

Revelation 21:1-8
Study ID#12ID1326

Revelation 21, verse 1 tonight. We have, I think, three weeks left. We have certainly spent months studying this final book of our Bibles, the unveiling, if you will, of Jesus, which brings to an end all that was begun back in the book of Genesis. In the beginning God created and yet tonight we come to the place where He will make a new heavens and a new earth. And so from beginning to end and everything in between, the book of Revelation brings us to that last step.

The final two chapters are all interested in one thing--the new heaven and the new earth which the Lord will bring forth. You could entitle the last two chapters, "New Housing." It is mystical in the sense that you don't get a lot of information. You get two chapters. And then you have more questions than answers by the time that you get done. It is glorious because it's eternal, and it is permanent.

We've gone through everything else. We've gone from the revelation of Jesus to John there on the island of Patmos, there in Chapter 1, to the Lord's letters to the churches during the church age in Chapter 2 and 3, to the rapture of the church and the appearance of the saints in heaven in Chapter 4 and 5, to the great tribulation that began in Chapter 6, to the outpouring of God's wrath upon a world that no longer wanted to follow Him, to the Antichrist and the dragon, Satan behind him and the false prophet who led this one final world government opposing Almighty God, to the return of Jesus at the battle of Armageddon, to the millennial rule of Christ for one thousand years, to the white throne judgment last week where the earth and death and hell and the sea gave up her dead and there at the end of the thousand years they stood before Jesus, the Judge, at the great white throne judgment. And then we read that the heavens and the earth fled from the face of Him who sat on the throne. The old heaven and earth, all that we know, will be burned up at that time according to Peter. It will just depart from us. And we mentioned that Colossians says that Jesus holds all things together. By Him all things consist. And it could be He's just going to let go. But in any event, that final judgment brings us to the record or the recording or in chronological order these final and permanent steps that lead to eternity.

When Genesis opens, "In the beginning God created," the word "created" there is *barra* (bä·rä'). And it's a word that is only applied to God, and you don't find it that often in the Scriptures, but it's a word that means "to make out of nothing." You can't do that. I can't do that. We can at best assemble existing materials. The Hebrew word for "assembly" is *asa* (ä'sä). But "*barra*" means to take nothing and make something. And God made the world that exists out of nothing, and the Bible never seeks to prove the existence of God because creation becomes the presumptive proof of His presence. Creation requires a Creator. And so when you read Psalm 19 that the heavens declare the glory of God; and the earth shows forth His handiwork. And day unto day and night unto night, their speech is heard throughout the world. There's not a place that you don't see that witness. It's because creation is the presumptive proof of God's presence, if you will. Only a fool would say in his heart, "There's no God." And that's why the LORD in Psalm 14, verse 1 says that, only a fool would say that. Why? Because look around, make me a tree pal. You can't do it. So when we get to Genesis, we're going to spend a lot of time in the first couples weeks on evolution and the gap theory and the twenty-four-hour day of creation and all. I think it will be very challenging to you as well as the heavens and the earth. It's a pretty cool book.

But we do know that the creation of God is subject to decay now because of the wages of sin. If you've taken any classes or physics you might have been taught the principle of entropy, which is kind of nature's way of finding the most randomness that it can. So if you put a bunch of molecules in a very

small space, they'll try to get as far away from each other and run in the biggest direction. Again, if you open up the space, they'll do that. And that's because of the decay, so over time everything that we see from the most complex to the simple breaks down. We did a study a few months ago on a Sunday looking at the fires of God that are already burning. There's a word for that. It is *aramakasis* (*air-a-mock'-a-sis*). It literally means that the fires that burn. Everything that you see is burning away. It doesn't last. You can see it in your clothes, in your homes, in whatever you are interested in keeping well. You've got to polish it and shine it because left to itself it doesn't get better, it gets worse. Go look in the mirror. (laughter) You're not getting better. You're getting worse. (laughter)

