

Revelation 20:1-6 – The Millennial Reign of Jesus

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Preacher: Simon Lawrenson

[0 : 00] Thanks to you. Thanks to the boy band for leading us in worship this morning. Almost coordinated their outfits as well. I hear there's a single coming out this week.

Intro to our study in Revelation 20. And the question is this, where do you find ultimate pleasure? Where do you find ultimate pleasure? And if you would for a minute, just jot down in your notebooks or in the margin of your Bible, the best answer to you have right now. Where do you find ultimate pleasure? Or where do you find, if you can't answer the word ultimate, where do you find pleasure? Where is pleasure found for you?

Some of you will no doubt try to answer in the form of maybe material possession. That's always a temptation. Worldly pursuits. I wonder if the person who won \$111 million on the lottery this week is asking that question.

We know that this pursuit often leaves us empty, doesn't it? Longing for something more substantial. Maybe you're answering it in terms of connections and relationships.

Maybe the true ultimate pleasure is found in meaningful connections. It's the bond that we find with those that we love. It's an act of kindness that we extend to others.

[1 : 38] Or it's compassion we show towards those who are in need. Or maybe you thought of pleasure as serving a higher purpose. For you, you know that pleasure is not solely about personal gain, but about contributing to the well-being of others.

Maybe you've thought of spiritual growth. Maybe you've thought about spiritual growth. Maybe you seek a deeper connection with God and open yourself to the realms of joy and peace that surpass other things.

Maybe you haven't been able to answer the question. Maybe like the playwright Oscar Wilde, he wrote this. He said, pleasure is the only thing worth having a theory about.

But, he said, I am afraid I cannot claim my theory as my own. He says, it's worth having a theory. It's definitely worth something thinking about.

And he says, I have a theory, but I haven't yet attained it yet. Where do you find ultimate pleasure? And when will you achieve it? So, I wonder how you've answered that question.

[2 : 54] This morning, I want to talk about pleasure. Because that's what I think the text addresses this morning. I think it addresses pleasure. And I want us to see at the end of our time together, that Christ is the source of true pleasure.

Christ is the source of true pleasure. And to do that, I want us to go all the way back to chapter 12 in Revelation, to show you that the events of chapter 20 are at the end of a sequence of events.

And I know that's just like an intro, and it may be a little bit technical, but it's important that we see that what we're reading this morning is at the end of the events.

So, they're designed to show us a world where Jesus is not acknowledged, and he is not acknowledged as the source of true pleasure.

That's what those chapters are showing us. So, Revelation 12, verse 9, the first kind of event that we see in this sequence of events is this.

[4 : 05] The great dragon was thrown down, the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. And he was thrown down to the earth, where his angels were thrown down with him.

And so, in that verse, we see that Satan is cast down to the earth, where he begins his work of deceiving the whole world. Part of that deception is that we think that we can discover pleasure outside of knowing Jesus.

It's deception. It's deception to think that we can discover pleasure alongside knowing Jesus. When the truth is that the only way we discover true pleasure is in knowing Jesus.

Not as a bolt-on, not as something that runs in parallel to something else, but the only way. And so, this is what this text is teaching us. So, the deceiver has come.

And then look at another event that takes place in the next chapter. In chapter 13, verse 1, John says that I saw a beast rising out of the sea. And so, in order to carry out his deception, Satan is going to do two things.

[5 : 19] He enlists the beast of the sea. Verse 7 says, It was allowed to make war on the saints and conquer them. And the authority was given to it over every tribe, people, nation, language and nation.

And all who dwell on the earth will worship it. Everyone whose name was not found written in the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. And so, he enlists this beast. And then he enlists another beast in verse 11, who is later known as the false prophet. And so, we see three characters, if you like. Satan, the dragon, Antichrist, the beast and the false prophet gang up to deceive the world.

And they are largely successful. And we see how successful they are in the descriptions of the world under their reign in chapter 17 and 18.

It's a reign of chaos. And then in chapter 19, John sees this in verse 11. Then I saw heaven open and behold, a white horse.

[6 : 26] And one sitting on it was called Faithful and True and in righteousness he judges and makes war. And John says in verse 19, And so, look, Jesus returns to earth, conquers them, casts them into the lake of fire.

And here's the big question. Here's the question that no one has answered in this text yet. What about Satan? Because chapter 19, we see Jesus returning and he's come to conquer.

And he takes the beast one and beast two, Antichrist, false prophet, throws them into the lake of fire. And the natural question for us at the end of chapter 19 is, yeah, but what about Satan?

Satan hasn't been dealt with so far. The one who is out to deceive the nations, the one who has enlisted the help of the two beasts. What about him? And so that's the big question.

Is Satan going to be dealt with? Or more importantly, how is Satan going to affect the rest of history?

[7 : 41] If the victory of Jesus is complete, how does Satan affect my ongoing pleasure? And will he deceive me?

Will he be able to? And so Revelation 20 answers that question as it follows on from chapter 19. And so verses 1 to 3 show Satan is bound.

Look at it. Verse 1, chapter 20. Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. Now, it seems that this angel is the same guy that we read about in chapter 9.

And in chapter 9, we said that the best candidate for this angel is an archangel by the name of Uriel. And it's not found anywhere in the Bible.

So I just want to be upfront and honest about that. It's extra biblical. But in the book of 1st, Enoch, which is an intertestimonial writing, Jewish writing, he is called Uriel over Tartarus.

[8 : 45] And the bottomless pit, also known as the abyss, is also known as Tartarus. And we get that from 2 Peter. And remember when we looked at this, Tartarus, this bottomless pit of the abyss, is where the watchers or the holy ones from Daniel 4 live.

It's where they were bound. Peter says that God did not spare angels when they sinned. So when the angels sinned, where did they go? What happened to them? They were cast into Tartarus or hell is the word.

But the word of hell is Tartarus. It's this bottomless pit. It's the abyss. And committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until when? Until judgment.

And it's until the judgment rather than just their judgment. And so this angel comes down from heaven. And he is the one who has the responsibility over the gate to Tartarus, to the abyss.

And we read in verse 2 that he, that's this angel, sees the dragon, which I just love. Like God has given authority to this angel just to grab Satan.

[10 : 00] And there is not a thing Satan can do about it. And he bound him for a thousand years. And he threw him into a pit, into the pit.

And he shut it and he sealed it over him so that he might not deceive the nations any longer. So the purpose of Satan being thrown to earth in chapter 12 was to deceive the nations.

And now that time has ended and clearly stated in our text, he is now prevented from deceiving the nations. So the whole purpose of him coming in chapter 12 was to deceive.

And the whole purpose of him being bowed in chapter 20 is so that he doesn't deceive. And not look at the word any longer. In other words, at one point Satan was engaged in such activity.

So, and look, the testimony of the last 2,000 years is that Satan has been very active. I don't need to explain that. You just need to turn on the news.

[11:10] The New Testament testifies that Satan is active. Luke chapter 22 records how he entered Judas and influenced him to betray Jesus right at the beginning.

Luke 22 verse 31, he saw how he might deceive, sift Peter like wheat. Acts chapter 5 shows us how he was effective at deceiving Ananias, influenced him to lie to the Holy Spirit.

Matthew chapter 13 tells us that he is like one snatching the word of God from the hearers of the gospel. In 1 Corinthians chapter 7, we see him tempting, attempting to deceive believers.

2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 4, Paul sees him as the God of this world, blinding the minds of unbelievers, deceiving. And so where John says no longer, that indicates a time that he was engaged in such deception, and now in our text something has changed.

Well, what has changed? Well, the text says the thing that has changed is that the angel has bound him, and he has thrown him into the pit. He has shut the pit, and he has sealed the pit.

