



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 21, 22

“The Glorious Destiny of the Redeemed”

TRANSCRIPT

[Audio begins] Let's begin with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for the privilege that is before us again, of turning to the word of God, the Scriptures which give us light upon our path in this world and also give us light upon the purposes which Thou hast for men. As Lord, we think about the things that are happening in the United States, we pray most of all that the Holy Spirit may give us understanding in spiritual things. That we may understand, we who have believed in Jesus Christ, the things that are taking place in the light of the program of the ages. And then Father, if it should please Thee, we pray that the Holy Spirit may bring conviction of sin, and of unrighteousness, in the hearts of the men of the United States and to the uttermost corners of this earth.

As we look about us Lord, we sense a great blindness that exists in the hearts of men. And we pray that, if it should please Thee, there may be some withdrawing of this blindness so that some at least may sense that Jesus Christ is the answer to the needs of the human heart. Cause us to see our sin and cause us to see that Jesus Christ has offered the sacrifice that takes away sin. And Lord we pray that in the little sphere, which Thou hast given us to labor in, that we may truly be lights for him. And enable us in critical

days just such as this when men are speaking about the human heart, enable us to speak under the inspiration of the Spirit, the word that may bring light to some of our friends, so that they too may share Jesus Christ with us. We now pray Thy blessing upon the ministry of the word tonight and may it be fruitful and profitable for each one of us. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Now tonight we're coming to the last in our series of studies on the Christian faith and the subject is “The Glorious Destiny of the Redeemed.” And I think if it has not become plain to us to this point, that at least that when we conclude tonight, we will sense that the purpose of the ages, so far as God is concerned, is to fellowship with the redeemed in glory. And that everything that has transpired in the program of God is aimed toward that end.

Now the problem that we're going to look at tonight is where do the redeemed enjoy the fellowship of God throughout all eternity? And the passage, which we shall look at in the last of the Book of Revelation, chapters 21 and 22, is the passage that reveals this. In the words which John the apostle gives us, from his vision, it is a new heaven and a new earth. Now we know, we human beings, who have at least read a little bit in the Bible, we know of heaven, but strictly speaking, we do not know a great deal about heaven.

Eric Sour, in one of his books, when he comes to the discussion of the new heaven and the new earth says, “Here we bow before the infinite and confess our ignorance.” And I think that is surely the attitude that most of us have when we read through these chapters and seek to understand what they really do mean, ultimately. But yet most of us would probably agree that there is such a place and that when the Bible speaks of it as heaven, we recognize that it is a particular place in which we shall enjoy the fellowship of God throughout all eternity.

Many year ago one of my friends, who is a teacher of the word of God, had his son disobey his wife. And she informed the little boy that she was going to give him a spanking, which she did. And when she finished giving him a spanking he said to her, “I’m going to tell Daddy on you.” And she said, “Well fine, go tell your father.” And so the little boy trooped off into the room of the father who was a preacher, and he walked into his study and he said that he wanted to tell Daddy about Mommy. And so he told on Mommy to Daddy, but unfortunately, Daddy agreed with Mommy. And so then he said, after Daddy agreed with Mommy, he said, “I’m going to tell God on you both.” [Laughter] And my friend said, “Alright go ahead and tell God on us both. Why don’t you go in your room right now and have a little word of prayer about it.” He said, “Oh no, I’m not going to tell him now. I’m going to tell him when I get to heaven.” [Laughter] So, he had a good faith in heaven. That is, as the ultimate place in which we shall spend our eternity.

Now, while we know I say a great deal, while we don’t know a great deal about heaven, we do know that there is such a place as heaven. Now I’ve put on the board tonight a diagram which is not drawn to scale, as I said before the class began, because the church age has lasted for nineteen hundred plus years. The tribulation is a period of seven years minus, because the Bible says it shall be reduced a little bit near the end because of the intensity of the suffering. And the Kingdom of God is appeared a time of a thousand years upon the earth. But I had to do it this way in order to get all of these titles in.

Now I’ve put on the board the eight great events of the future. Now we have discussed some of these but I want you to get the picture of them all in order. The church age remember, will end so far as the believers are concerned, with the rapture of the church. Jesus Christ will come from heaven and shall bring with him the spirits of those who have died, since the day of Pentecost, in faith, their bodies shall be resurrected, those who are living on the earth at the time of the rapture shall be caught up together with them, their bodies being changed in the air. The spirits of those who have come

with the Lord Jesus shall rejoin the bodies, so that all together shall be united who are part of the church of Jesus Christ, those that have died, those that are living at his coming in the air, and we shall meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Now that event is the next great event in the program of God. It is imminent, that is, it may occur at any moment. It may occur fifty years from now. It may occur a thousand years from now, that seems unlikely, but nevertheless so far as the Bible is concerned, it sets no dates with regard to the rapture.

