

## **The King of the People Revelation 21:5-8**

Well, let's turn in our Bibles please to the book of Revelation chapter 21. I want to read with you Revelation 21, verses 1 through 8, though the focus of our study this morning will be on verses 5 through 8. Revelation 21, verses 1 to 8:

“<sup>1</sup> And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup> And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. <sup>4</sup> And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

“<sup>5</sup> And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. <sup>6</sup> And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. <sup>7</sup> He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. <sup>8</sup> But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Revelation chapter 21 and chapter 22 set before us the glorious future of the people of God. After Christ returns, He will fully bestow upon us all that He has promised to us, and all He has promised to us, is described in these last two chapters of the book of Revelation.

As we have begun a study of these last two chapters, we have seen the dwelling place of the people of God in verse 1, which consists of the new heaven and the new earth. This dwelling place will be paradise restored. What the heaven and the earth were before the Fall when Eden was the dwelling place of mankind, is what we shall have again. All the beauty and all the perfection of creation will be restored, and once again, everything will be very good, and no harm will ever arise out of nature ever again. Furthermore, Satan and his people will be gone forever, and only Christ and His people will live upon the new earth. The restless sea of fallen humanity that lives in rebellion against God will never live among us ever again.

But we not only saw the dwelling place of the people of God in verse 1, secondly, we also saw the description of the people of God in verse 2, where they are said to be the holy city, and they are said to be the bride of Christ. The people of God are said to make up the holy city, the New Jerusalem, and these terms symbolize and represent the Christian society of the saints, who live together in perfect harmony and in perfect holiness with one another. In the society of the saints, there will be no sinful practices, there will be no sinful attitudes, there will be no sinful words.

There is only righteousness in their behavior, and there is only Christ-likeness in their character, and there is only love in their attitude toward one another.

These people who inhabit the new earth are not only said to be a holy city, describing their society, they are also said to be the bride of Christ, describing their relationship with Jesus. This symbolic designation is designed to convey the truth about the commitment that Christ has to us, and to convey the truth about the closeness that Christ has with us. This symbolism of the bride of Christ conveys the transcendent love that Christ has for His people, a love that He will express to us forever, and a love that we will then return to Him, who first loved us.

But there were still more riches to be seen in these opening verses of chapter 21. Not only did we see the dwelling place of the people of God in verse 1, not only did we see the description of the people of God in verse 2, but we also saw the blessedness of the people of God in verses 3 and 4. And this blessedness we saw consisted in two things—it consisted first of all in the fact that God would dwell with His people, as verse 3 declared. The blessedness of having God's presence with us and God's glory manifested to us, is a blessedness that is beyond description. To have God's favor toward us, to have God's presence with us, and to have God's love shown to us is wonderful beyond words. God's fatherly care of us will meet every need that we have to the fullest degree, at the very deepest level.

But the blessedness of the people of God not only consists in God dwelling in our midst, as verse 3 says; the blessedness of the people of God also consists in freedom from the curse, as we saw in verse 4. In the new earth, never again will we experience death, or sorrow, or crying, or pain. Never again will there be human suffering of any kind. Never again will we hurt emotionally, and never again will we suffer physically. There will be no sadness, there will be no depression, there will be no grief. All we will know in the new earth is joy, and peace, and pleasure, and contentment.

So we see in verse 1 the dwelling place of the people of God; we see in verse 2 the description of the people of God; we see in verses 3 and 4 the blessedness of the people of God. But as wonderful as those things are, God is not done yet with unfolding the blessing that awaits us. God now reveals to us in verses 5 through 8, the King of the people of God. And that King and ruler, as we shall see, is none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

In verses 5 to 8, we are told of the one who is sitting upon the throne, we are told of what He has to say, and we are told who the subjects of His kingdom are, and just as importantly, who they are not. We see the wonderful proclamations and the wonderful promises that this King makes to His people, and in these statements from the enthroned Christ, we find great hope and great comfort and great peace. So what we want to do together then this morning is to consider together the King of the people of God, spoken of in verses 5 through 8.