[12:27] So it's not just the case that the angel bound him and threw him into the pit, and he's on some kind of long extended chain. John says that the door was shut and the door was sealed.

And actually the same word for sealed here is the same word that is used in the gospels when the tomb was sealed. It's been sealed with a guard, if you like.

It's that idea. And so this indicates not just a removal of his power and authority, but it's talking about a complete, total removal of the influence of Satan on the earth.

Now look, perhaps it's a good moment just to mention some things about us and Calvary that maybe you're not aware of.

And you only get to teach Revelation 20 once, you know, twice in 20 years. So I'm going to say it now so that we know, right?

[13:31] So one of the things that defines Calvary's end times view, end times is like, you know, when Jesus is coming back, is that we hold to something called premillennial theology.

Now, I don't expect you to remember that word, but, and personally, I don't like systems very much. I think the Bible needs to speak for itself and we should let it. But we are premillennial in theology.

So we believe that Jesus returns before he starts reigning on earth. Pre. Another Bible teacher that you may have heard of who is also premillennial is John MacArthur.

Right? So I have some struggles with John, but on this, we pretty much agree. So what premillennials think is that the binding of Satan is future from today.

And it lasts for a thousand years. Now, some premillennials are like, well, a thousand years is a bit fuzzy. I don't think it's going to start on 1st of January some year and then end on the 31st of December.

[14:36] You know, there's probably some gray areas. He's probably talking about a period of time that is a thousand years-ish rather than a thousand years to the minute. But listen, one of the common criticisms, and you would have heard this, I've heard this, one of the common criticisms about premillennial theology is that it wasn't invented until the early 19th century.

How many people have heard that? Good. Six of us. Right. So for the rest of us, one of the common criticisms is that it wasn't invented until, you know, like the guys like Derby shows up in the mid-19th century.

And it's true that the system wasn't formalized and didn't become popular until then. But to say that it didn't exist simply isn't true.

So, for example, if you've heard of a guy called Papias, which is a great name, if you're intending on having any children, this is a great name for a lad, Papias. Right.

Or maybe a dog. You know. So Papias was alive at the same time as John the Apostle. All right.

[15:49] And he was a premillennialist. Papias. So, church historian Eusebius, who was around in the fourth century, writes that Papias believed this.

And it's coming on the screen. There we go. Papias believed that there will be a millennium after the resurrection of the dead when the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this earth.

That's Papias. Alive at the same time as John. Alive at the same time as Polycarp. And note that not only did Papias believe in a literal kingdom of Christ to come in after his return, but he believed it to be located where?

On earth. Literally. Revelation 5. The martyrs returning to earth to reign. John sees this. He says, And you have made them a kingdom and priest to our God, and they shall reign where?

On the earth. Another church father by the name of Irenaeus was also a premillennialist. So, Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp, who I mentioned before.

[16:53] Polycarp was a disciple of John the Apostle. If you've read Fox's Book of Martyrs, Polycarp shows up in that. He was the bishop of Leon in the third century. And actually, he was arguing against Gnosticism.

And Gnosticism is the idea that anything material is in fact immaterial since it is evil. And Irenaeus bases argument against Gnosticism on the idea that Jesus was going to come and redeem the actual earth after he returned.

And so, stuff matters. The earth matters. Right? So, in terms of where we are, climate change, we may have some reservations about how that is being packaged.

But this earth matters. Why? Because Jesus is going to come back and he's going to redeem it. Right? Philip Schaaf writes this in his book, History of the Christian Church.

He writes this. The most striking point in the eschatology of the Antecean age, which is all of that age, is a prominent belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years before the general resurrection and judgment.

[18:07] held by distinguished teachers such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, and Lactinius.

So, here's the point. So, here's the point. Premillennial theology isn't new at all. The system of premillennial theology is probably only a couple of hundred years old. Premillennial theology reads, Revelation 20 comes after the events of Revelation 19.

