



The Reconciliation We Dream Of  
Revelation 20-21

**Sooke Baptist Church**  
Sunday, February 6, 2022  
9:30am, In-person  
Also on Facebook Live Stream  
• and YouTube

A close-up image of a cracked coffee cup. The text is overlaid on the image.

Coffee/Question:  
If there was anything you could fix,  
what would it be?

**03:00**

**YOUR QUESTIONS FROM LAST SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 2022**

1. Can a person's name be removed from the book of life?
2. Who or what is thrown into the lake of fire?
3. Is there conscious existence after physical death?
4. When Jesus returns can people still choose to receive and believe in him?
5. Do all religions worship the same God, but just call him by different names?
6. How do we speak of the gospel in our culture?
7. What happens at the final judgement?
8. Who is the dragon and what is his mark?

Over the next couple weeks, we will answer the first seven questions. And today... I want to quickly answer question 8 and then we will get into our study.

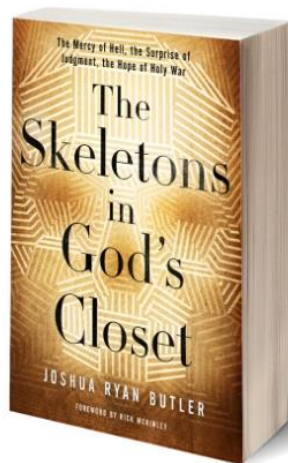
The dragon is a symbol used in the book of Revelation that represents the person and nature of Satan, who is a fallen angel.

The mark of the beast, the number 666, is also a symbol... that convey the complete incompleteness of life lived without God.

Every person who is born into this world has a fallen nature.

What I mean by that is that the image of God in which our first parents were created has been fractured and marred.

Until a person believes in Jesus and receives him into their life... and experiences the miracle of God creating a new nature in them that is like that of Jesus Christ, all of us in our nature bear a likeness, similar to that of Satan.



Joshua Ryan Butler

I am grateful to the book written by Joshua Butler entitled “The Skeletons in God’s Closet.”

This book helped me to think about... and to better understand... what the Bible teaches about hell - what it is and why it exists.

For most people, the topic of hell raises troubling questions, but then ...so does the fact that God will judge the life of every person, as Revelation 20:12-13 twice says...

## Revelation 20

v.12 – The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

v.13 - ...each person was judged according to what they had done.

Every person will stand before God, and the details of what they thought, said and did... and didn't do ...will be evaluated by him.

As followers of Jesus, we are not God's press secretary – massaging his image, trying to make him and his words more palatable.

The gospel, is both good and bad news.

The gospel tells humanity the truth of who we are and what happened to us and what God did... in love... in order to rescue us.

While you and I live in a culture that loves options, in the gospel of Jesus... God reveals there is only one way, one truth and one life.

I find it fascinating that this causes offense.

Think about it....God provided rescue and many are troubled, and some deeply offended... that God doesn't offer multiple salvation options from which humanity can choose????

This is why we prayed in the prayers of the people... for faith...

... faith to believe God...

... faith to believe God speaks the truth...

... faith to welcome the Holy Spirit to teach us truth...

... faith to realign our lives around the person of God and how he says life is to be lived to the full.

This morning I want to identify and then let the Bible speak... to an underlying confusion about hell... that exists... in those that don't yet follow Jesus and in those who do.



Heaven and hell are not co-equal counterparts – one good, the other bad.



When describing human destiny, nowhere in the Bible, does heaven and hell appear together in the same verse.

There are many verses which speak of heaven.

There are many verses which speak of hell.

In the Bible, heaven's counterpart... is the earth, not hell.

Let me say it again.

In the Bible, heaven's counterpart... is the earth, not hell.

There are many, many verses in the Bible which speak of heaven and the earth together.





Psalm 121:2

My help comes from the Lord, who made **heaven and earth.**



Isaiah 37:16:

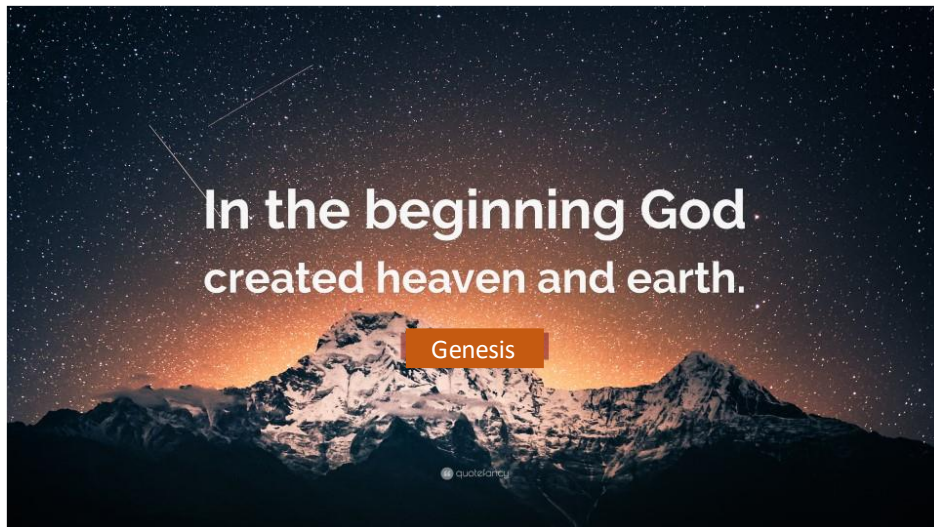
O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made **heaven and earth.**



Luke 10:21:

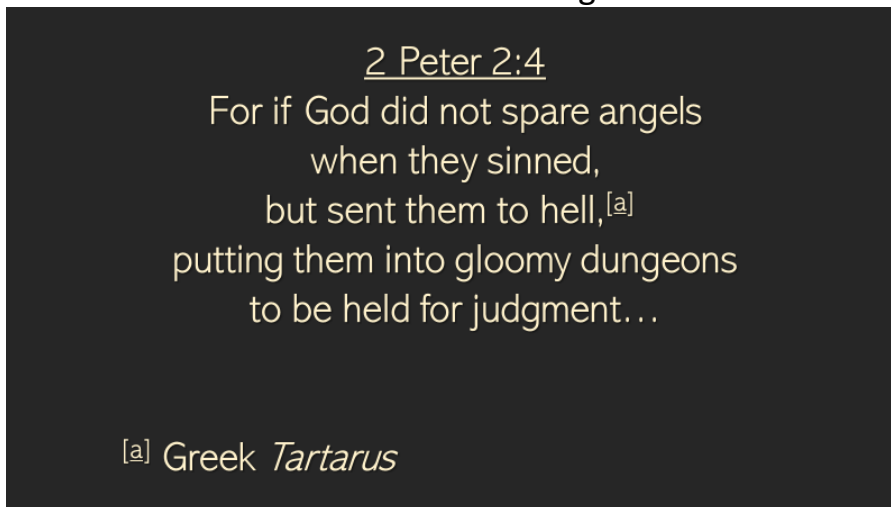
Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth...**"

In the very first book of the Bible, God reveals that he created heaven and earth.



God created the two realms... heaven and earth... for each other, just as God created two races of personal beings to live in them. Nowhere in the creation account... is hell mentioned. The Bible is clear in Genesis 1-2 that everything that God created... was created good.

The Holy Spirit through Peter in his second letter revealed that the necessity of hell came about when some of the angels sinned.



This word translated hell in the Greek language is Tartarus. There are three other words that are translated hell in our English Bible.

HELL < Tartarus  
Sheol  
Hades  
Gahenna

We will look in greater detail at each of these words another week.

In Greek mythology Tartarus was where the most ferocious criminals and monsters were held, restricted from causing chaos and harm on the earth. The word Tartarus is only once in the NT... in Peter's epistle.

The emphasis being made by the Spirit with the usage of this word is that the angels who sinned and initiated war in heaven were sent by God to a place of restriction (a dungeon), sent to a place permeated by gloom and darkness, where they await final judgment.

Jude also wrote of this.

Jude 6

And the angels who did not  
keep their positions of authority  
but abandoned their own home —  
these he has kept in darkness,  
bound with everlasting chains  
for judgment on the great Day.

God created the angels to live in fellowship with him, in a home permeated by intimacy, belonging, beauty and joy.

God gave to the angels... a will to choose.

Additionally, God entrusted each angel with authority to act on his behalf for the flourishing of heaven and earth.

What God did with the angels he did with humanity.

We too were created to live in fellowship with God.

We too were created to live with God in a home permeated by intimacy, belonging, beauty and joy.

We too were entrusted with authority and responsibility.

But the story of the fallen angels... became humanity's story.

Like them we chose to be... our own authority; we chose... to abandon God and our first parents were driven out of the home God had created for them.

To abandon is to walk away from; it is to turn one's back upon that which had been cherished and loved; it is to choose something else; it is to sever relationship; it is to break fellowship and communion.

This is what humanity did to God.

And the consequence of choosing to abandon God?

To turn away from light

is to turn to darkness

To turn away from life

is to turn towards death

To turn away from order

is to turn towards chaos

To turn away from authority

is to turn towards anarchy

God is altogether good and pure, and he will justly judge the seen and unseen worlds and its inhabitants.

But the gospel of Jesus tells us good news... for the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve....God's mercy is the basis of his judgment.

This is a theme we will return to.

There is another piece of truth we need to consider regarding this topic.



The choice made by our first parents... in addition to... allowing sin to enter into human nature and experience... with all of its manifold consequences.... caused the tearing apart of heaven and earth.



This had and continues to have profound implications upon life here on the earth. The earth doesn't function like God created it to function, and neither do we. And contrary to what many think... this is not God's fault.

Think of the tragedies that happen upon the earth – war, genocide, murder, sexual slavery, family brokenness, physical and sexual abuse, famine, greed, to name but a few...

Have you not have heard questions voiced that sound like this – if there is a God and he is good, why does he allow this to happen?

This question and variations like it... put the blame on to God, when in reality, these atrocities... are expressions of hell, of how life functions when God is absent... being unleashed upon the earth through human beings whose nature has been invaded by sin.

Look at what Jesus said, Matthew 15:19 and 12:34.

Matthew 15:19

For out of the heart  
come evil thoughts—  
murder,  
adultery,  
sexual immorality,  
theft,  
false testimony,  
slander.

Matthew 12:34

For out of  
the overflow  
of the heart  
the mouth speaks.

All these things mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 15 - evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, and slander...come out of our human nature.

These things do not exist outside of us and find their way into our heart. These things are within us.

And how they do they come out of us and into human culture... into our families, into our neighborhoods, into our schools, into our workplaces, into business and government, etc.?

They come out ...through our mouth; through the words we speak.

Look at James 3:5-6

James 3:5-6

The tongue is a small part of the body,  
but it makes great boasts.  
Consider what a great forest is set on fire  
by a small spark.  
The tongue also is a fire,  
a world of evil among the parts of the body.  
It corrupts the whole person,  
sets the whole course of one's life on fire,  
and is itself set on fire by hell.

James is very particular in identifying, that the unleashing of hell on the earth... starts...like a small spark starts a great forest fire.... with a person's words, which come out of their heart, and then influences and compels actions, which cause great harm and dysfunction.

The Bible is very clear...