In the first place then this morning, let us consider together the identity of the King. Notice if you will verse 5. It says, "And he that sat upon the throne said." Verse 5 introduces us to the

person who is enthroned in this new earth. Now when it says in verse 5, “And he that sat upon the throne said,” what throne is this? Well the answer is, it’s the same throne that’s spoken of in Revelation 20 and verse 11, where it says, “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.”

Chapter 21 and verse 5, “And he that sat upon the throne said.” And so this throne in Revelation 21 and verse 5 is the throne of judgment, it is the throne of power, and it is the throne of authority. In a word, it is the throne from which the rule of the new heavens and the new earth will be exercised for all eternity.

The question is, Who is the occupant of this throne? Well, we are not left in doubt as to His identity. In verse 6, the occupant of this throne says of Himself, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” Notice verse 6: “And he,” that is, the one sitting on the throne—“said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” These two titles—the “Alpha and Omega,” title number one; and the “beginning and the end,” title number two—these two titles should ring a bell of recollection in our minds from our study of Revelation chapter 1.

Now I want you to turn please in your Bibles to Revelation chapter 1. We’ll start reading at verse 4: “<sup>4</sup> John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; <sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, <sup>6</sup> and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

Now what is the subject of verses 4 to 6? Very clearly, the subject of verses 4 to 6 is Jesus Christ. He’s the one who washed us in His blood from our sins. He’s the one who made us kings and priests to God and his Father. Now notice verse 7. It says, “Behold, he cometh with clouds;” speaking of the second coming of Jesus, “and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” So verse 7 absolutely nails it down, that the subject of verses 4 to 7 is Jesus Christ.

Now notice verse 8: “<sup>8</sup> I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” Now we go from speaking in the third person—John speaking *about* Christ—to now this individual speaking in the first person, verse 8: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord.” In verse 8, the exact same title is used—Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending—that is used in Revelation chapter 21 and in verse 6.

In verse 8 of Revelation 1, the person speaking there not only says of himself that He’s the Alpha and Omega, and the beginning and the ending, He also says of Himself that He is, and was, and is to come, and that He is the Almighty. So this Lord that is speaking in verse 8 says, I am the Alpha and the Omega, I am the beginning and the end, and in addition to that, I am eternal and I

am omnipotent. And the question arises, Who is speaking in verse 8? Who bears these titles—Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the one who is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty? Well, let's just keep reading. Notice verses 9 to 11:

“<sup>9</sup> I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. <sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, <sup>11</sup> saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.”

Now here, this voice once again claims the title of Alpha and Omega, and it now adds a new third title, and that is “the first and the last.” He says, I am Alpha and Omega, title number 1; He says, I am the beginning and the end, title number 2; and now He has a third title,—He says, I am the first and the last.

But who does this voice belong to? Well, verses 12 to 13 says: “<sup>12</sup> And I turned to see the voice that spake with me”—that said He was the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last—“And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;”—*they* weren't doing the talking—“<sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the waist with a golden [belt].” That's the one who's doing the talking, the one like unto the Son of man. And so this voice and these titles belong to the Son of man, Jesus Christ. God the Father was never called the Son of man, and God the Holy Spirit was never called the Son of man. Only one person in the Godhead bears that title, and that is Jesus Christ.

Now notice the further description of Jesus Christ, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, and the first and the last, in verses 14 to 18: “<sup>14</sup> His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; <sup>15</sup> and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. <sup>16</sup> And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. <sup>17</sup> And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:”—there's the title—“<sup>18</sup> I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

Now there can be no doubt whatsoever that it is the resurrected Christ who is speaking here as the Son of man, claiming to Himself the title of Alpha and Omega, beginning and ending, and first and last. The first and the last is also identified as the resurrected Christ, the one who lived, who died, and who lived again and is alive forevermore, and who has authority over hell and death, so that death and hell must obey Him. And so we see these titles are clearly titles that belong to Christ. He speaks them and identifies Himself by them.

Now turn please to Revelation chapter 22, the very last chapter. I want you to notice verses 12 and 13 of Revelation 22. Someone is speaking here. I wonder who it is? Revelation 22 and verse 12: “And, behold, I come quickly.” Who might that be? Who’s coming back? Jesus Christ. He says, “<sup>12</sup>Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me”—He’s the one who sits on the judgment to give men the reward for their works. He says “my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

Now notice verse 13: “I,” the one who’s coming back, “am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” And so all three titles that are used of Jesus Christ in Revelation chapter 1 are all summarized and used of Jesus Christ in Revelation chapter 22 in verse 13. So Jesus says of Himself in chapter 1 and in chapter 22, I am Alpha and Omega, I am the beginning and the end, and I am the first and the last. All three of these titles belong to and are descriptive of Jesus Christ, and indisputably so.

Now then, when we return back to our passage in Revelation 21, verses 5 and 6, and we see the one sitting on the throne saying that He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending in verse 6, then clearly, this person who is on this throne in verse 5 is Jesus Christ. And here is the huge point, people: This same person who says that He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, also says something else. Notice verse 5: “And he that sat upon the throne said”; verse 6, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end”; verse 7: “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God.”

The huge point is that Jesus declares that He is our God in the clearest possible terms, thus proving His deity beyond any shadow of a doubt. And therefore, it is inexcusable that the Jehovah’s Witnesses and so many other heretical cults who claim to believe in the Bible’s authority and teaching would deny that Jesus Christ is God. The one sitting on the throne here is absolutely Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ says, “I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

So if you’ve ever wondered, Does the Bible definitively and absolutely and without question prove the deity of Christ?—You have just heard the proof out of the mouth of Christ Himself. He says, “I am God.” So any statement the Bible contains about God as God, is a statement that is applicable to Christ, and it is a statement that is true about Christ.

Now sometimes the Bible speaks of God as the Father, and what the Bible says about the Father as a person is not necessarily true of the Son, because the Son and the Father are distinct persons. But when the Bible speaks about God as God, as opposed to speaking about God as Father, then that statement is a statement that is applicable to Christ, and a statement that is true about Christ. So for example, when it says in Gen 1:1 “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,” we see that Jesus was the one who created the heavens and the earth, and the New Testament bears that out clearly in three individual, distinct places. (John 1:3, Col 1:16, Heb 1:2) This is why it says in John chapter 5 and verse 23, “All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.”

The Son and the Father both deserve equal worship, and equal praise, and equal honor, because they are equal in their essence, and in all of their attributes, and in their deity. The Son is just as much God as the Father is God. And that's why it says, "All men should honor the Son, even as"—or the idea is, just as much as, or in the same fashion as—"they honor the Father." And so if you somehow think of Jesus as something less than the Father is, in terms of His attributes and His essence, and His deity, then you are a blasphemer, and you are not a Christian. So the identity of the King of the people of God on the new earth is God the Son, Jesus Christ.

Well having then seen the identity of the King, in the second place we want to consider together the proclamations of the King. The King makes two proclamations from His throne. The first proclamation is made in verse 5. Notice verse 5: "And he that sat upon the throne said,"—here is the first proclamation—"Behold, I make all things new." That is, there will be nothing that is left untransformed, that was part of the first heaven and the first earth. We will not find in the new heavens and the new earth that some things are delivered from the effects of sin, while other things are still defiled as a result of sin.

For example, among your personal possessions, you have some brand new things that are still in perfect condition, but you also have other things that are worn and rusted and that show signs of decay. Not everything you have is brand new. But in the new heavens and the new earth, everything will be made brand new, everything will be in pristine condition, without any effects of the curse upon it in any way, shape, form, or degree. The earth itself in all of its physical characteristics, the plants, the animals, the stellar heavens, and humanity itself—everything will be put back into brand new condition, and it will remain in brand new condition for all eternity, because there will be no sin to cause its decay and degradation ever again. Nothing will grow old, nothing will wear out, nothing will rot or decay or rust or break.

Matthew chapter 6, verses 19 to 20, makes it clear that in this sin-cursed earth, moth and rust doth corrupt, but in the new earth, neither moth nor rust will ever corrupt anything ever again. He who upholds all things by the word of His power will uphold the newness of all things for all eternity, for when Jesus makes all things new, they stay that way forever. We have an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. And it's reserved in heaven for us. All the effects of sin on all of the things it touched will be totally eradicated to the point that it will be as though the effects of sin had never existed in the first place. And this will especially be true of saved people. Every saved person will be made new. Their bodies will be renewed back to the condition they were in before the Fall. Never again will the body be subject to sickness, or aging, or injury. They will have perfect physical health, 100% of the time.

Their souls will also be renewed back into the image of God so that they perfectly reflect God's moral character and God's communicable attributes. Never again will our flesh or our spirit find any attraction to any sin, or find any pleasure in it or any desire for it. All darkness of mind, all dullness of spirit, and all reluctance of the will regarding spiritual matters that we struggle so much against now will trouble us no more. We will be new people. The old things will pass away and all things will become new. Our zeal for obedience, and worship, and praise, and

learning about the things of God will be limitless and endless. We will finally be pure in heart, in the fullest sense of that term.

As it says in Isaiah 43, verses 18 and 19: “Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. <sup>19</sup> Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” Isaiah is saying, It isn’t going to be the way it used to be, anymore. God will make all things new so that the character of all things is transformed. All obstacles are removed—there will be a way in the wilderness; and all blessings will flow forevermore—there will be rivers in the desert.

And as we hear these things, we wonder, Could all of this really be true? Will God really do this wonderful work? Notice verse 5b: “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: *for these words are true and faithful.*” Yes, Jesus is saying, it’s true. What I just said to you, I will be faithful to that promise, and it will be true as I stated it. I *will* make all things new. Jesus is saying, This is really going to happen, and this is exactly how it will be, and I mean exactly what I say. Write that down. So this, then, is the first proclamation: “Behold, I make all things new.”

But there’s a second proclamation that the enthroned King makes, and that proclamation is in verse 6. Notice verse 6: “And he said unto me, It is done.” Now you recall that when Jesus died on the cross, He said something slightly different. He said, “It is finished.” And what He meant was that His mighty work of redemption had come to an end, because all He sought to do through it was completed. There was nothing left to do, and the work had entirely come to a conclusion.

Now that’s not what Jesus is saying here when He says, “It is done.” He employs different words in the original language. So when He says, “It is done,” what He is saying is, “It has come to pass,” not that it has come to an end, which is what He said on the cross. Now when He says “It is done,” He is saying, It has come to pass. In other words, all Jesus had promised to do, He has now brought to pass, when we are standing at that point in future history.

He promised to destroy the works of the Devil, and it has come to pass. It is done. The work of implementing all that He purchased on the cross has now come to pass. It is done. All of His elect have been fully saved from their sins. That is done. It has come to pass. All of the curse has been removed from physical creation. It’s done. It’s now come to pass. Satan’s head has been crushed, and all Satan accomplished has now been completely undone and entirely reversed and totally overthrown. It is done. That has now come to pass.

And so the finished provision that Christ made on the cross to redeem us from our sins has now been fully implemented, and the plan of redemption has now been fully executed, and the plan is now completed - it is done.

It's kind of like a divine building project. The blueprint of God's plan was made in eternity past. The financing for God's plan was provided at the cross, with the payment of the precious blood of Christ. The completion of God's plan will be achieved when the new heavens and the new earth are finished and the resurrected saints inhabit it. The building of the kingdom of God will be done.

Viewing the resurrected saints inhabiting the new heavens and the new earth, Jesus says, as He views all of His elect gathered together in the place of His finished work, "It's done." The construction project is completed. All that we have planned has now come to pass. The blueprint is now a reality. What Jesus starts, Jesus finishes, and what He purposed to do, comes to pass.

And Jesus looks here at the whole scope of history, and at all that He has achieved, and Jesus says, "It is done." The plan has been fully executed. He sees what He has achieved and He is fully satisfied. There is nothing left to do, by way of implementing the promises and the plans of God. And the application to us is simply this: All that Jesus has promised to us, He will fully perform for us, and He will not stop until it is done. Not one thing shall fail of all that the Lord has promised. All will come to pass.

Well that brings us then to our third major point this morning. Having seen the identity of the King, that it is Jesus Christ, God the Son; having seen the proclamation of the King, that He will make all things new and that His work is done; notice thirdly, the subjects of the King.

Now as we have thought about this wonderful King and His wonderful kingdom, the thought naturally arises, Who will enter into this kingdom? Who will be the subjects of this King? And who will receive all the blessings that this King has to bestow? Well the answer to all of those questions is provided to us in verses 6, 7, and 8. Those who will be in the kingdom of Christ are described in verses 6 and 7. And those who will be excluded from the kingdom of Christ are described in verse 8. We want to look at each of them in turn.

Notice then first of all, the citizens of the kingdom. The citizens of the kingdom have two essential characteristics. First of all, they are those who have acted on the gracious invitation of Christ. Notice verse 6: "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Now here's the gracious invitation of Christ: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

Now this thirst that is spoken of here in verse 6 is the intense longing for reconciliation with God and for redemption from sin. Here is one who says, My soul thirsts for God, the living God. When shall I come before God? Here is one who recognizes that just as water is necessary for physical life, a relationship with God is necessary for eternal life. And so here are those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness. And when they heard the gospel, they understood that Jesus Christ was the fountain of life. They understood that Jesus made an open invitation during His ministry: If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the



Scriptures have said, out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. When one who thirsts for righteousness, when one who thirsts for God, believes in Jesus Christ, that thirst will be satisfied. He will never thirst again.

The water of eternal life is freely given to anyone who feels the thirst of being alienated from God, and who feels the need to be reconciled to God, and who believes in Jesus Christ as the one who can meet those needs and provide that reconciliation for him. So then, who is in the kingdom of God? Those who came to Christ for eternal life and who freely received from Him the satisfaction that their souls longed for by presenting them faultless before His Father.

Now that same offer is open today. Jesus will still give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. Notice Revelation 22 and verse 17, the gracious invitation is repeated. It says, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” The water of life is Jesus Christ.

So this is the first characteristic of those who are citizens of the kingdom. They have felt the thirst of alienation from God. They have felt the thirst for righteousness that arises out of the guilt and the shame of sin. They have heard the gracious invitation of Christ, Come to me. I will quench that thirst with my forgiveness, with my redemption, with my reconciliation—indeed, with my very person. They acted on that gracious invitation of Christ, and they obtained eternal life from Him, and as a result, they will never thirst again.

But the second characteristic of those who are citizens of the kingdom is not only that they have acted on the gracious invitation of Christ, but secondly, they have overcome the temptation to forsake Christ. Notice verse 7: “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” There is no one in heaven, who is not an overcomer.

Now you recall that when we studied the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3 of this book, we saw that these seven churches were representative of the kind of spiritual warfare that churches would endure all throughout this New Covenant age in which we’re living. We saw as we looked at those seven churches in chapters 2 and 3, that each of those letters to those churches closed with promises to the one who overcame the temptations that beset that church and the believers within it. At the end of every one of those letters, Jesus said, “To him that overcometh” I will grant to be saved and sit with me in my throne and to enter heaven.

Now Satan does everything he can to either draw Christians away from Christ through temptation, or drive Christians away from Christ through persecution. Those who overcome the pressure of temptation to forsake Christ and those who overcome the pressure of persecution to forsake Christ are those who prove the genuineness of their faith in Christ. They are the overcomers. To be an overcomer doesn’t mean that you overcame every individual sin in your life so that you become sinless. It doesn’t mean that. To be an overcomer means that you overcame the pressure of Satan applied to you through temptation or through persecution to

forsake your faith in Christ and your faithfulness to Christ. In other words, to be an overcomer, means you overcame the temptation to turn your back on Christ and walk away.

The faith that saves is a faith that also transforms, and that transformation of life and that transformation of character is what enables believers to continue to follow Christ no matter the cost of doing so, and in the face of very powerful incentives to forsake Him. The overcomer overcomes Satan's efforts to draw him away from Christ. The overcomer perseveres in his battle against his own sin, and perseveres in that battle against sin to the end of this life. The overcomer never quits. The overcomer never gives in. The overcomer never gives up.

