

The New Heaven and New Earth - Part 1

Revelation 21-22

Well we are at the final portion of our study of the book of Revelation and this final chapter focuses on what theologians call, “the eternal state”.

INTRODUCTION: Hebrew stories are told very differently from stories we are accustomed to in the West. Our stories are told beginning, middle, end. Hebrew stories are told beginning, middle, new beginning.

EXAMPLE: Job - beginning he’s a wealthy land owner / rancher. Middle, he loses everything. At the end, there is a new beginning, all is restored 2 fold.

The Bible as a whole follows this pattern.

- **Beginning** - God creates the Heavens and the Earth.
- **Middle** - Sin infects and spreads, the curse follows and all the things associated with the curse.
- **New Beginning** - Jesus returns to set up a new Heaven and a new Earth.

With that in mind, look with me at Revelation 21 verse 1.

TEXT: Revelation 21:1–4 (ESV)

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.

The first thing that John sees in this final vision is...

1. A New World -

Let me show you something interesting about the book of Revelation:

TIME is moving **FORWARD**,
STORY is moving **BACKWARD**

- **Revelation 1** - We see Jesus walking amidst the 7 lampstands. Now where do we find 7 lampstands in the Bible? In the Temple. Whom did God use to build the first temple? Solomon. So this first section is a Revelation of Jesus as one Greater than Solomon, with a temple not only covering the temple mount, but even all of Asia Minor. **KINGS**.
- **Revelation 4 and 5** - We see Jesus revealed as the Lion of Judah, the root of David. You see chronologically we are moving forward, but in the story of Israel we are moving backward. **SAMUEL**.
- **Revelation 7** - 7 trumpets sound, which is home to a prostitute and the great city falls. Where in the OT do we find trumpets blasting, walls falling and a prostitute living in the

midst? This harkens back to Joshua and Jericho. JOSHUA.

- **Revelation 15** - Having escaped the beast of the sea, the people of God sing the, “song of Moses”. Well where in the OT did the people sing a song of Moses? EXODUS.
- **Revelation 20** - The earth is destroyed with fire. Where was the Earth destroyed in the OT? The great Noatic flood - **GENESIS**.
- **Revelation 21** - We see the relationship of humanity and God fully restored and paradise lost is found again.

So the thrust of history is that as time moves forward, the story is in a sense moving backward across the narrative.

In spite of the enemies best attempts to stop it, God is getting His people back into Eden.

This will involve **A RADICAL REFORMATION OF THE PLANET**

NOW REMEMBER WHERE WE ARE IN OUR TIMELINE: The tribulation is over, the Millennial reign is over, the Final Judgements are over, the elements of this planet have been burnt with intense heat like a furnace. Take a moment and imaging ***what now exists is something like what existed prior to the FLOOD.***

You see, prior to the flood the planet was very different. We are told in Genesis that this earth was surrounded with a pillow of water... which was most likely a form of vapor.

Genesis 1:6–8 (ESV) ⁶ And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷ And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

So this atmosphere that surrounded the planet before the flood contributed to life being able to prosper in a way we can hardly imagine.

- **Humans could live hundreds of years.** Someone asked recently if Christians believe in humanoid species like the Neanderthals? Yes, BUT, we simply believe they were really old humans. Have you ever noticed when a person grows old, their soft tissue never stops growing? Their nose grows, their ears grow. Well what if a person lived 700 years? Can you imagine that their skeleton would look different?

Well, not only is that plausible, but we know that Neanderthals cross bred with humans. Two distinct species can not do that, or if they do their progeny can't reproduce. A horse and a donkey, produce a ***sterile mule***... you see? But you can't

breed mules.

So the atmosphere combined with a pristine gene pool, caused early man to live far longer than they do today.

Keep in mind, before the flood, it seems that Earth was basically a massive hyperbaric oxygen chamber.

