

A new world to come

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[0 : 00] Now this evening we turn to Revelation chapter 21. Revelation chapter 21. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

Now there is a great transformation in this chapter from the previous one.

[1 : 14] And as we have seen in chapter 20, it dealt with the binding of Satan, and how Satan was deprived of the power and the authority that he used to have, so that he was unable to deceive the nations as he once did.

And that is a fact of history. You see, when Christ died on the cross, it was an extraordinary blow that Christ dealt the devil and the kingdom of darkness.

Before that time, the whole world, apart from this tiny nation of Israel, was under the faldom of Satan.

If you and I had been living our way back in those times and gone throughout the length and breadth of the world, we would have come across nation after nation, living in pagan darkness, without God, without hope, slaves to sin and to all the lusts that sin can motivate in the hearts of men.

And then what happened? Christ died on the cross, and he returned to his disciples and he gave them this commission, go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

[2 : 41] evangelize the world in my name. I give you power, and all power in heaven and on earth belongs to me.

Go and do it. And from that time onwards, that is what the Church of Christ has been about, evangelizing the world. And the devil no longer has the sway that he used to have.

He is no longer able to deceive the nations as he once did. Think of the West. You may say, well, there's not much in the West, is there? My dear friend, the West, look at what it owes to Christianity. Look at all the institutions that have been brought into being through Jesus Christ and his gospel.

This world will never know until the great day declares it how much it owes to Christ.

And then, of course, chapter 20 dealt to with the state of the blessed dead.

[3 : 48] Those who die in the Lord, where are they? Well, they are in heaven. And they are with Christ. And throughout this period, from the death of Christ onwards to his second coming, we have millennial blessings being enjoyed in the world.

A lot of people may say, we don't see much of the millennium in our days. Maybe not. Maybe not in this country. But millennial blessings are being enjoyed.

And oh, let us be thankful to God as we read the history of the past of this land of ours. A land that has known revival upon revival.

A land that has known the blessing of God in untold measure. Could any blessings be greater than that? But we are told in chapter 22 how prior to the end of historic time Satan will be loosed from his bonds.

These bonds that confine him now. And how he will go out and deceive the nations as he used to do. In other words, a great period of apostasy. Are we in that apostasy?

[5 : 13] That's a good question. Are we living in days when the nations are being deceived by the devil again? Well, we can't forecast.

We can't tell. We're not in the office of the prophet. So we must wait and see how the situation will develop. But thank God he is only loosed for a little season.

And as he gathers the forces of evil together in order to have that last, final opposition against God, that final conflict with God, that final conflict of good and evil.

When the armies of Satan will muster at Armageddon for the last, great and final day. What is going to happen? Well, as we have seen in chapter 28, you won't hear a shot being fired.

no explosion of any kind. Because what is going to happen is this, God will intervene. And when God intervenes, he will bring everything to its predestined end.

[6 : 30] And after that, the devil will be cast into hell along with the beast which represents alien government to God, along with the false prophet which represents false religion.

In other words, godless government, priceless religion, along with the devil will experience God's just displeasure eternally. God will set up his throne of judgment, everyone will muster there or be brought there.

All of us will be judged according to our relationship to God. If we are in Christ, we will be gloriously acquitted. If we are not in Christ, we will experience what John calls the second death, which is the lake of fire.

And as we have already said, the lake of fire is God's rubbish bin. What happens after these events?

Well, God is now going to bring into existence a new world, a new society, a new divine order, and that's what the last two chapters of Revelation are about.

[8 : 01] And this evening what we want to do is just look at this new world that's going to come into existence. I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

Oh, what a blessed thing that is. I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more scene.

that's going to be a blessed time indeed, my dear friend. Sometimes, as you read this, and as you read these descriptions, you almost long for the day to come when God will bring to pass what he has in mind.

You see, who can assess the damage that was done to this physical universe of ours when Adam sinned?