Most importantly, the overcomer never changes sides. He remains faithful to Christ to the end. He is the overcomer who overcomes Satan's efforts to either drag him or drive him away from Jesus Christ. It is people who cling to Christ no matter what in this life, who inhabit the new heaven and the new earth in the next life. They believed in Christ, and they came to Christ to obtain everlasting life, and then they persevered in faith in Christ, and in faithfulness to Christ to the end of their lives, and overcame every temptation to forsake Him. It is those people that are characterized by those two things that are the citizens of the kingdom of Christ.

But having seen the citizens of the kingdom, notice secondly the outcasts from the kingdom. The outcasts from the kingdom are mentioned in verse 8. "But"—in contrast to those who are in the kingdom—"the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Who is not in the kingdom? Who are outcasts from the kingdom? Who are excluded from the kingdom? Those who are excluded are those who were afraid of the cost of following Christ. They were the fearful—I'm afraid if I speak up for Christ, I'll lose my job; I'm afraid if I speak up for Christ, people will laugh at me. Fill in the blank with a thousand other scenarios of the bad things that can happen to you if you publicly confess Christ before men. People who are afraid to publicly confess Christ before men, will never enter the kingdom of God.

The outcasts from the kingdom are those who refuse to believe in Christ as their only hope of salvation. Notice verse 8: "But the fearful, and"—the what?—"unbelieving." These are those who would not believe in Christ as Savior while here on this earth. They would not believe in Him as God the Son who came to rule and reign in their lives, and to save them from their sins.

Those who are outcasts from the kingdom are those who practice moral abominations. It says in verse 8, "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable." Now this is a general word that encompasses all the things that God declares are an offense to Him, and many sins are listed as being an abomination to God, and this term encompasses them all. These are those who practice moral abominations.

Who are the outcasts from the kingdom? They are those who murdered others through homicide or through abortion. Now there's been a lot of murdering that's gone on in the history of this world. It started with Cain, and it's been going on ever since. And in particular, these murderers are those who are murdering Christians for following Christ. And mark it down, everyone that has murdered a Christian because he confessed Christ is damned to the lake of fire. A lot of people think of abortion as something less than murder. Abortion is the murder of a human being, and those who persist in these murders, defend these murders, justify these murders, will all be cast into hell.

And then it says those who are outcast from the kingdom are they who practice sexual immorality of every kind. It says in verse 8 that they are the "whoremongers." God gave us sexuality, and it is a huge blessing and gift when it is exercised within the context of marriage. God says in Hebrews 13:4 that marriage is honorable in all, and the bed is undefiled. It is whoremongers and adulterers that God will judge. So those who persist in sexual immorality—who justify it, defend it and go on in it—will never enter the kingdom of God.

Who are the outcasts from the kingdom? They are those who practice witchcraft and sorcery. Notice verse 8. Not only the whoremongers, but the sorcerers. This would include anyone who is involved in any kind of witchcraft in any way, shape or form. This is satanism at its core. And if it's something supposedly as innocent as playing with ouija boards and reading horoscopes, all the way to human sacrifices done on altars at midnight masses on Halloween to Satan, it's all encompassed by this word. You don't practice any kind of witchcraft, any kind of sorcery, and defend it and continue on in it, and expect to ever enter the kingdom of God.

And then it says those who are outcasts from the kingdom are they who worship false gods and follow false religions—it says, "and idolaters." An idolater is anyone who worships anything other than the true God. The very first commandment is, "I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me." And when people worship the gods of men's imaginations, the gods of the false religions, and the gods of the cults—none of those people will enter the kingdom of God. There will not be one Muslim who worships Allah who will enter the kingdom of God. There will not be one Mormon who worships the false gods described by Joseph Smith that will enter the kingdom of God. There will not be one Jehovah's Witness who denies the deity of Christ who will enter the kingdom of God. And I could go on, but they are all idolaters. They defend that idolatry, they persist in that idolatry, and that idolatry defines their lives. They will not enter the kingdom of God.

Finally, the outcasts from the kingdom are, all liars. Now a lot of people would never openly do things like murder, and sorcery, and whoremongering, and idolatry. But lying is so prevalent, and it is an especially great sin among those who profess faith in Christ. Those who live lives of deceit, and dishonesty, and slander, are those who have lived their lives as liars, and no liar who lies, defends his lies, and goes on in the practice of lying will ever inherit the kingdom of God. Satan is what? The father of lies. We say, Oh, it's just a little white lie. A lie is what caused the

fall of the human race in the Garden of Eden. There are no little lies. Either tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, or don't speak.

