

Paradise Restored

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- [0 : 0 0] How are we doing? Yeah? Tired? I heard of tired? What? Who should be?
- Don. Don should be tired. Oh, Donnie. Donnie, but he showed up today. Wait a minute. It's not Donnie baseball.
- That was the other Don. This thing. I need some duct tape. Duct tape.
- Okay, take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to Revelation chapter last. 22. Can you fathom that?
- Just a couple more weeks in this book. And then we'll restart, because, you know, now we know where to go.
- [1 : 0 5] No. Revelation chapter 22. We're looking today just at the first seven verses, mostly focusing on the first five.
- But we've gone from, in chapter 21, to seeing the holy city, which is prepared as a bride. Chapter 21.9, to showing us the bride, which is really showing us the city, with walls, gates.
- And now we come to chapter 22, and we get to look inside the gates. Inside the walls. Our first description of what's inside.
- It's a bit surprising. Because we're told a city. So we go from bride, to city, to something else. But always with God in the midst.
- [2 : 1 2] Okay, so we're going to read, and then we'll pray, and then we'll jump in. So if you're able, and you'd like to stand, as I read from Revelation 22, 1 through 7.
- 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 kinds 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. They will see his face. And his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more.
- [3 : 2 1] And they will need no light of lamp or sun. For the Lord God will be their light. And they will reign forever and ever.
- And he said to me, These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angels to show his servants what must soon take place.
- And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. So it reads.
- Let us pray. Father, as always, we ask, Lord, that you would give us eyes to see, ears to hear, particularly hearts to receive. As we see these images, Father, help us to make connections.

Help us to see the purpose of the apocalypse is to show these images to convey your truth. And so help us connect dots today.

[4 : 28] But particularly, Father, pierce our hearts today. You speak about water of life and tree of life and leaves of healing.

Grant us to taste of that today. Give us foretaste of what we will abundantly experience one day. This we pray in Christ's name.

Amen. Please be seated. Paradise, paradise, paradise.

What is your idea of paradise? What do you picture? When you think of paradise, what do you picture? What do you imagine?

Do you imagine a tropical beach? Yeah, I see. Yeah. A mountain retreat, perhaps.

[5 : 36] Skiing in the mountain. Hiking in the forest. Fishing on the river. I knew Ron would go there. Fishing on the river.

That's just paradise. Fishing on the river. Getting the line snagged in the tree behind you instead of catching stuff out of the river that's not fish.

That's my experience. In spite of Ron's many attempts to train me. Yeah.

What is your... How about a garden? Relaxing in a garden? No? One that bears fruit. No? One that bears fruit? One that's already tilled and weeded and...

Yeah. That's why I said relaxing. In the area. What do we mean when we say paradise? You know, experiencing paradise.

[6 : 33] We mean bliss. Tranquility. Peace. Contentment. Right? Joy. The word paradise is a biblical word.

It means walled garden. Walled garden. A garden with a wall. That's what it means. Interesting.

And here we have in Revelation 20 and 21 and 22 this picture. We've been given the picture in 21 of a bride that's like a city. A city that has walls.

And now we come to chapter 22. We get to see inside those walls is a garden. Paradise. Remember, the book of Genesis started with a garden.

Right? Garden of Eden. Paradise. Right? It had the tree of life. It had, you know, all these wonderful things.

[7 : 43] And then within, what? Chapter 1 tells us of creation. Chapter 2 tells us of the Garden of Eden. Chapter 3 tells us we're out of the garden. We're out.

Lost it. Paradise lost. Right? But then hanging on the cross, Jesus spoke about another paradise. He said to the thief, right? Today you will be with me in paradise.

A walled garden. In chapter 2 of Revelation, he said to the one, chapter 2, 7 talked about, to the one who conquers, I will give the right to eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God.

So scripture talks about paradise. Paradise. Another paradise. To replace the old, lost paradise. And that's what he's describing here.

In chapter 22. The paradise. Not just of God, but paradise with God. That's been the focus of chapter 21 and 22, that it is with God.

[8 : 54] In his presence. So think of the original paradise. We remember Genesis 2, Genesis 3. The original Garden of Eden had rivers going through it, had a tree of life.

Remember that they could hear God, the Lord walking in the garden. and before they made the fatal choice, that was a good sound.

