

Valley Bible Church – Adult Class

Living In Light Of His Return:

The Eternal State, Part I

Adult SS ~ August 16, 2015

Introduction:

Yesterday I watched "Tomorrowland" at the dollar theater with Maggie (**SLIDE**). It was a fascinating movie and while the concepts were over Maggie's head, I found it interesting how it paralleled much of what we have been talking about this summer. The storyline involves a young girl who is brilliant, innovative, and optimistic. Her father is a NASA engineer but she is really the wonder. She always asked her teachers, who taught from every angle that society is getting far worse (wars, famine, sickness, etc), "What can we do to change it?"

While she felt like she was getting nowhere, a younger girl from another place, visited her and gave her a pin with a "T" on it. When she touched the pin, she was immediately transported to Tomorrowland. Tomorrowland was a place that looked futuristic, technologically advanced, happy, progressive, peaceful; it was a place with hope.

Her experience didn't last long. She ended up back in her world, in the hopeless present; where no one seemed to concern themselves with fixing society's problems. It was then that the younger girl, Athena, paid her a visit. Casey, the main character, soon realized that Athena was robotic and not quite human. Athena had experienced Tomorrowland from the beginning. She was there to follow up with Casey, whom she had selected (by giving her one of her pins), and to ensure that she would be a difference maker in her world.

Athena led Casey to George Clooney (forgot his screen name), and he was someone who used to want to change things in the world. He was a young inventor and genius who had once hoped to inspire people to be different. Since, he had grown weary and less hopeful. Casey stirred him up to return to Tomorrowland to see what was the matter.

When they arrived, they found Tomorrowland to be in the clutches of a man (doctor from House) who was broadcasting hopelessness to their world from his. He said, "They don't want to change or improve. They lack hope and they run right into further hopelessness. I am only giving them what they want." This didn't sit well with Athena, Casey, and Clooney. Casey figured out that they could destroy House's broadcasting system so that everyone would wake up and find inspiration to be different again. Sadly, it involved the sacrifice of Athena's robotic life (of whom Clooney had grown quite affectionate in his youth).

When the corrupted system was destroyed, new robotic children were created and given pins, little gateways into Tomorrowland. These Athena-models were then sent into the world to give pins to difference makers in society. Casey's hope had won the day. She was now out to recruit a world of "dreamers."

The film, as I mentioned, was entertaining but I couldn't help but draw comparisons to the hopelessness of a fallen world, the selection of world-changers, the overthrow of the

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corrupt world system, the return to Tomorrowland, the sacrifice to rescue humanity, and the furtherance of hope in the world that focused on the next...I am not sure that is what Maggie was taking away from it!

But I could not get off my mind the wisdom of Solomon, “he has put eternity into man’s heart” (**Ecc 3:11**). The temporal world is clearly not all there is. There is hope beyond the fallen confines of this world. Deep down, every creature knows there is a Creator and that He has destined them for eternity. There is a longing for life eternally; it’s hard-wired into us for we are created in God’s image and after His likeness and we have been given consciences that give us a sense of right and wrong. Not only that, but we have been given revelation from God in His Word of His Son that there is a way to see God, a way to inherit the earth—through faith in His sacrifice on the cross.

Today, what we are going to do is to take a glimpse into the Eternal State, through the eyes and pen of the Apostle John, while exiled on the Island of Patmos. And similar to touching the pin of Tomorrowland and being transported there, we will consider our future hope of glory *so that* it might create in us and cause us to make a difference in our lives and others’ today—not just for society’s sake but for Christ’s, who is the only One who can redeem people from society. May His kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven!

While I am on the topic of sacrifice for the rescue of others, there is a noticeable relationship between grace and glory in the Scriptures (**SLIDE**). Observe:

Titus 2:11 “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, **12** training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, **13** waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **14** who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”

Grace characterized the first coming of Christ while glory will characterize His Second Coming. He is Redeemer and Ruler of the universe. His kingdom may come because He came to Calvary. He bore the cross so He may wear His crown.

The link between grace and glory of God is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If He had not risen from the dead; then the cross would be a shame, the kingdom would not come, and our Christian faith would be worthless (**1 Cor 15:19**). Jesus Christ is the firstfruits of the resurrection from the dead and He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection (**1 Pet 1:3**).

First Corinthians 15:23 “But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.”

In our study, let’s remember to keep our eschatology and our soteriology in tact, along with the other important doctrines of Scripture.

