

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Revelation 21:1-22:21 | Session 23 | The Final Warning and Promise to Tribulation Saints

A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

The Former Things Have All Passed Away

A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

Verse 1 —

And I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth. The James Webb Space Telescope, launched on December 25, 2021, is giving us an incredible view of the Universe every day. Today, the telescope is orbiting the Sun, a million miles from Earth, and discovering galaxies that are 20 million light years away, an incomprehensible distance¹. Every image we see from the Webb will one day be remade and John is a witness to it in his vision.

- The prophet Isaiah prophesied the new Heaven and a new Earth in Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22.
- Jesus prophesied of the existing Heaven and Earth passing away (Matthew 24:35), but that His Word would not pass away.
- Peter wrote that *new Heavens and a new Earth* are something to look forward to (2 Peter 3:13).

This will be a literal remake, everything will be made fresh. There will be no more decay. God allowed Satan access to the old Heavens and Earth, but there will be no contamination by sin in the new.

The first Heaven and the first Earth were passed away. That the verse says the **first** is gone, it should dispel the belief that there was another Earth before God created in Genesis 1. The Earth that we live on today is the first Earth, and there was none before it.

Why is there **no more sea**? No explanation is given, but it does not mean there will not be water on the new Earth (Revelation 22:1). Water will flow abundantly from the throne of God and will never be affected by drought. There will be no need for the hydrologic cycle in which the oceans act as a basic reservoir on the Earth today. Today, because we are in the habitable zone in our galaxy, our planet never loses its water, and all the water on our planet never freezes. I'm not a scientist, but the water today is the same water as 1,000 years ago. It has been recycled, stored and distributed in various ways since the beginning. A scientist will correct me, but there is no new water. However, in the **new Earth**, we might speculate that the water from God's throne will be new every moment. It is never stored; it is created fresh and new as it proceeds from the throne. There is no need to recycle it.

THE NEW JERUSALEM COMING DOWN

Verse 2 —

¹ A light year is a measure of astronomical distance. It measures the distance that light can travel in one year; about 5.88 trillion miles!

And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven. The **new city** is coming from the new heaven to the new earth. The word **holy** means *set apart*. The new city is called holy, but the old Jerusalem was also referred to as **holy** (e.g., Daniel 9:24; Nehemiah 11:1; Matthew 4:5; Revelation 11:2). We first heard about the new Jerusalem in Revelation 3:12 (Session 7). In the letter to the messenger of the assembly in Philadelphia, Jesus told them if they overcame the Tribulation, He would make them **a pillar in the temple of my God**. He also said the overcomer would have the name of the *city of God, new Jerusalem*, written upon him. We said back in chapter three that it might show these overcomers will be in service to the Lord throughout all eternity.

GOD WILL DWELL WITH MEN

Verse 3—

Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them. It was always God's plan for Israel for him to walk among them (Leviticus 26:11,12; Ezekiel 37:27; 43:7). Jesus was the foreshadowing of this (John 1:14). The Greek word **tabernacle** in John 1:14 is the same word used here. Here God dwells with men for eternity. **And will be there God**, fulfilling forever the first commandment, *thou shalt have no other gods before me*.

THE FORMER THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY

Verse 4—

This is the day everyone has waited for, no **tears, no more death, no sorrow, nor crying, and no more pain**. Those are all **former things** that have all **passed away**.

ALL THINGS ARE MADE NEW

Verse 5—

I make all things new. All things new means nothing will wear out or decay, no one will age, and bodies won't break down. How old will we be in Heaven? The Scriptures don't say. We would have to speculate.

- Adam and Eve were created as mature adults capable of raising children. Would they have stayed the same age had they not sinned? Presumably, yes, since it wasn't until sin that death came.
- Priests who served in the Tabernacle and Temple on Earth had to be between 30 and 50 years old (Numbers 4:3).
- Joseph was thirty when he was made ruler over Egypt (Genesis 41:43,46).
- David became king over Israel at age thirty (2 Samuel 5:4).
- Jesus began His earthly ministry around 30 years of age.

Or, maybe there is no age in eternity? Since we are bound by time now, we count years, but there is no time in eternity, so what is there to count? It's a bit mind-boggling to think about. Whatever the case, God is **true and faithful** in promising that **all things** will be made **new**.

THE ALPHA AND OMEGA GIVES WATER OF LIFE

Verse 6—

God always finishes what He starts. In Genesis 2:1-3, He finished Creation. In John 19:30, we read of the work of redemption being finished. Here he says **it is done**. The **Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end** has spoken. The promise is given that He will maintain our glorified bodies for us through **the fountain of the water of life**, for everyone **freely**.

THE OVERCOMERS VS. THE UNBELIEVING

Verses 7,8—

He that overcometh shall inherit all things, these are words spoken to those reading this in the coming Tribulation.

The New Jerusalem

THE NEW CITY DESCRIBED

Verse 9-27—

John got a glimpse of the New Jerusalem in verse 2, but now he gets a better look with more detail. It is no secret what he is going to see. The **angel which had the seven vials full of the seven plagues** informs John that he will show him **the bride, the Lamb's wife**. It should be noted that the Church is not the Bride; rather, the Church is the body of Christ. Therefore, the church has stolen the place of honor of the Bride when the Bride is the holy city. We are part of the bridegroom, not the Bride (see session 24 for more discussion on the Bride).

This **great city, the holy Jerusalem**, commemorates the **twelve tribes of the children of Israel** (vs. 12) and **the twelve apostles** (vs. 14), the eleven plus Matthias, but not the apostle Paul. Paul was not the apostle to the Jews as the twelve were.

The glory of God replaces the Sun (vs. 11, 23).

The city is **foursquare** (vs. 16), or a cube equaling 1,363 miles square, length, depth, width, and height.

The **gates**, made of a single **pearl**, seem to be entrances and not actual gates since they **shall not be shut** (vss. 21,25).

There must be nations still in the new Earth as **the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light** of the glory, **and the kings of the Earth do bring their glory and honor into it**. (Vs. 24).

In verse 27, John emphasizes that there is no danger and that there will be unlimited access, and all who enter have their names **written in the Lamb's Book of Life**.

Paradise

A REMADE GARDEN OF EDEN

Verses 1-7—

What we see in these next verses is Paradise made anew, and the Earth like the garden of Eden, yet with no serpent to tempt or usurp God's Authority.

The angel continues to give John a grand tour of the new heaven and new earth. On Earth, with its **pure river of water of life, proceeding from the throne.**

The tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of fruits...every month.* This **tree of life** was in the original garden, and because of their sin, Adam and Eve were cut off from it. Now, here it is again. This is something we cannot understand today. Our fruit trees bear fruit once every year. But this is not like our earth, this is a new earth.

The leaves of the tree...for the healing of the nations.

This newly created city, the Bride, contains **no more curse** (vs. 3). The new city is one of *purity and clarity* **proceeding out of the throne of God**, which is located **in it**. And it is there where God's **servants shall serve him**. We should note that Paul calls himself a *servant* but he never gives the Body of Christ, the Church that title. While it is true that we serve our Lord Jesus Christ, we are not servants, we are sons (Galatians 4:7). This tells us that the church is not here. Since we have been consistent all the way through the Revelation, here too, we must see Israel in view here, not us. The book of Revelation is about Israel. Where are we then, one cries! We are ***in Christ, as members of his body***

All of **these sayings are faithful and true**. That is, all we have read and all these **things sent** by the **Lord God** must **shortly be done**. **Shortly**, the Greek word *tachos* means that the events will happen rapidly in speed when they come. The word **shortly** is a speed word, not a time word. It does not indicate that they will come *soon*.

Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. Notice the Lord speaking here does not say *Blessed is the one who understands the prophecy of this book*, no, he says **Keepeth**. In this final dispensation one must keep the sayings of this book, and do them. This is not grace.

THE CONCLUSION

All of the events we have seen in Revelation concern the future.

- One account.
- One record.
- One prophecy.
- One revelation.

The book's contents are prophetic events announced in Jeremiah 30:7 as, *The Time of Jacob's Trouble*.

Jacob is Israel (Genesis 32:28). In our 26 weeks through Revelation, we have seen events concerning Israel. Israel is the book's subject, we have not seen the Church or the Body of Christ. Keeping that in mind

throughout the book and even as we now look at the conclusion, will clear up any mystery of what Revelation is about. Rightly dividing this book will give a clear interpretive look at all the events. When one deviates from that interpretive grid, confusion follows, and we have to read into Scripture (eisegesis), causing it to say something that it does not mean. We have tried to remain consistent throughout the study.

JOHN IS OVERCOME WITH AWE

Verses 8,9—

Is there a tendency for mankind to desire to worship anyone or anything greater than themselves? This likely is why celebrities are sometimes *worshipped*. Of course, what is worship? In its simplest terms, worship means to bow down to the will of God, acknowledging that what He says is true and that what He does is right.² If that definition is correct, and I think it is, that means worship is not singing songs in church (yet churches today have become *music centric*), or waving hands, or even bowing down. Worship comes from a knowledge of God, and knowledge can only come through the study of God's Word. Worship is Bible study, and then, through what we learn, we can submit to God's will and acknowledge His truth.

When **John saw these things and heard** the things we have spent the last 26 weeks studying, he **fell down to worship before the feet of the angel**. Verse 8 doesn't say he worshipped the angel, but in verse 9, the angel rebukes him. **Do it not: for I am thy fellow servant**, so apparently, John was worshipping the messenger rather than the Message Giver. Likewise, no creature or human should allow itself or himself to be worshipped. **Worshipping God** is the point.

THE TIME IS AT HAND

Verse 10 —

Seal not...for the time is at hand. In Daniel 12:4, God told Daniel to *shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end.*" Perhaps Daniel was told to seal up his prophecy because another dispensation would have to come first, the dispensation of grace, a mystery unknown until Christ revealed it through the apostle Paul. The word **time** in Greek is *Kairos*, which always means *season*, not chronological time. **At hand**, God is ready to do it.

MEN MUST CONTINUE TO GO THEIR WAY UNTIL THE END

Verse 11 —

Let him be unjust...filthy still...be righteous still...holy still until the time comes for this prophecy to take place. Mankind will continue with their wickedness and righteousness. Let men go their way until that time.

THE SPEEDY RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST

Verse 12 —

And, behold, I come quickly. