
God Makes All Things New

DARRELL DELANEY

When I was a kid, I simply loved Grandma's desserts. She had a famous upside-down 7-Up lemon pound cake. She would give us a delicious meal, and then say the words: Keep your fork! When I heard her say this, I was eagerly anticipating the best dessert in the world that was coming right after dinner. In this episode of *Groundwork*, we saved the best for last when we discuss the Consummation of all creation, next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, we are on the fourth and final part of our series on Reformed theology. We have been focusing on these themes from scripture. The four main movements have been Creation, Fall, and Redemption, and today, we are going to cover the Consummation or Restoration of all things.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Consummation just means that all things are going to be made complete. It is the completion of all things that God originally created, that got sullied by sin and evil, but that have been restored now and redeemed now through Christ; and this is going to be when all of creation is completely redeemed, saved, cleansed, purified, restored. As you said, it is sort of like dessert; the cherry on top of the whole biblical story.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, it is; and so, the fact that we are going to talk about this...this is the full completion of the grand plan of God. So, in the last episode, we talked about redemption and what God did to address the implications in the brokenness of the Fall; and this is the fullness and completion of that plan, and what happens after all the salvation things happen; and we have a newness that is happening. New is actually a theme that is picked up in scripture concerning this thing.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Revelation 21:1-5: Then (John writes) I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And 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. ⁴He 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."

DARRELL DELANEY

Scott, we can just pause and envision that, that is a really beautiful thing. God himself will be dwelling with his people. This has been God's longing throughout scripture the whole time. He has always been trying to get us back to: I will be their God; they will be my people. He has been trying to get back to that ever since the Fall.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We said in the first program in this series when we looked at Creation, that if you read Genesis 1 the right way, you recognize that the whole Garden of Eden was like a temple. It was a place where God rests; and that was what God wanted. He wanted to rest with his people. The people lived in the temple of God, with God in the temple of God, and then sin destroyed that and they got exiled from the Garden of Eden—exiled from the temple—and as you said, Darrell, ever since then, God has been trying to get back to that; and that grand vision we just saw in Revelation 21 is the demonstration that this is what is going to happen.

DARRELL DELANEY

It's a beautiful thing, Scott. Can you imagine, no more disease; no more sickness; no more racism; no more Alzheimer's; no more death; no more deception; no more COVID. You have the beautiful restoration of all things without sin at all; and we know God has been trying to get this point across for many, many centuries, and it is not just in Revelation that this idea of consummation shows up, is it, Scott?

SCOTT HOEZEE

No; we get a preview of this also in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 65:17-19: See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. ¹⁸But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. ¹⁹I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.

DARRELL DELANEY

I know a lot of people, chronologically speaking, may think of Revelation and the consummation of all things as the end of things; but it actually is a new beginning—it is a new beginning of how we will now live in light of our God and with our God and amongst each other forever and ever and ever; and it is the fulfillment of God's covenant promises, where he will definitely be the presence and delight for our hearts forever. Jesus himself spoke about this in his earthly ministry as well. I know Jesus healed people and he cast out demons. It is kind of a glimpse and a little bit of a peek at it, but Jesus taught about this in Matthew 19, where he says:

²⁸Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

So, it is not about the judging, really, it is about the renewal that Jesus is referring to; and we know sometimes that has been taken quite literally by some of his disciples, namely Peter.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; well, and before we get to that, I just want to point out that...and this word comes up in several places in the New Testament...when what has been translated as the “renewal of all things” is a single Greek word: *palingenesia*...*palingenesia*...and if in the second part of that word you hear *genesis*...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You are right; and *palin* means *again*, so really, the renewal of all things...the *palingenesia* basically means Genesis again...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Genesis again, right? We are going to create again, and that is what we anticipate; but, yes; I mean, sometimes the disciples would try to get ahead of themselves. They forgot that God's kingdom is not

ultimately going to be an earthly kingdom. We know from the Garden of Gethsemane story that apparently...we didn't really know this before, but Peter had a sword! He was packing...he had a sword! But that is not how you are going to bring out the kingdom, right? It is going to come through the work of Christ—the sacrifice of Christ—the resurrection and the ascension of Christ. Those are all the things that are pointing us to that Genesis-again moment when God will make all things new.

DARRELL DELANEY

And Jesus specifically said when he was being questioned by Pontius Pilate: My kingdom is not of this world. Of course, Peter was not there when he said it, but it was put in scripture for us to understand that he had something that was going to be far-reaching, and more important than just the earthly governing and kingdom that people thought it would be here.

