

Immanuel in Heaven Part 2

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Revelation 21:1-8
Preached on: Sunday, January 3, 2016

It is my great joy to open up the word of God to you this morning. I would invite you to take your Bibles and turn to Revelation 21. We will be looking, once again, at the first eight verses. We have moved away from our normal exposition where we've been studying 1 Thessalonians; I'll get back to that later on this month when I am back with you. But I wanted to speak one more time to you about this concept of "Immanuel in Heaven." Immanuel, God with us. Immanuel, we saw in the Christmas season in the living Christ.

The surest measure of your soul's health is what you think of Christ. Do you think of him often or little? Do you think of him accurately or inaccurately? Is he seated upon the throne of your heart? Is he esteemed as your glorious King? Or do you live merely for yourself? Do you enjoy his presence? Do you obey his commands? Do you defend his honor? Do you live for his glory? Is Christ the center of gravity around which your life orbits? If the answer is yes, then Christ is honored, you are filled with joy, you are blessed, you are energized to serve him. But if the answer is no, your soul is sick, perhaps unto death. The Lord Jesus tells us that there will be many that profess faith in Christ but very few will actually possess that faith.

The world would have us forget him, would have us redefine him. For many people, he is just a God of their own liking; some effeminate, sentimental, smiley face Jesus that is easily manipulated; a God that is known only for his love, not for his holiness, for his authority to judge and condemn. But, folks, the Jesus of the Bible is, as I said earlier, the uncreated Creator of the universe. He is the one for which all creation actually exists and it's my desire this morning to make much of him once again as we look at Immanuel, God with us both now and forever, even in our future home, and it's that aspect that I want to dwell upon this morning. In fact, a proper Christian worldview is uniquely focused heavenward. You will recall the Apostle Paul tells us that we are to set our mind on things above, not on the things of this earth, and this is even more important when we face persecution so that, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:16, we do not lose heart.

I was talking with some friends this last week who were lamenting over the constant and deliberate Christian bashing they must endure at their work, maybe you experience that as well. And it's real easy when you're immersed in that type of environment, it's easy for you to lose heart, but Paul says, we do not lose heart and he goes on to say, "for this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to the things which are seen, but to the things that are unseen, for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a

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house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." It's for this reason that Paul told the church of Rome, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." The fool who has no fear of God lives for himself and basically says, "Life is short, play hard." But the wise man who fears God and who knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior lays up treasures in heaven.

So let's fix our gaze heavenward this morning. Look beyond the temporal into the eternal. Let me begin by reminding you of what Jesus said in John 14. In verse 2 he said, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." Isn't it an amazing thought to know that it is the desire of God to dwell with his people? The Father's house that Jesus spoke of refers to his heavenly temple, the new Jerusalem, where we will serve him day and night according to Revelation 7:15. The place where he will dwell among us as we see here in Revelation 21:3. That place where we will behold the glory of his presence forever and bask in that ineffable light of his Shekinah, an amazing thought. Now, the King James version is a poor translation here. They speak of "many mansions, in my Father's house there are many mansions." Well, no, there is only one house, there is only one temple which is the Lord, a sanctuary in which there are many dwelling places where all of the saints will have equal access to God. The new Jerusalem, as we study it, will allow equal and simultaneous access for all of us to come into his holy presence, making possible just the unceasing worship and service of the saints as priests, as we are able to traverse the infinite universe that he has created, to do things that we cannot even imagine, resulting in joy that we cannot comprehend.

But now, I want you to remember the big picture. You will recall that in the Garden, sin caused man to be separated from God. God cursed his creation, including mankind, and from that day forward, man was unable to dwell in the presence of God without being destroyed. In fact, you will recall that God is described as a consuming fire. That's something you don't want to be around unless somehow you are prepared for that. And God told Moses in Exodus 33, "You cannot see me, you cannot see my face, for no man can see me and live," but because of God's desire to dwell with man in sweet communion, you will recall that he instructed his chosen people to build a special sanctuary that would actually allow the consuming fire of his presence, his Shekinah, to dwell with them while at the same time protect them from his glory which was actually concealed in an unlit, private, innermost chamber, in the Holy of Holies. But as we come to Revelation 21, we see what all of that pointed to. We learn that God has prepared a new Holy of Holies, one that will be illumined by the very light of his presence; one that will allow us to dwell with him and to experience the fullness of his glory; a sanctuary where he and we will dwell together.

