

# Jesus Restores All Things

Revelation 21:1-8

Today we conclude our ten week series on *the Gospel - the 10 saving acts of Jesus*. The Lord of heaven came to earth, lived a life of perfect righteousness and called sinners to repent. He died for our sins and rose again, in accordance with the Scriptures, so he could forgive our sins, being just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Him. He gives us a new heart and fills us with His Spirit. He reigns over all things and He is coming back soon to restore all things. The Gospel is wonderfully, incredibly good news!

The Gospel looks back on the finished work of Christ, it looks up to the power of Christ and it looks forward to the return of Christ. *Today we look forward to our blessed hope, that Jesus is coming back soon!*

Brothers and sisters, we have just heard the second to last chapter of the Bible. We know how this story ends. In this world we will have trouble, but we can take heart because **Jesus has overcome the world** and He has promised to come back and gather all believers together in the place He is preparing for us, so that we can be with Him forever.

As we walk through Revelation 21 we will see *three transformations*. When Jesus comes back he will **replace** some things, he will **upgrade** some things and he will **divide** some things. All of these will be permanent and irrevocable changes. This is both a comforting promise and a very serious warning.

First, when Jesus comes back, he will make three replacements. We see the first in verse 1.

## **When Jesus Comes Back**

1. He will **Replace**
  - **Chaos with Order**

*“The first heaven and the first earth had passed away and **the sea was no more.**” Revelation 21:1*

In ancient times *the sea was a symbol of chaos and death*. It was absolutely beyond the control of any mortal and was the domain of the gods. When Jonah told the sailors to throw him into the ocean he was accepting a death sentence to appease the Lord. Being thrown into the Sea was like being thrown directly into hell - which they called Sheol in those days. Notice God’s mercy to save his wayward prophet from the chaos and death of the ocean:

*“I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; **out of the belly of Sheol I cried**, and you heard my voice. For you cast me into the deep, **into the heart of the seas**, and the flood surrounded me... **yet you brought up my life from the pit**, O Lord my God... Salvation belongs to the LORD.” Jonah 2:1-2,6,9*

Similarly, in Psalm 107 it says

“Then **they cried to the LORD** in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. **He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed.** Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven.” Psalm 107:28-30

It was clear to everyone, as it still is today, that **only God can control the ocean.** No human being, no matter how powerful can tame the sea. No ocean vessel, no matter how strong, can withstand the raging fury of the ocean. Only God can calm a hurricane.

So when Jesus woke from a siesta to find his disciples in a panic on the Sea of Galilee, remember what happened? He stood up and said, **“Peace, be still.”** And everything went perfectly calm. A raging squall that had convinced experienced fishermen that they were about to die suddenly changed into that mirror-glass water that is the envy of every water skier since the invention of the motorboat.

When Jesus comes back he will say those same words to the entire universe: “Peace, be still.” Or he might use the words in verse 6 - **“It is done.”** Or like a parent intervening with two squabbling children: **“Enough!”** Whatever the words he says, everything will suddenly stop, just like the storm did that day on the Sea of Galilee. Everything will go dead calm and the whole cosmos will look at its Creator and Lord, and all chaos will be replaced with order.

**Several things will happen at once when Jesus comes back.** A trumpet will sound and the sky will tear open. Don't worry about where you'll be or what kind of view you might have. No one will miss this no matter what time of day or what part of the planet you're on. Listen to God's Word from 1 Thessalonians 4:

“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. **And the dead in Christ will rise first.** Then we who are alive, who are left, **will be caught up together with them in the clouds** to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore **encourage one another with these words.**” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

This is direct encouragement about loved ones who have died in the Lord - believers from whom we are temporarily separated. Be encouraged, brothers and sisters. We will soon be reunited with our family members in Christ. Here is how Jesus foretells his return in Matthew 24:

“And they will see the Son of Man coming on **the clouds of heaven** with power and great glory. **And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call,** and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Matthew 24:30-31

Brothers and sisters, Jesus is coming back soon, and **He is coming back as the conquering King.** He will defeat all of His enemies with a word of command. It will not be a dramatic military contest but will be settled with a simple and final statement, like, “Enough.” And that will be that.

The devil and his minions will be cast into the lake of fire and all of the chaos in this broken and fallen world will be stopped - forever replaced by perfect peace, order and harmony.

That's what Revelation 21 means when it says "and the sea was no more."

### **When Jesus Comes Back**

#### 1. He will **Replace**

##### ○ **Chaos with Order**

"The first heaven and the first earth had passed away and ***the sea was no more.***" Revelation 21:1

I, for one, believe we will have oceans or at least large bodies of water, in the new heaven and new earth. If dolphins and whales need to be converted to freshwater animals, the Lord can certainly manage that change. ***It isn't water that will be missing from the new creation, it is chaos*** - uncontrolled and damaging power - like hurricanes and tsunamis. And it won't just be the sea's seemingly limitless power that will become perfectly tame - it will be all natural disasters, all imbalances, all imperfections.

Be encouraged, brothers and sisters. ***All of the fear and uncertainty we deal with in this world will be replaced with perfect peace*** when King Jesus comes back. In this world we experience trouble, but He has overcome the world and we will overcome all hardship and suffering through Him. Hold on to this confident hope, this blessed assurance - Jesus is coming back soon and He will reign in perfect peace forever!

Everything that is chaotic and unpredictable now will become perfectly calm before the Lord of heaven when He speaks that final word. Then Jesus will replace sadness with joy.

### **When Jesus Comes Back**

#### 2. He will **Replace**

##### ○ **Chaos with Order**

##### ○ **Sadness with Joy**

"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes... ***neither shall there be mourning***, nor crying, nor pain anymore... and there will be ***no night there.***" Revelation 21:1,25

***God Himself will wipe every tear from your eyes.*** Imagine the comfort and joy of that moment. It means that God will acknowledge the pain we have experienced. He will not ignore it or downplay it - He will come to you and personally, carefully, gently wipe every tear from your eyes.

God is doing this already for us as we mourn losses. ***He is our good shepherd*** who ministers to us exactly at our point of need. He leads us beside quiet waters, he makes us lie down in green pastures, he restores your soul as you seek after Him and rest in Him. We do walk through the

valley of the shadow of death in this world, but we should not fear evil because God is with us to protect us, comfort us and guide us.

If we experience that reality now, how much more will it be true when we see Him face to face? Pain, sadness and loss are very real - and some of you are feeling those effects very acutely today. Take comfort in this promise: Jesus will replace all of your sadness with joy.

Right now the sadness may be all you can feel, but one day you will look back and see how temporary it all was - how ***this life was a blink of the eye in relation to eternity***. When Jesus comes back he will end all sadness, and mourning and crying and pain. All of that will be over - forever!

- In place of the mourning today, there will be celebration.
- In place of the tears, there will be laughter.
- In place of the pain, there will be healing, health and wholeness.
- In place of sadness, there will be joy - everlasting, unimaginable happiness.

Verse 25 says there will be no night there - **no darkness at all**. God Himself will be the light of heaven. The point of Revelation 21 is not to raise questions about the details in the new and improved Milky Way Galaxy - is there a sun and moon, is there not? The point is in verse 5 when God says, ***"I am making all things new."***

The glory of God will be so real and so present that ***even the brightness of the Sun will be overshadowed by the radiance and splendor of the Lord!*** The brightest and most important star in the heavens will be reduced to utter insignificance when we finally see God with the veil of this world removed. Right now we see God like people looking through eclipse glasses. When Jesus comes back and makes all things new we will take off those glasses and see Him in the fullness of His majesty. If you or I saw God like that right now we would be struck dead, because of the remaining sin in our lives. But on that day all of our sins will be gone and we will be ready to not only be in God's presence but to enjoy Him forever.

Verse 25 says there will be no more night. Verse 4 expands that symbolism by specifying that "death shall be no more." This is the third replacement. When Jesus comes back he will replace:

### **When Jesus Comes Back**

#### **3. He will Replace**

- Chaos with Order
- Sadness with Joy
- **Curses with Blessings**

***"Death will be no more... for the former things have passed away."*** Revelation 21:4

The world we live in today is under ***God's curse because of the Fall***. Death is the ultimate curse and the final enemy to be defeated. But all the other problems we experience are because man's rebellion brought on God's curses.