Paul the Apostle wants us to understand this future glory that he is talking about when he writes in Romans 8. He says:

¹⁸I consider that our present circumstances are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹For creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; so, yes; we live between the times now. We live between, you know, the work of Christ and the inbreaking of the kingdom and the *full* inbreaking of the kingdom and the consummation of all things. We are not there yet, but we eagerly expect it. We have pointed this out before on *Groundwork*, but there is another great Greek word in Romans 8: *apokaradokia*. That is translated as: we wait in eager expectation. *Apokaradokia* literally means to crane your neck. You know, it is sort of like you are waiting for a loved one to come down the gateway at the airport, and you are so eager, you are on your tiptoes and you are craning your neck. You cannot wait to see them, especially like parents waiting for a child to come back from a warzone. That is the whole creation...craning its neck on its collective tippy-toes because we know that despite the suffering we have now, this is childbirth, right? It is not just suffering for suffering's sake; it is not pointless suffering; it is the pain of childbirth, which is going to bring a new life.

We could also point out really quick, Darrell, that, again from Revelation, God says: Behold, I make all things new, (Rev. 21:5) and that is going to be important for later in this program. God doesn't say: Behold, I am going to make all new things. No, he is going to take the things he already made, and make them new; and that is the trajectory that we are on, the full liberation and restoration of all things.

Well, this theme of consummation, Darrell, is a vital one for all of scripture; and we are going to dig into it even a little bit more in the next part of this program, so stay tuned for that.

Segment 2

DARRELL DELANEY

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we are digging into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, in the previous part of this program, we explored that biblical promise of the consummation—the glorious future where God will make all things new; but let's delve now, Darrell, into some of the implications—found implications—that that truth has for our lives today. This isn't just pie-in-the-sky, by-and-by; this affects us right now.

DARRELL DELANEY

It does; and just like the Fall had far-reaching implications...we talked about that in the episode on the Fall...the Redemption and the Consummation ultimately how fully restored things will be; there are far-reaching implications, and one of those implications is the final defeat of our real enemy, Satan—the devil. In Revelation 20:10 it talks about his ultimate fate. It says:

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

I know a lot of people know that the real enemy is Satan, and a lot of the things that are going on with the sin in this world are not because of flesh and blood, but he is ultimately behind them, and his days are numbered, and that can give us hope.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We stand firm in our faith, right? The way things are are not a preview of the way things will be. The devil has been defeated. He still has his kicks; again, we are between the time. We are already and not yet people. So, the devil still has some power, but I think the biblical image, Darrell, is kind of like: Yes, the devil still has his kicks; terrible things still happen; people are still tempted by the devil and they fall prey to that temptation; but he is on a leash, it turns out. The devil is on a leash, and he can only go so far, and this is not going to last forever, because the day will come when that will ultimately be undone once and for all.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, because it will be dealt with once and for all, it reminds us that our God is just, and this is actually one of the implications of the Consummation is the restoration of justice and righteousness. In this world, we see a whole lot of things: We see corruption; we see suffering; we see imbalances; we see a lot of greed; we see a whole bunch of different things; but again, referring back to Revelation 21:4, 5, it says:

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. ⁵He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"

So, the fact that God is the one who is making everything new...and I know that we are called to do things as agents of transformation, and ultimately it is worthwhile work; and the fullness of that work that will be finished will be because God is intervening and dealing with those situations perfectly.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We all long to see the cosmic books balance out, right? I mean, there is so much imbalance in the world. So many crimes that go unpunished. People who get away with it. Whole systems of racism. Poverty, which isn't necessary; but corrupt leaders keep their people from getting the food they need. Things are not in plumb. Things are out of sync. As Neal Plantinga's book said: It is not the way it is supposed to be; and we long for that to come. In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr.: The arc of the universe is long...

