

WEEK 25: CHAPTER 21

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 21

- This chapter represents the timing after the Millennial Kingdom and the Great White Throne judgment of God upon all those who have ever lived and rejected Christ as their Savior.
- Chapter 21 is the beginning of the saint's new glorious life where perfect fellowship with one another and with Christ will never end.
- Where we live and operate today is not our final destination. All saints from all-time have looked forward to this final consummation the Lord has in store for those who love Him.
- **Isaiah 65:17** "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind."
- **Hebrews 11:9-10** "By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; [10] for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."
- **Hebrews 13:14** "For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come."
- Saints are never satisfied with what this world has to offer, but we look forward to the one that is coming.

CHAPTER 21:1 ~ THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

Revelation 21:1 "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea."

- As the Millennial period ends and God's judgment upon the whole earth and its inhabitants comes to a completion, John sees what all of God's people have longed for throughout time.
- Since the 1st heaven and earth have passed away, it is time for the new heaven and earth to come.
- When John says *new*, it is not about a chronological sequence of events but rather speaking of a qualitative state of heaven and earth.
- These are not just something that succeeds where we are now, but something that will be completely brand new in ways that we cannot even imagine.
- It is not going back to the same earth that Adam and Eve were created.
- It is not just adding a coat of paint to the sky or some extra rocks on the mountain tops.
- It is going to be something so glorious and unimaginable that man's words are completely insufficient to comprehend what God has in store for those who enter into the new heaven and new earth.

What does it mean to have a new heaven and earth?

- “You might be surprised to learn that your future in heaven is going to involve life on Planet Earth.”¹
- **2 Peter 3:10-13** “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. [11] Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people 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 destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! [13] But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”
- While there are some who think that this world we live in and on will be completely destroyed, the language leads us to believe that there is going to be a renewal or a restoration of the earth we currently live on.
- **Colossians 1:20** “...and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.”
 - The reconciliation of all things created; not the destruction of them for something new.
- **Acts 3:19-21** “Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; [20] and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, [21] whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.”
 - Again, notice that Peter says “...the period of restoration of all things...” not an annihilation of things when Jesus comes.
- **Romans 8:20-21** “For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope [21] that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”
 - Creation is not waiting for God to completely annihilate it so that it no longer exists; but to be restored and to have freedom from the bondage of slavery.
 - If there was just annihilation that awaited, there would be no reason for hope.
- When reading 2 Peter 3:10-13, it is not a complete and utter destruction of the earth, but rather a cleansing or a purging of sin.
- “The earth that was cursed and plunged into futility because of man’s sin (see Rom. 8:20; cr. Genesis 3) will be renewed. It will be purged and purified and found better than before. Much like precious metals go through fire to be purged, the earth will be purged but remain. God does not give up on His creation.”²

¹ <https://www.wisdomonline.org/>

² Michael Vlach, *The New Creation Model*, 75-76.

- God desires to redeem and transform His creation, not to vaporize it.
- “If God would have to annihilate the present cosmos, Satan would have won a great victory.”³
- “This is like your future glorified body. You will still be you, with your personality and gifts and physical features, but you will be perfected and made immortal. So also, the earth is not going to look like the moon; it will look like the earth. It will be recognizable but different—perfected and made to last forever.”⁴
- John also says that there will be no more sea. This does not mean that there will be no more water.
 - **Revelation 22:1-2** “Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, [2] in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”
- It is entirely possible that it means there are no more oceans that bring separation between God’s people.
- God’s heart has always been the unification of His people; both spiritual and geographical.
- There will more than likely still be lakes and other bodies of water that God’s people will be able to enjoy throughout eternity.

CHAPTER 21:2 ~ THE 1ST VISION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

Revelation 21:2 “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.”

- Upon the new earth, there is a new city, a holy city, it is the New Jerusalem.
- This city has descended from the heavens as a real place with real people who live real lives.
- John calls this a city...it should be taken to mean that this place coming from heaven has all the characteristics of a normal city.
- There will be streets, shops, buildings, etc. There will be conversations between people, places for them to live and have life.
- John describes New Jerusalem as “made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.”
- “Throughout the Bible, the redeemed are referred to as a bride. Israel is called the bride of Jehovah; the church is called the bride of Christ. Here, this new Jerusalem is called the bride, and that is because it contains all the people who belong to God. You might say this city descends like a golden carriage, bringing

³ Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 280. (quoted in above reference)

⁴ <https://www.wisdomonline.org>

within it the bridal party of God. And John's saying, "Look, here comes the bride." She is beautifully adorned for her beloved Groom, the King of Kings."⁵

- "Just as a bride spends extensive time preparing for the wedding day, the New Jerusalem represents the ultimate finished masterpiece of God's craftsmanship, adorned with precious stones and divine glory, fully prepared to descend to the renewed earth."⁶
- In the Scriptures, the marriage relationship is often times uses as the highest picture of covenantal fidelity between God and His people.
 - This is between God and Israel and the Jesus and the church.
 - The arrival of the New Jerusalem signifies that there is going to be a sweet, eternal, unbreaking communion between God and His people.

CHAPTER 21:3-4 ~ GOD DWELLING WITH MAN

Revelation 21:3-4 "And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, [4] and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.'"

- Now, God is in heaven and we are on earth.
- Then, God and man will dwell for eternity in the same place...God's tabernacle is coming to the new earth.
- There is not going to be any difference between heaven and earth in the final state.
- This is the ultimate fulfillment of the New Covenant promises to Israel:
 - **Jeremiah 31:33** "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, 'I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'"
 - **Ezekiel 37:27** "My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people."
- While we look forward to seeing all our friends and family who went ahead of us to heaven, our greatest anticipation is that we are going to finally see in person what we believed by faith.
- **1 John 3:2** "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is."
- Heaven is not centered upon us but upon God Himself.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Vlach

CHAPTER 19:17-19 ~ THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

Revelation 19:17-19 “Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, [18] so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." [19] And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and

CHAPTER 19:20-21 ~ THE DOOM OF THE BEAST AND FALSE PROPHET

Revelation 19:20-21 “And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. [21] And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled