

Growing in Christ Lesson 13 4Q 2012

When All Things Become New

Read Memory Text: “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Rev 21:4

When will all tears be wiped away? Before or after the millennium? Wouldn't it be after since it is in conjunction with there being no more death?

What about the sentence there will be no more sorrow or crying – if this is true, wouldn't it rule out the possibility of an eternal burning hell?

In other words, if there were an eternal burning place of torment, then wouldn't there be sorrow and crying by some of God's children for all eternity, so this verse would not be true?

As we talk about the events in Revelation 20-22 – what should we keep in mind?

- Do we know for certain what everything means?
- Or, is this both highly symbolic language and events that have not yet happened, therefore, we must remain open to possible change in our understanding?
- If someone believes differently than we do about these events does that mean they are not saved?
- Should we make certain interpretations of these verses a test of fellowship?
- Should we get upset or angry if someone understands these verses differently than we do?
- Can we explore different ideas, about the future, than what we have always been taught without getting upset?
- Are there any baseline points or ideas that we can use to know whether certain interpretations are true or not?

- God's character of love? Can we use the law of love and liberty to determine whether certain interpretations are accurate or not?

SUNDAY

Let's read Revelation chapter 20 together.

The Millennium – what do you understand this to be?

What have you heard regarding the teaching of the millennium?

When does it begin? When does it end?

Read the last paragraph, "That beginning..." thoughts?

What is this bottomless pit? How is Satan bound? Is it an action of force, or is he bound by circumstances?

Why doesn't God leave the wicked humans alive on earth for the 1000 years? Could they actually live? What would it be like to live on earth with no Holy Spirit, with Satan in full control, with nothing but evil in the heart and no righteous to attack? How is the earth described? Is it described as a great abyss, which is the same description as the earth in Genesis 1:1, the earth was void, without form and darkness covered the face of the deep. Could it be, without God here to sustain earth, that things revert back to chaos and human life is not sustainable in the vacuum of a black hole?

Does it make a difference to our salvation to be certain on this?

What difference does it make to understand this one way or another? Does it have any bearing on how we understand God and his methods?

Last week we explored some of the symbolism of the sanctuary service – this week we explore more symbolism, symbolism of prophecy. Do you think there could be a connection?

Is the millennium referenced anywhere OT sanctuary service?

What about the Day of Atonement – what happens on that day, what is symbolized and then what is the feast that follows?

The High Priest goes into the MH place and then comes out to where the people are and puts his hands on the head of the scapegoat and the scapegoat is taken into the wilderness – then, later in the cycle of events is the feast of tabernacles, which ends the yearly cycle.

What does this represent? Christ in heaven working to bring his people into “at-one-ment” unity, reconciliation with God, working to cleanse the people from everything that separates them from God. This would include removing the lies from our minds about God, exposing Satan as the deceiver he is, and transforming our characters to be like Christ’s.

Then, after his work in the MH place is done, he comes out, to where the people are, he comes back from heaven to where we are, and Satan is recognized, seen to be the true source of the lies, and rebellion, and he is held accountable by all living intelligences and is left alone in the wilderness of this world for 1000 years. Then, sometime later, God and the saved return and the final events take place, the earth is renewed, and we dwell on earth with God forever – we tabernacle with the Lord on earth forever.

Thoughts?

The scapegoat – were sins placed on the scapegoat – i.e. bad deeds, or was the acknowledgement that he is the source of lies placed on the scapegoat. In other words, we see the scapegoat for what he is and thus hold him responsible for the

unwarranted attack on God, the deception of man, and the pain and suffering he has caused? “It is you Satan, that caused this, not God!”

- 12 How you have fallen from heaven,
 O morning star, son of the dawn!
 You have been cast down to the earth,
 you who once laid low the nations!
- 13 You said in your heart,
 “I will ascend to heaven;
 I will raise my throne
 above the stars of God;
 I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
 on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.
- 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
 I will make myself like the Most High.”
- 15 But you are brought down to the grave,
 to the depths of the pit.
- 16 Those who see you stare at you,
 they ponder your fate:
**“Is this the man who shook the earth
 and made kingdoms tremble,
 17 the man who made the world a desert,
 who overthrew its cities
 and would not let his captives go home?”** ISA 14:12-17

Thoughts?

Notice, the description is that the people awaken and recognize Satan for what he is, a deceiver, the responsibility for sin is placed back on Satan.

What does the laying on of hands symbolize? Some suggest it is the transfer of sin – what do you think?

Could it mean anything else?