Now the next thing that shall transpire when we have met the Lord in the air, apparently from the word of God, is that we who have believed in Jesus Christ shall stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. Now this judgment shall not affect our eternal destiny. That is affected and settled when we believe on Jesus Christ. Our eternal destiny is settled the moment we believe in Christ. But the purpose of the judgment seat of Jesus Christ is to distribute rewards for service. And so we shall, every one of us Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verses 9 and 10, stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ to receive the things that have been done in the body. Every Christian, but remember that does not affect our eternal destiny. It only has to do with rewards for service.

Now while this is taking place in heaven, the tribulation upon the earth begins, we needn't talk about the details of precisely when it begins. The Bible does not say that it begins precisely at the end of the church age. It does not say that there is a long period of time either. It just doesn't speak on that point. But so far as we can tell, it begins shortly after the rapture of the church and the tribulation is the period of time in which God will bring judgment upon the nation Israel to bring them to faith in Jesus Christ. It is a tribulation judgment which is designed to purify and purge them and bring them to trust in him. It will also be a time of judgment upon the Gentile nations that have rejected Christ. It will also be a judgment upon that part of the church, professing church, which was not really the possessing church which enters into the tribulation period.

You see it is strictly correct, according to the Bible, to say the church will not go through the tribulation and to say the church will go through the tribulation. The believers will not go through the tribulation. The unbelievers who are nevertheless members of the organized church upon the earth, they shall enter into this tribulation. It shall be a time of judgment and tribulation upon the earth, our Lord says, such as the earth has never seen, nor shall yet see. It has nothing to do with the daily judgments or the daily tribulation which you as a Christian often experience. This is the time of judgment upon the earth, the tribulation. The Bible states that at the conclusion of this tribulation period, which is said to be seven years, shortened a little bit for the elect's sake, at the end of that period of time Jesus Christ, with the saints, shall come in his second advent to the earth. Now that is the fourth great event of the future, and that is the event that we looked at last time, particularly, plus the kingdom that follows.

Now we did not say anything about the marriage supper of the Lamb. So far as we can tell from Revelation chapter 19, verses 1 through 10, the marriage supper of the Lamb takes place upon the earth when Jesus Christ, with the redeemed of the church, meets and with the redeemed of the Old Testament saints, meets the living believers and together they inaugurate the Kingdom of God with what has also been called a messianic banquet. In other words, with a type of ordinance, you remember the Lord's supper, in the inauguration of the Lord's supper, Jesus Christ said that we were to eat the bread and drink the wine. And he said when he observed the supper with them, that he would no more eat the bread or drink the wine until he ate and drank it new with them in the Kingdom of God. Now he was referring to the fact that the time would come when he would sit down with the apostles and others in the Kingdom of God. And apparently at the beginning of that time there shall be a marriage supper of the Lamb in which the relationship that exists between Christ and the redeemed of all ages, shall be visibly manifested, that is, the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Now I believe it takes place on earth. Some of my friends think it takes place in heaven. But I think they're wrong, and of course they think I'm wrong. Now the way to solve a question like that, for you, is to study Revelation chapter 19, verses 1 through 10 for yourself and see what you think, in the light of the context and in the light of the teaching of the passage. Fortunately, no great doctrine is involved in the answer to that question.

The next event is the Kingdom of God upon the earth in which all of the promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled. Those promises made back to, made back beginning with Abraham. As a matter of fact, all the way back to the beginning of the Bible, but primarily from Abraham. The Abrahamic promises are fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. Israel shall again be the head of the nations, the church shall be the nobility of that kingdom, and shall rule and reign with our Lord Jesus Christ and with Israel over the nations of the earth.

Now surprisingly, the Bible states that at the conclusion of the Kingdom of God, in Revelation chapter 20, verses 7 through 10, there is to be a final rebellion of the nations against God. Satan you see had been bound during the Kingdom of God, but he is loosed again for a little season. The time is not stated specifically in the Bible, it's just said to be a little season. Satan is loosed for a little season, as if God wants to show for the last and final time, the wickedness of the human heart. And just as I was saying a minute ago, the one thing that has impressed me as I have listened to the commentators for the last two days, is that men are completely blind so far as the nature of man is concerned. And all of God's tests, which have been designed to show how sinful we really are, seem to have missed so far as the great majority of humanity is concerned. There is to be this final rebellion. And men shall really see, finally, how sinful we really are. Because even though Jesus Christ has ruled and reigned upon the earth for a thousand years, men have still, in his presence, been in rebellion against him.