Now, I know for most of us, we go, well, 19 comes before 20. That's normal. But the important thing is that Revelation 20 comes after a sequence of events.

And that sequence of events starts in Revelation 12. Satan's influence on the earth ramps up in chapter 12. And it leads to a point in chapter 20 when that influence is removed.

This is not a recapitulation of the New Testament age. This is what Jesus is doing to remove the influence of Satan on the earth before he comes to reign on the earth.

[19:21] John tells us in verse 3 how long that influence is going to be removed for. He says, until the thousand years were ended. A couple of things about the thousand years. Six times in this passage, John is going to mention a thousand years.

And there's no real reason to suggest that the thousand years are anything other than a thousand little years. John is able to tell us about years.

Like, he's not unable. He's like, I don't know. How do you describe a really, really long time? You can either say, well, it lasted a thousand years. Or you can say, it just lasted a really, really long time.

And John is able to tell us both. And he does frequently in this letter. So he's able to tell us about years. And he's also able to tell us about undisclosed periods of time.

So just look at verse 3. He says, after that, he must be released for how long? A little while. That just means it's just a time. John isn't really too sure about how long it is.

[20:23] So he goes, it's just a little, it's just a period of time. So he's able to say years. And he is able to say undisclosed period of time. Like, he's able to say a thousand years. And if it wasn't a thousand years, he's able to say, well, it's quite a long time.

But the fact he doesn't say it's quite a long time. And he says it's a thousand years. That's a good reason to believe it's a thousand years. Does that make sense? So the other thing is that the way that numbers, contrary to popular opinion, actually, the way that numbers are used in the book of Revelation are mostly literal ways that we would use numbers.

Now, I know there's the whole kind of the mystical way of reading Revelation and the kind of the, you know, number 10 means this, number 7 means that. But actually, and that is there.

But the most common way John uses numbers in Revelation is how we use numbers. Right? Let me just give you an example. There are seven literal churches in seven literal cities at the beginning of the book.

We don't get to the end of chapter 3 and go, oh, my goodness, there was eight. Like, we don't do that. John goes to the seven churches who are in Asia Minor.

[21 : 43] And we go, there's seven churches. And we get to the end of chapter 3 and we go, okay, what do you know? There were seven churches. It's exactly the same way we would use numbers. Like, we get to the seven sealed judgments.

And there's seven in number. We get to the seven trumpet judgments and the seven bold judgments. And, like, they don't ever state seven judgments.

And then we later find one tucked away somewhere. Right? In chapter 8, there are three angels connected to three last woes. And guess what?

There's three angels and three last woes. In chapter 16, there's three unclean spirits. And guess how many we read about? Three. The last seven plagues amount exactly to seven.

In chapter 21, we'll read about 12 apostles and 12 tribes. Of the 12 tribes of Israel that you read about in half of the book of the Old Testament. Those same 12 tribes. The same 12 apostles that we read about in the New Testament.

[22 : 44] So, the point is, don't assume that numbers in this book are always symbolic. Right? Look, so go back to the point. Satan is being thrown down to earth in chapter 12.

And the point of that was to deceive the nations. And now that time has ended. And he is prevented from deceiving the nations. And he's prevented by being bound in a bottomless pit for a thousand years.

And so, the idea is that this is exactly what the first readers would be waiting for. And what they would be expecting at the beginning of Revelation 20.

What about Satan? What is Jesus going to do with Satan? And John's like, I'm glad you asked. Let me tell you. In other words, this chapter serves as the final piece of the puzzle in the defeat.

An ultimate punishment of the enemy of Jesus. Verse 4. Then I saw thrones. And seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed.

[23 : 53] Now, if you cast your minds back not to Revelation 12. But now cast your mind back to Genesis 1. You remember that Adam was commanded by God to exercise dominion over the Garden of Eden.

He was to be like a king over the Kingdom of Eden. But his instruction was to work it and keep it. That's the bit we don't like very much.

