

# The End: Heaven

Mar31st  
2013

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In the beginning, God created perfection; a paradise where He lived with mankind and spoke with them face to face.

Satan came and deceived mankind tempting them and causing them to sin.

God could no longer dwell with mankind because of their sin, so He was separated from them.

God gave mankind a system of sacrifice where they could be cleansed of their sin, but it was a temporary and difficult system to maintain looking forward to a coming savior.

Jesus Christ, seeing mankind's suffering and this painful separation from them, made a decision.

He left heaven and humbled Himself completely, becoming one of us in every way with one exception.

He was born of the Holy Spirit and not born into sin as we are.

He lived a perfect, sinless life.

He then gave up His life in a horrific and unspeakable way to make one final and all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins.

For three days, His body lay in a tomb sealed and guarded that there would be no escape.

Then, on that glorious third day, Jesus rose back to life!

He's Alive!!!!

Because He is alive, we also have a living hope that we will also raise again to life eternal! It's as simple as placing our faith in Jesus and choosing to follow Him.

This morning, we come together to celebrate with great joy in this living hope that God has given us that NOTHING can take away from us!

## **1 Peter 1:3-9**

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

This is our final message in our series on the end times.

Last week, we learned of the great battle of Armageddon. We found that Satan, the false prophet, and the antichrist will be overcome and thrown into hell, that lake of burning fire where there will be torment for all of its inhabitants for all of eternity. We also learned of the great tragedy where those who did not accept Christ's free gift of salvation will also be thrown into that same eternal dwelling place of endless torment. Those were given a lifetime of opportunity, but never prioritized the one thing that matters in the end, that simple decision to follow Jesus and live their lives abundantly in His freedom, mercy, and grace.

Praise God, however, that while we still draw another breath, we still have this opportunity. For us, today is always the day of God's salvation and of His forgiveness if we only choose to accept it before the unknown time of our end arrives and we move into eternity. What an awesome and living hope those who accept it has! We know that no matter what comes our way in life, that God is with us and for us, that He will guide and direct us, and that He has hope-filled plans and a future for us to walk into.

This morning, we now turn our attention to the final and eternal dwelling place where all of those who have accepted Christ's salvation will dwell: the kingdom of Heaven.

## **Revelation 21**

1 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There

will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

5 He who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new!” (KJV) Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

6 He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. 8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

9 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. 11 It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. 14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. 16 The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia (1,400 miles) in length, and as wide and high as it is long. 17 The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits (200 feet) thick. 18 The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. 19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. 25 On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. 26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. 27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

## **Revelation 22**

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

12 “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

17 The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

20 He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.”

So here, we begin to get a picture of what Heaven will be like. What an awesome way to spend eternity where there is no more death, mourning, crying, sickness, or pain! Our bodies are finally made new as our salvation is made complete. We’ll walk on streets of translucent gold in the new city of Jerusalem in the very presence of God at all times.

Never again will we walk in darkness and struggle with fear, worry or doubt. We will live united with everyone else who has been adopted into the family of God through Christ's free gift of salvation and receive the very kingdom of God as our inheritance. Jesus said that He was going before us to prepare a room for us in the great mansion of God so that we might dwell forever with Him (John 14).

This morning, we all have the opportunity to share this same destiny. No one is beyond the forgiveness made available through Christ's death and resurrection! This morning, Jesus is calling out to each of us with that simple request to follow Him. For those who choose to place their faith Christ's free gift of salvation and follow Him, He has prepared a place in the kingdom of Heaven to dwell with Him for all eternity. We can all share the same certain living hope. Don't miss this opportunity this morning! This morning can be a new start for us where we truly come to life and become filled with that same power from the Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the grave! Our lives can be completely transformed as we become new creations through Christ!