

Understanding the end from the beginning

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- [0 : 0 0] Revelation 21 to 22 verse 5. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.
- And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.
- He will dwell with them, and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more.
- Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new.
- Also he said, Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true. And he said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.
- [1 : 1 9] To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God, and he will be my son.
- But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.
- Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, and spoke to me, saying, Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.
- And he carried me away in the spirit to a great high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper clear as crystal.
- It had a great high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed.
- [2 : 3 2] On the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.
- And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies four square, its length the same as its width.
- And he measured the city with his rod, twelve hundred stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, 144 cubits, by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.
- The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel.
- The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

[3 : 47] And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold like transparent glass. And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty and the Lamb.

And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

And its gates will never be shut by day, and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. Also on either side of the river, the tree of life, with its twelve kind of fruit, yielding its fruit each month.

The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.

[5 : 14] They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Well, how have you experienced your world, our world, this week? I guess I already know the answer to that question for every one of us, and that is, we'd have to say it's a mix.

It's always a mix, isn't it? So, on the one hand, you're aware of stunning beauty in the physical world, yet incredible harshness and uncertainty, climate change, devastating natural disasters, disease, plagues.

It's such a mix. It's like the same in our relational world. From time to time, we catch glimpses of the loving, secure, satisfying, selfless relationships that each one of us crave.

But mostly, we're just struggling to keep our relationships together. We're struggling just through dysfunction and brokenness. Our brokenness and dysfunction impacting others, and the brokenness and dysfunction of others impacting on us.

[6 : 46] And I think it would be safe to say, without being called Eeyore this morning, that I think most of us at the end of the week just feel a bit battered, and bruised, and tired.

That's life, isn't it? And then when we switch on our TVs, if you still use a TV, or your iPad, whatever it is, you get your news service on, at global village level, well, the picture's just the same, only much bigger, much more severe.

Brutal conflict erupting every which way. Hatred in countless forms. Lies.

Ruthless exploitation. We talk about man's inhumanity to man, but that's just a cliché, isn't it, for what we see. That reality, I think, is very, very much to the fore in explaining why, hope is basic to every person.

It's hope in the middle of a very, very heavy, dysfunctional, broken world. It's hope that keeps a person from being stuck in the awfulness of the past, or the present.

[8 : 09] Because hope gives promise of a better future. Hope is such a powerful thing in each of us.

Hope is a really powerful thing in society. In fact, it's so powerful that I think it's not too much to say that hope is the last thing we lose in life.

Once that's gone, then it's gone. Life's gone. We cannot continue to live meaningfully without hope.

It's that powerful. It's that important. Now, of course, when we look at our world, then we see that the more hopeless people feel, the more they experience that sense of brokenness and dysfunction in the world, as they observe it and experience it, the more they demand hope.

And what we see in our world, I believe, is that we keep recycling the same old hopeless forms of hope. Despair.

[9 : 29] Black depression. And that's an epidemic proportion in our society at the moment. Or, go to the other extreme, there's escapism, self-indulgence.

We entertain ourselves to death at the old retail therapy, bingeing Netflix, endless entertainments, home renovations, personal pampering, and so the list could go on and on and on.

It's all about escapism. It's all about self-indulgence. It's all about creating a sense of paradise and security and meaningfulness in among the dysfunction and the brokenness.

And then there's bland optimism. Our world seems to be still holding on to that. Positive thinking. Hard to know how after generations of war and destruction.

But it seems like a lot of people still, contrary to all evidence, believe that inherently people are good. And that if we can just deliver the right educational, economic, and social conditions, then we can actually build that earthly paradise we all crave.

[10 : 36] And that if we can just deliver and that's more positive in positive thinking than I can manage, let me tell you. In sharp contrast to that, there is Christian hope.

That is, Christian hope is the past, present, and future connected in Jesus. So the Christian hope, as I introduce that term, is just another way of speaking about the Christian worldview, which is spelled out in the Bible.

And the worldview, I've used this idea before, the worldview is just like a pair of glasses. A worldview is the lens by which we observe and understand our world, what our world is, where our world came from, and our place in the world.

