

Where Is All This Going?

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Revelation

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By way of introduction for those of you that have not been with us, we recently began an exposition of the book of Revelation, and I invite you to turn there with me. I want to read the opening three verses of Revelation, not because it's my text for this morning, but that it gives a framework to consider the things that we have from the Lord today. In Revelation chapter 1, beginning in verse 1, we read this,

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

The promise of blessing in the opening words of Revelation for those who read it, who hear it, who heed it, might at first seem a rather obscure and empty promise in light of the way interpretation of Revelation has gone in the subsequent 2,000 years; anyone who knows anything about the current state of the study of biblical end times realizes that bewildering questions meet you at almost every turn. You meet different philosophies of interpretation that seem directly contradictory, that are sometimes obscure and all of that. You meet different systems of eschatology. In interpretation, you have some that want to be literal, you have some that just treat it in such a symbolic fashion, some that try to mix the two. With eschatology, you have those that are amillennial, premillennial, postmillennial, and others who try to avoid all of those issues altogether. As you read the text itself, especially beginning in chapter 6 and beyond, you encounter unusual signs and symbols as you read and you see a description of the Lord Jesus Christ in chapter 1 that is so different than with the way that we're used to speaking and talking. And other challenges await any serious study of this book. I honestly, truly sympathize with pastors like John Calvin, who avoided altogether and choose not to address the book of Revelation, and for my own part, I don't say that from any position of pride at all, because I freely acknowledge that I was not looking to do an exposition of Revelation at all in the course of my ministry. A few years ago I started a study with the simple desire to do one single message on Revelation, to do an overview message, to preach that, and

then to move on to other things. I just wanted to do an overview, to kind of tap the base and then move on and now I can only smile as I realize that what I started as one message now is probably going to approach 50 or more in the months ahead, because I quickly realized that I could not do justice to the word or to the flock of God if I dealt with it in that manner; even if you were just to look at chapters 2 and 3, there is so much for the church that you couldn't treat that in a single message and leave it there.

With all that said, in light of the complexity of things that face us, I originally had several messages planned to cover introductory matters before we'd even get to Revelation chapter 1 verse 1 and talk about systems and philosophies and symbols and all of that, and as it got closer to the time to begin, in my judgment as a pastor and as a biblical expositor, I decided that that was not a good approach at all, even if it's the way that many books begin their study. For the people of God, it's who gather on Sundays for worship to start there and to dwell on that for weeks, it's too dry, it's too technical, it's not helpful. You would lose interest before we even got to chapter 1 verse 1. Now with that said, I hope to address those kinds of issues as we proceed naturally through the text to address the many questions about millennial views or things about the rapture or how the Old Testament affects the interpretation of Revelation, but here at the start, here at the beginning in what's the third or fourth message, I think there is a more edifying way, a more helpful way to begin an extended exposition of Revelation and let me start it by saying this, the title of today's message is a question and the question is, "Where is all this going?" Where is all this going? I want to step back and ask a really fundamental question. If you're having a personal conversation with someone, maybe that you don't know too well, and they're telling you things, it helps you if you have an idea of, I have an idea of where they're going. I can follow the thought based on what I think their intended outcome is. Well, it's similar in Scripture, certainly true for the book of Revelation. Where is all of this going? Where are all of these 22 chapters going? Where is all of the symbolism going? Where are the bowls and the trumpets and the things of judgment and the calls to repentance, where is it all going? And beloved, I want to tell you that that question, as I'm asking it, it progresses in meaning and I want you to stay with me, indeed, I insist that you stay with me because this is just so very fundamental.

You could ask the question, where is this all going in the sense of what is the goal of the book of Revelation? What is Revelation trying to accomplish? What does it tell us? You could ask the question more broadly than that. You could ask, what is the message of the Bible? In the 66 books of the Bible, where is the Bible going with what it has to say? What is the message of the Bible? In one sense, you could say that the question could be stated more broadly stated still, where is human history going? Where is human history headed? You see how this expands like a telescope? You talk about where is the book of Revelation going, you can expand it out and say, where's the Bible going, where is human history headed, or you could ask the most broad question of them all and say, what is the purpose of God? Where is God going with what he is doing? What was the purpose of God when he established his decree in eternity past for the course of everything that would follow in creation, sustaining providence, and consummation? Where are all of those things going? In other words, what is the purpose of it all? What is the goal of it all?