Darrell Delaney/

SCOTT HOEZEE

But it bends toward justice.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, that is true. What I see is an image of...you know how there are two forms of fabric. Maybe it used to be a fabric that was completely unified, but then it got ripped; and so, the skillful seamstress or the person who is working, takes the needle and thread and threads it through and pulls them back together. God is doing that with the things that are redeeming and consummating, because he goes back into the things that were broken in creation, and he is actually bringing them back, and giving us the Genesis 2.0, if you will. Right here in Romans 8:21, it talks about the responsibility that we have toward creation. It says creation itself will be liberated from bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. It reminds us that God put Adam in the Garden to take care of it. It is the cultural mandate, bringing it back from Genesis, and when we are in the Consummation, that is actually what we are going to see again, except better.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And as you said, Darrell, and this is so important, this is not just about the future. It is about today; because we have been given...by Jesus, by the Holy Spirit, by the writers of scripture...we have been given this preview of the Consummation; and what we are called to do now, Darrell, is to lean into that...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

In our everyday lives. We don't just say: Well, God will make all things just in the end. God will balance out the books that are imbalanced right now. No. We seek justice *now* because that is where we are headed. So, we are leaning into the kingdom patterns. The same thing with the creation. I mean, it is easy to say: Well, God is going to make all things new, you know; so, pollution and species extinction...it doesn't matter. God will fix it. No. We have been called, as you said, even from Adam and Eve, we have been called to be stewards of creation. So, we take care of the creation now because it has a future. We cannot be callous when species go extinct or when people suffer from pollution.

So, the vision of the Consummation becomes our marching orders for today as believers; and it is part of what we talked about in the previous program, living lives of gratitude for the redemption that we have received by grace alone.

DARRELL DELANEY

It helps us keep things in perspective, including our suffering and trials, as it says in 2 Corinthians 4. It says: ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

The perspective that we get that Paul is giving us here is that these trials that we are currently facing are going to be temporary, but we are going to have an eternal hope, where there are no more trials and no more temptations in that future place.

But I just want to say, Scott, like you said earlier, there is this thing that I call pole vault theology, where people leap over this life and talk about the sweet by-and-by: Oh, it's going to be better soon. But that is not how we are called to live; because God has made promises in the future of how we are going to be and how the new reality will be in the Consummation, we literally are called to borrow from that hope *there*, and live *here* in light of it as if it is already a reality. We speak those things that are not as though they were *here*, and we live by faith here. That will give us the endurance and the strength and the resilience to make it through hard times.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We don't diminish or poo-poo people's suffering, like: Oh, you know, Jesus will make it better. Don't cry! No, no, no; we are called to minister to one another in our pain and sorrow now. What the hope of the Consummation gives us is steadfastness, right? Patience...*makrothumia*...is the Greek word for patience, and it really means just sort of a long steadfastness...a long sticking with things, because we do at least have that hope, as we even now live as witnesses to the kingdom.

Meanwhile, in the light of this, as Jesus said in the Olivet Discourses in Matthew 25: ¹³Therefore, keep watch because you do not know the day or the hour. So, we are watching; we are hoping; we are anticipating; and in the meanwhile, Darrell, as we said, we are kind of leaning into these kingdom patterns in how we deal with each other, with our brokenness, with our suffering, with the pollution and corruption of the physical creation. We want to live as kingdom people now.

DARRELL DELANEY

And living as kingdom people now, Scott, is actually how the Consummation reminds us that we are fostering a sense of community and unity among believers. So, Ephesians 2 tells us: ¹⁹Consequently, we are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

So basically, he is saying that because of the new humanity because of Christ's finished atonement, we have a new way to live among each other; and we are called to live in anticipation of this great day that is the Consummation, but we are called to live as witnesses together in Christ.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; and from more of that same passage in Ephesians 2:19-22: ^{20b}Christ [Jesus] himself is the chief cornerstone (of this new building). ²¹[In him] the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

So, we saw earlier, Darrell, from Revelation 21, that ultimately the new Jerusalem comes down. We don't go up to heaven, heaven comes down to us; and God makes his dwelling. That is the ultimate vision of the Consummation. Paul says: In the meanwhile, you are already dwelling like a temple. The Spirit of God is already in you, and that is what motivates us to cultivate love and unity and mutual support within the body of Christ.

Well, coming up in just a moment, Darrell, we are going to wrap up this whole four-part series. So, stay tuned.

Segment 3

DARRELL DELANEY

I am Darrell Delaney, with Scott Hoezee, and you are listening to *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

In the previous parts of this program, Darrell, we explored the promise of Consummation, and its implications for our lives; but now let's turn our focus to how we should live in light of knowing that the consummation of all things is coming. As we just said, it transforms our daily lives; it gives us hope and perspective; but again, that doesn't make us passive. It is not like: Well, you know, God will fix it, so all we've got to do is twiddle our thumbs and wait. No; we do have things to do.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, there is an old gospel song that says: Trouble don't last always; and that is what we have our hope in, knowing that God has a date on the calendar for when the Consummation will happen.

