

## **THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH**

### **Revelation 21-22**

**By Andy Manning**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

##### 1. Illustration:

- i. Boudreaux, Thibodeaux, and Hebert all died on the same day and their souls went to heaven where St. Peter met them at the pearly gates. St. Peter looked at them and said, "Look boys, you are in heaven now and there are a lot of things you can do up here; but one thing you cannot do is step on my ducks. Do you understand?" At that moment all three said, "Yes we understand. Do not step on the ducks."
  - ii. Everything was going well. Boudreaux, Thibodeaux, and Hebert were all so glad to be there. Then it happened. Hebert wasn't paying attention and he stepped on a duck. Out of nowhere St. Peter appeared and he had the most gross, ugly woman anyone has ever seen. He went up to Hebert and grabbed his arm and hand cuffed the woman to Hebert and said, "Your punishment will be that you will spend eternity with this woman."
  - iii. Boudreaux and Thibodeaux looked at each other and Boudreaux said, "Be careful where you step."
  - iv. They were careful for awhile, and then it happened again. Thobodeaux was backing up and sure enough he stepped on a duck. Out of nowhere St Peter appeared and he had the most gross ugly woman anyone had ever seen. he went up to Thibodeaux and grabbed his arm and hand cuffed the woman to Thobodeaux and said, "Your punishment will be that you will spend eternity with this woman."
  - v. Boudreaux said, "That won't happen to me. And for years he never stepped on a duck."
  - vi. Then one day out of nowhere St. Peter came from the heavens and picked up Boudreaux by his arm. Boudreaux didn't understand just what he did for this to be happening. Then Boudreaux and St. Peter came down next to the most beautiful woman Boudreaux had ever seen. St. Peter went up to Boudreaux and grabbed his arm and hand cuffed the woman to him and this time he didn't say a thing. Boudreaux just looked at the woman and said, "What was all this about?"
  - vii. She said, "I don't know. One minute I was walking along and by accident I stepped on a duck and then this happens."
2. I have some good news for you today. That story may be funny, but it's not biblical. You don't have to worry about stepping on ducks in heaven.
  3. Today we are going to wrap up our sermon series on Revelation by looking at heaven, or more specifically, the new heaven and new earth.

4. Theology refers to the study of God. There are many different branches of theology: 1) Bibliology: the study of the Bible; 2) Anthropology: the study of humanity; 3) Hamartiology: the study of sin; 4) Christology: the study of Christ; 5) Pneumatology: the study of the Holy Spirit; 6) Soteriology: the study of salvation; 7) Ecclesiology: the study of the church; 8) Eschatology: the study of last things (or end times)
5. "Eschatology" comes from the Greek words for "last things" (*eschatos*) and "study, or word" (*logos*).
6. Eschatology deals with a number of issues, and they occur in the following order: (The Order of End Time Events)
  - i. Death.
  - ii. The intermediate state. The time between death and the return of Christ. The soul immediately goes either to heaven (paradise), or to Hades, a place of agony and torment (Lk 16:19-31).
  - iii. The millennium. The thousand-year reign of Christ (Rev 20).
  - iv. The return of Christ (second coming, or Parousia).
  - v. The general resurrection.
  - vi. The final judgment.
  - vii. The new heaven and new earth.
  - viii. The final state.
7. Today we are going to study the new heaven and new earth.
8. We are going to answer an important question. Where will Christians spend eternity? It is not some far-away place in the sky; we will spend eternity on a newly created earth.

## II. CONTEXT

1. Revelation 6-19 is mostly a series of prophetic visions about the imminent judgment and destruction of Jerusalem. I believe that Revelation was written around 65 AD, and most of its prophecies were fulfilled in 70 AD when the Romans invaded Israel and completely destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Revelation 19 ends with a promise the early church's two great enemies – the Jews (the false prophet) and the Romans (the beast) will be thrown into the lake of fire.
2. Revelation 20 deals with fate of the early church's third great enemy – Satan (the dragon).
  - i. Satan will be bound for 1,000 years, or a millennium, during which he will be prevented from obstructing the spread of the gospel.
  - ii. The 1,000 years is symbolic for a long time, and it refers to the period between Christ's first and second coming, or the period we are living in right now.
  - iii. During this period, the millennium, the gospel will continue to spread around the world until Christ comes back.
  - iv. At the end of the millennium, Satan will be allowed to gather an army to attack the church, but Christ will return and destroy him.

- v. After Christ's return, Revelation 20 tells us that then there will be the final judgment.
  - vi. Revelation 21-22 tell us what happens next, after the final judgment.
3. We're not going to be able to read every verse in these two chapters, but we will read Revelation 21:1-8.

### III. TEXT: Revelation 21:1-8

*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. 2 I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.*

*3 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.*

*5 Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new." He also said, "Write, because these words are faithful and true." 6 Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life. 7 The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son. 8 But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."*

### IV. SIX INSIGHTS ABOUT THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

#### 1. What is it called?

- i. Rev 21:1 calls it "a new heaven and a new earth."
- ii. The term "heaven and earth" refers to the entire universe (Hoekema).
- iii. There are four passages in the Bible that use the phrase "new heaven and earth," and this is one of them (Is 65:17-25; Is 66:22-23; 2 Pt 3:13; Rev 21:1-22:5).
- iv. **2 Peter 3:7, 13** "7 By the same word, the present heavens and earth are stored up for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly... 13 But based on his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells."
- v. One day the present heaven and earth will be destroyed and recreated.
- vi. Why?
- vii. Christ's purpose of salvation was not merely to save mankind, but to restore and renew creation.
- viii. In Acts 3:19-21, after healing a lame man at the temple, Peter encouraged people to repent and turn to Christ, who is in heaven "until the time of the restoration of all things, which God spoke about through his holy prophets from the beginning."

- ix. **Anthony Hoekema** “The expression ‘the restoration of all things’ suggests that the return of Christ will be followed by the restoration of all God’s creation to its original perfection – thus pointing to the new earth.”
- x. **Romans 8:19-21** “19 For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God’s sons to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it—in the hope 21 that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God’s children.”
- xi. All creation is waiting for the sons of God to be revealed, that is for Christ to return to give Christians their newly resurrected bodies, because at that time creation itself will be set free from bondage and decay.

## 2. When will it be created?

- i. If we follow the timeline in Revelation, the new heaven and earth and created after the final judgment, and the final judgment occurs when Christ comes back.
- ii. **Matthew 25:31-32** “31 When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels, with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations, will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”
  - 1. Here we see Christ’s return, followed by the final judgment.
- iii. We see the same thing in Revelation 20. After the millennium, Satan is allowed to gather an army to attack the church, but he is stopped by the second coming of Christ, which is immediately followed by the final judgment. After the final judgment, in Rev 21-22, we see the creation of the new heaven and earth.
- iv. Acts 3:21 “Heaven must receive him until the time of the restoration of all things, which God spoke about through his holy prophets from the beginning.”
  - 1. Peter is preaching in the temple after healing a lame man.
  - 2. He said that Christ must remain in heaven until the time of the restoration of all things.
  - 3. The implication is that when Christ leaves heaven to come back, He will restore all things – creating a new heavens and earth.
- v. We see the same thing in 2 Peter 3, which talks about the new heavens and new earth. The context of 2 Peter 3 is the second coming of Christ. Peter is addressing the scoffers who ask, “Where is Christ’s coming that He promised?” In verse 9 Peter said that God is being patient, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance. In other words, He is giving more people time to be saved. But notice what he says in verse 10.
  - 1. **2 Peter 3:10** “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that day the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will

burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed.”

2. The day of the Lord refers to the day of Christ’s return. What does he say about it?
  - a. It will come like a thief; it will be unexpected.
  - b. On that same day, the present heavens and earth will be destroyed.
- vi. So I believe all that the new heavens and earth will be created after Christ’s return and the final judgment.

### 3. Who will be there?

- i. **Revelation 21:7** “The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son.”
- ii. Who is the one who conquers? It gets more specific as you read.
  1. Rev 21:27: “only those written in the Lamb’s book of life.” In other words, Christians.
  2. Rev 22:14: “those who wash their robes.” In other words, those who repent of their sins and have faith in Jesus Christ, and as a result are forgiven.
- iii. The good news is that the new heaven and earth are open to everyone. Everyone is invited.
- iv. **Revelation 22:17** Both the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” Let anyone who hears, say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely.
  1. The “Spirit” is God. The “bride” is the church. Both of them are making an invitation to “anyone.” The invitation is to “Come! Take the water of life freely.” The “water of life” is Jesus; it is salvation through Jesus (Jn 4:14).
- v. Anyone who decides to believe in Jesus, and make Him the boss of your life, will inherit the new earth.

### 4. Who will not be there?

- i. Just as it is clear who will be in the new earth, it is also clear who will not be there.
- ii. **Revelation 21:8** “But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”
- iii. Notice what it doesn’t say. It doesn’t say that those who won’t inherit the new earth are unbelievers. Instead it is the unrepentant. It is true that we are saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9). We are not saved by good works, but by grace. Salvation is a free gift. And the way we receive it is by faith, but trusting in Jesus Christ. However, one of the most visible signs of

true faith and trust in Jesus is repentance; making Jesus the boss of your life; by turning away from anything that displeases God.

- iv. Even the demons believe in Jesus. But true faith involves repentance and obedience. The unrepentant will not inherit the new earth (see also 1 Cor 6:9-10).

