

What happens next (2)?

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[0:00] I want to say first of all that this subject is on the one hand extremely intimate and deeply personal.! It's almost as if Jesus is saying to each one of you this morning, man, woman, what does it profit you if you could gain the whole world and suffer the loss of your soul?

So this is the way God does deal with us. He deals with us one by one. He does deal with nations. He does deal with families. But essentially, his work and his word comes to us individually. And this subject matter is very individual. That's why we've been putting that challenge out the last two weeks. Where are you heading? What is your destiny?

Not what is your neighbour's destiny. What is your destiny? Are you prepared for the day of your death and are you prepared for the day of judgement? How will you be on that day?

Very serious, isn't it? It's very personal. We cannot shift the load to the person sitting next to us who's addressed to us. On the other hand, this subject is absolutely cosmic.

[1:45] It is about things that touch on the whole of creation. Romans 8, 19. The creation. The creation wakes an eager expectation.

That word is as big as everything that God has ever made. Don't even limit it to the world around you.

But the stars, the universe, the galaxies, the numbers which are in billions. That is God's creation. There's no limitation put in the Bible about which part of creation this might refer to.

The whole creation. And the whole creation is going to be wrapped up in a massive conclusion that God is going to bring.

So it's just something to ponder really. The intimacy of God with us one by one. And yet at the same time the enormity of his plans and purposes. And I want to say as well that this subject really does demand the use of the whole of Scripture and a sanctified imagination.

[2:58] So let me just give you an example of why it's so important that we should be reading the whole of the Bible in order to get the best possible understanding about what happens afterwards, what happens in the end.

Phil has been very helpful going through Isaiah and there's more to come. But these passages in Isaiah which we're not going to look at this morning.

But I just put them up on the screen and you can just remember them in the 60s. 60, 61, 62 and 65. There are massively wonderful promises that are made.

And I think we have a tendency to limit those to the nation of Israel. And there are definitely applications to be made to the nation of Israel there.

But you just have so many traces in those particular passages which are found in later expressions in the New Testament and indeed in the passage we read in Revelation just now.

[3:56] And really this is just to expand our expectancy when we read these passages and to realise that they have something to say about the very end times.

Some have got more short term fulfilments. But there are echoes all the time of things that are going to happen. So read your whole Bible with that expectancy that God is going to keep on giving us hints all the way through that he's got something very precious to say about his end purposes.

And I use the word sanctified imagination. Just not imagination but sanctified. That means a holy imagination. An imagination which is brought under the authority of Scripture that enables us to go and to use the springboards of truth and principles that are given to us in the Word so that we can say how might that apply?

How that might apply for us? The principles are there but if we just leave the principles by themselves they can be a bit sort of dry and lifeless. But we need to use our imaginations to an extent and to say well if God is renewing all things what might that be? And you'll see later on as we come to this wonderful, wonderful phrase there will be no more curse. Use your sanctified imagination as to how that could be working out.

[5:21] For you personally and for the world around you. What we're going to do is I think we've got four main headings and each of those headings we're going to read a passage of the Bible and simply pick out some certain points from it.

So the first heading here is the appearing of Jesus Christ. I haven't used the word return because that actually doesn't occur very frequently if at all but the appearing of Jesus Christ is very much a New Testament theme.

And our first reading therefore is 1 Thessalonians 4, 13-18. Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep.

Do you remember last time we looked at this word asleep and we said it's a kind of a Christian euphemism for people who have died. They've actually died. But Christians recognise that death is transformed into life.

And so sleep is more than just a sort of a nice way of putting things but it's also a sort of reality of the thought of the new life to come. So let's read that again.

[6:49] Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep or to grieve like the rest of men who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again.

And so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

After that, we who are still alive and are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

Therefore, encourage each other with these words. Encourage each other with these words. That's really my first point, that the truth that is given here and indeed elsewhere concerning the final things is truth that should comfort and reassure Christians.

[8:10] These particular believers in Thessalonica, Greece, they were troubled. And Paul says to them, we don't want you to be ignorant about what is going to happen to those who have already died, Christians already died, or to grieve like the rest of men who have no hope.

I've heard of several funerals recently where there's been no hope. And that's how people grieve, isn't it? When they don't have any hope. They've got no basis for grieving with any hope.

And Paul says, you're not to be like that. You mustn't have that dimension in your thinking about dying and death. There is a sadness, but there is something, there's truth, truth which is there to encourage and reassure us and to change the way we grieve.

And that is shot through the whole of this subject matter. It is not good to be ignorant. It is not healthy as Christians to be ignorant on this. We do need the whole truth and we want to get as much of it into our beings and thinking so that we can, as he says later, encourage each other with these words.

So that when people are going through a dark time personally, that we as a church should be able to encourage one another with truth sensitively applied to the situation.

[9:43] It's a great thing, isn't it? The truth of God's word is a very living and active ingredient in the healthiness of our thinking. It seems that these particular people were concerned that somehow the people who died would rather get left behind.

And Paul says it's not the case. They're not forgotten by God. They're actually going to be the first to rise. They will be remembered. Secondly, this is about certain facts.

This is not conjecture. These are certain facts. And it's almost like a creed which is being given here. Almost something like you could say it in the church and you say, I know that Jesus died upon

the cross.

I know he rose again. And I also know these things. That he's coming again. And that we will be with him and we're going to be with him forever.

And these things are to be held strongly and with equal certainty as the first stuff that we do know about. The stuff that we can look back and we say, we know he died.

[10:59] We know he's resurrected. But we know with equal certainty that he is going to be appearing again. And he will take his people to be with him. And thirdly, we'll all be together with the Lord forever.

We'll all be together with the Lord forever. That's the word, isn't it? After that, we who are still alive and left will be caught up together within the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

You know, if you had nothing else to hang on to at this point, that would be the great thought, wouldn't it? It's limitless. There's no end to it. It's going to happen.

And, well, this is a great passage because it tells us in sure and certain terms what the sequence is going to be. There is going to come a day when the Lord Jesus Christ, who ascended back into heaven, is at the right hand of the Father, will appear.

And he will appear in his glorified resurrection body. And he will be accompanied by angels and there will be a loud trumpet blast and a command. I don't know what that command is.

[12:08] Maybe it's a command to wake up. Wake up for the dead, for their resurrection life. And, and then this amazing miracle is going to happen that those who belong to Jesus Christ will find their bodies knit together and be granted resurrection bodies.

And here is a point of enormous comfort to those who have been killed in bomb blast or died in some tragic fashion, lost at sea and so forth.

He says specifically, you know, the dead in the sea are going to get raised. And it is an absolute truth that every single believer, however they have died, in whatever terrible state they may have been and might have been martyred, and there are people being martyred here, eaten by a lion, heads chopped off, and so forth.

God is going to, in a most remarkable way, bring together the DNA of those bodies and they will be made glorious. There will be such an identity of those bodies with the people who lived on the earth, but they will be glorified bodies like the Lord Jesus Christ was straying into the next topic.

But I just, I just think it's a wonderful thing to comfort, to comfort believers, isn't it? To comfort these Thessalonians. If they've seen a loved one die in terrible agony and pain and so forth, don't worry, whatever the situation was, and I would also go on to say, whatever the form of, of, of, setting the body aside, whether it was by burial or cremation or any other means at all, God is well able to handle all the misuse of bodies or all the things that have ever happened, bring all that together, and not a molecule will be missing.

[13:51] It's glorious, isn't it? Resurrection bodies, 1 Corinthians 15, 42 to 57.

This is a big subject matter in Corinthians. Corinthians, interestingly, would have been a seedbed for Greek thought, and Greek thought at the time had, was very influenced by Plato, one of the earlier philosophers, who made a big distinction between the spirit being good and the body being evil, and that kind of thought pattern has continued in certain kinds of religious set-ups and so forth. So the early church was infested with this problem of people saying, actually the body is like a tomb. I need to get rid of the body, I just need to have my spirit released.

The body is a source of all my troubles, that's where temptation comes, that's where I fail and fall. And so, it's very interesting that Paul addresses this issue of this wrong thinking to the people in Corinth, but of course we all need to hear this.

1 Corinthians 15, 42 to 57. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown perishable, it is raised imperishable, it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory, it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power, it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

[15:36] If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written, the first man Adam became a living being, the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.

The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that, the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven, as was the earthly man, so as those who are of the earth, and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.

And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Listen, I tell you a mystery. We'll not all sleep, but we will all be changed. Just a little explanation there.

We will not all sleep. What is he referring to there? He's referring to the fact that when the Lord Jesus appears, there will be many Christians upon the earth, and they will not go through the process of death.

[16:50] So they won't go through the process of sleep in that way. But many will have done, millions will have done, gone through the process of death, and they will be in that sleep mode.

So when he says that, he's referring to those two kinds of categories. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed in a flash, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

You remember the trumpet we read about? At the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true. Death has been swallowed up in victory.

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin. The power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, he gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[17:56] Do you see the kind of rock-hard logic that Paul is applying here to the situation?

He's saying, not just, it's a kind of an idea to have this body, there's an absolute inevitability that because Jesus has gone this way, because Jesus died, and really died, and he was resurrected with that resurrection body.

To be with him means that we will absolutely follow in that pathway. He's a template. And whatever he experienced, we will surely experience as well.

For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable. There will be no bodiless Christians in heavenly places. We will all have the likeness of the body of Jesus Christ granted to us.

That is God's determined resolution, and that is what exactly he's going to do. Jesus Christ is the assurance and the template of the resurrection body.

[19:09] We will be the same but wonderfully different. Paul is in very great pains to say that. There's a sameness about us. Which is the reason why we shall see distinction in heaven.

We will not always be given robotic bodies that look identical to one another. There will be absolute distinction that causes us to be able to recognise one another. But at the same time, it's going to be different.

It's going to be wonderfully different. Because every part of that body is going to be transformed, imperishable. Have a look at Isaiah 65.

I think that's a very helpful place where it talks about the imperishability. Don't look at it now but I just say that's another example of where the Old Testament is helpful when it picks up on these points.

It says something like, you know, no one's going to die below 100. It's not going to happen. Isaiah doesn't go any further than that but the point is no one's going to die at all because there's going to be no more death.

[20:14] There's no more perishing going to take place. We're all perishing, aren't we? Every day we're perishing. But there's going to be a big strong line drawn against that and we will become imperishable.

Same but wonderfully different. with capacities that we could hardly have imagined in our earthly life.

The body which incorporates the brain, the muscle functions, everything about it is going to be wonderfully different which is going to be completely suited to the new life which God wants us to

enjoy forever as we serve and reign.

What an amazing miracle this is. It's an amazing miracle that great thought here. Just imagine what that would mean in this congregation but multiply that throughout the world and the history of the world and to think of the greatness of God's work.

Sanctified imagination is needed to launch out of these principles, isn't it? Then we must look at judgment. We had, we had, we read that passage in Revelation 20, 20, is it?

[21:35] About judgment. I read that deliberately because I didn't want to avoid that, that reality because after, after the, after we are raised with resurrected bodies, there is judgment.

That is the day of judgment. So, if you just look briefly at Revelation 20, John says, he saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it, which must refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he then says, I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne and books, in the plural, were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life.

So there are books and those are the books that record the deeds of everybody who's lived upon the earth. And there is another book which is the book of life, the Lamb's book of life.

And he refers later to this book and says, this is the book into which your name needs to be recorded to demonstrate your acceptance in the sight of God. But then there are other books and those books are recording the deeds, the behaviours of people in their life.

[22:50] And this is what is referenced, I believe, in Matthew 25, verses 31 to 46. It's very important to understand the context of Matthew 25.

We have been helped in recent weeks because we've actually gone through these passages already. It starts off with a parable of the ten virgins. You remember? Five wise, five foolish. Five wise, five foolish.

Are they going to gain acceptance? Are they going to be able to go to this wedding feast? Five fail, five get there. But they do so on the basis of their being prepared and ready and accepted.

And then the parable of talents which works out what it means for such people who are the followers of the Lord Jesus. How do they demonstrate that they are followers of the Lord Jesus?

They demonstrate that by a serving life. And when people are not in that place where they have served their master well, it is a denial of their profession.

[24:12] And that's the background there as we head up to the sheep with the goats. When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. See, now you stop at this point and you say, oh, something has already happened. The Son of Man has already made a distinction.

A judgment has already been made. There are the sheep and the goats. That separation has already occurred and the separation occurs on the basis of whether we find ourselves to be those who trust in Jesus Christ as our sin bearer and our righteousness and our only means of entering into his presence.

if we're not in that place there, we find ourselves separated out as is put here.

We're not in that right place. and then the rest of this section really deals with what it was that distinguished in life between those who were followers of Jesus truly and what it was that distinguished in life those who were not followers of Jesus.

[25:38] And it's an explanation almost of the judgment that's already been made, the separation that's already occurred. He looks to the sheep on his right. Come you who are blessed by my Father.

Take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in.

I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer him, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you something to drink?

When did we see you a stranger and invite you in or needing clothes and clothed you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you? The king will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you

did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.

And he will say to those on his left, depart from me, you were cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink.

[26:42] I was a stranger and you didn't invite me in. I needed clothes and you didn't clothe me. I was sick and in prison and you didn't look after me. He also will answer, Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison didn't help you?

He will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these you did not do for me then they will go away to eternal punishment but the righteous to eternal life.

And this passage causes problems for evangelical Christians because it appears to put such a lot of emphasis upon the idea of works and behaviour and so forth.

But I just want you to remember what I just said about context. Remember the separation has already been taking place. But it is a serious challenge to us and it is there for a very distinct purpose because acceptance with God is proven by our works.

Acceptance with God is proven by our works, our behaviour. So just turn to Titus 2, 11 to 14 which is very helpful on this. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

[28:01] How has the grace of God appeared to all men? It's becoming the person of Jesus isn't it? We've seen something in Jesus and it's appeared and it's now being preached to all men. It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled upright and godly lives in this present age while we wait for the blessed hope the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own eager to do what is good.

And there's something absolutely straightforward in this passage which is saying that if you are a recipient of the grace of God in your life that will be demonstrated you're saying no to ungodliness and to live self-controlled upright and godly lives in this present age.

That's the specific reason Jesus Christ appeared who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own eager to do what is good.

So that's a good and necessary test of the reality of whether we have been accepted by God. Is it being demonstrated in a life which is being changed?

Because if that grace that you're professing is not actually working through in your life there's some massive disconnect. It's just a head theory. But Jesus Christ did not come to leave people in their life of sin.

[29:45] He came to redeem them from the life of sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil so that we might be a people who are being transformed. And so on that final day it should be possible for the Christian man and woman to be able to stand before God and the books be opened and with all the frailty and the weakness of the failure that we've experienced covered by the blood of Christ nevertheless there is something about the quality of their lives which was pleasing to God and a demonstration the grace of God was working in them.

And holiness is our calling and don't look these up but these are three references in that passage we read. Do you remember we read the passage and we saw every so often this sort of jarring note, you know, the cowardly, the immoral, the sexually immoral, the liars and so forth.

They won't be there. They won't be there because they don't have a holy life. They're not going to be let in. Heaven is a place where sin is no more.

So if we're living sinful lives and sinful habits we're not in a good place are we? I think it's a complete travesty for people to think they can just live their lives any way they like and somehow on the day of judgment it's all just going to get covered by the blood and it won't matter how we've lived our lives.

It does matter hugely how we live our lives because it is evidence of whether or not we have truly trusted Jesus or not and have his grace in us. Therefore brothers and sisters we're called to a holy life and that's a wonderful thing because that should be our natural territory that should be the thing

we want.

[31:31] We want to be those people. Don't you want to be a holy person like the Lord Jesus? I want to be that. I want to love you and bear with you and care for you as the Lord Jesus would.

That's exactly what the church should be like which is why it's so wonderful. We're not just people who come in here with head knowledge and just go out and we're changed people.

If any man is in Christ he's a new creation. The old is gone the new has come. No other way. No other calling. That's what we're called to see.

That's why Jesus died. The son of man is supremely qualified to judge human behavior. I was blessed by this thought.

It says here in Matthew the son of man is going to judge. God the father could judge, couldn't he? The spirit could judge. The spirit who knows all our hearts and how we go.

[32:32] But it's the son of man who's going to do the judging. The one who actually took on human flesh. Knew what it was to be tempted. Live this life. He is supremely qualified by the way that he went through all that personal experience.

Empathetic experience to be able to actually give true judgment. judgment. And so he does.

And the father has been pleased to deliver the judgment to his son. It is Jesus Christ who we face. Sometimes people say you're going to meet your maker.

Well that's true. But actually it's Jesus Christ who's going to sit on that throne. Jesus Christ who lived with shame and scoffing rude in my place condemned he stood.

It's Jesus who knows us intimately because he's been there before. He is the one who will judge.

And we will never be able to say I've got a biased judge, a judge who doesn't know me, doesn't know about me, doesn't understand me.

[33:39] Because Jesus Christ knows exactly who we are. He identifies with us utterly. A new heaven and a new earth. And you think I'll be going back into Revelation but I just want to draw actually this thread from Romans 8, 12 to 25.

Therefore brothers we have an obligation but it is not to the sinful nature to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body you will live.

Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. You did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear but you received the Spirit of Sonship and by him we cry Abba Father.

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed for the creation was subjected to frustration not by its own choice but by the will of the one who subjected it that's God in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

[35:23] We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption sons the redemption of our bodies for in this hope we were saved but hope that is seen is no hope at all.

Who hopes for what he already has but if we hope for what we do not yet have we wait for it patiently. There's so much in that passage and I want to draw attention especially to the whole idea the whole creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God and when is that going to be?

The revealing of the sons of God when is that going to be? It must be on the day when Jesus appears and all his people all his people with resurrection bodies will be revealed and the glory of Jesus will be shining through them and that is the trigger the trigger by the appearing of Jesus Christ and the revealing of the sons of God that's going to be the trigger to release all that bondage and groaning that the whole creation has been under as a result of the curse the curse is removed

from all creation Revelation 22 3 says there is no more curse there is no more curse sanctified imagination kicks in again here this is the fulfillment of God's original plan he made a world that was very good Genesis 1 and 2 again and again very good very good very good he made the stars he made the skies he made the seas he made the birds he made the things that crawled on the ground and then he made man and he says about all it's very good very good and it's very good because it pleases him the pure and holy

God so utterly it's very good and he had intentions and purposes for that world that he had made that it should be a place where man was like a vice regent ruling and reigning sometimes we think of the garden of Eden as a bit like our back garden a bit expanded a bit the garden of Eden is described in Genesis 1-2 it was actually massive there was rivers flowing through it and there's talk of gold and stuff to be dug out of the ground I'm sure that God never intended for Adam and Eve to stay within four square acres in their lives but that they should push out push out push out push out and that in what we're celebrating recently the first man on the moon that's surely part of God's purpose we should expand into the universe that he had made but we shouldn't be sort of landlocked in any way there was going to be this fantastic expansion and everything was going to be very good very good but of course

Genesis 3 kicks in and the curse comes and there is trouble and we can't work with happiness we work with sorrow and pain suffering and we die and things go wrong and people kill each other and the world is the mess it is and has been for millennia but God has not abandoned his original purpose he's not abandoned his original purpose and that's what a great God he is he's made something beautiful artist created something absolutely wonderful and he is absolutely determined that what he started he will finish he doesn't have a plan B it's this one what he has begun he will finish Genesis 1 2 will reach its conclusion in Revelation 21 and that will be absolutely glorious and everything that he had in mind at the very beginning punctuated by this terrible interruption but gloriously so because we see the revealing of the majesty of a God who is both just and merciful and Jesus and Jesus is the one who will take it all under his hand and he is the one who will make it happen reigning and ruling in a new heaven and a new earth the fulfillment of God's original plan and it's intensely and deliberately physical and spiritual