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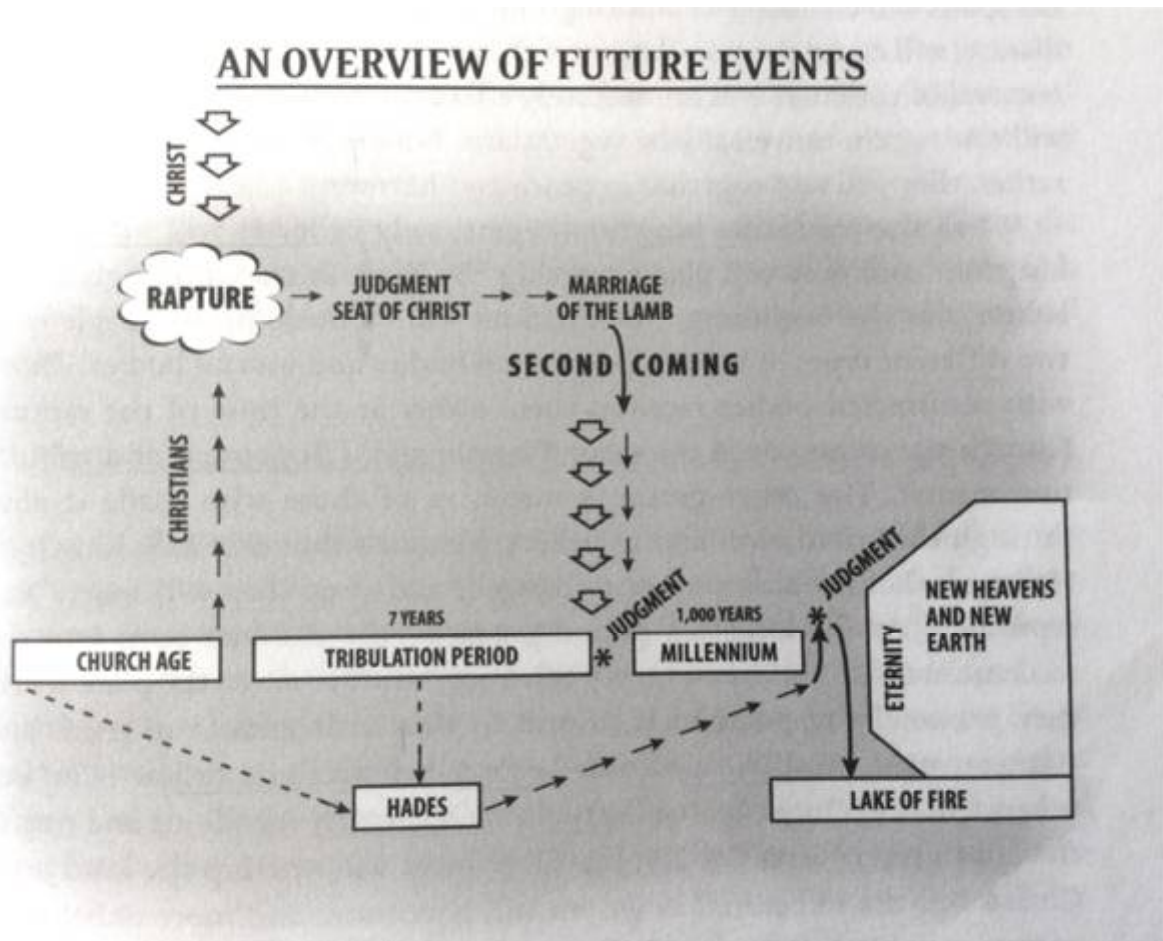
Objective:

For this two-part study on the Eternal State we have a good amount in store. We will begin to take a look at **eight aspects** of the New Jerusalem in **Revelation 20:7–22:5** in order to **behold the glory of God and live in light of future glory**.

Additionally, I would like to expand our theological discussion to two different views on the subject of Heaven and the New Earth. We NEED this discussion today!

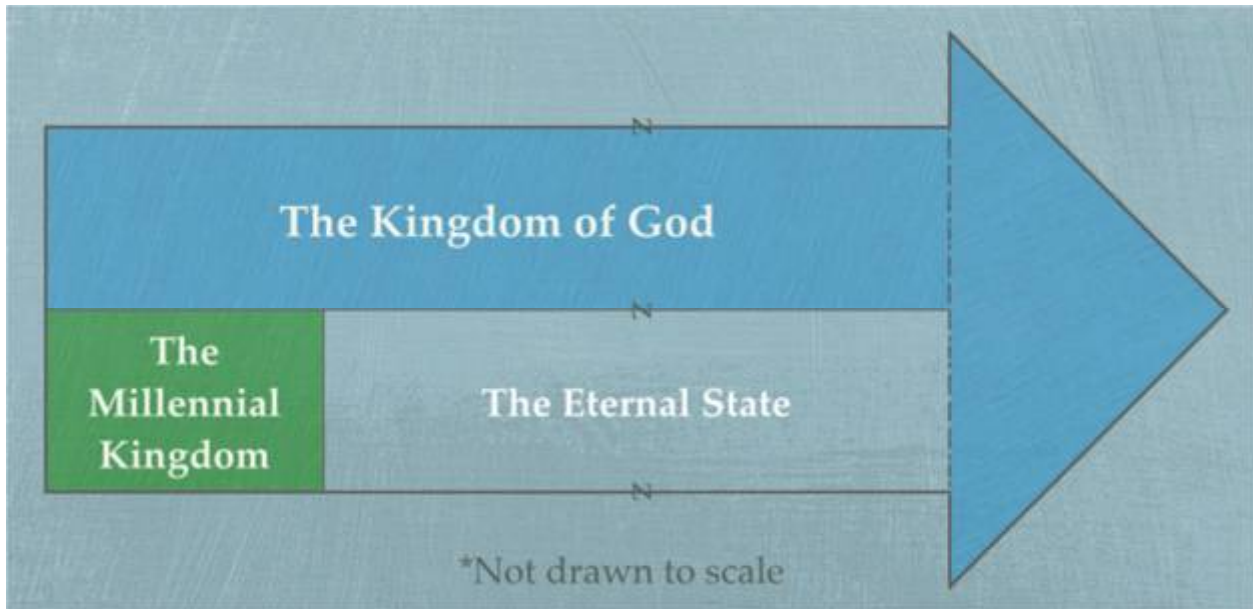
Review:

Before we get into our text, I would like to spend a few minutes in review. First, let's trace the path of the "Church Age Saints" through our End Times chart (**SLIDE**). Second, the "OT Saints" path (**SLIDE**). Third, the "Tribulation Saints/Martyrs" (**SLIDE**).



Finally, here is an adjustment to our "Two aspects of the Kingdom of God" visual (**SLIDE**).

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Let's read the passage that will be under our examination for this week and next (**Rev 20:7–22:5**)...

And now, the eight aspects of the New Jerusalem in order to behold the glory of God (**SLIDE**).

Outline:

1. The Judgment before the New Jerusalem (20:7–20:15) (**SLIDE**)

Review of the different phases of the judgments of God mentioned in the Scriptures:

The Phases of Judgment (**SLIDE**)

There is not *One* Great Judgment Day; there are a number of judgments that take place at different times in the future:

- ***The Judgment Seat of Christ*** (rewards for all those in the church age, raptured/alive and resurrected/asleep)
- ***The Sheep and Goat Judgment*** (all living Jews and Gentiles at end of tribulation period, all OT saints, and all martyred tribulation saints in order to reveal who will inherit the Kingdom)
- ***The Great White Throne Judgment*** (there is a need for all that remains to be evaluated, judged, purged, and prepared before the New Heavens and the New Earth come)

As the Millennial Kingdom merges into the Eternal State, there is a three-part judgment near the Great White Throne (**SLIDE**):

a. Judgment of the Devil (20:7–10) (**SLIDE**)

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- i. Three stages to Satan's judgment:
 1. Half way through the Tribulation, he will be kicked out of heaven to only inhabit the earth (**Rev 12:7ff**).
 2. When the Tribulation is over and the Millennial Kingdom begins, he will be locked up in the Abyss (**Rev 20:1–3**).
 3. When the Millennial Kingdom is up, he will be released for only a short while and then ultimately and eternally judged (**Rev 20:7–10**).
 - ii. The **Purpose** of Satan's release is a final test to show the extent of the depravity of sin
 - iii. The **Result** of Satan's final deceiving work is to bring those who have rejected Christ's Kingship to their desired end—permanent separation from Christ
 - iv. Satan's fate was sealed at the cross but will be carried out after the Millennial reign of Christ
 1. **Hebrews 2:14** "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that *through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.*"
 2. **First John 3:8** "Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*"
 3. **First Corinthians 15:24, 25** "Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and every power. **25** For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet."
 - v. Satan makes one last attempt at his goal from the beginning of time—to deceive the nations from the knowledge of the truth of their Creator and Redeemer—but he comes under the judgment of the only Sovereign, Jesus Christ
- b. Judgment of the Dirt (20:11)**

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- i. This present universe will *pass away*, lit. *flee* or *run away*; by metaphor, it means *vanish, or escape*; it will quickly disappear
 1. **Matthew 24:35** “Heaven and earth will *pass away*, but my words will not pass away.”
 2. **2 Peter 3:10** “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.”
- ii. D.A. Carson says, “Indeed, before the face of his majesty, heaven and earth flee away.”
- iii. This is the *uncreation* in preparation for the *new creation* (**21:1ff**)
- iv. The **Reason** for heaven and earth’s renewal
 1. The effects of the curse (**Gen 3**) remained on the earth because of the presence of sin, so destruction (demolition) is necessary for complete reconciliation in heaven and on earth
 2. God promised to create a new heavens and a new earth (**Isa 65:17–25; Rev 21:1**)
- v. There are two main views to how the present heaven and earth pass away: the Annihilation view and the Renovation view. The heavens and the earth will NOT be annihilated and made all over from nothing, but they will be renewed, restored, “set free from its bondage to decay” (**Rom 8:21**). There are a few reasons for this:
 1. The parallel passage on the passing away of creation in **2 Peter 3**, draws a comparison to the Flood in Noah’s day (**vv. 5–7**)
 2. The Apostle Paul draws a comparison between the creation and the Christian; both groan inwardly for the *redemption* of our bodies and the *release* from the bondage of decay
 - a. The problem is not the *physical* nature (“it was very good” **Gen 1:31**) but the *fallen* condition, so if anything were to “pass away” from God’s presence in that Day it would be the “decay” from the fall
 - b. Just as the person who is now considered a “new creation” in Christ with the old nature passing away, so