Work pre-fall. Like, oh. That means work is a good thing. Yes, it is. Right? Right? So, as keeper king, Adam was there to tend, to keep, to have dominion over the Kingdom or the Garden of Eden. And that theme, keeper king. And, you know, you might want to do a Bible study of it at some point. But the keeper king theme develops through the Bible.

And it actually ends up here in verse 4. So, we've talked about inter-canonical themes before in the Bible and how they start in Genesis and end up in Revelation. Well, this is one, the keeper king theme ends up.

[25 : 03] So, for example, David was a keeper king. He was a shepherd, right? But he was also a king. And so, that kind of theme kind of just develops through the Old Testament and finds its way out here in verse 4.

The language that the Old Testament uses for work it and keep it is actually the same language that is used in Exodus and Leviticus of the priests in the temple.

We move from a garden to a tabernacle to a temple to the people of God to the millennial reign.

So, in the language of Old Testament, in the Old Testament language, Adam was a priest of the garden, which was the dwelling place of God on earth. And this idea, again, was developed when, in Exodus 19, verse 6, God told Israel that you will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Keep a king. A kingdom of priests. A kingdom of keepers. Shepherds of God's people. Peter tells Christians in 1 Peter 2, verse 9, that you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.

[26 : 19] Royal priest, kingdom of keepers. And a holy nation. Then, in the beginning of Revelation, John wrote this in chapter 1, verse 5. To whom who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests.

To his God and Father. And so, it seems that this theme of keeping and working priests, now that Satan is bound, the reign of the priest kings begins. It's what Daniel saw in Daniel chapter 7.

Until the Ancient of Days came, the judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom. It's what Paul wrote about in 1 Corinthians

when he said, Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? When is that going to happen? When is that going to happen? When is that going to happen? When is that going to happen in the kingdom? And so, in a sense, this angel that was thrown, that has thrown Satan into prison, the angel has done what Adam failed to do.

Right? So, Adam failed to resist Satan's deception in the garden. And to keep him out of the garden.

[27 : 35] To be a kingdom, a king keeper of the garden. He failed to do that. And as such, then, you know the story of the fall and sin and destruction has come.

Adam was called to keep the garden. And this angel has done that. This angel has also done what Israel failed to do when they entered the land to drive out all of its inhabitants.

So, with this binding, it's as though the land is finally cleansed of the serpent and his seed from Genesis 3. Isaiah says, in Isaiah 11 verse 9, a wonderful verse.

The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Beautiful. That's what it's going to look like. So, John sees this scene where all the righteous of God gather to fulfill mankind's original command and honor.

Where Daniel says, in Daniel 7, that the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever, and ever. So, all the saints, who are they?

[28 : 47] Well, they just must be the guys who are in the stained glass, right? Wrong. Like, it probably includes some of those. But, some of those.

I don't want to be sweeping and say, oh, but I bet it, you know. I've seen Peter up in stained glass. I bet he's here. And in fact, you know, there's four categories of people that all the saints covers.

Firstly, they're the Old Testament believers. So, saints of the Most High. In Daniel's context, they're Old Testament believers. So, is Abraham going to be there?

Yeah. Yeah. Moses. Joshua. Yeah. All those. David's going to be there. All of those guys are going to be hanging out. I'm not sure where they're going to be hanging out, but they are going to be hanging out.

Right? Secondly, they are the apostles and the church. Right? So, Peter's going to be there. Matthew's going to be there. Right?

[29 : 50] John, writing this, he's going to be there. Matthew 19, verse 28, says this. Jesus said to them, truly, I say to you, in the new world, which I love. I just love that phrase.

In the new world. When the Son of Man will sit on this glorious throne. You who have followed me will also sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. So, the apostles are going to be there.

And everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or fathers, or mother, or children, or lands, for my sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

That's you, if you're a follower of Jesus. If you're a follower of Jesus, you're in this scene. You'll be there. So, where are you going today to find ultimate pleasure?

