history Satan has plotted ways to strike at the Jews.

He does so here... The armies of Antichrist chase the Jews to the wilderness. In verse 16 God protects them. The genocide squad is thwarted by a earthquake. Satan gets defeated in heaven and routed on earth.

Revelation 13 brings double trouble. Satan employs *the beastie boys* - a demonic duo with occult powers.

The first beast is the Antichrist – he's a political leader who rules the world. His 10 horns represent a 10 nation confederacy that catapults him to power.

Today, the world is longing for a leader. An early organizer of the European Community, Henry Speck, once commented, "We don't want another committee. We

want a man of stature to hold the allegiance of the people... Send us a man whether he be God or a devil, send him.” Well, the world is going to get its devil.

The second beast in Revelation 13 is the False Prophet - a religious leader who gives ecclesiastical sanction and support to the ambitions of the Antichrist.

He constructs an idol and blackmails the world.

This past week I was at Kroger picking up a prescription, and the girl at the counter had a bar code sticker on the back of her right hand. She was using it to log onto her computer. She scanned her hand. And it reminded me of the scheme the beastie boys concoct.

They sieze control of a one-world government, and require everyone to take a mark in your right hand or forehead. It's a number - 666. *To buy groceries, or get healthcare, or fill up your tank... you'll need the mark.*

It's pledge allegiance to the Beast or starve...

Now that the Church is in Heaven, God uses angels as His messengers. In Revelation 14 three angels buzz the Earth... the first, preaches the Gospel - the second, declares destruction - and the third, warns of the mark.

Verse 11 describes the plight of those who ignore this warning - **“the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night.”**

Don't dare think there's such no such thing as eternal punishment!

Chapter 14 closes with Jesus fulfilling the parable He told in Matthew 13. The wheat and weeds grow up together, until the harvest... Now the harvest has come.

It's time to weed the world. Jesus separates the righteous from the rebels. He's about to crush the wicked in the winepress of His wrath. Which sets the stage for Revelation 15-16 - the final seven plagues.

The seven bowls brimming with divine wrath are the most intense of all God's judgments. These aren't *bowl games*. God is serious about sin. God don't play.

“Foul and loathsome sores” - contamination - solar flares - people in the dark blistered and bleeding...

The bowl judgments are global warming on steroids.

The sixth bowl sets the stage for the final showdown at Armageddon. Demons draw out the Eastern armies.

The seventh bowl ravages the Earth. It's shock and awe. Mountains are leveled - islands erased. In 16:21 the world gets pelted with 100 pound hailstones. In the OT, blasphemy was punishable by stoning... Here God stones a blasphemous world... Jesus is saddling up!

But before He comes, John has another vignette or sidebar to the story. The Antichrist deceived the world by religion and commerce. And John shows how God judges both. Two Babylons appear in chapters 17-18.

Chapter 17:5 introduces, **“Babylon, the mother of harlots.”** This was the religious system that sanctioned the Beast - the Church after the true Church was gone.

It's a tolerant religion. All paths lead to God. The whore's only creed is, **“Believe in anything but Jesus.”**

This harlot came to prominence riding on the beast. She scratches his back, and he scratches her back.

In the end, Antichrist turns on his religious system. Once he declares himself god, he dumps the harlot.

But two Babylons brought the Beast to power. The other is commercial - a global economy. People and nations will compromise conviction for prosperity.

But in the end this Babylon goes belly up.

Chapter 18:17 tells us, “In one hour such great riches came to nothing...” Earthly treasure always come to nothing! Verse 10 tells us, her mourners “see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment...” It could be Babylon gets nuked.

In Chapter 18 citizens on Earth mourn the fall of the world’s system, but four times in the first four verses of Revelation 19 Heaven rejoices, and shouts, “Alleluia!”

Chapter 19 ends with a *battle scene*, but it begins with a *bridal suite*. While judgment occurs on Earth, Heaven hosts a wedding. Chapter 19:7 should remind all believers to *save the date*, “for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

Are you ready? Are ready for your wedding day?

The last half of chapter 19 is the moment Creation has been awaiting. The Prince of Peace is no pacifist!

In Revelation 19 Jesus and His bride go to war.

Here's the climatic conclusion of the war between God and Satan! The armies stage at Armageddon, but other Scriptures teach the fighting occurs in the sky over Jerusalem. The Beast tries to thwart Jesus' return.

In verse 11 Heaven opens again! But not to let the Church in, but to let God's Warrior come out. It's been a long time since this wicked world has seen the Lamb.

