

Series: **The End of Time**  
Today's Title: **"The Eternal State"**

December 3, 2023 – Revelation 21-22

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**Objective:** To encourage believers with the future blessing of heaven and eternity.

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What is eternity?

To say something is 'eternal' – what does that mean?

According to Websters – 'Eternity' is:

- The quality or state of being eternal. – ***Not helpful!!!***
- infinite time
- the state after death.
- a seemingly endless or immeasurable time.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/eternity>

Cambridge.org and the Oxford English Dictionary were not that helpful either!

- time that never ends or that has no limits. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/eternity>

The Oxford English Dictionary wasn't much help either:

- Infinite time. The total eternity, which has neither beginning nor end, may be regarded as divided by...

The future eternity; time without end.

The problem with these definitions is they are incorporating time into the definition in some way.

But that isn't true to what the Bible teaches.

Time is something God created when He created the world / universe.

When He created the solar system and the rotation of the planets and stars – time was created.

However, God has never been limited by or subject to time. He is beyond time – above time.

Throughout history He has entered time – even putting Himself in subjection to time in His incarnate state.

He is sovereign over the limitations and power of time.

To speak of eternity – or things that are eternal – means there will be an absence of time – as we know it.

**Eternity = timelessness – or the absence of time.**

Some theologians speak of eternity as a constant present – where there is no passage of time – but everything exists in a present state.

Thinking on this topic can quickly move into a philosophical – metaphysical – even a mathematical discussion – which can be very confusing.

*So, let's keep this as simple as possible.*

Eternity – the Eternal State – will be a timeless existence.

There will be no past – or future in the eternal state.

As Peter writes, “...with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (2 Peter 3:8)

When we look forward to the eternal state, we are looking forward to an experience that is so different than our current experience.

***Imagine living without time!!***

Eternity won't seem like a long time – because time won't exist.

So, when we think of the Eternal State – know it is unending – without time – and it is what our existence will be like... forever – which is a time reference, I know.

**Turn to Revelation 21**

***Opening Prayer***

Timeline – we have arrived at the end!!!!

**The new heaven and new earth.** 21:1-8

These first 8 verses serve as an overview – a '*big picture*' perspective of the new heaven and earth.

**Read vs. 1-8**

**vs. 1 - “new heaven”** refers to the earth's atmosphere and the universe (stars, planets, etc.) – not the dwelling place of God.

**“the sea was no more”** – Our current planet is covered by about 70% water. (<https://science.nasa.gov/earth/facts>)

Our current bodies are composed of about 60-70% water. (<https://www.britannica.com/science/human-body>) (<https://www.webmd.com/diet/health-benefits-water>)

The New Earth will have an entirely different composition or structure than our current planet.

The New Earth will not be water-based.

**vs. 2** – The “new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God...” seems to be something that has already been created – not part of the creation of the “...new heaven and new earth”.

Some connect Jesus’ words in **John 14** where He tells His disciples “I go and prepare a place for you...” as ‘proof’ that the “new Jerusalem” exists now – but won’t be ‘unveiled’ until the eternal state.

**vs. 3** – This is the true essence of heaven - God dwelling with us – ‘Immanuel’ – God with us!!

If this was all heaven was – it would be worth any and every moment of suffering which we might endure in this life.

But heaven and the eternal state will be so much more than the presence of God!

We will have fulfilling and rewarding work and responsibilities that God assigns to us – according to our faithfulness in this life.

We will have perfect health – flawless relationships  
– inspiring worship, and so much more!

*I would refer you* to a short series on heaven I  
preached in early 2020.

*I also recommend* Randy Alcorn’s book, “Heaven”  
– which is the best book on what the Bible says  
about heaven that I have found.

**vs. 4** – No more tears – no more sorrow – pain – death  
has been killed / defeated!!!

Imagine life – without sadness, sorrow, pain, or death.