So evolution, unfortunately, sees just the opposite. It sees everything getting better. There's a pile of sand. If you kick it long enough you get a Rolex. It doesn't work that way. So it's a ludicrous idea. Stars lose their energy constantly. In fact, the sun loses, I think, 1.3 million tons of mass every second. So it is really like a big, giant clock that God has wound up and the universe is winding down. Paul wrote to the Romans in Chapter 8, "I consider that the sufferings that we are facing at this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us." And then he says, "For the earnest expectation of creation eagerly waits the revealing of the sons of God. For creation is subject to futility, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected it in hope; creation wants to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." So everything you see has been tainted by sin. We live, we die, we buy new cars, they turn old, if you live at the beach they rust away. If you paint your room, you're going to have to paint it again. You buy a new set of clothes, you're going to have to replace them sooner or later. Nothing lasts in and around us, though God made all around us, though He spoke the world into existence out of nothing, yet we find it decaying. And so "all of creation," as Paul said to the Romans, "groans waiting for the redemption." But for now everything's tainted. When the Lord said there in Job 15 (verses 15-16), "If God puts not trust in His saints, and the heavens are not pure in His sight, how much less man, who is abominable and filthy, who drinks iniquity like water!" It's just everything's been corrupted right? And even we who are saved are being delivered from a corrupted life. And all of our days as we walk with God, we are turning away from sin unto the Lord. But there's always that history isn't there, that past that God has forgiven it certainly, but you still battle with it because everything has been touched, and yet according to the Bible one day all of this will come to an end. In fact, Jesus said in Matthew 24, verse 35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will never pass away." But heaven and earth, everything you see, is one day going by the wayside. And that day is right here beginning in verse 1 of Chapter 21.

Peter said in Chapter 3 of his second letter that everything was passing away and knowing that this wasn't going to last, what kind of people should we be in our faith. So for the next couple weeks as we wind down the book of Revelation, we will be looking at this last chapter in the revelation of Jesus Christ, the final act of God that will take us to our eternal dwelling place, one that is, in many ways, hidden in mystery and yet is very glorious.

Verse 1 says this, "Now," John said, "I saw," and remember we just finished the great white throne judgment, "now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And also there was no more sea." In the previous chapter John was shown this ideal time on the earth where Jesus was ruling, and Satan was bound. And for a thousand years the Lord showed man what life should have been like. How it might have been. And yet as glorious as the millennial kingdom was in fulfilling God's promises to Israel in renovating the earth so that the consequences of sin aren't found in the animal kingdom, it certainly was not His ultimate plan. There was still sin. There was still death. There was still a final rebellion. There was still a judgment that had to be faced there at the great white throne of God where the earth fled, and the earth and the seas and all gave up their dead,

and everyone who arrived there for judgment ended up in Gehenna, in the second death in the lake of fire.

During the millennial kingdom, however, sin and death were not vanquished. You can read Isaiah 65, verse 20, also verse 9 of the last chapter. Fire came down from heaven and devoured those in rebellion. But now, here at the end, God creates a new heaven and a new earth which differ fundamentally from the old ones in the fact that this new heaven and new earth is perfect. It is uncorrupted. Is that a word? Or is it incorrupted. I think it's uncorrupted, and I've got the mike, so it is uncorrupted. (laughter) If it isn't, we'll change it later. We'll edit. It is uncorrupted by (I hope that's right) sin and death. Nothing has ever touched it that offended God. Nothing has dwelt in it that had to be redeemed, in the sense that it was one way one time and now it's another. The Old Testament prophets, by the way, got glimpses of this final eternal state, but if you go read those prophecies, often times they are intertwined with the millennial kingdom. So you'll see some promises of what would take place in the thousand year reign of Christ, and then they'll say, "And then there's a new heaven and a new earth." And somehow they get mixed together and so no one had an easy time separating what part of that prophecy fit where. When you get to the book of Revelation, it makes it very clear because God places for us these things in very chronological order, and He places these at the end. For example, Isaiah 65 (verse 17-20) says this, "Behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. So be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;" And the word is *barra*, "out of nothing." "Behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, her people as a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and I shall joy in My people; the voice of weeping no longer will be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall still be accursed." Now that's a mixture of millennial kingdom where because the Lord replenishes and restores the earth people will live to be a thousand years old. Again, they certainly can. But yet the new heavens and the earth follow. So there's prophecy there, some for near, some for further, but until you get the book of Revelation's chronological order you can't take the prophecy of Isaiah and say, "Well, you see there was a new heaven and a new earth." No, there isn't until the end. But there is that time in the millennial that there will be that thousand year reign where people will live that long. Isaiah 66 says this, "As the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me, so shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass from one New Moon to another, from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,' saith the LORD." Both millennial and future, if you will, or beyond the millennium. The prophecies that are hard to distinguish, we are helped in understanding them by the outline that the Lord gives us in chronology here in the book of Revelation. You can place them well.

