

THE APOCALYPSE – A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

(Rev 21:1-27)

1. The New Heavens and the New Earth – 21:1-8

21:1 (How new is the new heaven and new earth?) – Revelation 21:1, *“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”*

The word for new is “*kainos*” which means not new in terms of chronology but in a qualitative sense. It will be something brand new and fresh. It is something never seen before. We know that the first heaven and earth will be destroyed i.e. uncreated from 20:11.

Does the new heaven here include all the three heavens, the first, second and third heaven? It is true that the word used here for heaven is in the singular but it could be a generic usage of the singular which refers to all three heavens.

Why were they uncreated and not given an extreme makeover? The reason is that it has been stained by sin. Has the outer space been stained by sin as well? The answer would be yes. Outer space has been stained by the satellites and debris of old satellites left there by sinful men. These discarded junks have stained the second heaven. If the reason for the un-creation of the first heaven was the stain of sin then by corollary, it must also include the second heaven. Also the Book of Revelation in chapter 21 reveals that there will be no sun and no moon in eternity cf. 21:23.

Will the third heaven be recreated also? The same question will also be asked: Has the third heaven been stained by sin?

Isaiah 14:12-15, *“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”*

Jesus said in **Luke 10:18**, *“And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”*

It is apparent that since the third heaven has also been stained by sin, then it ought to be re-created like the other two heavens.

What is the difference between Abraham's bosom, Paradise and the Third Heaven? Where the apostle John was brought to in the Book of Revelation is called Heaven.

Abraham's bosom is an equivalent term for Paradise. There is a chasm between the place called Hell and Abraham's bosom that cannot be bridged.

Luke 16:22-26, *“And it came to pass, that **the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, **between us and you there is a great gulf fixed:** so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.”*** [emphasis added] The word for Hell here is Hades which is the same as in Revelation 20:13-14. Hades is a place of torment but it is not permanent. It must not be compared with Purgatory. Hades is not a place of purging where after purging the sinner can go to heaven. There is no getting out of Hades. Purgatory on the other hand is a place for the purging of sin as concocted by the Roman Catholic Church. Such place like purgatory is not taught in the Bible. When a person dies He goes to either Heaven or Hell.

Is Paradise the same as the Third Heaven? Jesus said to the malefactor that today you shall be with me in Paradise. The Lord Jesus Christ went to Paradise. The apostle Paul himself equated the third heaven with Paradise.

2 Corinthians 12:2-4, *“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one **caught up to the third heaven.** And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was **caught up into paradise,** and*

heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” [emphasis added]

Revelation 2:7, “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is **in the midst of the paradise of God.***” The apostle John also referred to Heaven as Paradise. With this overwhelming evidence from Scripture, Paradise and The Third Heaven and Abraham’s bosom would refer to the same place.

The new earth which is also totally brand new has no sea in it. Human beings with the glorified bodies need not have water any more to survive. What is the composition of our glorified body like?

Jesus says in **Luke 24:39**, “*Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not **flesh and bones**, as ye see me have.*” [[emphasis added] Note that blood is not mentioned.

21:2-8 (The Inhabitants of New Jerusalem) – This section describes the eternal capital city and the ones who will be found in the new heaven and new earth. The occupants of the first or old heaven and earth were mentioned after Day One in Genesis. Here we are given a glimpse of the inhabitants with no reference to time. The reason is that the new inhabitants will live in eternity where time will take on a very different perspective.

The first thing to discard would probably be clocks and watches. Today we are time keepers as time is limited. But when we have eternity to look forward to without any good-bye, what a glorious and joyous and great blessing it is to be with likeminded brothers and sisters in Christ. Ah time when such brethren gather together for fellowship it is indeed a foretaste of our heavenly eternity.

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

21:2 (The New Jerusalem mentioned) -- The word for “new” here is also “*kainos*”. This means that this Jerusalem will be totally brand new. It is NOT a repair work done on the old Jerusalem. This new city will come down from God out of heaven, the new heaven. It will be so beautiful like a bride prepared for her husband. This new Jerusalem will be described in great detail in the following next few verses.