Oh, the Lord's coming. We're going to talk to the Lord. The presence of the Lord in the garden. And that's what they lost when they were tempted and they ate of the other tree.

There were two trees. Lots of trees in the garden, but two central ones. One was the tree of life from which they were able to eat and enjoy life. And then there was another one, just one, that they were restricted from.

Do not eat from that tree. For the day that you eat from that tree, you will surely die. Day you eat of it, you'll die. Right? So they ate of it, and did they die?

[10 : 01] Not physically, but they had a death means separation. They were immediately estranged from God. Immediately when they hear God coming in the garden, what do they do?

They hide, right? When they ate of the tree, their eyes were open. They were suddenly aware of themselves, focused on themselves. Oh, I need to dress.

And so when they lost, when their eyes were open, they experienced death, separation from God. There was immediately a hiding from God instead of a, oh, embrace the Lord.

They were, as a result, expelled from the garden, barred from the garden, separated from the tree of life. And they experienced the curse.

Now, so that's the original, but it wasn't ever forgotten, this garden. There were continual reminders. When God had them build a tabernacle in which to worship him and meet with him, in the tabernacle were images of a garden.

[11 : 14] There was a tree. Does anybody know what the tree was? A lampstand. It had seven branches with flowers on the top that held the lamps.

There was a couple of tables. There was a table before the veil that was a table of incense. Where'd the incense come from?

From the ground. Spices. Herbs. There was a table with 12 loaves of bread. Where'd the bread come from?

Garden. Garden. Natural grocers. Come on. Fruit.

There's garden pictures. Then, when Solomon built his temple, he just magnified it.

[12 : 15] And the images of garden and of flowers and of gourds and of pomegranates and palm trees exploded everywhere in the temple.

Everywhere. Garden. Garden, garden, garden, garden, garden, garden, garden, garden. Why garden? Because that's the original paradise.

That's the original fellowship, unbroken, unhindered fellowship with God. That was lost. And now we see it restored.

So the places where the garden was reimagined were the tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, and the temple, the Holy of Holies. Holy of Holies is where God was, right?

Behind the veil, right? You could, one person only could go in there once a year and that's with bells on and a belt on and a rope and prayed up and washed and clean and go in there and sprinkle blood and get out because that's the very holy presence of God.

[13 : 30] And the message of the temple was stay out, stay alive. Right? Warning, warning, warning, warning. Jesus comes and what happened to that temple?

What happened to that temple on earth? Curtain rendered. The veil rendered. If you were on service that day as the priest, right?

Well, you, oh! I cannot see his face and blue. So that's the picture.

And the Holy of Holies was, and it was the same width, same length, same height. It was an exact cube.

What was the measurement of the city in the new Jerusalem? 1,380 miles wide, 1,380 miles estimated long, 1,380 miles high.

[14 : 38] An exact cube. Picture of the Holy of Holies. Magnifier. The presence of God. That's the focus.

Of the new heaven and the new earth. Similarities? Differences. So let's explore some of that.

So Paradise Lost. Now we, we had a tree in the original garden that brought the curse because the aid of the tree it brought the curse. But there's another tree in the middle of history that was raised up that removed that curse, right?

He became a curse for us hanging on a tree that he might remove the curse for us and provide a way back to Paradise where there will be another tree.

In fact, more than one tree. So let's look at that. Paradise restored. We're given two assurances here. One, in verses one and two, the assurance that Paradise is restored.

[15 : 55] Paradise with God is restored and magnified. It's not just going back to the Garden of Eden. It's the Garden of Eden magnified, escalated, surpassed.

And then, secondly, we'll see the results of that, the implications of that. Verses three through seven, not only is Paradise restored, but the curse is reversed.

Not just removed, but reversed. And so now, what we experience right now as the curse is removed from us by faith, we will see with our eyes in that day.

So the curse is reversed and now we have intimacy with God. Nothing hindering, nothing breaking that, nothing distracting from that, but intimacy with God.

So we'll look at that. So two things. So first of all, the Paradise with God is restored and magnified. So we're shown some pictures here. Verse one, first we're shown a river, a river of water of life, literally a river of living water that is constantly flowing from the throne, we're told.

