



## SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE

### Heaven and Hell, The Reality Of Life After Death, Pt. 6

Pastor John Riggs

#### Main Scriptures:

- Genesis 1–2
- Genesis 3
- Revelation 20
- Revelation 21–22
- Romans 8:18-21
- 2 Peter 3:10-13
- John 14:1-3
- 2 Corinthians 12:2-4
- Hebrews 12:22-24
- Hebrews 11:10
- Hebrews 11:13-16
- Hebrews 13:14
- Revelation 21:3-5
- Revelation 21:6-8
- Revelation 21:9-15

#### Key Points:

- The Christian hope is not merely an escape to a spiritual realm, but a future reality of a new heaven and a new earth where God dwells with redeemed humanity.
- God's plan of redemption encompasses not only humanity but also the entire creation, which is currently groaning under the effects of sin.
- The future eternal state will be characterized by the complete absence of sin, corruption, and death, leading to perfect communion with God.

- The New Jerusalem, described in Revelation, is a literal city with immense dimensions, signifying God's tangible and glorious dwelling place with His people on the new earth.
- God created humanity for a purpose on earth, and this purpose of ruling and reigning under God will be restored in the new earth.
- In the New Heaven and New Earth, believers will see Jesus face to face, and there will be no more night or darkness, as God's glory will be their light.
- The Christian hope includes the resurrection of physical bodies, mirroring Jesus' physical resurrection and ascension.
- Gnosticism, which teaches the inherent evil of the physical body, is contrasted with biblical truth, which affirms the goodness of creation and the reality of physical resurrection.
- Christians are encouraged to enjoy life on Earth, as it is a gift from God, while recognizing they are sojourners looking forward to a better, heavenly home.
- The New Jerusalem, described in Revelation, is a literal, meticulously designed city where God will dwell with humanity, characterized by the absence of sin, death, and suffering.
- The New Jerusalem's design, including its cubic shape and foundations, symbolically represents the unity of Old Testament saints (represented by the tribes of Israel on the gates) and New Testament saints (represented by the apostles on the foundations), forming the bride of Christ.
- Heaven is not a passive, boring existence but an active, purposeful, eternal dwelling with God, fulfilling humanity's deep longing for a perfect home.
- Salvation through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, not religious culture or works, is the only way to God and eternal life, making the gospel the most crucial message.

**NOTES:**

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**Question and Answer:** (answers provided on pages 15-16 of the study)

Q: What is the Christian's ultimate eternal destiny according to the sermon?

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Q: Will the current heaven change or pass away?

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Q: What will life be like on the new earth?

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Q: Does God's redemption only apply to humans, or does it include the rest of creation?

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Q: What is the significance of the New Jerusalem described in Revelation?

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Q: What is the significance of the 'tree of life' in the new Jerusalem?

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Q: What will the eternal dwelling place be like?

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Q: Why is the resurrection of the body important in Christian theology?

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Q: Should Christians avoid enjoying life on Earth?

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Q: What is the significance of the New Jerusalem?

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Q: What are the characteristics of the New Jerusalem?

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Q: What is the difference between the current heaven and the future New Jerusalem on the new earth?

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Q: How does one attain salvation and avoid hell?

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Q: What is the ultimate heritage for a Christian?

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## Sermon Transcript:

We're going to continue looking at uh what scripture teaches us about the uh about heaven and um not only heaven, but the intermediate state and all that we have to look forward to as Christians. We're not going to focus on the aspect of hell this morning, which is a true reality for those who die outside of the saving faith that is found in Christ. But um we're going to look together here um at what scripture teaches about this reality. Now, you've heard it said, I know probably many times that this world is not our home. Now, I know for some of you, if you gave me the church answer, you would say, "Yes, sir. I'm ready to go. I'm tired of this old place. Not having any fun down here. I'm not enjoying any of the beauty that God has provided through creation. I'm not enjoying relationships with my family nor my friends, not enjoying the work that I do." you you you you would you would you would be lying because the reality is that we are meant to enjoy what God has created and provided.