### **God's Original Blessing on Creation**

**"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. *And God blessed them.*"** Genesis 1:27-28

In God's original creation, He pronounced everything VERY GOOD. ***All that God made, including Adam and Eve, lived under God's lavish blessing.*** There was no disease and everything flourished. There was no conflict and every living being interacted harmoniously. And there was no death. Everything on earth would have lived forever under the blessing of God, because that is what God's presence does - it gives LIFE and abundant life at that. That is what the Garden of Eden was - abundant, fertile, beautiful, luxuriant LIFE under the blessing of God.

***But then a serpent crawled into the garden*** and started talking. Adam and Eve chose to listen to the snake instead of to the God who had made them and blessed them. And so they ate the fruit about which God had said, "in the day you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:17). ***And the world cracked at its foundation.*** Everything was broken in that single moment, appropriately called **The Fall**. Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God's clear command, He pronounced the first curses in the Bible. Only because of His mercy, God did not directly curse Adam and Eve. Instead, God cursed the devil and He cursed the ground.

### **God's Curse Falls on Creation**

**"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' *cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.*"** Genesis 3:17-18

Women have a built in monthly reminder of the fall - a curse on the female body. Kristin is 100 times tougher than me - but whenever she is in pain she shakes her fist and says, "Eve! Why!?!?" God knew that men couldn't handle a monthly cycle involving pain, much less childbirth, so He gave that one to the ladies. But all of us feel the curse on the ground. Whenever you feel the frustration of life and work in a fallen, broken world - ***take that up with Adam.*** This world is cursed because of Adam's failure to trust and obey the Lord.

But when Jesus comes back, those curses will be undone and replaced with the fullness of God's blessing.

### **When Jesus Comes Back**

3. He will **Replace**
  - **Curses with Blessings**

“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. **He will dwell with them** and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God... To the thirsty I will give from **the spring of the water of life...**” Revelation 21:3,6

Do you see how **the blessing of God - the water of life - comes with the presence of God** - just as it did in the Garden? When Jesus comes back, God will again dwell with people - He will be directly present with us. And all of our hunger and thirst will be satisfied. For thousands of years humanity has been cut off from the Tree of Life, but soon that door will be open again and not just one tree, but Revelation 22 says there will be twelve trees each bearing a different fruit and the leaves of the trees will be for the healing of the nations.

Does this give you hope? Are you encouraged? When Jesus comes back he will replace chaos with order, sadness with joy and curses with blessings. At the same time He will make two eternal UPGRADES - to the cosmos and to the church.

### **When Jesus Comes Back**

#### **2. He will Upgrade**

- The Cosmos ∞.0
- The Church ∞.0

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... And I saw the holy City, new Jerusalem... **‘Behold, I am making all things new.’**” Revelation 1,2,5

The word here is NEW. All things will be **NEW**. If a new car has a special smell for a while and that feeling of right from the showroom awesomeness, how much more will the new heaven and new earth have that new car smell?

**The entire universe will receive an eternal upgrade.** There is so much in the cosmos we don’t know that it’s hard to even imagine what this might mean. Maybe the stars will be closer and the sky so spectacular we can appreciate it without darkness. Maybe the Northern Lights will be the most normal thing in the sky and there will be a never ending cycle of newer, larger, closer planets, nebulae, star clusters and more.

Whatever it means, the Cosmos will have a complete overhaul upgrade. It will not just be The Cosmos 2.0 but The Cosmos Infinite point oh. God will make ALL THINGS NEW. But the even more exciting upgrade to think about is the one coming for the Church - for you and for me - for all who belong to Jesus Christ. You will not just become yourself 2.0 but **Yourself Infinite point oh**. This is the main emphasis of Revelation 21 - the upgrade coming for the church.

### **When Jesus Comes Back**

#### **2. He will Upgrade**

- The Church ∞.0

“And I saw *the holy City*, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*” Revelation 21:2

There are two pictures here - the church as a ginormous **city** and the church as a **beautiful bride**. The city metaphor is to communicate the GLORY of the church - its massive scale and unparalleled splendor. And the metaphor of the bride is to convey the purity and holiness of the church.

### **When Jesus Comes Back**

#### 2. He will **Upgrade**

- The Church - Perfectly **Holy** - Glorious & Beautiful

“And I saw *the holy City*, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*” Revelation 21:2

We don't have time to read the center of this chapter, but listen to verse 10-11:

### **The Glorious and Beautiful Church**

“Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.’ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, *having the glory of God*, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, *clear as crystal.*” Revelation 21:10-11

If you belong to Jesus by faith, let this truth sink in: when Jesus comes back this is what you will look like. ***This colorful and dramatic chapter describes YOU - it describes US*** - all believers from all time, all together. We will **have** the glory of God. The fullness of God's glory will be ours. When John sees this vision, it looks to him like an enormous city founded on gems the size of baseball diamonds and with gates of hollowed out pearls the size of Epcot's golfball.

**We will be glorious** - not with our own glory, but finally and fully ***reflecting the limitless glory of God***. 1 John says we will be LIKE HIM when we see Him as He is. Romans 8 says those God has justified he will also GLORIFY. ***Revelation 21 shows us the results of GLORIFICATION***. It defies explanation. We have to follow Bart from Mercy Me and say, “***I can only imagine*** what my eyes will see when your face is before me.”

1 Corinthians 15 promises that in the twinkling of an eye we will be changed - from mortal to immortality, from this crude matter to the stuff of eternity. C.S. Lewis said that if you saw your future glorified self you would be tempted to worship. ***We will look like God for we will be directly reflecting His glory*** with no sin or weakness or fear dulling that reflection.

We will be glorious like that enormous Holy City and we will be beautiful like a radiant young bride. The church is called **the Bride of Christ** - the wife of the Lamb. When Jesus comes back, that will be our wedding night! What a celebration that will be! ***Think of the most beautiful***

***bride you have ever seen*** and consider - that is how Jesus will see us - the delight of His eyes, the joy of His heart, the fulfillment of His every expectation and desire.

John draws attention especially to the preciousness of **the jewels** and to ***the CLARITY - the PURITY of them***. Verse 11 shows “the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.” Verse 21 says “the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.” A jewel so clear that it has no imperfections. Gold so pure it is as transparent as glass. These are powerful pictures of purity to show that ***the church will be perfectly HOLY when Christ returns***.

That is our ultimate upgrade. This is what will make heaven feel like heaven. The transformation that has begun in Christ will be complete when He returns. Right now we are free from the penalty and power of sin but in that moment even ***the last traces of sin’s presence will be removed from us forever***. We have already been declared righteous in Christ, but in that moment we will have His righteousness fully and permanently realized in us.

Imagine what that will be like to not have to fight sin but to simply delight in Jesus! To not have to resist temptation or discipline the weakness of your body but simply to rest in the glory of God. Oh to be holy! To be totally like Jesus, His image perfected in us! That will be The Church Infinite point oh. That will be our ultimate upgrade. And it will make possible the second upgrade - we will be perfectly HAPPY in God.

## **When Jesus Comes Back**

### **2. He will Upgrade**

#### **○ The Church - Perfectly Happy in God**

“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man... To the thirsty I will give from ***the spring of the water of life*** without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and ***he will be my son***.” Revelation 21:3,6-7

All sadness will be replaced with joy in heaven. All sin will be fully and finally washed away when we are glorified in Christ and become perfectly holy. And as those who have righteousness perfected, our happiness will likewise be perfected.

On a simple level, ***heaven will be fun***, of course. It will be a beautiful paradise with unending experiences to have and places to explore. Revelation indicates there will be work to do, things to organize. God has unending surprises awaiting us in eternity. But our happiness in heaven will not stem from any of these things - as cool as it will be to swim with dolphins and maybe fly on a Pteronadon, or Banshee as we call them.

No, ***our happiness in heaven will flow directly from the throne of God Himself***. It is pictured here as the **water of life**. Verse six says that this water ***will quench our deepest thirst***. We feel that thirst now. Our little tiny communion cups are not meant to quench your thirst. If you had



been working outside for three hours in the heat and came in, you wouldn't grab a communion cup, drink down that thimble of water and say, "Phew! That did it!" You would fill a Tervis Tumbler or drink a 20 ounce water bottle if you're a water snob like the people in my family who are too good for tap water.

### **The Source of our Eternal Happiness**

"Then the angel showed me ***the river of the water of life***, bright as crystal, ***flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb*** through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, ***the tree of life*** with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month... His servants will worship him. ***They will see his face***, and his name will be on their foreheads." Revelation 22:1,3-4

The water of life is a picture of ***the life of God Himself***. All life and energy flows from God like a never ending river. Think of **Niagara Falls** and you have a glimmer of an idea of the ***limitless nature of the grace and love and life that flow continually from the Lord*** and His throne. Though we are thirsty now - feeling that something is missing and we are never quite satisfied - we will be totally content, totally FULL, totally satisfied in heaven, like after Thanksgiving Dinner.

The water of life and the tree of life are pictures to convey the true source of joy which is in 22:4 - ***we will see His face*** and His name will be on our foreheads. We will see Him and we will belong to Him - we will finally be with God and that will be our joy - unending joy.

There is one more point to make and it is **a warning**. Revelation 21-22 is half promise and hope and the other half warning. We should rejoice in the wonderful promise from the Lord that when he returns he will replace chaos with order, sadness with joy, curses with blessings for he will upgrade the cosmos and the church so that we will be perfectly holy and perfectly happy in Him. But listen to the condition of these promises:

### **Warning:**

***"The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."***  
Revelation 21:7

These promises are not blanket, unconditional promises for everyone on earth. They are only for a very specific group of people. Here John sees them as the ones who overcome - ***the conquerors***, the victors. This word appears at least fifteen times in Revelation - first in the letters to the churches. So it is a challenge and exhortation - to be an overcomer - to be among those who stand firm to the end against the full onslaught of the enemy. But the warning gets even more explicit in verse eight:

### **Warning:**

“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, ***their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.***” Revelation 21:8

The one who conquers will drink the water of life. The one who fails to conquer will experience the fire of death. This is ***no small warning label*** like you find on a bottle of aspirin - be careful, don't take too many of these, consult your doctor, etc. No, this is ***a massive warning sign*** like the ones at the beach when the rip tide is really bad and the red flags are waving straight out in a strong wind.

That's the level of warning here in Revelation 21. It is a huge billboard with bright LED flashing lights, saying ***WARNING! WARNING!*** The conquerors will get into heaven and drink the water of life - the cowardly will be cast into the lake of fire. The thirsty will drink pure water flowing from the throne of God but the faithless, detestable idolaters will suffer unending agony in something called the second death.

Revelation 21 ends by describing the glory of God in the new heaven and new earth and how the nations will bring their glory into the new city of God. By contrast, verse 27 says:

**Warning:**

“But ***nothing unclean will ever enter it***, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but ***only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.***” Revelation 21:27

So here is the final transformation Jesus will make when he comes back - ***he will DIVIDE the righteous from the unrighteous***; the clean from the unclean; the conquerors from the cowardly; the forgiven from the unforgiven. Matthew 25 says in the final judgment Jesus will separate the people as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. It will not be hard to tell the difference - it will be as plain as day.

There will be those who shine like the stars in the heavens because their sins are all gone and they are perfectly radiant reflections of the limitless glory of God. And there will be those so covered in filth, with their sins still upon them. Jesus said it's like a filthy homeless guy showing up for a wedding - scraggly beard, hasn't washed up or changed clothes in several months, and he stumbles in half drunk to a reception in which the men are all in tuxedos and the women are dressed to the nines.

That's what it will be like on the day of judgment for the unclean - the unforgiven. They will stand before God with all of their sins fully and terribly exposed in the relentless light of God's all-seeing glory. And Jesus will divide them from His own holy ones and send them to the judgment they have chosen for themselves.

Oh dear friends, listen to this warning! Do not close your ears or harden your hearts! God does not want anyone to perish. He longs for all people to come to repentance! Now is the time of God's favor! Forgiveness and eternal life are available as a free gift in Jesus Christ. Don't delay, don't hesitate. Come to Jesus today to be washed clean and to have your name recorded in the Lamb's book of life.

The Last words of the Bible are an invitation:

**God's Loving Invitation:**

***"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price." Revelation 22:17***

There is no price to pay for this water that gives eternal life. ***It is a free gift because Jesus already paid the price when he laid down His life for us.***

Come. **Come, all who are thirsty.** Come, all who are weary.

- Come and ***be forgiven*** - have your robes washed clean.
- Come and ***be free from your sin***, free from the condemnation that is coming on this lost, broken and dying world.
- Come and ***be filled up*** with the only water you can drink and never thirst again - the water that only Jesus can give you.