

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 10/4/92
Revelation 21:6-8 "The Truth About a Painful Subject"

Intro: People generally want to know the truth. Even if it's painful. Now I know some people are "deniers." But most want the truth laid on the table.

Illust: I've been in hospital surgery waiting lounges, "Doc, tell me the truth..."

Illust: Court Oath, "Tell me the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth"

Today I want to pass on to you the truth about a painful subject. Not because it's pleasant. Not because you will leave today "feeling good." Now because I personally want to. But because you need to know.

Present Series:

Today we are concluding a brief 3 week mini-series entitled "Life Beyond the Grave." Two weeks ago, we looked at Luke 16, the story of the Rich man and Lazarus. When it comes to Life Beyond the Grave, Jesus told us there are 2 types of men, 2 destinies, and one critical choice. Then in the evening service, we marveled at the Hope of Heaven Jesus described in John 14.

Last week, we began to investigate Rev 21:1-8. Do you remember what we learned? The best is yet to come! If you're a child of God, one day you will enjoy unhindered, direct fellowship with God Himself! If you belong to Christ, you will participate in the new universe order: no tears, no death, no crying, no pain, no sin. If you're in God's family, the best is yet to come!

I wish we could stop there. But we can't. The fact of the matter is this. The best is not yet to come...for everyone.

This morning we must tackle the truth about a painful subject. In Rev 21:6-8, God informs us of very grim and sobering news. Not everyone will enjoy the bliss of the coming new heaven and new earth.

Who won't? What will be their fate in the life beyond the grave?

We'll find those answers as we look at Jesus' announcement to John.

Proposition: In Revelation 21:6-8, Jesus told John 4 critical truths about a painful subject.

- I. The Certainty of His Plan (6a)
- II. The Credentials of His Person (6b)
- III. The Confirmation of His Provision (6c-7)
 - A. Jesus offers Satisfaction (6).
 - B. Jesus offers Security (7).
- IV. The Consequence of His Passion/Wrath (8)
 - A. The People
 - B. The Place

Look at truth #1 in v 6.

I. The Certainty of His Plan (6a)

V 6 "And He said unto me, It is done."

Q: What's done? Who said it?

The One speaking to John is none other than the One who sits on the throne of the universe (5), Jesus Christ. Last week, we took a seat next to John in vv 1-5, and listened intently as he shared 3 things: What He Saw (1-2,), What He Heard (3-4), and What He Did (5). What He saw and heard was the New Heavens and Earth that Jesus announced He would establish.

Now watch this. What did Jesus tell John about that plan? "It's done." (lit. "they are done", that is the things revealed to John in vv 1-5). Wow! That's certainty. Jesus announced that the final chapter of the universe is already written! In God's mind, it's as good as done.

Let truth #1 sink in--The Certainty of His Plan. Heaven is a real place. And one day God will fashion a New Heaven and New Earth. He will actually dwell in that redeemed world with His redeemed people.

Illust:

Tran: What gives Jesus the right to make such a certain prediction? Truth #2...

II. The Credentials of His Person (6b)

V 6 "I am Alpha and Omega..."

Listen to His Credentials. He is "Alpha and Omega." Those of course are the first and last letters of the greek alphabet, the language John used in writing this book. He is "the beginning and the end." He is the "beginning" in that He is the Source and Origin of all things. He is the "end" in that He is the Goal and Aim of all things. Unlike us, He is unaffected by time. He never changes.

Key: Do you know why Jesus can make such a certain announcement, "It is done"? Here's the reason. Because of He has the Credentials! The Clout! He sees the whole picture, including the outcome!

Illust:

Tran: 2 truths thus far: The Certainty of His Plan, The Credentials of His Person.

Q: What does Jesus offer us?

III. The Confirmation of His Provision (6c-7)

Vv 6-7 "I will give..."

What an offer! Actually a twofold offer...

A. Jesus offers Satisfaction (6).

V 6 "I will give...the fountain..."

Do you know what heaven will be like? There's much we don't know, but this image makes something perfectly clear. In the new heaven and earth, every need and desire will be perfectly SATISFIED! Jesus offers satisfaction.

We don't worry much about water. We turn on the faucet and out it comes. But having sufficient, pure water was a major concern in John's day. Wiersbe suggests John may have worked in the Roman mines and knew the meaning of thirst.