See, I don't know many people that are just clawing to get out of life. In fact, our bodies are made to live. They're made to live. Some people have guilt feelings when they don't feel like they're ready to just go to heaven right now. Well, what's interesting is you study scripture, you'll see that God has created us to live here upon the earth. What's really encouraging for us as we go through this, as we begin to look at heaven and we get begin to look at uh the eternal estate of what is to come is the incredible truth of God's purpose and plan of redemption and how that applies to us in our life today. not only in our life today but in the future that is to come. In fact, to help us have a better understanding of some of these truths, you can look at scripture divided into three segments. Three segments. The first segment is Genesis chapter 1 and two. That would be your first segment. The second segment of scripture which would be the bulk of the book would be Genesis 3 through Revelation 20. And then the final bookend of what we would have for us written by God to help us understand what God's plan is and what is our destiny and what is our future and what is our hope can be found in Genesis in in Revelation 21 through 22. For example, in Genesis 1-2, we see God's incredible creation. And in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And then we go through a list of the days of creation and all that God created until he creates the crowning jewel of all that he has made where he creates man in his likeness and his image. And scripture says God said this is good. Everything that God created was good. That is before sin entered the world through man's disobedience to God's command. And sin infected and affected all of God's creation. We know that all that God made was good. Can you imagine what it would have been like to live in Eden? Can you imagine the beauty of an earth created by God who said, "This is very, very good what it looked like." Can you imagine relationships with others that were not tainted by any sin whatsoever? Can you imagine a body that has not felt any effect of the corruption of sin? Can you imagine an uninhibited perfect relationship in communion with the God who created you? that you could walk with God and talk with God with no hindrance whatsoever in perfect relationship in communion because no sin had tainted or separated you from the God who created you. It's incredible. It's incredible to think about that. But see, God created us to live on this earth. He created us to live under him in his likeness and his image. And we would bear his image upon the earth. And we were to rule and reign and subdue the earth. We were going to rule under God as co-regent, if you will, under God, rulers over all the beautiful things that God created for man and for God. That's what God's original design was before sin entered and corruption and death came. Not only to man but also to creation. By the way, after the flood, the earth no longer looks anything like it did in its original creation. When you get to Genesis chapter 3 and you begin to read all the way through the Old Testament, the New Testament, all the way through the center of the dividing season of history, which is Christ, God

in flesh, coming and dwelling among man, dying on a cross at Calvary to redeem sinful man to himself by faith through the finished work of God in the flesh, the second person of the triune Godhead. God the Son died in order to redeem and to bring about a reconciliation and a reverse of the curse that took place in Genesis chapter 3. Now, when you get to Revelation 21 and chapter 22, we're going to see something incredible again. But the whole entirety of scripture from Genesis 3 to Revelation chapter uh 20 is going to outline for you God's plan to redeem all that was cursed and lost in the sin that took place in Genesis chapter 3. It's God drawing a people for himself. It's God providing the atoning sacrificial system and plan all the way through history. God's plan of redemption is taught through the scriptures as we study it, as we learn it, and as we read it. But when you get to Genesis or to Revelation, excuse me, uh chapter 21 and 22, something interesting here jumps out at you. Would you open your Bibles there with me this morning? I want to show you a few things as we get into this today. Did you know that the current heaven that where God dwells today, his throne is, where where his seed of government is, where the angelic beings live, do you know that that is not our final destiny? Did you know that? Because heaven is going to change and it's going to be different. It's going to be made new. In fact, in Revelation 21, I pointed this out about 3 weeks ago, but let me let me show you something. John now is seeing here now a vision of something in the future. And now we know the culmination of God's perfect plan all the way through history has been completed at the end of the millennial reign. And now we're going to see something. John the Apostle sees this in a vision. Listen to what he sees. Then I saw we're going back to a creation again, a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. John says, ' And I heard a loud voice from the throne, the throne of God, saying, Behold, listen to this, the dwelling place of God is with man. What we're finding now as we're going to go through these two chapters in great detail is that we are now seeing once again God creating a new heaven and a new earth. And just as God dwelt with Adam and walked with Adam in the cool of the garden in his creation on earth, God is going to come and dwell. Not us up in heaven, but come and dwell with us where? On the earth. We are going to spend eternity not in the heaven where people go today who die in Christ. No, that's going to pass away. And God is going to create a new heaven and a new earth. And we, the redeemed of the Lord in resurrected bodies, now we're going to experience for all eternity. The very thing that we have been longing for our entire life, Eden. That's what's coming. That is what is coming our way. Christian, we are not told all of what the earth is going to look like. But when we look at the first creation, the beauty and the grander and the spectacular things that God created for his earth, we would have to even think that God would do the same in the new earth. To think that this is going to be some state of mind or or or or or just a spiritual experience is couldn't be further from the truth. God created for us to live upon the earth and God would dwell with us on this earth and we were to rule and reign over all that God created. That was God's design. Did you know that we're going to do that again? In fact, let me point out something to you quickly in Revelation chapter 22. Now, we're going to be going through a lot of scripture here. Here's here's the thing. People when you when people think that what we have coming is just boring, they have no understanding of what scripture teaches about what is coming for the believer. And why did it have to be this way? Aren't you glad that we just don't simply die in our sinful state? You'll become so thankful for the gospel, for the goodness of God, for his grace, and for his mercy. You'll have a whole different understanding about this life and the life that we will experience for all eternity. For we will never die. Don't you see that? Oh, you might lay down your physical body. Why? Because that is the result of sin. We live in a corrupted world. But there's coming a day where we won't live in a corrupted world any longer. We're going to live in a world that will

