

The Temptation of Jesus

by Dennis Kinlaw

Dennis Kinlaw's sermon explores the profound significance of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, emphasizing reliance on God's Word and the nature of true worship.

Duration: 52:57

Scripture: Matthew 3:17 - 4:11, Revelation 22:1-3, Revelation 22:6, Revelation 22:13

Topics: "Temptation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the joyous moment when heaven opened and God's voice declared His pleasure in His Son. However, immediately after this, Jesus is led into the wilderness to be tempted. The speaker then relates this to the experience of attendees at a conference, where they have had days of blessing and closeness to God. He emphasizes that although there is a desire to stay in that place of intimacy, God sends them back into the world. The speaker briefly mentions the story of Pilgrim in Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' to illustrate that although there are temptations and challenges, God's power has already been broken and believers can walk in victory by staying on the narrow path.

Transcript

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.

Jesus answered, It is written, Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. If you are the Son of God, he said, throw yourself down, for it is written, he will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

Jesus answered him, It is also written, Do not put the Lord your God to the test. Again the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. All this I will give you, he said, if you will bow down and worship me.

Jesus said to him, Away from me, Satan, for it is written, Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only. Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. Will you bow with me? Now, Father, now we come in these closing minutes that we have together.

Our hearts are full of gratitude for the way you have kept your promise to us, and you have been in our midst. We have sensed it. There is no way we can ever express to you our gratitude that you should come to us to give yourself to us, but in these four days you have done that, and we thank you.

If there is any corner of us that is closed off to you, we would like for you to help us to get it open before we leave today, because we know that our only security is where you are, and there is the potential of death and hell itself in any spot that is not yours. We want to be wholly yours today as we leave the fellowship that you have given us together in these days. Now, Father, we need to hear you speak afresh.

You have given us many words, and we thank you for them. Give us now your final word before we go, and we will give you thanks in Christ's name. Amen.

I don't know about you, but one of my problems is that I'm too familiar with the Bible. Now that doesn't mean that I know enough about it. There's a difference between being familiar with somebody and knowing the other person.

And I know enough that oftentimes I think I know far more than I really do. A good illustration is the passage that we read for you just a few moments ago. It's familiar to every person in this auditorium.

You've read that story in Matthew, and that's the one I read. You've read it in Luke. You've read the condensed, abbreviated account in Mark.

You know all about this passage. And if I were to ask you, you could pass a test this morning on the three temptations of Jesus. But if you will stop to think about it, I think you will sense the way I do, that it really, though we take it so for granted, is an incredible and an astounding story.

Who is this person who's being tempted here? You know and I know that he was the very Son of God. You will notice that Satan taunts him, saying, if you really are the Son of God. But he was not just the Son of God in a way that you and I are, he was more.

He was that, as the Incarnate One, incarnate in human flesh. But he was also the second person of the Blessed Trinity. Do you know this one who is being tempted here is the one who created the tempter, brought him into existence and had the power to wipe him out in a fraction of a second? And now he, the eternal Son of God, submits himself to the ordeal of being tempted by his own creature.

Now I don't know what you do with that, but one of the things that tantalizes me as I live with the Word and as I get older is two questions that are remarkably close. One of them is, how far will God go to redeem you and to redeem me? And the second question is very close to it. How far does he have to go in order to redeem you and to redeem me? And if you want to know how lost we are, you need to get an overall glance of Christ, life, the Incarnation and all that it involves.

You see, you get a glimmer of that at Bethlehem, because now you have the One who spoke the universe into existence and before whom every knee will ultimately bow. Would you like me to say, having his diapers changed? I don't know about you, but that would be humiliating to me. And on a food schedule, the One who is the bread of life himself? Or take Nazareth, the One who grew up in that town, whose name we never would have known if he had not grown up there.

Here is the One who is the omnipresent One who is everywhere, confined to the obscurity and to the meanness of Nazareth. And now we come to the temptation. He's taken on a form just like yours and a

being, a creaturehood just like yours and a person just like mine.

He has come to redeem you and to redeem me. And he left heaven to do it, and he left heaven's throne to do it. We somehow or other in American evangelicalism have never caught the fact that he couldn't do it from the throne.

If he could, Bethlehem wouldn't have been necessary. God could not save us by power and position and the means that we want to use so oftentimes to touch a world. He left all of that behind, and he came to a wilderness.

Because, you will notice, that's where the temptation took place. We are told that the Spirit led him or drove him, some translations, into the wilderness. It is a word that speaks of loneliness.

It is a word that speaks of separation. It is a word that speaks of barrenness, and it is a word that speaks of fearfulness. You will remember that he was there with the wild beasts.

Now why was it that he began here? He began here because he is retracing a pathway. He is retracing a trip that started many, many centuries before and millennia before in a place that we speak of as paradise. Because, you see, when God made this world, it was not a wilderness.

When God made this world, it was what we speak of as Eden, and there everything was right. And then into that world that was right and good, he put his creature, his first son and daughter. And when he put them there, they turned their face away from him.

And instead of seeing in their God and Father the One who was their hope, their sustenance, their fulfillment, notice that word fulfillment, they got the idea that there was a greater fulfillment somewhere else other than in him. And so they turned their face away from him. And when we turn our face away from the light, we end up in darkness.

And when we turn our face away from the source of freedom, we end up in bondage. And when we turn our face away from him who is the light, we end up in death. And so the course of human history, starting in a paradise, leads now to a wilderness.

Remarkable metaphor for the world in which you and I now live. And God says, how can I turn it around? And so he sends his son to go to the depths of the wilderness to retrace for you and me the path back so there can be a doorway into fellowship with him who is our life, our light, our salvation. Now, it's interesting, it is the reversal of that story of the prodigal son, isn't it? But you will remember the father in that story waited until the prodigal came, and when he saw him, he went running to embrace him.

But in this story, that's where the parable is only a parable, because the reality is that the father went into the depths of the pig pen to take his place, the place of his son, but not only to take the place of his son, to take the lostness, the loneliness, the hopelessness, and the hell that he had come to know. I ran across a book about seven months ago on American higher education. I was fascinated by the title.

It was called Exiles from Eden, and that title for that writer was a picture of the American university. That we are one, you will remember it was a particularly apt figure for him, because you will remember the enemy said, The one who put you here knows that in the day that you meet of this forbidden fruit, you will have knowledge that you don't have. And he doesn't want you to have that knowledge.

And so it was the search for knowledge, illegitimate knowledge, that led from Eden to the wilderness. And so that's a good picture of the context for the temptation of Jesus. There is no question but that in the mind of the one who gave us this passage in this If you want to know the fullness of the context, you have to go back to Genesis 3. And now God is saying, I will put a new son, now not in a paradise, but I will put him in a wilderness, in a desert.

I will put him in a lost world, and we will work our way back to redemption. Now, you will notice that it's very interesting when the temptation came to Jesus. We know who he is.

He is the eternal Son of God. He is as much God as the Father is God, and he is as much God as the Spirit is God, God in human flesh. Now, where does this temptation begin? You will notice that it begins immediately after the baptism.

Now I wish I were skillful enough and smart enough to picture that the way it ought to be pictured, because the baptism must have been an incredible experience for Jesus. Now, you know and I know that we're dealing with a mass of mystery here. We do not know how much Jesus knew when he came to John the Baptist.

Did he know fully who he was? We do not have answers to all those questions. But now he presents himself to John the Baptist and says, I need to be baptized. We know that John knew enough that he knew there was something anomalous about that, because his baptism was for sinners, and somehow he knew that the one who stood in front of him was the Holy One of God.

And it seemed so inappropriate for him to baptize him as a symbol of his lostness, as a symbol of lostness and as a symbol of a need for redemption, as a symbol for sinfulness and the need for deliverance from that. And so he protested. And Jesus said, No, we've got to run the course all the way back.

So I stand here in the place that all the rest of these that are here stand. And you, it is right that you should baptize me. We must fulfill all righteousness.

And so you will remember he baptized him, and as he came up out of the water, the Spirit of God descended upon him. We are told, as the temptation story begins, that he was filled with the Spirit. Now, you can ask me questions here I cannot answer.

But I think it is safe for us to say that in that experience a relationship to the Holy Spirit came that had not been there before. That does not mean that he was without the Spirit. That's inconceivable to me.

And it does not mean that he needed the Spirit in the sense that you and I so desperately need him. But now he is stepping into a vocational role that demands that the third person of the Trinity be fully, fully present. Now, who is this third person of the Trinity? It's interesting, if we're going to take the Genesis analogy, he is the one who's mentioned in the beginning of the story.

You will remember how Genesis tells us that God, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the creation was without form and void, and chaos was the order of the day. Formless and empty, and the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the deep. And as the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the deep, God said, Let there be light, and the creation began.

Now, we have one who has come for a new creation. He has come to recreate the world that now is lost, fallen, twisted, as we heard, twisted and diseased, the way we heard last night. Now he has come to recreate this world and bring it back to what the Father intended it to be, and he is the one who is the means of redeeming it.

It's significant that the only way that he can do it is from within the creation. He could not do it from the outside. It's interesting, he could speak the world into existence, but he could not redeem it except from within.

Joy to the world, what an appropriate Christmas hymn. The Lord has come, let earth receive her King. No more let sins and sorrows grow, that's our wilderness.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground. He comes to make his blessings known, far as the curse is found. Now, how is he going to undo the curse? It's almost as if you've got a straight line from paradise to total lostness.

And he says, if I'm to reverse that, I've got to start at the depths of the lostness and work it back. What an incredible story that we have to tell the world, that the wilderness that is our world does not have to be a wilderness, and one of these days it will not be a wilderness. God is going to undo the destructiveness that we have wrought on his own creation.

You know, as I worked with this, I had an interesting thought. I wonder how Matthew and Luke got this story, because neither one of them was there. You know, it's going to be wonderful to learn some things when we get to heaven.

I don't know about you, but I'm going to do my best to make friends with one of those disciples, because I've got a thousand, thousand questions I want to ask. And one of the questions I want to ask is, when did you learn about the temptation because you weren't there? I'm glad there was nobody there. You know, I'm glad that temptation takes place normally in the places where there are no onlookers, and there we are before our Maker and the one who would mislead us, and there we are and we make the decision.

But in the sacredness of that aloneness, he fought the battle for us. Now, I really wonder if it was after Caesarea Philippi that he told them about this, because there is no indication that he talked extensively, talked in any way except by implication about the cross until Caesarea Philippi. When he looked at them and said, Who do you think I am? Who do you think I am? And they said, We know now.

You are the Christ. You're the one that we've been looking for. You are the one Israel's looking for.

You are the one the whole world is looking for. Did you know that you and I know the one the whole world is looking for? You know what that's what the word Christ means, basically? We know the one the whole world is looking for. What a privilege, but what an obligation.

You will remember that they said, We know you are now. And he said, Good. Now I want to tell you what I've come to do so that I can do for you what you want me to do.

And then he began to talk to them about the cross. I wonder if it may not have been part of that Emmaus Road conversation. You will remember he was talking with these two fellows, Cleopas and his friend, and they were so sad.

And he said, Why are you so sad? And they said, You mean you haven't heard what took place in this city? The one that we had hoped was the Messiah. The one that we had hoped was the one everybody was looking for. They killed him on Friday and they buried him.

And you know, it says he started with Moses. He started with the law. He started with the Pentateuch and went through the prophets and said, You shouldn't have been surprised.

You should have known all this was coming. I wonder if he didn't say, Let me tell you about some of what I've gone through. I want to tell you how my ministry began.

It began in a conflict with the one who's led us to this wilderness and produced it. And I had to face him if I was to bring you out and to bring you back. You know, there is an interesting thing I've seen recently in Genesis I'd never seen before.

You remember that in the twelfth chapter of Genesis, God says to Abraham, You're the chosen one. Through you, the redemption of the world is going to come. And then in chapter 15, he says, Let me reiterate that.

You're the one who is the chosen one and your family will be the elect nation. And through you, the redemption of the world will come. And Abraham says, How will I know that? Well, he says, Your descendants will live 400 years in Egyptian slavery.

And as we suggested, who'd ever want to be chosen? Who'd ever want to be elect? Who wants to be among the predestined? But you see, they were chosen to be a part of God's means to turn this story around. And it can't be done from the palaces. It can't be done from here.

It's got to be done from the depths and up. Now note when the temptation came. I do not think it's an accident that it came immediately after the heavens had been opened and after he himself had heard a voice that said, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

Now it's after that the temptation comes and the devil says, You're the Son of God, I want to tell you how to act. Cast yourself off this temple and show them you really are. Now the world has a way to tell you how you're supposed to live.

It's interesting, the devil has a way to tell you how you're supposed to live as a Christian. The devil told the disciples exactly how to put the kingdom together, and Jesus said, It won't work that way. You don't think my thoughts.

You've got to think the way I think. Now he has been at this high moment. Do you know the text only indicates there were three moments that precious for Jesus? Do you remember when heaven opened and the voice spoke and said, This is my son and I'm pleased with him? Can you imagine the joy of that for him? And then the next thing you know, he's in the wilderness being tempted.

Now I'm getting to my point. We've had four days of blessing. We've had four days when he is drawn near.

We've had four days when, for some of us, the heavens have opened a bit and there's been an inner witness that he's met us, he's come to us, he cares for us, he gives himself to us. Precious moments. I don't know about you, but when I've been in conferences like this in my life and God has moved very close, and I've got into my car to go back, there was something inside of me that didn't want to go.

I was like Peter, James and John who said, Let's build three tabernacles here and stay and worship. Well, God said, No, I brought you here to send you back. And God brought Jesus to that high moment to send him now into the battle to win a world, to turn it around, to redeem God's creation.

Now what are the temptations that he gave to him? No way I can deal adequately with this. If I had fifteen years to deal with this text, I'd never deal with it adequately. We're dealing with incredible mystery here.

But just let me make some very superficial comments. It's interesting that he had been forty days fasting. Now, my understanding is, and I've never been there, but when a person has fasted that long, you're in an extremity of human need and your body is tested.

I remember an old Arab wise man who said to his kids, he said, Before you go out into a tough day, fill your stomach, because you can take a lot more pressure if your stomach isn't empty. That's the reason sometimes we get so impatient and we're more susceptible to sins of the spirit, I think, when we are weak. There is a connection between the physical and the spiritual.

And he's reached the point of extremity and the enemy comes and says, If you're the son of God, you put this whole shoot and match together, all you've got to do is speak to those stones and you've got plenty of food to feed yourself with. There's nothing wrong with eating. God made you to hunger.

It's a legitimate thing, and knowing, being who you are, it's a legitimate exercise for you to satisfy your own needs. I don't have any clever things to say about that, except to say that here you see a person whose own needs were never his primary concern. Could I put it that simply? His own needs were never his primary concern.

That doesn't mean that our own needs are illegitimate, but it does mean that if we are to be what he wants us to be, our own needs have to be subordinated to a higher goal and purpose. It's true that also you will remember he said, Man doesn't live by bread alone. And I think that's another way of saying what I've just said.

He knew that the spiritual part in us is more important than the physical material. There is a depth in us that nothing in this world can ever meet. We can get it all, and there will still be a grand canyon in our being, and that grand canyon in our beings can only be filled from beyond by him.

Now, the second temptation, you will remember Satan took him up on the top of the temple and he said, If you'll just throw yourself down, you have a promise. The Father who sent you said his angels would take care of you. Now here he is quoting Psalm 91, and Psalm 91 is a very beautiful psalm, as you know.

It talks about the ones who live under the shadow of the Almighty. They are in the area of the Almighty's care and concern, his loving canopy. And he says, It's a great place to live, and it's a safe place to live.

And under his canopy he has appointed his angels to care for you so that you won't dash your foot against the stone. So the enemy said, You're under that canopy. Now take advantage of it, take advantage of it, and just show who you are.

You know, the Jews again and again came to him and said, Now you seem to be playing a role in their people who say that you're the Messiah. Just show us a sign, just show us a sign, and if you show us a sign, then we will bow down to you. But do you know what if he had? Those who bowed down would not have been redeemed.

The power of God will be more clearly seen in hell than it will ever be seen in this earth. And yet the power of God, controlling every iota of it, will not redeem a soul. So Satan says, Just show me.

And something in Jesus says, No, yes, I am under his canopy. And if I'm under his precious canopy and if he's caring for me, it's his business to care for me. And I'm not going to tell him how to do it, and I'm not going to test him.

Do you know why the Hebrew children didn't get into the promised land? Because they tested him. They grumbled and they tested him. Now, Jesus is not going to try a shortcut or an easy way.

He's saying, I'm going to not test myself down. You are the enemy is going to lift me up, because it's when I'm lifted up on a cross, not when I come floating down in power, that there will be redemption for a world that's lost. Now, the third one, you will remember, he showed him all the kingdoms of the world.

And he said, There they are. You can have them, and I can give them to you. And then you can establish your kingdom.

Just worship me. Put me ahead of the one who sent you. Now, you know, you and I tend to have, or at least I tend to have pictures of Satan saying to Jesus, Just get out on your face and bow down and give me the praise and the credit and the glory I need.

I don't think that's the way the temptation comes. I think the temptation comes and says, He's all right. You don't want to ditch him.

You don't want to ditch him. Just temporarily listen to me and try my way. And when you, if you'll just temporarily listen to me and try my way, you can get much easier what he's told you he's going to give to you.

And Jesus says, No, he's the one whom I am to worship. And that means that I keep my eye on him all the time, and I keep my heart centered so it isn't divided part and part, but I live exclusively for him. Now, I wish I knew how to bring that to where it would come alive for us.

But one thing is clear. He is saying the kingdom never comes by power this way. It comes when I am lifted up and placed on a cross.

Some of you have heard me deal with the figures of Jesus in the book of John. You know, the book of John shows the conflict between the Pharisees and Sadducees and Jesus, the temple and Jesus, more intensely than any of the other gospels, so that there are many people who look upon the gospel of John as anti-Semitic. I do not believe that, but it shows the conflict that's there.

Do you know what the heart of it is? It is the fact that Jesus wouldn't play the game the way the temple thought he ought to. You see it when he rides a donkey instead of a horse. You see it when he takes a basin and kneels at our feet instead of letting us fall at his.

You see it when he goes on a cross instead of sitting on a throne. You see it as he empties himself and takes our position. And when he takes our position, the incredible thing is, then it is possible for us to take his position.

Now, it's interesting, much as we think it is, let me just--you know, it's very easy in biblical studies to think if you've got the right Ph.D. from the right university, you can interpret the Scripture clearly. In educational

circles, it's very easy to say, if I've got the right Ph.D. from the right university educational program, I'm qualified to lead an institution. It's very easy in the church to say, if you just elect me bishop or district superintendent to give me the big church, I don't know where it is in your circle.

My world is a religious world and a church world and an educational world, so I talk about that. But some way or other, we think if we could get to the place where we were here, we could hand it down. But God says, no, you've got to get here because the only thing that's going to be redemptive is when it starts at the bottom and comes up, not of power, but of weakness and self-sacrifice.

You know, there are some hymns that are written about, crown him with many crowns, but do you know what the best of them says? Crown him with many crowns, the lamb, not the lion, the sacrificial lamb, who got to the throne by way of personal sacrifice. And there's something about that that has a power in it that is the power of all powers. See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingle down.

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or forms compose so rich a crown? When you see that, there's something within you that begins to cry out if there is anything within you that's right. Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small, love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul. And you see, that's what he wants, my life, my all.

His purposes are only going to be fulfilled in that way, and so he cannot listen to the enemy of us all who comes to lead him astray. Now, the interesting thing is that it is that sacrifice that has broken the power of the enemy. You know, you and I now have been here.

We go out. We go to our own temptations and we go to our own battles. But the thing I love is that in him we've seen the power that is going to win.

You remember the story of the Methodist Church in Prague? That when the government finally fell and the communist power was broken and they were permitted to put a sign out front, you remember the sign they put was very simply, the Lamb has won. That's it. And that's what you see implicit in all of this temptation story.

Now, when I come to this and say, you know, we're living in a day when there's a great deal of discussion of the demonic, and some of that we need. But, you know, I think we need to be careful lest we give him a place that he doesn't have, because do you know his power has been broken? I love Bunyan's story of Pilgrim as he's making the journey. He's fearful, terrified when he sees ahead of him two huge lions sitting waiting for him.

And as he sees them, he says, what hope is there for me? And he's ready to turn and flee. And then you will remember his attention is brought to the fact that those lions don't sit the way they want to sit. And he takes another look and he sees that both of them are carefully chained.

And when he sees those chains, he sees that the chains are such that they can get just to the edge of that narrow path. And if he'll walk down the middle of that narrow path, neither one of them can touch him. And so I suspect he looked at that path and looked straight ahead and walked as near the middle of it as he could walk.