Never again will there ever be a “Terrible, Horrible, No  
Good, Terrible Day”!!!!!!

Imagine only knowing and experiencing joy, pleasure,  
excitement, intimacy, fulfillment, and ultimate  
satisfaction!

**Isaiah 65:17-19**

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the  
former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.  
But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for  
behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a  
gladness.

I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; no more  
shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of  
distress.”

**vs. 5-6** – The eternal state is not a remodel of the current  
heavens and earth.

It's not a re-design or a redecorating of our current planet.

*It's altogether new – a new creation.*

*Eden 2.0!*

Our current world – current universe – will be destroyed.

It will be destroyed by God – not by humanity.

**2 Peter 3:7**

“But by the same word (God’s word – creation ex nihilo – by fiat) the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.”

**vs. 7-8** – the residents of the eternal state – of the new heaven and new earth – will be “the one who conquers”.

Who are these conquerors? “...one who conquers” is often translated “overcomer” – and is from the Greek word ‘*nike*’.

**1 John 4:4**

“Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”

This is describing those who have faith in Christ.

We “conquer” – or “overcome” not by our own works – but by Christ and His finished work on the cross – by His resurrection from the dead.

Our victory is in Christ.

*His victory is your victory through faith in Him as your Savior!*

The list in vs. 8 are those who were judged at the GWT – 20:11-15.

**Details of heaven's capital city.** 21:9 – 22:5

John gets a sneak peek at what heaven will look like – specifically, what the new Jerusalem will look like and the details of this amazing city.

The description of the city. 21:9-14

**Read 21:9-14**

**vs. 11** – “like a most rare jewel” – “like a jasper...”

Once again, John is struggling to give an accurate description of what he sees – with a vocabulary that is unable to be exact.

“like” – he is using what he knows – what he’s familiar with – to describe things that are truly out of this world!

Notice the presence of the 12 tribes of Israel (Jacob’s sons) – and the 12 disciples / Apostles.

**Israel** and the **Church** are not the same – they have not been blended into 1 entity.

Even in eternity – they are distinct.

Both are in the family of God – those who have been redeemed!

The dimensions of the city. 21:15-17

## **Read 21:15-17**

This massive city is a cube – or some believe a pyramid.

If these measurements are literal – which there is no reason to think otherwise...

L – W – H = 1,400 miles (approx.)

Walls = 216 feet (thickness?)

Literal or symbolic – the point: this city is massive – able to house billions of people – all believers through all of history.

The *brilliance* of the city. 21:18-27

**Summarize 21:18-21** – built with precious materials: gold, jewels, gates of giant pearls.

## **Read 21:22-27**

*Just a couple of comments...*

The presence of God – of Christ – eliminates the need for a temple.

Temples are places to encounter God – to worship God.

God's presence will dominate heaven – no need for a temple!

**vs. 23** – “the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it”

Some believe this verse is teaching there will be no sun or moon in the new creation.



I'm not so sure...

It's clear there will be no need for them to warm and illuminate the new earth.

But "no need" doesn't mean they don't exist.

They aren't needed – but are they purely for the sake of beauty?

Doesn't the creation speak to the power and glory of God?

Can't an unnecessary sun and moon do the same in the new heaven?

**vs. 25-27** – speak of the safety we will experience in eternity. The city will have walls – but they define the space – they don't protect the city.

The gates never close – there is no night – no darkness – no evil – ever!

The River of Life. 22:1-5

No more curse!!!!

**Read 22:1-5**

**vs. 3** – “No longer will there be anything accursed...”

**Finally!!!**

The curse of God rendered in **Genesis 3** is no more. The new creation will be the realization of what Eden 1.0 was supposed to be – a perfect, sinless, glorious existence!

**vs. 4-5** – We will have amazing intimacy with God – and we will rule and reign the new heaven and new earth with Him!

**Jesus' closing words.** 22:6-21

The revelation given to John is from Jesus – through the various angels who are conveying this revelation of future realities.