Now after the defeat of that final rebellion, described in Revelation 20:7-10, there follows in verses 11 through 15 of chapter 20, the great white throne judgment. Now believers appear before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. Unbelievers only appear before the great white throne judgment. Will you notice verse 11 for a moment, and 12 of chapter 20, “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.” And by the way, I don’t know where that judgment takes place, I have put this in this way on the diagram, but it takes place in space somewhere. And now we read verse 20,

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; (now that expression the dead, means the dead spiritually) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

So the dead appear before the great white throne judgment, and so far as we know from this passage, no one was found written in, as he says, the book of life, and hence all are cast into the lake of fire. Now the lake of fire is not put on the board. But following this, there comes the eternal state. And that I think is the thing that John writes about in chapter 21 of the Book of Revelation. We call it the eternal state, we call it heaven, or we call it a new heaven and a new earth.

Now let’s read verses 1 through 8, in which we have the vision of the new heaven, and the new earth, and the new Jerusalem, and some details with regard to them in a general way. First of all, verses 1 and 2, in which John declares what he saw about

the new heaven, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth.” Now remember when we were talking about the Book of Revelation, these are visions that the Apostle John saw. Now that does not mean, however, that the reality is not a genuine reality. That is, the reality back of the vision. So when we read about a new heaven and a new earth, we should look for some entity behind this description which John gives us. “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.”

Now men, what that means practically is, if you're going to get any fishing done you better do it now, because there's not going to be any fishing in heaven [Laughter] no more sea. That, by the way, is stated I think, more than once in these last few chapters. And I'm not suggesting in any way that there is anything wrong in going out and being a modern day Isaac Walter. But I think it's rather interesting anyway, 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.”

Now notice he describes this new heaven and new earth as new, now he means by this, it is fresh. The old heaven and the old earth is passed away, it has been tainted by sin. And even though redeemed during the kingdom period, it still bears the marks of that sin. And consequently, the new heaven and the new earth is going to be like a resurrected entity. It's going to be fresh, that's the meaning of the Greek word for new here.

“I saw a fresh heaven and a fresh earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, (fresh Jerusalem, the old Jerusalem faded with all of its past history, this one fresh) coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

Now this I, so far as I can tell, is a literal city. The reason it is described as new Jerusalem is because Jerusalem was the place that God chose. It was the place where he put his name. It was the place where, in the Old Testament, all authorized worship was carried on, and consequently, the heavenly city is called Jerusalem because of its associations. It is the place where God is worshiped. It is the place which all authorized worship, throughout all eternity shall begin in, and so it's called “the fresh Jerusalem.” Now it's a literal city, although its description, as we shall see shortly, is given, I believe, in figurative language. But here the other side becomes this side, and eternity transfigures time.

Now let's read on. And here we're going to read some of the details of the new heavens and the new earth. Verse 3, “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.” In other words, there is to be a complete perfection of divine fellowship in the heavenly new Jerusalem, “the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people,” now that's wonderful you know, when you think about it, that all of the redeemed shall be in that city with the God who has redeemed them.

By the way, in the latter part of verse 3, some of the Greek manuscripts may be rendered this way, “They shall be his people and God with them shall be their God.” “God with them shall be their God.” Now if you remember, that in the Old Testament it was said that the one born of a virgin should be called Emmanuel or God with us. Then it is possible that that is the meaning here. That is, that Emmanuel shall be their God, Jesus Christ shall be their God. However not all the manuscripts have that, and so we must not say that it is the teaching of the passage. It's interesting however, I think that this passage means that, when it says, “and God himself shall be with them and be their God.”

It's striking you know, that Jesus is never called Emmanuel, and yet Isaiah says, “His name shall be called Emmanuel.” The reason being, that the term name, according to the Hebrew, was not a name in the sense that we have a name. We have a name that identifies us, but it doesn't say anything really about us. And it's not very truthful. For example, my name is Lewis. Now Lewis, I think, means a might warrior of God, or something like that, or a mighty warrior. Now it's obvious that that name does not fit me, but it identifies me.

Now in the Old Testament, and in Hebraic thought, the name was designed to do more than identify a person. It was designed to describe them, to describe their character. For example, Isaiah meant salvation, the salvation of the Lord. And so his name was more than identity, it was a name that marked him out as a prophet of God with a special message. And so our Lord was called Jesus, not to merely identify, but Jesus means Jehovah is salvation. It was designed to reveal him, to describe his nature. And so here, God with them, or God himself shall be with them, or Emmanuel shall be with them and be their God. Emmanuel was Jesus Christ's name in the Hebraic sense, and is his name today, for that is what he is, God's salvation.

Now the 4th verse says, “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 remember, I think last time or the time before, well I've been having so many home Bible classes over the last two or three months, I, it's difficult for me to keep all of them absolutely straight. That is, every statement that I've made, which is not in my notes. But it seems to me that I mentioned to you that the Bible does not really give us a description of heaven. It tells us only, or primarily is perhaps a better word, primarily, negatives about heaven. It doesn't tell us what it is because we're not qualified to understand it. We don't have a resurrected nature, or we have not been resurrected and transported there, so that we could understand. So the Bible merely tells us, primarily, that heaven is not like things down on

the earth. For example, Peter, I think I quoted this passage for you, Peter when he speaks about the inheritance of Christians, he says that it is an inheritance that is undefiled. It is incorruptible, it fades no away. In other words, it's not like things on the earth, for they corrupt, they fade away, and so on.

Now, you'll notice here that John does the same thing. “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” In other words, the things that characterize this sinful human existence, are no longer there. But what it is positively, and precisely, the Bible cannot tell us. And consequently, it does not, as a rule, tell us. So the negatives are given. John puts it in his epistle, “It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall be manifested, we shall belike him, for we shall see him as he is. He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” And even then you see, he only tells us that we shall be like him in character, we shall be pure as he is pure.

Now then, there will follow some pronouncements of the one on the throne, and we read, verse 5, “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done.” Now, when he says, “It is done” he means that the purposes of God are completed. You remember when Jesus was on the cross he said, “It is finished” he meant by that, the redeeming work. Now when John hears this, on in the future, these words that come from the one who sits upon the throne, “It is done” he means not the work of redemption, but the whole of the purposes of God. They have now been completed, and we are to enter into the eternal state. “And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.”

You know when you read these great titles of God, “I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end,” I am the one who sits on the throne and I make all things new, you wonder that he could ever pay any attention to us at all, because we must be

just like a fly on a window pane to a God who is named the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. But the very next words show that we are very much on the heart of God, for he says, “I will give unto him that is a thirst of the fountain of the water of life if they join the church.” [Laughter] “I will give unto him that is a thirst of the fountain of the water of life if they do good works, if they are baptized, in water, by immersion, in an approved church, if they observe the Lord’s table, if they are well educated, intelligent, T.V. commentators,” [Laughter] “whatever it may be.” You’ll notice that the Bible says, “I will give unto him that is a thirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Freely, that’s the only way you can get to heaven, freely.

I have a friend who says, “That’s why heaven is going to be full of Scotsmen, because it’s free.” And I lived in Scotland for a year and a half, and it’s not true. [Laughter] This is one thing that’s free that the Scots are like everyone of us, they’re not too impressed by it. Verse 7,

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: this is the second death.”

Now the first death is the death into which all of us are born, because we’re born dead in sins. But if while we are here upon the earth, we do not believe in Jesus Christ, then we die the second death, which is defined in verse 14 of chapter 20 as the lake of fire. That is the second death, to be cast into the lake of fire. The second death is the eternal continuation of the death which we all are born in.

Now then, we come to verse 9 and here John, having described the new heavens and the new earth, now devotes a great number of verses to the description of the city which shall be on the new earth, under the new heaven. Now I would gather from this,

since there is really only one verse, or two verses, devoted to the new heavens and new earth, well I guess one, because the second verse is really about the new Jerusalem too. One verse, devoted to the heavens and the earth and quite a few verses devoted to the city, that the city is more important than the heavens and the earth. Well it's perhaps right to think that because the city is the place where we shall dwell. It is the final home of the redeemed, the new Jerusalem.

So let's read about it in verses 9 and 10. Here's the vision, now remember, when we read of this city, you will notice that the city is called the bride, the Lamb's wife. Now don't let that confuse you. Unfortunately some good Bible teachers have been confused by this, and since the church is called the bride of the Lamb, they have confused the city and the church. But strictly speaking, this is oriental metaphor, because in oriental metaphor when a king ascended a throne, or when a prince entered a city to take over, it was often said that he became married to his dominion. For example, if I were prince so and so, and became by my father's death, king of the land, when I was crowned, in the oriental terminology, it could be said, and was frequently said, that I became married to the people and the land, and they were my wife, they were my bride. And so that is the picture that exists here. Verse 9,

“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God (having the glory of God).”

Now, you will notice that when John is told he is to see the bride, he then is taken away and he notices a city that is coming down from heaven. Now if we just for a moment may speak of this as the new earth, this city John sees coming down to the earth.

Now in a startling interpretation, and I say startling because it doesn't really make much sense at all, some interpreters have had the nerve to say that the city never reached the earth. And that is, that it is always coming to the earth, and that what we have here is something that pertains to the kingdom rather than to the eternal state. That is not the sense of the Greek text. When John sees the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming or descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, he intends that we should understand that that city does come and rest upon the new earth. He's talking about the eternal state here. He's not talking about the kingdom on the earth. And you'll notice that 11th verse, and here I want you to notice this particularly, it says that this city has the glory of God. And then I want you to look at verse 21, “And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, every several gate was of one pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were, transparent glass.” Now I want you to notice that verse, because I hope I am able to deliver you from a literalism that is wrong. There is a literalism that is correct, but there is a literalism that is wrong.

Now ordinarily in the Bible, when we interpret the Bible, we take things literally, unless the facts of the context, studied in the light of related passages, and also as we examine figures of speech and so forth, we take passages literally unless these things indicate otherwise, so that the normal interpretation is to take words at their normal meaning. But if the normal meaning does not make sense, or makes strange sense, then we should look for figures of speech. And this is particularly true in apocalyptic language. Now the Book of Revelation is an apocalyptic book. It is full of vision, it is full of symbolism. John tells us that right in the beginning. He says he received these things and he was to signify, he was to have them signified to him. That is, well Dr. Ironside used to say, “signified” because that's the meaning of the Greek word. That's what signify means, it means to declare by means of a vision. So these are visions. Now when we see the vision of the city, and then we're going to see now the walls described, the streets described, and everything else. Now I don't want to shock you, but nevertheless I want

to tell you exactly what I think about it. I do not think that these descriptions of the new Jerusalem are to be taken literally in every particular.

Now I want you to look at verse 21. Have you ever seen gold that you could see through? Have you? No you haven't because there is no such gold. Yet the gold of this city, this city, is gold that is like transparent glass. Do you see it from verse 21? Well why then is this city described as a city of gold if it's not really gold? Well because it's the only way God has of telling us, who cannot understand what heaven is like, we don't have the faculties for doing it. It's the only way of telling us of the infinite preciousness of that city. And so he describes it as a city of gold, streets, its' walls are of pure diamond, two hundred and fifty feet high, fifteen hundred miles long. Think of that, talk about the Cornier jewels or the Borneo diamond. In other words, this is described in human language, because John saw this vision in order to get over the fact that this is a city that is infinitely precious. The gold is not fourteen carat gold, or twenty-one carat gold, it's the kind of gold that you can see through. It's different, but yet it's precious.

Now, once I have said that, do not get the impression that this is not a regular, a real city, it's just as real as the city of Dallas. But it's different in its makeup, it's a divine city. It's a city suitable for people who have been resurrected. As a matter of fact, now this is what I'm really going to tell you, I'm getting to this, it's a resurrected city.

Now, let me introduce an analogy here. When I believed in Jesus Christ, before I believed in Jesus Christ, I was lost, I was in sin. I possessed an old nature. I was destined for eternal judgment. Then I believed in Jesus Christ, and I was redeemed, I received redemption. Now I have redemption right now. But you see the same old body don't you? Look at it very carefully. Do you see the signs of decay? Do you? Come on admit it. [Laughter] I do. Every day I get up I look in the mirror, they're lines on my face, you know, lines I never used to have, here. The hair is not only sparser but it's a different color. And now it's a race to see whether it will all be gray before it's all gone. [Laughter] And then there are many other ways in which decay has set in, but I'm a new

person. I'm redeemed. You see, I was lost, I am redeemed now. I have a new spirit. You can't see it, it's fresh. It will never die. It's my new spirit. I'm a new person.

But the time is coming when I must die, if I'm not alive when Jesus Christ comes, and my body shall be placed in the grave. My spirit shall go to be with the Lord. Then when the Lord comes, my spirit shall come with him and my body, which in the mean time has decayed to dust, shall by the power of God be caught up and shall rejoin my spirit, and I'll look at it and say, “Hello, what in the world is this that I'm to enter into?” And if I look in the mirror, there are no more lines apparently. All of the signs of decay are gone because I have a body, according to Scripture, like Jesus Christ's own body of glory. And I discover when I walk about in that body, I don't have to pay any attention to doors, I can go right through them, just like Jesus Christ did. In other words, I have a glorified body. So there are three stages. I was lost, redeemed, resurrected in glory.

Now, the same thing transpires with regard to the creation. Do you remember back when man sinned in the Garden of Eden God said, “Because man has sinned, the creation is going to” what “bring forth thorns and thistles.” You see the creation is subjected to vanity or to vainness, Paul says in Romans 8, because of the sin of man. The reason being, that I'm destined to rule and reign over the earth and its destiny is connected with my destiny. So when I sin, the creation suffered. That's why when you grind your garden and you stick your hand back underneath the bush and pull it out suddenly because something has stuck you. That should remind you that all men are sinners, every time you do that, see because that is the product of it, thorns and thistles.

Now, the earth has never been redeemed. It shall be redeemed at the coming of Jesus Christ to the earth. Then the Book of Isaiah, you remember last time we read about the lion laying down with the lamb, and other animals eating straw, wild animals eating straw like the ox? Well in Isaiah chapter 12, Isaiah speaks of many great things that are going to happen to the earth. In other words, the earth is going to have its redemption at the second advent of Jesus Christ. It is now under divine judgment because of sin. It

shall have its redemption here. Then at the beginning of the eternal state, it shall have its resurrection. In other words, it shall be a new heavens and a new earth, fresh. And it shall be characterized by, did you notice verse 11, having the glory of God, a glorified city.

So, in the eternal state, the new heavens and the new earth and the new Jerusalem are glorified cities, glorified cities. Now how can we describe a glorified city? We cannot do it. The only way the Spirit of God can do this is to give John this tremendous vision of a city described by precious jewels, gates of pearl, walls of diamond, streets of gold, this is his way of describing a city which is utterly incomprehensible to us. So that the creation shall have the experience of men, under judgment, redeemed, glorified. Except the stage is one stage later. So, as we are lost, redeemed, resurrected in glory, so the creation is under judgment, redeemed, resurrected in glory. Now that's not a new interpretation. That interpretation has been given of Revelation chapters 21 and 22 since the time of Irenaeus, in the 2nd Century. It's one of the oldest, and I think the best, interpretation of the description given in Revelation 21 and 22 of the new Jerusalem upon the earth. It makes sense to me. It delivers me from the difficulty of saying the streets of the city of Jerusalem are fourteen carat gold, when it is stated that the gold is gold that you can see through. So, that's the way I understand it.

Now then, that after the description, well we don't have time to read all of these verses, after the description of the wife, John describes the city in verses 11 through 21, and then after describing the city in these verses, in verse 22 of chapter 21 through chapter 22, verse 5 he describes the conditions of life in the city. And let's read through these verses because they pertain to us directly. Verse 22,

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, (it's a glorified city you see) and the Lamb is the light thereof. And

the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. (now that of course is his way of saying there is no sin there because darkness in the Bible is figurative of that) And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, (you'll notice by the way, how that in the Book of Revelation in the last two chapters we're coming back now to the things that are described in the opening of the Bible because God is now completing his purpose with regard to man and there is a restoration and also an advance on the things that characterize the creation of man in the Garden of Eden, so we have) the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: (that's the best fruit of the month that you'll ever subscribe to) and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

By the way, that does not mean that the nations will need healing in the sense that they're lost then, but the tree of life is the sacrament of eternity and throughout all eternity we shall have a derived life. Remember we are still creatures, even though we are redeemed and glorified, we still get our life from God throughout all eternity. The attitude of every believer throughout all eternity is the attitude of trust in God. But of course we shall never do anything but trust then.

“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. (and by the way, the fact that they see his face is an evidence of the

perfected character of the redeemed, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God” Jesus said in the beatitude, and here, “they shall see his face” because they are pure in heart) his name shall be in their foreheads. There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

There is a perfected environment, no curse, no night. They are at home with the Lord. You know Mr. Moody used to say, “When I get to heaven, I’m going to sit down for one thousand years in the presence of the Lord Jesus. And when I get through with that thousand years I’m going to say, ‘Where’s Paul?’” Heaven is the place of perfected environment. It’s our home.

A few years ago I was in the east preaching a Bible conference, and was talking with a Christian, a man who had been a Christian for many years and he told me a very interesting story about G. Campbell Morgan, which I had never heard. It seems that a number of years ago there was a contest in the *London News* for the best definition of home. And this went on for a number of days in the paper and quite a few Londoners, and others who got the paper were interested in the contest, and they sent in a lot of definitions. Among the definitions that were sent in were these: “Home is the place where our stomachs get three square meals a day and our hearts a thousand.”, “Home is the place where we grumble the most and are treated the best.”, “Home is the place where the great are small and the small are great.” I kind of like that definition.

Well Morgan was preaching in London, not long after that, and although there’s no direct evidence that he was reading the definitions of heaven, or home, in the paper, still he must have been, because in the course of his exposition one night, he said that he had the best definition of home. And he said, “My definition of home is this: Home is the only place where I feel at home.” And then he said, “What I want to say to you is this,” he said, “I frequently travel, I travel around the world preaching the word. I’m in lots of

homes. And when I come into the homes of the people with whom I stay, they almost invariably say to me, ‘Now Dr. Morgan, this is your room, this is the bathroom that you’re to use, here are the towels, and we want you to feel at home.’” But he said, “You know, I never feel at home.” He said, “In the first place, I love to get up in the morning before breakfast and go down and raid the ice box. But if I did that it would break all of the conventions of the homes in which I am.” He said, “Furthermore, when I get home, I like to take off my shoes, and go over and pull my chair up in front of the fire and put my shoe, take my shoes off, put my feet in my socks, up in front of the fire and wiggle my toes.” [Laughter] And he said, “I do that all the time at home, but if I did that in the homes of the people in whom I was staying, why, they would be very much embarrassed by it.” He said, “Home is the only place where I feel at home.” And then he said, “You know Paul was referring to this when in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 he said, ‘To be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord’ that’s the meaning of that Greek expression, ‘To be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord.’” And then he stopped. And there was about fifteen hundred people in the audience, and he stopped and he looked out at the audience and he said, “Since I have been converted this earth is not my home. In other words, heaven is really the only place where I can feel at home.”