This eternal kingdom, the one that we're going to study now, has some great attributes. It has no sin. It has no death. It has no tears. It has no memory of the past. And it has no sea. Now I read that and went, "Oh, bummer! How can you not have an ocean?" I love the ocean! I don't care about the mountains. You can have the mountains. Just give me the beach, and a surfboard. I know, you're not agreeing with me, many of you, at all. That's fine. For all I know you'll have your mountains in heaven. (laughter) But it is God's final place for man where God's people will be intimately in fellowship with Him forevermore. And notice the word "now." Back in verse 11 of the last chapter, when the great white throne judgment was called, we read, "the earth and the heaven fled away. There was no place found for them." John saw them leave, but now he is shown this new heaven and this new earth, and the first heaven and the first earth have passed away.

During the millennium, the Lord restores the earth. In fact, the earth goes through a regeneration. I think in Matthew (Chapter 19) Jesus, when He was speaking said there in verse 28, "Assuredly I say to you, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on His throne with His glory, you who have followed Me will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." But the Lord called that millennial kingdom a regeneration. It's a fixing up. It's a reconstituting. It's a healing of that which had been destroyed through sin. But it was still the old heaven and the old earth.

This is an entirely new created order. There is nothing here that is like what we know. And we have very little to go by for what we will know of it before we get there. Peter wrote this in his last letter (2 Peter 3:10-14), "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with a fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in your holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening towards the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, the elements will melt with a fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;" Look forward to this place. We realize everything around us is going to burn. You know the old saying in the church, "It's all gonna burn." It's all gonna burn. It's a Biblical concept. Read 2 Peter Chapter 3.

And notice that God's word has outlasted the heavens and the earth just as Jesus declared. "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." He promises that no means would pass from the law until everything was fulfilled. Paul, I think, said to the Corinthians in Chapter 7 (1 Corinthians 7:29-31), "The time is short. Those who rejoice as though they should not be rejoicing, those who are buying as though they did not possess, those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away." New heaven. New earth. Isn't this cool? A new place.

Now the word "heaven" is used I think five hundred and, well depending on which translation you use, about five hundred thirty-five are in thirty-five times in the Bible, and it only refers to one of three places. It is the atmosphere, the heavens, if you will. It is the outer space where the stars are found. So it's up there, and it's way out there. And then there's that place where God dwells. It is called often times the third heaven. It's the place that Paul was taken there in 2 Corinthians 12 when he was left for dead outside of the city having been stoned, and he said, "I knew a man fourteen years ago--whether in the body or not, I don't know, God knows--but I was caught up to the third heaven." So the atmosphere, outer space, and then that place of God's glory. Those are the three places that the Scriptures take us to. It is called Paradise by Paul in 2 Corinthians Chapter 12. It is called Paradise by Jesus when He spoke in Luke to the thief on the cross, in Luke 23, verse 43. It is Paradise and it is that same place that the Lord spoke to the Ephesian church about in Revelation Chapter 2 when He said, "To him who overcomes he will be able to eat of the tree of life, which he will find in the midst of the Paradise of God." So that's the place of God's dwelling.

But now there is a new heaven and a new earth and the word says here that the old heaven and the old earth, or the first heaven and the first earth have passed away. The word "heaven" here is the exact same word that we find throughout all of the New Testament, but it is now defined by its context. It is not the atmosphere. It is not outer space. It is not the place of God's present dwelling. It is a new place. The creation of this new heaven and earth are found in prophecy often times. Like we just read there in Peter, "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth

where righteousness will dwell." And like I told you in Isaiah 65, that "creation" word is the word *barra*, again "out of nothing" as God made His original creation, He will make this. We don't know what it looks like. We don't know what it's going to entail, but you can't but be excited about it, can you? And yet, like what we have been studying of late, and I think I've mentioned it to you maybe once too often in the last three or four chapters, the information about this place and the time is at best very limited. You get like a taste. It kind of whets your appetite, then you go, "Is there another book I could read?" "No!" "Is there a second edition? Do you have an update?" "No!" "Is one report done here on the new heaven and the new earth?" I'm pretty sure it is.

