

02-08-09b Revelation

Let's resume our study now in Revelation chapter 2, verses 1 through 7, the message to the angel of the church at Ephesus. We have reviewed and expanded on the material in the first five verses up to the point where he says, remember therefore from where you have fallen. Memory is mentioned later on in another one of the letters, and we'll hark back to this one when we get there from chapter 3. But there's a lot you can say about memory.

I began to think my memory was starting to slip, but I kept forgetting about it. But I finally got some books on memory and had a very interesting study on the things that cause us to remember and help us to remember patterns and associations, and it's quite a fascinating study. There was in the news just today, Charlton Heston announced to the world that he's been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, or a neurological disorder associated with Alzheimer's, I think is how they put it.

And he said, I'm in an early stage, I don't plan to do anything any different for the time being, but if I tell you the same humorous story twice, please just laugh both times. And he was very poised and gracious about it. But our memory is a valuable thing.

Memory is how we compare the present to the past. It forms a part of our motivation. We're motivated to avoid certain things because we remember bad consequences in the past.

And we can find emotions rekindled that maybe we haven't felt in a long time when we call to mind. And this is a silly example, but I hadn't heard, there was a song from back in the 70s I think that the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band did about a guy named Mr. Bojangles that danced. But one part of that little story song, it's about this fellow who's in jail and he's kind of boozy and all that, but he's a dancer.

But for 15 years in this story, he travels around the country with his dog, and then his dog died. Well, he's telling this story and 20 years later, he's telling his cellmate about how he traveled with this dog, and he bursts out in tears. He cries about the dog that he lost 20 years earlier.

That's the power of memory. And all of us have experienced that. People will tell you things that happened in the long past, and old emotions and old thoughts will reawaken.

And that's the power of memory. A lady I work with, it was kind of funny, we work on the W.A. Criswell legacy. Dr. Criswell, very long career as a pastor, and when she was a teenager, she was in First Baptist Church of Dallas and saw Dr. Criswell, and at that time, he was in his late 50s and early 60s.

And now, she is in her late 50s, and we got a new piece of equipment where we can screen some of the videos that are a part of our holdings there at the legacy. And so, we pulled out one of the oldest videos, I said, I'd like to find the oldest piece of videotape that we have. And so, we

pulled one out from 1973, it's one of the earliest of the videos that First Baptist Church has on VHS.

And we put it in, and at this time, Dr. Criswell is 64 years old, he was born in 1909. So back in '73, he was 64, he just passed away earlier this year, but he was 64. And Joyce was saying, you know, when I was a teenager, and this was back in the late 50s and early 60s, we thought Dr. Criswell was so old, he was such an old grandfatherly man back in the early 60s.

We watched this video of him ten years after that, and she said, I didn't realize what a handsome man he is. He's a dashing figure, and he was very healthy and went to the Y every day and worked out. He was a very vital and effervescent and effusive and ebullient 64-year-old, and you ought to see him on this video.

I mean, he is just, he could put a 35-year-old to shame. But it's a matter of perspective, and her memory of Dr. Criswell from when she was young was that he was this old, creaky, grandfatherly guy. And here, now that her perspective has shifted, she's got to go back and revise her memory a little bit.

But memory is a part of our life. It's a gift from God. I firmly believe that all of our experiences, you know, we have trouble, I can hardly remember what I did the day before yesterday, much less a week or a month ago or a year ago.

You think, well, what were you doing on this day a year ago? This is August the 9th, and it's the day before my daughter's birthday. That gives me some sort of a chronological reference point, but I have not a clue what I was doing this day a year ago. I don't know what day of the week it was.

I would have to look it up. We cannot keep that much information on the front burners of our minds. And our human brain, we are told, stores many of the details of each day.

I think our soul has a perfect and complete record of our entire life. And our soul is immaterial, it's invisible. I think it exists on a dimensional plane that is beyond our comprehension in the physical universe now, but it won't be in the future.

And I think we access the memories that are stored in our soul through the machine that we call our brain. To give a very crude and not too perfect example, you have the working memory of a computer. When you turn your computer on, it comes up and says, Hi, welcome to Windows, and it gives you your main screen there, and you can move the mouse around and choose things.