be completely completely rid of any type or ability to sin. It will not exist in the new earth. No sin. Can you imagine that? Your body will not be any longer affected because of the cause of sin. You will no longer age. You will no longer have disease. You will no longer get sick. You will no longer die. You will have what you've been longing for. What all men long for. Immortality is what we want. We want to live forever, but we don't want to just live forever in a cursed world. God is so good. He doesn't let us live forever in this cursed condition. Aren't you glad? No. God is so good that he's going to what? He is going to redeem all things including creation. In fact, Romans tells us before I read this to you, go to Romans chapter 8. Let me show you something. Some of you are aware of this passage in Romans 8. But let me share it with you anyway. Romans chapter 8. Eric, I'll get to my scriptures here in a little bit. So, I apologize you don't have these, but I'm just I'm wanting to share just a few of these things. In Romans chapter 8, Paul in verse 18 says, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present age." Why do we experience suffering at all? It's because we live in a sinful, fallen, corrupted world stained by sin. That's why. Why does suffering happen? Because of the result of sin. Paul says that I consider the suffering of this present time not worth comparing to what you mean. There's something better coming. Oh, by far? The glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits for something. Look at the creation. We see it. We can almost hear it happening around the world. The creation is waiting with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to something, to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope, listen to this, that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. Not only are we going to be free from corruption and obtain the glory of God, creation is waiting for the day for the sons of God to be revealed. Why? So that it will be set free from the corruption that it is now under in the curse. And it will also what? Obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. Is that not incredible? It's amazing. Let's go back to Revelation chapter 22. Revelation chapter 22. Now, I don't want to get ahead of myself and the the sermons to come, but let me just read here just briefly for you. Now, we're going to be looking at the the new earth, but something incredible is going to happen. We see John sees from heaven there's a city that's coming. It's called the New Jerusalem. Here's the thing too. We often times forget us dwelling on earth. We often times think about everything here from earth up. But we need to think differently. We need to think and understand that everything must be seen from heaven down here. You think about the city of Jerusalem and why it's so significant and so important and and the reality of it here. But yet we find that there is the city Jerusalem. The heavenly city is in heaven right now. Where do we think the concept of cities even came from? Where do we think rivers and trees and mountains and valleys and animals and where do we think all this stuff even came from? God created all of these things. We often times don't think of heaven in that way. Oh, there's a city in heaven. It's called the New Jerusalem. It is a great city, by the way. In fact, some people try to say that this is just nothing but symbolic language. And no doubt there's symbolism in the book of Revelation in apocalyptic teaching. But listen, these symbols mean something. And I take a very literal approach to scripture. Even in apocalyptic language, we can see there are literal things being taught even through symbols. But what's incredible to me is that John goes to great length to actually even give us the dimensions of the New Jerusalem. Did you know that the New Jerusalem, according to scripture, is nearly 1,400 miles high, wide, and deep. That's what scripture gives. Now, if he's only speaking of the bride of Christ in symbology, why in the world would he give us the description of the actual size of the city? For good reason, because the New Jerusalem is a city and it comes out of the current heaven and it's brought down to the earth. This city is nearly It's a cube. It is a cube shape and it's 1,400 miles nearly. It's like 1382, but nearly 1,400 miles high, 1,400 miles wide, and 1,400 miles deep. That's a big city. No wonder Satan was all about Babel. He came from heaven. You