Revelation 21:3, “*And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”*

21:3 (God dwelling with men) -- It is also called the Tabernacle of God i.e. the dwelling place of God for that is exactly what a tabernacle means. The Home of God is in the midst of man. This is a good definition of Heaven if you ever need

one. Heaven is a place where God “*will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*” This is the eternal home for every born again believer.

The truth stated here is already a reality now. But we believe by faith now but see with our glorified eyes in the future. To be called God’s people is ownership and belonging. We belong with God. We have been saved by the blood of Christ to make us part of God’s blessed family.

“God will be with His people” which is “Emmanuel.” And He will be our God. The relationship of creature and Creator will be an eternal one. We come to church to worship Him from our hearts because God is our God, my personal God not just the God of this world in an impersonal way. But there is a real and genuine and sincere relationship from our hearts that is real, personal and very reassuring.

Revelation 21:4, “*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*”

21:4 (Former things are passed away) -- Revelation 21:4 does not mean that the saints are now crying in the New Heaven and New Earth. What it means is that the days of sorrow and tears and death and separation and pain will become things of the past. These earthly activities which are part and parcel of life today will not be so in eternity. It is a statement of general declaration rather than a personal one.

The word for passed away in 21:4 is different from 21:1. 21:1 refers to perishing i.e. destroyed. 21:4 refers to leaving behind. All these hurts and pains will be left behind when the old heaven and earth are destroyed. It is amazing how different God looks at this world. Man sees this world as their home despite her sins and evil. Man holds on to this world so strongly as if this is the best. How foolish man is. God has promised mankind a new heaven and new world that is perfect and eternal. It is not a place of weeping or dying or sobbing or crying or pain. The new earth is blissful and sweet. Fragrant and glorious and pure and bright is the new earth and heaven. It has the light and holiness of God emanating from His holy throne.

Revelation 21:5, “*And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.*”

21:5 (Christ made all things new) – Christ will make all things new i.e. brand new (*Kainos*). Christ has done it! He did it with His shed blood for each and every one of us. John was told to write them down for these revelations are true and faithful i.e. Christ can be trusted to tell the truth. Believe Christ.

These revelations concerning the new heaven and earth are real! They will become a reality in God’s time. Believe now in the Lord Jesus Christ and the reality will begin immediately! It is a matter of time i.e. “when” and not “if”. **2**

Corinthians 5:17, “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new [kainos] creature: old things are passed away; behold,*

all things are become new.”

Revelation 21:6-7, *“And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”*

21:6-7 (We must overcome) – Christ is the one in charge of the beginning and the end. The plan of salvation for mankind is now completed. “It is done.” He calls Himself the Alpha and the Omega (the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet) the beginning and the end of all things. Everything is now concluded. In the alphabet contains all writings. Christ is the beginning of ALL revelations. If there are two words to summarize the whole Bible it will be “Jesus Christ”.

1 Corinthians 13:10-12, *“But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”* With the completion of the Bible what is known of all mankind by God is now also known by all believers. With the book of Revelation completed, we now know our end from the beginning.

After reading all these truths, are you spiritually thirsty? This is a thirst for the living water. Drinking it and you will never thirst again.

The ones who continues to persevere and holdfast to the very end will inherit all things (“overcometh” is in the present participle). Jesus will be His God and he shall be God’s son. This is the offer of salvation to all who have ears to hear, please hear.

Revelation 21:8, *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”*

21:8 (The second death) – But the contrast is also very clear. It says, *“the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”*

“Fearful” – These are the cowards. They are the timid ones. **Matthew 10:33**, *“But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”* They will not stand up for Christ and defend His holy Word and Name.