The biblical worldview gives us a framework to understand the frustration and brokenness we observe in ourselves and in our world.

The biblical worldview gives us a framework to understand the sense of futility and meaninglessness which threatens to overwhelm us from time to time. The Christian worldview is a compelling historical explanation which guarantees we're not stuck in the past or the present because it explains precisely how and why the future will be better.

[12 : 18] In the Christian worldview, history is linear, not circular, as in many Eastern religions and philosophies.

that is, in the Christian worldview, history, or what we know as space and time, actually had a precise start. It was created out of nothing by God when he created our universe.

And history, space and time, will have a precise, finite ending at some point in the future. Also determined by God.

and in between those two points, history is us moving inexorably towards that final point in time. And the Christian worldview, most importantly, explains to us that we experience the world not as it was created to be, but we experience the world having been subjected to frustration and futility.

And that fits, doesn't it? That fits with our sense of what we're observing in ourselves and experiencing in our world. We just think to ourselves, there's got to be something better.

[13 : 43] This can't be what we were made for. We see that most clearly at death. We just want to cry, no, no, no, this is not right. We were made for better things.

But equally true, the Christian worldview explains that God's future is already breaking into the present. Both God's image bearers and God's physical world will be restored to God's original design and plan.

Because it is God's design and plan. And Jesus, we're told in the biblical worldview, is the center of history and the Bible.

Every aspect of the past, present, and future is tied inseparably to Jesus and God's kingdom. And so as Christians, as believers, those in Christ, we have the link, the vital piece that puts it all together.

That is the Christian hope. And Jesus himself was very much aware of this. His mission in the world, he says in Mark 1, verse 15, you can check that out for yourself at a later time, his mission in the world was to establish the kingdom of God.

[15 : 14] That is, in the context, he's saying, as God's Messiah, as God's promised king and savior, I will do everything necessary to restore the kingdom of God.

What's the kingdom of God? Well, the kingdom of God, we've seen over the last few weeks from Genesis 1 to 3, is God's people, God's special people, in God's place, under God's rule and blessing.

God's under God's rule and blessing. In John 5, verse 39, again, you can check it out later, Jesus is clear that all scripture, that which we call the Old Testament, all scripture is written about him.

And in that context, he actually connects that to eternal life. So if you want to know how to find eternal life, what eternal life is, then you read the Old Testament scripture in the light of Jesus.

He brings it to fulfillment. He makes it real. He delivers all those Old Testament promises. The same in Luke chapter 27, verses 44 to 46, after his resurrection, and he was walking on the Emmaus Road with his disciples.

[16 : 23] And he reveals himself and then tells them that, again, the same thing, everything written about him in the scriptures, the Old Testament, as we call it, was about him.

Again, he is the one who fulfills every promise made by God as part of God's salvation plan. So friends, Jesus literally is the key to understanding the whole Bible.

We can only understand properly what we read in the Old Testament when we understand it through Jesus. So for example, if we just took the idea of sin we saw last week in Genesis chapter 3, we can see it's awful, but it's not until we see what Jesus has to pay to undo the effect of sin that we understand how awful it is.

Nothing less than the life of God's own son was going to be sufficient to deal with it. And so, things that we see in the early part of scriptures, we actually see develop throughout scripture, and then finally the last piece fits in place and we think, wow, so that's what it was all leading to.

Jesus is doing this. Now it all makes sense. Every aspect of Jesus' ministry is shaped and defined by the problems and issues of the past as he brings God's future into time and space.

[18 : 00] Jesus. So, in the remainder of my time, I just want to have a quick walk through the Bible's plot line of God's salvation plan in Jesus.

And it's going to be very quick. It's actually going to be more like a gallop. So, over the past three weeks, we've explored Genesis 1-3 and we've explored that under the headings of explanation for why we observe and experience the world as we do.

And we started in Genesis 1 with a notion that God created. And we saw there the world as it was designed to be. And we just made some notes in passing.

The universe is God's created place. The universe is a home for God's glory. Demonstrating his creative power and goodness. And it's in Genesis 1 and 2 and 3 that we see the pattern of God's kingdom.