And beloved, I submit to you, until you start asking those questions, you're really wasting your time with the book of Revelation because the purpose of Revelation is to help us understand all of those things, and that's why I've stated many times already, I can only imagine how many more times I'll say it in the coming calendar year, that it makes me very impatient with trivial questions by people who have read too many fiction books loosely based on Revelation that want to talk about the mark of the beast, is the beast Jewish or Gentile, is it possible to be saved if you take the mark of the beast. As one correspondent told me not too long ago, that they were tired of the science fiction approach to Revelation that's just fascinated with the symbolism and the idea of end times and chaos in the world and what's going to happen in all of that. There's just this perverse fleshly carnal curiosity about details for the sake of being entertained by them, it's just actually just completely unthinkable to think that in a book that is declaring the final purpose of God and showing the future judgment of all of the world, that people would approach it with a carnal curiosity to get details to gratify their curiosity without any desire for God, for holiness, for repentance, or anything of the like. And so these questions, where is it all going, where is Revelation going, where is the Bible going, where is human history going, where is the purpose of God going, those are the questions that matter. I don't care what anybody else says about Revelation. Those are the questions that matter and they're obviously, beloved, infinitely more vital than whether a man can be saved if he takes the mark of the beast.

Now here's the point for this morning. If you know the direction of a story, you can follow the narrative and so let's start with an elementary observation, shall we? This book, the Bible, starts with Genesis, and it ends with Revelation. Book number one in the Bible is Genesis. Book number 66 in the Bible, and that stops there, there aren't any more books than that, it ends with Revelation in our English text anyway. And let me ask you a somewhat hypothetical question, maybe you haven't considered it before. What if there was continuity between the opening chapters of Genesis with the closing chapters of Revelation? What if we saw common themes from beginning to end? What if creation in Genesis 1 finds its outcome at the end of Revelation? And what if there were multiple instances of this, 14 for our purposes today and on Tuesday just to give you a little sneak preview there, what if there were more than a dozen obvious connections between Genesis 1, 2, and 3, and Revelation 21, 22? What if it was so obvious that you could not miss it if only you were aware of the reality of it? What would that tell us? Well, suddenly we would be in awe of the Holy Spirit who inspired all of Scripture. We would be in awe of the fact that things from the very beginning of Genesis 1:1 were actually being operated according to a sovereign plan as shown by the fact that there's an outcome at the end of God's revelation. It would show us that a sovereign plan was at work in all things, that there was a purpose of God from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, and that at all points in between, it was obvious that there was a powerful work of the sovereign God to accomplish everything that he desired. It would banish our Arminianism. It would banish our preoccupation with the purposes of man. It would open our eyes, beloved, to the very purpose of the universe. It would open our eyes to the purpose of human history and then and only then would we be able to study Revelation in its total context. Only if

you see that Revelation is concluding something that began earlier, all the way back to the beginning, can you begin to understand the significance of what is in front of us.

And so I want to do that today and Tuesday. Maybe it may spill over to a third message, it depends on how many tangents I go on over the next couple of hours in the pulpit. But I want to show you these things at the start and it's probably right and fair for me to just acknowledge that while I've taken it much further than this, a simple chart in a book called "Talk Through the Bible" on page 515 triggered the development of my material here and it stimulated my thinking and I started developing other thoughts and there you go. Here's what you need to know, beloved: the book of Revelation closes the process of God's revelation. In other words, God began revelation through Moses in the first five books of the Bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy, and when you come to Revelation, you find that Scripture has gone full circle, 360 degrees, in a way that it's obvious that God was closing the circle that began in the first early chapters of Genesis. The book of Revelation ties together biblical themes, Scripture ends where it began and leaves us with an obvious conclusion that there's nothing else to say. God, having brought everything full circle, has said everything that he has to say. So much so that it's obvious, I mean, this is kind of a subsidiary argument, but a forceful one in my opinion, that it's obvious that there's no more revelation coming from God today. He is not giving new revelation in visions or through prophets or apostles or anything. It's impossible because it's come full circle. He's completed the revelation as is obvious from the themes that have been given and so what we're going to start to see here this morning is that the first three chapters of Genesis find their counterpart in Revelation 21 to 22, and there are so many parallels that it is undoubtedly the intention of God that we see them and take them to heart. And as he says in Isaiah, that God knows the end from the beginning, and, beloved, I know it's hard for some of you that have been raised and trained in thinking about the so-called free will of man, you've been trained to think that the power of salvation is in the hands of the man who will decide whether he accepts Jesus or not, and you've been, some of you, conditioned in fundamentalist circles to hate Calvinistic doctrine, with that background, it's very difficult for you to immediately embrace and accept the fullness of what God says about his own sovereignty in his own word but the reality is, what we're going to see, is that it is obvious that God planned the end from the beginning, that when the events of Genesis 1, 2, and 3 were unfolding, God, as it were, stood above it all and saw the end from the beginning. To use an analogy that a friend of mine has used in some of his writings, if you're standing at the front end of the parade and you're just seeing what passes in front of you and you only see that limited segment because your perspective is so narrow, so earthbound, so geographically centered, if you were able to rise up in a news helicopter and peer over and see the end of the parade from the beginning, you would see that there was a course that the whole parade was following, you would see that there was an obvious plan and progression to it so that you could not possibly doubt that this had a master plan that was being operated all along.

Now, while I am sympathetic to those of you that come from that background, it is your responsibility to see what Scripture says and to alter your thinking and to change your opinions so that they conform to the word of God and that you embrace the revelation of God in a way that gives honor to him for his sovereignty, forsaking your previous love

and preoccupation with the will of man. The will of man has to bow before the things that we see here today and perhaps on Tuesday. Creation and human history operate according to a divine plan, on a divine timetable, to achieve a divine end, to the glory of God. That is where all of this is going. Let me say that again. Creation and human history operate according to a divine plan, on a divine timetable, to achieve a divine end, all to the glory of God. That's where revelation is going. That's where the Bible is going. That's where human history is going. That's where the purpose of God is going and anything that is not brought into subjection of that is outside of the truth. A mind that does not think in these ways is a mind that is yet immature and fleshly in the things of God. That's where all of this is going and that's where, by the grace of God, the exposition from this pulpit on Revelation is going to go.

Now, a time or two ago when we started our exposition and for the benefit of our guests who were not with us, we started with the spiritual characteristics that are necessary to have a meaningful study of the word of God. Revelation sets forth certain themes that are to have a spiritual impact upon us and the only heart that is truly going to enter into an understanding of the book of Revelation is a heart that is submitted to these four themes that, and this is review for those of you that have been with us. Revelation is about the glory of Christ as seen in Revelation chapter 1. It starts with the glory of Christ and then Christ in his glory moves and judges and encourages the churches in chapters 2 and 3 and then moves on into his judgment and his ultimate return and final conquest. The glory of Christ is central and a heart, let's put it in a positive way, shall we, the heart that wants to understand Revelation must come with an unreserved desire and devotion and submission to the glory of Christ. That's why this idle curiosity of a science fiction kind of genre approach to Revelation guarantees misunderstanding and darkness before you ever begin because it bypasses the glory of Christ. We said that Revelation teaches the fear of God in light of the coming judgment of God. Revelation teaches us to worship God. And Revelation, especially in chapters 2 and 3 in addressing the church, as well as the world later on in the book, Revelation emphasizes repentance from sin and the need for the church to repent of false doctrine, of sinful practice, of a loss of its love for Christ. And if ever there was a time in the history of the church, broadly speaking, the church of Jesus Christ, if ever there was a time for so-called evangelicals to repent of losing their first love, beloved, we're right in the middle of those days, for reasons that I've said many times from different pulpits in different places. And so the glory of Christ, the fear of God, the worship of God, repentance from sin, we have to keep those things in mind and realize that we are not playing an intellectual game here, all right? We're not playing games here. We're not playing theological tag with people who view end times differently than we do, as if this were some childhood game, we could run around and chase each other on the blacktop till we all got tired and then we collapse and drink Kool-Aid and go play with toys. This isn't theological tag. This is about the glory of Christ. This is about the eternal purpose of God. This is about repentance from sin. This is about self-examination. This is about knowing whether you're a conqueror or someone that will be sent away at the end.

And so all of those things are vital and in light of what I've just said in the review of the message, "Revelation and Personal Holiness," let me just encourage you to keep the glory

of Christ in mind today. This is a two-part, maybe a three-part message and what I hope to do this morning is to cover quickly six of the 14 total points that I have to give to you on this matter. Where is it all going? Six of 14 total points. Now here's what you need to do. You want to limber up your fingers a little bit. You want to put one finger in the first three chapters of Genesis in your Bible, the other finger at the last two chapters of Revelation in your Bible, and we're going to be going back and forth rather quickly with what we have to say here. What I said earlier was that creation and human history operate according to a divine plan and we're going to see this in six different ways here this morning as we compare Genesis with Revelation.

First of all, let's look at the plan for creation, shall we? The plan for creation and Scripture opens, as you all know so very well, Scripture opens with the creation of the heavens and earth. You read Genesis 1:1 and the very first words that you meet say, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Now, with keeping your finger there, turn to Revelation 21. Turn to Revelation 21 and all we're going to do is simply see the parallels. I'm not going to exposit much of anything here today, but in Revelation 21 verse 1, John is speaking of the vision that he saw at the end and he said, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more." Scripture ends with a new heaven and a new earth. There is a purpose that is fulfilled. Immediately, just in what we've seen already, we realize that we are living on a globe, we are living in the midst of a realm with an inherited 6,000 or so years of human history, with everything that we see around us, and we realize that the globe upon which we live, the heavens which we look up to, the life and the realm that we live, it's all temporary because the first heaven and the first earth are going to pass away and there will be the introduction of a new heaven and a new earth.

And so what began in Genesis 1 finds its counterpart with something new in Revelation 21 verse 1. This is after Christ has returned and vanquished his enemies and vanquished Satan, as we'll see a little bit later, and Christ, who begins the book of Revelation, is found at the center at the end of it and here's what you find, beloved. Here's what you find: heaven and earth, the realm in which we live, it's all going to yield to the glory of Christ which is in keeping with things that we know from Philippians chapter 2, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. The whole creation will bow, will yield, and Christ will be supreme over it all and therefore, no wonder why the Apostle John, who wrote Revelation, also said words like this in his first epistle when he said, "Do not love the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him for all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride and possessions is not from the Father, but is from the world." And then what did he say after that? And he said, "and the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." Everything that we're preoccupied with in this life is temporary, it's transient, it's passing, and we're told not to love it with the affection that should go to God and to Christ alone. It's the plan for creation. This is temporary. It will be wrapped up. The skies will be rolled back like a scroll, and Christ will be made known in a new heaven and a new earth. Whatever else that means, it means that we're living in a passing world, and that's the plan of God for creation, that the realm in which we presently exist,

its purpose, its time, its manifestation will expire. It will be over and then a new heaven and a new earth will be introduced to the glory of Christ. It's wonderful to contemplate. It's staggering. You know, I think that if we truly grasped anything of the significance of what we're talking about here, we would be staggered and crushed and simultaneously elevated by the magnificence and the magnitude of it all. That's the plan for creation. A new heaven and a new earth are coming. The present heaven and earth in which we live will be done away.

Secondly, we want to consider the plan for man. The plan for man and the way that I am addressing this is kind of in sequence with the presentation in the book of Genesis, and that means it we'll go back and forth a little bit in Revelation. We saw the plan for creation. Secondly, I want to speak briefly to the plan for man. The plan for man. Now, Scripture opens with the first Adam reigning on earth and go back to Genesis 1 therefore. After the six days of creation, at the end of the sixth day, God, as you know, makes man in his own image and so we read in Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." And then as you read on in chapter 2 verse 8, actually go to verse 5, chapter 2, "When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up--for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground--then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed." Verse 16, "the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'" God created man, planted him in the garden, gave him dominion over the earth, and told him to name the animals and to tend to the garden.

This is before the colossal fall of man in Genesis chapter 3. You know the story. You know that that first Adam fell. We all sinned in him, with him. We fell with him and there was a colossal failure as a result. But man started in the creation of God. He started with dominion. He started with authority that God had given him in the garden. When you come to Revelation chapter 21, you find something different. What you find is given to us in Revelation chapter 21 beginning in verse 3 and the Apostle John says, "I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, '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. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.' And," here we go, "he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.' And he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.'" What do we see going on here in very general terms? The first Adam, having

received authority and failed, and sinned against God, having sacrificed dominion as it were, is replaced by the second Adam, which is the Lord Jesus Christ who is speaking here. And where is he? He's seated on the throne, the throne being the position of authority. And so whereas Adam had authority on earth but failed, the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, will have authority from which he reigns and dwells and asserts his authority, reigning in glory in the new heaven and the new earth. You have a central figure in Genesis 1 and 2 given authority, the creation, the plan for man. The first man failed, the first Adam failed, the last Adam succeeds. The last Adam reigns without failure and reigns in glory.

So whereas Adam began in a state of innocence from which he fell, Christ in his impeccable nature, having accomplished everything the Father gives to him, Christ ends reigning in glory, keeping in mind, beloved, that in Jesus Christ we have not only the nature of God, but the nature of man, perfect man, reigning from the throne in the new heaven and the new earth and everything that Adam failed and lost in, the perfect Adam, the second Adam, comes, accomplishes, and reigns forever. That's the plan for man, culminated not in our first parent, certainly not represented in any of us, or any king, prince on earth. The plan, God's plan for man is that there would be a perfect man, the Lord Jesus Christ, reigning from the throne in the new heaven and the new earth and what the first Adam lost, the second Adam regained and secures forever.

What do we see in that? The plan of creation yielded to the glory of Christ. That was point number one. What we see here is that the very nature of man himself, man as representative of all of humanity, all of humanity, the very nature of man, the very purpose of man, finds its fulfillment and yields to the glory of Jesus Christ. It's phenomenal. It's phenomenal. Now thirdly, moving into some of the details, going back to Genesis. Now actually, I need to correct myself. We're following what's the sequence in Revelation. We go back and forth in Genesis here. Let's consider the plan for night. The plan for night in Genesis chapter 1 and we'll pick it up in verse 2, for example, where we read that, "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day."

Now, beloved, it's really a challenge. It's really remarkable to see the word of God address the most fundamental aspects of our existence, the things that we presuppose, the things around which we order our lives, and realize that God has a plan for them in a way that transcends our presuppositions and our experience. We're so accustomed to day and night, we refer to it when we talk in logical ways. We'll say it follows as night follows the day, right? You ever heard anyone say that? You ever said that yourself? It follows as night follows the day. The inevitability of night following day in the purpose of God in this present realm of existence, we say, is so much that there is a logical necessity to the things that I'm saying. It follows like that. It's inevitable. Well, God's plan for night is that it's temporary. In the eternal state, there will be no night. Look at Revelation chapter 21. Revelation chapter 21, and again, we're going to start in verse 22, Revelation 21, we're

going to begin in verse 22 because it just helps us see the centrality of Christ and the centrality of his glory in the things that we are reading and we're seeing and John, as he's in the Spirit, God is revealing these things to him to be recorded for the use of the church in the ensuing 2,000 years. John says in 21:22 of Revelation, "I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day--and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 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."

Do you see it, beloved? You see the centrality of the glory of Christ as John describes this? The temple is the Lord God, the Almighty and the Lamb. The kings will bring their glory into it. Its lamp is the Lamb. How great, how glorious is Christ that he's at the center of this glorious eternal state that is being revealed to us. And incidentally, he says, there won't be any night there. Apparently night doesn't always follow. Night itself is temporary, the glory of Christ is eternal, and what is central to our existence, the division between day and night, will yield, will bow like every knee of every man who has ever lived or ever will live, every knee of every man who has ever lived or ever will live will bow to Christ and praise him and acknowledge him to the glory of God the Father. Well, in like manner, night itself will yield to the Lamb. Night yields to the glory of Christ. I love this. I truly do.