[17 : 14] It's bright as crystal. So just like everything else in the city, like the wall and the foundation, the bright, bright, bright, bright as crystal, almost transparent, but with all kinds of colors in it.

So here now, once again, a shiny, bright, crystal river flowing from the throne of God. There's the picture.

Flowing from, what's the source of this river? It is the throne of God and the Lamb. Notice that from Revelation 5 on, the Lamb shares the throne.

It's one throne of God and the Lamb. And we saw back in Revelation 4, the throne and everything, the throne was central to everything.

Everything else is described in relation to the throne. Things on the throne, things before the throne, things around the throne, et cetera, et cetera. And then we get to chapter 5 and we gotta open this scroll and who's worthy to open the scroll and no one in heaven and earth are found and then comes, right, he hears about the Lion of Judah and he turns to look and he doesn't see a lion, he sees a Lamb as if slain and that Lamb is worthy of the same worship chapter 4 as the Father God.

[18 : 33] He's worthy of the same worship because he's redeemed. So, he's sharing the throne and he's from the throne he is opening the seals, right, from the throne he is voicing things, he is in control of history.

Like 1 Corinthians 15 tells us, he's on his throne, he ascended to the right hand, he is on his throne, he is ruling history, putting his enemies one by one under his feet until he puts death under his feet and then he hands the kingdom back to the Father.

so we have, so this river comes from not just from the Father but from the Son flowing from the throne, that's the source of life.

Back in chapter 7:17 we were told about the Lamb on the throne who is also a shepherd and he's guiding his people to living water, to the eternal life, to fellowship with God.

So what's this river of life? It's a picture of life, of living water. Remember Jesus talked about that a couple of times in John, John 4, he met the Samaritan woman, talked about water, right, and talked about, oh, if you knew who you were talking to, you would ask him for the living water.

[20 : 04] If you had that you'd never thirst again. Oh, I want that water so I don't have to come out here to get the water. Right? She's confused but she's, and they get into this discussion.

And then later in chapter 7 of John he talks about at the feast he stands up and announces if anyone's thirsty come to me. I will give him living water. He will never thirst again.

I will give him living water. And then John comments that Jesus was talking about the spirit that was to come after his resurrection. You know, Jesus said, I go away and I will send you.

Help her, just exactly like me but he'll be with you always and never leave you. So this living water, I think the way that John interprets it earlier in his gospel is the river of life is the work of the Holy Spirit.

There's a constant flow of the work of the spirit that gives us life. Is it a real river? Maybe?

[21 : 13] I don't know. But the picture is something else. The image is what we're focused. Then next he sees in verse 2 a tree of life. Now my text says the tree of life.

Right? Know what yours has? Chapter 2. It says through the middle. Oh, the river is through the middle of the street of the city. So again, we're talking about a city inside.

And then on either side of the river, the tree of life. No, it's not the, it's a tree of life because it's not a split tree. It's not one tree that's on either side.

It's a tree on either side. So it's at least two. So in the original garden we had one. In the paradise of God we will have at least two.

And by the way, no mention of that other tree. We're not going back through that again. We're done with that. We did that. Done it. Failed. Okay. We've already experienced that tree of good and evil.

[22 : 20] of good and evil. So here's this tree. And it's got 12 kinds of fruit. Does your say each month?

Each month. How? Every month or each month. Okay. So every month. So month. So do we have months in heaven? In eternity?

I guess we do. Says every month. It means every month. But wait a minute. This is a whole new creation. Right?

The first creation God, you know, created light and then he created light bearers. Right? The fourth day the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night.

And they will be for signs and for seasons. How do you know when a month has gone by?

[23 : 18] Huh? Because your calendar tells you? No, no, no, no, no. Before How did Adam know?

How did the Indians know? Oh, new moon. New moon. I can say that because I'm Cherokee. New moon. It's a season. God created the sun and the moon for seasons.

Right? So the sun goes around. No, the sun doesn't go around. Has the Bible got it wrong? The sun goes around? No, it doesn't have it wrong actually. He's just giving it from our perspective.

And the moon, right? So the sun and the moon create seasons. A year or months. So, if there's no more sun and no more moon, how do we have seasons? And how do you know when a month goes by?

The fruit changes. The fruit changes. New fruit. Must be a new month. I'm not saying there's not.