We'd like to know so much more, and the Lord doesn't tell us. The Bible is filled with instruction about creation and the ways of man and sin, and the plans of God and redemption, the ministry of Jesus, and the resurrection, and His love, and His coming rule. And when you get to these last two chapters you don't get much of it. And like reading Genesis where I just say to the Lord, "Oh, I wish You had written a hundred chapters about creation. I want to know why You made black widow spiders. I want to know why You made rats. I'm sure we could have got something else." I would have loved to be at the meeting with the rat thing. When everyone went, "Hey! No! I'm voting no on the bat that flies at night." You don't get much. And I know why you don't get much. And I'll tell you early on before we get to Genesis. God wrote the book with an agenda. And His agenda was just to point to two great events in the life of the world--the first and the second coming of His Son. So if it doesn't really affect that, He's not telling you a lot. So you get tons of chapters on Leviticus on sacrifice, on blood, and the need for your sins to be covered and later forgiven. You get tons. You get to the book of Genesis and the Lord gives you like, "And He also made the stars." And that's it! "Hey! Hey! Hey! What about them stars?" Right by it. I know we're interested. "You have enough information to know who's the boss, and now let's move on to My story." And that's exactly what He does here, unfortunately, at the end.

The good news is the only people living here are those who love Jesus and have followed Him with their lives. I doubt if God sought to explain it to us whether we'd really get it anyway. I remember Paul writing there in 2 Corinthians 12 when he came back from the third heaven, and he said as he was writing to the Corinthians, "I can't express what I saw in words. It would not be lawful for me to utter them." In other words, "I think I'd be sinning trying to explain this to you." It's so overwhelming. John, the poor man almost passed out. He fell down to worship angels a couple times. Pretty much beside himself. Daniel, he'd go, "I can't have another vision for a week." He was always sick and tired and confused and, "I've had enough." So I can just imagine the Lord goes, "Let me just tell you about the new heaven." We'd all be going, "Oh, I can't go to work tomorrow. I've been studying."

So God doesn't see fit to lay it all out for us. I wish that He did. It's kind of like trying to explain to somebody how being born again feels, or what the spiritual nature of God's work in us is. When we read, "it's a joy inexpressible and full of glory," how do you express that if it's inexpressible? Or Philippians says, "God will give you a peace beyond all understanding." You go, "Let me try to explain to you." It's beyond your understanding. You'll not quite understand this, ever. And I guess that's kind of where we're at with some of these kind of things. It puts us at a great disadvantage, but we are told that this future home is waiting and will be, and it makes speculation fun, but we do have these two pages.

But like we read in Peter, Peter did say you should look forward to this day. You should be looking forward, and I think it was in Hebrews 12 (verses 22-24) that Paul wrote, "You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, and to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all,

to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel." You've come to Mount Zion. You've come to the place where God....this is what it's all about. By the time you get to these two chapters, this is what it's all about to the Lord, right? He's sent His Son. He's given His life. He's invited men to come. He's given them all the chances He could. He's brought judgments. He's put on His government to show men what it can be like. He gives them a final welcome, then He goes, "Alright, now those of you that are left, come one, I got a new place for you to hang out."

And then we get this new heaven and this new earth. And we are told here in verse 1 that we'll have a quite different environment than the earth we are used to. We live in a world covered with 75% water. Here, there's no water. Well, there's a river running through it. It's not Idaho, it's a new heaven and a new earth. But in Chapter 22, verse 1 we'll read about a river, pure water river running through it. And maybe I read comically, I don't know, but I'm thinking, poor John who's been exiled at nearly a hundred years old on an island, when he hears from the Lord, "The new place has got not water." He's probably going, "Excellent!" Because he's surrounded by it. He can't get away from it. I'm sure he just said, "All right!" That's just probably my brain.

Okay, verse 2. "And then I, John, saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem," notice, "the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride that is adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, He will dwell with them, they shall be His people. And God Himself will be with them and be their God.'" Now in verse 2 is one of the five places that John in the book of Revelation refers to himself by name. Chapter 1, 4, 21, 22, and here. But coming from the third heaven where God dwells, John sees a new Jerusalem. He calls it holy in verse 10. We won't get there tonight. But he calls it the holy Jerusalem in verse 10, and to John it looks like a beautifully adorned bride at her wedding. But this is a city. And from all we can gather this city is the focal point of the new earth. When we get to its description next week in verse 10 and beyond, and in Chapter 22, it seems like everything revolves around this place. I don't know how much is beyond there, but we know that this place tends to be at the very center. And in fact next week starting at verse 10 John will give us dimensions of the city to assure us it's not a symbolic vision. It is a real place with real dimensions. But this is kind of like grand opening day. Hebrews 11, verse 10 says we look for a city and the maker is God. Well here's God's city. This will be the complete fulfillment of John Chapter 14 when the Lord says, "Don't let your hearts be troubled, neither let it be afraid. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. But I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; where I am, there you may be also." This is where we're going to be also with Him. Notice what it says in verse 3, "God will be with us. He will be our God. We will be His people." There will be a fellowship like we have yet to know. It will be that final place, the heavenly Jerusalem, which Jesus called, in His Philadelphian letter, Chapter 3, verse 12, the city of My God. This will be the city of My God. This is the ultimate destination for all saints. I think Paul wrote in Chapter 3 to the Hebrews, "We have no continuing city here, but we seek the one to come." This city is going to continue. There's nothing beyond this. There's no chapter 23 of Revelation.

Now we are told in a couple of the epistles that in the ages to come, *aiōnios* (ī-ō'n-ee-os), in the centuries that will follow when we get to heaven, the Lord will reveal to us things that we aren't even expecting. I think God's got a lot of surprises. But this He's told us about.

I want to point out to you in verse 2 the word "prepared," because the word prepared there is a perfect passive participle which literally means it's been prepared without the help from the city. That's literally

the way that the tense reads. So the reason is the city is inanimate. Now back in Chapter 19, verse 7, when the bride of Christ, the church, when you read there that she made herself ready, that was an active verb which means the bride participated in preparing herself. She was faithful and followed the Lord. But this is just a portrait of what John sees. So the picture is beautiful, for as the church in Chapter 19, here the city represents the bride of Christ that has gone to the wedding supper, the Old Testament nation of Israel that was saved married to Jehovah in the Old Testament, you might remember, as His bride, the New Jerusalem will offer life to all of those God's people who have intimacy with God without separation. So it really is kind of the crowning jewel, or the culmination of all of the types that you've seen. And John said, "Looks just like a bride." Well indeed, everyone that comes to the Lord and loves Him, whether Old Testament saints or new, are really His own.

John said in verse 3 that he heard a loud voice. I don't know if you pay much attention, but that's the 21st time that someone's screaming in John's ear. The loud voices tend to come a lot. And it usually follows something important that's about to take place so that we're kind of told to listen up. This is the last one, by the way. But the greatest joy of this city, notice in verse 3, is that God is dwelling there with His people. No rebellion. No sin. If you read the Bible fairly carefully, you realize pretty quickly that God has always desired fellowship with His creation, right? Revelation tells us He made us for His good pleasure. In the garden, for however long it lasted, Adam and Eve got to walk with God in the cool of the day. They didn't have to work, but they did have to tend the garden. They were blessed. They were given so much. Until it was broken by disobedience, they had fellowship with God. In Israel later amongst His own people, the Lord dwelt in the tabernacle. Before that it was a fire at night and a cloud by day, His presence with them. Then when the temple was built, it was His glory *shekinah* (shĭ-kē'nə) there in the temple, but sin drove them away from the temple as well as idolatry did. Jesus came to His own. His own received Him not. Today He dwells in the hearts of many by faith when invited to come, but He's removed by many many more. God's desire is always fellowship. Man's desire is not always fellowship with God.

So one day we will rule with Him for a thousand years, and then thereafter we will move into full fellowship with God where everything has been resolved. There are no judgments pending. There's no business to attend to. There is no work to be accomplished. There is nothing on the calendar for tomorrow, so to speak. Just uninterrupted fellowship with God, and it is God's greatest joy to be with you as you be with Him. What does David write there in Psalm 16, "In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Now we are not told all that this new life and new place will hold, but we are told this in verse 3, "God will be there with us." It'll be the permanent fellowship place between you and the Lord. And as long as Jesus is there, I don't have to worry about an ocean, it'll be perfect. All of the Scriptures declare this to be the greatest blessing man can hope for, right? Revelation 22, verse 4, "face to face with God." They shall see His face. Face to face with God. Abiding fellowship with God. Uninterrupted by sin or sorrow or death. The New Jerusalem is the Holy of Holies as the tabernacle was in the Old Testament. This is the place where God dwells. You moved right into the Holy of Holies, the New Jerusalem, the holy Jerusalem, the city of my God. You can find lots of names for it.

Well then John says, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, no sorrow, no crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then verse 5 says, "Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'" And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.'" Here's one insight into the eternal that should rejoice your heart. There will be no more death, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more crying, or any memory of

the former things. No more hurts, no more broken promises, no more disappointments, just a new beginning. And better than the millennium for sure, and that's exactly, I think, why Isaiah in writing in Chapter 35 said, "The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy, and gladness, and sorrow and sighing will flee away." It'll be that way in heaven, but it'll be that way in many more ways in this new place, where God begins life anew, but He begins it with His own gathered around Him. It's an amazing verse isn't it. And I thought about how compassionate our God is to prepare us for eternity by setting aside all of the memories of loss or suffering. I can't fully appreciate what that means. But I'll tell you what, life will never be like it was in the book of Revelation. There will never be that kind of rebellion, never again that kind of suffering, never again that kind of temptation. There will just be life. So praise the Lord for what is coming.

And then I love verse 5 because the Lord declares from His throne, "Look." The word "behold" is the great New Testament word that means "stop and check this out." It doesn't just mean "look over here." It means look with interest, behold! It's a cool word right? The Lord uses it a lot, "Hey! Check this out! I'm making everything new." And the Lord said to John, "Hey, start writing man." And I think John must have went, "Whoa! Dude!" I think he quit writing. Don't you? "Wow!" It's going to be great. The Lord says, "Hurry up, write it down! I got more to...you got a chapter and a half to go. Let's go John, shall we?" "Okay." So John has to begin to write again. I get the sense he just quit recording because he was just longingly staring. Amazing. "Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven." So, write it down, this isn't too good to be true. And, by the way, you can do that tonight with your Bible. You can underline it and remember, it's not too good to be true, God said so.

Verse 6. "And He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, and the unbelieving, the abominable, and the murderer, the sexually immoral, and the sorcerer, the idolater, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'"

Now, before looking at all of the individual versus about what the Lord has kind of introduced to us, the Lord gives to John the prerequisites for entering. In other words, here are the folks who are going to make it in. And it's obviously too late if you're at this point. There's no one left. They've already been judged in Chapter 20 towards the end there at the great white throne judgment, but God gives this to John in the narrative so that those who are reading it before these things come to pass might be ready.

From Jesus' own mouth man has two destinies. He can either go to the new heaven and the new earth, or he can go to the lake of fire. You really don't have like a third stop on the train. There isn't any kind of limbo, purgatory, temporary dwelling place of the evil to get better. It's appointed unto man once to die, and then the judgment. The New Jerusalem or the lake of fire. Those thirsty for God, those who overcome by faith now, walk obediently with Him now, will receive this inheritance. The rest will face a judgment out of their works, out of the book of their works, the second death. You die once and then you go get judged, and then you die again for all of eternity.

Notice in verse 8, he makes a list, it's obviously not a complete list, but it's a list of those who don't want to walk with God, who want to live worldly, fleshly, selfish lives. The list is repeated in verse 27 of Chapter 21. This list is repeated in Chapter 22, verse 15 right at the end here because it is God's interest that you and I don't end up in anything but this New Jerusalem. So, hey, if your life has these things in it, don't think you're going to make it. But if you thirst for God, you'll be entirely satisfied and you will inherit eternity as an heir or as a child, a son, a child of God.

I love, "I make," in verse 5, "I make all things new," and in verse 6, "It is done!" Seems like it didn't take six days and a day of rest like initially. In fact, I wrote some things about, when I was studying Genesis Chapter 1, thought, "Well, the Lord doesn't need six days." He could have done like, "There it is." Right? "Ta da!" But He took His time like He was lazy or tired or slow or, no, that couldn't be it. There must be a good reason. So I'll tell you about that in Genesis. But I love the fact that the Lord in verse 5 goes, "I am making....It is done!" Right? This is what I expected of Genesis, but you get it at the end here. God absolutely finishes what He...."I am the Alpha and I am the Omega." In the beginning God created. Here in the end He creates again. He is the First. He is the Last. He is the author. He is the finisher of this world and of the next.

And the invitation that He gives in verse 6, "I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who's thirsty." He says again in verse 17 of Chapter 22, "'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who is thirsty come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." These are the final two invitations from the Lord to man found in the Bible. Spiritual water for the spiritually thirst is offered to anyone who would come to Jesus. And this water of life, this redemption, is portrayed in different ways throughout the entire Bible. The invitation at the end is much as you'll find it early on in the Scriptures as well. We read, I think, Isaiah 55 last Sunday, "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; he that has no money, come, buy, eat, milk and wine without money and without price. Why would you spend your labor for that which satisfies not?" Delight yourself in Me. Make your soul delight itself. But come drink, have water. I can give you real life. You can't last for more than three or four days without water before you start dying real quickly. Spiritually you can't make eternity either without the life that Jesus has to give you. And the essential difference between religion and relationship is that religion thinks you have the water. A relationship with God says you don't. That you need His help, not your own little set of values where you're going to justify yourself before God. The gift is free, but notice it is valuable only to the thirsty right? Jesus said, "I haven't come to heal those that are well. Well people don't need a doctor. I've come to be the Physician to those who are sick. Here's water to the thirsty." But if you're not thirsty, no matter if there's water there or not, it's not going to help you any.

So David wrote, "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" He was thirsty to know the Lord. And I love that at the very end as the Lord begins to describe the new heaven and new earth, He stops twice to say, "By the way, if you're living like this, you aren't going to make it." But these who are thirsty can come in. And if you're hungry, you can come. And if you want life, you can come. And the book ends with God creating anew, and then saying, "Come! I want you to be there with Me. I want your life to be there."

Satan offers people lots of ways to satisfy their thirsty souls, and most of them are not going to help. In fact, none of them will. People misidentify their thirst. If I had more money. If I had more power. If I had more friends. If I had more fame. Yet, it just leaves you thirsting. I always think of that great story there in John. It's Chapter 4 where the Lord sat down with that woman at the well in Samaria and she was a pretty tough woman. I mean if you read that story there early on and it's about noontime and the disciples have gone into town to get like Subway or something, (laughter) and Jacob's well is there and it's like hot, and Jesus said, "Could you give me something to drink?" to this woman with a bucket and all. And she said, "Hey, You're a Jew, and You're asking me a Samaritan for a drink? You know, we don't have any dealings with you guys." Really? Nice lady. And Jesus said, "Well, if you knew the gift of God, and who it is that's asking you for a drink, you'd ask Me for a drink, and I'd give you living water." I love

how the Lord can turn any conversation into preaching in about thirty seconds. And she looked at Him and said, "Yeah, you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep." She wasn't a real nice woman. "What do you mean living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who built this well and drank from it himself, and his sons and his livestock?" And then Jesus said, "Yeah, you drink of this water you're going to thirst again. You're just going to get thirsty again. But if you drink of the water that I give, you'll never thirst, but that water will become in you like a fountain of water springing up into eternal life." And then she started to get interested for all the wrong reasons. She said, "Oh, sir, I'd like some of that water. I don't ever want to be thirsty or have to come up here again. That'd be great." And you know interestingly enough she'd been shunned by the whole town. Nobody comes out at noon to draw water. Everybody comes in the morning. But she was kind of a loose woman, with a bad reputation, the women kept their husbands in when she was in the streets. That kind of lady. And Jesus said, "Alright. I can give that to you. Go get your husband, come here." And the woman said, "Well, I don't have a husband." And the Lord said, "That's right. You've had five. Now you're shacking up with some guy." And now the woman gets more interested. "Oh, you must be a prophet." He nailed it. And then she asks a Bible question. "Well you know our fathers worshiped here, and you Jews say that we're supposed to worship in Jerusalem. Where are we supposed to worship anyway? Who's right, prophet?" And Jesus said, "Look, the hour is coming and now is that you won't worship Me here or in Jerusalem, but you'll worship Me in spirit and in truth." God's a Spirit. And then the woman said, "I know that the Messiah is coming. When He comes, He's going to tell us everything." And Jesus said, "That's Me. I am He." And at this point the disciples came back and they marveled that He was talking with this woman. "What is He doing?" But interestingly enough, when Jesus said, "That's Me." you'll read there in John 4 that she leaves her water pot behind, and she runs off to town. She forsakes the one advantage that she has, but now her mask is off, and she's hearing what Jesus can say, and she doesn't need the water pot anymore. She's gotten water from the Lord now. She realizes who He is. She goes into town and no one likes her. And few people trust her, and she wants to begin to convince these folks that there's a fella sitting outside the city at the well who has to be the Messiah. "He has told me everything I have ever done." But He didn't. But He told her enough to where she was convinced of who He was. She drank, and she was filled. And Jesus was so mobbed by the time the people came out that they kept Him there for two days. And people were getting saved right and left. Just one woman, thirsty. She was hard, but she was thirsty. She was defensive, but she was thirsty. A lot of people come to church and they wear masks to cover their thirst, or what's going on, a thirst for the Lord. But when God gets your mask off, it isn't long before you have life.

So at the end of the book, the water Jesus offers is the solution to everyone's thirst. There's a lot of stuff you can get temporary buzzes off of in the world. "Oh, this made me feel good!" It usually goes away doesn't it? But when the Lord comes along and says, "I will give you the fountain of life freely to him who is thirsty," what more would you want than that?

In John Chapter 7 on the last day of the great feast, Jesus stood up on the day that they didn't pour any water out because it celebrated the arrival of the children of Israel through the wilderness into the Promised Land, and Jesus stood up and He cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. And if you believe in Me, as the Scripture said, out of your belly will flow torrents of living water." So you get to the end of the book. I mean this is about as far deep as you're going to get, and you read in verse 6, "I'll give you the fountain of the water of life. If you're thirsty, you just come right here." And like that woman at the well or those folks in John 7, you can have eternal life. Or in Chapter 22, verse 17, all of about five verses before the end of the book, before the Amen, you close the book, the invitation is there.

Verse 7, "He who overcomes." The phrase often used of the one who has placed his faith in Jesus and becomes his son, his child, he will inherit all things. And yet, for the unbeliever, and verse 8 is nothing more than a description of the unbeliever. The word "cowardly" is someone who shows fear, but in a shameful way. Jesus used the same word, by the way, in Matthew 8 when He spoke to the boys on the boat who woke Him up when the storms were raging, and He said, "Why are you so fearful?" In other words, you have little faith, you have no faith, life frightens you, and I'm on the boat with you! The cowardly.

The "unbelieving." The word *pistos* (pē-stos) is faith, but *apistos* (ä'-pē-stos) means without faith. It literally means "no faith."

"Abominable" is a word in Greek that means "detestable behavior." Moses makes a bunch of lists in Leviticus, 11 through 19 in Deuteronomy, 12 through 24, listing abominable deeds of men living apart from God.

"Sexually immoral" is the word for fornication.

The word for "sorcerer" is the word *pharmakeus* (fär-mä-kyü's). It is a word that means "using drugs for magical powers, or ritual witchcraft." It is the pharmacy word.

"Idolaters" are just that, worshiping false gods, false prophets.

And the "liars." "You are of your father, the devil. He lied from the beginning." You'll have no part in this dwelling place with God's children alone.

So, what a cool place. It is pure. It is holy. It is new. It is created out of nothing. It is made when all of the judgments have been finished, and the heavens are gone, the earth is gone, and "Here," says the Lord, "here's our new place." New housing. Two destinies. But notice that the Lord stops in the midst of the description to say to those who are reading before it comes to pass, "Hey, if you can be an overcomer, if you're thirsty, I'll give you something to drink."

Still time for you, you mask-wearers. (laughter) You aren't so tough. The Lord knows your number. He knows you need to be saved. You might as well just give it up. Or eventually you're going to give it up. It'll be too late.

Next week we will finish Chapter 21. Two weeks from now, Lord be willing, we'll finish the book, and we'll answer those impossible questions, and then start the book of Genesis. Ah, it's going to be good.

End of message