A new study from **Tel Aviv University and the Shamir Medical Center** in Israel has shown that hyperbaric oxygen treatments in normal healthy adults can halt and even reverse the aging process of blood cells.¹

- Not only great humans, but **Great animals like Dinosaurs** could walk the planet and grow to enormous size due to the proper climate allowing their prey to flourish, and their oxygen to be sufficient for them to survive.
- **All manner of life giving plants existed.** Remember after the fall, one of the great concerns was that in a fallen state, Adam and Eve might eat of the tree of life and live forever? I believe that was a literal tree that had remarkable healing properties. Remember there were two significant trees in the garden, the tree of good and evil, and the tree of life. Adam and Even did not leave the garden willingly, they were driven out then an angel guarded the gate of the city with a flaming sword.

SO WHAT CHANGED? What happened to the long life and the large animals and these life giving plants? Well, we are told in Genesis 7, that God caused the firmament above to fall upon the earth. So this watery cushion around the planet came down and flooded the earth. This caused the continents to shift, this caused great mountains to be thrust into the sky, This brought about radical changes to the atmosphere. Oxygen levels were dramatically changed. Radiation from the sun heated the planet in a new way. Ice caps formed at the poles. The water cycle became more violent and less predictable.

WHAT'S THE POINT? Well in Revelation 20, God basically nukes the planet.

2 Peter 3:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved...

WHAT HAPPENS AS A RESULT? New life is going to emerge as it did after the flood, but also we see that this would likely restore the firmament. The waters above return, and this planet is restored to its former glory.

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.**

¹ <https://www.icr.org/article/hyperbaric-research-and-the-pre-flood-atmosphere>

Where did the sea go? It went to the place it came from, back into the firmament. You say, “well does that mean no more ocean? No more lakes?”, no we are told a great river flows out of the city and those things will be remade in time.

Not only a new World but notice secondly...

2. A New City

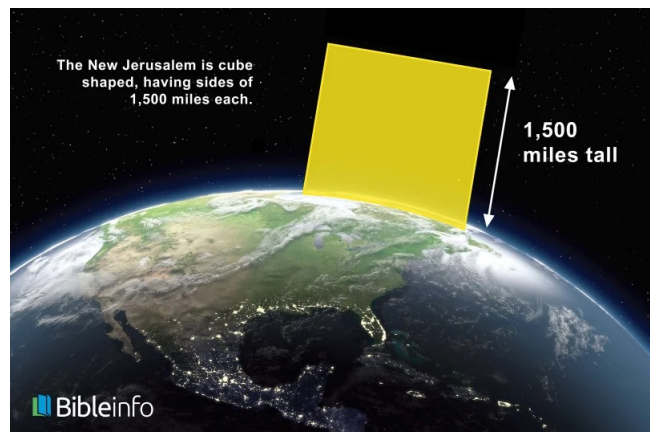
2. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

And now we see a grand and glorious 1,500 mile high city called, “the NEW JERUSALEM” coming down out of heaven to rest on Earth.

If that happened today as things are, it would cause the poles to shift and the planet would wobble out of orbit. But, with the return of the firmament this will be very possible.

So see here, Heaven is not something way out in space that you’ll go off to one day, but will exist here on this planet.

You say, “But Pastor it says there will be a NEW EARTH”. Yes, that’s correct, but it is new in the same sense that it was new after the flood. It’s not completely different, but simply remade.



1. **This was the pattern when God first destroyed the Earth with a Flood** - it wasn't totally annihilated, but it was wiped clean and reborn. So there is precedence for this view.
2. **Paul Argued that the Current Creation would be set free - Romans 8:20–21 (ESV)** ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
3. **The Analogy between the New Earth and our New Bodies.** The differences between our present bodies and our resurrection bodies, breathtaking though they will be, will not take away the *continuity*:

4. **The victory over Satan.** If God would have to annihilate the present cosmos, Satan would have won a great victory, for then Satan would have succeeded in so devastatingly corrupting the present universe and the present earth that God could do nothing with it but blot it out of existence. But Satan was decisively defeated. God will reveal the full dimensions of that defeat when he renews this very earth on which Satan deceived mankind, and finally banishes from it all the results of Satan's evil work. God will maintain his creation. There will be **continuity** as well as **discontinuity** between the present earth and the new earth.
5. **Kainos versus Neos** - In II Peter 3: 13 and in Revelation 21: 1 the Greek word used to designate the newness of the new earth is not neos but kainos. The word neos means new in time or origin, whereas the word kainos means new in nature or in quality.

