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**The Millennium and Judgment Day**

**Revelation 20**

Prayer: *Father, we just want to again thank you and praise you for your grace and your goodness. We thank you once again for the freedom that enables us to still gather and we are just grateful for that. And again, Lord, we're back in the book of Revelation and we pray especially for the presence of your Holy Spirit. I pray for the presence that enables us to understand, to grow and to encapsulate exactly what it is you have for us, and I pray that you would give us the ability to make it of permanent value; and I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, we're at Revelation 20, the 20th chapter, and it starts out this way, this is the apostle John. He says: *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be*

*released for a little while.*

Well, folks, these are some of the most controversial verses in all of the Bible. People have stopped speaking to one another because of these verses. I mean, churches have split over these verses and folks have declared each other heretics over their understanding of these verses. And all of it has to do with is the thousand-year period of time that's known as the millennium.

We're in the home stretch of the book of Revelation and again, it would take literally months to simply recap where we've been for the last year. Again, suffice it to say there's over twenty messages that are out there already if you want to get some back-up as to where we've come to thus far. But where we are right now today at the start of chapter 20 and the hot button subject of the millennium is a period that's been summed up very nicely by Daniel Akin. This is what he says.

He says: "The tribulation, with its seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments, has ended." I hope you remember that. "Israel has experienced a great end-time revival. The nations, the people groups of the world, have come to Christ. Antichrist (the beast) and the false prophet have been revealed, defeated, and cast into the lake of fire. Babylon, that evil, organized religious,

political, social, and economic world system that stands in opposition to God, has been destroyed. Armageddon has taken place. Jesus has come again to the earth to rule and reign for a thousand years as its rightful Master, Lord, and King."

Now that last statement made by Mr. Akin is the one that's divided folks and it has divided them into three different camps: There's the premillennial view which is basically what I just presented, there's the post millennial view and there is the amillennial view and obviously they differ about the millennium. And the word "millennium" simply means a period of a thousand years, and it's basically about that period of time when Christ is going to reign on the earth. And the differences between the views are not just whether or not the thousand years is literal but also on just how Christ's earthly reign is going to take shape.

A-mil and post-mil views, they both reject the idea of a literal one thousand-year reign because obviously the church has been around, it's been alive, it's been thriving for twice that many years since Christ established it. They do agree more or less on one idea though, of the millennium being this long period of time where Satan is bound in the abyss and where, most importantly, Christ is reigning and ruling on the earth.

Now the pre-mil view, that takes the millennium literally, meaning it's exactly a period of one thousand years. The post-mil view tends to take the millennium symbolically. They don't see Christ ruling literally on the earth but they see him symbolically ruling through the church. Now the a-mil view says there is no millennium. There's no one thousand-year reign in the future because 2,000 years ago on the cross Christ defeated Satan and therefore this millennium is already here because Christ is already reigning here on earth.

Now, are you confused yet? Over the years I've heard many, many different presentations of each of these views and when folks would ask me what my view is I would usually say, "I don't know, whatever one I heard last presented," because every one of these different systems have significant plusses and minuses, significant scriptural back-up and significant biblical reasons for existing. So, you know, I'd hear a pre-mil view presented well, I'm absolutely certain then that that's the view. And somebody would give a post-mil presentation and that would make a lot of sense as well. And of course is the a-mil position, and it too when presented properly makes sense. And so very clearly the answer is one of the above or maybe some combination of all three.

See, God has left this position shrouded in mystery and, you know,

mystery itself is a biblical term that's not for something that's entirely confusing but for a truth, a specific truth that God intends to keep hidden for a period of time only to reveal it at a later date. We've seen that. I mean, for thousands of years God didn't reveal that the rapture would take place in which Christ is going to meet his saints in the air. And we find Paul introducing that information by saying it was a mystery that he's now revealing. *1 Corinthians 15:51* Paul says: *Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.*

Well, the millennium it's still shrouded in mystery because it, like most of the details in Revelation, have not yet unfolded. We're not at that later date where God chooses to reveal it in its entirety and so we're forced with what is obviously a lot of confusion. And what I can say with absolute certainty is that regardless of which position you take on this matter, you are still a blood-bought brother or sister in Christ. This is not a doctrine on which Christians should ever divide. It's something which everyone should agree to disagree -- agreeably if they do -- and still go forward as brothers and sisters.

So just for information's sake, once again I just want to state that at present I am premillennial. It's the view that makes most sense to me at this point. It doesn't mean that I'm not open to

changing my mind if I hear some other information that changes that view, but for now I consider myself premillennial. So with that in mind I just want to point out to you some of the strengths and weaknesses of the other two views before we go into some depth of just what the premillennial view is saying.

So first we'll look at the post millennial view. And this view like the amillennial view sees the millennium as simply a symbol. It's not an actual thing, it's a symbol of a long period of time, not exactly a thousand years. And it says that Christ will indeed return but only after a long period of time during which his representative, that is us, the church, it's going to turn the world around.

I mean, these folks see the reign of Christ as beginning with his ascension into heaven, continuing through his church to a time in the future when the gospel reigns in every single way before Christ returns. And they tend to look like look at scriptures like *Psalm 22:27*, which says: *All the ends of the world Shall remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations Shall worship before You* or *1 Corinthians 15* which says: *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.*

You see, post-mils see government itself becoming more and more kingdom-oriented and they also see no real future for Israel. See, they believe all the promises that God made to Israel have become null and void because Israel has rejected God's offer and instead they see those promises now applying to the church. And they see Christ through his church continuing this refining process of the planet, as more and more of the gospel sinks into the very fabric of the planet, it becomes more and more like the earth it was always intended to be. And when the preaching of the gospel and its effectiveness has made this world as close as it can come to heaven on earth, well then Jesus returns, Satan is released from the abyss and then he's finally defeated. In this view the gospel will become the rule, the law, the best possible way affecting in the best possible way every aspect of culture, law and governance prior to Christ's return.

The world sees this as Christians trying to take over the world culturally, politically, spiritually and every other way, I mean, post millennialism is seen as an existential threat to a secular government. And you may have heard it referred to as Christian nationalism or theonomy or reconstructionism. And what most people would say to most post millennials today is have you read a newspaper lately? I mean, have you seen the news? How do you have any confidence in this view seeing how incredibly wicked in this

world has become?

Now, folks may tend to scoff at this perspective seeing how bad things these days seem for the gospel, but the post-mil view says no, no, no, no, no, you have to look at the ark of history over a very long term rather than the short term evil that we are surrounded with. They would point out that the gospel started out with twelve believers, all of whom were executed save one, and now it's only 2,000 years later and there's over two billion people who claim to be Christian. So they say give it another 40- or 50,000 years or even more, who's to say that that gospel is not going to completely penetrate the culture?

Darrell Johnson does a good job of summing it all up. This is what he says. He says: "The post-mil believes that the rule of Jesus, exercised by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the word, is now on earth, and will ultimately transform society. The post-mils believe that both the pre-mils and a-mils 'underestimate the power of the gospel.' The post-mil seizes upon Jesus' teaching about the mystery of the kingdom in Matthew 13, where Jesus, using the analogies of the leaven and the mustard seed, seems to suggest that the kingdom comes not with a bang, but slowly, quietly, imperceptibly, inevitably. After this one-thousand-year period, just before Jesus appears, evil gets one more try, but fails.

Jesus comes, and we enter the glorious new creation." (Johnson, Darrell W.. *Discipleship On The Edge: An Expository Journey Through the Book of Revelation* (p. 335). Canadian Church Leaders Network. Kindle Edition.)

Well, if you want to learn more about post millennialism, I would suggest you tune in to the podcast of Douglas Wilson, who I enjoy, who happens to be a brilliant proponent of that view. That's post millennialism.