You choose something and click it. Well, until you click it and pull it into the working memory of the machine, the machine doesn't really even know it's there. It has a shortcut or a menu option that points to something, but it doesn't know about a word processing program.

It knows about your wallpaper, and it knows about the mouse, and it knows about the display and

some things that are active at the time, but it only works with what it knows. And you double-click a shortcut, and then it goes to its deep storage and pulls off of the hard drive the code that turns your machine into a word processor or a spreadsheet or an email program or whatever it may be. Well, you might lose access to a portion of your hard drive.

This data could still be stored there, but you couldn't access it anymore. Maybe the shortcut gets lost, and you don't know enough to go find that program. Some people, I go in and work on people's programs, there's all kinds of lost programs there that they didn't even know were there, fully stored, fully functional, but since there's no shortcut and no menu option, as far as they know, it's not there anymore.

And I think of that as how our human brain works in this life. I think everything is stored in our soul. Our soul's got sort of a perfect hard drive created by God where all of our life's hours and minutes and seconds are stored.

All of our waking consciousness, probably all of our dreams, everything else we experience are all stored there, but the machine that God has given us in this physical world to access what's in our soul is our brain. And you can suffer deterioration over time of the function of your brain. People get brain damage from accidents and car crashes and things, and it doesn't mean that they've lost, you know, people wake up after a serious concussion or after some sort of brain damage and have to relearn who they are and have to relearn certain skills.

Well that stuff is stored, but they've lost the ability to access it out of their soul. And just the natural fallen nature of our existence here, we are unable to access everything that's stored in our soul. But it's there.

And it will be there and we will think back and, you know, people say, oh, there are people who believe we won't remember anything bad from this life. I have talked to people who firmly believe because there'll be no more tears and no more sorrow in the eternal future, and so they say, well, if I could remember all of my failures and things, then I would be sorrowful. Well, let me pose this to you as an alternative to that view.

It is, when you shine a light on a landscape, I've been looking at some beautiful paintings and the use that the artist makes of light. I was on my lunch break earlier this week and I pulled, I eat in the library and I pulled a book off the shelf that had all of Michelangelo's work, his statuary and his paintings. And the great thing about great art like that is the interplay of light and shadow.

And some of these had several different plates from different perspectives of some Michelangelo's statuary that he's done, these different Madonnas and David and the great works on the Sistine Chapel. And as they would move in for detail, they would change the lighting to highlight particular things that he had done in the stone. And it's the interplay of light and shadow that gives you an appreciation for the form of these statues and the form of what he's done with

the paintings.

It's the interplay of light and shadow. If you flood it with light, you cannot make out the subtleties of form and the beauty that's contained there. And you need the shadows and you need the highlights by way of contrast.

And I think in the eternal future, when we think back and we will remember, I believe, our failures, we'll remember our sins, but it is going to be flooded with the knowledge of God's grace and it is going to only enhance our appreciation for the grace of God and the faithfulness of God. If we forget all of our sin and all of our failure, how are we going to appreciate the Lord Jesus Christ? We're going to say, well, this lamb that was slain, what did he get slain for? What was the big problem? Why should I think so much of Jesus Christ? If we don't remember from where we came, how can we appreciate where we have arrived, where God has brought us? And the amazing thing is that the miraculous power of God and the wonderful joy that we're going to have in the future is going to actually, you know, we see this even in this life, you never know what you've got until it's gone. I had ten coins, the lady says, I lost one, and now I've found it.

Look at my joy in finding that tenth coin that I lost. God is going to fill in our lost coins and our lost sheep and we'll remember the loss, but it just undergirds and is the foundation for all of our joy and our appreciation for what God has done. So I don't think it's necessary to believe that in order to have joy and appreciation for God, he has to erase our hard drive and eliminate our memories.

I think those will be part and parcel and it's all in our soul. But Jesus says here in verse 5, remember therefore from where you have fallen. He says, think back, remember, the movies and things have a theme of, I saw a little bit of, they have a program that comes on sometimes called something about Raymond, everybody loves Raymond, and he's been married about 15 years, he's got a couple of three kids to his wife, and they had one of those things where it gets all wavery and they go back to when they first met, they were trying to decide who initiated their first date and then ending up getting married, and each of them was claiming responsibility, so you know how they do, they play the harp and it wavers and you're back 15 years, and he's delivering a futon and she's there thinking he's a pretty nice guy and all that, but they think back and then it comes back to the present 15 years later, and the first time she served him lemon chicken was their very first dinner and she went to all this care and set the table with these candles and everything and put this lemon chicken on his plate and he professed to like it and think it was the greatest thing, and 15 years later she comes over and plops the lemon chicken on his plate and he says, you know, it's still good, and things have changed over the 15 years, but remembering their first love was an important element of that particular plot, and it puts things in context those 15 years later, this is where we came from, this is how the lemon chicken thing got started, and before and after they went on this trip down memory lane, there was a difference, they were kind of carping and harping back and forth and trying to take credit for one thing and another, but they sort of look at each other with dreamy eyes after they relived this 15 years ago, they kind of remember the things that first attracted them, and he didn't really like the lemon chicken, but he

said so because he was really interested in her, and it comes forward into the present and some of that old self-sacrifice and fascination sort of returns with the memory, and there is an idea of that here, Jesus says remember from where you have fallen, he says you have lost your first love, what is he saying now? Remember, go back and remember your first love, remember the things that were taught to you when the apostles first came, when the apostle John first came to your town and shared with you the great truths of scripture, the things that first caught you on fire and motivated you and excited you and got you interested in doing these labors and being willing to persevere.

You can persevere for so long that pretty soon your perseverance is just perseverance for perseverance sake and you lose the reasoning and the purpose of it, and so he says remember from where you have fallen. Now, where does it say that they have fallen? Have they fallen in perseverance? Have they fallen in works? Have they fallen in patience? Not at all, the Lord Jesus says I know those things, I walk all around your lampstand, I see those and I know those, where have they fallen? They have fallen in the area of love. The reason for which they do these things has gotten lost in the shuffle of the details, lost in the day-to-day grind of the perseverance and the grind of the patience and the grind of the labors and the works.

The whole reason that makes it worth doing has faded from view and he says, you know, you still know this, you just need to stop and think about it. It's in your mind, it's accessible from the repository of your memory. Pull up the reason, don't just do for doing's sake, go back in your mind, perform a mental operation that is here, go back and access why you did what you did at the first.

Remember from where you have fallen and once you do this, change your mind. Now, we've talked before, you cannot decide to love someone, all you have to do is watch blind date a couple of times and see where people get together and can't stand each other or you know friends, think back to your dating life, you know, you've one way or another angle and when you think somebody is interesting, you go out on a date and you think, oh, I can't wait for this evening to be over. And yet they may have a lot of attractive, maybe they've got a good job and a bright future and a good family and wealth and status and a lot of attractive things, but if the love, and you say, boy, I wish I loved him, what a great life.

I remember long before I met Patty, when I was a very young artillery officer and I thought, boy, you know, I met a girl and dated her a few times that would have made a perfect officer's wife. She loved the whole thing, took her to the Marine Corps ball, she loved everything about it. She knew how to circulate and how to do the schmoozing thing that officer's wives do and I looked at her and I thought, you know, that girl is the perfect officer's wife, but I don't love her.

And if I could decide to love her, I could just have a career in the wife department that she would just be the perfect fit in that niche, but I didn't love her and I couldn't decide to love her. And you can't just flip a switch in your mind and say, you know what, I need to love that person, so, hey,

I'm in love. You can't do it.

But here Jesus says, make a mental decision about love. How is this love rekindled? How do you return to the place from where you have fallen? He says, change your mind. There is an area of choice that we can make when it comes to love for God and love for one another and that is what we choose to think about when we think about one another and when we think about God.

There are people who just have a bone to pick with God because there are circumstances that didn't turn out like they want. They lost a child, they lost a job, something went sour, their church split, some bad thing happened and they have a chip on their shoulder when it comes to God and they won't forgive him for it. And any time they think about God they think, well, that's the God that let this happen, that's the God that let that happen, that's the God that tolerates what's going on in the Middle East, that's the God that tolerates starvation or hunger or violence or this awful thing that happened in my family or in my periphery.

Every time they think about God that's what they think about and they don't make a decision to think about something else. We are commanded time again in the Scripture, think on these things. We can choose what we think about and we can choose what we release.

And in the realm of divine love that makes a difference. Change your mind and do the first works. Do what you do for the right reason.

