

Won't We Be Sad in Heaven?

Introduction

- Church Age (current)
- Rapture (before the Tribulation of Rev. 4–5)
- Rev. 6–19 (during the Tribulation) judgments of God, marriage supper of the Lamb, Second Coming, destruction of beast, unbelievers
- Rev. 20 (after the Tribulation) binding of Satan, Millennium, Satan released, last battle, Great White Throne judgment

1. A New Creation

Rev. 21:1 – I saw ... a new _____ and a new _____

Isaiah 65, similarities

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Isaiah 65, differences

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2. A New City

Rev. 21:2 – I saw ... the holy city, new _____

Why the new Jerusalem is NOT symbolic

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Why the new Jerusalem is NOT the church

- Greek word used for bride is different in 19:7 vs. 21:2
- The voice of the verbs used to describe the bride
- Israel and the current Jerusalem are also called God's bride

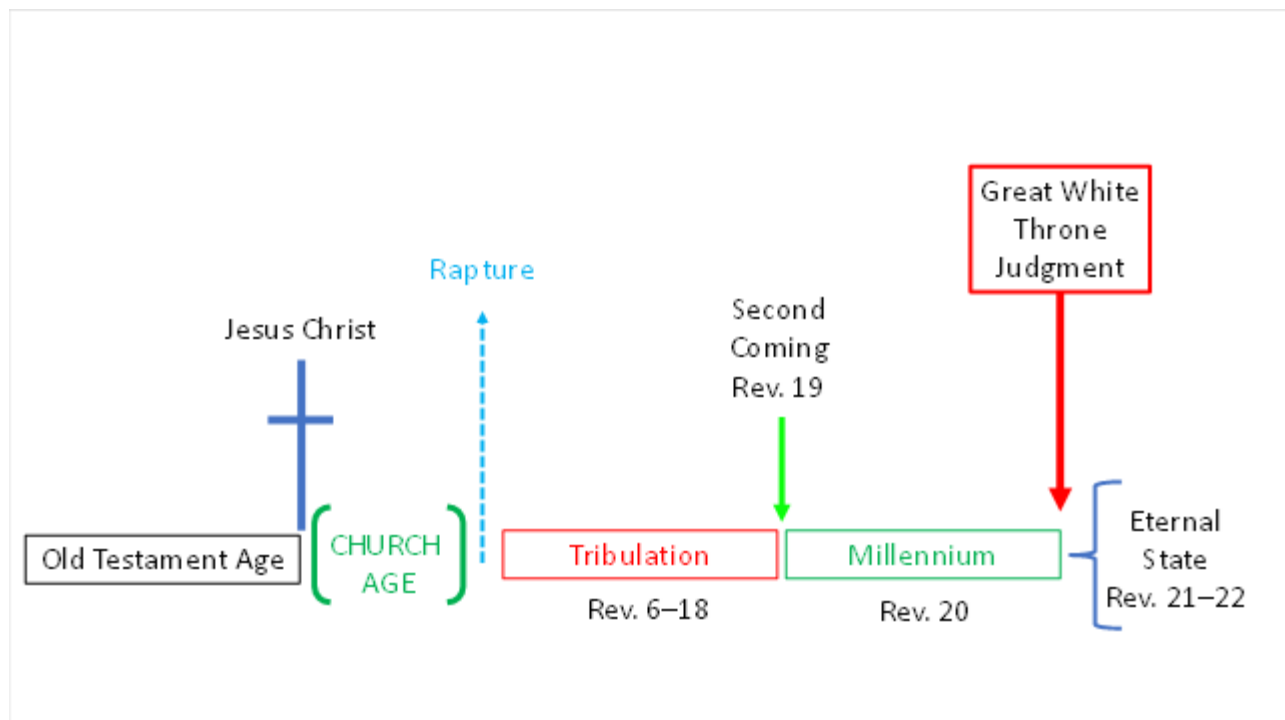
The new Jerusalem is a literal city in eternity future that brings the saint of all ages together

3. A New Relationship

Rev. 21:3-4 – I heard ... a loud _____ from the _____, saying ... the first things have passed away.

Why will we not be sad in heaven?

- Tears, death, mourning, crying and pain will be _____
- Since death will be gone, and from 21:4 that is coupled with tears/crying/etc., there is at least the possibility that our resurrection bodies _____ these other things as well
- It may be that we can only feel _____ in this life
- We will have a clearer perspective on God's righteous _____
- What about the rich man and Lazarus, doesn't the prove we shall see those in hell?
- We shall be in the personal _____ of God (Rev. 21:3) and that is associated with _____ -> Psalm 16:11, Jude 1:2



Won't We Be Sad in Heaven?

Where did I get the title for this sermon? Our home meets at Calvin and Alyssa's, whom you know have four children. Children ask questions, children ask hard questions, children ask hard questions that we as adults can answer in a way that will satisfy our children, but they will in no way satisfy us as adults. Why? There are larger issues, deeper ideas, lots of background information we need to sort through ... but we can usually satisfy a child with a shorter answer. We are having our discussion and Alyssa passes on a question that little Solomon asked. His question was ... "won't we be sad in heaven knowing that people we know are suffering in hell?" I muttered through an answer that used Rev 21:4 "He will wipe away all our tears" ... but like you ... I was not satisfied with that answer. So I stand here wanting to dissect Revelation 21:1-4, which is my text this morning. At best I can only hope to give you some thoughts to consider. This is the introductory study for this topic, all subject to change with data.

There will be some speculation in this sermon. Its ok to speculate with the text of scripture, as long as you hold fast to what is clearly taught ... and only hold loosely to that which is not clearly taught ... but perhaps implied.

Context ...

- Rapture of the church (after Rev. 1–3, but before Rev. 4–5)
- Rev 6–18 the various judgments upon the people of the earth and antichrists kingdom
- Rev. 19 Second Coming, destruction of the beast and false prophet, all unbelievers removed in judgment
- Rev. 20 Satan bound, First Resurrection, Millennium, Satan freed, Final battle, Great White Throne Judgment (unbelievers of all time), Lake of Fire (Death and Hades thrown in)
- Rev. 21 ...

Text is Revelation 21:1-4 <READ IT>

1. A New Creation

Rev. 21¹ Then I saw ... a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea.

Is there really going to be a NEW heaven and NEW earth? ... you won't believe how many big-name theologians there are that believe that God is just doing a facelift on the old, slap a fresh coat of paint on it ...

Not the same as depicted in the NT

- Matt. 19:28 –

²⁷ Then Peter said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?"

²⁸ And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

regeneration (παλιγγενεσία) of all things ... *the restoration of a thing to a pristine state, its renovation*, the idea here is that God is going to restore something that was lost to the old earth ... so this passage doesn't seem to indicate anything entirely new, but merely something that is renovated.

- Acts 3:19 –

¹⁹ "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.

times of refreshing ... literally, as a relief from heat *coolness, refreshing, relaxation*; figuratively, of the messianic age as relief from distressing circumstances *rest, refreshing* ... Notice that last phrase ... "which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time."

These NT depictions pertain to the millennium ... but this is not what is in view here in Revelation 21 ... THESE new heavens and new earth are AFTER the Millennium! This is something different ... this is not rejuvenation or renovation of what already exists ... this is something different. Ask Pastor Chad whether there is a difference between something new, and something that you must renovate.

The text says the first heaven and earth passed away ... so the question is ... is there a Biblical basis for this earth passing away? Yes, it WAS revealed to the OT prophets that the first heavens and earth would perish (Psalm 102:25–26, Isaiah 51:6) ... in the NT, 2 Peter 3:10 describes the complete destruction of both the existing heavens and earth.

This new heavens and new earth in Rev. 21 must be a second creation ... I think another ex-nihilo creation! Creation from nothing.

Now, Peter said the OT prophets spoke of things in ancient times ... is there any passage in the OT that speaks of the new heaven and earth?

Is there any basis for a new heavens and new earth in the OT? YES ... in Isaiah 65.

However, we must first engage in some very important concepts when dealing with OT prophecy. You see, there are several interesting things about OT prophecy that we need to get clear before we go on.

