

He Makes All Things New

Revelation 21:1-8

Rev. Brian Bill

October 17-18, 2026

On behalf of all the pastors at Edgewood, thank you for the multiple ways you encourage us. Let's show our appreciation right now to Pastor Chad as this is his last weekend as our Worship Pastor. An Open House for the Doran family will be held Sunday afternoon from 2:00-4:00.

A week ago, each of the pastors received some props from our Awana children as they shared what they think should be included in our job descriptions. Here are a few I received.

Q: How many hours will a pastor need to work a week?

A: 5 minutes.

Q: What should a pastor wear to work?

A: A Sparkies vest.

Q: How much should a pastor make in a week?

A: \$5.00.

Q: What should a pastor wear to work?

A: Bears jersey and jeans.

Q: What is their favorite food?

A: Cheese curds.

Q: What is their favorite candy?

A: Gummy cheese curds.

Q: What is their favorite ice cream?

A: Cheese curd.

Q: What makes your pastor great?

A: Because he talks the Bible.

Well, that's what I want to be known for – cheese curds and talking the Bible! Let's talk the Bible right now and then make sure we walk it when we leave here.

We're nearing the end of our *Revelation Unveiled* series as we move from the horrors of Hell in chapter 20 to the hope of Heaven in Revelation 21:1-8. Let's stand and read these glorious verses together. Just a heads-up, you may find yourself breaking into worship as we read the Word.

“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. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’ And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ And he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 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.’”

Here's a summary of this section of Scripture: *God's final victory will usher in a new creation where believers will enjoy eternal fellowship with God while unbelievers will face everlasting judgment.*

I see five mighty acts of the Almighty in these verses.

1. The God who creates. The Book of Genesis opens with God creating heaven and earth and the Bible ends with God recreating a new heaven and a new earth. Listen again to verse 1: ***“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.”*** The word **“new”** means, *“totally and qualitatively new,”* not just something improved. The phrase **“passed away”** refers to *“departing and disappearing.”*

The ESV Study Bible has a helpful note: *“The removal of the first heaven and earth eliminates the fatal infection of evil in the cosmic order and gives way to God's creation of a new cosmic order where sin and suffering and death are forever banished.”*

Jesus predicted this would happen in Luke 21:23: ***“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”*** 2 Peter 3:13 says, ***“But according to His promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”*** Isaiah 65:17 looks ahead to the last chapters of Revelation: ***“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.”*** BTW, of the hundreds of references to heaven in the Bible, approximately 50 are found in Revelation!

The phrase, ***“and the sea was no more”*** reveals a startling change from our present earth, which is more than 70% covered by water. Throughout Revelation, the sea also symbolizes disorder, danger, and rebellion. John is assuring us that all the forces opposed to God will be removed, and chaos will never again threaten the new creation.

Verse 2 adds, ***“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”*** The focus on a future Jerusalem is referenced in many places, including Hebrews 12:22: ***“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering.”***

Every detail of the New Jerusalem has been prepared by God Himself as the city descends in breathtaking beauty, like a bride walking down the aisle. This reflects God’s delight in dwelling forever with His redeemed people.

2. The God who comes. God is not a disinterested and distant deity but always takes the initiative to come close to His creation. The greatest blessing of heaven will be unhindered fellowship with God. We see this in verse 3: ***“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.’”*** Note that in verses 1-2, John “saw” and in verse 3 he “heard a loud voice.”

Speaking of a loud voice, one of our grandchildren had a spontaneous conversation with his dad this week. Here’s how it went.

Child: *“Heaven is going to be a lot of joy, and love...and very loud!”*

Dad: *“Why will it be loud, son?”*

Child: *“Because everyone will be running to Jesus!”*

Children often have a way of expressing profound truths with simple words. The word **“behold”** can be translated as *“Lo and behold”* and is used as a summons to stop, look, and marvel at the dwelling place of God. One source put it like this: *“God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden, and even after they sinned, God never abandoned His desire to dwell with His people. The entire storyline of Scripture traces God’s relentless pursuit of that purpose. What was lost in Eden is fully restored in the new creation.”*

To **“dwell”** refers *“to pitching one’s tent.”* More specifically it means, *“to settle, to stay, to inhabit.”* This makes us think of the **“tent of meeting,”** where God met with the Israelites in the Old Testament. This is also the same word used for **“tabernacle,”** which was a portable worship center where God dwelt and met with His people. It was also the place where sacrifices were made and where God’s glory and holiness were displayed.

Years later, God instructed King Solomon to build a permanent worship center called the Temple. In 1 Kings 6:13, after finishing the construction, God declared: ***“And I will dwell among the children of Israel and will not forsake my people Israel.”***

The glory of God filled the Temple for about 350 years. But because of people’s persistent sin and rebellion, God raised up the Babylonians, who wiped out Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. As a result, God no longer dwelt with His people and the display of His glory on earth became a distant memory. One of our Christmas carols captures that longing, *“O come, O come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel...”*

This yearning for God to dwell with people continues to build and is beautifully fleshed out in John 1:14: ***“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*** Don’t miss that **“Immanuel”** means, “God with us.” In Jesus, the glory of God has descended, and He has pitched His tent to dwell with us. God’s good news comes into our bad news. Centuries of waiting are now over.

Look at it this way: *In the Garden of Eden, God walked with Adam and Eve. In the wilderness, God dwelt with His people in a tent and later in the temple. In the incarnation, God dwelt with His people in the person of Jesus Christ. Through the new birth, God dwells within believers through the Holy Spirit. In the new creation, God will dwell with His people forever. What was anticipated in the*

tabernacle, embodied in Christ, and experienced through the Spirit will be consummated in the New Jerusalem.

Don't miss this phrase from Revelation 21:3: ***“And God himself will be with them as their God.”*** The word ***“himself”*** is emphatic. This fulfills Leviticus 26:12: ***“And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.”*** Ezekiel 37:27 says: ***“My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*** The emphasis is personal presence, not just divine blessing or benefits.

Ultimately, Heaven is not a place where you'll play golf all day, or endlessly eat cheese curds, or just reconnect with your loved ones. Of course, there will be rejoicing and there will be a glorious reunion with other believers, but ultimately Heaven is all about dwelling with God in His very presence.

Recently, I was talking to our Youth Assistant (and future Youth Pastor) Micah Kongkousonh about what God is teaching him. He referenced a book called “God is the Gospel” and shared this quote: *“The Gospel isn't just to get people into Heaven; it's to get people to God.”* After teaching that powerful truth for the student ministry, he sent me a summary:

“It was exciting to share about this because it made me realize the weight of my hope...much of the lesson was sharing with the students how Genesis 1 was paradise as it should have been and eternity will be paradise restored...In our lives, we must seek out God as the treasure. Eternity has already begun for those who believe and as Christ prepares the home set before us, our hearts and lives are being prepared to meet Him face-to-face.”

Not surprisingly, Micah ended his lesson by reading Revelation 21:1-3. God creates and God comes close. His third mighty act is that He comforts.

3. The God who comforts. Five guys (not the burger place) from Edgewood are involved in Youth Hope's mentoring program for young boys who are struggling academically and behaviorally. At our first meeting this past Wednesday, 20 men lined up at the door, giving high-fives to the boys as they entered to the sounds of the legendary Chicago Bulls entrance music. From their smiles, it was as if they were being introduced before a championship game.

Most of these boys don't get applauded very often. During the lesson they learned about the importance of showing respect to others by listening and giving people eye contact. As I was thinking about this, I'm so grateful that God is a good listener. He cares, He comes close, and He comforts today while giving born again believers the hope of Heaven tomorrow.

Let's savor verse 4: ***"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*** Let's ponder each one of these phrases.

- **He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.** The phrase ***"wipe away"*** means, ***"to blot out, to wipe off."*** Notice it refers to ***"every tear."*** Here's a literal translation: ***"He shall wipe out every tear out of their eyes."*** Revelation 7:17 says, ***"For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."***

Not a single tear you've shed has gone unnoticed; whether it spilled out of your eyes when you were a newborn, when you broke your arm at five, when your heart was broken at sixteen, when you lost your grandpa, when you became a widow or widower, or when the Bears lost last weekend. God is both a tear-catcher and a burden-bearer. He keeps record of every tear because He cares deeply for you.

- **Death shall be no more.** Every time we hear of a death or go to a funeral, we're reminded that something is terribly wrong with this world. Many of you have experienced the pain of deep loss accompanied by the ache of an empty chair at the table. Brothers and sisters, a day is coming when death itself will die! Death has reigned over every generation since Adam, but it will not reign forever. As Adrian Rogers used to say, ***"Death is only a comma to a Christian – not a period!"***

Jesus has already won the victory through His death and resurrection, but one day He will forever swallow the enemy of death. Check out the promise found in 1 Corinthians 15:26: ***"The last enemy to be destroyed is death."*** Isaiah 25:8: ***"He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from their faces."***

This week, I listened to the song “His Heart Beats” by Andrew Peterson and was overcome by the words.

*He breathes in, His living lungs expand
The heavy air surrounding death turns to breath again
He breathes out, He is word and flesh once more
The Lamb of God slain for us is a Lion ready to roar
And His heart beats*

*He took one breath
And put death to death
Where is your sting, O grave?
How great is your defeat!
I know His heart beats*

*He rises, glorified in flesh
Clothed in immortality, the firstborn from the dead
He rises, and His work’s already done
So He’s resting as He rises to reclaim the Bride He won
And His heart beats*

- **Neither shall there be mourning.** The word “*neither*” can be translated as “*not even,*” and “*mourning*” refers to lament, sadness and grief. Some of you are going through deep grief right now. Our GriefShare group hasn’t met for a couple weeks due to illness, but Pastor Dan will be jumping in to lead if needed. Also, our one-session GriefShare for the Holidays is scheduled for November 22. Isaiah 35:10 says that one day “*sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*”
- **Nor crying.** How many of you cry easily and often? I do. Isaiah 30:19 is worth memorizing: “*...you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as He hears it, he answers you.*” God’s people often cry out in pain, fear, and affliction. In the new creation, every cause for crying will be removed forever.
- **Nor pain anymore.** The word for “*pain*” is “*travail, toil, and anguish.*” Some of you are in great travail physically, relationally, emotionally, or spiritually right now. Your body aches, your heart is breaking, your relationships are strained, or your soul feels weary. Can you imagine a day

when you will never hurt again? Isaiah 33:24 points us to that day: ***“And no inhabitant will say, ‘I am sick.’”***

Aren’t you grateful that God will reverse the curse of sin’s consequences, along with death, disappointment, and decay? It will be a glorious day when ***“the former things have passed away.”***

Verse 5 gives us certainty that God will comfort: ***“And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’”*** The phrase, ***“I am making all things new”*** is in the present tense, meaning God is continuously renewing and restoring. 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us this eternal renewal has already begun in the life of the believer: ***“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”***

The prophet Isaiah longed for renewal centuries before John saw the new heaven and new earth. Listen to Isaiah 42:9: ***“Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.”*** Isaiah 43:19 adds, ***“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”*** We can count on all this happening because God is trustworthy and true. He is reliable and real. What He says He will do.

God creates, He comes near, He comforts, and fourthly, He completes.

4. The God who completes. God will satisfy the deep ache in our lives and bring to fulfillment all our longings, quenching our deep thirst for Him according to verse 6: ***“And he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.’”*** This recalls the cry of Jesus from the cross when He triumphantly proclaimed in John 19:30: ***“It is finished!”*** Jesus is the first and the last, the A and the Z and everything in between. One pastor writes, ***“He had the first word in history, and He will have the last word in history.”*** There is a day coming when every single promise of God will be fulfilled.

The word ***“thirsty”*** means, ***“to be dry and desire ardently.”*** If you are thirsty, make sure to come to Christ to be saved and satisfied. There’s no cost for this water of life. This reminds me how Bobby and Lisa Bechtel and the Hope Foundation in Kenya provide free water every day for their Muslim neighbors who live around the school. They charge nothing. Salvation is free because Jesus has paid it all.

