Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Living in Anticipation of Christ's Return, Part 1
Scripture: 2 Peter 3:11-13
Code: 61-26

Now let's turn to the Word of God for our study tonight. Second Peter chapter 3, we're looking at the last section of this epistle, verses 11 through 18, and titling it, "Living in Anticipation of Christ's Return." Peter has unfolded divine revelation in this great epistle for the purpose of safeguarding the church from the incessant onslaught of false teachers.

And you'll remember that in chapter 1 he gave us some very important instruction about how to make sure that we're in a right relationship with God. Then in chapter 2, he described the characteristics of false teachers. And then in chapter 3, he has been refuting their main error in whatever assembly Peter was directing his attention. Obviously, these false teachers were attacking the Second Coming. So in the first ten verses of chapter 3 Peter has done a masterful job of refuting those who deny the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

So chapter 1 really laid a foundation by talking about our own relationship to the living God and making sure it is as it ought to be. Chapter 2 gave us a very clear insight into what to look for as we assess those who offer themselves as true teachers but are not. And chapter 3 then deals with arguing for the truth of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. And so as we have completed those first ten verses, we have to say that Peter really has dealt a deathblow to the purveyors of lies about the return of Jesus Christ.

He has unmasked the false teachers in this epistle. He has armed all Christians who read it and understand it for protection. He has obliterated their errors about judgment and the return of Christ. And now the epistle is nearly over. Powerfully he has affirmed the truth that Jesus will come. And we should really thank him for that. The world should thank him for that. The unregenerate world even should be grateful that history has a goal, that history has a purpose.

If Jesus is not coming, if there is no judgment, if God's not going to intervene, think about what that means. It means that men are left with absolutely no hope, no future, no nothing. William Barclay gave three superb examples from heathen tombs of what happens when men reject the view of history that says it has a goal, a climax, and God will intervene through the coming of Christ and bring history to its proper end. One of those tombs expresses hedonism, it says, "I was nothing, I am nothing, so thou who art still alive, eat, drink and be merry."

When there is no goal for history, when there is no end, when there is no future, hedonism prevails in some hearts and you live anyway you want to live. After all, there's nothing to hold you back. And then it says on one of the tombs, "Once I had no existence, now I have none. I am not aware of it, it does not concern me." And that indicates that for some there was nothing but apathy. I don't really care, I haven't had any existence, I don't have any now, I won't have any, it means nothing.

Finally, having no goal and no end in history leads to despair. Another tomb from ancient times says, "Charidas, what is below? Deep darkness. But what of the paths upward? All is a lie, then we are lost." Quite an epitaph for a tomb. Whether it's hedonism or apathy or abject despair, without God intervening in human history, without having a goal for history, without having a purpose for history, without having an end for history, without having the righting of wrong, life takes on absolutely no meaning at all. And so, even those who do not know Christ should be grateful that He's coming back to make it right.

But beyond that, Peter's not so concerned with unbelievers as he is with Christians. He is concerned that we as believers have a proper understanding and a proper response to the return of Jesus Christ. And so before he can close this epistle, he has a final thing to say. One writer puts it this way, "With the little remaining strength at his disposal, he grips his quill more tightly and with a firmer hand then scribes upon the parchment before him, the final words in his faithful attempt to strengthen his brethren.

"The sands in the hourglass of time are slipping away and soon with neither voice nor pen will he be able to serve the Savior here among the sons of men. Savage men are closing in upon him and perhaps already the sentence of execution has been passed. Very soon perhaps brutal hands will drag him away to the cursed tree where he will be crucified. As he contemplates the immediate possibilities and reviews again the words he has just written, he wonders whether there may not be need for one further emphasis. He decides there is. And he pens the final words."

The final words begin in verse 11. "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way," says Peter, "what sort of people ought you to be." Stop at that point. Having just made it very clear that Jesus is coming, he now poses the very, very important issue. What does that mean to you? What kind of person should you be? If you know that Jesus is coming; if you are anticipating what He calls the day of God, what he calls in verse 18 the day of eternity; if you're anticipating the final state, the glorious future, the eternity that God has planned for those who love Him, how should it impact your life now? If you're looking forward to that final heaven, that final glory, shouldn't it have some very, very strong implications for how you live?

Now keep this in mind. He uses the phrase here "the day of God," as we shall see. He uses the phrase in verse 18 at the very end, "the day of eternity." Both "the day of God" in verse 12, and "the day of eternity" in verse 18 refer to the eternal state. He says if you're longing for that eternal state,

that new heaven and new earth, that glorious eternity; if you're longing for that, it ought to have an impact on your life.

We don't long for the day of the Lord. That term is used in verse 10. That's a term of judgment, destruction and damnation. We're not longing for the day of the Lord. We're not longing impatiently for God to come in furious final damning judgment. We know it's inevitable. And it's a painful thing to think about. But we long for what comes after the day of the Lord, namely that eternal day of God, the eternal state of righteous glory when, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians, everything resolves in God in His ultimate glory.

So, Peter says, "Look, if you're waiting for the coming of the great day of God, the eternal state, the glory that shall be yours in the presence of Jesus Christ when He comes and sets up His eternal glory, if you're waiting for that – " verse 11 " - and you're anticipating beyond the destruction of the day of the Lord, what sort of people ought you to be. What sort of people ought you to be.

That phrase, "since all these things are to be destroyed," takes you back to verse 10 which says, "The heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." It takes you back to verse 7, "The present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men."

Now since we know that's going to happen, since all these things are to be destroyed in this way which will usher in the day of God, the eternal state, the eternal glory, what sort of people ought you to be? Now you'll notice in verse 11 there's no question mark. Even though at first sight it appears as a question, it is not a question. It is an exclamation. In fact, that little phrase "what sort of people" comes from a very unique Greek term, *potapos*. It doesn't actually ask a question at all. It marks an exclamation of astonishment. It does not expect an answer.

It could be translated this way: "How astoundingly, how astonishingly excellent you ought to be." When he says "what sort of people ought you to be," implied in that is at what level of excellence ought you to live, exclamation point, when you know that you're going to see beyond the day of the Lord the day of God and eternal glory. That is a straightforward challenge to Christians to conform their lives to the reality of eternity.

If Jesus is coming to reward you, if Jesus is coming to take you to be with Himself; if Jesus is coming to build for you a new heaven and a new earth; if Jesus is coming to deliver you from judgment and to usher you into the great eternal day of God; if Jesus is coming to take you into the kingdom of eternal righteousness, that ought to impact your life. In other words, if you have been made for that, created for that, redeemed for that, sanctified for that, then you ought to begin to live in the light of that. That's what Peter is saying.

Beloved, if this is what we have been saved for, how we ought to live even now to be consistent with our destiny. In fact, in 2 Corinthians 5:9, Paul would add his voice to Peter's point. He says, "We have as our ambition whether at home or absent to be pleasing to Him, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad." There's coming a time when we're going to receive an eternal reward. We're going to all stand before that judgment. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians, at that point in time when the Lord judges the secrets of our hearts, every one of us will have praise from God and we will enter into our eternal reward.

What kind of people ought we to be then? We're not living for this world. We're aliens, strangers, foreigners. We as Christians are not a part of this world system. We don't love the world, neither the things that are in the world. It's not our place. We are pilgrims. We belong to a heavenly place. We look for a city whose builder and maker is God, a city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. What kind of people ought we to be, at what level of excellence ought we to live, he says. And so, belief in, confidence in the glory of the coming day of God in which we will dwell forever in righteousness with Him compels us with some implications.

Peter lists a number of them which we'll talk about tonight and next Lord's day evening. First of all, there is a general statement in verse 11. "What sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?" And that's the arena in which he is speaking. Whatever kind of people you're to be, it is in the area of godliness and the area of holiness that he is speaking. Holy conduct refers to action; godliness refers to attitude. Holy conduct refers to the way I live my life; godliness refers to the spirit of reverence within me by which I live my life. Holy conduct refers to that which rules my behavior, and godliness refers to that which rules my heart. And so he is saying what kind of person ought you to be in heart and in behavior, in motive and in action, in attitude and in duty.