And you know that’s true. If you are a genuine Christian and you have believed Jesus Christ and you know him as your personal savior, heaven is the only place where you can really feel at home. And the best thing about heaven is the people who are there. Heaven is heaven not because the streets are gold, who cares about that really? After you’ve been in Texas, what difference do things like that make? [Laughter] Who cares whether the walls are made of diamonds or who cares that the gate of the city is all of pearl? That doesn’t make any, any real difference after we take a good look at that. But heaven is heaven because of who is there. And it isn’t the saints, heaven’s not going to be heaven because you’re there, and I’m going to get to see you, or because I’m there and you’re going to get to see me. Oh I grant you, it’s going to be good to be able to

look at those whom we have known and who have gone to be with the Lord, that's part of heaven. And heaven surely is going to be getting to get acquainted with some of the angels. I'd like to know a little bit about Michael and Gabriel and the rest of the angelic host, but primarily, heaven is heaven because of Jesus Christ. And when we get to heaven I'm sure that every one of us who really appreciates what he has done for us, that's going to be the characteristic thing of heaven we're going to be there with the Lamb. And we're going to be at home with him.

Mr. Moody was one of our great evangelists and he used to love to tell the story of a little girl that lost her mother. It seemed that, it's just a little girl just a few years old, and her mother was very sick. And because it was quite a problem to take care of the little girl while the mother was in the hospital, it was thought best to take the little girl and to put her with a relative or a friend for a few days or weeks, while Mother was in the hospital sick. And after some time the mother died. And then of course, the father and the relatives had a problem on their hands. What shall we do about telling the little girl about her mother's death? They decided that they would let her stay just a little longer with, in the home where she was staying, because they hoped perhaps she might really forget. And so they took her to the home, ultimately, and they opened the door and the little girl rushed immediately into the kitchen. She looked around, she rushed into the bedroom, she looked around, she rushed into one of, two of the other rooms and finally she went back into a little room where Mother frequently got down upon her knees and prayed and she looked there. And she came back and she said, “Where's Mother?” And finally, they were forced to tell her. And the little girl said, “Take me away, take me away! This home is not home without Mother.”

And that's the way heaven is going to be. It's not going to be home if Jesus Christ is not there. That's the characteristic thing about it. And you'll notice that as John describes it, this is the thing that really comes home to him. Verse 6, or verse 5, “And

there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

Now we don't have time to read the rest of the chapter, let me just sum it up for you. The book concludes with a series with testimonies. The angel's testimony, in verses 6 through 15, you'll notice that it is characterized by the word come, “Behold I come quickly” verse 12. Then there is the testimony of the Lord himself, in verses 16, 17, 18, and 19 and again, it is characterized by the words come, “I come addressed to him and I come addressed to all who are outside of him.”

And finally it concludes with John's own testimony in verses 20 and 21 and again it's, “Surely I come quickly.” And John responds to the testimony of our Lord by saying, “Even so, come Lord Jesus.” So the Bible concludes with great stress upon the coming of Jesus Christ. And you will notice it is imminent. That is, it can come any moment. And even though the day of Pentecost has taken place, some have said that that was the second coming of Christ. Even though the new birth of the members of the church have, has taken place down through the years, some have said that when we are born again that's the second coming of Christ. Still John is saying at the conclusion of the Revelation of the program of God, “Even so come quickly Lord Jesus.” In other words, the coming that the Bible refers to is the coming when he comes for the rapture of the church and concludes that period of time by coming to the earth.

Time is up, we must stop. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for this wonderful section, which describes for us in human language, that which is indescribable, the new heavens, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem. We thank Thee for the assurance that there is a new heavens and a new earth and a new city, in which we shall dwell throughout all eternity. And we thank Thee for the assurance that through faith in Jesus Christ we shall some day be in that city. And now Lord, we pray Thy blessing upon all of the things that we have studied together.