In a word, as we take all of these characteristics and we compress them together, it describes those who have the mark of the beast. This is what the mark of the beast looks like—it's those who live and act and think in this fashion. These are they who think like Satan in their minds, they act like Satan with their hands, and they follow Satan with their lives. Now they may deny that, but their works prove that this is who their god is. Because you only have one of two gods. Either Jesus Christ is your God, or Satan is your god, and there are no other gods.

Such people who practice, and defend, and continue on in such things that are mentioned here in verse 8 as the characteristic of their lives will never enter the kingdom of Christ. Rather, it says in verse 8, they will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where they will be justly tormented for their sins for all of eternity, which is the second and the final death, and from which there is no recovery, ever. These outcasts from the kingdom are those who chose to spend their lives separated from God here on this earth, and this ensures that they will spend their eternity separated from God as well, in the lake of fire.

You don't ignore God, defy God, rebel against God all your life, and then show up on the day of judgment and go into heaven. It doesn't work that way. You either believe in Christ and follow Christ and serve Christ now, or you will never be with Him then. And we're going to see this as we go on in chapter 22 and verse 11, where it says, He that is unjust in this life, let him be unjust for eternity, and he which is filthy in this life, let him continue to be filthy for eternity, and he that is righteous, let him continue to be righteous for eternity, and he that is holy in this life, let him continue to be holy for eternity. That's interpretive reading, okay, but that's exactly what it means.

All eternity is is a continuation of what you have begun and practiced here. And so if you have lived a life of humility in following Christ now, as imperfect as it may be, and that's been the defining characteristic of your life, Jesus will own you and confess you as His and bring you into His kingdom.

The problem is not that you're a sinner. Christ came to save sinners. Sin is not a problem. It is unrepentance from sin and unbelief in Christ that is the problem. And when you repent of your sins and believe in Christ as Savior and Lord, and then seek to follow and obey Him, even though it's terribly imperfect, Christ will forgive you, Christ will receive you, Christ will reward you in heaven as one who stuck with Him and continued to follow after Him all the days of your life. And when you fell into sin, you confessed your sin, and He was faithful and just to forgive you of your sin and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness and restore you. And you go on. And if you live your life that way, you'll have a good outcome on the day of judgment.

You know, we tend to labor under so much guilt because in our hearts, we are closet-legalists. We think, You know, I really haven't done good enough for God to be happy with me. You know

what that is? It's works-salvation. The real question is: Did Christ do good enough for God to be happy with you? And as far as you doing good enough, the issue there is, What is the disposition and direction of your life? Are you turning away from the sins in verse 8, or are you continuing in the sins of verse 8, justifying them and going on in the practice of them, without any sense of repentance, or any sense that, I need to get rid of this stuff? I need to follow Jesus.

So it's not about perfection, it's about direction. Are you going toward Christ, or are you going away from Christ? Those who went toward Him all their life will be with Him throughout all eternity. And those who went away from Him all their life will be away from Him for all eternity. Choose you this day what your destiny will be by what you do now in relationship to Jesus. Will you be invited into His kingdom or will you be cast out from it? The choice is up to you. Repent of your sins, believe in Jesus, confess Jesus, follow Jesus, and you will be invited into His glorious kingdom. Shall we pray together.

Our Father, we thank you for this blessed book and for the wonderful preview of the future that it gives to us—the roadmap it lays out for us—that if we follow it, Father, we shall find ourselves in the kingdom of God. Father, what message is more important than this? What choices and decisions matter more than these?

Father, I just pray that we would recognize Christ as the enthroned King who will make all things new, who will finish His work, and who will receive all those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness. He will fill them. O Father, just encourage our hearts, fill us with hope, knowing that this is what has been provided, and this is who has provided it. And as we look to Him and believe in Him and rest in Him, we know we will find from Him the fulfillment of all of His promises to those who call upon the name of the Lord. Father, save us, I pray, in Jesus name. Amen.