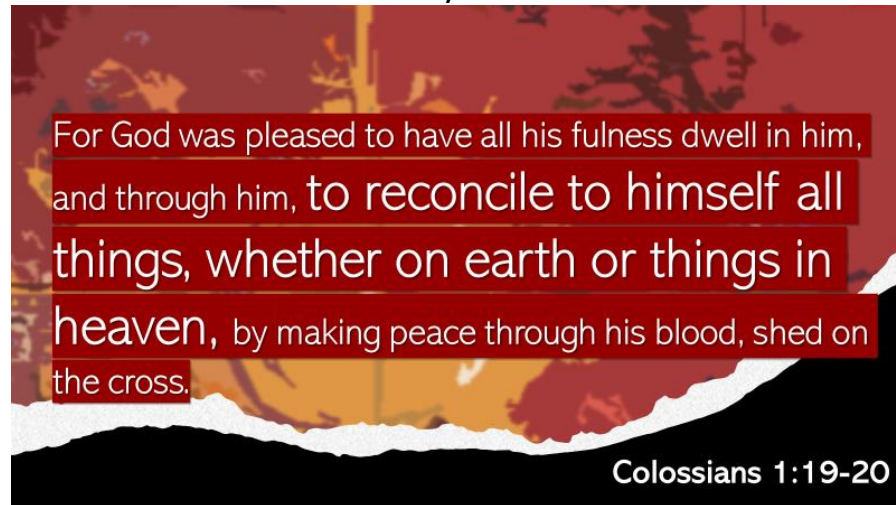
... and human beings, by their own efforts... cannot remove them out of their hearts.

We need a Rescuer... and thank God... Jesus is that Rescuer.  
What we cannot do by ourselves and for ourselves, Jesus did for us.  
But the salvation of Jesus is far more comprehensive.



For from before the creation, it has been the will of God that what humanity ruptured, he would reunite.

Look at what Colossians 1 says...



Reconciliation is at the core of the gospel.

God's purpose is not to get humanity out of the earth and into heaven, but to reconcile heaven and earth, and to have the redeemed live with him and the holy angels in a new creation.

This was the theme of many of the parables Jesus taught.

The truth that God is a reconciling God inspires our worship when we gather together on Sundays.

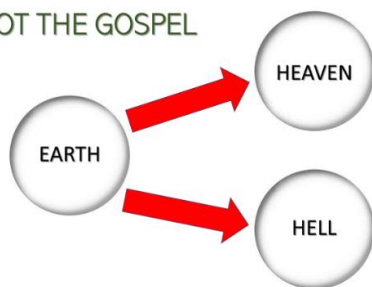
It is the theme of our prayers, of our calls to worship, of our songs of praise and adoration.

It is also the source of our hope.

God will reconcile to himself all things, on earth and in heaven.

Here we need to simply state ...what is the good news of Jesus?

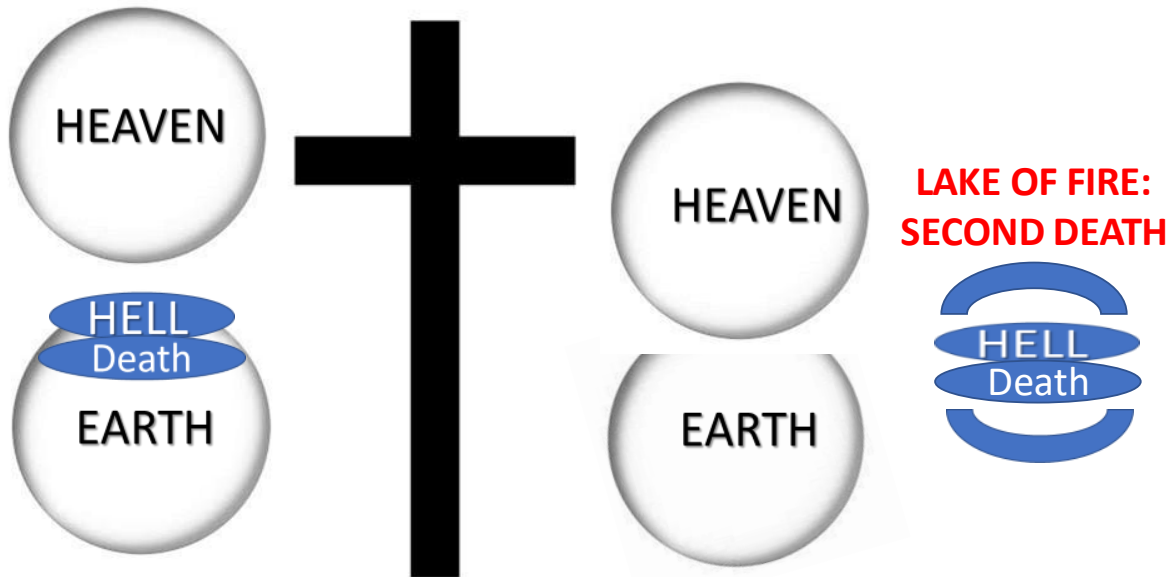
THIS IS NOT THE GOSPEL



Human beings do not live on the earth in this lifetime, and then after death, in one of two destinations... heaven or hell.

What then is the gospel?

# THIS IS THE GOSPEL

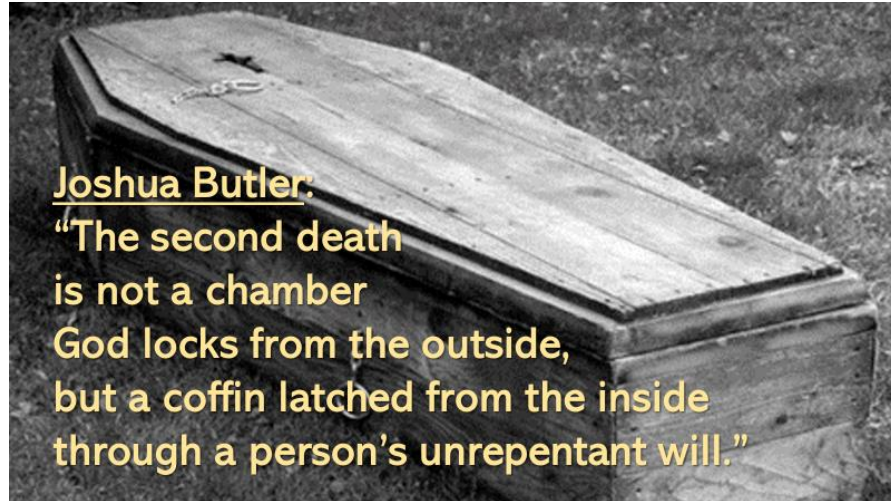


Human sin opened the door to death and hell to enter human experience and the earth, which resulted in heaven and earth being torn apart.

But God's salvation, rescues the fallen sons and daughters of Adam and Eve who trust in God's Savior, Jesus Christ.

And at the return of Jesus, God's salvation will reconcile earth and heaven and exile hell and death.

Regarding the exile of hell and death, Joshua Butler writes





CS Lewis in 'The Great Divorce,' wrote...

C.S. Lewis, 'The Great Divorce'  
There are only two kinds of people  
in the end.  
Those who say to God,  
**'Your will be done,'**  
and those to whom God says,  
**'Your will be done.'**

The lake of fire, the second death.... is the land of the free.

Regarding the reconciliation of heaven and earth.

Look at Revelation 21:1.

**Revelation 21:1**

**Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for  
the first heaven and the first earth had passed  
away...**

John saw what?

A new heaven and a new earth.

What had been broken.. was now made new.

What had caused corruption... was now removed.

What had been divided... was now put back together.

Look at what John saw in verse 2...

**Revelation 21:1**

**Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...**

**Revelation 21:2**

**I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.**

The imagery in verse 2 is that of a city and a bride.

Where there is a bride, there is what?

A wedding.

What do weddings celebrate?

They celebrate the joining together, the union of two who are different.

Who was the husband in this vision seen by John?

It is God.

Who is the bride?

It is the followers of Jesus.