So we see creation yields, the heaven and earth yield to the glory of Christ. We see the nature of man yielding to and fulfilled and culminated in the glory of Christ. We see night yielding to the glory of Christ. Point number four, the plan for light. The plan for light and as I said, go back to Genesis 1; keeping your finger there makes this all go quickly and easily. In that first week of creation, God made two great lights, the sun and the moon and we read about it beginning in verse 14 of Genesis 1, "God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. And God made the two great lights--the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night--and the stars." He incidentally says, "Oh yeah, and God created trillions of stars also," like that's incidental. The sun ruling the day, the moon ruling the night, again, these things that we assume in the natural course of our existence. We have never known, and we will not know until the return of Christ, any kind of existence, mankind will never know an existence where sun and moon don't dominate and become the whole basis of the astronomical calendar by which we order our existence. This is so fundamental to the nature of everything that we know by direct personal experience.

God made the sun and the moon and they regulate our existence and our calendars. It's remarkable. And yet, beloved, in the time to come, in the eternal state, those bodies which are fundamental, essential to our existence, without which we would be in complete and utter chaos, they'll no longer be needed. We already read that, but go back

to Revelation 21, beginning in verse 22. I wonder, as you're turning there, I wonder how many times we've read this. I wonder how many times I've read these things and just casually passed over them without any serious contemplation of exactly what it means, how it displays the power and the sovereignty of God and the execution of his decree. Revelation 21 verse 22, let's look at it again. "I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day--and there will be no night there." We could not exist for five minutes if the sun and moon collapsed out of existence in the present heaven and earth. That would be so catastrophic our minds can't even begin to speculate on what that might be like. So fundamental and foundational and dependent we are upon it and yet here is Scripture telling us that God has a plan for those heavenly lights and his plan is they're not going to be needed. They will be discarded. The greatness of the glory of the sun, so powerful that we can't begin to look on it with our unprotected eyes, you can't even drive in the early morning and have that sun hit you without having to take immediate evasive action, doing something to protect yourself from it, so great is its might, so great is its light, so great is its power and here's Scripture telling us, yeah, God is infinitely greater than that. He'll sweep them aside with a brush of his hand, and his own intrinsic manifest glory will replace it in a way that renders these heavenly bodies no longer needed.

Do you see it, beloved? The sun and the moon will yield to the greater glory of Christ. The sun and moon, as it were, will be looked upon and said, "You served your purpose. You're not needed now. Exit stage right." And the children of God will have that, which is the only thing that we've known, replaced somehow by a greater glory of the Lamb, the greater glory of Christ, permanent, unyielding, unchanging, putting an end to them. It's remarkable. This is another one of those times, those of you that have been around for a while know that I often say things like this, this is yet another one of those times where a simple elementary reading and study of Scripture brings you to a point, brings the speaker to a point where his tongue does not have the ability or the vocabulary to express the magnitude and the greatness and the glory of the things that we're contemplating. Creation yields to the glory of Christ. Man yields to the glory of Christ. Night yields to the glory of Christ. Sun and moon, the light yields to the glory of Christ.

Let's talk about another aspect, another unavoidable aspect of our existence here. Point number five, the plan for death. The plan for death. We spent last year dealing with all manners of presuppositions in "Building a Christian Mind" and things that we fundamentally assume and take for granted and having to examine different things. Well, we saw earlier the way we assume day and night, so much so that we speak in terms of logic, "Well, it follows as night follows day," and we just assume these things and we shrug our shoulders as if we were talking about matters of eternal principle, not recognizing that we're talking about things that are temporary, as fundamental as they are. Here's another one. Think about God's plan for death. We speak about death in a similar way. People will say, "Two things that are certain in life, death and taxes." And you just assume that death is an open-ended reality.

Well, let's consider the plan for death. God in Genesis warned Adam and Eve of the consequences for their sin. Look at Genesis chapter 2 verse 16. The plan for death is what we're considering here in the brief time that we have left. Verse 15, Genesis 2:15, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'" Adam warned in the beginning, "Don't cross this boundary. Don't transgress this commandment because you will die. You will introduce death into the world, physical and spiritual. You will fall out of the communion that you have with me and one day your bones and flesh will cease to operate. Don't do that. You'll surely die." You know what happened, they took the fruit, they ate, they died, we all die, so much so that Scripture says it's appointed for man to die once and after this comes judgment.