You can change the why of your actions. I'm going to end up doing the same thing but I'm going to do it for a different reason. I'm going to do this not because I think I will gain from it but because I know it's what pleases the Lord.

And we do the very same action but it's a different action now. Or else I will come to you suddenly. This doesn't mean right away.

People can go for years but there is going to be a swift and sudden removal of the lampstand from its place. And removal is a theme in Ephesus isn't it? Their city site moved several times in their history. They were conquered and moved.

Their city was destroyed and they were moved. They had an earthquake and moved. The harbor silted in and they moved.

Over and over again they had to move. And so this is a theme that they are familiar with historically in their city. If a city can be removed, so can a church.

And the Lord says, you want to talk about moving? If you don't go back to what you know and change your mind, very suddenly, just like an earthquake, just like a volcanic eruption at Mount St. Helens, one of these days you will find that your church just isn't there. Your lampstand is removed out of its place. Unless you change your mind.

And Jesus reiterates that. He gave them a double commendation in each area and now he gives them a double statement of opportunity. Unless you change your mind.

He says, it's up to you. This isn't predestined. It's not foreordained.

It's not perseverance of the saints or lack thereof that has been graven in stone in some eternal past. If you change your mind, your lampstand won't be removed. If you fail to change your mind, your lampstand will be removed quickly, unexpectedly, out of its place.

But I'll give you an additional commendation. This you have. You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

I'm going to save the Nicolaitans for a later letter where we have a little more information. We've talked already about the origin of the word, Nikos or Nike, for victory or conquering and Laos is people. Nicolaitans is holding it over the people, lording it over the people, manipulating people, using influence over people.

We're going to see in more detail. But you can think of that partly in terms of the false apostles. These who come in and try to take advantage of the flock for their own gain.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. What do we know about the tree of life? The first mention, of course, is back in Genesis, where in the garden of Eden, and paradisos is the Persian word for garden or an enclave, an enclosure where plants were cultivated.

So this is the paradise of God. Well, what is the background of this blessing? What's the nature of the blessing? Genesis 2.9 is our first mention in the word of God. Out of the ground, the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

So these two are set in opposition or contradistinction to one another. You have the tree of life on the one hand and essentially the tree of death. In the day that you eat thereof, thou shalt surely die.

Tree of life, tree of death, tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That's always been kind of a puzzler because God goes on to say that after the fall, we have to remove access to the tree of life over in Genesis 3.22. After the fall and the pronouncement of the curses and so on, the expulsion from the garden, the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Well now, by partaking of the tree, God says thou shalt surely die, but he also says you become like one of us, knowing good and evil.

Well, is this the same us that made man in our own image and after our likeness? If the image and likeness of God includes knowledge of good and evil, then is that something that was left out

of the image? It's a challenging area to think about. We talked about this in some detail when we studied Genesis a while back, but the point here is the Lord God said the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, and now he might stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever. So the tree of life sustains mortal existence.

There is immortality associated with the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and it appears that in some form or fashion, the physical bodies that Adam and Eve had were sustained and could be sustained indefinitely by partaking of this tree in a physical and literal sense. Therefore, Genesis 3.23, the Lord God sent him out from the Garden of Eden to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. The food that he grows by the sweat of his brow is not going to be food that sustains everlastingly.

He drove the man out, and at the east of the Garden of Eden he stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword, the whirling sword, turning every direction to guard the way of what? To guard the way to the tree of life. It wasn't the Garden of Eden per se, it was specifically the tree of life. The garden was only accessible by this single gate at the east of the garden.

It seems to have been hedged about in some fashion and was only accessible through this one gate. By guarding that gate, stationing cherubim there and the whirling sword, access specifically to the tree of life was cut off. This essentially was a death sentence.

In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. The sentence begins to be implemented because this is where Adam and Eve begin to age and where they begin to decline and where they begin to experience the effects of sin. The tree of life is mentioned again in Ezekiel chapter 47 where in prophetic vision Ezekiel sees the new temple, the millennial temple.

I think we looked at this passage a little bit last time. If you look at Ezekiel 47.12, by the river that flows out from beneath the temple, on one side and on the other will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail.

They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing. This also harks back to the days of the Garden of Eden because you will recall that in the garden the river is spoken of. The river, you remember the flowing water of the river and the four rivers, you have the Pishon and the Gihon and the Tigris and the Euphrates it says in the English but those are actually also Hebrew words.

Let me find that in Genesis chapter 2. Look at Genesis 2.10, there is a single river that flows out of Eden, one river, and after it leaves the garden it parted and became four river heads. You have the Pishon which skirts the land of Havilah where there is gold and onyx stone and so on. The name of the second river is Gihon, it is the one which goes around the whole land of Cush.

The name of the third river is Hiddekel which in a lot of Bibles you will find translated as Tigris. It is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates and that is

also not even a transliteration.

The Hebrew word there is Perath. So you have Pishon, Gihon, Hiddekel and Perath are the four rivers but they all split and divide from the single river that flows out of the garden. That is the same model you have in Ezekiel chapter 47 verse 12 and following where there is a single river flowing out from the throne or the temple in this case in the Jerusalem of the millennium and the trees grow on its banks.

I think we looked at that a little bit last time, that river flows forth and freshens the entire sea. It goes down all the way into the Ereba and then flows into the sea. Where does this river come from by the way? He talks about stretching a dividing line or a measuring line from that river and it gets deeper as he goes further out.

He measures out, if you start at the beginning of the chapter, verse 2, he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around to the outside. Water was trickling from the south side. The man went out toward the east with a line in his hand.

He measured a thousand cubits and led me through water that was ankle deep. He went a thousand cubits further and it is knee deep. He goes a thousand cubits further and it is loin deep.

He goes another thousand cubits and it is a river he could not ford. So as you move east from the temple mount of Jerusalem this water gets deeper and deeper until it is too deep to cross on foot. Well there is a tiny little creek there and valley to the east between the mount of Jerusalem on Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives.

But there is no river of any size or any prospect of a river there. The spring Gihon now is up on the side of Mount Zion about half way up. That is the one that Hezekiah's tunnel went to, to go inside the city walls and make the pool of Bethesda.

So where is this river going to come from? Well we don't have time to go there but you look at the second coming passage where the Lord Jesus comes down and plants his feet on the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives splits apart along a great fault and provides a way of escape at the end of the battle of Armageddon for the pinned, hemmed in armies of Israel. Then the Lord Jesus finishes that battle by slaying and the blood runs as high as a horse's bridles and so on.

Well the result of this great geological movement at the Mount of Olives is the creation of this giant river bed so that when the waters flow out from beneath the Millennial Temple they will enter that great fault line and flow down to the Arabah and eventually circle around into the Mediterranean Sea. It will be such a flow of water, fresh water, that it will freshen the bed so that it is no longer salt. Instead of water flowing in from the Atlantic Ocean through the Straits of Gibraltar, water will flow the other direction.

It will come flow out of Jerusalem into the Mediterranean Sea and will freshen the entire sea and

drive it out. There is going to be a huge geological change in the time of the Millennial Kingdom. It is one of many things we could talk about in that regard.

The point here is that in the Millennium there will be this river and there will be the tree on each side producing this fruit. This is a model and it is a link from the river and tree of life in the Garden of Eden to what we are going to see now when we turn to Revelation chapter 22. Let's turn now to Revelation 22.

He says, He showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal. This now we are in a different kingdom. Remember the Millennial Kingdom? Kingdom of Christ.

Christ ruling on the literal earth from Jerusalem on the throne of his father David. I suspect that somewhere secreted in the bowels and tombs of Jerusalem is the actual throne of David. I think, I suspect, I will not be surprised at all if they don't put that chair up there and the Lord Jesus Christ is going to literally sit on the throne that David occupied in 1000 B.C. That remains to be seen.

But this now is after the end of the Millennium, after the Great White Throne of Judgment, even before that you have the Gog Magog Rebellion, after the sheep and goats and all the rest of it. Now you have the new heavens and the new earth. You have the heavenly Jerusalem and you have the city.

He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the land, the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse." Now this is important and it's important because we want to take a look at Isaiah chapter 65.

Isaiah chapter 65. I know I'm jumping you around, but we've got a lot to cover in a short amount of time. You'll just have to bear with me.

Isaiah chapter 65 beginning at verse 17. Because what we're talking about here is the new heavens and the new earth. It's important to distinguish.