Because this is the place that you find it. It's in the place that you've been created for. You've been created to be here.

[30 : 48] And we find our ultimate pleasure, our ultimate purpose, in our ultimate destiny that God hands for us. And thirdly, Israel, at the time of the return of Jesus, will also be there.

So, three covenants that God made with Israel talk about Israel returning to the land. And during the return of Christ, Zechariah prophesies this in Zechariah 12.

He says, Who is that? That's Israel. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that when they look on me, on him that they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and we bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

That's what Romans 11 is all about. Romans 11, 25. Lest you be wise in your own sight. I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers. A partial hardening has come upon Israel until when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

And in this way, all Israel will be saved. As it is written, the deliverer will come from Zion. He will banish ungodliness from Jacob. And this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.

[32 : 07] And then fourthly, the fourth group of people who will be there will be those in the kingdom who are unbelievers will also be there. So those in the kingdom who have been born during that time.

So children born during the millennial age, it's going to last a thousand years, there's going to be kids born. Children born in the millennial kingdom will have the same responsibility to exercise faith

in Christ, the same as all people from all ages.

And what is clear from other passages is that there will be some who choose not to believe. which is remarkable for us. And we've had this conversation before, you know, when you go back to the Gospels and people have seen Jesus and they still didn't believe Jesus.

Like, how can that be? Well, that time's coming again when they will live in near perfection, under the reign of Christ.

And there will still be people going, I'm not going to choose that way. And so whilst there won't be any unbelievers entering the kingdom, there will be at some point that will become a reality at some point.

[33 : 18] Isaiah speaks about the millennial kingdom and he says this in Isaiah 65, no more shall there be, and this is beautiful, no more shall there be in it an infant who dies but a few days or an old man who does not fill out his days.

And I like that, just fill out. It's talking about, it's talking about older people who slow down because life slows down and bodies slow down and minds slow down.

And so older people don't necessarily accomplish as much in their later years as they did in their early years. And Isaiah is saying, we're going to have none of that. You're going to be like a spring chicken for all of your days.

He says, for the young man shall die a hundred years old. And he's saying, look, if you die at a hundred, you'll be considered young.

Like we talk about young people, you know, dying and they may be 18, 20, 25. And what do we say? That's no age at all. Right?

[34 : 30] And the Bible says, during this time, you'll be a hundred years old and we'll be turning around going, man, that's no, that's no age at all. And then note this, the sinner of a hundred years old shall be accursed.

There's going to be sinners in the kingdom. But it, but it, but it, it won't be for them the land flowing with milk and honey. They will be accursed.

According to Micah 4, verse 2, during this time, many nations shall come and say, come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord. Can you imagine that? Turning on BBC.

BBC is going to be great because it's going to be like standing for Christ. Right? So, turning on the BBC and all of a sudden, you get this announcement. Hey, the nations.

Let's go, let's go to the mountain of the Lord, the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways, that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

[35 : 41] And this is why the Lord lays out consequences for nations that do not worship him.

There in Zechariah 14, if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem, you're like, ah, Jerusalem.

It's a long way away. Why? It's like at least a four hour flight, five hour flight. That's like, I can't do that. If any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain on them.

I consider that a bad thing. And so, those that occupy the kingdom will be the righteous from all previous times, believing Gentiles, believing Jews, all from the same family of faith.

It will be a restored land. And this is what we've been saying all along since chapter 6. What is God doing during the tribulation period? He is restoring the land. He is resetting the land.

He is cleansing the land. Why? Why doesn't he just come back and go, let's just judge. Boom, done. Why? Because he's got a plan for the land. He's restoring the land for himself and for his people.

[36 : 51] So the land will be like an Eden, a kingdom. And eventually, it will contain those people who do not follow Christ.

Something else John saw, he saw the souls. John doesn't see resurrected bodies as he does in verse 12, but the souls of those not yet resurrected.

So he sees the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God and those who had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on its foreheads or on their hands.

So that takes us back to Revelation 13, describing those people who had been killed by Antichrist and the false prophet. And he says that they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand

years.

Like, there is only one way to translate they came to life. You know what that is? They came to life. The word resurrection is used 42 times in the New Testament and almost exclusively in reference to physical resurrection.

[38 : 04] Now that does cause a problem. Some of you are ahead of the game already. Look at the text again. I saw the souls of those not yet resurrected of those who had been beheaded.

I don't know how that works. I don't know how resurrected people get their heads back. Like, I don't want to be in charge of giving those heads out.

Like, you know, are they numbered? I don't know what. But they're going to come back. And I just think, look, if God can fashion eyes from mud and heal a man's withered hand and he can speak to a storm and the storm goes, this is a guide I need to obey and then he does, I don't think I have much of a problem with that verse.

Verse 5, the rest of the dead. Who is that? Well, that is everyone who does not know Jesus. The rest of the dead. The rest of the dead did not come to life.

That's sad, isn't it? When you parallel everything that is good in these verses and you take that, the rest of the dead didn't come to life.

[39 : 27] You know, there is no, there is no waiting room. There's no purgatory. There's no place where people who have died not knowing the Lord go to in the hope that they can work their way out of it.

that doesn't exist anywhere in the Bible. This is one of the most saddest verses in the whole of Revelation. The rest of the dead, they didn't live again. They didn't come to life until the thousand years were ended.

this, referring to verse 4, is the first resurrection. Let's look at this, the first resurrection. The first resurrection is important to understand because that phrase can be tricky.

The first resurrection, that phrase, is important to understand as a category and not an event. So, in the Bible, there are two resurrections and only two.

And I know what you're saying, well, what about this resurrection and that resurrection? What about Jesus' resurrection? What about our resurrection? What about that resurrection? What about this resurrection? There's more than two. There's two categories of resurrection.

[40 : 39] And within each category, there's multiple events. So, one is the first resurrection. And it's better to talk about the first resurrection in terms of the resurrection to life.

Whenever it talks about the first resurrection, it's a resurrection to life. And then there's a second resurrection or the resurrection to death. And the problem is is that we can fall into thinking that these two resurrections are again events because they're not.

They're categories. They're either resurrection to life or the resurrection to death. Paul explains this in 1 Corinthians 15. He says this.

He says, but in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. So, Jesus is the first fruit. Okay, what does that mean? Well, he explains it.

Verse 21. For as by a man came death. Who was that? Adam, right? So, through Adam, he listened to the deception of Satan.

[41 : 43] He wasn't a king keeper in the kingdom, right? He fell. Death came. By a man has come also the resurrection of the dead, Adam, right?

For, as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. Verse 23. This is the key.

But each in his own order. Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. So, here's Paul's point. Because of Adam, everyone dies.

If you're not spiritually born again today, you're going to face the resurrection of the dead or resurrection to death. The second resurrection. If you don't know Jesus. But in contrast, just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive.

Each to his own order. So, because of Jesus' resurrection was the first in that order, it's by Jesus and his resurrection that we have resurrection to life.

[42 : 55] Remember in Matthew 27, there's this strange few verses, and it is strange few verses, where Matthew records that when Jesus rose, all of the graves were opened.

And the loved ones who had died were seen by people in the city. Do you remember that? And there's no explanation. Matthew just kind of goes to what it is, and then he moves on, and you're like, what?

That's the first part of the first resurrection. Right? Ephesians 4 talks about it. It's a different event, but it's part of the first category.

So, those who know Jesus and who have died before the rapture, come back with Jesus in chapter 19, first resurrection. Those who know Jesus and are alive at the time of the rapture, come back with Jesus in chapter 19, first resurrection.