I ask you. You see, you and I must remember that the world of today is totally different from the world as it was created and given to Adam.

[9 : 11] we must remember that a drastic change came over the face of the earth after Adam had sinned.

God's curse came upon the world and when God's curse came upon the world, the world was altered, dramatically altered from being a perfect habitation for men.

Let me bring you back to Genesis chapter 3 where God says this to Adam, to Eve. Cursed is the ground for thy sake.

In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground.

See the change. Cursed. Sorrow. Thorns.

[10 : 25] Thistles. Sweat. That's the penalty. And you see this earth that we are living in just now has shared in the penalty of the fall.

And this world that we inhabit at this particular moment it's undergoing a decaying process. As the apostle Paul puts it the world is groaning.

He tells us in Romans chapter 8 that this world is travailing in pain until now. He likens the world to a woman in birth or giving birth.

She's in labour you see in tremendous pain waiting for deliverance and in the same way says the apostle Paul this world of ours is going through its awful pains and it's waiting for its deliverance.

And you know however beautiful the world of nature appears to be and it is very beautiful you know. Yet what do you find in this world of ours?

[11 : 42] You find around you the stench of death isn't that true? And you can't get away from it. no matter where you might travel to throughout this universe you can't get away from the stench of

death.

It's everywhere. And the instant something begins to live in that instant it also has the seeds of death within it.

As soon as something comes into life the seeds of death are beginning the flowers that you see that are growing just now in this beautiful time of the year when the weather is so nice the trees coming in to blossom you'll see the freshness but suddenly you will see it's all withering and it's all going into its process of decay and it's going to die.

this is how the poet Wordsworth puts it waters on a starry night are beautiful and fair the sunshine is a glorious birth but yet I know where'er I go that there have passed away a glory from the earth. Now Wordsworth was no Christian he was one of the nature poets of the 19th century but he was a man full of observation and being full of observation he wrote in one of these nature poems of his these very words and yet I know he says where'er I go that there have passed away a glory from the earth.

[13 : 40] And so this world of ours what is it? It's a defective world isn't it? And being a defective world it has to pass away.

It is a world that is under God's sentence to pass away. Now the world is not going to perish in flood water as it did in Noah's day we are told that in the Bible.

It's not going to be baptised again as the world was baptised in the days of Noah. It's not going to pass away through water.

But as we were reading together in 2 Peter it's going to melt with fire. Let me just recall what we read this evening in 2 Peter chapter 3 where the apostle there says the day of the Lord will come. And of course people are saying where is the promise of the day of God? Ever since the fathers fell asleep the world has continued as it has been right through the generations until now.

[14 : 55] But as Peter says one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. And so however long the time may seem to be to us to God it's of no consequence.

And says Peter the day of the Lord will come and swiftly and suddenly when we least expect it as a thief in the night in the which says the apostle the heavens shall pass away with a great noise the elements shall melt with fervent heat the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

Now nothing could be plainer could it? That's not metaphoric language that's factual language of what is going to take place at the end of historic time.

and I can only say just now that it is idle for us to speculate how this is going to happen. Will it be that the combustible substances under the earth's surface will rage uncontrollably as fire begins? We've seen what can happen when Piper Alpha lets loose and when men can hardly control the fire that took place on that occasion.

[16 : 40] We're only thankful to God that there were men who were prepared to do something to try and stop it. But that inferno was a reminder to us of how fire is not very far away from us.

But it's idle to speculate as I have said whether it's going to be like that or it's idle to speculate whether it's going to be atomic or nuclear explosions that will bring about the melting of the earth. We can say this that God doesn't require these methods. He doesn't require these methods at all. And when his day comes what God will do then is this.

He will ignite the present world and its system and he will destroy it. You might say why has God got to do that?

Well my friend think of this earth that you're on. It's stained by human sin.

[18 : 01] I wonder that God looks at it. It's unclean. Wherever you go you find sin staining the world in one way or another.