Jesus told John, "I offer to you and anyone else who is thirsty the water of life which quenches and satisfies every parched soul!"

The words remind me of what Jesus told what woman in Jn 4:14? The Samaritan woman who had experienced the pain of broken marriages and rejection. He told her in Jn 4:14, "But whoever drinks of the water I shall give shall never thirst..."

What does that mean? Jesus isn't talking about physical thirst, but spiritual. Jn 7:37 "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."

Jn 7:38 "He that believes on Me, as the Scriptures have said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of water."

Here's the offer. Jesus offers satisfaction to all who will believe in Him. The offer is "free." You can't buy it. That's a hangup for some. Some pride themselves in needing noone. They're self-made. They're in total control. But true satisfaction is available only for those who come to the fountain of life, Jesus Christ.

Illust:

B. Jesus offers Security (7).

V 7 "He that overcomes..."

Jesus offers the security of a Family Relationship. An eternal family relationship! You talk about an inheritance! To those that overcome, God offers the privilege of intimate communion with Him--"I will be his God, and he shall be my son." That's security!

Illust:

Q: Who is entitled to this security?

A: "He that overcometh."

Let's put out stakes down here for a minute. Did you ever notice the emphasis on "overcoming" in the NT. Jesus overcame the world (Jn 16:33). Christians are OVERCOMERS. We're called to overcome the world and sin (I Jn 5:4-5). We're equipped to overcome the Evil One (Mt 6:13). Throughout Revelation, God emphasizes that true Christians are "overcomers."

See: Rev 2:7, 17, 26; 3:12, 21 (esp 3:21)

Problem: We don't emphasize this enough. A true Christian is an overcomer. It's a gross contradiction in terms to claim to be a Christian, and be caught up living like the world. I grieve for what's happening in America. Our godly heritage is slipping through our fingers. The church is not full of overcomers, but accommodaters.

Illust:

Key: The New Heaven and Earth will be wonderful, beyond imagination. It will be a place of ultimate and complete satisfaction and security.

Q: Do you know one of the reasons why it will be? See...

21:27 "And there shall in no way enter into it anything that defiles..."

22:14-15 "Blessed are they...For outside are dogs, and sorcerers..."

Listen. The new universe will be a fantastic place, in part, because there will be no one or nothing there to contaminate it. Only people that love God and have a relationship with Jesus Christ will be there.

Q: Where will the rest be?

Tran: Now we come to the most painful subject in this text, in all of God's Word. We've considered the Certainty of His Plan, the Credentials of His Person, the Confirmation of His Provision. Now v 8.

V 8 "But the fearful..."

IV. The Consequence of His Passion/Wrath (8)

God is Love (I Jn 4:8). God is Merciful (Tit 3:5). God is Gracious (Ex 33:19). God is Good (Rom 2:4). Yes, God is all of that. But listen. The God of the Bible is also a God of Wrath. His Wrath is consistent with His Holy character.

We seldom talk about the Wrath of God. Yet when you scan the final words God gave to us in the book of Revelation, you can't miss this attribute of our God.

Rev 6:17 "For the great day of His WRATH is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

Rev 14:19 "The angel thrust in his sickle...the great winepress of the wrath of God."

Rev 16:1 "I heard a voice...pour out the bowls of the wrath of God upon the earth."

Rev 19:15 "...He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

Friends, today is the day of God's salvation. Today He mercifully and graciously offers pardon to all who will acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. But listen. God has already announced the coming day of His Wrath.

Illust:

Q: What are the consequences of His wrath? Notice 2 factors in v 8.

A. The People of His Wrath

Q: Who will miss the bliss of the New Universe? Who will incur God's wrath? Jesus itemized 8 types of people that will suffer God's inevitable wrath...

1. The Fearful--the "cowardly", those that succumb to the world, those that refuse to acknowledge their need for Christ because of a fear of what people might think. Just the opposite of overcomers!

2. The Unbelieving--Perhaps the greatest sin is when a person knows the truth, but refuses to accept it. The "unbelieving" are those that refuse to trust and place the confidence of their lives in Christ.

3. The Abominable--"polluted," refers to those who chose to indulge in sin, and polluted their mind, body, and spirit.

4. Murderers--those who have no regard for human life

5. Fornicators--NASB "immoral persons" (in thought or deed)

6. Sorcerers--greek word "pharmakois"; those involved with magic arts

7. Idolaters--An Image Worshipper

Lest you say, "Well those that suffer God's wrath are those that commit BIG sins. I don't, so I'm OK..." Don't be deceived! Those who worship images instead of God are in this group.

We live in a culture full of image worshippers! No, not the images of 4 footed beasts. Our images are much more sophisticated. For some, the image has 4 white wall tires. For others, the image is a piece of green paper with the picture of George Washington on it. For others, the image is a girlfriend or boyfriend.

8. All Liars--Did you notice something added to this 8th characteristic? "All" liars. Do you ever lie? Mislead people? Deceive? Misrepresent the truth?

Q: Who will suffer the Consequences of God's wrath?

This verse does not teach that you can be saved by works. But it does teach that your works indicate whether you are saved or not! Works are not the basis of salvation, but they are the evidence of it.

Warning: There are a lot of people clinging to a false security...

Illust:

B. The Place of His Wrath

Hell is a real place. The word "hell" is mentioned 52 times in the KJV Bible. Ps 9:17 "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Mt 10:28 "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." Rev 1:18 "I am He that lives, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Hell is a horrible place. But hell is not the final destiny. It's a holding pen until the final resurrection day.

Q: What will be the final place of God's wrath?

A: V 8 "the lake which burns with fire and brimstone (sulphur)..."

Q: What do we know about that horrible place?

A: Just as human language is insufficient to describe the glories of heaven, it also falls short of depicting the dread of this place known as the Lake of Fire. Granted, John uses symbolic language in Revelation. But nonetheless, we can be certain of these. The Lake of Fire will be a place of...

1. A Place of Pain

V 8 "lake which burns..."

See: Rev 20:11-15

The Lake of Fire will be a place of torment. According to Rev 19:20, the Beast will be there. So will the False Prophet. Rev 20:10 reveals that the Devil will likewise be cast into the Lake of Fire, "and shall be tormented day and night forever."

There's something frightening about fire.

Illust: Colonial Florist burned 2 weeks ago. I saw the smoke...

Objection: "Well I don't believe in hell." Listen. That doesn't make it any less real!

2. A Place of Permanency

V 8 "this is the second death"

Lehman Strauss points out that "the second death" literally means "the second kind of death." There are 2 kinds of death: physical and spiritual. Physical death is the separation of body from spirit. Spiritual death is a separation too, of a man from God, forever.

The Lake of Fire is the eternal state of the lost. It is a real place. It is certain. And it is forever.

Notice a comparison. The last verse of Rev 20 reveals the eternal outcome of one group, and the last verse of Rev 20 another. According to 21:27, what is the eternal destiny of those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life? The New Heaven and Earth. According to 20:15, what is the eternal destiny of those whose names are NOT written in the Book? Lake of Fire.

Quote: Commentator Alford (in Mounce), "As there is a second and higher life, so there is also a second and deeper death. And as after that life there is no more death, so after that death there is no more life."

What a sobering truth! A place of Pain, a place of Permanency.

Heb 10:31 "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Heb 12:29 "For our God is a consuming fire."

Illust: 251 years ago, Jonathon Edwards preached the most famous sermon ever delivered in the history of America. It was preached for the first time at Enfield, Conn. Edwards was an invited guest speaker. The congregation had been known for being calloused and stubborn to the gospel. The response to God's Word that day was nothing short of amazing. Before Edwards could finish, people were moaning and crying out, 'What shall I do to be saved?'

I want to read part of the sermon, "Sinners in the Hands..." (19-20)

Conclusion:

Q: How could God ever send people to a place like the lake of fire?

A: That question reveals 2 misunderstandings on our part.

We misunderstand the Holiness of God. He is holy. He hates sin. His character demands the just dealing with sin. We all stand guilty before God. We all have offended a holy God.

We misunderstand the Grace of God. Grace is free, but it's not cheap. God provided one way for guilty people to be pardoned and restored to Himself. His Son endured the torment of our hell for us.

Listen. People go to hell not because God sends them there, but because they reject His Son, and send themselves there.

Oh friend, what have you done with Christ?

Listen. What I have passed on to you today is not pleasant, is not popular, but it is true. It's the truth about a painful subject. What are you going to do with the truth today?

You can reject it. You can deny what I am saying.

Or you can respond to the truth by faith.

Christian, are you living in light of eternity?

Non-Christian, are you prepared for eternity?