

Sermon-based Study Guide

Sermon: *The Age to Come* (Revelation 21:1-22:5)

Sermon Series: If I should die before I wake...

SERMON SUPPLEMENT SUMMARY

Question: What is God's vision of eternity?

The age to come...

- ✚ It is earthen / earthly.
- ✚ The Lord is dwelling here with His followers;
- ✚ all together in community;
- ✚ sustained from age to age.

Help for today ...

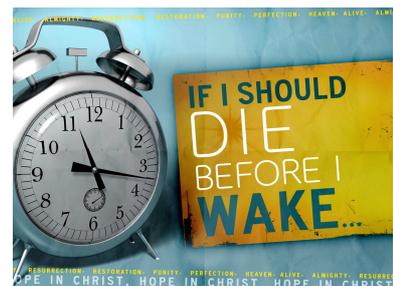
- ✚ Community is central to our living.
- ✚ Renewal is central to our approach.

LET'S REVIEW

1. What are 1 or 2 key truths you take away from this sermon?

➡ What questions do I have?

I hope you will take time to write down some questions you have related to this subject. It would be great if you would send those questions in to the pastoral team. Chances are others may have similar questions. We will do our best to respond to you but also, we hope to respond to a few questions during our regular worship service too; for the benefit of all.



DIGGING DEEPER

1. Background reading. I encourage you to read some of the Old Testament passages in the *Links* section with the sermon text fresh in your minds. Write down your observations.
2. What are some other ways the age to come is described? Matthew 8:11; 14:24; 22:3; Matthew 22:1-14; 25:10.

I believe the righteous will enjoy everlasting company of the Lord Jesus Christ. This joy is described as a rich banquet, and a lavish wedding feast. Some people suggest Heaven is a 'state' of mind; or a state of being; (e.g. a state of blissfulness, utopia, etc.). However, scripture talks about the Heaven – that is, the age to come as being a real place (John 14:1-3). 'Place' has been and always will be important to the Lord.

3. What do you notice about the New Earth? Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; Matthew 19:28; Acts 3:21; Romans 8:8-21.

There seems to be a sense of continuity between the current earth and Heaven and the new Earth and Heaven, however, the transformation will be completely radical so as to make the New Heaven and New Earth different. I suggest referring to the word study below for further understanding. This is also very consistent with an overarching theme in Scripture which I have referred to as the 'theology of re.' (i.e. reconcile, redeem, restore, renew, regenerate, resurrect, rebirth...) A key message of scripture is a returning to God's ultimate intention and design.

Earth is important to the saved in their glorified state because God's design, from the outset in Genesis chapter one and two was for people, present in body and soul, to enjoy and participate in an earthly life in the company of the Creator. Human beings are as much physical as we are spiritual.

4. The problem with Hell. Is Hell for real? Does everyone go to Heaven? I will provide a very few scripture passages here, however, also consider and write down in an honest and critical way, what influences your view regarding this aspect of eternity (e.g. books, Bible, approaches to interpretation, emotions, current worldview). Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:46; Luke 13:22-30; 2 Thessalonians 1:9.

The new Testament refers to a place called Gehenna, or the Abyss (several passages in Matthew – 5:22, 29, 30; 8:12; 10:28; 11:22-24; 13:43; 18:9; 22:13; 23:15, 33; 25:30; in Mark – 9:43, 45, 47; Luke



12:5; James 3:6; and Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14-15; 21:8).

Some scholars debate between whether these descriptors are literal or symbolic. Ultimately that point is moot because it is awful in any case.

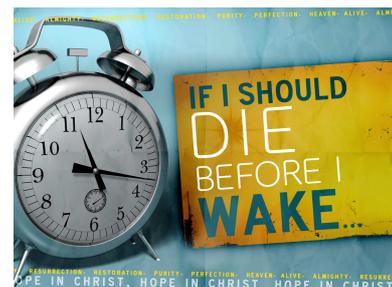
The question becomes, what do you believe about Hell? Is it too a real place like Heaven? Do only God's enemies (i.e. Satan, death, the anti-Christ) go there? Do God's enemies and a select few, really horrible people go there?

I have read authors from one extreme to the other; some preach as though they are sending everyone to Hell, and only a precious few select people go to Heaven. At the other end of the spectrum are those who suggest it is merely a state of mind; or because of sensibilities, make every attempt to write it out of scripture without necessarily fully doing so. Then there is the view the wicked are annihilated rather than suffering indefinitely.