“Unbelieving” – These are the faithless. They belong to the stony ground and ground with rocks underneath as depicted in the Parable of the Sower cf. Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23. And **Hebrews 11:6**, *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* **Romans 14:23**, *“And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”* They believe with their lips only and not their heart.

“Abominable” – That which is polluted and vile, wicked and evil. It comes from the root word “to stink.” Deeds and actions and thoughts that belong to this category are included in this word. This includes the sins of idolatry.

“Murderers” – He breaks the 6th Commandment. Jesus says that if anyone is angry with his brother without a cause he has committed murder. These are the ones who hold a grudge and never let go. Character assignation would also be included here.

“Whoremongers” – These are the immoral persons. Fornication, adultery and all forms of sexual sins will be committed by them. These sexual sins would include homosexuality. Homosexuals will have no part in the kingdom of heaven.

“Sorcerers” – It comes from the word for “pharmacy”. These are those who delve in witch craft. Necromancy and wizardry will be part of their way of life.

“Idolaters” – They worship idols. Anyone or thing that takes first place in the persons’ life is an idol. God must be on the throne of our hearts.

“Liars” – They tell lies. Lying is part of their lives. They are the compulsive liars. This sin would include deceivers.

These sinners commit the above sins as part of their lives. These are habitual sins. Jesus says that they will have no part in the Kingdom of Heaven instead they will have their part in the Lake of Fire which burns with fire and brimstone. This is the second death.

This is the last and final appeal to all sinners to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

a. The Fourth Vision: Christ and the Heavenly Reality – 21:9-22:5

b. The New Jerusalem – 21:9-21

21:9-21 (The description of the New Jerusalem) --

The New Jerusalem is the next focus. Whether there will be any other city in the New Earth and New Heaven, they are not mentioned. But one city is singled out for deliberate and careful mention. It is none other than the city of David, Jerusalem. Apparently the capital city is of utmost importance to God. It is the center of a kingdom's rule and authority. Every kingdom has a capital city and so has God's. The capital city is the heart of the kingdom from which the political, economic and religious aspects of the kingdom emanate and reside.

21:9-11 (Called the Bride, the Lamb's Wife) –

Revelation 21:9-11, *“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;”*

One of the angels which had the seven vials came and spoke with John. He will now show him the bride, the Lamb's wife, the New Jerusalem. Why is the New Jerusalem called the Lamb's wife? Remember that the marriage supper of the Lamb is over. The bride is now the wife. This is a picture of a marital relationship which is similar to what the Bible explains in Ephesians 5:22-33. The everlasting and mysterious nature of marriage is emphasized here. In the case of the husband and wife it is two become one. Likewise the special and mysterious nature of marriage is used by God to demonstrate His relationship with His people.

John was brought to a great and high mountain. He saw the great city Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God. The city possesses the glory of God. It was glorious and crystal clear green in colour as jasper stone. The capital city, also the wife of Christ, represents the body of believers as this is their kingdom, or eternal and final home.

21:12-14 (The 12 Gates and 12 Foundations) –

Revelation 21:12-14, *“And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north*

three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

The city had a great and high wall. It also had twelve gates with twelve angels and the names written on them were the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There are twelve angels for twelve gates indicating that there was an angel each protecting the twelve gates ensuring only those whose names were written on the gates were allowed to enter. The assurance to the occupants is that they are the chosen ones and are found in the New Jerusalem by the grace and mercy of God.

On the East were 3 gates, on the south were 3 gates, on the west were 3 gates, and on the north were 3 gates. The names of the 12 tribes of Israel, written on the gates, point to the ones who will be found inside the city. These are the OT saints who looked forward to what Christ would do for them in the future on Calvary.

The wall of the city had 12 foundations. In these foundations were the names of the 12 apostles. The foundations indicate the Scriptures which is the perfect Word of God. **Ephesians 2:20**, *“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”* The apostles and their writings and ministry would be the emphasis here. The NT saints are saved based upon both the OT and NT.