Both terms, by the way, are in the plural, untranslatable in English. But in Greek they just take the concept of holiness and godliness and spread it all over life. It's as if he is saying what kind of person should you be in holinesses and godlinesses, so that it's just spread over everything, every area of our life. This is Peter's final message. This is his last word. And as you know, tradition tells us he was crucified and he was feeling unworthy to be crucified like his Lord, so he pleaded to be crucified upside down, which he was. But his final word is this, "We're headed for glory, what kind of person should we be in the arena of conduct and heart, holiness, godliness, in view of this glorious future." That's really the issue.

What is the answer to that? What is the answer? The answer flows, starting in verse 12 down through verse 18. What should it be that characterizes us? Let me give you a little list, then we'll cover it. Expectation, pacification, purification, evangelization, discrimination, maturation and adoration. Now, you don't need to get those down, I just want to kind of give you a little feeling for the flow. Those are

the things that should mark us out in holy conduct and godliness.

Frankly, this implication of the Second Coming takes us back to 1 Peter chapter 1. I need to draw you back there, 1Peter chapter 1 in verse 13, Peter says, “Therefore gird your minds for action,” that’s the outside again, “be sober minded,” that’s the inside. So get your conduct right and your attitude right, and there we are with that holy conduct and internal godliness again. And he says, “Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” There’s that same concept.

Live in the light of that unbelievable grace that is going to be bestowed upon you when Jesus is fully revealed in all His glory and sets up His eternal kingdom. Live in the light of that, and it will impact your action and it will impact your mind, or your heart, your inner being. And then he says, “As obedient children – “ 1 Peter 1:14 “ - don’t be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior.” He’s calling again for holiness in the light of living for eternity.

Holiness then is to extend to all areas of life, all matters of life. That’s consistent with where we’re headed. That’s the direction we ought to take. Verse 15 makes this very important point. “But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves.” If we are God’s children, if we’re headed for His kingdom, we should behave in a manner consistent with that identification. You remember back in Matthew 5:48 at the very beginning of the New Testament when the first recorded sermon of Jesus is given. It says, “Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

The apostle Paul said in Colossians, “Set your affections on things above and not on things in the earth.” Paul said our citizenship is not on the earth, but in heaven. In other words, we are to live in the light of glory and that compels us to a level of holiness and godliness that is absolutely pervasive in life. Hope makes us holy. Hope makes us holy. Now, since some day we’re going to be with Him, how do we begin in this process of holiness? What are the component parts of making us the kind of people we ought to be?

First, let’s call it expectation. First point, expectation. Notice verse 12. “Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning and the elements will melt with intense heat, but according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” Here is the concept of expectation. Since I am headed for eternal glory, since I am going to be a citizen of God’s eternal kingdom, since I am going to be delivered from the day of the Lord to enter into the eternal day of God, I should be living in expectation of that. Pretty obvious.

Let’s look at verse 12 and just see the component parts of this tremendous truth. Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, it’s as if Peter is saying you certainly shouldn’t be afraid of it,

you certainly shouldn't be worried about it. You ought to be like those of whom Paul speaks and with whom he identifies himself in 2 Timothy 4:8, when he talks about those who love Christ's appearing. You ought to be like John who said, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." Like Paul, who said, "It's nice to be here, far better to depart and be there." You ought to have a longing in your heart for the coming of the day of God.

That verb "looking for" has the idea of expectancy, has the idea of waiting with a watchfulness, alert to the Lord's arrival. That word "hastening" adds the idea of eager desire. Not only are you watching and waiting, but you're eagerly desiring that it happen. You're not just waiting for it, you're waiting for it and you want it very badly and you want it soon. That's the idea. Instead of living in fear of the future and fear of judgment and fear of the day of the Lord, you live in holy eagerness. You live with that 1 Corinthians 16:22 word *Maranatha* on your lips; come, Lord, living constantly in desirous expectation.

What does that mean? That means that I'm going to be dealing with some issues in my life. That means I'm going to be dealing with some things in my life so that I can say I want Him to come because I know when He comes I won't be ashamed at His coming. First John 2 talks about not being ashamed when Jesus comes. Chapter 2 verse 28, "When He appears we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." If my life is right, then I'm not going to be ashamed. I'm going to be eager and I'm going to be anxious and I'm going to be desirous that Jesus come.

That little phrase "the coming," again that wonderful word *parousia*. It literally means the presence. It could read, looking for and hastening the presence of the day of God. And if you take that word *parousia* and just kind of move it through the New Testament, everywhere you find it, it emphasizes a personal bodily presence of Jesus Christ. It's not the presence of an event. It's not the presence of a place. It's the presence of a person.

And so we're waiting for the presence of Jesus Christ which will be the glory of the eternal day of God which will be the jewel of the new heavens and the new earth. And if our life is right, we have no shame because we have no unconfessed and repeated sin, then we can eagerly anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ. We long for Him to return.

As I mentioned earlier, that little phrase "day of God" does not refer to the day of the Lord, I think. Some would equate the two. But I think it refers to that eternal day that's mentioned also, as I said, in verse 18, the eternal state when God is all in all. We aren't eager for the day of the Lord, we are for the day of God. So, he says if you're looking for it, that is watchful, and if you're hastening the presence of that day, that is you're eagerly anticipating it, longing that it come, then he says, "On account of which the heavens will be destroyed," and so forth.

He is making a very interesting point. Follow it. If you're looking for and hastening the day of God, in order to bring it something else has to happen. On account of the day of God, God has to destroy the present universe. So we can say then that what he means there is to make way for the day of God there must be the day of the Lord. If there is to be a new day and a new kingdom and a new heaven and a new earth; if there is to be a new universe in which righteousness dwells, then the Lord is going to have to destroy the old one. Destruction of the whole sin-cursed universe.

Just as we learned back in verses 5 and 6, that the Lord destroyed this universe once by water, this earthly part, drowning all of the people that were in it from waters underneath and waters above the earth, so in the future He will destroy it by fire. And so Peter is saying when it comes time for the day of God, the day of the Lord must come first. Please note this, the day of the Lord is not the result of any natural process. It is not the result of any natural calamity. It is not the result of some nations using nuclear weapons. It is not the result of any man or any natural event or natural cataclysm. It is a divine judgment by Almighty God through the power of Christ to whom He has committed the judgment. It is the work of God.

I hear people trying to explain it as a nuclear war or some scientist who hits the wrong button and sends a chain reaction that destroys all the atoms. It is not some man's doing. It is God's doing. And then just to emphasize the horror of it, Peter repeats what he said in verse 10. Look then at verse 12 again. "On account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning and the elements will melt with intense heat." That's almost identical to verse 10 and very close to verse 7, as I read a moment ago.

Now there are some previews to this. Now keep in mind now, the day of the Lord comes in two parts. It comes when Jesus returns in the Second Coming at the end of the time of Tribulation. And then He sets up His thousand-year kingdom. At the end of that thousand years, the second phase of the day of the Lord comes. God sees it as one day, because a thousand years with Him is as one day, as it says in verse 8.

But the first time that Jesus comes, at the beginning of the thousand years, there are some previews of what's going to happen at the end of the thousand years when the full fire of the universe takes place. Let me show you the previews that happen a thousand years earlier. Look at Revelation. This will be a little…a little taste of what it's going to be like.

In Revelation chapter 8, verse 7, the trumpets are blown to pronounce the judgment at the end of the Tribulation time. And as the first trumpet is sounded, "there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; a third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. And a second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed."

It’s unimaginable to think that a huge, huge ball of fire coming out of the sky could hit the seas, destroy a third of the seas without creating a tidal wave that would be absolutely beyond imagination, a flaming ball of fire plunging into the sea, to be added to the other fires that come down to the earth that burn up a third of everything on the globe. That’s only a preview of the devastating fire of the universe that will consume everything at the end of the thousand years when the Lord sets up the new heaven and the new earth.

Chapter 9 of Revelation, another preview is coming. Chapter 9, verse 17, there comes a great army, at the sounding of the sixth angel, trumpet, and this army comes, the horses and those who sat on them. It says “the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. And a third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone,” which is like lava, “which proceeded out of their mouths.”

This is some kind of graphic figurative description of a great fiery force. Maybe God just opens the earth and turns loose the guts of its volcanic capacity, which as you know now goes to about 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit, and consumes a third of the world. That’s just a preview, that’s just a little taste of what’s coming at the end of the thousand-year kingdom.

Chapter 16 of Revelation and verse 8, and here you have the final judgments. First you read about the seal judgments, then you read about the trumpet judgments which come more rapid fire, and then you read about the bowl judgments which are the most rapid of all, happening very, very rapidly at the end of the Tribulation, just before the Lord Jesus comes. And it says in verse 8 of chapter 16, “The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.

I don’t know what the Lord does, it’s almost as if He has the angel pour gasoline on the sun and it becomes hotter than it’s ever been, and it begins to literally incinerate people in the world.

Chapter 18, another preview of what is to come. Here we get the description of the dissolution of man’s world, his enterprise, his economy, Babylon the great. Verse 8, “in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.

Then lastly chapter 20 in verse 9. Here we find at the end of the thousand years, Satan released from prison. He comes out to deceive people who have lived through that thousand years and rejected Christ. “And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints,” and all the rebels from out of the kingdom are going to try to attack “the beloved city, and fire came

down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

And that is the starting point of the final devastation of fire that consumes the whole universe. That's how it's going to end. And the Lord has given us ample warning, Old Testament, New Testament, very descriptive previews coming at the end of the seven-year period of Tribulation, just prior to Jesus' return to set up His thousand-year kingdom. And then a taste of that furious fire is going to come upon that great rebellious army that are going to fight Jesus Christ at the end of His earthly kingdom.

And then comes the holocaust when all of the universe is consumed and the elements melt with intense heat. Right down to the elements. What do you mean that elements? That's that word *stoicheia* again. it means the microscopic components that make up the building blocks of matter. Right down to the very essence of matter, it's all going to be consumed. First John 2:17, "And the world passes away." The universe, the earth and the world means the system, social, economic, cultural, religious, whatever it might be, it's all consumed.

When God's day arrives, the final destruction has taken place. Man's day is over. That's why it's the day of God. It's not man's day anymore. His corruption of the universe and that of fallen angels is finally judged. And so verse 13, Peter says, "But according to His promise we are looking," not for the day of the Lord. We're looking for the day of God, the day of eternity, "for the new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."

According to His promise, singular, the promise has been stated over and over again that the Lord is going to bring a new heaven and a new earth, paradise regained after the holocaust of fire. And we're looking for it, for a new heaven and new earth. That, really, is one idea. There aren't two definite articles there; there are no articles there. We're looking for a new heaven-slash-new earth, one unit. That is God's promise. But according to His promise, who cannot lie, who always speaks the truth, we're looking for a new world, a new universe.

That promise goes way back. That promise goes way back to the Psalms. In Psalm 102, for example, in verse 25, "Of old Thou didst found the earth and the heavens are the work of Thy hands, even they will perish but Thou dost endure, all of them will wear out like a garment, like clothing Thou wilt change them and they will be changed." The new heavens and the new earth. The prophet Isaiah saw it. Again, Isaiah 65:17, "For behold, says the Lord, I create new heavens and the new earth," and listen to this, "and the former thing shall not be remembered or come to mind."

Listen, one of the great realities of eternity is you will have no memory of time. You will be consumed in the new heaven and the new earth and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.

“Be glad and rejoice forever,” he says, “in what I create.” And then in Isaiah 66 in verse 22 he says it again, “ ‘Just as the new heavens and the new earth which I make will endure before Me,’ declares the Lord, ‘so your offspring and your name will endure.’ ”

Yes, Peter says, according to His promise, there’s a new heaven and a new earth. The word “new” is the word *kainos*. It means new in quality, not new in chronology. Not just new in order, but new in quality. It’s different, not like anything we’ve ever known. And how does he sum up the character of its newness? Beautifully, verse 13, “In which righteousness dwells.” The word “dwells” just doesn’t do it, folks, just doesn’t do it. There’s a Greek word, *oike*, which means to be at home, to be at home. This word is *katoike*.

Whenever, as I told you, you add a preposition to a verb in the Greek language you intensify its meaning. *Katoike* means to settle down and be at home, to settle down and be at home; to take up permanent, comfortable residence. And so he is saying that new world is a world in which righteousness is no longer a stranger, a world in which righteousness is no longer a wanderer, a world in which righteousness is no longer a foreigner, a world which is the home of righteousness, permanent, perfect existence. That’s the world we look forward to. That’s the world that has been promised to us in Jesus Christ. That’s where our history is going. That’s what’s prepared for those who love Him.