Well, look ahead to what Revelation is telling us. Where is all of this going? Where is creation going? Where is man going? Where is night going? Where are sun and moon going? Where is death going? Well, the eternal state will put an end to it. The eternal state will put an end to it. Go back to the beginning of chapter 21 of Revelation. Verse 3, "I heard a loud voice from the throne," again the glory of Christ, the authority of Christ, the fear of God, the worship of God, repentance from sin, "I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, '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. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, no mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.'" God had a plan for death, it was a necessary, right, just consequence for sin, but now that Christ has come, now that Christ has died, Christ has risen again, Christ has ascended, death itself will yield to the glory of Christ and will be no more. Those of you who have loved ones that I've helped bury or walked through the process of death with you, and we know the weight of those occasions and it's inevitable in this life, in this realm, on the present heavens and earth to realize that that inevitable aspect of present existence itself is going to be lifted up and cast away and never be a part of the eternal state. Death will be no more. The former things have passed away. That's God's plan for death and he had it in operation from the beginning. Death introduced at the sin of man, death ended by the final Adam who conquered death at the cross, conquered death in his resurrection and ascension, and who will put all of these things away in the end so that not only heaven and earth, not only night, not only sun and moon, but death will yield to the glory of Christ. This ineffable, inexpressible triumph of the Son of Man, Son of God over it all, over the whole realm of our existence, triumphant over it all, unmistakably, undeniably victorious.

And one final one for this morning. Number six, the plan for Satan. The plan for Satan. Paradise was ruined in Genesis when Satan appeared on the scene. We read about it in chapter 3, verse 1, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, "You shall not eat of any tree in the garden"?' " And you know what comes after that, so I won't dwell on it. We see Satan introduced in Genesis chapter 3, and we see the destruction that his deception wrought on humanity and we live in the wake of that now. And as we read on,

we see Satan winning an initial battle with Eve as she succumbs to the temptation that he presented to us and to her, but the Lamb of God will have the final victory over Satan. Satan is not sovereign. Satan is a stooge of God, you could say. He operates only within the bounds and the limits that God permits him, and when God says it's over for Satan, it will be completely done. so that we read in Revelation chapter 20 verse 10, we read that "the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." And in chapter 22, verse 3, we read, "No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever." I want to bounce up and down in victory. The Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, will have the final victory. Paradise will be restored and made permanent and unlosable. Satan will yield to the glory of Christ in utter, humiliating, eternal, tormented defeat. He will be put away so that Satan himself will simply become a tool that gives greater glory to Christ.

So where is all this going, heaven and earth, man, creation, the luminary bodies in the sky, death, Satan? Where is it all going? Beloved, don't you see it? Don't you see the plan? The book of Revelation, the entire Bible itself, we're looking at the bookends of the Bible in Genesis 1 and Revelation 22, and everything in between, therefore, glorifies Christ by showing his triumph over creation, over the fall of man, and over all of eternity. Before the beginning of time, at creation, in the providential operation of things, consummation and the eternal state, Christ is supreme over it all. That's where all this is going and if you miss that, deny it, dislike it, you're out of harmony with the purpose and plan and revelation of God. Everything in all creation yields to the glory of Christ in the end and only those who belong to him now will share in that glory. The rest of you, the rest of you are going to be with Satan in the pit as you read in Revelation 20:11 to 15. And so when we preach the gospel to you, when we declare the word of God to you, we are doing that which is of transcendent eternal significance, which deserves and demands your utmost attention and faith to what God has said. This is not a game. This is not lighthearted entertainment. In Scripture, we see the plan of God and where it's all going. and all that we as elders, all that I as a pastor desire for you, we don't ask you for anything here, we don't pass a plate, we don't beg you for money. We don't. And you know it. All we want, all we want is for you to enter into Christ, to be saved by him, and to be secure so that you are on the right side of where all of this is going. May God work in your heart to that end. In the name of Christ. Amen.

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