

St Martins C3 – September 24, 2023

Come, Lord Jesus – The Beginning and The End

Sermon Notes:

When we compare the first pages of the Bible to the last pages we see a God who can turn our world of ruin into something good once more. What was begun in Genesis is completed in Revelation.

1 – God Saves Our Universe

Read Genesis 1:1; 3:17; Romans 8:19-22; Revelation 20:11; 21:1-2; 22:3

God made everything on earth good. Yet, human overreaching threatens the destruction of our planet.

God will renew all creation. God cares about His world and He will remove from it broken and corrupted things and recreate our world into a verdant vibrant place of flourishing.

2 – Suffering is Removed

Read Genesis 1:31; 2:9; 3:16-19; Revelation 20: 14; 21:4, 27

God created a good world but sin marred it and it is now a place of suffering, evil, and death. When the New Heavens and Earth are created all suffering will be removed from the world.

Evil will be dispatched. Death and the grave will be destroyed!

3 – We are Invited to Abundant Life

Read Genesis 2:9-10; Ezekiel 47:7-12; Revelation 22:1-2

The picture from Genesis is pretty much repeated but with a significant difference. There are two trees of life and no tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is a great picture of abundant life.

Revelation 21-22 shows a new creation. The good things of the original creation will be renewed, they are the same but different. It paints a picture of the original creation but with more direct reliance upon God.

So What?

1 - God is in Control

The message of Revelation for the people of the time was clear - if there are beastly figures or antichrists or plagues or persecution don't freak out. God will take care of them all

Read Revelation 21:5

2 - Your Life Matters

In the same way, God is working out the Universe, He cares about who you are and what you do. That is why Jesus came.

3 - So Trust Him

For your life to matter it needs to be attached to this purpose. Inasmuch as you live out the creation purposes and redemption ends your life matters.

If situations threaten us we don't need to worry, we trust in the one who is in command of history.

Trust him, Trust him. Trust him!

Questions for Connect Groups:

Bible Study:

Read Genesis 1-3 and Revelation 20-22, looking for ways Revelation references, inverts or riffs off Genesis.

Questions:

What stood out to you from today's message?

What does this message tell you about God?

What does this message tell you about humans?

If you were God what one thing would you change?

How would you respond if someone said God doesn't care about the problems in the world?

How does the relation between Revelation and Genesis help you see that God is in control of history?

How do we know that the same God who is in control of history cares about our lives?

What in your life do you need God to do something about?

How can you trust Him more with your life?

What will you do as a result of this message?

Songs from Today:

Battle Belongs, Majesty (O The Mystery), You Reign, That's the Power, Praises (Be Lifted Up)

Monday's Devotion – Heaven and Earth

Read Genesis 1:1; Matthew 6:9-12 ; Revelation 21:1-2

Many think the story of the Bible is the story of Heaven and Hell. Yet in all the verses of the Bible Heaven and Hell are never mentioned together. Instead, the story of the Bible is the story of Heaven and Earth – which are mentioned together over 200 times, right from the very first verse of the Bible.

The story of Heaven and Earth is not just about the place in which we live, however, as we discussed on Sunday these verses give great value to the planet that we call home.

In ancient Hebrew thought, Heaven and Earth were more than physical spaces. They were different realms. Heaven was the abode of God. It was where He sat above the stars and the waters above. The earth was the domain of humans, a place for us to rule as His image bearers.

Sadly, through sin the separation between the two realms became insurmountable.

As Jesus prays His famous prayer, we see the ultimate aim of God to bring the two closer together. That earth would reflect the will of Heaven. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus made a way for sinful people to enter into God's realm.

Revelation 21 reveals that Heaven is not a place we go to when we die, rather it is a reality that will come to earth. Heaven and Earth will be one. Praise God today for the way He is bringing His story to a grand conclusion!

Tuesday's Devotion – The Presence of God

Read Genesis 3:1-11, 23; Revelation 21:3; 22:3-4; 1 Corinthians 3:16

As we saw yesterday, our space remains separate from God's space. Yet, in the beginning, there are hints that it was not supposed to be that way. God walked in the garden looking for Adam and Eve. He was physically present with them. Whilst we only see this happening once it seems that it was a regular thing for God to do.