Take the blasphemer outside the camp. All those who heard him are to **lay their hands on his head**, and the entire assembly is to stone him. Lev 24:14

What is being symbolized here? Were the people transferring sins to the person? What were they doing?

Were they perhaps saying, your fate is on your own head, what happens to you is based on who you are, we recognize you for what and who you are?

Could the symbolism of the High Priest represent the recognition that Satan's demise is on his own head, we see him for who and what he is?

MONDAY

Read Revelation 20:4 – thoughts? What does it mean?

Read last two paragraphs, “One of the three....”

Thoughts?

What does this mean? What are they going to be judging?

Let's read Rev 20:4 from a variety of versions:

- I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. NIV
- Then I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given the power to judge. GNT
- And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them ASV
- And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. NKJV

Thoughts?

- Does it mean we are judicial agents, determining guilt and innocence and meting out proper imposed punishments?
- Or, does it mean we are given the ability, the power, to rightly judge what has happened in the Great Controversy and why the wicked experience what they do?
- In other words, our minds are healed and we understand things correctly now?
- If the judgment is actually created beings, sitting around in committee, weighing the evidence for and against individuals, determining either guilt/innocence, or accepting God found them guilty and we are merely determining the length of their fiery punishment before execution – what would this mean about God and his law?

Is God's law imposed or natural? Does God's law have built in consequence or are the consequences for breaking God's law externally imposed by God?

Does it make a difference regarding the kind of being God is and our ability to trust him?

Which view increases trust in God, which view undermines trust in God?

If you had broken both the imposed law of not speeding, and the natural law of physics by running off the road and having your body impact a fixed object at high speed, do you want to see law enforcement or a judge? Do you want to see EMTs and the doctor?

Does it make a difference how we view God in our ability to trust him? Why do so many religious teachers insist on presenting God as a law enforcer? Who benefits from this?

When we think of the judgment described in Rev 20, who benefits from this judgment?

So what do you understand happens during the 1000 years?

What does it mean that death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire? Does it mean death was killed? How does one kill death? Would it be through life? What is the lake of fire?

Is sin composed of material substance, matter? Can fire burn sin? What is sin composed of? What consumes it? Where does the fire originate? Does it have any connection with Bible description of God's presence being a fire?

TUESDAY

What do you understand happens at the end of the 1000 years?

The New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, filled with the saints of God, with God and Jesus, and angels, and the wicked humans are raised to life and are on earth with wicked angels and Satan.

The gates of the New Jerusalem are open and Satan and his evil hoard go about making implements of war – for some period, then when they march on the city to attack it the gates are closed.

What are the implications of this? Why resurrect the wicked to do this? What is revealed by this experience?

When they march on the city, God unveils himself and the fire of his presence begins to flow over the earth – the fire of love and truth. The wicked, who had been deceived, are no longer deceived and realize they have been lied to. They turn on those who have lied to them and many are killed in the slaughter. Then, the fires of truth continue to burn through the minds of people and they come face to face with unremedied sin in their characters and this causes terrible agony as they experience themselves for what they are and, eventually die.

Then, fires of combustion consume all nature that has been polluted, deformed, and defective from sin, and the earth is made new.

Here is one description from a book called *Early Writings*:

Then Jesus and all the retinue of holy angels, and all the redeemed saints, left the city. The angels surrounded their Commander and escorted Him on His way, and the train of redeemed saints followed. Then, in terrible, fearful majesty, Jesus called forth the wicked dead; and they came up with the same feeble, sickly bodies that went into the grave. What a spectacle! what a scene! At the first resurrection all came forth in immortal bloom; but at the second the marks of the curse are visible on all. The kings and noblemen of the earth, the mean and low, the learned and unlearned, come forth together. All behold the Son of man; and those very men who despised and mocked Him, who put the crown of thorns upon His sacred brow, and smote Him with the reed, behold Him in all His kingly majesty. Those who spit upon Him in the hour of His trial now turn from His piercing gaze and from the glory of His countenance. Those who drove the nails through His hands and feet now look upon the marks of His crucifixion. Those who thrust the spear into His side behold the marks of their cruelty on His body. And they know that He is the very one whom they crucified and derided in His expiring agony. **And then there arises one long protracted wail of agony, as they flee to hide from the presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords.** {EW 292.1}

All are seeking to hide in the rocks, to shield themselves from the terrible glory of Him whom they once despised. And, **overwhelmed and pained with His majesty and exceeding glory**, they with one accord raise their voices, and with terrible distinctness exclaim, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" {EW 292.2}