remember that? Was cast to earth. Where do you think all these ideas come from? They don't come from man. They come from God. It's where they come from. Look at this though. In chapter 22, the angel showed John, notice something else which is amazing here. The river of the water of life. Now listen, I love rivers. Do you love rivers? But I have to admit, the Red River is not exactly what I would call a beautiful river. Okay? It's a river. All right. But it's kind of nasty. This river here, the water of life, notice it is bright as crystal. Ding. Have you ever looked through crystal? It's translucent. You know when you're in Colorado and you're trying to catch trout and they can see you before you see them. Why? Because the water is so clear. We're looking at a river that is flowing from where it says. Now, we notice that it's bright and crystal and it's flowing from where? The throne of God, which the throne of God is in the new Jerusalem, on the new earth. Did you know that? Remember, Christ was going to set on the throne of David. He'll do that in the millennial kingdom in Jerusalem. But on the in the new heaven, in the new earth, Christ the King of glory, he will be seated on the throne, in the new Jerusalem, on the new earth. There's a river that flows from the throne and its purity is is impeccable. There's there's no stain of anything. It's pure and it flows from the throne of God and the lamb through the middle of the street of the city. Also on either side of the river, we're going to find something we find back in Genesis chapter 2. What do we see here? Genesis 3, we find the creation part. The tree of life is in the new Jerusalem. The tree of life is there. That's incredible, is it not? The tree of life is there with 12 kinds of fruit yielding its fruit each month. And notice what the leaves of this tree mean and what they are. The leaves of the tree of life were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any accursed. Nothing accursed. Guys, can you can you fathom this? There will be nothing our cursed. Nothing. We can't even in our finite minds living in a cursed world with a cursed body with all of the things in this world. We can't understand what this must be like. Sorry, I keep losing my pages here. We can't even comprehend what it's like to live in in in a place where there's no stain of any corruption, sin, nothing whatsoever, nothing but God's goodness and purity. Man, no longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and the lamb will be in it. And his servants will worship him. Oh, you will worship Jesus. Oh, man. And you know what? There'll be no barrier, no separation. There'll be nothing to limit or inhibit the way in which we purely worship Jesus Christ. man. They will see his face. Wow. Not dimly, not through a a smoky mirror. Oh, no. We'll see Jesus face to face and his name will be on their foreheads and the night will be no more. Did you know we There will be no more night in heaven or on the new earth. Isn't that incredible? There'll be no more night. There's a reason for that. They will need no light of lamp or sun. For the Lord God will be their light and they will reign forever and ever. The glory of God will be so magnificent, brightly shining on the new earth that we won't even need light because the glory of God's light will light everything. And there'll be no darkness. There'll be no need for you to light a lamp to to to flip on the electricity. Why? Because Jesus Christ, the King of glory, the God of all creation, his glory will be shining that bright. Pretty incredible. Now, I can't wait to get into more details about this, but let's go back to where we were. So, we see that we're going to have this this incredible plan of God completely fully fulfilled. Completely fully fulfilled. Here's the thing. God's people throughout time, they've had a firm grasp on this biblical truth. They didn't know all there was to know, but they knew that these things were a reality. They understood that they were simply in this life although created and designed to live in this physical world. And we have to get past the whole mindset that everything else that we're going to do forever is all spiritual. What do you think the point is of the resurrection of our bodies? The body of Christ was a physical body with a physical resurrection and his physical body ascended to a physical heaven. You realize that people say, "Well, there's a spiritual aspect of different things." Yeah, the body that Christ had after the resurrection could do some pretty incredible things. It had some things that no longer limited him, but his body was so

physical that he even ate fish with his apostles. And he also even what? Let them touch his body. Still maintains the scars. He had a physical resurrection. Now the gnostics they have done a lot of damage to this type of teaching and theology because the Gnostics teach that the physical body itself is wicked and vile and the spirit is good. That's why it matters not what you do in the physical body because it doesn't have any meaning whatsoever. It's spiritual and they deny the spiritual they deny the physical body of Jesus Christ and they deny the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ. No, it was physical. And you will one day, if you die before Christ comes again, your body will be resurrected from the grave. And it will be a body according to scripture like the body of Jesus Christ. That's what our body will be like. That's encouraging. Those throughout history, the people of God, they understood that they were just sojourners or pilgrims passing through a foreign country. Why? There's a reason for that. It's not that we don't enjoy life here. I don't know where Christians ever got the mindset that you can't enjoy living life here on this earth. Sometimes I might I meet people that way. No, we we can of all people enjoy life on this earth because we know the reality of what is to come. We also know the reality of what this is. We also know what it is to be in communion with God, to be at peace with God, to know what it is to have everlasting life. We have hope in this world. We have all of these things. We of all people should be able to enjoy life here upon the earth. But here's the reality. They they understood these things. They knew that they were passing through and they were exiles in a sense. In what sense? That they were looking for the promised land. They were looking for the promise of God. Let me tell you something. When you're 25, you don't think much about death, do you? You might think about heaven occasionally, but you don't think much about it. You're kind of like, I want to go there, but not today. I can remember earlier in my life uh knew the reality of all these things, but I can remember telling the Lord, you know, Lord, I sure would like to meet that woman that I'm going to marry one day. And I did. And God blessed me to do that. And then after we were married, I said, 'Lord, boy, heaven's going to be great. I know it will be, but God, I sure would like to meet those kids that my wife and I desire to have one day. And he blessed me, and I have. And as you go along in life, you're like, "Well, Lord, Lord, I tell you, I sure would like to meet those grandkids that are hopefully going to come one day." And then you age and your bodies begin to wear out and you fight sickness and disease. And as you age, you begin to see that there's a finish line that's much closer now than it was in your than you were naturally in your 20s. And you'll find that older people think a lot more about heaven than younger people do. But that is for good reason. Why? Because if they were to take the natural direction of life, they know that life comes to an end normally at a certain age. And if you cheat it by a few years, that's great. But we know the life expectancy of a man or a woman is just a certain amount of time. And so what do they do as they age? They begin to have more of a thought process about this place called heaven where they know that they're going to be going when they die. But it isn't that they didn't love life. Aren't you thankful that you were able to have a wife that you loved? And if you're a wife that you had a husband that you were able to love in this lifetime. Aren't you thankful for the day that you held that baby for the first time? How can you say that's not good? How about those relationships with your siblings and friends? And how about when you encountered Christ? And and how about just the joy of being in the back country and hearing a bull bugle in the early hours of the morning before daylight? Or how about fishing in a stream that is clear and and and you're and and you're just watching your line rip across the water or the fog on a early morning or the coyotes howling in the evening or early morning out. How about riding a a a good horse or or or just enjoying a pet that you have that a great dog? What what about all this? You trying to tell me none of this stuff's good? It's enjoyable. It is, but it's not going to last. because of sin. That's the great news of the gospel. It's the great news of the gospel. Those that went through life before us and even us now, they had their minds set on a distant homeland. Like travelers