[24 : 24] I'm just saying it's different. Okay? It's not like we know in this old first creation. It's different. And maybe that's a hint that the 12, 12, 12, 12, numbers matter.

Numbers count. Numbers often have a different significance in Revelation, not a literal. Right? Seven churches.

Was that all there were in the first century? Just those seven churches? Are those the only churches that met? No. They were representative of all the churches. Seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bulls, representative of fullness.

12. What's 12? Well, there was 12 tribes. God didn't pick 13. He took 12. Jesus came along and, oh, I think I'll do 15 apostles.

No, did 12. Why? Because that's enough. That's full. That's fullness. That's representative of all. 12 tribes represents all of Israel.

[25 : 33] 12 apostles represents all of Christianity. Right? So, in the new city, we have, what?

We have 12 gates, which are the 12 tribes. That's how you enter this city through Israel. And the 12 foundations, the rock foundation of the truth and the gospel is the 12 apostles that the city's built upon.

So, 12. So, is it literally 12 fruits? Which ones are they? Pomegranate? Apple? What do you got?

Whatever's in season. How many? Are there 12 fruits or are there more than that? Does it matter? See, so I think the whole idea of each month, we understand that that gives us a vision of, okay, it's constant.

I mean, 12 kinds of fruit every month, that's constant. Not literal, constant. And it probably gives us the idea that 12 isn't necessarily just 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 fruits, but fullness, plenty, full provision, full supply.

[26 : 54] There's no want, no lack. That's the picture. Now, if in your paradise you need those trees with the fruit, you'll be fine.

You're good. And just be the ones you like, right? No broccoli. No, actually, broccoli probably tastes great if you don't like broccoli.

I know, I like broccoli too. That's a vegetable. What's the difference? What's the difference? In Genesis 1, Genesis 1, it was all fruit.

So no berries, right?

No berries? Is that what that means? Okay, careful. This is it. Remember, apocalyptic literature, picture. How does that impress me?

[28 : 03] It's not the details that we quibble over. It's the picture. What's the picture? Life.

Fruitfulness. And by the way, what are these 12 kinds of fruit? If it's not literal fruit, what kind of fruit might it be? What? Fruits of the spirit.

Well, if the water is the spirit, as Jesus says, the living water is the spirit producing life, what comes after the life?

Growth. Fruitfulness. What if the fruit in heaven is not necessarily a physical apple fruit?

Isn't that what we got in trouble? Isn't it the apple? What if it's love? Ongoing. Love. Joy.

- [29 : 08] Fullness of joy. Constant. Joy. What else is the fruit? Peace. Oh, remember that surpassing peace?
- All the time. That's paradise now. Contentment. Never unkind to my neighbor.
- By the way, your neighbor, you're the one you're supposed to bear with now and forgive them. Gonna be in heaven with you. How you gonna do? I just gotta avoid that.
- No, what if the fruit, what if the fruit is this, this flowing, because the real fruit comes from the Holy Spirit. The real fruit comes because you're abiding in the vine of Jesus and you're drawing from him and you don't produce the fruit, you bear it.
- He's, so what if that's constant? I'm not gonna have dislikes of people. I'm just gonna love them.
- [30 : 17] There'll be kindness, there'll be gentleness, there'll be all this, right? Hmm. What if that's the idea? And then he adds, at the end of verse two, leaves for the healing of the nation.
- What's, so, okay, leaves for the healing of the nations. So the nations are Gentiles, you know, because we've got Jews and Gentiles in this city, right?
- The bride is made up of all these people who are united into one body. So leaves for healing. What needs to be healed in paradise? Healing what?
- Right? Does that imply that there will be diseases again? Does it imply that there will be brokenness and pain and, because weren't we already told there'll be no more pain?
- No more crying? He'll wipe every tear from our eyes, right? Healing of everything we suffered on earth? I don't think it's about an ongoing healing.
- [31 : 23] I think it's about a climactic fulfillment of healing. From the past. Just like, just like that phrase, he will wipe every tear from our eyes. Right. So there will be an initial recognition of what, you know, here I am, this is who I am, this is what I've experienced, and Christ will come and just say, gotcha.
- Right, good. So, healing of every wound and scar that we have suffered in this life, particularly for following Jesus.
- The abuse we've experienced, the rejection, mocking, those things that have left scars in our hearts, the broken relationships, because I've chosen to follow Jesus.
- And then there's the, there's the personal shame. Now, Jesus has forgiven us. The cross has removed our shame, has it not?
- Do you still feel shame? Yeah. I do. I do. And then I gotta go back here again, right?
- [32 : 40] I gotta renew my faith, because he's wiped that out. But I still remember. And when I fail again, when I fall again, what do I feel? Oh, you shouldn't feel shame when Jesus took it away.
- Well, I do, brother. Because I hate disappointing him. Well, sorry, wrong word. Can't disappoint him. But I hate grieving him.
- He feels, yeah, I know it. He feels that. So I'm ashamed. So that, he's gonna take and he's gonna, whoo.
- Does that mean the healing of the, does that mean whoo. The memory of pain, God? Memory of my failures to him, God?
- I don't know, but maybe. But there will be healing. I, I, I, I don't know about you, but I like that picture.
- [33 : 45] The grief, the disgrace, our failures healed. So, paradise restored was, was an Israelite hope.