What a surprise to hear Him roar like a lion. He came the first time to save - the second time to slaughter.

There's no donkey ride this time... He's charging on a war horse. He's "Faithful and True". His eyes are like a flame of fire. On His head sits many crowns.

His robe is splattered with the blood of enemies He slays in battle. "His name is called The Word of God." He brings the "fierceness and wrath of (the) Almighty."

Verse 16 is the climax of John's description. He says of Jesus, "He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

2 Thessalonians 2 tells us Jesus destroys the Beast with His breath - *just by blowing on him*. It's a blowout!

Chapter 19 opens and closes with a feast. After the Battle of Armageddon God invites the birds and the scavengers to feast on the corpses of rebel casualties.

Jesus captures the Antichrist and False Prophet and tosses them into the lake of fire. The war is finally over.

Blood was shed. Lives were lost. The Earth is in shambles and in need of restoration, but this is what it took to end the coup. The Earth is now under *new management*. And Jesus will restore all that sin ruined.

That's what chapter 20 is about. The first act of Jesus' new administration is to chain the Devil in Hell. The Tempter is jailed for a thousand years - for a "Millennium." At long last, the world will be at peace!

The lamb will lie down with the lion.

The desire of all beauty pageant contestants is finally fulfilled - the nations of the Earth enjoy world peace!

Jesus will end the day of human government, and establishes His earthly Kingdom. He rules the nations in righteousness. He rejuvenates the eco-system.

Jesus returns the fallen planet to a garden paradise.

Finally, our prayer is fully answered, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done. On earth as it is in heaven."

Verse 4 tells us the Tribulation saints will rule with Jesus, but we learn throughout the NT that we will too.

If you're faithful on Earth, you'll rule in the Kingdom.

A strange mixture will make up Christ's Kingdom. Mortal men will live alongside resurrected believers.

Folks who survived the Great Tribulation repopulate the planet. They and their kids will retain a sin nature. And we'll be in charge of their discipleship. Having known firsthand the folly of sin we'll have lots to teach.

Toward the end of the Millennium, chapter 20 takes a bizarre twist. Verse 3 says of Satan, “After these things he must be released for a little while.” And what does he do, but stir up another rebellion. He’s incorrigible.

And God allows this for an important reason...

After living in a perfect world for a thousand years, at the first opportunity to rebel, man jumps at the chance.

It proves that he’s a sinner by nature, not a victim of a poor environment. His problem is not a lack of money, or education, or culture. He’s a sinner at heart.

Jesus puts down the revolt - throws Satan in the lake of fire (*his permanent punishment*) - and chapter 20 closes with a vision of God’s Great White Throne.

In verse 11 we’re told that before this throne the elements melt. The physical universe disappears. All that remains from the former world are you and God.

Verse 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.”

The Christian’s sin was judged at the cross. This Great White Throne is for people who never trusted Jesus. They’re judged on their own merits. And sadly, in the eyes of God, our righteousness is as filthy rags.

Everyone who’s name isn’t written in the Book of Life, as well as Death and Hades, are thrown into the lake of fire. Verse 14 reads, “This is the second death.”

Physical death is the first death. The lake of fire is the second. It’s said, “Born once die twice, but born twice die only once.” We all need to be born again.

Which makes way for a new heaven and new earth. This is what the subject of the last two chapters...

This universe is no-deposit, no-return. God has no plans to recycle. The thousand years is necessary for it's God's victory to redeem all that sin has damaged.

But the material world was never our final home.

God has a more glorious world awaiting. Jesus is building its city right now. He's preparing a place for us.

And John sees Heaven in 21:2. He calls it the New Jerusalem. It's coming like a Bride walking the aisle.

I've never seen a groom disappointed on his wedding day. Likewise, Heaven will fulfill your wildest imaginations. I love 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..."

The New Jerusalem is huge. There's plenty of room for all believers of all the ages. *There's room for you!*

The city has gates, and a street, and a river, and a tree with fruit. We'll regain access to the tree of life. Now that we're redeemed we're invited to live forever.

We'll work in Heaven, but without the curse. We'll eat, but without the inches. And 22:4 reveals Heaven's highest blessing, "They shall see His face..." We've reached the summit when we see the face of God.

John wraps up the *Revelation* with an *invitation*...

Verse 17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life

freely.” And that’s how we’ll close. The roar of the Lion ends with the invitation to come... *please come!*