living in a foreign country and longing for home, they lived with great expectation, looking forward to the day that they would return home or they would arrive home. Heaven will one day be upon the earth. That's what's incredible. Along with the new city, the new Jerusalem. Now, let's get started in here. We're going to run out of time. Let me bring up a few things for you. We were in Revelation chap 21, were we not? Believe we were. I don't know how much of that I read, but let me let me let's continue on here. Let's pick up in verse three. We already see the new heaven, the new earth. Now we going to John's going to give us more details here, some more information. In verse three, John says, "And I heard something." John said, "I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. Notice this is when the tears will be wiped away, Christian. A lot of people say that, well, it's going to happen. No, listen. This is when the tears will be wiped away. Right here in the new heaven and the new earth. No sin, no corruption. Here's what happens. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning. No mourning nor crying. No need for crying. Not Not when God dwells with us. Not when we're living on the new earth. Not when heaven actually comes down to earth. Not when we're living void of any sin, corruption, anything at all that would infect in any way the goodness and the glory of God. None of that will be present. There will be no crying, no mourning, no dying. Notice this. There won't even be any pain. Isn't that good? For the former things have passed away. Verse five. And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold," listen to this, "I am making all things new." Also, he said, "Write this down. This is important, John. Write it down. These words are what? Trustworthy, and they are true." See, here's the thing I love about scripture. It is the word of God. It is truth. What did what did John write down? What he was told? Write these things down. What things? Everything I've told you and it's emphatically written for you in scripture, Christian, for our for our benefit. This is what it says. These things that I have just told you. You mean the new heaven, the new earth, the no crying, the no dying, the no tears, the new Jerusalem, God dwelling among men, absent of any corruption, sin, anything else that would taint anything but the glorious perfection of God. It will not exist. And Jesus says, "Write it down. Put it in a book. My word, it is going to happen." Guaranteed. This is not a story like Little Red Riding Hood. This is the word of God in Christian. This is where you and I by the grace of God will spend all our eternity here. It's real. It's not a joke. How real is it? It's as real as I am standing here in this place on this earth in this universe. That's how real that is. It's even more real than us being here because this is temporary. That is forever. Say, "Wow, sounds like a little too much to believe. Are you kidding me? You haven't studied scripture enough to know how incredibly true scripture is, and it proves itself over and over. This is going to happen. Christ said it would. Write it down. Let Christians know that this is your hope right here. It's going to take place. it's going to happen. And yeah, we hate death. Why? Because we enjoy some things here. We enjoy life even in a cursed world. We enjoy um our our own existence even with a cursed body. We enjoy relationships with other people even though we have things that are imperfect in that. And we enjoy communion with God even though I don't yet see him fully or know him fully, but I will one day. This is true. He says, "And he said to me, 'It is done.'" Oh, I love those words. When God says something's done, it's done. Now, realize this is already John seeing into the future, Christian. This is already done. This is the plan of God set forth before the foundation of the world. This is it. And by God's grace, today, if you know Jesus, this is part of your future. And if you don't know Jesus, the good news is this can be your future. You don't have to go to hell. And we're going to learn what that is. And trust me, we don't want anyone to go there. And it's just as eternal as this place will be. Except it will be suffering and torment and separation and darkness. It's not going to be a party. And people scoff at this thing, this gospel, and they scoff at this message, and they scoff at the word of