The reference to Israel and the apostles would point to all the redeemed. Both the Old and the New Testaments saints would be included here.

21:15-17 (The Dimension of the City) –

Revelation 21:15-17, *“And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.”*

John was given a golden reed to measure the city. The city is square shape. It is 12,000 furlongs in length and breadth. 12,000 furlongs is about 1,380 miles or about 2,300 km. The height is also the same length. It would be the shape of a cube. The thickness of the wall is 144 cubits i.e. 72 yards or about 216 feet or 66 meters thick. The measurement is to be understood in human terms i.e. according to the measure of a man which are also the measurements of the angel. NOTE: Mount Everest is only 8,848 meters (29,028 feet). The height of this city will dwarf Mount Everest.

The size of the enclosed perfect cuboid shape points to the great number of believers that will be present in heaven. The capital city is able to contain all of them at the same time.

21:18-21 (The Description of the 12 Gates and 12 Foundations) –

Revelation 21:18-21, “*And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*”

The wall was made of clear jasper. The city was pure gold and clear as glass.

The foundations are made of 12 different stones. *The first foundation was jasper* (like green diamond); *the second, sapphire* (brilliant blue stone—next in hardness to the diamond); *the third, a chalcedony* (an agate stone which is sky blue with coloured stripes); *the fourth, an emerald* (bright green); *The fifth, sardonyx* (red and white stripe stone); *the sixth, sardius* (different shades of red); *the seventh, chrysolite* (transparent yellow-hued stone); *the eighth, beryl* (shades of green, yellow and blue); *the ninth, a topaz* (yellow green stone); *the tenth, a chrysoprasus* (gold-tinted green stone); *the eleventh, a jacinth* (blue or violet coloured stone in John's day although reddish brown in our time); *the twelfth, an amethyst* (a purple stone).

This was a spectrum of colour with an indescribable breathtaking beauty. The author wants the believers to realize that the city would be of an indescribable beauty and brilliance. The multi-colour description of the wife of Christ demonstrates the complex make-up of all the different unique qualities of every individual believer combined together.

The material of the 12 Gates is: pearl. It was made up of 12 pearls: one pearl per gate. The pearl would be perfect and of the best quality. It would possess the greatest luster with the greatest nacre thickness. It will probably be milky white represent purity and holiness. The great value of the pearl is measured by the size of the pearl. Since the entire gate is made up of one gigantic pearl each and there are twelve gates altogether, all these gates would be made up of the pearl of greatest price!

c. New Life with God and the Lamb – 21:22-22:5

21:22-23 (No Temple, No Sun, No Moon) –

Revelation 21:22-23, *“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”*

There was no temple in eternity. For the Temple is God the Father and the Lamb. There is no need to go to the temple for the believer will and can go to God and the Lord Jesus Christ directly. The Temple has always been seen and understood as the home of God where the presence of God resides. Now that we are in eternity, this “mediatorial” structure which served its purpose only when there are saints with a sinful nature. Now that all saints have been given a glorified body and there is no more sin, death and Hell, the Temple is no longer needed.

There is no need for the sun or the moon. The brilliant light that emanates from the glory of God and the Lamb will be light enough for eternity. These temporal general revelations of God which shines forth the great glory of God (cf. Psalm 19:1-6) on earth will pale to insignificance compared to the greater glory that emanates from Him Himself! These objects of reflected glory are also not needed.

21:24-27 (Always Bright and Safe and Glorious) –

Revelation 21:24-27, *“And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”*

All believers will delight in and enjoy walking in the light of God. Note the use of the plural in the word “nations.” All of us will be royalty and we will bring ourselves into the presence of God in our glorified state, as kings.

The gates will never be shut all day and all night. Only believers will be present. Once again God mentions those who are excluded—the defile objects (every object contaminated by sinful man) and all persons who work abomination (detestable persons especially idolaters) and all liars. Their names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life. This is the believers’ forever assurance that salvation is not of man but entirely of God.