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Now, biblically we know that, first, God is going to purge the heavens as well as the earth from sin by uncreating it. We talked about this before. He's going to cease holding all things together by the word of his power. It's all going to fly apart. 2 Peter 3:10, "the heavens will pass away with a roar." In the Greek, the word is (whirling sound). It "pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." In other words, all that we know, all that we can see, is one day going to fly apart. It will vaporize into complete oblivion. God will uncreate his creation and he will create a new heaven and a new earth where the curse no longer exists, and this will be a place where the saints in their glorified bodies, their resurrected bodies, will be able to enjoy his presence and dwell with God forever without any separation, without any fear, without being disintegrated, shall we say.

The new Jerusalem, according to Revelation 21, and we're not going to be able to look at all of that, that's beyond the scope of my discourse to you this morning, but it's a 1,500 mile cube, an immense Holy of Holies that cannot be defiled from within because the curse has passed. It cannot be defiled from without because all potential desecrators have been confined to the lake of fire. And this is the force of the loud voice from the throne, you'll notice here in chapter 21, verse 3, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them." It's absolutely astonishing to think that one day we will be able to dwell eternally in this colossal sanctuary where we will see him just as he is, 1 John 3:2. We will see the one who today, as Paul says, dwells in unapproachable light. There we will commune with him. There we will serve him. And amazingly, according to our Lord's parable of the wedding feast, you will recall in Luke 12, the Lord is actually going to wait and serve us; wait on us and serve us. Absolutely astounding.

May I also remind you that John now witnesses in this vision that God gives him, this revelation of Jesus Christ, he witnesses that which he earlier penned in 1 John 3:2. Remember, there he said, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be." Then he says this, "We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." Now certainly, you would all agree that right now it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. Even as the glory of the incarnate Christ was concealed in the flesh of his humanness, so too our undeserved glory as adopted sons remains concealed until our resurrected state. We remain in the confines of our unredeemed humanness like an ugly seed that awaits its planting. We await the transformation of resurrected bodies, as Paul says, "When we are sown a perishable body, but raised an imperishable body. Sown in dishonor but raised in glory. Sown in weakness but raised in honor."

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Then we, like that seed, will rise from the ground and blossom into a stunning flower that will give off the fragrance of holiness and we shall rise in the image of Christ and live with him forever, and this is why John went on to say, "When He appears, we shall be like Him." Why? "Because we will see Him just as He is." You must understand that we cannot see him right now because we have not been made like him. We have to be made like him in order to really see him. You will recall that Paul described Jesus to Timothy as "dwelling in unapproachable light whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power."

I find it fascinating physicists tell us that light is a form of energy that is on a spectrum. On one end of the spectrum you have radio and microwave and infrared light, and then in the middle you have visible light, and on the other side of the spectrum you have ultraviolet light, you have x-ray and gamma rays, and in that full spectrum, we are only able to see 1/1000th of what is really there. It's an astounding thing to me, yet in that minuscule range, think of all the breathtaking beauty that we are able to behold with our eyes, and it's fascinating that God who is Spirit, would often reveal himself, materialize himself, in the light of his Shekinah in glorious light. In fact, Daniel tells us that God emanates light without shadow, for light dwells with him; and the Psalmist tells us that he is the one who covers himself with light as with a garment. And isn't it interesting that just like that spectrum of light, that one little tiny sliver where we can see all of this beauty, so too we can only see just a little of who God is in all of his glory. We can see a little of him in all of his glory in his creation. We can see a little of him in his word. We can see a little of him in the incarnate Christ. A little of him in the body of his people. But, folks, one day, we will be able to see him just as he is because we will be made like him.

So with this as a bit of background, we come to Revelation 21 which, I might add, is really a full exposition of Isaiah's promise in Isaiah 65. Let me read that to you. Isaiah 65, beginning in verse 17, God says, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing And her people for gladness. I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying."