In 1931, Swiss theologian **Edward Thurneysen writes of this new earth**, "The world into which we shall enter in the Parousia of Jesus Christ is therefore not another world; it is this world, this heaven, this earth; both, however, passed away and renewed. It is these forests, these fields, these cities, these streets, these people, that will be the scene of redemption. At present they are battlefields, full of the strife and sorrow of the not-yet-accomplished consummation; then they will be fields of victory, fields of harvest, where out of seed that was sown with tears the everlasting sheaves will be reaped and brought home" (Zwischen den Zeiten, 1931, p. 209).

THINK OF NEW EARTH as a SET FREE OLD EARTH.

When we properly understand biblical teachings about the new earth, many other Scripture passages begin to form a significant pattern.

Hebrews tells us that Abraham was looking forward to this city... Heb. 11:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God....that is this city the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:5–6 (ESV)

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

That is one of the sweetest verses in the whole bible. As a matter of fact, if I were to get a tattoo, that may be what mine would say, “Behold, I am making all things new”

That is the point of Christianity by the way - Jesus makes all things new. You say, but Pastor that is way out in the future. No my friend, the OUTSIDE change happens in the future. The INSIDE change happens now.

God changes you, and that change spill over into your relationships.. you family changes, your community changes, your workplace changes. Then eventually God gives us a planet that serves as a proper host to changed people.

That brings us to point #3...

3. A New People

5b. Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”⁶ And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.”

Again, I am of the opinion that this is literal, life giving, water. We will later see the tree of life in the garden is now cultivated and planted all down this glorious river.

At this point our physical bodies have been raised and reunified with our Spirits. We still eat, we still play, we will work but work becomes the most fulfilling experience.

In his book, “The Weight of Glory” C.S. Lewis makes this profound observation that we would do well to consider:

“...remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare.

There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit...”

So we see a NEW EARTH, A NEW CITY, and A NEW PEOPLE.

All of those promises of the Bible come true -

Psalm 37: 11 “But the meek shall possess the land.”

Jesus quotes it in **Matt. 5:5** “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”

Well, they really do.

I believe that the promise of God to ethnic Israel is literally fulfilled, they inhabit the land nearest to the Holy City.

Where will we live? Well we will likely have a place in the New Jerusalem, but our portion will likely be elsewhere.

Revelation 21:7–8 (ESV)

⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

John pauses to remind us, this is NOT everyone’s future.

I may sound like the most tone deaf man, politically incorrect man alive, but I want to make this very clear. Not everyone will be here.

What is the defining mark of the one who is a citizen of Heaven? He or she has been changed by Jesus Christ.

Jesus has never saved anyone He did not change.

I John 1:6

If we say we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NASB95)

⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Galatians 5:19-21 (NASB95)

¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

ILLUSTRATION; GOT RUN OVER BY AN 18 WHEELER

Paul Washer once illustrated it this way... *Imagine I came in here late today and one of the deacons came up to me and said, "Brother Zach why are you late today?" What if I said, "I'm sorry, but as I was heading out of Flora Parke subdivision, and I saw something in the road and I got out to look at it, and as I was looking a huge 18 wheeler ran over me so I'm late. You say, that's absurd you couldn't be walking you would be drastically changed.*

Has God become smaller than a logging truck? Did he change you?

Jesus said, "A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit."

John the Baptist said, "The ax is already laid at the foot of the tree, every tree therefore that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NASB95)

¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.