

# The final end

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[0:00] Go through this chapter. My contention is that this section takes us through church history from the beginning right to the very end.

! I've been listening to one or two preachers preaching on this. Some of them say this is not the final end.

But I think it is. If we read it, I think it is the Eschete Imara, the last day.

So if I can convince you of that, I think it's fairly clear that it's going from the time of writing right up to the end. And so I'll put an hourglass there.

Right. With me so far? Yes. So this is stuff we've done. And I said that whatever interpretation we may or may not arrive at, the application is clear.

[1:14] Because in verse 12 it says, this is what I'm rewriting it for. This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus.

So whatever eschatological scheme you come up with, and I would like to persuade you of my scheme, the scheme that I'm propounding, but whatever it is, what you do with it is this.

You have to patiently endure. So he doesn't say, this is a call for panic, or this is a call for a complete change of direction.

He says, this is a call for patient endurance. So keep on in the Christian life. Keep on keeping his commands, and keep on being faithful to Jesus.

So that's about where we got to last time. And I'll just point out that there's a blessing in verse 13. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.

[2:15] There are seven blessings in the book of Revelation. The first blessing is for those who read and take to heart what's written. So you all have the blessing of reading it, and let's pray we have the blessing of taking it to heart.

And this is the second blessing. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. That's a great text at a Christian funeral.

To get to a funeral is not a defeat. It is a victory. When people get to the end of their lives still believing in Jesus, still following him, that is a resounding victory.

It is a tick on the scoreboard, if you like. Job done. This person has been seen through thick and thin from being called to the Lord Jesus Christ through all the trials and troubles and tests of life, and has remained faithful.

And amen. There they are. Headed for glory. Blessed are the dead in the Lord. Do you agree with that? Yeah. Now then, I'm going to try and get us back to this Peter text in a moment.

[3:27] I hope I don't miss it out. Let's look at it now, in case I haven't got it tidy. 2 Peter 3. 2 Peter 3.

10 to 13.

No, Valerie's got the microphone. Could you read this for us, please? 2 Peter 3. 2 Peter 3. 10 to 13.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with the wall. The elements will be destroyed by fire. And the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

[4:31] That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with this promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness lasts.

Thank you. So, whatever else we take away from this evening, let's take that away. Since there will be a day of the Lord, since it will be cataclysmic, since there will be a new heaven and a new earth, what kind of people ought you to be?

Verse 11. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

So, that's what we take away. Seeing as we know the Lord Jesus is coming, and we're looking forward to that, and we know that it will be a cataclysmic, solemn, awesome day, what kind of people ought we to be?

What kind of people ought we to be? We ought to live holy and godly lives as we look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. So, even if you don't follow anything else, take that away.

[5:50] Let's take that away with us. Right, I'm backtracking slightly. We're back in Revelation. And I don't think I dealt properly last time with the first angel.

Did I do this? Because I don't think I did. I think I jumped ahead. Let's see what we think. So, this is in verse 6. I saw another angel flying in midair.

He had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on earth, to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He said in a loud voice, Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come.

Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water. So, it's said to be gospel, verse 6.

That's good news, isn't it? Gospel is good news. But my question is, oh, here's the worship him who made the earth, because the hour of his judgment has come.

[6:58] So, it's eschatological. The hour of his judgment has come.

Worship the creator. Now, it says it's good news.

My question is, is this saving good news, or is it simply good news? Now, we would normally, normally when we use the expression gospel, we mean good news that leads to salvation.

So, we typically mean by that the good news, which includes the doctrine of the atonement, which tells us what Christ did on the cross, how he died for people's sins, how he invites people to come to him in repentance and faith, and that through him, there is eternal salvation.

So, that's what we normally mean by the gospel. And my question is, is that the good news that he's describing here? Because it doesn't say anything about the atonement, does it?

It doesn't say anything about Jesus, actually, does it? So, I wonder whether we should say that it is good news, because judgment is good news.

[8:13] Can we turn to Psalm 98? Psalm 98. Psalm 98.

Page 603. Page 603. Do you want to be the reader? Sure. Okay. Psalm 98.

This is... It says, shout for joy to the Lord. It says, sing to the Lord a new song. It says, verse 7, Let the sea resound and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.

Let the rivers clap their hands. Let the mountains sing together for joy. So, this is a joyful song about good news. Could you read us, please, verse 9? Let them sing before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples with equity. Thank you. So, what is the reason for joy in that last verse? Judgment.

[9:32] Yeah. So, I think you can make a case, at least in Psalm 98. The fact that God is going to judge the world is good news.

I mean, it's not good news for sinners, but it is good news taken globally. At last, God is going to put everything right. At last, evil is going to be put where it deserves.

And, along with that, at last, God's purposes of salvation are going to be fulfilled. But the specific thing is, he's going to come and judge the world.

And I've got Romans 1.18, which will surprise you. Sorry, it's actually Romans 2.

Oh, we've got 2.16 as well. Romans 1.18 talks about the current wrath.

[10:38] Wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against the godlessness and wickedness of men. So, there's a current display of God's wrath. But there is a future display or a future final fulfillment of God's wrath in chapter 2, verse 16.

So, could Valerie read us 2.16? This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Thank you. So, what day is it? What does it say the day is? On the day when God judges people's secrets. Thank you very much. And where is it declared?

In my gospel. Which is interesting, isn't it? Because you would not have put it that way. What does the gospel declare? Well, he says the gospel, the good news, says that God will go to judge everybody.

He will judge the secrets. He will deal with evil totally thoroughly. Not just outwardly, but inwardly. So, I'm suggesting that there is this sense that that good news is the, shall we say primarily, not exhaustively, but primarily the good news of judgment.

[11:58] That seems to fit what he says, isn't it? This angel says, Fear God, give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.

He is the judge. He is coming to judge. Hallelujah. Amen. That's what we're looking forward to. Okay. So, I wanted to cover that.

I missed that last time. Does that make sense? Yeah. And then the second angel, verse 8, refers to Babylon, which is both a city and a woman.

And I'm not going to stop on Babylon because this is just an introduction to the theme of Babylon. It later gets picked up on in much more detail.

So, I'm going to leave that till we get to chapter 17. And then the third angel talks about those who have worshipped the beast and its image and received its mark on their forehead or on their hand.

[13:02] And, sorry, I'm not going to give a long explanation of this because it's something that we've had before. But there is a mark for God's people which guarantees their security.

And correspondingly, in this symbolic language, there is a mark of those who are idolaters, worshippers of the beast or his image.

And they, in this symbolic way, have a mark on their forehead or on their hand. But I think what I didn't say was where it goes to from here.

So, please will you look at verse 10, where it says, They too will drink the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath.

They will be tormented with burning sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever.

[14:10] There will be no rest, day or night, for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name. This is what calls for patient endurance.

And incidentally, there's no rest for those people. But in verse 13, they will rest from their labour for their deeds follow them. So there's a contrast between rest and no rest.

But just thinking a little bit more slowly of what awful things are said about those who worship the beast.

It is awful. I mean, it hardly bears thinking about, does it? It hardly bears talking about. But this is what it is. So let's think about it.

It says, they will drink the cup of his wrath. There's many different pictures for God's wrath.

[15:07] And there are different pictures for the last day. And I'll come back to that in a moment. But here, it's using the idea of a cup. Something that you drink.

And it's a nasty, horrible drink. It does you in. It sends you crazy. There's some references to this. So, for example, can we look at Isaiah 51, verse 17. Usually, John is picking up pictures and language and illustrations from the Old Testament.

And here he is in the Hebrew Scriptures. Isaiah 51, verse 17. He's referring to the Babylonian captivity.

And the fact that the exile of Israel came to an end. They took, as it were, they took the punishment. And that exile came to an end.

[16:20] And this is how it's put in Isaiah 51, verse 17, please. Awake, awake. Rise of Jerusalem. You who have drunk from the hand of the Lord.

The cup of his wrath. You who have drained to its strength. The goblet that makes people stagger. Thank you very much. So, it's a horrible drink that makes people stagger.

It does people in. I'm just thinking of, do you remember in Salisbury, the Russian agents poisoned whoever it was, a Russian dissident or something?

And he either ingested or smelt or touched, what's it called? Novichok. Novichok? Yeah. And as soon as he'd ingested it, it just worked within him to just completely destroy him.

And, you know, working on the nervous system and all the bodily organs and just a horrible thing to have been in contact with. And the cup of God's wrath seems to be in a similar sort of idea, doesn't it?

[17:29] You drain to the dregs the goblet that makes people stagger. It just does you in. It just does you in. That particular cup. Now then, can anybody think of an example of somebody else having a cup put before them, which was a horrible cup, but which they had to drink and which they did in fact drink?

Can anybody think of that? Jesus in the garden. Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. And you can imagine the agony that he went through, thinking, here is the cup of God's wrath.

It's the same sort of cup that's described, isn't it? This cup is not a nice beneficial drink. It's not a protein shake or something like that.

Mark 14, 32, in Gethsemane, he says in verse 36, Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me, yet not what I will, but what you will. So the idea here that what the Lord Jesus did for us was to take the cup that we should have been drinking, the cup of God's wrath, and he drank it instead.

[18:56] And it's, you can say, did him in. It wasn't, that would be a silly thing to say, but you know what I mean. We may not know what, we cannot tell what pain he had to bear, but we believe it was for us.

He hung and suffered there. He took the cup, he didn't refuse it. He drank the whole lot of it, didn't he? And he did it for us, and for our salvation.

And are we not completely grateful of what he did for us? That horrible cup, he drank it up. That cup was meant for me, but he drank it instead.

And we praise the Lord Jesus for that. Amen. Let's move on to the next bit.

The burning sulfur. Again, this is a horrible thought, isn't it? The smoke of their torment, sorry, verse 10. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angel of the Lamb.

[20:03] The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and there will be no rest day or night. So this is a reference, is it not to eternal? I mean, it doesn't use the word hell, but that's what he's describing.

A place of unending, conscious torment. I mean, I hardly dare to say it and hardly dare to think about it.

But that's what it says, isn't it? Just, just awful. Absolutely awful. The idea of the sulfur, I think, probably comes from the Sodom and Gomorrah, doesn't it?

That the burning sulfur rained down on those cities. And the smoke of the torment going up forever and ever, I think, is probably a reference somewhere to the destruction of Babylon, where the smoke goes up forever and ever.

I'm not sure I'd want to dwell on it, but it is an awful picture, isn't it? And that, no, I won't get ahead of myself. That's the picture that's described. There is no rest.

[21:12] It is just too awful to bear thinking about. Right. Let me, that's what we did last time. So let's pick up on this bit here.

So, as we go further on into the chapter, we're thinking of the final end and the last day. Yeah, that's what I put up on the board.

There are various ways of speaking of the last day. There's not only one way of speaking, but various ways of speaking. So we usually talk about the day of judgment.

Now, that is a legal metaphor, isn't it? A day of judgment, condemned or acquitted, it's what happens in a court. Yeah? That's a way of understanding the last day.

I mean, this is how God speaks to us in Scripture. He speaks to us with things that we can understand. The reality is far greater and far deeper. But he says that, well, you'll understand this, a

day of judgment.

[22:20] Yeah? So there was that. There's another metaphor, a day of battle, or a day where a battle is finished. So there's either a day of victory in battle, or a day of defeat in battle.

That is a military metaphor. Yes? Later on, we will see another metaphor, another way of speaking of it. Because we've got the colossal, appalling, sacrificial feast, with birds coming down and pecking up the sacrificial flesh and so on.

And in these next verses, we have an agricultural metaphor, which is the metaphor of harvest.

There's not one metaphor, but there's multiple metaphors.

And they're all talking about the one thing, different aspects, if you like. I also put drinking an awful drink, which we've just been saying, or joining in a beautiful feast. Many will come on that day to the feast.

Now, what does it say? With Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Many will come from the north and south and east and west, something like that, at the great feast. So that's yet another metaphor.

[23:40] But here, we're looking at two things, the grain harvest and the great harvest. So let's use the last minutes to think about that. So we have three more angels.

Well, actually, we've got a fourth angel, haven't we? But we've got three more angels, verse 15, 17, and 18. So let's take them as they come.

And I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, seated on the cloud, one like a son of man, with a crown of gold on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand.

Then another angel came out of the temple, and called in a loud voice, to him who was sitting on the cloud, take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over, excuse me, over the earth, and the earth was harvested. So let's look at this.

[24:39] So it is a vision. It says, and I looked, and there was a white cloud, cloud, and someone seated on the cloud. Where does that picture come from? Well, I'm thinking Daniel chapter 7.

Let's see whether that makes sense. Daniel chapter 7, verse 13. In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.

So I'm going to go with that as the sort of thing that he's referring to. That's Daniel 7, verse 13. A white cloud, and someone's sitting on it.

Who sits on the cloud? The son of man. Yeah, there's the cloud. Seated on the cloud, one like a son of man. And as Christians read this, we're thinking who that would be.

Yeah, I think we're thinking this is Jesus. A son of man. As Jesus said, didn't he, at his trial. You'll see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven.

[25:54] He said more than that, didn't he? But they said, oh, that's enough to convict you. So Jesus referred to that verse then. And he has a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

What happens next in verse 15? Another angel comes from the temple. And what does the angel do?

Or say? He tells the one on the cloud to take his sickle and reap. Yes, that's right. It's a little bit strange, doesn't it?

Because he instructs or requests the one on the cloud to reap. So I've got that. It comes from the temple. And he says, reap because the time has come.

I guess this is a little bit like the saints praying and saying, how long, O Lord? Or come, Lord, come.

[26:59] So there is a sense that we already accept that Jesus comes in response to prayer. And maybe the angel is sort of expressing that.

There's been all these prayers. There's been all these promises. Surely now is the time. Now is the time to do what you've said you're going to do all along. So he harvests the earth.

And who, just remind us, who does this action? The Son of Man. Yeah. So this is specifically Jesus doing this harvest.

The Son of Man. The time has come. I thought we would step back and look at what Jesus himself said about the last day because he makes references to this.

Can we turn to Matthew 13, 24? Jesus used this metaphor of harvest.

[28:22] I mean, he used other metaphors, but he certainly used this metaphor. And there's a lot here, so I'm going to have to try and cut out some of the material. But John 13, 24, Jesus told them another parable.

The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. When everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed wheat amongst the, sorry, weeds amongst the wheat, and went away.

And the wheat sprouted and formed ears and the weeds also appeared. So he's describing a situation where you've got wheat and weeds both growing up together.

And the owner's servants came to him and said, Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from? An enemy did this, he replied. And the servants say, Do you want us to go and pull them up?

And the answer is quite significant, isn't he? No, he answered, because while you are pulling up the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let them both grow until the harvest.

[29:26] So it's like, why don't you sort out good and evil now? And the answer being that there's a sense in which the human enterprise with good and evil is so interconnected that you can't at this stage root out evil without without impeding the whole enterprise.

So it waits till a later time. Verse 29, No, he answered, because while you are pulling up the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let them both grow together until harvest.

At that time, I will tell the harvesters, first collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burnt.

Then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn. So that's a harvesty sort of thing.

Did we do all of that? Looking again in that chapter, verse 36, he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.

He answered, The one who sowed the good seed is the son of man. The field is the world. The good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the one. Oh dear.

[30:43] The weeds are the people of the evil one. The enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvesters, the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. So Jesus himself spoke about this final harvest and the involvement of angels and the wheat and the weeds.

There's other things he talks about in that chapter to do with catching fish, which we won't stop on. In chapter 24, there's a lot of teaching.

And again, we won't stop on it, but there's the first part of the chapter 24, which I would take to be judgment on the temple, but it's very like the future judgment. But when we get to 24, I don't know why I put zero there, verse 30 and 31, Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.

Then all the peoples of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. He will send his angels with a loud trumpet call.

They will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. So this is Jesus talking about the final harvest via angels.

[32:07] And just while we're on the subject, chapter 25 of Matthew, verses 1 to 13, still on the subject of final judgment.

This is the one with the five foolish, the ten virgins. Five of them are foolish and five of them are wise. And I just point out that in verse 25, verse 13, he says, you've got to be on your watch all the time because you do not know the day or the hour.

And I think that is a significant principle. The prophecy and the foretelling and the promise of this day is not put in terms that we, if we are clever, can identify signs and movements of history so that we do know when it's coming because Jesus says, no, you can't do that.

You've got to be ready all the time because you don't know when it's coming. And I think that simple principle undermines a lot of fascination with prophecy and the prophecies about Israel and that the end of the world is bound to be coming now because Jesus says, you can't tell.

It might be thousands of years yet. We don't know. That's why you've got to keep watch all the time. And there isn't something where you can say, well, we're okay until such and such happens and then we shall start keeping watch.

[33:43] Jesus says, you've got to keep watch all the time because you don't know the day or the hour or whatever it says. You don't know the

day or the hour. Right. Now then.

I won't stop on the teaching of the Lord Jesus but I can let you have access to those references because there's a lot of teaching from our Saviour specifically about the final end.

Jesus taught specifically about the coming fearful judgement. So it isn't just John in the book of Revelation being nasty. The Lord Jesus is the one who taught about this.

Our loving, kind, generous, merciful Saviour said, look, this is coming. So you've got to shape your lives according to that if you're not sheltered from the wrath.

If you're going to be drinking that cup yourself, you'd better look out. Now is the time to flee from the wrath which is to come. Now is the time to get your soul right with God and the only way to do that is through Jesus.

[34:57] Let me not get carried away. Let's look at the grain harvest which is in verse 17. And I looked and another angel came out of the temple in heaven and he too had a sharp sickle.

still another angel who had charge of the fire came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle. Take your sharp sickle, gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine because its grapes are ripe.

Again, that seems to be a time reference. Now is the time. It's been a long time getting up to this but now is the time for this grape harvest.

So where does this angel come from? He comes from the temple in heaven. And what was his duties?

It says he was in charge of the fire. I guess there's some significance to that. I'm not quite sure what it is. Maybe we can, as we go further, it will become clearer. But he's in charge of the fire so I'm going to put the altar, I'm going to do the altar fire.

[36:20] And he, what does he do? What does this angel do? No, he doesn't.

Verse 18. What does this angel do? Angel number three. He calls to, yes, he calls to the previous angel and says, take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine because the grapes are ripe.

So there's a sort of team effort here but this command or instruction is aimed at is it the son of man this time?

It says it's an angel. I don't know if we're to take that as significant, that there's something particular about the saviour gathering in his beloved, you know, the grain, and being a little more distant from the process of gathering the grapes.

But it does seem to be the son of man that does the harvesting, the first case, and an angel does the harvesting in the second case. I don't know whether we're supposed to make a lot of that. but let's look at how it's described.

[37:36] The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes, and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. So here is yet another appalling picture.

It is appalling, isn't it? A great winepress of God's wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and the blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horse's bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia, which is about 180 miles, or 300 kilometers.

What an appalling picture that is. I mean, I don't want to make it, I certainly don't want to make it look comical, but the idea of having the grapes crushed, and then the grape juice becomes, is referred to as blood, isn't it?

I mean, the grapes are people, and this is the appalling, appalling idea of judgment with blood flowing out, so I don't know how high horse's bridle is, is it something like that?

And you've got that amount of fluid stretching over 180 miles, presumably 180 miles in all directions, I don't know what the calculation of the volume of that is, but it's just appalling, absolutely appalling.

[39:01] And again, he is not just making this up out of nowhere. Could we look at some references please? Lamentations 1.15 Lamentations 1.15 Anybody over this side want to have a go at reading?

No? It's still with you, Valerie. Lamentations 1.15 which is on page 824 or thereabouts. Yeah.

The Lord has rejected all the warriors in my midst. He has summoned an army against me to crash my young men. In his way as the Lord has trampled bread and door to Judah.

Yeah. So there's an example of God's judgment on his own people. You know that wine press, don't you? They'd put the grapes in there and they'd squash them to get the grape juice out and then that would be fermented as wine.

And that's the picture there. Isaiah 63 And while you're finding Isaiah 63, just bear in mind that the same theme that when God judges his enemies, he saves his people.

[40:46] Those things both happen together. You can't have one without the other. And you find references to that in Isaiah 63. I'll read this one.

I think the context of this is that there is injustice and God's people are in captivity and who's going to sort this out? Who's going to sort this out?

And God says, I'm going to do it. Who is this coming from Edom, from Bosra, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this robed in splendour, striding forward in the greatness of his might? It is I proclaiming victory, mighty to save. Why are your garments red like those of one treading the winepress? This is the Lord speaking.

I have trodden the winepress alone. From the nations, no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger. I trod them down in my wrath.

[41:52] Their blood spattered my garments. I stained all my clothing. It was for me the day of vengeance. The year for me to redeem had come. I looked.

There was no one to help. I was appalled that no one gave support. So my own arm achieved salvation for me. And my own wrath sustained me.

I trampled the nations in my anger. In my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground. Is it God's passion or determination?

I'm going to save my people. I'm going to crush my enemies. Is anybody going to help me? No. I will do it all by myself. And that's this dramatic statement in here.

I'm coming mighty to save. Mighty to save. And indignant to judge. And this is the day of vengeance and the day of redemption.

[42:55] And I'm going to do this all by myself. You think of the Lord Jesus for his part on that heading to the cross. Is anybody else going to die for our sins?

Anybody? Disciples? No. They've all run away. Even the dear women who are accompanying him. Are you going to die for these people's sins? No. I'm going to do it all by myself.

And the Lord Jesus in his indignation says, I'm going to do this. I'm going to crush my enemies and I'm going to save my people, whatever it takes.

Amen. So, we've looked at the final end and there's a lot we could say, but it is quite a challenging thing to think about, isn't it?

to think that salvation implies its reverse.