Now, as we learned the last time we were together in the first eight verses of Revelation, believers will really be able to experience, according to what God is telling us here, five categories of heavenly bliss. We looked at three of them last week. Let me give them to you by way of quick review. We will experience a new heaven and a new earth, in other words, it will be something that is totally new; something that we have never seen before; something that has never before been created. We will experience a new Jerusalem which

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will be the crown jewel of heaven. It says that it "will come down out of heaven from God," this 1,500 mile cube, so to speak. By the way, that's about the distance from Florida to Maine in every direction, 2.25 million square miles, an immense Holy of Holies like the most holy place in Solomon's temple that was also a cube of 20 cubits. The new Jerusalem is going to be the most holy place for all eternity. It will be the very sanctuary of God himself where we will dwell in the fullness of his presence and be able to behold the unimaginable majesty and beauty of our God. The most holy place will descend, according to what we read here, and it will hover over this new earth that God is going to create in a new heaven.

Now, if I can digress for a moment, I have very dear friends, godly men, who sincerely differ with my interpretation and many others of this particular text, and many other prophetic texts. They would argue that this city and all of these measurements are merely, for example, "symbolic of the fulfillment of all God's promises expressing the paradox of the completeness of infinity in God." I'm not sure what all that means but, in other words, this is just symbolic. This isn't real. You don't take any of this literally. In fact, many believe that everything in Revelation has already taken place and it just merely refers to that which happened in A.D. 70 when the Romans came in and destroyed the Jews and so forth, so it's not an actual place. Another godly scholar who represents many in this camp would say that the new Jerusalem "merely symbolizes the fact that the most holy place and the people of God will be identical in the consummation without any separation at all between God and his spotless bride." My question to them, and I've talked with them at length, is simply this: why should we disregard the normal meaning of language? On what basis do we do that? Moreover, by what authority do you have to say, "Well, I know that's what God has said, but that's not what it means. Let me tell you what it means." I'm very uncomfortable with that and so I humbly differ with my brothers and argue that there is no reason to spiritualize the prophetic literature when it is so clear. In fact, John describes the angel's measurements of the city wall in verse 17. Notice, he says he also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also angels' measurement.

Now, such precision in measurement and in language, to me, argues for a literal interpretation and would not such a city bring eternal glory to God? Of course it would. Moreover, while spiritual interpretations might be true, they simply do not stir the human soul like a literal interpretation. For example, spiritualizers will tell us that Jesus promised to come in Matthew 24 on the clouds and power and great glory after the day of tribulation, and all of those things, that that's already happened in A.D. 70 when somehow in Jerusalem when Jerusalem fell and what that basically, what Jesus was really saying is not that he's going to actually do those things, but that he comes "and takes up residence in your heart and it is there where his kingdom is established." Well, that is partially true, but there's got to be so much more. For example, think of this: to be able to

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see the King of kings returning in unrivaled glory to establish a literal earthly kingdom is so exceedingly more moving and God-glorifying than saying he came to take up residence in our heart and it is there where his kingdom is established. That just really leaves me cold. Likewise, to realize that a new Jerusalem will come down out of the third heaven, come down from God, and hover over a new earth and house the glory of God and his bridal church is exceptionally more awe-inspiring and soul-satisfying than telling me that none of that is going to be real but, rather, God is merely telling us that he is going to fulfill all of his promises and the people of God will live without any separation between them and God.

I mean, folks, everybody knows that. God has said that repeatedly in clear language, and if that is what is being communicated here, why didn't he just say that? Why go into all of this elaborate description and detail? Folks, I don't know about you, but I want to see the glory of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, like Habakkuk says. I want to see the kings of the earth yield up their glory in the face of the glory of heaven and walk in the light of the presence of my glorious God. That's what it says here in verse 24 of Revelation 21, by its light will the nations walk and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Imagine, dear friends, a literal understanding of this, as I believe we should take it. Imagine that day when all of the redeemed from every nation, every tribe, every tongue, has access into the eternal city, the very dwelling place of God. That gets me excited and I think that's what God is trying to do here, to give us a glimpse of the glory that is to come.

So, we will experience a new heaven and earth, a new Jerusalem, and then, thirdly, a new intimacy. By very quick review here, "Behold," verse 3, "the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them." In other words, when we finally enter into the presence of his glory, when we see him face-to-face, we will experience a level of communion and relational intimacy like we have never before even imagined, much less experienced. So this brings us to where I want to be here this morning, 4. we are also going to experience a new creation. Verse 4, "and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

Now, the new creation of heaven is here set in contrast with our present fallen condition that is really characterized by these four ills that have plagued man ever since sin entered the Garden: death, mourning, crying, and pain. We can all identify with that, some of us right now. Death, mourning, crying, and pain. And here we see the tender compassion of God in the very first phrase, "He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." The imagery is so precious here. It's that of a father seeing his little child weeping and coming

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to bring comfort and wiping away the tear, as I have done many times with my children and my grandchildren, and some of your children. So this is the picture here.

David spoke of this kind of compassion in Psalm 57:8, "Thou hast taken account of my wanderings, put my tears in thy bottle. Are they not in thy book?" It's for this reason it has been the ancient custom of the Jews to make little vials like you would see in a laboratory, and I've seen them in different colors; some of them they have dug up and found even from the days of Jesus. They would take these vials and they would capture their tears in a bottle and put a cork on it to remind them that God is sensitive to every tear that they cry; that he will never leave them nor forsake them, symbolizing God's compassion. But in the new creation, there won't be anymore tears because the curse is lifted. All of that is over. Moreover, there will be no more death which is always associated with mourning and crying and pain. Remember, the devil who has power over death, Hebrews 2:14, and death itself will now be cast into the lake of fire, according to Revelation 20.

Now, it's also important for you to realize that there is a great contrast that the Lord is giving John here in this writing, a contrast between the fate of Babylon, which will actually be a literal city some day of Satan's kingdom upon the earth under the rule of the antichrist, a place that will one day really symbolize and manifest the godless materialism and the blasphemous idolatry that man has always preferred over worshiping and serving the one true God. So Babylon is being set in contrast here with the new Jerusalem. This contrast is set up by the command in Revelation 17:1, "Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot," and then in chapter 21, verse 9, he says, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb," the new Jerusalem.

Babylon will be a real place characterized by the utter absence of God. The new Jerusalem will be a real place that will be characterized by the ubiquitous presence of the living God. Unlike the new Jerusalem, Babylon is characterized in Revelation 18 as a place of torment and mourning, death and dying, weeping and crying, versus the new Jerusalem characterized by no more death, mourning, crying, and pain. And what hope this should bring to each of us, to know that this is what awaits the redeemed by God's grace alone.

Then notice he says, "the first things have passed away." In other words, the metastasizing corruption of sin and all of the misery that it brings, it's all gone. And how can this possibly be? Oh, I love this, notice verse 5, "And He who sits on the throne said." Now, let me stop here for a second. This is referring to God the Father. This is the first time God the Father has spoken in Revelation since verse 8 of chapter 1, and he says, "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to

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come, the Almighty." Then, as if to underscore the absolute certainty of these promises, he speaks and he says, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, 'Write, for these words are faithful and true.'" Oh, child of God, think of this: we will be a new creation in which we live as the adopted sons of God. We will live forever with Immanuel, God with us.

Then, notice, he says, "Write for these words are faithful and true." In other words, "What I'm telling you here is carved into the granite of my word, the word of the living God." You can take this to the bank, in our vernacular. This is going to happen. You will recall that while Jesus was on the earth he promised that, "Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away." That's the point here, and I also find it interesting that there are over 300 Bible prophecies that were perfectly and literally fulfilled by the time of Christ's first advent, therefore we have no reason to believe that the rest of these promises will be fulfilled in any different way.

Verse 6, "Then He said to me, 'It is done.'" Boy, it sounds certain, doesn't it? It should. "It is done." What is done? Well, the subject of the verb is "all things" in verse 5, and it's in the perfect tense which indicates that the action now stands accomplished. In other words, all that God has promised regarding the uncreation of the old world, the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, everything regarding the new Jerusalem, all that we will experience, including the fate of the unsaved, all of this is accomplished right now. It merely awaits the actual moment in history in which it will be manifested. Do you recall that upon the cross of Calvary the Lord Jesus said, "It is finished," right? And so ended the work of redemption that had been set into motion in eternity past, and now the Almighty that is seated upon the throne of absolute sovereignty says, "It is done." And with these words will come the end of redemptive history and the beginning of the eternal state.

Now, who is this Almighty Sovereign? Well, he describes himself here and he says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega." Again, this is the same statement he made of himself in chapter 1, verse 8, thus confirming that this is the Father speaking. But it's also interesting that this is the same appellation or title or designation as the one made of the Lord Jesus Christ later on in chapter 22, verse 13, which therefore confirms the words of Jesus when he said, "I and the Father are one." So, that God is the Alpha and the Omega underscores both his omniscience as well as his sovereignty because Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet and therefore they represent all that can be expressed in language. We know that letters can be mixed and matched in an infinite number of ways to make words and express concepts, and even so, we know that God is the one who has created human beings in his image capable of communicating and understanding language, and like letters of the alphabet that can express a vast infinite

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array of concepts, the point is, so too God is the reservoir of all information. He is the source of all that can be known; the source of all that can be revealed. He is the omniscient God of glory. There is nothing that exists outside the realm of his knowledge, so there is nothing that could possibly happen that would catch him off-guard. There is therefore nothing that could possibly thwart his intended purposes.

And notice he says here as well, that he is the beginning and the end. I love this. Talk about finality. In other words, he is the first cause and the final say in all things. Remember what Paul said in Romans 11:36 at the end of that great doxology? "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." That's the point. Ephesians 4:6, we are told that there exists one God and Father of all who is over all, and through all, and in all. That pretty well covers it, right?

So this is the signature expression of God that he places upon his promise to us regarding all that is going to transpire in the new heaven and earth, the new Jerusalem, this new intimacy, this new creation, and 5. guess what else we're going to enjoy? I like to put it this way: a new satisfaction. Notice at the end of verse 6, "I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost." This is such a powerful metaphor. It pictures a desperation for that which gives life. We all know that without water, you will quickly die. If you've ever seen cattle, as I have, that are desperate for water, or I've seen deer the same way, their tongues will hang out and they're real thick. It's a terrible looking sight. They have to have water quickly or they will die. This is the picture here. It's a picture, if you will, of spiritual dehydration. "I am going to give to the one who is spiritually dehydrated from the spring of the water of life without cost." In other words, "for the person who is earnest for undeserved mercy, for forgiveness, for a righteousness that is foreign to their own so that they can somehow come into the presence of a holy God, to that person, I am going to be their satisfaction. I am going to give them eternal life," which, by the way, water pictures throughout Scripture.

And it's interesting as well that this is the second time the personal pronoun "I" is used in this verse. In other words, he's emphasizing that, "I as God, I alone can satisfy this thirst and I'm going to provide it from the spring of the water of life without cost." Again, this is a contrast to the radically different thirst quencher that is offered by the harlot Babylon in chapter 17, who will make sinners "drunk with the wine of her immorality." And if you've ever been around the spring break crowd, if you've ever been around the Hollywood crowd, the people that live to drink and to party and are filled with immorality, they are never satisfied. They are never happy. They have to have more and more and more until they destroy themselves.

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And who are those who thirst? Well, it's those who long for this forgiveness, who long for God's saving grace. This speaks of the man who has become so sick of the consequences of sin in his life and in the world, so broken over the weight of his own guilt, so overwhelmed by his utter helplessness to change and to save himself, that he's like the tax collector in Luke 18 that you will recall stood a distance away from Jesus and he was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven and he was beating on his chest saying, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" Now, that man thirsted for what God will provide.

Over the years, I've counseled with many very wealthy people that have enjoyed all of the pleasures life has to give, and you find them in desperation telling you just how lonely and how empty and how discouraged they are. It's like a drug addict. They begin to take the drug because of the euphoria that it gives them, but before long, the high isn't that high so you have to have more drugs to get back up there, and eventually you can't ever get there so now you're not living for the pleasure, you're living to avoid the pain. That's how many people live. My friend, there is nothing that can satisfy the longing of your soul like the love of Christ; like his saving grace, his saving power, his transforming grace. In fact, Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me as the Scripture said, from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water." How different from the man or the woman who does not know Christ.

God spoke through Isaiah and gave a similar invitation to those who thirsted in the Old Testament for the free gift of salvation. Isaiah 55:1, he said, "Come, everyone who thirsts. Come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost." And in verse 7 he said, "Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon."