In Isaiah chapter 60, verse 19, Isaiah writes about that world. Listen to what he says. “No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will the moon give you light.” Isn't that something? We won't have the sun for light and won't have the moon for light. “You will have the Lord for an everlasting light,” what a statement, “and your God for your glory. Your sun will sent no more, neither will your moon wane; for you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, and the days of your mourning will be finished. Then all your people will be righteous.” Great statement. All your people will be righteous.

Look at Revelation chapter 21. Here is a New Testament description. Revelation 21:1, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea,” no separation. “I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall settle down and be at home among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them. This is where righteousness is at home because this is where God is at home. For God is the light, the everlasting light.

Verse 4 says “He’ll wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning or crying or pain; the first things have passed away. And “He who sits on the throne,” the Lord, “says, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ ” All things new. “And He

said, ‘Write, for these words are faithful and true.’ And He said to me, ‘It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.’ ”

If you want to be in on this kingdom, you have to overcome. You say, “How do I overcome?” John said it. What is it that overcomes? “Even our faith.” Faith in whom? “Faith in Jesus Christ.” Verse 8, “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and 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.

Go to verse 23, and here again what we read in Isaiah. “And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. And the nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth,” that is those were redeemed, “shall bring their glory into it. And in the daytime, for there will be no night there, its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.” All the nations will be there basking in this glory. But Verse 27, “nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

It is the place in which righteousness settles down and is finally at home. It is the place where righteousness is no stranger. It is the place where God dwells. What a world. What a world. Our response should be that of John. Go to chapter 22, Revelation verse 8, “And I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things and when I heard and saw I fell down to worship.” His heart was right. He just fell at the wrong place. He fell at the feet of an angel who said, “Get up, worship God, He’s the one who did this.” Down to verse 20, “He who testifies to these things, says yes, I am coming quickly.” And what is John’s response? “Amen,” what? “Come, Lord Jesus.” Come, Lord Jesus.”

And you see, if we know that we’re headed for the new heaven and the new earth; if we know that we’ll be delivered out of the day of the Lord, phase one and phase two; if we know that we’re going to escape the judgment because we have been ordained unto eternal life, eternal glory, and eternal righteousness, and that our dwelling place forever will be in the eternal day of God, where righteousness is all there is; if that is God’s plan for us and that is the reason He redeemed us, what kind of people ought we to be. Certainly not like people who are going to spend forever in the burning pit.

First of all, we ought to be people characterized by expectation. We ought to be living in expectation. The sequence of events, the Lord Jesus comes to Rapture His church out, then comes phase one of the day of the Lord, the holocaust of judgment. And then we come back with Him to reign with Him in that thousand years in our glorified bodies.

At the end of that time He destroys the universe, preserving the already made righteous and redeemed through that destruction and ushers us finally at the end of the thousand years into the day of God. That's what we're made for and that's what we should be anticipating. We should live in expectation. The best is yet to come. So many rich things in this passage. Let's pray.

Thank You, Father, again, for this wonderful reminder of our future. Thank You that You've written our names in the Lamb's Book of Life. Thank You that You've caused our hearts to turn in faith to Jesus Christ and be saved. Thank You that we're headed for heaven. Thank You that we shall never be condemned, but only know eternal glory. Not because we're worthy, not because we've done anything to deserve it but because You loved us and You gave Your life for us, because we simply received the offer of salvation freely given.

Father, I pray for anyone here who is headed for the terrors of judgment that tonight You'll turn their hearts and may they come to Jesus Christ, not only to receive blessing and joy and peace in this life, but eternal glory. God, we pray that You will save many tonight and turn them toward You to become sons of God who shall inherit the new heaven and the new earth. And for those who are Christians, Lord, may we live in expectation and may we live in eagerness, watching for the coming of the Savior, anxious and eager that He come that we might enter into that for which we have been destined, even to be made like Jesus Christ, to dwell in His eternal righteousness in Your presence, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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