

Rev. 21:6-8
"The Other Side of that Promise"

Very few people have trouble believing in or accepting the idea of heaven. A place of peace and tranquility. A place of life never ending, filled with bliss. For believers, a place of unending life with God, with our Lord Jesus the Christ. I would also argue there is a huge portion of folk who believe that just about everyone who dies goes to heaven and that those in heaven are looking down on us, watching over us. Not so, scripturally. On the other hand, though we readily accept the idea of heaven as a real place, many refute the idea of hell. A place of torment, darkness, tremendous pain, eternal separation from God. And though the interpretations of hell may differ among us, the community of faith, no one who faithfully studies scripture could repudiate the reality of such a place.

Matt 10:28 ²⁸ "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

Matt 25:41-43 ⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'"

Mark 9:43 ⁴³ "And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire."

Now, just as there is a promise of eternal life for those who trust in Jesus there is with this promise the promise of eternal judgement for those who reject him. With this said we turn our attention to our text,

and I want to share three things keeping what I have said in the forefront of our minds.

First, what we are awaiting to take place here has already been completed in eternity. V6a “⁶And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.” This is why we must resist living simply by what we see and how we feel. But rather live by what the word of God declares, what the word of God assures us. We encounter life moment by moment, not so with God/Christ. God sees it all. He knows the end from the beginning (Isa 46:10). We have a sense of our beginnings but none of us know how and when our end will come. However, we do know what our eternity will be in Christ Jesus. And this should have tremendous bearing upon how we interpret our present, dictating how we live and who we live for in the here and now. We walk by faith not by sight. And he said to me, it is done!

Eph 1:3-6 “³³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.”

Acts 13:48 “⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.”

2 Tim 2:10 “Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

Second, the one who believes in Christ Jesus is the one who conquers. V6b-7 “To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.” Certainly, we know we do not achieve the victory, but rather the victory is won for us. Because the victory is won, we are overcomers. We are more than conquerors. This is a distinction of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that separates the faith from all other religions. I say this because it is necessary for followers of Christ to accept the fact that eternal life with God is reserved for those who trust in His Son. If we fail to operate by this truth, we will falter in our evangelistic endeavors. If there are multiple paths to God, then cease and assist all outreach and evangelistic efforts. God forbid! There are still many who have yet to believe and there are some, maybe many, whose coming to faith is tied to us.

John 3:35-36 “³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. ³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”

Romans 8:31-37 “³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to

be slaughtered.” ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

Third and final, though many will no one has to face the second death. V8 “But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

I will admit it is a comforting idea to believe that all who die go to heaven. Though a comforting belief it is no true. If it were true I would tell you so. Better yet, scripture would tell us so. As hard as it is for some to believe in an eternal existence in place that burns with fire and sulfur, a place of torment, a place of utter darkness, a place of eternal separation from God, such a place exists. It must. For if there is no such place, then evil will persist. If there is no such place, then there is no such thing as God’s eternal wrath. If there is no such place, there is no need for salvation. If there is no such place, Jesus’ death and resurrection is a farce. If there is no such place, then we have no need for a heaven. If there is no such place, then there is no second death. A literal existence in a place of total despair apart from God for all eternity. No one has to face such a fate. Turn to Christ Jesus! And church, considering such a text as this we must take seriously the mandate to deny ourselves, pick up our cross daily and follow him for life and death hang in the balance.

Matt 7:13-14 ¹³“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”

The other side of that promise. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**