I doubt if he turned to look at them and gloat a bit. He may have done that after he got through, but he was told and he knew that if he stayed right in the center of that path, all hell was power. Now, when I think of that and when I think of you and me and what we face in the days ahead, and I think our society is going

to become more corrupt and is going to be more and more difficult, when I think of that, is there hope for us? Yes, I think there's great hope.

I think there's security. We had a young man come here a number of times over the years since the sixties named Bruce Olson, and he told me about one night about how he had been living among these primitive Indians in Colombia for a while, and they had told him about the king and he wanted to see the king. And so he asked them finally if they would take him to see the king.

And they were reluctant, but finally he had won their confidence, and they said, Yes, we will take you. So they started the trek through the mountains, and as they moved along, these little Indians with him, they came to a great chasm. My memory is he said to me it was 100 to 200 feet deep, and he said, I looked to see how we could cross it.

And he said there was one giant log that had fallen across it, and he said it became very evident very quickly that they were going to go across that log. And he said, I looked at that thing in terror. He said, worse, I looked at it and saw that it was dripping wet.

And he said, I looked at it and realized that it was slick as greased glass. And he said, I panicked. The little Indians stood around me and sensed my terror, and they began to howl with laughter.

And they said, oh, it's no problem. He said, they said, just get in line. And so they got in line.

When they got in line, they said to him, now put your right hand on the right shoulder of the Indian in front of you. And then he felt the hand on his right shoulder, the Indian behind him. And then he said, they said, now when you get to the log, when you put your foot down the first time, barefooted, push hard.

And when you do, your foot will penetrate the moss, push the water out of the moss, and create a vacuum. And that vacuum will hold your foot in place until you're ready to take the next step. But they said, be very careful that you keep your eye on the center of the back of the head of the Indian in front of you.

He said, I didn't have any options. So he said, in terror, we started. He said, I put my foot down, push.

Sure enough, the water surged down. And he said, I sensed there was a vacuum there. My foot was tightly in place.

And then he said, I very tentatively did the next one. He said, the Indians were very patient with me, took their time. And he said, then I did another one.

He said, you know, we were almost across. And I thought, you know, this isn't bad. And he said, I thought, you think I could take one look? He said, we were just a few feet from the other side.

And I tried. And if they hadn't grabbed me, I'd have been gone. I've always been grateful for that story.

You know that line, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? All these other things will be provided for you. More than that, you'll be in perfect safety. Because, you see, the one behind whom you walk is the eternal Son of God.

He stepped into our wilderness and started down the road back. And he said, follow me. Put your hand on my shoulder and follow me.

And do you know who the Indian is behind us? That's the Holy Ghost. And do you know, it doesn't say the ones that don't fall will get there. Do you know what it does say? It says the ones that don't jump will get there.

Because the one who's behind you and me is perfectly capable. But the problem is that sometimes we want to step out of his path. Now, he's brought us close.

What a privilege. But more than that, he's brought us into a pilgrimage. And do you know what a marvelous pilgrimage is? It's from the wilderness to paradise.

And the Eden that we will find will be better than the original one. Did you know that? And did you know it's going to be a successful journey? Could I just read for you? You remember the guy who said, I always hated these extremely exciting novels that get me so teed up. I couldn't take it, so I'd sneak a look at the last chapter.

And then when I found my hero was going to win, it didn't matter how tough the spots got, because I knew how it was going to turn out. And I found myself saying to my hero when he was in great trouble, hold steady, hold steady, boy, you're going to make it. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

He's going to make it over again. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city.

The new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne now saying, Now the dwelling of God is with men. Adam and Eve are back in communion with him.

Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 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. He who was seated on the throne said, I am making all things new. Then he said, write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.

I am the beginning, and I am the end. Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God into the land. Down the middle of the great street of the city on each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month.

And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any more curse. Do you remember what you heard Sunday night? No longer will there be any more curse.

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their cards. There will be no darkness there.

There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever.

But the journey doesn't go this way. It goes this way. We're the people in on the secret, aren't we? We ought to go wherever he's taking us with joy, with great confidence, and with a hope that invigorates us to give everything we've got while he helps us make that journey as a race and as a world back to him.

Because we're on our way.

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