- Often times the OT prophet conveyed future events that were a mixture of events that were to be fulfilled in the near future and those that were to be fulfilled in the far future. The classic passage that Jesus quotes in his synagogue reading is an example. He quoted Isaiah 61:1–2 but stopped at 2a. The passage goes on to mention the day of vengeance and the millennial blessings that follow. The first part was fulfilled in His reading, the second is for the future Tribulation period.
- The OT provides end time events, but the information is distributed among many prophets and much of the information is not presented in chronological order. We will see that in Isaiah 65.
- There is actually very little new information in the book of Revelation, however, its major contribution to Biblical studies is that it puts all the events (all predicted in the OT) in CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER. Sometime there are aspects to the order in Revelation that help us determine where something in the OT goes in time. For example, Rev. 21:1 tells us in the new earth there is no more sea. Any prophecy that mentions the restoration of "millennial-type" things and also includes a reference to the sea must refer to the millennium. For example: Zech. 9:10 "And his dominion will be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth." Zech. 14:8 "And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter."

With this understanding, we now look at the only place in the OT where the new heaven and new earth is mentioned; Isaiah 65. READ TEXT starting at Isaiah 65:17 ...

Isaiah mentions some aspects of the Rev. 21 timeframe, but goes on to describe a time which includes *sin and death*. Which are incompatible with the eternal state. (Rev. 21:3–4).

Isaiah 65

- ¹⁷ new heaven and new earth
- ¹⁷ former things will not be remembered
or come to mind
- ¹⁹ no longer weeping ... crying

Rev 21–22

- ¹ new heaven and new earth
- ⁴ first things passed away
- ⁴ wipe away tears ... no crying

Those are certainly similarities, but there are the following differences

- ²⁰ youth will die at 100
- ²¹ build houses
- ²¹ plant vineyards
- ²³ bear children

- ⁴ no more death
- ³ new Jerusalem coming down from heaven ...
- ^{22²⁻³} tree of life, no curse
- ⁴ no mourning, crying, pain; also Matt 22:30 – in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven

So while this passage in Isaiah 65 says some similar things wrt Revelation 21, there are some major differences that we would see as pertaining to the millennial reign of the Messiah, most notably the mention of death.

One last thing in Rev. 22:1 ...

Also, he saw that there was no longer any sea. The first verse in chapter 22 indicates that there will indeed be water in the new earth ... the water of life. Speculation: there will be trout in the river of life and in any river and stream and creek in which the river of life flows ... and the trout fishing will be good in all of those streams.

Application?

There are theological and Biblical reasons why there will be a new heaven and new earth?

- This present earth is associated with sin, man's rebellion happened here, there must be a new one eventually
- In Gen. 1, it was God's intention to rule on earth through a human representative ... that failed when Adam sinned. In order for God to be vindicated, He must rule over this present earth or He is defeated ... and He will for 1000 years. That has several implications for our present day thinking ...
 - From a Biblical perspective, it is silly to think that we will destroy the earth with climate change, global warming, or any other term the environmental extremists will invent to scare the money out of us
 - From a Biblical perspective, it is silly to think that we will destroy the earth with nuclear weapons or an Imperial Death Star laser ray beam ...
 - From a Biblical perspective, it is silly to think that the earth will be destroyed IN ANY MANNER before the Lord God Almighty reigns in this earthly realm during the millennium.
 - HE is the one who will destroy the heavens and the earth ... and it will make way for the new

2. A New City

21² And I saw ... the holy city, coming down ... out of heaven from God,
new Jerusalem, made ready ... as a bride adorned for her husband.

What is the New Jerusalem? There is a vast tendency for believers of all types, and most non-believers to interpret the New Jerusalem symbolically instead of as a literal future city. The major problem with that approach is the flexibility that the interpreter has in assigning meaning to every aspect of the text to agree with their own presuppositions. When you spiritualize the text, you lose the ability to understand what the text actually means.

Why it's not symbolic but literal:

- John is given the physical measurements by an angel; why would He give precise measurements of a symbolic inanimate object ... the mere act of measuring something points to its certain physical reality
- All the aspects of a literal city, namely, its dimensions, the foundations, the walls, the gates, and the streets are mentioned ... sure seems like a city to me ... only think missing is who the mayor of the New Jerusalem is ... hint: there will be no mayor ... there will be a King.
- An actual physical city in eternity future is a completely logical reference point for believers who have been raised and possess physical resurrection bodies ... Luke 24 "a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."
- New Jerusalem is a perfect cube (Rev. 21:16) ... just like the holy of holies in the temple (1 Kings 6:20). Why? The holy of holies was the unique place where the glory of the Father would appear, once a year to the High Priest on the day of Atonement ... and in the New Jerusalem, He will dwell with us ... not just appear to the High Priest once a year ... He will dwell with us.

So the New Jerusalem is a literal city ...

But wait a second Dennis, Rev. 21:2 says the New Jerusalem is as a bride adorned for her husband ... **isn't the church the bride of Christ** and doesn't that mean the church is the New Jerusalem? (Rev. 19:7-9)? ... and in 21:9 the angel says "I will show you the wife of the Lamb" and proceeds to give all the detailed description of the NJ. Well let's look at this very carefully ...

Go back to Rev. 19 ... before the Second Coming in verse 7.

- Greek word translated "bride" here is γυνή – woman, wife ... without reference to age
- His bride has made herself ready (aorist active indicative of ἐτοιμάζω – to prepare, active voice ... the bride has done the preparing → presumably by the righteous acts)
- Fine linen, bright and clean → righteous acts of the saints
- Vs. 14 armies of heaven, fine linen, white and clean ...

Compare with Rev. 21:2

- Greek word translated "bride" here is νύμφη – young woman engaged or newly married, young wife
- Made ready as a bride (perfect passive participle of ἐτοιμάζω – to prepare), passive voice ... the bride was not involved in her preparation here ... "having been prepared/made ready" the agent of preparation is assumed to be God Himself
- Adorned (perfect passive participle of κοσμέω – to adorn), again, passive voice ... the bride was not involved in her adornment ... "having been adorned ..."

These are not the same ... the bride in Rev. 19 is the church – but the church should be more precisely understood as betrothed to Christ, because the marriage supper of the Lamb is just before the Second Coming, AND more importantly, before the resurrection of the OT saints (Rev. 20:4), and before the events in chapter 21. So the church before the millennium AND the New Jerusalem after the millennium are each called the bride of Christ/Lamb ... BUT THEY ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.

Now what is very true from the OT, both the **nation of Israel** AND **Jerusalem** are depicted as the wife/bride of God. But the prophets, especially Hosea and Jeremiah, make it very clear that because Israel proved to be an unfaithful wife, God put her away by divorce, though He promised to remain faithful to her in His relationship as Israel's husband.

The New Jerusalem as a literal city in eternity future brings the perfect setting to resurrected saints of all ages, both the church and the nation of Israel. This is certainly attested to in that the gates are written with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel ... and the foundation stones were written with the names of the twelve apostles.

3. A New Relationship

21³ 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."

Why is it significant that God Himself will dwell with us? Because in the OT, God dwelling with the nation of Israel was such that the people could not physically see Him. He was said to dwell with them in the sense that He walked among them unknowingly

... Exod. 29:45 "I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God."

... Lev 26:12 ..."I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people."

John Himself, in his gospel, says "no one has seen God at any time ... (John 1:18) by presumption, meaning God the Father. ...

Now, we could spend lots more time dissecting this passage and going into the rest of Rev. 21 and 22 ... but let's get to little Solomon's question before we run out of daylight.

Why will we not be sad in heaven over people in hell?