It was spoken of in the prophets. Particularly, Ezekiel speaks about a new temple in the future. And Ezekiel prophesied after the fall of Babylon, I mean, excuse me, after the fall of Jerusalem, when the, when the temple was destroyed, David, Solomon's temple is destroyed.

They're ousted out of the land and they're in a foreign land. They don't know, are they coming back? And so Ezekiel's talking about future hope. He's talking about, yeah, you're gonna, you're gonna come back to be a new temple, but this will not be like the other.

This is gonna be a way more glorious. This is heaven on earth kind of temple. Okay, so, so, from Ezekiel 40 through 48, he's speaking about these things.

And in chapter 47 of Ezekiel, he describes this paradise. So, listen to his words. I'm just gonna take some of the words from Ezekiel 47, the first seven or eight verses.

[35 : 03] So, he's, Ezekiel is brought by somebody else to see this vision. He brought me back to the door of the temple. And behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east.

So, going, you know, the entrance of the temple is always on the east. And the water was issuing toward the east. And the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar.

And going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits and then led me through the water. It was ankle deep. And he measured a thousand and he led me through the water and now it was knee deep.

He measured through a thousand and led me through the water and now it was waist deep. Again, he measured a thousand and it was a river. Now it's a river that I could not pass through for the water had risen.

It was deep, deep enough to swim in. A river that could not be passed through. And wherever the river goes, what is it about this river? Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live.

[36 : 12] There will be very many fish. So good news for fishermen, Ron. For this water goes there that the waters of the sea may become fresh. Oh, change, change, change, change, big change.

Waters of the sea become fresh. So everything will live where the river goes. It's a river of water of life. And on the banks, oh, this sounds familiar, on the banks, on both sides of the river.

There will be all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail every month, right? But they will bear fresh fruit every month because the water for them flows from the sanctuary.

Their fruit will be for food, their leaves for healing. How's that just a coincidence? Same words. river that brings life.

Trees on either side of the river that bear fruit every month. And all, by the way, leaves give healing. John's taking, well, John has a different vision, but it lines up with the previous vision Ezekiel had.

[37 : 28] And Ezekiel's seeing this heaven on earth, it's a new Jerusalem, it's got a, but it's got a temple. Remember now in John, it's like there's no temple because the Lord's already there.

There's no separation. There's no, but now the river's coming right from the throne of God has got trees on either side. He's got paradise restored as an Israel hope.

But do you know something as Christians, we already have all of this. Did you know that? We already have the word, we already have the river of life. Jesus said that's the Holy Spirit.

It's the that keeps reviving us. We already have the tree of life, that's the vine of Jesus Christ. It's the tree that removed the curse and then it's the ongoing I am the vine, you are the branches, abide in me and you will bear much fruit.

What's your job? Bearing the, producing the fruit? No, your job is connect to the vine. Apart from me you can do nothing.

[38 : 42] Oh, you can do stuff but it's not, but abide in me, you're going to bear, you're going to bear, you're going to bear in its season and the Father will come and prune you back.

Remember that? That's part of it. Season. But here, this will be ongoing, no pruning. Ongoing, ongoing, ongoing, ongoing.

Don't you wish it would be ongoing? It will be. Don't you wish that love that God displays through you would always be there every day?