So, Adam and Eve were God's special people in God's special place, the garden. Created as image bearers to reflect God's glory, they were the first of the human race, set apart from all other living creatures to enjoy unique personal relationship with God and rule God's world on God's behalf.

[19 : 32] And they were gladly under God's rule as Genesis 2, as they lived all of life in obedience to God's word and as they lived all of life as worship of God.

And in turn, enjoying the good life of blessing, abundance, and rest, as it's called in Genesis 2, or security. God was created, then the next step is that God has rejected chapter 3.

And the world is subjected to frustration and futility. So, there you have God's people in God's place under God's rule. Well, chapter 3, God's special people choose to disobey God and act independently of him.

And the consequences were disastrous both for them, Adam and Eve, and for every generation that has followed them since. No longer God's special people in God's special place because they've been banished.

They were shut out of God's garden. They turned away from God. God turned away from them. And they were forced into that very thing which they wanted in their action.

[20 : 58] That is, they wanted to live independently of God. That was why they chose what they did. And guess what? They got it as God closed them out of the garden and locked them out. They were forced to experience life independently of God.

And we see in Genesis 4 to 11 that that life was just horrendous as the depth and nature of sin spread from the generation to the generation. No longer God's special people.

No longer in God's special place. No longer under God's rule and enjoying God's blessing. Now, they were experiencing God's wrath, God's judgment, albeit partial.

But they were seeing an aspect of God's character they'd never come across before until they disobeyed. And their life was subjected to restlessness in comparison to rest, frustration in comparison to delight and ease, toil, futility, rebellion, and most of all and most destructive of all, self-worship.

They stopped worshipping God. Who did they start to worship? Themselves. They had put themselves as creators. They had inverted God's order.

[22 : 28] God created, God rejected, and then God mirac... Oh, no, I've lost my word. God provides.

Sorry. I'm sorry about that. God provides for his rebellious people. I don't know what happened there. God created, God rejected, and God provides for his rebellious people.

The situation at the end of chapter 3, on one reading, just looks hopeless. But in amongst all the hopelessness, we see that God is determined to restore his kingdom.

God is determined once again to have his special people in his special place, gladly under his robe, and enjoying the blessing that comes with that.

And so God commits to acting towards his rebellious people in love and undeserving generosity. And the first promise of that is tied to someone in Genesis 2, 15.

[23 : 32] Dave looked at this last week. Again, go back and check out the verse. I'm going to call that person the bruiser. Because the prophecy was that this descendant of Eve would come and bruise Satan's head.

But in that action, would himself be bruised. The bruiser. What was his, what was the promise of the bruiser from the God?

Well, the bruiser, at considerable cost to himself, would defeat Satan and undo the effects of sin and rebellion and therefore restore God's people to God's place under God's rule and blessing once again.

So that once again, God's world would do what God designed his world to do, and that is perfectly reflect his glory. perfectly demonstrate his power, his aloneness in terms of his being and his presence in the universe.

Now, as I said before, Genesis 4 to 11 records the horrendous consequences as sins spread from one generation to the next, and they are horrendous. Look through those chapters.

[24 : 59] It just beggars belief. It's a but then hope surfaces again as God promises Abraham, Genesis 12 we're up to now, he says one of your descendants will, essentially he doesn't use this language, but one of your descendants will be the bruiser.

That is, the promise to Abraham was in turn of land, nation and blessing. God's people in God's place in God's rule. And so if you're looking at the second page in the bullet and you can see this little schematic thing, the diagram thing, we see that Genesis 1 to 11, the whole of the world is on focus, it's on view, and then in Genesis 12 with the promise to Abraham, we sort of narrow down and for the next generations we have the history of God's salvation plan as it's worked out through national Israel, the Jews.

And then when we get to Jesus, then we open up and the whole world's back on view again. And finally we get to the end. And so it's symmetrical. But the rest of the Old Testament is basically God working out his plan of salvation that once again he would have his special people in his special place under his rule and enjoying his unrestricted blessing.

Now, how do we see that? Well, if I had another three or four hours I would take you through all the different genres of literature in the Old Testament, but I'm not going to do that this morning. I just want to, at risk of being simplistic, and this probably will annoy some of you, just talk about this massive period in a couple of sentences, a few sentences, and say it, cast it like this.

So the pattern from Genesis 12 until we get to Jesus is a pattern of waiting for the bruiser to come. And so what happens is this. As we track through and we get introduced to the next big character in God's salvation history, then the anticipation soars.

[27 : 08] Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, each time the anticipation soars. Perhaps this one is the bruiser. Perhaps he'll do what nobody else has been able to do before him, undo the effects of sin and restore the Garden of Eden conditions, bring God's people back into God's place and under God's rule.

And the expectation soars and then crashes. Because we see that successively, each of these big figures, although they do great work for the Lord in that sense, each of them is still part of the problem.

Sin. And sin trips them up and we crash and burn again. And we wait again in history for God to bring the next one.

Expectation soars and we crash and burn. And so the pattern continues right through until Jesus. Finally, we get to Jesus.

And once again, hope surges. Now, if you read in the early chapters of Luke's gospel, you'll find people like Zechariah and Elizabeth, Anna the prophetess and others who are described as people who are faithfully waiting for the consolation of Israel.

[28 : 31] That is, they were people who were living in hope, hope of the bruiser finally coming, hope that God would finally send his Messiah, the one who would undo the effects of sin and restore the world to what it was meant to be.

They too were feeling bruised and battered and tired. And they couldn't wait for God to act and send the bruiser. Expectations were soaring again.

Anticipation was soaring. Only this time, we stay up there. There's no disappointment. No crash and burn. Jesus was the bruiser.

Finally arrived. And he got busy doing what was promised in Genesis 2.15. But he did it in the most surprising of ways.

The redemption of God's people, that is the restoration, the undoing of the effects of sin and bringing God's people back into perfect relationship with God, that's what redemption is.

[29 : 37] The redemption of God's people came as he was bruised on the cross and in death. But his death did undo the effects of sin.

His death did restore God's people to God's special place, that is, in Jesus. Relationship, personal, intimate relationship with Jesus. It renewed them from the inside out so that once again they're delighted to live all of life under God's rule, to live all of life as worship and to enjoy all the blessings of being in God's family, in God's place, in the Lord Jesus, as they were created to do.

But not even Jesus brings the story to the end, in that sense.

Salvation or redemption as we experience it is very much real. We already have God's future reaching into the present now.

We are in Christ. We are holy in Christ. We are in relationship with Christ. We are already being made perfect, made suitable for heaven.

[30 : 59] But it's not yet complete, we're told, in the New Testament. We are a new creation in Christ, 2 Corinthians 5, 17. Ephesians 1, 1 to 14.

We have every possible blessing in Christ. Our inheritance is real. But it's not yet fully experienced or appreciated or enjoyed, is what we're told in Ephesians 1, 12 to 14.

So in spite of the fact that we already experienced so much renewal, restoration and blessing in Christ, in spite of the fact, therefore, that God's future has already come into us in the present, then I can tell you this morning, my friends, and I'm excited about this if you're not, the best is yet to come.

The best is yet to come. And to think of the best being yet to come takes us to the end of history and the new heavens and the new earth.

And those, whatever else they are, are just pictures of renewal and complete restoration. For all the points we might trip over some of the details of the pictures, just come with me at that point.

[32 : 23] It's just a picture of complete restoration where once again we see what it will be like to be God's special people in God's special place under God's rule and enjoying his blessing in a way that's no longer restricted and inhibited by our finiteness and by our remaining sin.

And it's a picture that's tantalizing, to say the least. So turn with me now to Revelation 21 and 22. These are pictures and they are profound pictures and yet clear pictures and I say to you, let's not make them too complicated.

I think they're just meant to be simple pictures. And notice we do that, that we started the Bible, this series in Genesis 1, with God's word.

The first page of the Bible is God's word and creation. The last page of the Bible is God's word and new creation. And in between that is Jesus.