You will recall in John 4, Jesus came to a woman of Samaria and we are told in that passage that she had five husbands and now she was living with another man that wasn't her husband, an immoral woman that was terribly unsatisfied, and Jesus in his compassion and in his omniscience knew that and he said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water," referring to the water in the physical well, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." And, beloved, here in Revelation 21, we see this magnificent well of eternal life springing up eternally, a gift from God received by faith. "I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost." What an amazing thing to see how God satisfies our thirst.

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You know, if you are here today without Christ, you really have no life. You're just living to escape the painful realities of life, and there are so many things that you can go to, to somehow find relief, but you're not really living. You're just existing. Moreover, in the quietness of the night, you know that there is a nagging reality that the wrath of God abides on you because you are living in rebellion to him, and unless you come to the fountain of eternal life through repentant faith in Christ Jesus, your rebellion will one day doom you to eternal separation from God, and in that eternal separation, your thirst will be increased exponentially and it will never be satisfied though you exist in a lake of fire, but not a lake of life-giving water like you could have if you place your faith in Christ.

And what a contrast to the bliss of heaven that awaits those who thirsted for God. He says in verse 7, "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son." And who are those that have overcome? Those who have thirsted for him; those who have placed their faith in Christ. 1 John 5:4, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" You see, this will be the person that will inherit all these things as we see here. Inherit carries the idea of entering into possession of something or partaking of these things. And what are these things? Well, all the things of verse 5. The overcomer will inherit all of God's blessings that we have been describing here.

But notice what else is added to this promise that we will inherit all these things, and this is the supreme blessing that will be ours in verse 7, "and I will be his God and he will be My son." What an astounding thing, dear friends, to be an adopted son of the living God, a son of the Father. No wonder Paul declared, "I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Then later on in verse 23 of Romans 8, he talks about how that we are all waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. The full expression of who we are. This, my friends, will be the final and ultimate satisfaction for all those who thirst for God who made us in his image.

But notice, finally, the contrast of those who will not overcome by their faith in Christ. He says, verse 8, "But for the cowardly," here in this text that just speaks of those whose faith was not genuine; they cowered in the face of persecution; those who shrink back to destruction, as we're told in Hebrews 10. "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable," in other words, those detestable polluters who practiced pure evil, "and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers," pharmakos in the original language; we get our word "pharmacy" from that. Drugs are always used in association with occultic practices and we're going to see this in the prekingdom judgments during the time of the tribulation before the Lord returns. Sorcery will play a huge role in the future delusion

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Immanuel in Heaven Part 2

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Revelation 21:1-8

Preached on: Sunday, January 3, 2016

created by the antichrist. We're already seeing this being manifested as the world is being prepared for these times. "Murderers, immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Paul spoke of this in 1 Corinthians 6:9, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" He says, "Do not be deceived." The reason he says that is because there is great deception. There are people today trying to deceive you. "Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God." In other words, all people who are slaves to sin, who live in the bondage of all of those things, are those who have never been made new creatures in Christ by God's grace. They've never experienced the power of being born again, of regenerating grace, and therefore their doom is set. How unspeakably tragic to pursue all of the unsatisfying fleeting pleasures of this life and then forfeit the inheritance of the kingdom of God. And if that isn't bad enough, to be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

Dear friend, is Immanuel, God with you, with you? I hope he is, and if not, I plead with you today to repent, to ask God to show you the reality of your sin and the glory of the cross before it's too late. And, dear Christian, may I challenge you in closing? Take time daily to set your mind on the things above, because everything else in this earth is trying to do just the opposite. And, secondly, focus your thoughts on the astounding reality of Immanuel, God with you now and forever. Don't allow yourself to get bogged down into all of the politics and pain of this fallen world. We're not citizens of this place, alright? Think about your eternal home. Learn to live in the light of eternity. You are a child of the King, and pray that the Spirit of God will help you enjoy the presence of the lover of your soul.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for these eternal truths. I know that for those who do not know you, everything that has just been said is pure baloney. You have said that to the natural man the things of the Spirit are foolishness because ultimately they are spiritually dead; they have no capacity to discern spiritual truth. O God, I know that the only way they can see the truth and respond to it is by your regenerating power so we cry out to you to save them. And for those of us who know you, may we live in light of these truths, that others might see the light of Christ in and through us, and that we might enjoy more fully every expression of your love and grace for us. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly, for it is in your name that I pray. Amen.

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We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.

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