God. We're pleading with you. Repent and believe the gospel and be saved. Just as Noah did in his day, we do today. But one day, the ark door will be shut. But it's not now. That's the good stuff. Here we go. Here's a few more things that I want to share with you about this. I am the alpha and the omega. He's the beginning and he's the end. He's the book ends. He's eternal. He's from eternity, past, present, f. He's never ever had a beginning. He'll never have an end. This is God we're speaking of. I am the alpha, the omega, the beginning, the end. To the thirsty, I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. Are you thirsty this morning? To the one who conquers will have this heritage. This is your heritage. It's not your grandfather's farm. That's not your heritage. Nothing wrong with that. But let me tell you something. That will come to an end too for you. But this is our ultimate heritage right here as a Christian. And I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, and the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolators, and liars, their portion will be in the lake of fire that burns, the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death. We have an incredible heritage that awaits us. First thing we notice here is that John sees a new heaven. He sees a new earth. And the first heaven and the first earth pass away. Second Peter, Peter tells us some of the same things. If you have your Bibles, you can turn to 2 Peter 3:10-13. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. It's coming. His second coming is coming. It's going to come like a thief, Peter says. And then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved. and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, Peter says, "What sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn, according to his promise. We are waiting for what Peter says, new heavens and new earth in which righteousness will dwell. That's what we're waiting for. The new earth will have no sea. John says he didn't see a sea there. The fourth thing John sees a city coming down out of heaven, the new Jerusalem, which is notice prepared as a bride which is adorned for her husband. It appears that this city was already in the current heaven and John sees it coming down out of heaven to the new earth. And some make the claim that this is simply, as I mentioned to you, metaphoric language, but we do not believe that's solely the case. Also, when you think about the size of the city being a perfect cube, when you think about God's command to Moses on the mountain, when he was to go down and make a tabernacle, he gave Moses very, very specific instructions as did Solomon. He was to build it very specifically according to what God said it should look like, what materials should be used. He gave dimensions for certain aspects of it. And if you look at the Holy of Holies, do you know the Holy of Holies? No matter whether it was the temple of Solomon or it was the tabernacle that they took through the wilderness, do you know that it was a perfect cube? Everything in Solomon's temple in the Holy of Holies was to be covered in what? Gold. All of the things

that we see here, we're going to see in type compared to the substance of the new Jerusalem. Did you know the new Jerusalem is made of solid gold? In fact, the Bible says the gold is so pure that it's translucent. You can see right through it. We'll get into that in a few studies. It's really incredible.

But I want you to see that God does things very, very specific nature. This also makes us think here of what Jesus told his disciples in John 14:1. We think about a city and we think about this this place in heaven and then that upon the new earth. It says, "Let not your hearts be troubled." Speaking to his disciples, he was getting ready to leave. He says, "Believe in God, believe in me." He says, "In my father's house are many rooms." That word there is the Greek

word Monae and it means mansion, abode, resident or dwelling place. It makes us think of a city with lots of places to live. Makes me think of the new Jerusalem.

The current heaven is distinctly different from earth today. In fact, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12 2-4, I know a man in Christ who 14 years ago was caught up into the third heaven. Whether in body or out of the body, I do not know. God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise. That is in the third heaven. Whether in body or out of body, I do not know. God knows. And he heard things that he cannot tell, which man may not utter. The Apostle Paul was caught up into the third heaven. And notice he didn't even know if it was a physical catching up or if he went in the spirit. Paul says, "I don't know, but I went there." And he called it paradise. Remember last week we learned about paradise being taken up to heaven with Christ when he ascended.

The current heaven contains a city, the new Jerusalem. We saw that the future heaven will be upon the earth where God will dwell with man upon the new earth. Here's a few more details I want to share with you about the current heaven. Take your Bibles and go to 12 uh chapter 12 of Hebrews. Look at verse 22- 24, please. That's Hebrews 12 22- 24. The writer of Hebrews says, "But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to innumerable angels in festal gathering, to the assembly of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."

Here we're seeing that the city of God is the new Jerusalem. And we're looking here at heaven. We think about how incredible heaven's going to be. Notice heaven right now. There are there are innumerable angels in festal gathering in heaven. If those we love have died and gone to be with the Lord. Here's an example of things that are happening there. Things that they see. There's much more we're going to learn about the current heaven. But nonetheless, there are innumerable angels in festal gathering. We're seeing that there is the city of God which is called the new Jerusalem. Also there is the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven. We also see that God the father is there the judge of all. We know God is omni omnipresent. The spirit of God is present all over. He's omnipresent. But God has a dwelling place that he has chosen for himself. And that would be what Paul was caught up into. The third heaven. We notice in Genesis 1, God made the heavens plural and the earth. This would be his seat of government and the angelic host who accompany him and fulfill the will of the father. We also have the spirits of the righteous made perfect. Those who die in Christ, as Paul says, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. in heaven right now. There are those who are still awaiting the resurrection of Jesus Christ to come and the return of Christ to come and the resurrection and they're there. And then also notice Jesus the mediator of the new covenant is there as well.

Hebrews 11:10 Abraham says this about him for he Abraham was looking forward to the city that has foundations whose designer and builder is God. Even Abraham, the father of the people of God, the man of faith, he was looking forward to a city that man didn't build, but that God built. That would be speaking of the new Jerusalem.

Hebrews 11:13-16, speaking of all these men and women of faith, it says, "These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on earth. They were looking

forward to something better." For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. They're seeking a homeland. If they had not been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had the opportunity to return. But but as it is, they desire a better country that is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to call them their God, for he has done what? Prepared for them a city. Hebrews 13:14 says, "For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come."