This sermon and discussion has focused on the age to come for the righteous, however, because we are discussing eternity, it is important to at least open up the matter of Hell for discussion as well.

IN MY LIFE...

1. Am I inclined to willingly wait for greater gratification later?
2. How do I define community? How am I nurturing it?
3. What opportunities for renewal do I have before me?



SEMC Statement of faith

Article # 13. RETURN AND FINAL TRIUMPH OF CHRIST

We believe in the personal, visible, bodily return of Jesus Christ. This is the blessed hope of believers. Christ's return will be the occasion of the resurrection of the dead and the eternal separation of the just and the unjust. Everything will be brought into the subjection of his authority and rule as his eternal kingdom is realized (Matt.24:44; 25:31-46; John 14:1-6; Acts 1:11; I Cor.15:19-28; I Thess.4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; Heb.10:37; II Peter 3:3-13; Rev.20 - 22).

At his return, Christ will judge all people. After the judgment, the righteous will be with God, the unrighteous in hell. Death will be destroyed, and Satan and his angels will be thrown into the lake of fire. Christ will hand over the kingdom to God the Father, after destroying all dominion, authority and power. Then the righteous will reign with Christ forever (Matt.25:31-46; John 5:22, 23; I Cor.15:20-28).

SEMC Vision

We envision...

- ...an environment of openness with God and each other,
- as we **gather**.
- ...becoming more like Jesus,
- as we **grow**.
- ...being missionaries where we live and around the world,
- as we **go**.

(unabridged version)

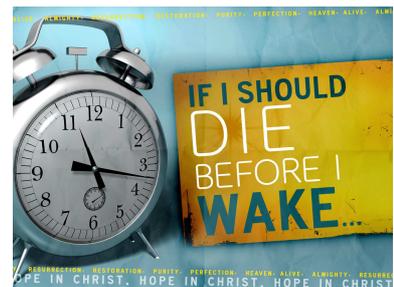
SEMC...

is a safe place where people **gather** in Jesus' name.

A place of openness and freedom to give and receive love and care, to share and pray with one another. We express ourselves to God honestly and we are willing to be changed by Him.

We will **grow** as disciples becoming more like Jesus as we pursue spiritual maturity based on the Bible.

We will **go** to our families, to our communities, and around the world, to share the love, forgiveness and grace of Jesus; and live each day with honesty, integrity, and boldness through the power of the Holy Spirit.



Word Study

New: (x4 uses in this passage) καινός (*kainos*) fresh; “New heavens and a new earth” (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1; Sept.: Is. 65:17; 66:22) refers to heaven and earth which have been renewed, and, therefore, made superior, more splendid; as also the “new Jerusalem” (Rev. 3:12; 21:2); “I make all things new” or nobler (Rev. 21:5).

Metaphorically speaking of Christians who are renewed and changed from evil to good by the Spirit of God (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:24); a new heart, a transformed, saved heart (Sept.: Ezek. 18:31; 36:26).ⁱ

First: πρῶτος (*prōtos*);

pro•to•type n

[F, fr. Gk *prōtotypon*, fr. neut. of *prōtotypos* archetypal, fr. *prōt-* + *typos* type] 1552

- 1 : an original model on which something is patterned : ARCHETYPE
- 2 : an individual that exhibits the essential features of a later type
- 3 : a standard or typical example
- 4 : a first full-scale and usu. functional form of a new type or design of a construction (as an airplane)ⁱⁱ

Bride: νύμφη (*nymphē*)

Throne (x4 uses in this passage); throne, an elaborate, oversized chair for the ruler to sitⁱⁱⁱ; ‘I saw a book in the right hand of the one sitting on the throne’ Re 5.1. In some languages ‘throne’ is rendered as ‘the seat of judging’ or ‘the seat of decision-making for a ruler.’^{iv}; (a figurative extension of meaning of θρόνος^a ‘throne,’ 6.112) a ruling power, with the implication of royal status—‘ruler, royal ruler.’^v

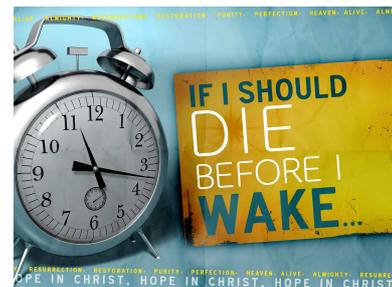
Behold: look!, suddenly, now; a marker used to liven up a Hebrew style narrative, to change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail^{vi}

Dwell with them: (x5 in the NT) take up residence, formally, live in a tent; to come to dwell in a place defined psychologically or spiritually (with the possible implication in some contexts of a temporary arrangement)—‘to take up residence, to come to reside, to come to dwell.’