Tonight before this Sabbath day is over think of the volume of sin that will be perpetrated in this town itself. The whole of Inverness is saturated with the sin of men.

sin of man but think of the whole country. City like Edinburgh, city like Glasgow.

There they are in Edinburgh with their AIDS problem. Think of London. The days of iniquity that are there. And as I say this is right through the whole world and am I not right when I say that the world is saturated?

Can I put it any stronger than that by saying that the world is saturated with sin? And how God hates sin.

[19 : 25] And the whole place is foul. And the world has got a stench about it. We're so used to it that we don't notice it.

You know it's like the nurse in hospital there. She may be nursing a particularly infected person and the smell of putrefaction is coming.

The stranger as he goes into hospital maybe I'm visiting there I notice it right away. But the nurse doesn't notice it. So you're so used to it you see.

And then after a while I don't notice it myself. And isn't that what it's like with us in this world of ours when we don't notice it. We become so used to it we're immunized as it were.

Almost paralyzed by the sin itself but we no longer take any notice of it. But as far as God is concerned the whole universe is unclean and so the world has to pass away.

[20 : 39] And this is what John is talking about. I saw he says a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.

We were reading of that promise made by God through the prophet Isaiah and it's a promise you see that's got to come to pass. What is the promise? I create says God new heavens and a new earth and the former shall not be remembered nor come to mind.

Oh that's wonderful. The former that is this world. It shall not be remembered nor come to mind. Maybe you're obsessed sometimes by a degree of nostalgia and you think back on the past and you think of the happy occasions.

Oh yes that's all very well. But when you see the thing in retrospection it's not so beautiful after all these nostalgic things that you look back on.

And God is saying these former things shall not be remembered nor come to mind. You will be so captivated by the new that I'm going to create says God.

[22 : 09] It's going to be a complete thing of wonder to you. You've never experienced this before. It's an experience that only you will realize when it takes place says God.

be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create. For behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy.

You know my dear friend when the smoke of the old world lifts and disappears. What is it that you will see emerging as it were from the smoke a new heaven created by God himself and a new earth created by God himself.

it will be so different from the present order and we believe that it will transcend the original creation.

You know let's remember what it was like at the beginning when God first made the world. It gave great pleasure to God when he created the world at the beginning.

[23 : 33] What does it say in Genesis chapter 1? After having created the world that he created it says this with regard to God that he saw everything that he made and having seen everything that he made he pronounced these words he pronounced it to be very good and it must have been good the world in its original form well what is the new world going to be like if the first earth was like that so that it brought forth God's commendation of being very good then this new heaven and this new earth is going to be perfect and you know there will be no danger of it ever becoming defective like the present world because as

John is going to go on to say there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh alive in this present world you see what happened was the devil got his foot onto it but thank God the devil's in the bottomless pit and the new world is brought into existence the devil is now in the lake of fire where he will be forever and ever and so he will not be allowed onto that new earth and nothing that defileth will be allowed onto it there shall in no wise enter into it that's the promise of God there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie what this new world will be like we don't really know but we can be sure of this that this new world that is coming is going to surpass all our expectations as we will see as we go on with our studies in this book to the end of the book the new world is going to be a place of perfection it's going to be a place of richness it's going to be a place of happiness it's going to be a place of contentment it's going to be a place of enjoyment of God to all eternity and as I think of these words perfection richness happiness contentment if there is anything that I find in the world tonight it's just the opposite of these there's no perfection and there's a constant haggling over riches and there's no deep deep happiness and what contentment Christian even you know that that among God's people there isn't the contentment that there ought

to be and consequently there isn't the fullness of enjoyment of God that there should be and so it's going to be a world that's going to be so different from this one but we won't be surprised if it doesn't resemble the present world in many of its aspects but without its imperfections and so as I look forward to this new heaven and this new earth I can think of it in terms of this present world but without the imperfections of this present world world