This city is pretty incredible that we're going to be going to. This city that will be upon the earth for eternity is the new Jerusalem. And I'm going to close us out this morning with just a few more to get you ready for next week. And go back with me to Revelation, if you would please, uh, Revelation chapter 21. I'm not going to give all the details here today. I want to set you just kind of your minds this way for next week. John says, ' Then came one of the seven angels. I'm in verse 9. Then came one of the seven angels who had seven bowls full of the la full who has who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues. We read about him earlier in book of revelation. And he spoke to me saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the lamb." And he carried me away in the spirit to a great high mountain. And he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem. Did you know that we are the bride of Christ, the bride of the lamb? He showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. Having the glory of God, we will have the glory of God. Isn't that awesome? It's radiance like the most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had great high walls, a a great high wall with 12 gates.

Now, he's given descriptions here about this city, but also there's some symbolic teaching here about who the bride of Christ is, and he's going to cover some of these things in detail. There's a dual meaning here. Notice there were 12 gates. The number 12 is very, very important in scripture, no doubt. But there were 12 gates. And the gates there were 12 angels. And notice that on the gates, the names of the 12 tribes of the son of Israel were inscribed, which that would be speaking of the Old Testament saints as well. There are 12 gates to the city. And on the 12 gates of the city, there's a name ascribed. And the names ascribed are those names of the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel, which represent those people from the Old Covenant and those of the Old Testament, the Old Testament saints of God.

Notice something else about this city that the the gates were actually on the east there were three gates, on the north there were three gates, and on the south three gates, and on the west there were three gates. And the wall of the city had 12 foundations. Remember, Abraham was looking for a city whose foundations were not built by man. He was looking for the south the the city that we're reading of right here, the new Jerusalem. This city called the New Jerusalem that John sees has 12 foundations. And notice on the foundations here, we'll get into this probably more next week in detail, but on them were the 12 names of the 12 apostles of the lamb. Who is this representing? This is representing the church, the bride of Christ in the church age. those that are of the New Testament and the New Covenant, the same all by faith. So we have the Old Testament saints, we have the New Testament saints, and we see that this picture symbol, if you will, is the bride of Christ, which the totality of the bride of Christ and the people of God are culminating between the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints, all of them saved by faith, every single one in in the work that God has provided in Christ. We talked about Jesus going down and proclaiming and what he was doing last week when he descended into lower regions of the earth. If you haven't heard that one, go back and listen to it if you would.

In verse 15, we read this. And one of the ones who spoke to me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies four square in length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia, which is to give you the exact number, 1,380 miles. Its length and width and height are equal. That's why I told you it's a cube, just like the Holy of Holies was. Why? Well, it shouldn't shock us that God would have them design the Holy of Holies as a cube. We're looking from heaven down to earth. Just as we see this city where God's throne dwells, where he dwells is the same. It's a cube. He also measured its wall 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. The wall was built out of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. That's how pure it is. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh crystalite, the eighth was burl, the ninth topaz, the 10th u cryoprase, and the 11th jinta or just yeah, jinta. The 12th is amethyst. Now, we're going to learn that the ephod that we find in the Old Testament, which we'll get into later, um that that the priest had to wear. Um, and the 12 gates were 12 pearls. Each of the gates made a single pearl, and the city and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. I'd say it's pretty distinct detail about what the city, the new Jerusalem, looks like, huh? We cannot comprehend what this place looks like. I can tell you. You think Wichita Falls is nice. And all we're seeing here is the New Jerusalem, folks. But we also see, symbolically, the purity of the body of Christ. And I saw no temple in the city. Why? For its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb. And the city had no need for sun. We read this to you earlier. What an incredible city.

For those of you who have had the mindset or the thought that what we have coming is simply going to be boring and void of purpose or work or any of that. Those of you that wonder, well, what what what's it what's this going to look like? What is my body going to look like? Listen, we already have some pretty good examples of what things are going to be like. Although we live in a cursed world, you will have work to do. You will rule, and you will reign. There's a whole lot we're going to learn about what scripture gives us. Heaven is going to be anything but boring. It's actually what we all have been longing for. Home. We're longing for Eden. Christian and every human being out there is. They just don't know what they're longing for. They're longing for a world with no sin, a relationship with God with no hindrance, a body with no corruption. They're looking for what God is going to provide and what Jesus Christ has already provided through his sacrificial offering on the cross of Calvary. Jesus has conquered. Did you know that? This is a firm fact of what is to come. It's not that we don't enjoy life here, but it is marred. Every aspect of it is marred by sin and corruption. Christian, we can enjoy life here, but the best is yet to come. I'm overwhelmed with God. I'm overwhelmed with his plan. It's overwhelming, but it's true, man. How can you not worship God? Christian, this is why we preach the gospel because as we learn about hell, you don't want anybody going there. You don't want anybody to die without Jesus. And I don't want anybody caught in the lie of religion and the southern mentality of just a religious culture. Religion will not get you to to to God. You know that only a relationship through Christ by faith in what he's done will ever get you to God. This is why we preach the gospel. That's why we teach the word because we want people to know Jesus. Because your life, oh man, is a vapor. It is here today and gone tomorrow. That's why the only thing that really honestly matters in its entirety in life is the gospel. Everything else you have, your relationships, everything in your life, your business, your your plans, everything. Do you know they're all coming to a close? And you can have the world, but if you don't have Jesus, not one single thing of all of your life in the totality of every second that you were alive matters if you don't die with the knowledge and the understanding and the salvation that is found only in Jesus Christ. That's the truth.

