

## The Revelation of Jesus Christ

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### GOD WILL DWELL WITH US FOREVER

#### Revelation 21:1-3

**"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. <sup>2</sup> Then I, John, 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 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."**

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. After John saw the Great White Throne Judgment in which the books were opened and the unsaved men were judged for their works, now the apostle sees a new heaven and a new earth. As we said last week it is not so much that the present earth is annihilated but rather it will be resurrected from its present state of slavery to the glorious eternal state (**Rom. 8:21**).
- B. Heaven and earth will be new in the sense that they will be of a new nature, freed from evil and corruption. The old is over and everything is new. Paul uses exactly this same expression to talk about what happens to those of us who are in Christ.  
**2 Cor. 5:17** **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."**
- C. The earth will be partially restored at the beginning of the Millennium but completely renewed when the Father descends along with the New Jerusalem.

#### II. THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH OUR ETERNAL HOME

- A. **John recorded this vision to reveal our final and eternal home.** Throughout this passage there are many allusions to **Is. 60** and **65**; and **Ez. 40-48**.  
**Is. 65:17-19** **'For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. <sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. <sup>19</sup> I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying'**  
**Is. 66:22-23** **"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. <sup>23</sup>... All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the Lord."**  
**2 Pe. 3:13** **"Pero nosotros esperamos, según sus promesas, cielos nuevos y tierra nueva, en los cuales mora la justicia"**
- B. The 4 passages that use the phrase, **"New heavens and earth"** are in the context of both the Millennium and the eternal state. In a single passage, prophetic Scripture is often written about two events together that are separated by time. **Many Scriptures have substantial initial fulfillment and then future final fulfillment.** For example **Jl. 2: 28-32** in **Acts. 2: 1-21**.

- C. John distinguished these two aspects of the events of the future and applied the term **"new heaven and new earth"** to the eternal state after the Millennium. Isaiah's vision of the future was more general, while John's was more specific. Similarly, Old Testament prophets spoke of the coming of the Messiah, but did not distinguish the first coming from the second coming. The subsequent revelation clarified that there would be two coming. This is in harmony with the way God has revealed many things in His Word: first in general, then more specifically. For example **Is 61:1-2** and **Lk. 4:18**.
- D. The grace manifested on the New Earth begins with an expression during the Millennium in which **there will be substantial but not total justice**. Justice on earth during the Millennium **focuses on the quality of Jesus' government** much more than its expression in people's hearts. However, justice has its highest expression on the New Earth when the government of Jesus and the hearts of the people are in full agreement.

**1 Cor. 15:24 y 28 "hen comes the end, when He [Jesus] delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.... 28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him [The Father] who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."**

### III. THE NEW JERUSALEM

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

- A. In the same vision, John then saw the holy **"city descend from the sky of God"** (**Rev. 21:10; 3:12; Heb. 11: 13-16**). This city is uniquely **"holy,"** in contrast to the ancient Jerusalem (**Rev. 11:8; Is. 52:1**) in which no lie will be told, evil will never be spoken, a gloomy business will not even be discussed, an unclean image will not be seen, nor will it be corrupted but life of God will always be manifest.
- B. As the earthly Jerusalem will be the capital of Jesus Christ during the Millennium, the **"New Jerusalem"** will be His capital after the Millennium. In the simile bridegroom-husband, the city is like an ornate bride, and Christ the husband (**Rev. 21:9-10; Rev 3:12**) Obviously, some symbolism is present in the descriptions of the New Jerusalem.
- C. Although it is a real literal city, Her glory will far exceed the language that John uses to portray it. John's language is an attempt to describe what is indescribable. The use of the figure **"as a bride adorned for her husband"** should not lead us to conclude that the New Jerusalem is identical to the church; Here **"the city"** is compared to a bride which basically describes Her preparation and dignity. This city, rather, encompasses the two previous brides of Christ: Israel and the church that will actually be His only wife forever. **The city constitutes at the same time the corporate identity of those who reside there.** Like Babylon, it is a real city, but it also represents the people who live there.
- D. The **"city"** contains people, but it is not another name or a reference for those people. This should be clear because: (1) the city is like a bride, so it cannot be the

bride, (2) **v.7** says that the saints inherit the city, so they cannot be the city, and (3) the city is described as a place where the saints live (**Rev. 21: 24-26**).