## 5. Where will people live?

- i. **Revelation 21:2** “I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.”
- ii. Rev 21-22 describe a city on the new earth where God’s people will live. It’s called the new Jerusalem. It goes into great detail to describe the city, although most scholars believe the language is highly symbolic and figurative.
  - 1. Verse 2 says that it comes down from heaven to earth, and that God will dwell there. Since heaven is God’s dwelling place, we know that it is going to be a melding of heaven and earth. Heaven and earth will no longer be two places; they will be one place, on the new earth.
  - 2. Verse 9 says that the city is the bride, the wife of the lamb. So we know that it is filled with Christians.
  - 3. Verse 12 says it has a massive wall, 216 feet high, made out of jasper. The massive wall indicates that God’s people will be perfectly safe.
  - 4. Verse 14 says the wall has twelve foundations. Each foundation is made out of a different precious stone, and each is inscribed with the name of one of the twelve apostles. This is because the apostles are the foundation of the church, which is built on their testimony.
  - 5. Verse 16 says the city is a perfect square, extending 1,500 miles long, wide, and high. This one reason scholars believe the language is symbolic, because outer space is only 62 miles above sea level, but this city reaches 1,500 miles high.
  - 6. Verse 12 says the city has twelve gates, three on each wall – north, south, east, and west. Each gate is made out of a single pearl – another indication of symbolism. And the gates will never close, which implies that there will be perfect safety in and out of the city.
  - 7. Verse 18 says the city is pure gold, clear as glass.
  - 8. Verse 21 says the main street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass.
  - 9. It has no temple because God and Jesus are its temple (v. 22). You won’t need the sun or the moon or a lamp because the glory of God will illuminate the city (v. 23). It has no night because God is there illuminating it constantly (v. 23).
  - 10. Rev 22:1 describes the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing down the middle of the main street.

11. Rev 22:2 describes a tree of life on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, and producing fruit twelve months out of the year. And its leaves provide healing for the nations.
  12. Rev 22:3 says that we will worship God there, and Rev 22:5 says we will reign there forever and ever.
- iii. What does all of this mean? Which parts are literal, and which parts are symbolic? I don't know. But it does tell us that the new Jerusalem on the new earth will be more wonderful than you can possibly imagine.

## 6. What will it be like?

- i. This is more important than where we will live.
- ii. **Revelation 21:3-4** "3 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne:, Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away."
  1. No more "tears," "grief," or "crying."
  2. No more death.
  3. No more pain.
  4. Rev 21:27 says there will be no more sin.
  5. Rev 22:3 says there will no longer be any curse. So the earth, nature, plants, animals, the weather will all be restored to perfect order like the Garden of Eden.
    - a. **Theologian Wayne Grudem**, *Christian Beliefs*, 135 "No longer will there be 'thorns and thistles' (Gen 3:18) that God brought in judgment on sin, nor will there be other distortions of nature that bring destruction, such as hurricanes and tornadoes, floods, droughts, and earthquakes. Paradise will be destroyed (Rm 8:21)."
6. God will live with us.
  - a. This is the best thing of all.
  - b. Rev 22:4 says we will see His face.
  - c. This is called the beatific vision.
  - d. The OT says no one can see God's face and live (Ex 33:20). Because of our sin, we cannot look on God's face. But on the new earth, we will be with God and see Him face to face.
  - e. **Theologian Anthony Hoekema** calls this "the highest joy and greatest privilege of the life of glory." He writes, "In short, existence on the new earth will be marked by perfect knowledge of God, perfect enjoyment of God, and perfect service of God."

- f. **Theologian Wayne Grudem**, *Christian Beliefs*, 136 “Our greatest joy will be that we ‘will see his face’ (Rev 22:4). The sight of God’s face will be the fulfillment of everything we know to be good, right, and desirable in the universe. In God’s face, we will see and experience the fulfillment of all the longing we have ever had – the longing to know perfect love, peace, and joy, to know truth and justice, holiness and wisdom, goodness and power, glory and beauty. We will discover that in God’s presence ‘there is fullness of joy’ and at his right hand ‘pleasures forevermore’ (Ps 16:11).”

## V. CONCLUSION

1. Arnold Schwarzenegger was being interviewed by Howard Stern. Howard asked him, “Tell me, governor, what happens to us when we die?” Schwarzenegger replied, “Nothing. You’re 6 feet under. Anyone that tells you something else is a liar.” In another interview with Danny DeVito Schwarzenegger said that the idea that people will see each other again after death is only a fantasy. Schwarzenegger is a great actor; a very rich man; a very powerful man – governor of California. But he’s wrong about heaven. I know he’s wrong because the Bible clearly teaches it. You will spend eternity on the new earth with God, or in the lake of fire away from God. The determining factor is your relationship with Jesus. Are you a Christian?
2. How can you make sure that you are a Christian? Make a decision. It’s as easy as A, B, C.
  - i. Admit you are a sinner in need of a Savior. Admit that you don’t deserve heaven, and that you cannot do enough good works to earn it.
  - ii. Believe in Jesus, that He died and rose again to pay your penalty.
  - iii. Call on Jesus to save you, and to be the boss of your life.