I mentioned earlier that you have to be careful when you see a phrase or a word used in scripture, thinking that it always means the same thing all the way through. Tree of life, for example, is used four places in the Old Testament to refer to things other than this tree of life. It's used in Proverbs chapter 3 verse 18 for wisdom.

Proverbs 3 verse 18 says, wisdom is a tree of life to those who take hold of her and happy are all who hold her fast. Well, that's a symbolic, that's a metaphorical use of the tree of life. Same thing in Proverbs 11 verse 30.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life. What does that mean? The tree of life is something that sustains and nourishes and builds up and strengthens and partakes of the eternal and the divine.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he who is wise wins souls, it says in the New American Standard, saves lives.

Proverbs chapter 13 and verse 12, hope deferred makes the heart sick. If you're hoping for something and it just never comes, never comes, never comes, you get heart sick. But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

And then Proverbs 15 verse 4, a soothing tongue is a tree of life, but perversion in it crushes the spirit. Talking about speech, so you have metaphorical uses for wisdom or fruitful works or hope and productive speech. Wise use of the tongue.

And then of course as we saw in Ezekiel 47, you have the allusion to the tree of life, it sort of harks back to the Garden of Eden and it also looks forward to what will ultimately be in the kingdom of the Father. But we're in Isaiah 65 verse 17, and here he says, behold I create a new heavens and a new earth. Well we say, oh I know all about that, Peter talked about that, the earth being rolled up like a scroll and the elements melting with a fervent heat and God will create a new heaven.

John talks about it in Revelation, no more night, no more sea, no more pain and death, I know all about the new heavens and new earth. Guess what? This is not that new heavens and new earth. It's a fascinating study, I wish we had more time than we've got.

But let me just tell you here that the word for new in Hebrew is Kadesh, K-A-D-E-S-H. Kind of sounds like Kadosh, but that's a different, that would be Q, Kadosh meaning holy. But Kadesh, K-A-D-E-S-H, Kadesh means new.

But it's a special word in Hebrew, it doesn't just mean new like we use the English word new. It means new specifically in the sense of renewed, something that already exists but it is renewed. It was used for repair, for repairing something.

It was used of the moon. We talk about the new moon, well did somebody put a brand new moon up there every time we have a new moon? No, it means it has returned to its original state, it has been renewed to its origin. So here when he says I create a new heavens, of course heavens is plural in Hebrew, this is Kadeshim.

It is Shemaim Kadeshim, a renewed heavens and a renewed earth. And that's exactly what we have in the millennial kingdom. The Lord Jesus Christ is going to come and refurbish and restore and renew this earth.

And there's going to be a renewed heavens. I think that possibly you could speculate on what this might be and it is just speculation. But for example, suppose he corrects the tilt in the earth's axis, suppose he corrects the wobble, suppose he restores the canopy that existed before the flood so that cosmic rays no longer penetrate and you just have a greater light by day and a lesser light by

night and you have the perfect environment for the growth of vegetation and you lose the harmful mutations and damage that's done to DNA and so forth by radiation and the various things that come straight down to us because we've lost that protective layer, the waters separated from the waters and the firmament in between that existed before the flood.

If it's a new heavens, a renewed heavens, well that's how it was in the beginning. What a great chiasmic structure to history, a great closing of the bracket to restore the earth to its former beauty and perfection as God created it before sin literally knocked it off its axis. Anyway, he says, I create a renewed heavens and a renewed earth and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

Be glad and rejoice forever in what I create for behold I create Jerusalem as rejoicing and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in my people. The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in here nor the voice of crying.

How do we know this is the millennium? No more shall an infant from there live but a few days nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days for the child shall die one hundred years old. There is death in the millennium. There are still people in mortal bodies.

We've talked about this in other contexts. But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. If he dies at the age of one hundred he'll say he must have been under a curse to have died so young at the age of one hundred.

Remember in Revelation 22 it says there is no more curse. But here we do have a curse. This is not the complete new heavens and new earth that is spoken of in the kingdom of the Father.

They shall build houses and inhabit them. They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and someone else inhabit.

They shall not plant and another eat. As the days of a tree so shall be the days of my people. My chosen ones, my elect, shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

They will not labor in vain nor bring forth children in trouble. They shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord and their offspring with them. Before they call I will answer and so forth.