That joy that sometimes seems far apart in our experience would be there?

The peace? Yeah. So, I ask you, do you want life?

[39 : 49] Do you need life? Has your life been dry? Some of you already talked about that. Has your life been dry lately? We go through seasons, don't we? We go through tests, we go through trials, we go through dryness, right?

He prunes us, he builds us, he produces through us, and we go through pruning, right? We have seasons of life, that's part of the Christian life, it's normal. And so sometimes during those pruning times, right?

Sometimes during those dry times, Lord, where's the water? I don't feel the life. I know I got it, right?

I got it, but I don't feel it flowing. You want that? How about fruitfulness? Like some fruitfulness?

Yeah, yeah, yeah. How about some healing? Yeah, okay, yeah. I don't know. Right? Where do I get it? Well, in Ezekiel and in Revelation, both says it comes from, in Ezekiel it says it comes from the sanctuary.

[41 : 00] What's the sanctuary? Holy of holies. What's the holy of holies? Presence of God. Revelation 22, where's the river come from that feeds the trees?

From the throne of God, it's the presence of God. So if you want life and if you want fruit and if you want healing, where do you go? Presence of God. And you know how you go to the presence of God?

In the name of Jesus. Come. Jesus has come. Are you thirsty? Come.

Come, come, come. Are you hurting? Are you dry? Are you in a time of trial? When, you know, I better not rely on me.

Come. Okay, let's get to the second part. Assurance number two, the curse of sin is reversed and unbroken intimacy with God is restored.

[42 : 04] Now we already have, the curse of sin already has been removed. We already have the opportunity for intimacy with God. but not unbroken, not unhindered like we will have.

So what do we do there? Look at verse three. First of all, there's no more curse. No longer will there be anything accursed. In other words, nothing is cursed. Nothing has the curse upon it.

The curse is gone. The curse has been not just removed, but it's been reversed because now we will serve him, right? Now we will worship him.

And verse four intimates that we're worshiping in his very presence. So I'm not just worshiping in some temple that's removed from the very presence of God, literal presence of God, but I'm coming up to his presence.

Now we do that spiritually, right? We do that spiritually. wherever we gather, God is with us, right? And don't use the verse where two or three are gathered, there he is, because that's talking about something else, not talking about his presence.

[43 : 17] His presence is always with us. Even if you're just one, he's with you, right? I will never leave you. But when we gather, there's a more particular presence, a working presence of God.

So we have that by faith, but he's talking about escalating that in heaven. We will serve him. We will worship him without hindrance.

Hindrance. What would that be like? I came across this verse, you've heard it before, in Psalm 16. David, David, in Psalm 16, he's predicting resurrection, he's predicting the resurrection of the Messiah, right?

You will not let your Holy One suffer corruption, right? Etc. You know, we will be raised. And at the end of Psalm 16, he says this, right?

You make known to me the path of life. In your presence, remember, context is talking about resurrection. In your presence is fullness of what?

[44 : 25] Right now? Joy. Joy. Joy. Joy. Whatever that worshiping him in heaven, whatever that serving him in that garden means, it's fullness of joy.

I mean, can you imagine? I mean, I'm excited just to meet Jesus, right? Aren't you? I mean, just, oh, what can I do for you?

How can I honor you? And then there's a father right there. Father's right there. not, not excluding the Holy Spirit, right?

Oh, in your presence is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forever, delights.

whatever your understanding of these pictures of paradise, know that what we do experience is fullness of joy, pleasures forever.

[45 : 37] Don't think, oh, man, I'll be worshiping all day. Can I go out fishing? that's my earthly perspective, right?

Because in my earthly perspective, it's, it's supposed to be all about him, but what is it? It's about me. And it's not that God wants to rob us of our pleasures.

He gives us rivers to fish in. He gives us food to enjoy. I'm not saying that. But worshiping in his presence, serving him in his presence, it's not going to get any better than that.

Fullness of joy. It's better than fishing. Right? Oh, my. It's better than hiking in the forest, if you're into that.

It's better than skiing on the mountain in perfectly new snow. You know, where you try to do a jump and you fall on your back and you never ski again.

[46 : 46] It's better than that. Okay. I'm trying to, can you catch it? And then in verse 4, he says, they will see his face.

face. Now, on earth, that can't be done. Even Moses, who was an exception, Moses, who was not a priest, but allowed to go into the presence of God any time.