And may the things that have come from Thee remain in our minds, and those things that are not of Thee, may oh God, we forget them, may they be put out of our minds by the Holy Spirit. And this we ask in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Now if you have a question or two you have just about five or ten minutes, and that's all. Yes ma'am.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] The question is, “Will we be at the great white throne judgment and if so, will we recognize and understand what is transpiring?” I presume you mean? Well now since the Bible says that we shall judge angels, and while angels are not necessarily judged here, and since the Bible says that all judgment has been committed to the Son and we are forever with him, it seems to me that we will be at the great white throne judgment. Now, I'm sure that since we are there, we understand too, what is transpiring. But so far as the exercising of the judgment itself, I would presume that it is our Lord who takes the lead in the judgment.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] No, now the question, I'm doing this for the tape. The question is, “Does the wiping away of tears refer to what happens at the great white throne judgment?” No, because, strictly speaking, the wiping away of tears described in the 7th chapter of the Book of Revelation is a wiping away that takes place before the Kingdom of God. I think that the wiping away of tears has to do with this, and this is just my own personal explanation. I think that when the Bible says that God will wipe away all tears, oh by the way, it is of course, “there shall be no more crying” with reference to this too,

the eternal state, both are true. What it means is that we shall understand the reason for the sufferings and trials of the earth. That's the wiping away of tears, in other words, the explanation of what has transpired, not that we shall have some fresh suffering up there, fresh weeping or crying, but rather, all of that shall be done away with then. And I've often used the illustration of a rain that occurs during the night. And the next morning you get up. And the sun comes up and it's a bright sunny day but the effects of the rain are still seen because the leaves of the tree are still dripping with water. And that is what I think the “no more crying” or “God shall wipe away all tears”. The day has come, there's no more suffering. But there is the explanation of why, all of our whys are going to be answered then. Yes sir, Mr. Thomas.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Yes, on the earth. He says that, if you'll notice, the expression is in chapter 7 through 10, “The nations of the earth” the precise words are these, verse 7, “and when the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed out of his prison and shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth.”

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Yes, that's right. People are born during the Kingdom of God. And even though our Lord exercises a rule of righteousness, no violence in the kingdom, whenever violence breaks out there is immediate judgment. Still, men yield him feigned obedience, the Bible says. And so some are, while they are outwardly obedient, as soon as Satan is released he is able to go out and work up a rebellion, a fresh one.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] The Bible doesn't say anything about that. We would presume of course, there is such, you know. But, there is a judgment that takes place before the kingdom, which has to do with their entrance into the kingdom. But, the Bible doesn't really say anything about the other judgment. Yes sir.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] I think so, yes. Now Bible teachers differ over that. Some Bible teachers think that we shall see God. I don't because in the first place, the Father doesn't have a face. And, but if we understood that figuratively it might mean that you would see God the Father. But I do not think so. I think we shall see the Son. Read it.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Well yes, I think that it probably is a reference to the fact that the throne of God and of the Lamb, because they, you see, the Lamb is at the right hand of the Father and he rules, and his servants shall serve him, of course I think, has to do with the Lamb. The throne will be there of course. But it doesn't say we shall see his face. Go ahead.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] All lost, “I saw the dead, small and great” and that term dead, is a reference to the unbelieving, dead.

[Comment from the same audience member]

[Johnson] That's right. Some might have severer judgment than others because of greater light and greater responsibility. You remember this principle is expressed in the Bible. Such as, servants being beaten with few stripes and many stripes, and also in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, you know our Lord says, “It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for you Capernaum.” Both are going to be lost because of their rejection, but more tolerable, less tolerable. There is a distinction in degree of judgment.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Judgment seat of Christ

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Satan is cast into the lake of fire and then those who have not believed in Jesus Christ, they too are cast into the lake of fire.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Oh yes, he will suffer in the lake of fire. [Laughter] I think you can, with a great deal of assurance, leave that in the Lord's hands. [Laughter] Yes ma'am.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] At what time will we, the new body? At the rapture of the church.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] As far as we know, as far as we know, they will receive their resurrection bodies preparatory to the entering into the eternal state. But we will have already had ours. See we have ours at the rapture of the church. That's the resurrection, that when the Bible speaks of the resurrection that's the event to which it refers. But here, of course, their resurrection will occur at some time then. But the Bible doesn't really describe that. It's purely an inference. Yes ma'am.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Question is, “What Scripture brings out the fact that there will be people born during the kingdom age?” In Isaiah, in chapter 65 and verse 20, we have a reference that seems to indicate this. Verse 20, “And there shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” And I think that there are probably some other texts too, that refer to that. The main purpose of this verse of course, is not to set forth that, but rather to point out that a person who dies at a hundred shall be considered a mere child and so forth. In other words, there is a different kind of life then.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Verse 23, “They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord and their offspring with them.” That would seem to suggest that too.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] No. Well you see, those who are in the tribulation are those who enter the kingdom. And they enter the kingdom without resurrection. Now that is described in Matthew chapter 13, for example, and also Matthew chapter 25.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] They are redeemed but they do not have new bodies, resurrected. See there's a difference between redemption and resurrection. See they are saved, and because they are saved they are allowed to enter the Kingdom of God, but they still have their o...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]