God's word and Jesus working out God's salvation plan. Now that's a worldview, my friends, that is so, so good to have when we're feeling battered and bruised and weary.

[33 : 52] Mark Twain said history never repeats itself, but it does rhyme. He was even more Eorish than me because what he was really saying.

That was meant to be rhetorical, Liz. What he's saying is that, look, nothing ever changes in history. It just goes round and round and round. That's a dreadful place to be.

In Revelation chapter 20, very difficult, complicated things. Christians have argued over this for years and will continue to argue that in the generations. But let me just touch you down very briefly in Genesis 20, verses 11 through to 15.

Essentially this, that Genesis 20, 11 through to 15, and you can read this for yourself, is God's final action in history. That is the final judgment.

And again, that parallels Genesis 3. God brought a first judgment, but it was only partial. There was always going to be an expectation of a second, final judgment if God's justice was to be displayed in God's glory.

[35 : 04] Well, that second, final judgment that brings history to an end is talked about in Revelation 20, 11 through to 15. But what then?

That was an event that had no fear for Christ's people because their names are written in the Lamb's book of life, as John talked about.

It was a momentous occasion. It will be a momentous occasion, sorry. But it has no fear for God's people. But what then? Well, remember the structure of Genesis 1?

Six days of action by the Lord on the seventh day. It didn't end. Revelation is structured in the same way. I don't think, coincidentally, I think it's deliberately by John.

He works through six scenes or six cycles of history. Each has a start. Each has a finish. It's a perspective of God's world over the ages. But then this last scene doesn't end.

[36 : 05] It continues. Theoretically, it should end at the end of chapter 20 because that's the end of history. But no, it continues. What's left after God's final action of history? God's people in God's place under God's rule.

It's a picture of heaven. It's a picture of heaven. And what a picture it is. All the things lost and spoiled by sin and rebellion now restored and perfected by Jesus so that they can never be lost again.

So the Bible starts with the Garden of Eden. And it ends with a picture of the Garden of Eden.

But far better than the first Garden of Eden. We'll get to that in a minute. Far more secure. Finally, the picture, as we move into these pictures, finally as Christ's people will experience in full what we long for daily.

Revelation 21, verses 1 to 8. I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and earth had passed away.

[37 : 23] And the sea. By the way, here the sea represents a chaos and disorder in the world. But there won't be any of that in heaven.

So the sea doesn't exist. It's picture language. Remember that? Remember that? And I saw the holy city. New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven for God.

Prepared as a bride. Adorned for her husband. The new city is actually a community. People. The church. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them. And they will be his people. And God himself will be with them as their God. God's people. Names in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Redeemed people. In God's place. Right there with God. As he walked with Adam in the garden. We're back to that picture again. Under God's rule.

[38 : 25] The good life. The eternal life. The abundant life. The abundant life. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

And death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore. For the former things have passed away. Friends, don't we just long to be free from the awfulness of life?

The older I get, the more I long for it. Don't we just long for a new home. A place of security.

A place that's deeply satisfying. A place that's restful. A place that sin. And I speak about my own sin or the sin of others. That can't intrude.

It can't spoil. Nor do we need to be anxious about it. Intruding or spoiling. That's the picture of heaven. Heaven will be perfect.

[39 : 27] There will be none in heaven, verse 8, who seek to live independently of God. And heaven is God's place of security and beauty. And blessing for God's people.

In verses 9 through to 27, there's a series of four, again, pictures. John is showcasing God's people. Christ's bride. The holy city.

The new Jerusalem. And all of these are different symbols and different pictures of the same thing. That is, they're all describing God's people in every edge.

And so, John uses these pictures, I think, to describe what he knows to be indescribable. It's beyond his finite ability just to capture it.

And so, he's just searching for things and piling them up. And so, he starts by saying, verse 11 and verses 18 to 21, he uses the imagery of precious stones.

[40 : 25] And so, he sort of visualizes God's people as just this massive, massive chasm full of the most precious stones you can imagine. Everywhere you look, God's people are sparkling.

Why do they sparkle? Because Christ has made them new. He's restored them to true image bearers. What a beautiful picture to crave and long for.