[44:00] If people are not saved from the wrath, then they will experience the wrath of God. It should impel us to prayer, shouldn't it? I'm not saying we should be dwelling on this every single moment, but it should impel us to prayer.

And to say that it is actually not possible to live the Christian life without reference to the final end. The Christian life is a life lived in the light of the final end.

In the light of, like it said in 2 Peter, seeing as everything is going to be burned up, what sort of people should we be as we live holy and godly lives, speeding his coming.

Only the final end makes sense of the injustice of God's current providence. You know, you have this question, why does God allow suffering? Of course, you can answer it in various ways, but one thing to say is, he won't always allow suffering.

It is wrong that there should be sin and suffering, and one day he will remove injustice, but he's not doing it at the moment, because like with the wheat and the weeds, if he were to root out all evil now, it would just disrupt the whole venture of humankind, but one day he will.

[45:25] Only the final end gives a cogent reason why contented sinners need to turn to Jesus.

gospel preaching needs you never knew you had. Let me just comment on that. We had those lovely Texan people here, do you remember, was it 18 months ago, and one of them gave a testimony, he said, this is why I became a Christian, because I was sexually promiscuous, I had

problems with drugs and guns, and my life was such a mess, and that's why I turned to the Lord Jesus, and since then I've been clean from alcohol, I've been faithful to my wife, and he's made such a difference in my life, and I say, amen to that.

But suppose there was somebody sitting there who said, well actually I have no problems with alcohol, I have a lovely marriage, I don't even know what a gun is, why should I become a Christian?

And I think that's a good question, well why should you? If it's just for this life? And the answer is, because there is a final end. Because even though you have loved your wife, and done an honest trade, and not had a problem with alcohol, you've never turned to the Lord, have you?

You've built up your whole life for yourself. You haven't done it for him, and one day he will ask you, all those gifts I gave you, did you ever say thank you to me?

[47:00] All that I gave you, in him we live and move and have our being, there's not a single breath that we have for which we should not be eternally grateful to the living God.

And have you ever turned and thanked him for that? No. Well that's a reason why you need the Lord Jesus, because of that last day. Only the final end gives a cogent reason why contented sinners need to turn to Jesus.

Gospel preaching addresses needs you didn't know you had. People say well I don't feel any need of religion. I don't feel that. Well you probably don't. But you do need because there will be a last day, a day of judgment, and that will be an awful, awful thing if you have to drink the cup, because the Lord Jesus didn't drink it for you.

Do you see what I mean? Only the final end makes it possible for Christian disciples to run at a loss during this life. We have a hope set before us.

There are heavenly rewards. Our deeds follow us. Only thinking of that makes it possible to live the Christian life running at a loss.

[48:17] Did you make your first million? No I never did. Did you always have perfect health and wealth? No I never did. Did you know suffering and loss?

Yes I did. Were you even martyred for your faith? Yes I was. Well is it worth being a Christian? Well yes because what it's going to be. What it will be like when we get there.

That makes sense of everything else. It's a little bit like studying. Do you enjoy your studies? Not necessarily. Is it hard work? Yes it is. Why are you doing it?

Because one day I'll get a degree. I put up with various things because of what's going to happen in the end. Being pregnant and actually going through labour.

I need to see ladies after they've had their baby and they say I'm never going through that again. But they do. And it's the fact that all that discomfort and some degree of indignity and certainly the let me not lay it on too thick.

[49:27] it's certainly not something I'd like to do. But is it worth it? Well yes it is because you get a baby. What happens at the final end makes sense of all the previous nine months.

that is the Christian life. Shall we close by turning to Romans 18? Romans 18?

There is no Romans 18. Romans 8. Romans 8. Romans 8. Romans 9.

Romans 9. Romans 9. Romans 9. Romans 9. Romans 9. That means confident anticipation.

That creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth up to the present time.

[51:07] Not only so, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved, the confident expectation.

Hope that is seen is not hope. If you've got it already, you wouldn't call it hope. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

And he goes on to say, looking forward to this final end, as it were, in verse 35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword, as it is written, for your sake we face death all day long, we are considered a sheep to be slaughtered.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor demons, neither powers, neither height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[52:22] And that is the hope that we have set before us. And we live in hope. Oh, yeah. End, end. I should stop.

I would actually like to test your patience by singing something and then ask Daniel to close in prayer. And I have something in mind to sing. What was it? I can't remember.

But shall we sing 779? Okay. Okay. Let's sing 779.