Right? Everybody else, uh-uh. Moses was an exception. And Moses met with God and his face would come out shining, right? So he had some kind of presence of God. But he never saw God's glory.

Remember, he asked, Lord, let me see your glory. I just want to see your glory. Might be the last day I live, but I want to see your glory. Right? And he's, okay, hide over there in the rock because you can't see my face and live.

So, how? Now we're going to see his face and live? The word see here means not just to see with vision, but to see with perspective, to see with understanding.

- [48 : 02] In other words, our understanding of God will be fuller. And we've got a whole eternity, I think, to learn his character, his. And then we get a name.
- He gives a name to us. That means we have an identity which is his. Everybody struggles, maybe not everybody, but a lot of people struggle today with their identity. Who am I?
- I'm going to claim to be this, I'm going to claim to be that, or I'm going to find my identity in this, or maybe this will be more meaningful because I don't like the way God made me, so I'm going to go this way. We all do that in ways.
- Finally, my identity. Now, my identity by faith is already settled, right? I'm his. I'm a saint, right? You believe that you're a saint, right? You're holy and pure, right?
- You believe that, right? Yeah. I know he says it. It's like that song you say, right? It's like, you say, so I'm going to believe it because you said it.
- [49 : 07] It's true. I know I'm loved. I know it, right? But there's going to be a name and I'll never forget who I belong to.
- I'll never forget who I am. I won't struggle. I won't doubt. I won't. Okay, another picture. Then he says we're going to reign in his light, verse 5.
- There's no night, no lamps, no sun. It's going to be different. It's a new creation. No sun, no moon, no night. It's going to be different.
- God is our light. What does that mean? We will walk in purity. When Jesus talked about I'm the light of the world, you don't walk in darkness. So now we walk in the light of Christ, but that's by faith and we take a step at a time.
- We walk by faith. We take steps. In heaven, it won't be like that. There won't be any darkness. We will be in his light. We will walk in purity. I won't have struggle finding it.
- [50 : 07] Where's the road? Where's the road? Oh, there's another road over here. Right? The broad road. Here's the narrow. I keep getting this straight. Heaven, I won't have that.
- This is another blessing. He says we will reign forever. It's a question. Reign over what?
- Are there going to be enemies? No? What are we reigning? How are we reigning? This is different than chapter 20 talked about reigning with Christ for a thousand years.
- That's that time period of when our souls are with God. we're actually joining in with what he's doing on earth. But this is eternity.
- So what is there to reign over? Will we reign over our angels? I don't know. Is that going to be hard?
- [51 : 11] Oh, so there's a new creation. So there's going to be dogs and cats. Okay, so Diane, you get the cats. That's right. Right, because you can do that. Right. James, you got the dogs. Jeremy, you got the emus. Abby, you got the gators. Right, whatever. I don't know. I don't know. It was mentioned in class.
- Sherry mentioned this. I thought it made sense. It's not so much that we're reigning over, but it's that you have authority and right to be there. That makes more sense to me.
- Yeah. Yeah. I mean, we know by Ephesians 2, we know we're already there. In a sense, we've already been raised. We're already seated with Christ. Right? We're already reigning in a spiritual sense, but then it'll be, you're done.
- You have a right to be here. Right? And heaven, by the way, paradise part two is a lot like paradise part one.
- [52 : 15] Remember, paradise part one was not, what were they doing? Were they sitting around and kind of relaxing, lounge chair by the beach? They're working.
- You got a job, Adam and Eve. Till, the garden, guard, the garden, subdue the earth. You got a big job, actually. That's paradise. What do we do in paradise part two expanded?

Worship and serve. Reigning, whatever, that, some kind of responsibility. And it will be fullness of joy and pleasure for him.

Finally, verse six and seven, he gets to some application. Verse six, he says, these words, what I've just told you, are trustworthy and too, you can count on it. They're secure.

They're certain. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place. So repeating these words that we've heard from the beginning, he's showing his servants what must soon take place.

[53 : 19] So in other words, these last words about the garden and the tree and the river and the leaves and the no night, that's gonna be soon. Soon.

Imminent. Any day. We're not waiting for something. No, wait. We gotta wait for the temple to be rebuilt in Israel, right? According to who?