I was reading Michael Wilcock and I've used his book as I've been looking at these studies myself and in his book I saw heaven opened this is how he puts it here is a new world it is recognisably a world still for John can describe it in terms of a heaven and an earth and Wilcock goes on to say this we shall not find ourselves in an entirely alien order of being I think that's well put isn't it we won't find ourselves aliens in this new world we'll feel very much at home in this place and you know it will be a place suitably adapted for our resurrection bodies and in that new world we will realise the completeness of our redemption in Christ do you know that it's only then in the new world that we will realise the completeness of our redemption in Christ it has been pointed out you see that your soul and my soul is redeemed by regeneration through the

Holy Spirit now but our bodies will be redeemed at the resurrection and our dwelling place will be redeemed at the creation of the new heaven and the new earth so that when God says behold I make all things new it means that the world is new the soul has been renewed and the body that we are going to have is renewed and John also says here there was no more sea we're just about coming to the close of the service no more sea why does he say that well as we have already said to the Jew and John was a Jew to the

[30 : 42] Jew the sea suggested the unknown and the mysterious and you know it does so still doesn't it you've been out on the sea and as you look over the side of the ship what is it like it's dark you don't know what's underneath it's full of mystery and in scripture you see sometimes the sea suggests evil or evil behavior it's Isaiah who puts it like this the wicked he says are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest whose waters cast up mire and dirt and wasn't it from the sea that John saw the awesome horrifying monster emerge that monster that had seven heads in the head that's where we have the wisdom and this beast had seven heads and seven is the perfect number meaning that it had fullness of knowledge and it also had ten horns and the horns are the emblems of the power of the beast and it had ten horns why ten because it means that its power could go anywhere and everywhere just as we have ten fingers and ten toes five to the one side five to the other doesn't the ten horns mean that the power of this beast could be everywhere and felt everywhere and upon the heads the name blasphemy and this weird creature that came up from the sea was the symbol of satanic power that pervades the earth and the sea speaks about destruction and death and a sailor knows that and that is why he treats the sea with the greatest respect and the sea speaks of separation continent from continent island from island race from race and the sea speaks of catastrophe and judgment it was you see the water that deluged the world and deluged that civilization in the days of Noah and with the sea you see there is nothing permanent it's restless it's in perpetual motion and that is why a man doesn't live in the sea he only uses the sea to cross from one place to another and so what we are saying when it says there was no more sea is this that in heaven in this new world anything suggestive of restlessness separation evil will not be allowed so that in the new earth there will be no more sea yes it says that there will be rivers and streams but no sea you know that world to come will be very beautiful in every sense of the word it will be perfectly constructed and it

will be a joy to behold that new world will be lavishly furnished with everything that will be required to reflect the glory of God and give pleasure to God's people and that is the world that is promised for the total redeemed person you know at present and I said this before but I sometimes think that these things have got to be repeated and so I repeat it here again this evening at present you know when death comes and when it takes the Christian it means for the Christian that his soul becomes disembodied and departs to be with Christ which is far better than the present existence but let us ever remember this that the soul in its disembodied state is as

Paul describes it naked and it is waiting to be re-clothed with its body but you know we are thankful that that nakedness of the soul is just temporary and at the resurrection oh the blessed day of the resurrection the soul will come back from paradise to be reunited with its glorified body which will be raised incorruptible and that total person as we call him body and soul will now be fitted to live in God's new world

I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea oh God grant that you and I will be there next Sabbath God willing we'll try and look at God's people who will be there let us pray oh Lord our God eye hath not seen nor heard nor hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love him we pray thee that as we get our eyes fixed on the far distances and as we view the world that is yet to come may our hearts be filled with rejoicing that that is the world that thou art preparing for thy redeemed people and gladly may we go forward in thy name until that achievement has been realized take away our sins in Jesus name we ask it
Amen Amen ■■ Lord et or als he esc in the Hebrews is optimize he melodies