## Answers to the Study Questions:

Q: What is the Christian's ultimate eternal destiny according to the sermon?

A: The sermon teaches that the ultimate eternal destiny for Christians is not to reside in the current heaven, but to live on a 'new heaven and a new earth' where God Himself will dwell with His redeemed people. This new earth will be a restored paradise, free from sin and its consequences.

Q: Will the current heaven change or pass away?

A: Yes, the sermon indicates that the current heaven, where believers go upon death, is not the final destination. Revelation 21 states that 'the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,' implying a transformation and renewal into a new heaven and a new earth.

Q: What will life be like on the new earth?

A: Life on the new earth will be a return to and an enhancement of the perfection of Eden. It will be a place completely free from sin, corruption, disease, aging, and death. Believers will live in perfect communion with God, in resurrected bodies, and enjoy the beauty of a redeemed creation.

Q: Does God's redemption only apply to humans, or does it include the rest of creation?

A: The sermon emphasizes that God's redemption extends to all of creation. Citing Romans 8, it explains that creation itself is waiting to be set free from its bondage to corruption and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Q: What is the significance of the New Jerusalem described in Revelation?

A: The New Jerusalem is presented as a literal, massive city (nearly 1,400 miles cubed) that comes down from heaven to the new earth. It is the dwelling place of God and the Lamb, from which flows the river of the water of life and where the tree of life is found, signifying a place of perfect communion and healing.

Q: What is the significance of the 'tree of life' in the new Jerusalem?

A: The tree of life in the new Jerusalem bears 12 kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. Its leaves are specifically mentioned as being 'for the healing of the nations,' signifying a complete restoration and absence of any curse or ailment in the eternal state.

Q: What will the eternal dwelling place be like?

A: The eternal dwelling place, described as the New Heaven and New Earth, will be a place where God Himself dwells with humanity. There will be no more night, darkness, tears, mourning, crying, death, or pain. God's glory will be the light, and His presence will bring perfect peace and joy. This future reality involves the resurrection of physical bodies, similar to Jesus' resurrected body.

Q: Why is the resurrection of the body important in Christian theology?

A: The resurrection of the body is a core tenet of Christian faith, affirming the goodness of God's creation, including the physical body. It contrasts with Gnostic beliefs that the physical body is inherently evil. The resurrection of Jesus' physical body and His ascension to a physical heaven serve as the model and promise for believers' own future physical resurrection.

Q: Should Christians avoid enjoying life on Earth?

A: No, Christians are encouraged to enjoy life on Earth as a gift from God. While recognizing themselves as sojourners or pilgrims with a heavenly home in view, they can and should appreciate the good things God provides in this life. This enjoyment is enhanced by the knowledge of what is to come and the peace of being in communion with God.

Q: What is the significance of the New Jerusalem?

A: The New Jerusalem is a literal, magnificent city described in Revelation that will come down from heaven to the new earth. It represents God's dwelling place with humanity, signifying the ultimate fulfillment of His plan. Its design, with twelve gates bearing the names of Israel's tribes and twelve foundations bearing the names of the apostles, symbolizes the unity of Old and New Testament believers, forming the bride of Christ.

Q: What are the characteristics of the New Jerusalem?

A: The New Jerusalem is described as being made of pure gold, like clear glass, with immense dimensions (1,380 miles in length, width, and height), forming a perfect cube. It has twelve gates, each a single pearl, inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and twelve foundations adorned with precious jewels, bearing the names of the twelve apostles. The city has no temple because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple, and it needs no sun or moon for light, as God's glory illuminates it.

Q: What is the difference between the current heaven and the future New Jerusalem on the new earth?

A: The current heaven is described as a place where God's dwelling is, containing innumerable angels and the spirits of the righteous. The New Jerusalem, however, is the future dwelling place where God will come down to dwell with humanity on the new earth, signifying a complete restoration and eternal presence of God with His people.

Q: How does one attain salvation and avoid hell?

A: Salvation is achieved not through religious culture or personal merit, but through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, based on faith in His sacrificial work on the cross. The message of the gospel is crucial: repent of sins and believe in Jesus. This faith leads to eternal life with God and avoids the suffering and torment of hell, which is described as the second death.

Q: What is the ultimate heritage for a Christian?

A: The ultimate heritage for a Christian is not earthly possessions but the eternal inheritance promised in the New Jerusalem. This includes reigning with Christ, living in a perfect world free from sin and corruption, and dwelling in God's presence forever. It is a heritage prepared by God, far surpassing anything this temporary world can offer.