σκηνώ: σκηνώσει μετ’ αὐτῶν ‘he will come to dwell with them’ Re 21.3; ὁ λόγος σαρκὶ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν ‘the Word became a human being and dwelt among us’ Jn 1.14.

ἐπισκηνώ: ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ’ ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ ‘that the power of Christ may come to dwell in me’ 2 Cor 12.9.

In all of these contexts, σκηνώ and ἐπισκηνώ are essentially figurative in meaning, for they deal with spiritual existence and residence rather than human residence or dwelling. In translating one should, in so far as possible, try to preserve this important figurative relationship, since it expresses one of the most significant ways in which spiritual and human existence can be combined. In some languages, however, it may be necessary to employ an expression which means simply ‘to be in’ or ‘to continue with,’ since expressions for ‘living’ or ‘dwelling’ may be based upon terms which are too specific in meaning, for example, ‘to eat from the same pot’ or ‘to enter by the same door.’^{vii}



ae•on or eon n

[L, fr. Gk *aiōn* — more at AYE] 1647

- 1 : an immeasurably or indefinitely long period of time : AGE
- 2 a usu eon : a very large division of geologic time usu. longer than an era
- b : a unit of geologic time equal to one billion years^{xviii}

eternity: (from Hebrew – i.e. Eccl. 3:11); everlasting, forever, eternity, i.e., pertaining to an unlimited duration of time, usually with a focus on the future^{xix}

com•mu•ni•ty n

pl -ties often attrib [ME *comunete*, fr. AF *communité*, fr. L *communitat-*, *communitas*, fr. *communis*] 14c

- 1 : a unified body of individuals: as
 - a : STATE, COMMONWEALTH
 - b : the people with common interests living in a particular area *broadly* : the area itself □the problems of a large *community*□
 - c : an interacting population of various kinds of individuals (as species) in a common location
 - d : a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society □a *community* of retired persons□
 - e : a group linked by a common policy
 - f : a body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests □the international *community*□
 - g : a body of persons of common and esp. professional interests scattered through a larger society □the academic *community*□
- 2 : society at large
- 3 a : joint ownership or participation □*community* of goods□
- b : common character : LIKENESS □*community* of interests□
- c : social activity : FELLOWSHIP
- d : a social state or condition^{xx}



Endnotes

Sept (Septuagint)

ⁱZodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). *The complete word study dictionary : New Testament* (electronic ed.) (G2537). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

n northern, noun

F Fahrenheit, French

fr from

Gk Greek

neut neuter

usu usually

ⁱⁱMerriam-Webster, I. (2003). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. Includes index. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

ⁱⁱⁱSwanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.) (DBLG 2585, #1). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

^{iv}Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996, c1989). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (1:66). New York: United Bible societies.

^vIbid.

^{vi}Swanson, J. (1997). ...

^{vii}Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996, c1989). ...

^{viii}Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). ...

^{ix}Swanson, J. (1997). ...

^xLouw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996, c1989). ...

^{xi}Swanson, J. (1997). ...

^{xii}Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996, c1989). ...

^{xiii}Swanson, J. (1997). ...

^{xiv}Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996, c1989). ...

⁷ It is possible that λίμνη τοῦ πυρός 'lake of fire' does not belong in this class of regions below the earth, but since it is so closely associated with other places of destruction and punishment, it is probably better treated here rather than elsewhere. If the figurative language is derived from a knowledge of volcanic activity, this could lend support to the classification of λίμνη τοῦ πυρός at this point, since it would coincide very closely with related concepts of 'pit' and 'abyss.'

^{xv}Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996, c1989). ...

^{xvi}Ibid.

^{xvii}Ibid.

n northern, noun

L Latin

fr from

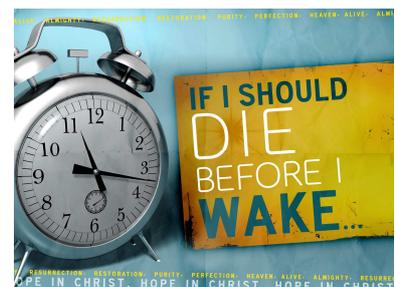
Gk Greek

long longitude

usu usually

^{xviii}Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). ...

^{xix}Swanson, J. (1997). ...



n northern, noun

pl plural

attrib attributive, attributively

ME Middle English

fr from

AF Anglo-French

L Latin

c century

esp especially

^{xx}Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). ...