I've always been drawn to Isaiah 55:1-2: ***"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?"***

God creates, He comes near, He comforts, He completes, and finally, He calls.

5. The God who calls. God constantly calls us to full surrender while warning us of the reality of the lake of fire. We see this in verses 7-8: ***"The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 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."***

The contrast here is between courageous conquerors and cowardly compromisers who do not have genuine faith. This list describes people whose lives are characterized by sin while remaining unrepentant. These sins reveal a settled pattern, not an isolated failure.

The ***"cowardly"*** are those who shrink back from confessing Christ, the ***"faithless"*** are unbelievers without faith, the word ***"detestable"*** means, ***"polluted"*** and refers to those whose lives are marked by what is abhorrent to God, ***"murderers"*** are those intent on taking innocent life, the ***"sexually immoral"*** routinely live by their lusts not for the Lord, ***"sorcerers"*** are committed to idolatrous magic, and ***"liars"*** are characterized by deceit, not truthfulness. Their portion is in the lake of fire and sulfur.

Before the final judgment comes, God calls sinners to repent, believe the gospel, and become part of His family. The One who says, ***"their portion will be in the lake of fire,"*** is also the One who says, ***"I will be his God and he will be my son"*** for those who take ***"from the spring of the water of life without payment."*** The call of God is both a promise to embrace and a warning to heed. That's why we want to always be ready to share the gospel. If you're comfortable doing so, we encourage everyone to "light it up" on Halloween by greeting your neighbors, handing out candy, and looking for gospel opportunities.

The biblical narrative outlines how God is the Creator, how He relates to our fallenness, and how He works to reconcile the world to its intended purpose. As we've been learning in Revelation, God is directing history and will ultimately

defeat all opposition. The Bible provides answers to life's fundamental questions and offers a vision for true human flourishing.

The grand story of the Bible can be summarized with four words.

- Creation
- Fall
- Redemption
- Restoration

God created everything and He created us. Humans decided to go their own way by deliberately disobeying God, causing a curse upon the human race and corruption to be unleashed in our world. God provided a solution for our sin by sending Jesus to die on the cross and by being raised on the third day. He is coming again and will make all things new, ultimately restoring creation back to the perfect image He first intended.

I love the line in *The Last Battle*, the final book in the *Chronicles of Narnia* series by C.S. Lewis: *"I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now."*

Someone summarized this passage well:

Every longing you've ever had is ultimately a longing for God. Every disappointment in this life reminds us that this world is not our home. Every funeral, every tear, every ache, every broken relationship, every diagnosis, every injustice whispers the same truth: we were made for something more. Revelation 21 pulls back the curtain and shows us what that 'something more' is. And one day, all who belong to Christ will finally be home.

Until then, we must live as pilgrims, not settlers. Don't cling too tightly to what is passing away. Don't build your life around temporary treasures. Don't let the pursuit of comfort keep you from courage or allow compromise to pull you away from Christ. Live today in light of that day. If you're a believer, let the certainty of heaven strengthen your faithfulness on earth. If you're thirsty, come to Christ and drink deeply of the water of life. And if you've never surrendered to Jesus, hear His invitation today. The same God who

*warns about the lake of fire offers the water of life without payment.
Come while the invitation is still open.*

Several years ago, I read something called, “Heaven’s Surprise” by Rod Hemphill.
I’d like to do so again.

*I was shocked, confused, bewildered
as I entered Heaven’s door,
Not by the beauty of it all,
by the lights or its decor.*

*But it was the folks in Heaven
who made me sputter and gasp –
the thieves, the liars, the sinners,
the alcoholics, the trash.*

*There stood the kid from seventh grade
who swiped my lunch money twice.
Next to him was my old neighbor
who never said anything nice.*

*Herb, who I always thought
was rotting away in hell,
was sitting in heaven,
looking incredibly well.*

*I nudged Jesus, “What’s the deal?
I would love to hear Your take.
How’d all these sinners get up here?
God must’ve made a mistake.*

*And why’s everyone so quiet,
so somber? Give me a clue.”
“Hush, child,” said He, “They’re all in shock.
No one thought they’d be seeing you.”*

The surprise of Heaven is this: No one gets in by thinking their sins smell better than other people’s sins. We’re all equally undeserving, yet we’re equally invited when we stop pointing fingers and start clinging to the cross. Grace levels the field: the proud religious leader stumbles at the door while the broken-hearted

sinner runs in with joy.

Heaven won't be shocked by who made it in, but by the miracle that any of us did.

May that truth humble us today. May it free us from judgment and fill us with gratitude for His undeserved grace. We enter Heaven not by merit, but by the mercy of Jesus Christ who paid the price for our sins.

The greatest surprise of Heaven might be that God loved us enough to make room for sinners like you...and like me.

Will I see you there?

Are you thirsty enough to receive the water of life without payment?

Invitation

Closing Song: Is He Worthy?

Do you know what the phrase “lightning round” means? It’s a fast-paced segment where you move through a series of items quickly, often with just a sentence or two on each, rather than going deep on any one of them. I want to end today by sharing a bunch of updates because God is at work in some incredible ways.

- The Deacons will be doing an on-site interview with a candidate for our Celebrate Recovery and Counseling Pastor position next weekend.
- Make sure to attend the 25th Anniversary Celebration of Celebrate Recovery November 6-8.
- Pastor Stephen, our Young Adults Pastor, will be preaching the second half of Revelation 21 next weekend!
- Speaking of Pastor Stephen, Mainspring has doubled in the two months he’s been here – some highlights include a new apologetics group for Augie students. There are 11 young adults on the leadership team and 6 other volunteers and mentors.
- Our new December Series will be called, *The Christ Who Came* and will focus on how Christ is *for us, with us, in us, among us*, and how He works *through us*.
- The Children’s Christmas Choir will be singing Sunday, December 13.
- Our Adult Christmas Choir will be singing December 19-20 (all three services). Promo will begin soon.

- Chris Love, the new director of One Eighty will be speaking at SecondWinders luncheon on Thursday and the QC Ukelele Band will provide the music. Reservations need to be made by Monday night.
- About 100 men attended the Men's Chili Cook-off on Wednesday night. Dave Freymann gave a challenging devotional and Matt Weedon's Elk Chili won top prize. BTW, I stopped to pick up some Pepto Bismol on my way home.
- The EdgeWomen Holiday Craft Day will be on November 8.
- The Discovery Team has been meeting monthly to study our facility and space needs.
- A team has been meeting to plan a more intentional ministry to families.
- If you've lost a Bible, check out the table in the lobby.
- Our Unreached Prayer Nights are held on the first Monday night of the month.
- Our RI County Jail Ministry team shares the gospel every Friday night.
- The Alzheimer's/Dementia Support Group meets on the last Sunday of the month from 2:00-4:00 p.m.
- Curbside Christmas will be held on December 1 as we collect items for Safe Families, Youth Hope, Pregnancy Resources, a food pantry for refugee families, Rock Island Academy, Active Day Senior Center, One Eighty, and Argrow's House
- Operation Christmas Child Kickoff is today. To learn more, check out this week's podcast with Sheila Kuriscak and Jodie Russell. BTW, over the last four years, Edgewood has filled 2,700 boxes!
- A number of Edgewood guys are part of the Kairos Prison Ministry. They will be ministering the gospel November 12-15 at a prison.
- The "Life and World of Jesus" Israel Trip led by Pastor Ed and Gerad Hall will be held May 28-June 8.
- We'll be hearing from Joshua Ngao with Fishers of Men next week as we learn more about the strategic importance of child sponsorship.
- Our Disaster Relief Teams will give a report in two weeks.
- Don't forget to vote for biblical values on Tuesday, November 3. Sadly, according to research by George Barna, approximately 42% of born-again Christians did not vote in the 2024 election. Brothers and sisters, this is part of our stewardship as citizens and as salt and light.

New Members

9:00 - Jan and Lois VanHoek

10:45 - Ed and Sandie Cox