In Revelation 21, the word is *new*; I am making all things *new*. I want to shift our focus from *new* to *now*, because we are called to live in a certain way, just because we know that that consummation is on the way; and the fact that the Bible's promises are sure, Scott, means we can take what God says to the bank; and we can live as if it is already happening *now*; so that, even though we don't fully see all the manifestation of what will happen, we can still live in that reality by borrowing from that future hope.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Colossians 3, Paul writes: Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

In a sermon some while back, I had two passages that I kind of did a compare and contrast. So, on the one hand, we get Acts 1, the ascension story. The disciples are staring up, you know, mouths wide open, jaws slack. They cannot believe...where did Jesus go? All of a sudden, there are angels behind them and saying: Why are you looking up there? Look down here. You've got work to do! Okay; but then, compare that to what we just read in Colossians 3, where Paul says: Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. So, it is like, which is it? Do we stare up into the skies or do we look to the earth for what we have to do; and of course, the answer is both. What we see when we set our minds on things above sets our marching orders for what is right in front of us for now as well.

DARRELL DELANEY

It's a beautiful thing because it helps us to have an eternal perspective on earthly things; and sometimes we look at earthly things and try to have an eternal perspective from the earthly things, and that can discourage us...that can overwhelm us, because if we look at this world, it looks like evil is winning; and that is the problem; when we look at the news and we look at our lives and we look at the brokenness; but if we

remember that God has a date on the calendar for when he will set these things straight, that will give us the eternal perspective and the resilience we need to endure in hard times.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And to keep on working, right? I think C. S. Lewis has a line somewhere where he says: If you only focus on the earth, that is all you are going to get; but if you focus on heaven, you get heaven, and the earth gets thrown into the mix, too. So, now you know what you have to do. In fact, we had that line earlier in the program, I think, from Matthew 25. Jesus says: ^(verse 13)Therefore, keep watch because you do not know the day or the hour. So, what does it mean to keep watch; that we just keep staring off into the distant horizon while we are just twiddling our thumbs? No; because what is interesting is that in that same passage, Darrell, Jesus says keep watch... Okay, what does that mean? Well, Jesus has an illustration, and it is about a household servant; and he says, you know: What you want to be is like a faithful servant who gives all of the other servants their dinner at the proper time. So, it is like, oh, that is what it means to keep watch. You make dinner; you do the things that our day-to-day lives require. That is what it means to keep watch: To be found doing faithful work when Christ returns.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; blessed is the one that when he comes back, he finds them faithfully serving and doing the work; and so, there is a way to eagerly anticipate the Consummation and patiently wait while actively serving; and that is what Christ calls us to do; and that includes, you know, your praying, your witnessing, your study of scripture; but you are also being a light and a witness in the marketplace, so to speak; and so, this keeps us aligned.

So, this is what we do: We live in light of the Consummation so that it can engage our acts of love and justice, like it says in James 1:27. It says:

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

So, he gives us action and marching orders in light of the faith that we carry.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; so, we are called to live lives that reflect God's justice, God's mercy, God's concern for the physical creation; and that means that we lean into all of those kingdom patterns. We work to alleviate suffering; we advocate for the oppressed; we show Christ's love to those around us; and in that way, we become active participants in God's rolling redemption, which is taking us toward that consummation.

So, the last three things we can say, Darrell, one is hopeful expectation: We live with the assurance that God's plan for restoration is already in motion, and that hope can sustain us through trials and challenges. Trouble isn't going to have the last word.

DARRELL DELANEY

I am so glad that that is true. Also, to have an eternal perspective of things, that is what it means to set your minds on things above. When you pray and when you are studying scripture and when you are allowing God to speak to you...in your fellowship with the believers and when you worship and going to church...those things will actually fuel your eternal perspective to let you know that God has more going on than just what we see.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, we live with hopeful expectation; we live with an eternal perspective; and finally, we live with what we have been talking about, thirdly, an active participation would reflect God's justice in our daily lives.

So, the Consummation...it isn't pie-in-the-sky, by-and-by; it isn't focusing on heaven so that we are, in the old phrase: So heavenly minded as to be of no earthly good. We want to be of earthly good precisely because we are heavenly minded. That is what it means to live in the light of God's Consummation of all things. As we wait for the fulfillment of God's promises, we remain steadfast in faith, hope, and love; thanks be to God.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Darrell Delaney with Scott Hoezee, and we hope you will join us again next time as we continue to dig deeply into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives.

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SCOTT HOEZEE

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Printed on July 26, 2025