The amillennial view simply means no millennium. If you add A to a word, you negate it, I mean, if you add A to "theist" which is somebody who believes in God, you got an atheist. Well, the amillennial view means there's no actual millennium. It sees the millennium of Christ as symbolic, as something that started with Christ's defeat of Satan on the cross and they can clearly quote scripture that supports that view. Just before going to the cross Jesus uttered these words in *John 12:31*. He said: "*Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*"

You see, a-mils believe that Christ came first as a baby born in Bethlehem and that he lived his life in preparation for this battle that he was going to have with Satan and that he won the war and he

establishes millennial rule at the cross. And again they quote the apostle Paul. He speaks about the crucifixion this way. He says: *Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*

So a-mils believe that we're right now today, that today right now is the millennial rule of Christ. They believe that Satan's going to be unleashed for a brief revival followed by Christ's second and final return. And like I said before, many solid believers, as you can see they differ greatly on this important biblical event. And I believe that if you disagree you have to disagree or agree agreeably.

Now Scotty Smith is a pastor of Christ Community Church in Franklin, Tennessee. He sums up what the attitude should be towards these three different positions. This is what he says. He says: "No a-millennialist is going to pout if the post-millennialist is right. No post-millennialist is going to have his feelings hurt if a-millennialism proves to be more consistent with the unfolding of the history of redemption. Pre-millennialists are not going to high five one another for a thousand years in the face of dejected post-mils and a-mils, should their view on these matters be realized in history. The good news is that all Christians are going to enjoy fully everything won for us by our

blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, no matter what our position on the millennium is!" (Johnson, Darrell W.. Discipleship On The Edge: An Expository Journey Through the Book of Revelation (p. 336). Canadian Church Leaders Network. Kindle Edition.)

That's very, very wise words. But you know, there's one thing that all three of these different millennial beliefs have in common and that is there's a real struggle trying to understand Revelation as it unfolds events with regard to time. It's one thing in particular that the book of Revelation is all about that's extraordinarily confusing, and it's the way John treats the issue of time itself.

I've said in the past, we humans, we view time in a very linear way. We look at it moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day. Well, John in the book of Revelation, he does not. And perhaps the most confusing thing about reading Revelation is finding statements about historical facts that are stated in ways that defy the sequential way of understanding time. I mean, I just opened by reading the opening verses of chapter 20, and let me just re-read it. You'll see the problem.

John says: *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he*

*seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.*

Well just precisely what does John mean by that little four-letter word "then", because it's widely open to interpretation simply because John doesn't see time the way we see time. You see, in Revelation 12, this is what John said in Revelation 12:9. He said: *And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world -- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*

Okay. So you read that and you say, okay, when did that happen? I mean, is that when the serpent entered the Garden of Eden or was it much later? And then we get to the gospels and we have Jesus responding to the return of his 72 disciples and this is what Jesus says in Luke 10:17. He says: *The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."* And so we scratch our head and say is Jesus describing the same event or is this a different event? And how does this event relate

to that same dragon being bound for a thousand years? Where does all this fit in linear time? And the answer is who knows.

See, the whole issue of time, it's addressed well by Darrell Johnson, who says this; this is what he says about the flow of time in Revelation. He says: "What gives? Namely, that what John is relaying to us in the book is what he sees next, not what happens next. The book does not necessarily flow in chronological order. John does not say, 'and it happened, and it happened, and it happened.' He says, 'and I saw, and I saw, and I saw.' What he sees next may not happen next. Indeed, what he sees next may have happened before what he saw last!" (Johnson, Darrell W..

Discipleship On The Edge: An Expository Journey Through the Book of Revelation (p. 341). Canadian Church Leaders Network. Kindle Edition.)

So once again John tells us not what's unfolding in linear time but again what's unfolding in the visions as he sees them. And this is what he says next in our text this morning. He says: *Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to*

*life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

So John sees this great crowd of witnesses, and he starts off describing those who have been beheaded, then he moves on to those who refuse to worship the beast or have the mark of the beast on their foreheads or their hands. And understand, he's not drawing distinction between super Christian martyrs and those who have lived just ordinary Christian lives. There are those who have died for their faith and again, John's not just singling out those who have been beheaded, there are those who have died like Peter died, you know, having been crucified or stoned or burned at the stake, among other ways. And what John is doing is he's simply describing this crowd by saying it was made up of all the redeemed of Christ from those who were beheaded down to those who simply lived their life for Christ. And he says all of them live and reign with Christ for a thousand years.

And then in verse 5, he says: *The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.* Now understand who the rest of the dead he's referring to is. The rest of the dead are those who die outside of the kingdom. The rest of the dead are those who do not come immediately back to life spiritually. They do not experience this first resurrection because only believers do. And again, if you

move on to verse 6, it says: *Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.*

And what John is telling us here, let's understand, he's telling us that believers in Christ experience two separate resurrections. The first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection, and it occurs the moment we die. See, death closes our eyes and immediately after death occurs we experience this first resurrection where we find ourselves alive and present spiritually with Christ. I mean, it was Paul who said in *2 Corinthians 5: We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. To be present from the body is to be present with Christ.*

Now you see it's believers only who have these two different resurrections. And this first one that they're talking about, it's spiritual, it occurs right after death, places us beside Christ ruling and reigning with him until the final day of judgment when Christians will have a second resurrection that reunites them with their redeemed body of flesh.

Now, death for a non believer is very different. Death for a non

believer is a closing of a curtain with no spiritual resurrection. Everything just fades to black and remains that way until they receive a resurrection to judgment and final condemnation. As Verse 5 puts it: *The rest of the dead does not come to live until the thousand years were ended.* And again the rest of the dead refers to all those who have died outside the kingdom of God who enter an unconscious state while awaiting judgment. I mean, the non believer who dies today is going to be in a state of unconsciousness until the time when he's resurrected to face final judgment. This is the dreaded day of judgment that comes at the end of the millennium, and whether it's a symbolic state of the post-mils and the a-mils that lasts thousands and thousands of years or a literal state of the pre-mils that lasts exactly 1,000 years, like I said, I consider myself premillennial at this point so I would give you that perspective with the understanding that there are others out there who see all of these events very differently.

God says in verse 7: *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city.* Now again,

people might be asking again for the premillennial view is how could it possibly be that after thousand, a thousand years of Christ's millennial rule on the earth where the earth is filled with righteousness and peace, how could it possibly be that people could once again rebel against such blessedness? And for that I just take you back to the very first rebellion that occurred with Adam and Eve, I mean, they were in a place of absolute perfection.

And again, Daniel Akin sums it up, he says: "Apparently a thousand years of confinement does not alter Satan's plans, nor does a thousand years of freedom from the influence of wickedness change people's basic tendency to rebel against their creator. What an indictment once again on the wicked hearts of evil demons and evil humanity!" (Akin, Dr. Daniel L.; Platt, David; Merida, Tony. Exalting Jesus in Revelation (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 338). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.)

So we're then told that Satan is released, but he's released but only for -- quote -- "a little while." And once again we find that trying to fit this into a linear analysis with regard to time, it's an almost hopeless task, because John in the spirit don't treat time in a linear fashion.

And so what we find here is essentially God's recapitulating a

battle that's already taken place. He's talking about the battle of Armageddon which, as I said before, wasn't really a battle, it was a rout. Verses 9 and 10 says: *And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

And so what he's describing is all the armies of the world have gathered in opposition to Christ and his kingdom and they're all summarily vanquished and it's almost instantaneous. The beast and the prophet, if you remember, they've already been cast into the lake of fire at the battle of Armageddon but in this text we see the dragon or Satan himself meet the exact same fate, and again, it takes us back to that final battle.

And as Bakers New Testament Commentary puts it, John is providing two sketches, two very different sketches of the very same event. And again, we learned from Ezekiel that Gog and Magog, that represented the masses assembled at God against Armageddon. Way back in Ezekiel he said: *"You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you."*

And so what God is saying is this vast army, this army that's assembled from all over the world, it's going to swarm over the plains of Megiddo just outside of Israel in a challenge to God that he's going to answer instantly by sending fire out of the sky to vaporize them. And -- quote -- he says: *"And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them."*

And so what he's saying is the devil then joins the beast, the prophet and the whore of Babylon in the lake of fire forever -- quote -- *"And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."* And again, I don't blame you if you're confused because time is not structured in any linear way in the way this is presented.

And what follows next, and again, even that, it doesn't necessarily follow next but what follows next verse wise, verse 11, is judgment day. It says: *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.* And again, he's talking about this dreadful day that Peter spoke of in 2 Peter 3. He said: *But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.* Peter's going -- he goes on to describe this day when the entire world and its atmosphere is going to be burned up in

what sounds like a thermonuclear event. And again, the earth's not going to be completely destroyed, it's going to sound like it is, but it's not going to be completely destroyed; instead it's undergoing a process of transformation. Again, this is *2 Peter*. He says: *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.*

And you know, Isaiah in the Old Testament, he echoes that exact same day of judgment. He's describing earth and its inhabitants in the very same way like vanishing in a puff of smoke. This is *Isaiah 51*. He says: *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, And look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, The earth will grow old like a garment, And those who dwell in it will die in like manner; But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not be abolished.*

Well, here's the critical part. John's vision then shifts to the event of the day. This is verse 12. He says: *And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened.* This is the judgment of those who are outside of Christ. And remember,

God spoke previously about the difference between the death of those who believe and those who don't. Again, believers have two separate resurrections, an immediate spiritual resurrection a moment after death brings believers into intimate contact with Christ and his kingdom and there they remain until this second resurrection which reunites them with their redeemed and reconstructed bodies.

Sad to say, a very different fate awaits those who are not believers. They don't have two resurrections; they have but one. They die and they remain in a state of unconsciousness until they are resurrected for this very day. *Daniel 12* in the Old Testament speaks of it. It says: *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.* And Jesus himself said of this day in *John 5*: *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth -- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

So I want you to try to picture what John is seeing in this vision. All the inhabitants of earth who are outside of the kingdom of God, they're all lined up before this great white throne of God and the throne is white, it indicates absolute purity and perfection and

the judge is the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and every single resurrected person is standing before him to be judged.

Verse 12 says this: *And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.*

Every single molecule of every single cell of every single human who has ever existed, whether they were burned up in a fire or drowned in the sea or simply joined what Disney calls "the circle of life", they've all come together once again to be reconstituted, as Jesus said, not for life but for this awful resurrection of condemnation. It doesn't matter whether their souls were in Hades or simply asleep in death itself because it says the sea, death and Hades were all required to give up their dead. Quote -- *"And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."*

And you notice that the word "books" there, that's plural. And what it indicates is that there are multiple books, probably one for each of the dead standing for judgment. These books contain everyone's worst nightmare. Someone once said, can you imagine if

you had to walk around with a TV screen on your head that broadcast every single thought to everyone that you had as you had those thoughts. Well, that book is going to contain every single thought, word and deed you have ever committed. There's coming a day -- quote -- *"when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."* The apostle Paul said: *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.* Judgment day will have finally arrived.

You know, many years ago, many, many years ago when I was a young teenager, I was a huge fan of Superman comics. And if any of you remember back that far, one of the mainstays of Superman back in those days was a sub comic that they had done called Bizarroworld. Anybody remember that, Bizarroworld? Okay. Yeah. Well, D.C. Comics described Bizarro Man this way -- quote -- *"The imperfect duplicate of Superman, the chalk faced hero lives on the cube-shaped world of Bizarro where everything is the opposite of life on Earth. Beauty is hated, ugliness is revered, and it is a crime to make anything perfect."*

I was just thinking about reading all of this, and it occurred to me that Bizarro was unintentionally prophetic of the world that we live in right here and right now. We're living in an actual

bizarroland except it's not funny, it's real.

You know, in philosophy there's something known as the correspondence theory, and it describes truth itself as that which corresponds with reality. That's a really simple definition of truth. And just says it's the one thing that lines up with the way things actually are. And for thousands of years now there's been a battle as to just what things actually are. And there's two different kingdoms that are categorically stating what that reality is.

And one kingdom, according to Jesus, is run by a murderous father of lies, one for who lying is his actual native tongue. This kingdom is known as the kingdom of darkness but it's only known as the kingdom of darkness by those who recognize it as such and it's only recognized because they've been pulled out of that same dark kingdom into the light by God himself. *Colossians 1:12* says this, says: *Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*

And what John is witnessing in Revelation 20 is this final victory

of the kingdom of light and the judgment that the kingdom is going to bring on every inhabitant of the world since that first rebellion in the Garden of Eden. It's where all of creation is headed. It's where all of us without Christ are going to wind up. Quote -- *"And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."*

We're going to be judged by the works in our lives and we'll either stand for judgment based on our record alone as detailed in those books of our lives opened up in front of a perfect God who will examine every single aspect of our lives, from our thought lives to the words that we speak to the deeds that we do, and it's not going to be pretty. Jesus himself put it this way in *Luke 12*. He said: *"For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops."*

See now at that point if we haven't by faith, if we have not claimed the righteousness of Christ who's paid for all of our misdeeds and bad thoughts and ugly words by dying for them on a cross, if we don't have that payment already made for us, then we're going to stand before the ultimate reality. And the ultimate truth that lines up perfectly with that reality is that you must

pay the penalty for your sins. God says in *Romans 6:23*: *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

And so if you reject God's gift of life, you're going to embrace the only alternative that is available and that is death itself; and that's not the ending of the physical body, it is the complete separation of your existence from all that is right and true and noble and holy and good.

And for years now we have lived in this literal Bizarroworld. It's a culture that's at war with reality. In this world what is good is evil, what is evil is good, what is bitter is sweet, what is sweet is bitter and it's been that way for quite a while. I mean, it's a world so upside down that the very act of standing up right side is considered hateful and bigoted. You have to understand, this world isn't static, it's dynamic but its dynamic it's going in the wrong direction which is to say it only gets worse and worse. And the amazing thing is that the people in this world, they get used to it getting worse to worse so much so that they no longer recognize how truly awful things have become.

Just the other day I saw a TV ad for a show that featured men elaborately dressed as women competing to be the most sexually

alluring as pretend females. God says in Deuteronomy 22, he actually says that kind of conduct is an abomination to him. It's just good fun, according to the ad. Highly entertaining, just like the Gladiators and the lions killing Christians was highly entertaining.

We now have whole political parties that promise to guarantee the right for mothers to kill their children at any time in their pregnancies up to the moment of birth itself and almost no one in that party -- which represents almost half the country -- almost none of those recognize it as human sacrifice offered up to the prince of darkness, which is exactly what it is. And it's something so evil God says, I can't even imagine it. *Psalm 106* says: *They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood.* In bizarroland it's no big deal.

Marriage is no longer a ceremony that unites man and woman, it's now a battleground and it's a battleground that divide people who say love is love and people who say that marriage is sacred. And those who hold to the traditional biblical view are now considered hateful and bigoted because, like I said, we live in Bizarroworld. Anyone who says that this is not only wrong but it's absolutely

crazy, they're going to be singled out as a threat because, you see, in Bizarroworld it only works when everybody agrees that bizarro is perfectly fine. And folks think that it's perfectly fine because they're surrounded by a media that shouts that from the rooftops, shouts it out everywhere and every way over and over again so people genuinely think that men pretending to be women is no big deal, because that's the way it is in Bizarroland.

And those who live in the kingdom of light who refuse to pretend that Bizarroland is anything other than a twisted rebellion against the kingdom of light, they're going to find themselves more and more at odds with their friends, their neighbors, their colleagues and their culture. And that's why the book of Revelation is so important because, you see, this book is the ultimate reality check.

You know, the correspondence theory says truth is that which lines up with reality. You know what God says? God says reality is that judgment is coming. And the rebellion and the wickedness and the upside down-ness of this bizarro existence that we live in now is at that time going to be called out for exactly what it is.

Chapter ends with verses 14 and 15: *Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not*

*found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. And the ultimate question is: Which side will you be on? Let's pray.*

*Father, I take no pleasure in sounding like a harbinger of doom because that's exactly the task that I have in reading and explaining the book of Revelation because that's the task that you've given in that book. And Lord, I look around and I see so many people who I genuinely love, so many wonderful, caring people who are still outside the kingdom. And they may be disturbed, they may be uncomfortable, they may not like the fact that they're having stuff shoved down their throats but it's just the way things are.*

*And so, Lord, I pray for us, for each one of us to develop a holy zeal, to realize that this is still a period of grace, we still have time, the doors have not closed. It's still open season for sharing the gospel, sharing the good news, telling people, you live in Bizarroland, and there's a real land, a kingdom of light where there's truth and love and beauty and it's open to any who would call and seek it. And so I pray you would give us opportunity and a passion to share. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*