

# THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

Revelation 21:1-8

We enter the home stretch of our studies in Revelation as we open to Revelation chapter 21. By way of review using the *Chronology of Eschatology* chart, we are living in *The Dispensation of Grace*, specifically, *The Church Age*. We are awaiting the *Rapture* of the Church which, after an unspecified amount of time, will be followed by the *Tribulation*. The seven year *Tribulation* will be brought to completion by the *Second Coming of Christ* to the earth. Jesus will then reign as King of kings and Lord of lords during the one thousand years of *The Millennial Kingdom* here on earth.

At the conclusion of *The Millennial Kingdom*, Satan will be released from the abyss and mount one last rebellion against Jesus. Jesus will prevail after which He will convene *The Great White Throne Judgment*. As a result of *The Great White Throne Judgment*, Satan, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, all demons, all unrighteous human beings, the process/experience of death and even the place of the dead (Hades) will all be confined to the Lake of Fire for eternity.

Then the wonders revealed in Revelation 21 will unfold: the New Heaven, the New Earth and the New Jerusalem coming to earth.

## Revelation 21:1-8 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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."

<sup>5</sup> 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." <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup> 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."

## GOD WILL CREATE A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH (21:1)

### Revelation 21:1 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> 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.

Very little information is given in Scripture about the character of the new heaven and new earth. What is emphasized is that this is not the renovation of the old heaven and earth, but an act of new creation. This present earth and heaven<sup>1</sup> will be destroyed (cf. 2 Peter 3:10-12; Rev. 20:11). The word "new" is *kainos* which means new in quality and character.<sup>2</sup> God will create a new heaven and a new earth which will be our eternal dwelling place.

The one feature of the new earth John does mention is the absence of the sea. The only body of water mentioned on the new earth is the river of life that will flow from the throne of God (Rev. 22:1) though there may be other bodies of water as well.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter 3:10 & 12 speak of the "heavens" plural being burned up and the awaiting of the promised new "heavens", again plural. This indicates that both the first (atmospheric) and the second (outer space) heavens will be destroyed and created anew.

<sup>2</sup> **καινός kainós**; adj. New. Qualitatively new, as contrasted with *néos* (3501), temporally new. Zodhiates, Spiros. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000.

To all you surfers, fishermen and boaters: let not your hearts be troubled. What God has in store for you will immeasurably exceed the pleasure you now experience!

Following the vision of the new heaven and the new earth, John next saw the new Jerusalem descending from heaven to the earth.

### **THE NEW JERUSALEM WILL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN (21:2)**

**Revelation 21:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

The heavenly Jerusalem is holy; undefiled by sin and evil. The heavenly Jerusalem is not a village, but a city of immense proportions (Rev. 21:15-17). This Jerusalem is located in the 3rd heaven, the dwelling place of God. It exists right now, this moment. Just as there is a heavenly tabernacle and an earthly tabernacle (Heb. 8:1-5, 9:11-12), so also there is a heavenly Jerusalem and an earthly Jerusalem. When the new earth is created, itself holy, then the holy city of Jerusalem will be able to dwell on earth. This Jerusalem is not part of the creation of the new heaven and new earth. The new Jerusalem exists now in heaven and will be our dwelling place from the Rapture throughout eternity.

Notice that John describes the new Jerusalem as “prepared”. John 14:1-3 records the promise of the Rapture given by our Lord to His disciples.

**John 14:1–3 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*

It seems likely to me that the new Jerusalem is the place Jesus is preparing. When will Jesus return for the Twelve to take them to be with Him in the place He is preparing?

At the Rapture.

At the Rapture, we, too, will be gathered up to dwell in the place Jesus is preparing. I believe that at the time of the Rapture, not only will we receive our glorified bodies, we will also take up residence in the heavenly Jerusalem for the rest of eternity! By the way, the name Jerusalem means “dwelling of peace”.

What is taking place here in Revelation 21:2 is that the heavenly Jerusalem will come down and settle on the new earth. Our eternal residence will be in the “dwelling of peace” on the new earth!

God’s purpose in this is explained in verse 3.

### **GOD WILL DWELL WITH US (21:3)**

**Revelation 21:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> *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.*

Though God is completely self-sufficient and does not need us, He wants an intimate relationship with us. Having confined all evil to the Lake of Fire and having created a new heaven and earth, the triune God - Father, Son and Spirit - will dwell personally and intimately in the midst of His people.

Verse four reveals He will minister to us in such a way that we will be able to experience maximal joy in the eternal order.

### **GOD WILL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR (21:4)**

**Revelation 21:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> *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.”*

Each one of us will have family and friends in the Lake of Fire. Perhaps you've wondered how it will be that you will shed no tears for your loved ones nor mourn nor feel the pain of loss. Verse four is emphatic in the Greek text: God Himself will wipe away every tear from each and every one of our eyes. What that will be like and how it will resolve all causes of pain and sorrow we will not know until we experience His loving touch in the eternal order. Pain, sorrow and crying are so much a part of our existence even as Christians that it is hard to comprehend life without them. But when we are with God and He with us, we will experience unending joy and unbroken peace for all eternity.

Lest John or any of us balk at these incredible revelations, God asserts unequivocally that He will bring these things to pass.

### **GOD'S PROMISES (21:5-8)**

In verses 5-8 God makes three promises.

First, He will make all things new – the new heaven, the new earth, the new Jerusalem.

#### **Revelation 21:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> *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."*

Second, He will freely give spiritual life to all who thirst for it.

#### **Revelation 21:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> *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 reminds us of our Lord's offer of spiritual life to the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:1-15).

#### **John 4:10, 13-14 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."*

<sup>13</sup> *Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

I appreciate Dallas Willard's definition of what it means to be thirsty:

*...to be driven and ruled by unsatisfied desires.*

We all know what it's like to be thirsty. Only a restored relationship with God, the source of life, can satisfy the deepest longings of our souls. God gives spiritual life without payment because the payment has already been made in full by the blood sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross.

If you are thirsty - driven and ruled by unsatisfied desires – but you want peace, purpose and satisfaction, start trusting and following Jesus today.

God's third promise is that all who come and receive the water of life will inherit the new heaven, earth and Jerusalem and, most importantly, an intimate, personal relationship with God. Those who do not will inherit the Lake of Fire.

#### **Revelation 21:7-8 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> *The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup> 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."*

As it stands right now, what will be your inheritance?

If the new heaven, earth and Jerusalem then worship God with thanksgiving.

If the Lake of Fire, then trust in the blood sacrifice of Jesus for the payment of your sin and start following Jesus today!