Or you know what? Why? Why would God rebuild the physical temple and go back to animal sacrifice? I don't, he can have a mysterious purpose.

I'm fine with that. But it doesn't make any sense. What are we waiting for? Jesus said, Matthew 24, so man, it's gonna be like Noah's days.

Everything's going on normal, partying going on, and then, boom, just gonna, it's gonna, no warning, boom. That's why every parable is about your master's away, he can return at any time, are you ready?

[54 : 26] Well, he's delayed in coming, so I think I'll take a nap. That's what this is. Soon. Soon. That's hard, because it's soon, right?

It's been a long time. Soon. Soon. And how do we live now? Verse 7 says, behold, I'm coming soon. There it is again.

I'm coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. How do we apply this right now? Right now, we keep the words. We keep the words.

What does it mean to keep the words? We protect them. We guard them. We hold fast to them. We do not deny his name. We do the work that he's given us to do. Our faith is intentional.

John talks about this in his letter of 1 John 3. He said, see what kind of love the Father has given to us. What kind of love is that? That we should be called the children of God.

[55 : 23] And so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be, so he's getting into this, what we will be has not yet appeared.

But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him. Why? Because we will see him as he is.

Connecting that we will see him. And everyone, what does that mean? What's the implications of being like him and seeing him like he is, seeing him as he is?

The implication is that everyone who has this hope purifies himself. And everyone who makes a practice of sinning, on the other hand, everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness.

Sin is lawlessness. You know, you know that he appeared the first time to take away sins, so why would you continue in them? And in him there is no sin.

[56 : 31] sin. No one who abides in him, no one who abides in him keeps on sinning.

In other words, whoever is not abiding in him keeps on sinning. Right? No one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.

Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous. John's a bottom line black and white guy. Whoever practices righteousness is the righteous person just as he is righteous.

So what does John mean? Is he talking about perfection here? Does he mean we should never sin again? Notice that little word practice. practice. Not perfection.

Practice. Practicing. So if you practice sin, that means you're continuing to sin without fighting it. You just abandon to it.

[57 : 42] That's what I practice. That's what I'm working on it. Perfecting my sin nature. I started at age three and I'm going on. Right? About three, isn't it? Two or three, they start perfecting the sin nature?

Young family? We know how to teach them how to do that. But to practice righteousness, what does that mean? Does it mean to be perfect?

No. It means to grow in it, to keep on abiding in Christ to bear fruit. It means I repent when I fall and I abide again. That's what it means. It's not perfection, but perseverance.

It's growth. It's practicing intentional faith in him. Am I intentional in my faith or passive in my faith?

Oh, I believe in Jesus. Yeah, what does that look like? I believe in you. I prayed the prayer. Good. He'll take care of me. How you doing, Peter? How you doing, Peter?

[58 : 42] Aren't you with Jesus? No, I don't know what you're talking about. Right? Not perfection. The one continuing in sin without fighting shows that they don't know Christ.

They've never seen him with understanding. Paradise is God's promise of time when we can experience life fruit without hindrance of sin and shame.

So once again I ask you, how are you today? How are you? Do you have the life that you hope to have in Christ? Do you have the fruitfulness that you hope to have in Christ?

How are you doing? Where are you in the battle, in the journey, in the struggle? If you're down, beloved, I want to encourage you.

Where do you get the life and the fruit and the healing? His presence. That's not a big job to go to his presence.

[59 : 43] It's not like trying to go to the temple and going through the priests and bringing it. It's just Jesus says, come directly to me. Go to the Father in my name.

You got direct access. Come. Come for the water of life. Come for the tree of life.

And begin to experience the paradise of God, the love, joy, peace, contentment that only God can give. We get to taste that today. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for your word. What a tremendous picture of our eternity. We do not claim, Lord, we can grasp it all.

And again, we recognize that John is trying to describe eternal things in temporal words. But, Lord, we pray that we get enough of the picture to be excited, to be motivated, to be encouraged in our hope, to be longing for the day of Christ.

[60 : 57] And to be mindful, Lord, that you are coming at any time. And we, as your children, want to be ready. We want to be found working.

we want to be found by you as those servants who are doing good. Well done. But we need you to do it.

We need you to do it. So, encourage us today, Father, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.