Those who know Jesus and died in any way during the tribulation period, come back with Jesus in Revelation 19, first resurrection. It's all a contrast to verse 14, which is talking about the resurrection to death.

[44 : 12] Look at verse 14, or look at 13 actually, in chapter 20. The sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them. They were judged, each one of them according to what they had done.

Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire, or this is the resurrection to death, is another way of putting it. So, where John says in verse 5, the rest of the dead, the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.

That's what we see from verse 11 onwards in the second resurrection, the resurrection to death.

He's saying that those who died not knowing Christ don't experience this first resurrection to life.

There's not an opportunity again for them. And so that's why he says in verse 6, blessed. Blessed and holy is the one.

There are seven Beatitudes in the book of Revelation. There's seven of them. You don't find an eight. There's seven. Just thought I'd point that out.

[45 : 23] There's seven Beatitudes. This is the fifth. And remember from our studies in Matthew 5 that a Beatitude is the description of the blessed life as much as it is an invitation to come and share in it.

What is the blessed life? John says it's the one who shares in the first resurrection. That's the blessed life. The blessed life is the one who shares in the first resurrection.

Over such the second death has no power. But they will be priests of God and of Christ and they shall reign with him a thousand years. If you are a believer in Jesus this morning this is describing your future.

And it's describing pleasure. Satan has gone from the scene. Jesus is reigning. You will be raised from the dead to sin no more.

No satanic deception. No satanic temptation. No devil prowling like a roaring lion. In the presence of Jesus you and I we will do justice and serve as king priests to God.

[46 : 42] It's what you're made for. What I was made for. Is that what you thought of when we started speaking about pleasure this morning?

Don't we need to soak ourselves in the word of God in the Bible so that the Bible will define pleasure for us? Pleasure is not sin.

Pleasure is walking with God in unrestrained obedience to him. Pleasure is doing the right thing instinctively. Pleasure is trusting God no matter what.

pleasure is knowing him in all of your ways. If you don't know the Lord your destiny right now is very different.

Your destiny begins in verse 11 and it's a destiny of resurrection to death. And today you still have the opportunity to change that destiny to change the outcome of your life.

[47 : 57] If you're still chasing pleasures that are defined by this world know that you will be chasing that forever and never arrive.

And the only true promise is that we find our pleasure when we find ourselves doing the very thing that we're created to do. So this morning we're going to take communion together and I wanted to share from Matthew 20 26 and as we do the team are going to come up and lead us in some songs and it's Matthew 26 the key verse is 29 but I'm going to read to you from a little bit before that.

Jesus is there taking the Passover meal with his disciples it's on the night he was going to be betrayed he's about to go to the cross and this is what he says now this is what Matthew says now and Matthew was there now as they were eating Jesus took bread after he blessed it he broke it and he gave it to his disciples and he says take eat this is my body this is the invitation to be partakers of the first resurrection is to be partakers of his body to share in his life and after that he took the cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them saying drink it all of you for this is notice this this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins

what covenant the

Davidic covenant the covenant that speaks mostly about the return of Jesus to set up his reign on the earth how do you know that because the very next verse says I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom one of the reasons that we take communion is not only just a picture of what Christ has done for us breaking his body his body broken for us his blood spilt for us but the whole purpose of that Passover meal on that evening was to set up what we read about last week the marriage supper when do we do that marriage supper when we partake with

Jesus and Jesus partakes with us and we find pleasure forever more so as we come to the table the band are going to lead us in a song and I want to encourage you to come from your seats and take the elements back to your seat and we do it like that because this is your choice to take it is your choice to come the invitation is there blessed is everyone who is part of that first resurrection and if you have decided to follow Jesus and you're going to be following him all the way into the kingdom if you decided to follow Jesus whether that was 10 years ago 20 years ago 50 years ago or whether you just deciding to do it today you're welcome to come to the table and you're going to say thank you

[52 : 06] Lord for your broken body your shed blood and look forward to doing this with you in the kingdom let's pray together father thank you