Verse 25, the wolf and the lamb will feed together. The lion eats straw like the ox. Dust shall be the serpent's food.

They will not hurt or destroy and all my holy mountain says the Lord. You can see other passages in Isaiah. We don't have time to turn there but earlier in Isaiah he talks about the fact that there are suckling children.

A young child will lead the ox and the lion together and so forth. Well where do you have children? In the millennium, not in the kingdom of the Father. But there will be births, there will be

deaths, there will be a mortal segment of the population in the millennium just as there will be those who have their resurrection bodies.

It's clearly taught in scripture. We'll study it when we get to our kingdom study here before long. Suffice it to say that in that millennial kingdom you have this river flowing out and flowing around through the Arabah, through the desert.

But remember there are still the salt marshes. It doesn't completely eradicate the salt. It doesn't completely freshen because it's not yet perfect environment.

It's not yet the complete renewal of all things in the new heavens and new earth and heavenly Jerusalem and God among men. That awaits the kingdom of the Father. When Christ turns his kingdom over to the Father after Gog Magog and the great white throne and death and hell and Satan and all of the unbelievers are cast forever into the lake of fire, then you have Revelation 22.

He showed me the river of water of life, clear as crystal coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street. On either side of the river the tree of life bearing twelve kinds of fruit. Remember the gates of the new Jerusalem? There are twelve gates, twelve kinds of fruit.

What is the number twelve? Remember our study of symbolic numbers? What's the number of God? Three. What's the number of man? Four. You can add them together and get seven.

You have the seven day week, the seven days, six days plus the day of rest for the creation week and so on. That's God plus man. But in the eternal future it's going to be four times three.

Twelve is the multiplication of the divine number and the human number. The number is God with us in the ultimate sense. So you have these twelve kinds of fruit.

There will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it and his bond servants will serve him. They will see his face and his name will be on their forehead.

I wish we had time to go to the passages. Go back to Exodus 33. Moses says, Lord show me your glory.

He says, I'll cover you in the cleft of the rock and I'll pass by you can see my hindward parts but no man can see my face and live. John says, no man has seen God at any time but Christ has revealed him. But in the eternal future kingdom there will be those, the bond servants of the Lord, who will see his face.

Something that has never been possible in human history will be possible at that time. Now the argument is that this is a blessing for all believers. That this is a promise for all believers.

But let me tell you something. Let's read on down. There will no longer be any night.

There will no longer be any need of a lamp nor the light of the sun because the Lord God will illumine them. They are the bond servants. They will reign forever and ever.

Now, if this is all believers, this sounds like an awful lot of chiefs and no Indians, doesn't it? If all believers are going to reign forever and ever, who are they reigning over? Because there are about as many believers as angels. So each of us is going to rule over one angel or two angels. Who are they reigning over? What are they reigning over? Well, I have news for you and since our time is short we will have to explore it more next time.

But this is a reward. The partaking of the tree of life, the right and privilege of entering through the gates of the new Jerusalem is a privilege granted to the bond servants. Granted to the faithful.

Granted to the overcomers. What will be one of the duties? Does everyone partake of the tree of life? They will. Those who enter the city are going to bring the healing leaves outside the gates.

It says they have the right to enter the gates. That means they leave. Why do they leave? Why wouldn't you just stay in there all the time? Because they will have a ministry.

Part of their reigning, part of their ministry and their service to God is going to be taking the fruit. The water of life is going to flow out of the city. Everyone will be able to partake of the water of life.

But the privilege of picking the fruit off the tree, of viewing those trees and seeing the face of God is going to be granted only to overcomers. Only to those who become bond slaves in this life. It's fascinating.

Look at the passages, study it out for yourself. We will talk about it more next time. But what a wonderful potential and what an encouragement to remember our first love and to persevere in our faith and our obedience in this life.

Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, it has not entered in the hearts of man the things that God has for those who love him. This is just a glimpse, a foretaste of glory divine. Let's close in prayer.

Father we do thank you for your grace. We can earn and deserve nothing of your favor, nothing of your blessings. But you have made so much possible for us and granted so much to us.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will cause these truths to live in our souls so that we will be motivated to heed the warnings and heed the encouragements in these letters and live in a way that pleases you and reflects your glory. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.