[40:14] I want to say this to you because please do not read the whole of these revelation passages as if they were simply sort of figurative language because what I've just described is a real world that was made in Genesis 1 2 real animals that were to be named real people to populate it real things happening holes dug in the ground things found things expressed things experienced you may be troubled by the thought that this Jerusalem comes down the holy city as a massive city 14 what did I say 1400 miles wide broad and whatever the angel measures it with a rod I find that very amusing this sort of human rod how do you get 1400 miles and get it right but he does that measuring and we need to understand that the garden of

Eden is going to become a garden within a city there is going to be a city at the end because that is part of God's purpose cities are good they're okay there's a sort of a bad phrase wasn't there about God made the country and man made the city but that's not the case cities are places of culture of an endeavour of entrepreneurship what would our city be like if there was no curse how brilliant that would be wouldn't it and that's where our sanctified imagination needs to kick in it's intensely and deliberately physical and spiritual of course there are things here which are figurative but there's enough given us here to realise that there is a solid earth we're going to be in and that's why God is going to give us resurrection bodies because he loves the body the body is a very important part of you you are not a person if you don't have a body if you're just floating around as a spirit that's not how God intended you to be he needs you and wants you to have a body and he loves that and you're going to have a sanctified body to enjoy the sanctified world in which you're going to be living and now the dwelling of God is with men which is a great phrase isn't it now the dwelling of God is with men

I was thinking I was thinking about this how was it in the garden of Eden originally God was we're told he moved in the garden he heard the sound of the Lord God in the cool of the day in Genesis 3 they heard the sound of the Lord God did God have a did he embody himself in some way I don't know but they heard the sound of the Lord God at a specific point and then after the curse God

appears in various physical form but always located geographically and then Jesus comes and he is also located geographically Phil was reminding us on Wednesday about the physical presence of Jesus that one place on earth he's in Galilee he's in Galilee that's where he is and then comes the day of Pentecost and we're all filled with the Holy Spirit and each believer has the presence of God in their lives but this is massive this is massive now the dwelling of God is with men he's everywhere he's everywhere he's in everything you touch and handle and see and face and so forth there's a bigness there's an overflow of the presence of God how we pray so often at this meeting that we would know the presence of God and sometimes we touch and feel it a little bit a little bit but to think of the whole presence of the being of God on that new heaven and new earth filling filling this new world that he's made there's no cursed world there's no interruption no night no limitation to the experience of the fullness of God and he's pleased to do that he's pleased to come down that's why heaven comes down to earth the new heaven comes down to earth they're not separated geographically like they are now the new heaven comes down to earth the dwelling of God which was in heaven with his throne there comes down to earth and he's with us with his people and there's a marriage because the church is the bride of Christ I'll just reference you here to say we are the bride of Christ not individually you're not individually the bride of Christ we are the church the whole church is the bride of Christ and it's only when the whole church is complete and finished that at that point the bride is complete and what more intimate relationship could be possibly expressed in human language than bride and bride groom and that's exactly what we are told to look forward to it's a work in progress isn't it but it is being done and there's an inheritance that passage in Romans and there are many many more passages you need to think about inheritance we are co-heirs with Jesus Christ the father has blessed the son with this inheritance and Jesus has drawn us alongside his adopted sons so that we too could be inheritors alongside him alongside him he shares his wealth with us and creation is restored and extended and the wealth of the nations which we read about in one of the revelation passages is going to be brought in and this again is an Isaiah theme as well isn't it that the wealth of the nations what will be the wealth of the nations surely all the wonderful things that have been created are all going to be brought in they're all going to find a place in this new heaven and new earth this is the future of every disciple of Jesus Christ we've scratched the surface haven't we this morning we're all invited to this future today I just want to make that solid note to you everybody in this room you're invited to this future today Revelation 22 17 whoever is thirsty let him come whoever wishes let him take the free gift of the water of life you could hardly think of anything freer in that gift that opportunity offered to you today if you're thirsty we all know what it's like to be thirsty don't we if you're thirsty you come to Jesus Christ and he will freely give you the water of life that eternal life what a gift what a promise what an opportunity what a reason for thankfulness Amen