And then, verses 12 to 14, he goes on and uses what you might call a more military metaphor of picture. He describes God's people like a fortress. And this is an amazingly huge fortress.

You can't dig under the waters, the walls, because there's 12 foundations. You can't knock the doors down because they're miles thick. You can't get over the top because it's so high. It is a perfectly safe, secure place.

And it dominates the horizon. Why? Because it's God's people in God's place enjoying the blessings of God's rule. And he goes on then to use a mathematical picture.

[41 : 31] God's people are like a perfect cube. You know, the same this way, this way, and that way. It was just seen to be perfection in that day when it was written.

And he describes all these things. And then, verses 22 through to 27, he's sort of still despairing. He just can't quite get it. Like an artist who can't quite capture what's before him.

And then he sort of backtracks and says, well, actually, let's just go back to what's really simple. Heaven is God's people gathered around Jesus. Those people who've been thirsty all their lives.

Verse 6. To the thirsty, I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The Samaritan lady was so thirsty when she came to the well.

She thought she was thirsty for water. But Jesus told her, no, no, no. Behind that thirst, there's an even deeper thirst. You're thirsting for life. You don't know where to look for it. But I do.

[42 : 37] Look to me for life, says Jesus. And your thirst will be quenched forever. Can you imagine that? Well, that which we can only sort of grasp for in the depths of our minds with as many pictures as we can imagine, that will be the reality for us in the future.

That is God's future that we now enjoy in part, but which will be delivered in fullness to us in the future. All right, I've got carried away here.

I need to stop. So, heaven, in summary, then, is Eden restored, only much better. In chapter 22, verse 1 to 5, you can see the pictures of Eden again.

Once again, the river of life flows freely. Once again, it's a land of abundance and beauty and delight. Once again, the tree of life is available with no restrictions.

The tree of the fruit of good and evil isn't there anymore. And I presume that's because there'll be no more craving independence that everybody will be happy to live under the Lord. And gladly so.

[43 : 44] Once again, God looks at what he's created and says it's good. Once again, there's uninterrupted blessing and fellowship between the Lord and his people. How is it better than Eden?

Because our righteousness and obedience is now sourced from Christ's work on our behalf. And in God's Spirit who has taken up residence in us.

We have the genetic code of the second man. The last man. The true Adam. Adam. Adam. Adam. Adam. Adam. Adam.

Adam. Friends, knowing the end from the beginning is the basis of the Christian hope. Make it more personal.

Knowing our end from our beginning is what gives us hope for the future. And it's only when we have hope for the future that we have the capacity to live well in the present.

[44 : 51] to live well now in this broken, dysfunctional world with broken, dysfunctional bodies, knowing that what we have in Christ is real, but the best is yet to come.

And the question then as I wind up, do you believe that? Do you believe that is your inheritance? Do you believe this is your identity?

Do you crave God as your ultimate expression of beauty? This is what we shall be in the age to come.

This is what we are in a very real sense, this is what we are in a very real sense already now. So the question then is, why would we look longingly at the things, the hopeless forms of hope our world offers us?

When true hope that understands our world and understands our brokenness is to be found in relationship with Jesus. In the terms of Genesis 1-3, why would we keep trying to build our own paradise here in this earth under our own resources to try and answer the deep thirst of our soul when Jesus says, come to me and drink freely with no payment.

[46 : 29] Friends, let's set ourselves this week to live in the light of heaven, not to live as those were stuck in the past or the present in our brokenness and dysfunction.

Pray with me, please. Lord, we thank you for pictures. Pictures, as they say, paint a thousand words, capture a thousand words.

And the pictures of Revelation, Lord, capture many, many more words than that and yet we can scarcely even comprehend the pictures. Lord, our thirsty souls do long for that soul-satisfying water of life that you've already poured into us in the Lord Jesus Christ and in your spirit.

And we long for that, Lord, to be topped up to full measure in the age to come. And so, Lord, in the brokenness and the dysfunction of this world and in my own brokenness and dysfunction, knowing the best is yet to come, I just simply say, come, Lord Jesus.