

# Apokalypsis – The God who makes all things new!

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**Text: Revelation 21: 1-5; 22:1-13**

**Theme: The Book of Revelation, End times, Prophecy, Salvation, Heaven, Eternity**

- Since Epiphany Sunday back the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, we've been on a spiritual journey through the Book of Revelation. Apokalypsis – An Unveiling of things to come. “Apokalypsis” being the Greek word for Revelation. We saw that word first back in Rev. 1:1 – **“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place...”** And so a lot of Revelation is prophecy about the future. It also contributes to some of the great Biblical themes: God's sovereignty, God's faithful people, tribulation, spiritual warfare, future events, the return of Jesus, judgment, and hope. Overall we discovered the overall theme of Revelation: **the lordship of Jesus Christ over His Church and over all of human history.**
- Look at some of Jesus' own words as Revelation closes: **22:7-13**
- Today we close with a glimpse of glory and the hope that generates within us! Revelation 21 and 22 are glorious contrasts to the doom and gloom of Satan and his follower's final judgment of chapter 20.
- Chapters 21-22 are all about the God who makes all things news. Not only are these chapters a fitting end to the Book of Revelation – but also a fitting end to the entire Bible itself.
- When the Bible opens back in Genesis, where are we as human beings? **In a garden!** Our existence began in a garden. Guess what? **A garden is where we end up!** Our existence began without sin in Eden. It ends up without sin in the Heavenly Jerusalem! Our existence began in perfection before our great Fall. It ends up in perfection because of the great work of Jesus on our behalf!
- Our God is God who makes everything new again. That forms the basis of our eschatological hope! Our hope through all that is to come before the Lord returns. All of creation groans for this....Romans 8:22–25 (NIV84) - <sup>22</sup> **We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.** <sup>23</sup> **Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.** <sup>24</sup> **For in this**

**hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.**

- Look how similar Paul's ideas are in **2 Corinthians 5:1-4** – **“Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. <sup>2</sup> Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup> because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.**
- You see – we groan - We long for redemption. For new bodies. For our heavenly dwelling. To spin off of U2's famous song – we long for the day when we've finally found what we're looking for!
- Human existence began for us with a clear identity as a people, we had a place, and we experienced the perfect presence of God. We lost it all in the Fall! Our relationships with each other become broken (shame), we lost our place (Eden), and our relationship with God became broken.
- From Rev. 21&22 - Let's see how God will ultimately restore and make all things new again:
  1. **He restores a place for all of eternity. 21:1-2.** The New Jerusalem is described with symbolic perfection in 21:10 to the end of the chapter. It also reveals the make up of the city's population – who in fact will live there- 21:27!
  2. **He restores a people for all of eternity.** Our relationships and sense of community is perfectly restored. 21:3-5. 22:3-5 So notice what isn't in heaven? Night/ Darkness; Pain; Crying; Death; No bills, hospitals, or bank accounts!; No hate. No fear. No crime. No terrorism!
  3. **He restores His presence with us for all of eternity!** 21:3, 6-7, 22:1-2

This restoration of things to come is the basis of our living hope. The end of the Book provides us a solid basis for sure hope for life now and for life beyond the grave. The hope of eternity is something magnificent the Christian faith offers the world.

Pastor Tim Keller once wrote of this: **“When plagues came, that was a very important part of the rise of Christianity. When great plagues came into the cities in the first couple of centuries after Christ, everybody fled to get away from the contagion, but the Christians stayed and they died taking care of many of the people, both believers and unbelievers who were sick. The world saw it, and it had an enormous impact on the world. Where do people get that kind of hope? Here it is [in Revelation 21-22]. They had a hope that enabled them to [care for the sick and die doing it]. They had a hope that enabled them. Do you? They had a hope that enabled them to say, “Bubonic plague? No problem.” I don’t mean that they didn’t weep....I don’t mean they had brainwashed themselves, that they were saying, “Oh, yes,” and they never cried, they never crawled out. Oh no. The point is there was something greater....at the other end. They had a living hope”.**<sup>1</sup>

I was remembering Judy Campbell the other day. There was a lady who suffered near the end, yet she died with a living hope. Judy loved to sing an old hymn. I remembered it as I was wrapping up this message..

When all my labors and trials are o’er,  
And I *am safe on that beautiful shore*,  
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,  
Will through the ages be glory for me.

**Oh, that will be glory for me,  
Glory for me, glory for me,  
When by His grace I shall look on His face,  
That will be glory, be glory for me.**

When, by the *gift of His infinite grace*,  
I am accorded in heaven a place,  
Just to be there and to look on His face,  
Will through the ages be glory for me.

Friends will be there I have loved long ago;  
*Joy like a river around me will flow;*  
Yet just a smile from my Savior, I know,  
Will through the ages be glory for me.

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<sup>1</sup> Keller, T. J. (2013). *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive*. New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

- I love this account of Pastor Richard Baxter that John Piper tells: “Richard Baxter was a very effective pastor in England in the 1600s. His whole adult life was spent battling one sickness after the other. He was harassed by a constant cough, frequent nosebleeds, migraine headaches, digestive ailments, kidney stones, and gallstones. He believed in supernatural healing and said several times he was restored to fruitful labor because of God’s direct intervention. He said once a cancerous looking tumor in his throat vanished while he was in the pulpit testifying to God’s mercies in his own life. Yet bodily suffering was with him to the end, and he once said that from the age of 21 he was “seldom an hour free from pain.” One of the effects of this suffering was to make him intensely conscious of how temporary his life is and how inevitable death is. Once, when he was 35, he was bed-bound by one of his diseases and thought he would probably not recover. He began to meditate on the joys of heaven and the age to come in preparation for leaving this world. He focused especially on “the hope of glory” and began to write his thoughts. To his surprise he recovered and his thoughts became a book entitled *The Saints’ Everlasting Rest*. He took up the practice of meditating on heaven a half hour each day because of the powerful impact it had on his life.<sup>2</sup>
- May the end of Revelation inspire us to do that – reflect more frequently and more deeply on the reality of the new heaven and earth to come!
- And so we come to the end of Apokalypsis. Revelation. We will be a perfected people, forever living and loving in a perfect place, under the presence and eternal protection of a perfect God. Nothing imperfect will ever again molest. The imperfect will disappear and be swallowed up in perfection. Always remember: The only way to this state and place of perfection is through a perfect Saviour. The only perfect Saviour this world knows, or will ever know, is Jesus Christ.
- He shows us the way through the elements on His table this morning. It is through his body given and his blood shed for you and for me. Because of this table. There will be a great marriage supper of the lamb to come. Because of this table. We will feast together and dance on the streets that are golden! Thanks be to God!
- Rev. 22:21 – the final word = “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen”!

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<sup>2</sup> Piper, J. (2007). *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)*. Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God.