- Tears, death, mourning, crying and pain will be gone ... not be part of the new order of things in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:4). The simple statement of the text of Revelation 21. The Bible says it; I believe it; that settles that!
- Since we know that our resurrection bodies will be unable to experience death (this passage as well as 1 Cor 15:42, 52–54) → there is at least the possibility (from the collection of things that pass away in this verse) that our resurrection bodies cannot experience these other things as well ... tears, mourning, crying and pain also.
- Because of the above two items, it may be that we only feel sadness for the lost in this life ... and in this life that is a good thing ... as it motivates us toward evangelism. But once the choice is made, and we depart from this life ... there is at least a chance that by the time of the New Heaven and New Earth that we will no longer feel sad for those who have chosen eternity without Christ. This relates to the next point ...
- We will have a clearer perspective of Gods righteous justice and we will fully concur with Gods judgment on the unbeliever. (Rev. 6) the souls of those killed in the Tribulation ... crying out to God for His judgment to come upon the people of the earth. There will be no flippant attitude toward sin like we have in this life. We will not have any illusions that there are good people who went to hell without Christ. We will heartily concur with Gods judgment on unbelievers and there will be no unbelievers that we think got an unfair assessment at the Great White Throne Judgment.
- Speaking of the Great White Throne judgment, remember, the new heaven and new earth hasn't been created yet ... so it may be that we will cry for the unsaved at that point ... but He will wipe away our tears ... which could mean he wipes the memory of all tears, death, mourning, crying and pain away from us ...
- Some may object with: "Won't we be able to see our loved ones in hell for all eternity ... because of the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. Doesn't that imply we will see our loved ones in hell?" Actually, Luke 16, the text only says that, in Hades, the rich man saw Abraham and Lazarus, it does not say Lazarus was able to see the rich man. If you think about it, it would make sense that the damned should be able to see the redeemed ... but not the other way around.
- We shall be personally in the presence of the Lord (Rev. 21:3) → His presence is associate with great and abundant joy (Psalm 16:11, Jude 1:24)

- All this data suggests that we will have no knowledge of the lost when we are in the new heaven and new earth. And if this entire sermon will all this speculation is incorrect ... the omniscience and omnipotence God the Almighty will have a solution to this "problem." Trust in Him.

TRANSLATION

¹ Καὶ εἶδον οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν καινὴν. ὁ γὰρ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ πρώτη γῆ ἀπῆλθαν καὶ ἡ θάλασσα οὐκ
And I saw heaven new and earth new, the for first heaven and the first earth they went away and the sea not
(AAI 1st sing of ὁράω – to see) (AAI 3rd pl of ἀπέρχομαι – to depart/go away)

ἔστιν ἔτι.
it is still.

² καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἰερουσαλὴμ καινὴν εἶδον καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ
And the city the holy Jerusalem new I saw coming down out from heaven from God
(AAI 1st sing of ὁράω – to see)
(Present active participle of καταβαίνω – to go down)

ἡτοιμασμένην ὡς νύμφην κεκοσμημένην τῷ ἀνδρὶ αὐτῆς.
having been made ready as bride/young woman having been adorned to husband her.
(Perfect passive participle of ἐτοιμάζω – to prepare) (Perfect passive participle of κοσμέω – to arrange, adorn, decorate)

³ καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου λεγούσης·
and I heard sound/voice great out from the throne saying
(aorist active indicative of ἀκούω – to hear) (Present active participle of λέγω – to say/speak)

ἰδοὺ ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ σκηνώσει μετ' αὐτῶν, καὶ αὐτοὶ λαοὶ αὐτοῦ
behold the tabernacle of God (is) with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they/themselves people His
(Future active indicative of σκηνόω – to dwell)

ἔσονται, αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς μετ' αὐτῶν ἔσται [αὐτῶν θεός],
they shall be, Himself God with them shall be (and be) their God,
(Future active indicative of εἰμί – to be)

⁴ καὶ ἐξαλείψει πᾶν δάκρυον ἐκ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν,
and he shall wipe out every tear out from the eyes of us,
(Future active indicative of ἐξαλείφω – to remove/wipe out/obliterate)

καὶ ὁ θάνατος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι οὔτε πένθος οὔτε κραυγὴ οὔτε πόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι, [ὅτι] τὰ πρῶτα ἀπῆλθαν.
and death not shall be still neither mourning neither crying neither labor/toil/pain no shall be still, because the first (things) have passed away.
(Future active indicative of εἰμί – to be) (Future active indicative of εἰμί – to be) (AAI 3rd pl of ἀπέρχομαι – to depart/go away)