The truth and blessing of the message. 22:6-9

**Read 22:6-9**

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> time we are told “These words are trustworthy and true.” (see 21:5)

God’s Word is trustworthy.

It is inspired by the Spirit of God.

It is authoritative for every aspect of our life – and every aspect of our faith.

It is our rule – our guide for life and faith!

It is powerful – it will change your life – and Jesus said the Word of God is eternal – it will never cease – never be null and void! (Matt. 5:17-20; 24:35)

John is so overwhelmed by all he is seeing and hearing that he falls down to worship the angel next to him – but the angel corrects him – and says 2 truths which are important.

1. Angels are just like us – servants of God.

They are spirit beings – not mortal – but they are created – and their ultimate role and obligation is to serve and worship God.

2. Only God is to be worshipped.

To worship anyone else – or anything else – is a great sin.

The *power* of these truths. 22:10-13

**Read 22:10-13**

**vs. 10** - “Don’t seal up these words” – means don’t be silent – don’t hide them from view.

Tell people what is to come!

Tell people what is “trustworthy and true” about the future!!!

**vs. 11-13** - In the end – there is no time for a ‘re-do’. Those without faith in Christ – will face eternal judgment.

Those who are righteous because of Jesus – will be eternally righteous.

The *blessed* and the *cursed*. 22:14-15

**Read 22:14-15**

“wash their robes” is a metaphor for faith in Jesus as Savior.

Those with faith in Jesus are blessed.

Those without faith are “dogs” – a euphemism for those who are morally impure – they will never enter the holy city.

The final invitation and warning. 22:16-21

**Read 22:16-21**

**vs. 17** – the invitation of God is to everyone!

If you thirst for truth – if you’re spiritually thirsty – then Jesus says, “Come”!!

He tells those of us who have already come – to tell others to “come”!

- Have you put your faith in Jesus as your Savior?
- Have you asked Jesus to forgive your sins – to have His sacrifice on the cross cover your sins?

If you haven’t done that yet, what are you waiting for?

Now is the time to decide.

Today is the day of your salvation! (2 Cor. 6:2)

**vs. 18-19 – Don’t tamper with God’s Word!!!**

If you add to God’s Word – that is legalism.

If you take away from His Word – that is liberalism.

There is a high price to pay if you edit God’s Word.

I’m sure you know people / churches that have sinned in these ways.

Those who add rules and require rituals – that’s legalism.

Those who take away – or ‘ignore’ certain parts of God’s Word.

*‘That is very old fashioned.’*

*‘We’re more advanced than that.’*

*‘We’ve moved beyond those archaic rules and limitations.’*

What a great end to the Bible!

Jesus says: (vs. 20)

20 “He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.”

Then John responds: (vs. 21) – Let’s read this together.

“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.”

It’s so fitting that Revelation - the Bible – ends on a note of grace.

### ***Apply it...***

Today is your decision day – put your faith in Jesus!

Don’t delay any longer. Judgment is coming!

**Hebrews 9:27**

“...it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment...”

You might have questions – but don’t let secondary questions keep you from the primary issue.

- You (all of us) are a sinner.
- This is a problem – we are cursed due to sin.
- We can't remedy this problem – because we are the problem!
- God's remedy is Jesus – He gave His life as a sacrifice – to atone / pay for our sins.
- Belief / faith in Jesus is what God requires to be forgiven / reborn.

Other questions you might have may be important – but they are at best secondary compared to the most important – the primary question of your need to be saved from your sins!!!

Gospel urgency: The End of Time is near.

Christian - there is an urgency to the mission Jesus gave us.

An urgency to share the Gospel with others.

An urgency for them to hear about God's love for them – and His grace and forgiveness to them through Jesus.

Who is God bringing to your mind?

Your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers – who can you pray for – and invite to one of our Christmas services over the next 4 weeks?

*Closing prayer*