When God speaks of the fellowship and intimacy and communion to be experienced by his people with himself, in the new heaven and the new earth... the analogy he chose to use... is that of marriage.

The picture of marriage best describes what the voice from the throne declared...

Revelation 21:3-4

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
“Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people,  
and he will dwell with them. They will be his people,  
and God himself will be with them and be their God.

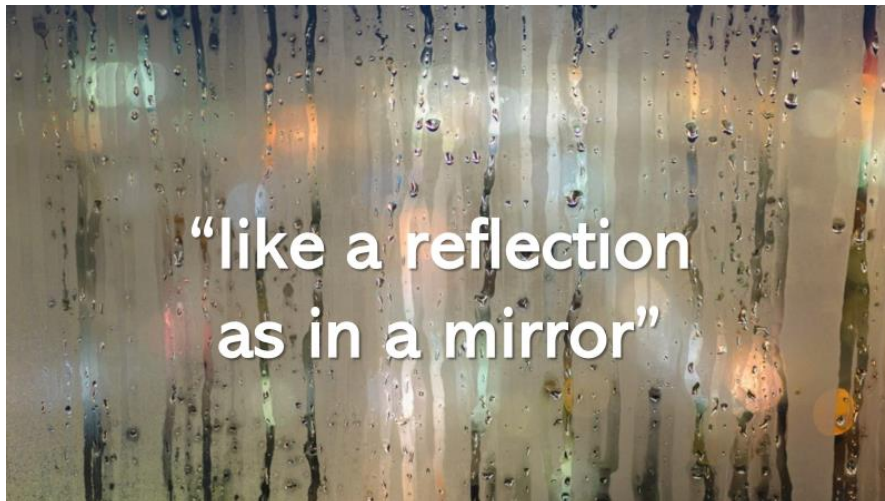
<sup>4</sup> ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will  
be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for  
the old order of things has passed away.”

God will dwell among his people...like a husband and wife live together.

The imagery of marriage explains the vision of the city that comes down out of heaven.

Cities are where people live together in close proximity.

When heaven and earth are reconciled... and death and hell are exiled,  
the followers of Jesus will no longer experience God, in the words of 1 Corinthians  
13:12...



.... but face to face.

God will be visibly present with us and live among us... like a husband and wife live together.

The things from this life may not be instantaneously forgotten – the mourning, the crying, the pain.

But as our husband... God's assurance... that these things... are forever gone... will be enough.

It may not be that all our questions will be instantly answered, but seeing God face to face and having him wipe away our tears... will be answer enough.

We've focused on this truth emphasis first, because we won't understand hell, unless... God's saving purposes are crystal clear to us.

Such a great salvation is meant to grip us with wonder and leave us in awe.



## Prayers of the People

written by Tim Keller

O Lord,  
I worry because I forget your wisdom.  
I resent because I forget your mercy.  
I covet because I forget your beauty.  
I sin because I forget your holiness.  
I fear because I forget your sovereignty.  
You always remember me.  
Help me, teach me, O Spirit, to remember my God.  
Amen

## Prayers of the People

Jesus we are yours. We love you. We acknowledge that our salvation and all the good in our lives is a gift from you... thank you!

We also acknowledge that everything that touches our lives passes first through your hand – we believe that nothing or no one can snatch us away from you. Because of your unfailing love it is well with our souls.

We ask you to grow our faith in you. Amen



El Redil Caldas Family  
(Sandra is on the leadership team.)

We ask you God that you give to Sandra, joy, insight and stamina. Protect her as she travels into Caldas five nights a week to serve you, the church family, and the greater community of Caldas.



Sandra Lizcano Diaz

### Prayers of the People

Father, our land is in desperate need. But you are the Lord of history who awakens the spiritually dead and opens hearts to see and love Jesus.

Please shake your church, and revive your people that we might live in the fullness of life that Jesus said is ours through faith in him.

O Spirit of God, restore our first love, that we might speak of our Lord Jesus with great boldness.

Amen