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## Pastor's Introduction

When it comes to what happens after we die, people today are as confused as ever. The Bible teaches that those who are saved by Christ will spend eternity with God in Heaven, while those who are not saved will spend eternity apart from God in Hell. This belief about the afterlife has been a basic and orthodox Christian belief throughout church history. Although the Bible has much to say, people seem to not understand what God is saying. According to a 2021 Pew Research survey, 73% of US adults believe in Heaven, whereas 62% believe in Hell. Among US adults who claim to be Christian, 92% believe in Heaven, and 79% believe in Hell. Among US adults who do not claim to be Christians, only 37% believe in Heaven and 28% in Hell.

In our new 7-week sermon series, "Afterlife," we will be studying what the Bible says about Heaven and Hell. My prayer is that not only will we confirm your belief in Heaven and Hell, but we will clarify what Heaven and Hell are truly like according to the Scriptures.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John T. Green".

Ed. TG



**Participant Guide for April 7, 2024**

## **Hell: Rejection**

Revelation 20:11-15

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### **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Despite its challenging symbolism and visions, Revelation captivates many Christians. What draws us to this book, and why does it intrigue us so much?
2. After reading John 5:22 & 5:26–27 and Revelation 20:11, who do you understand to be seated on the Great White Throne? Discuss how Jesus embodies the roles of both judge and savior.
3. Revelation mentions the opening of two types of books during the final judgment. Identify these books and explore their differences. Who is judged according to these books, and on what basis? Consider how this relates to the concept of grace in God's judgment versus human achievements.
4. Reflect on the meaning behind Death and Hades being cast into the Lake of Fire. What does their ultimate destruction signify?
5. How would you address the question, "How can a loving or 'good' God send people to Hell?" Discuss how God's goodness aligns with the existence of Hell.
6. How does the vivid imagery of judgment in Revelation influence how we share the gospel with others?
- 7.

## Respond

- **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated?**
- ◆ This week, consider how you will respond to the urgency presented in this passage.

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**Participant Guide April 14, 2024**

## **Hell: Reality**

Revelation 21:8

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### **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. The concept of Hell often provokes discomfort. Why is it crucial to engage in this discussion despite the unease it may cause?
2. Revelation 21:8 lists certain behaviors that result in punishment in the lake of fire, with "cowardly" and "faithless" mentioned first. Discuss the possible reasons for this specific ordering and why these behaviors are highlighted.
3. How does Revelation 21:8 define the second death? Discuss the implications of this term in differentiating between physical and spiritual death.
4. In what ways does Revelation 21:8 underscore the gravity of sin and its consequences, including eternal separation from God?
5. Given the solemn warnings of Revelation 21:8, how can we find unwavering hope and absolute certainty in our salvation? How do verses such as John 3:16, Romans 10:9, and Ephesians 2:8-9 affirm our salvation by grace through faith?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Reflect on how Revelation 21:8 serves as a daily reminder of the necessity for repentance and the hope offered through faith in salvation.

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## Participant Guide for April 21, 2024

# Hell: Reward

Revelation 22:12-21

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## Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

## Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Read Isaiah 40:10 and 62:11: How do these verses connect to today's passage in Revelation 22:12-21? Consider the context of Isaiah's prophecies and the promises of restoration and redemption. What is the great reward that both Isaiah and Jesus speak of?
2. Read Revelation 22:17: Who is giving the invitation, and what invitation is being extended? How do these verses connect to Isaiah 55:1? Consider the parallel between the invitation to come and drink in Isaiah 55:1 and the invitation in Revelation 22:17. What common themes emerge? Jesus and John continue to connect the writings of Revelation and Isaiah. What insights can we gain from this continuity?
3. In verse 17, we also encounter the concept of the "free gift of the water of life." How does this relate to our understanding of salvation? What is the significance of receiving this gift freely and its implications for our spiritual journey?
4. How does Revelation 22 shape your perspective on eternity? Consider the imagery of the River of Life and the Tree of Life. How does an eternal perspective influence our priorities, decisions, and daily living?
5. The Book of Revelation concludes with a triumphant invitation: "Come and see!" How do these final verses summarize the entire biblical message?
6. Verse 21 provides a benediction. How does this blessing reflect our daily need for God's grace? What are some practical ways we rely on God's grace in our relationships, challenges, and spiritual growth?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, reflect on how Christ's reward impacts our faith journey and our anticipation of God's ultimate fulfillment.