Then Jesus and the holy angels, accompanied by all the saints, again go to the city, and the **bitter lamentations and wailings of the doomed wicked** fill the air. Then I saw that Satan again commenced his work. He passed around among his subjects, and made the weak and feeble strong, and told them that he and his angels were powerful. He pointed to the countless millions who had been raised. There were mighty warriors and kings who were well skilled in battle and who had conquered kingdoms. And there were mighty giants and valiant men who had never lost a battle. There was the proud, ambitious Napoleon, whose approach had caused kingdoms to tremble. There stood men of lofty stature and dignified bearing, who had fallen in battle while thirsting to conquer. **As they come forth from their graves, they resume the current of their thoughts where it ceased in death. They possess the same desire to conquer which ruled when they fell.** Satan consults with his angels, and then with those kings and conquerors and mighty men. Then he looks over the vast army, and tells them that the company in the city is small and feeble, and that they can go up and take it, and cast out its inhabitants, and possess its riches and glory themselves. {EW 293.1}

Satan succeeds in deceiving them, and all immediately begin to prepare themselves for battle. There are many skillful men in that vast army, and they construct all kinds of implements of war. Then with Satan at their head, the multitude move on. Kings and warriors follow close after Satan, and the multitude follow after in companies. Each company has its leader, and order is observed as they march over the broken surface of the earth to the Holy City. **Jesus closes the gates of the city,** and this vast army surround it, and place themselves in battle array, expecting a fierce conflict. Jesus and all the angelic host and all the saints, with the glittering crowns upon their heads, ascend to the top of the wall of the city. Jesus speaks with majesty, saying, "Behold, ye sinners, the reward of the just! And

behold, My redeemed, the reward of the wicked!" The vast multitude behold the glorious company on the walls of the city. And as they witness the splendor of their glittering crowns and see their faces radiant with glory, reflecting the image of Jesus, and **then behold the unsurpassed glory and majesty of the King of kings and Lord of lords, their courage fails.** A sense of the treasure and glory which they have lost rushes upon them, and they realize that the wages of sin is death. They see the holy, happy company whom they have despised, clothed with glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life, while they are outside the city with every mean and abominable thing. EW 293

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

The New Earth – how do you think God will recreate the earth, in one quick moment, or will he do it in six days and rest on the seventh?

Which would you prefer? Would you like to see it done all over again as he did in the beginning?

Read second paragraph, "The word translated..." thoughts?

What was God's purpose in Genesis? A showcase for his law of love, in a living being, an entire civilization and ecosystem governed by his methods and principles of love. Adam and Eve were to govern earth, now Jesus governs the universe from earth. Any thoughts or implications?

Read Rev 21:9-22:5 then read last paragraph, thoughts?

I believe there is a literal city, a physical place we will dwell. But, do you believe this is literal or metaphorical?

Can someone, including God, marry an inanimate object? Doesn't marriage require two consenting beings? Does marriage, as God designed and would participate in, require love, affection, unity of heart and mind? So, could the marriage of the lamb really be to an empty city made out of inanimate material?

Note the city is adorned like a bride, what adornments would a city need? Would it not be adorned with the living beings who are in unity with God?

So, while I believe there is a literal city, in which we will live, and a literal earth, upon which we will dwell, I believe this description is highly metaphorical to describe the people of God, built together into a dwelling place for God.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Perhaps there isn't..." thoughts?

What did sin do that caused a separation between God and man?

What is changed such that the separation no longer exists?

Read second paragraph, "Also, true fellowship..." thoughts?

What do you think the fellowship, relationship, between man and nature will be?

If we are to be a dwelling place where God dwells by his Spirit, if we are to be in such unity with God that we can communicate with him at all times, share our thoughts and know his presence, and if we were created in his image to reveal him, do you think we will be able to commune with nature, animals in a similar way? Do you think we will be able to have awareness of what is going on in a plant? Will we have ability to control inanimate nature?

Read last two paragraphs, thoughts?

Isn't the size of the universe amazing? Isn't the God who built it amazing?

Is the size of the universe alone, sufficient reason for God to be worthy of our worship? 19th century theologian George MacDonald said:

What is the deepest in God? His power? No, for power could not make him what we mean when we say *God*. A being whose essence was only power would be such a negation of the divine that no righteous worship could be offered him; his service would be only fear.¹

Thoughts?

Isn't it God's character of love that merits our humble devotion and love?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "In the typical..." thoughts?

What do you think this means? Does it make a difference to you if you believe the heavenly sanctuary is built out of mortar and brick, versus built out of living beings?

¹ George MacDonald, *Discovering the Character of God*, p. 29.