- E. The book of Revelation as a whole can be characterized as the history of two cities, with the subtitle: The harlot and the bride "The **"New Jerusalem"** and the **"new heaven and the new earth"** are two different figures that describe the eternal abode of believers which will be a completely new creation of God that John saw in his visions: first as a new earth and then as a new city.

#### IV. HEAVEN ON EARTH

- A. The centerpiece of God's eternal purpose is for Jesus to return to establish the dominion of His Kingdom over all the earth while uniting the heavenly and earthly kingdoms.

**Eph. 1:9-10** *"having made known to us the mystery [hidden plan] of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, <sup>10</sup> that in the dispensation [at the right time] of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him."*

- B. Heaven speaks of the supernatural kingdom where God's presence is openly manifested. The earth speaks of the physical kingdom as the place where the natural process, human emotion and physical sensation reach their maximum expression.
- C. God's purpose has always been to live together with His people **face to face on this earth**. This is the most difficult maximum reality but that God determined to achieve through Christ. The dilemma is that God cannot violate His fiery holiness and yet will not violate man's free will. Therefore, He had to establish a process of salvation that created the context for Him to dwell face to face with humans. God can only live on earth after nations live in total obedience to Him. There are many implications for this great reality of God completely removing "the veil" that separates us from Him.

**Rev 21:3** *"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."*

- D. During the last 20 times in his vision, John heard "a strong voice" that meant the importance of the proclamation that followed. **"Behold"** further highlights its importance. This voice announced that the **"tabernacle of God,"** evidently the whole **New Jerusalem**, was now **"among men."** Finally, **the relationship between God and humanity, which God has always wanted people to enjoy, will be a reality** (**Rev. 7:15-17; Gen. 3:8; 17:7; Ex. 6:7-8; 29:45; Lev 26:11-12; Num. 15:41; Deut. 29:13; 2 Sam. 7:24; Jer. 7:23; 11:4; 30:22; 31:1 and 33; 32:38; Ez. 34:24; 36:28; 37:23, 27; Zac. 2:10; 8:8; 2 Cor. 6:16**). **God will dwell among His clean people, and they will experience intimate fellowship with Him.** This is the supreme blessing of the New Jerusalem (**Ez. 48:35**).
- E. This fellowship existed, to some extent, when God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and when He lived among the Israelites in the tabernacle and later in the temple, hence the reference to the **"tabernacle"** (**Rev. 13:6; 15:5**). It also occurred partially when Jesus Christ came and "dwelt" among people (**John 1:14**). It

exists today when God inhabits the bodies of Christians individually (**1 Cor. 6:19-20**) and the church in a corporate manner (**Eph. 2:21-22**).

- F. The essence of v.3 is the focal point of all of John's description of the New Jerusalem: God's immediate presence with men.** The prominence of the subject is evident in **v.3** by virtue of a fivefold repetition of the same essential truth in that verse. It is the main focus again in **Rev. 21:7**, where the promise to the overcomer is that **God would be his God and he would be the son of God**. The glory of God in the city in **Rev. 21:11** is another indication of **God's immediate presence, a presence that is also the direct emphasis of Rev. 22:3-4** that speaks of the presence of God's throne and the Lamb in the city and immediate access to Him by His servants, allowing them to see His face.
- G.** The plural "**peoples**" allude to other groups besides Israel in the New Jerusalem. God had promised Abraham that He would bless "**all the families of the earth**" through the patriarch (**Gen. 12:3; cf. Gal. 3: 8, 16, 26-29**). This is the final fulfillment of that promise.

## V. APOCALYPSE NOW

- A. What a glorious conclusion to this whole story, we come up from the wilderness of tribulation lying on the chest of our Beloved (**Song 8:5**). **This should fill us not only with hope but with a total focus on our life's perspective.**
- B. Heaven is not an ethereal reality but a city on a mountain of colossal proportions and unrivaled beauty. The book of **Hebrews** also contains four different references to the Holy City (**11:10, 11:16, 12:22, 13:14**). **These references clarify that the Great City is our future hope but also a present reality.**
- C. Just as Abraham "**he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God**" (**Heb. 11:10**), and the writer states that "**we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come**" (**Heb. 13:14**).

**Heb. 12:22** "...But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem."

**Phil. 3:20-21 y 4:1** "**But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. <sup>4:1</sup> Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!**"

## VI. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How much impact does the reality of heaven have on your present reality?
2. How can you grow your hope in this time by considering the future that awaits us?
3. Do you consider that you live expectantly of the return of Jesus? Explain how you show it in your life.
4. Why do you think these truths make us stand firm in the Lord?