The fall happened and humanity was removed from the Garden of Eden and removed from the presence of God. Warren will go into more detail this Sunday on our search to be in the presence of God, in the meantime notice with wonder the final pages of the Bible.

In the picture of the New Heavens and the New Earth, an idea that is repeated is that God will live with His people. Here we see that Heaven is better than Eden. God won't just pop by now and then but He will live with us.

The longing of every human heart is to be united with its creator. It is only in His presence that we can find all that life was meant to be.

What a glorious destiny awaits us!

Today, we have a foretaste of this destiny by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Spend time in prayer and surrender today, asking God to make you aware of His presence and speak to you.

Wednesday's Devotion – The Sea Was Gone

Read Genesis 1:2; 10; 20-22; Psalm 74:13-17; Daniel 7:1-7; Revelation 13:1; 20:13; 21:1

“And the Sea was also gone.” What a strange detail that is included in this vision of Heaven. What’s God got against the sea? It’s a wonderful place we can swim, sail, kayak, jet-ski, and fish. We may not enjoy Heaven as much without the sea.

We need to remember that this is a prophetic vision of Heaven and as such it is a metaphorical description of our future reality, not a physical depiction. So, we need to ask what negative reality the sea represents that is being removed.

For one, the sea for John would have represented separation from the people that he loved whilst he was exiled on Patmos.

Primarily, however, the sea represented disorder and chaos in the ancient world. We see hints at this in the Genesis account of creation. The pre-creation state is a formless and void world with water being its only substance. The Spirit moves over the water and God begins creating. Part of His creation is the sea and the great sea creatures.

Another version of this creation story is told in Psalm 74 where it highlights God’s creation as a taming of a sea creature. This is related to Daniel and Revelation’s vision of a sea beast.

The sea was a place of chaos, and the future hope is that all forces of chaos – the sea, the beast, and the devil will be subdued. God will bring complete order to the world. Pray, that God would give you victory over all forces of evil today.

Thursday's Devotion – No Night, No Darkness

Read Genesis 1:2-5, 16; Isaiah 60:19, 20; Revelation 21:23-25, 22:5

The book of Revelation often trips people up with its symbolic pictures. If they are taken as video camera footage of the future then they can be bizarre, confusing, and frightening. Another one of these images is the removal of the sun or even lamps.

Because this is a symbolic image of the future, we can see that it is not just saying the lighting section of the hardware store will be empty! Nor is it saying that the new Heavens and Earth will be a place without sleep ('cause how could you sleep in that brightness).

What does this symbolically mean?

In Genesis, the world was created and dependent upon good elements, chief of which was the sun. But the sun is also subject to the curse and will not shine eternally.

The point is that the glory of God amongst His people is so great that there will not be any need for other sources of life. All reliance on the physical world to sustain us will be gone and our complete reliance will be on God for both the physical and spiritual needs that we have.

All the darkness and night will be gone as God's life will not fade, even for a moment. If the future is made up of God completely enlivening and sustaining us, then why not spend time today asking Him to enliven all parts of your life?

Friday Devotion – The Second Adam and Eve

Read Genesis 2:18-25; Ephesians 5:30-33; Romans 5:12-21; Revelation 19:6-8; 21:2-3

History begins and ends with a wedding. In the beginning, it is the creation of Eve from Adam's side and their joining in a covenantal cooperative relationship. In the end, it is the wedding of the Lamb, Jesus, and His Bride, the Church.

This is the work that Christ completed on the cross.

Matthew Henry says: "Adam was a figure of him that was to come; for out of the side of Christ, the second Adam, his spouse the church was formed, when he slept the sleep, the deep sleep, of death upon the cross, to which his side was opened, and there came out blood and water, blood to purchase his church and water to purify it to himself."

Marriage on earth is a symbol of what God wants to do with His people, bringing together those who are different to be joined in love and commitment to Him.

One day, we will gather as the Church and be united with God in a complete and unending relationship with Him the way humans were supposed to in marriage.

What a picture of intimacy! What a picture of eternity! All the seeds begun in creation will be brought to consummation in new creation. The garden will be transformed into a city and everything that we long for will be fulfilled. Forever.

Give your life again to the one who will make it all happen.