**Participant Guide for April 28, 2024**

## **Renewal Sunday – Herbert Beck**

Reference

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### **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1.

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3.

4.

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## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**



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**Participant Guide for May 5, 2024**

## **Heaven: Renewal**

Revelation 21:1-2

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### **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:

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. <sup>2</sup>I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.



## Apply

1. When you move into a new place there is an excitement of newness. For most of us, we bring our previous things with us, even to a new place. Do you feel this adds to or takes away from the newness and its excitement?
2. What are your ideas about what/where Heaven is? What will we be like in Heaven? What will eternity look like?
3. In the case of our passage today, all the old Earth has passed away, and everything becomes new. From God's standpoint, why is this absolutely necessary?
4. Read 2 Peter 3:3-13: How is the passing of the current world to take place?
5. What was the main difference between the first destruction by water and the second by fire?
6. In today's passage, what is different between the New Heaven and the New Earth? Discuss how this makes all things new.

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Discuss with your family how the scriptures describe what eternity will be like. Ensure we do not perpetuate faulty understandings of what God has in store.

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**Participant Guide for May 12, 2024**

## **Heaven: Reunion**

Revelation 21:3

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### **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:

<sup>3</sup>Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God.



## Apply

1. As we journey through life, our relationships with parents and children evolve, passing through distinct phases. What are some of these phases that we experience as we mature?
2. Today's passage introduces a transition in our relationship with God. What are some of the transitions in this relationship through the ages?
3. Today's passage begins with the fact that man will once again hear the audible voice of God. What do you think He will sound like?
4. This reunion with God will confirm and affirm that He is all we ever needed. How do you think our reunion with God will make this clear?
5. How does this verse connect to other themes in the Book of Revelation? How does it offer hope of restoration after the visions of judgment?
6. How can this passage be applied to our lives today? If God is already with us, how can we live in a way that reflects that closeness?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Discuss with your family the presence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the greatness of dwelling in God's presence in the New Heaven and New Earth.

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**Participant Guide for May 19, 2024**

## **Heaven: Relief**

Revelation 21:4

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### **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:

<sup>4</sup>He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.



## Apply

1. Have there been times in your life when dread or guilt consumed you? How does it feel when these circumstances are resolved or at least behind you?
2. After our reunion with God in Heaven, the passage states that, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” What do you believe is the origin of these tears?” Have someone read 2 Corinthians 5:10: How do you feel this relates to the tears God wipes from our eyes?
3. The rest of our passage relates that this will be a very temporary occurrence. What does the passage say next that brings relief to the tears? What feeling does that bring to your expectations of your encounter with Christ portrayed by the scriptures?
4. The last thing our passage communicates today is why this new state of being exists. What does it say? How does that affect our past tears?
5. Spend any time you have left to allow people to share testimonies of thankfulness for God’s goodness, both in the present and future.

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Have a joyful discussion of the truth that our passage reveals to us today.

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**Participant Guide for May 26, 2024**

## **Heaven: Reassignment**

Revelation 22:3-5

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### **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:

<sup>3</sup>and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup>They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever.



## Apply

1. There is an organization that has a mission to set free those who have been wrongly imprisoned. Putting yourself in the shoes of the wrongly accused, how would you feel when freedom is finally realized?
2. What should be the difference in thought and attitude between the wrongly imprisoned and the redeemed sinner?
3. What does the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence of our passage today say will be our response?
4. What does it mean when it says, “His name shall be on their foreheads?”
5. Today’s passage doesn't mention an end to serving God (v. 3). How do you imagine serving God in eternity might be different from serving him on Earth?
6. Revelation often contains disturbing imagery. How does this passage offer hope and comfort in light of the earlier visions?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Reflect with your family and friends about how glorious it is to be a child of God!

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