

Wednesday Teaching Series
Revelation 21-26:5

The Book of Revelation
Lesson #20-The New Heaven and the New Earth

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. Isaiah 65:17 NKJV

"For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. Isaiah 66:22 NKJV

Introduction: In the closing chapters of Isaiah God promised that he would create a new heaven and a new earth that would endure before Him forever.

- The fulfillment of that promise begins to unfold in this final vision of John in Revelation.
- Greek thought emphasizes dualism (good vs. evil) body and spirit; heaven and earth (God's thinking allows for man to be placed on a redeemed earth in a redeemed body not removed forever from either).
- In this vision; scenes of Eden are restored (tree of life; river of life) and a renewed emphasis to "Eden-like" fellowship with God and humanity.

I. The New Creation (v. 1-8)

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Revelation 21:1 NKJV

A. The meaning of the New Heaven and Earth

1. Apocalyptic tradition taught a transformation (Enoch/Esdra/Baruch)
2. Peter indicated a cataclysmic happening will bring a new heaven and earth in which righteousness dwells.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:10-13 NKJV

3. Paul spoke of creation's anticipation of being emancipated from decay.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. 26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Romans 8:19-27 NKJV

4. Stretches limits of vocabulary; varying degrees and literalness
5. No more sea; why?
 - a. Reflects dread of ancient people toward seas; God is victorious over all it stood for in ancient tradition.
 - b. Out of the sea the beast emerged and blasphemed God.

B. The New Jerusalem

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Revelation 21:2 NKJV

1. New Testament anticipated

But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. Galatians 4:26 NKJV

For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Hebrews 11:10 NKJV

Whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." Hebrews 12:26 NKJV

For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Hebrews 13:14 NKJV

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Philippians 3:20 NKJV

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. Revelation 3:12 NKJV

2. Jerusalem is the site of the temple where the Presence dwells.
3. Probably a picture of the church in its perfected and eternal state.
Comes down from heaven; God originates it (Matthew 16:18).
4. NOTE THE CONTRAST: Earthly city (prostitute) Heavenly city (bride).

C. His Presence with humanity is the principal character of the coming age and yields marvelous benefits.

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Revelation 21:3-4 NKJV

D. Write the vision for it is true and faithful

Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." Revelation 21:5 NKJV

E. It is done and the benefits will begin

And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. Revelation 21:6-7 NKJV

F. Those who do not enter

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Revelation 21:8 NKJV

II. The New Jerusalem Described (9-27)

A. The angels invitation

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." Revelation 21:9 NKJV

B. Description of the Bride

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. 14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Revelation 21:10-14 NKJV

1. In 17:3 John viewed Babylon when taken by the Spirit to the desert; only from a high mountain can be viewed the New Jerusalem.
2. Brilliant, shining, glory (symbol of God's presence)
3. Walls are part of the ideal city in Ancient times

- a. 12; abundant entrance
- b. 12 tribes and apostles; continuity of God's people (Old Testament/New Testament)
- c. 12 foundations

Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. Ephesians 2:20 NKJV

C. The Measuring of the Holy City

And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. 16 The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. 17 Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. Revelation 21:15-17 NKJV

*Probably a description of how difficult it is to measure and to describe

D. The Stones of the New Jerusalem

The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. Revelation 21:18-21 NKJV

1. A city of brilliant stone surrounded by a wall inlaid with jasper; resting on 12 foundations adorned with every imaginable stone and every color and hue. Magnificent beyond description.

NOTE: The language must break free from its own limitations to describe the magnificence.

2. Pearls large enough to be a gate; streets of city were, gold

E. No need for a temple or luminaries

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. Revelation 21:22-23 NKJV

1. Symbol gives way to reality; His presence illumines the temple
2. Illuminated by the glory of God (apocalyptic language common to John).

That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. John 1:9 NKJV

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." John 8:12 NKJV

F. Those who enter

And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. 25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. Revelation 21:24-26 NKJV

III. Eden Restored (22:1-5)

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. Revelation 22:1-5 NKJV

NOTE: In Chapter 21, John used the imagery of a magnificent city to describe the people of God in the glorious and eternal age to come. Now in these opening verses of Chapter 22 the eternal state as Eden restored is described, thus "book-ending" the Christian Bible.

- o Genesis 2:9: The tree of life was planted in the middle of the garden.
- o To eat of its fruit was to live forever.
- o Now, redeemed humanity is back in the garden able to eat the fruit again. The curse is removed and His face can be seen. Eternal fellowship with the Lord has been returned.

- The Bible ends with the ultimate restoration of the original creation:

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Romans 8:19-21 NKJV

- Sin marred the human race but through Jesus a new humanity has been wrought
- Full cycle to God's original plan

Conclusions: (Revelation 22:6-21)

Several loosely related utterances:

- A. A statement as to the veracity of the Revelation

Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. Revelation 22:6 NKJV

- B. The promise of His return

"Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." Revelation 22:7 NKJV

1. Every generation is to be ready!
2. No timetable
3. Blessed are those who stand fast in the great persecution about to break on to the church

- C. John attests to the truthfulness of the book and explains his call

Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." 10 And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. Revelation 22:8-10 NKJV

NOTE: This was not a flight of his imagination!

1. Angel worship, though forbidden, was popular
2. No longer are those revelations sealed up; prophetic and meant to be heard

“Time is near”

NOTE: Seems that there has been a two-fold perspective

- o Ongoing struggle in the lives of believers
 - o Ultimately climatic; apocalyptic
- D. From the perspective of John (as the prophet) no time to change

He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11 NKJV

1. Once events begin; sealed decision
 2. Necessary to respond now.
- E. Renewed announcement of Christ

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." Revelation 22:12-13 NKJV

1. Coming and will judge

I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings. Jeremiah 17:10 NKJV

Who "will render to each one according to his deeds": Romans 2:6 NKJV

And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; 1 Peter 1:17 NKJV

2. Alpha and Omega (A to Z)

F. Final Beatitude

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. Revelation 22:14-15 NKJV

NOTE: This is to contrast the blessedness of the faithful and the fate of the wicked.

“Dogs”

- Deuteronomy 23:17-18 (Male with prostitute)
- Matthew 15:22 (Heathen)
- Philippians 3:2 (Judaizer)

G. The angel is now authenticated by Christ

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." Revelation 22:16 NKJV

H. Four invitations; Evangelistic plea

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. Revelation 22:17 NKJV

1. Spirit and bride (church empowered by Spirit) say come!
2. Those who accept invite should invite others; saying come!
3. Whoever desires may drink!

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Isaiah 55:1 NKJV

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. John 7:37 NKJV

I. Severe Warning

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Revelation 22:18-19 NKJV

J. Christ again speaks: Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Revelation 22:20 NKJV

K. Benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Revelation 22:21 NKJV

Book is now complete!

- Served to inform readers then and now that God is sovereign
- His plan for humanity will be carried out
- During the interim there will be hostility and opposition
- People must choose their allegiance
- Those who choose the beast will ultimately share his fate for Babylon will fall
- Those who choose to follow the Lamb will be brought into eternal fellowship with God in the New Jerusalem
- Believers are encouraged to remain faithful to this and trust and wait expectantly for the Return of Christ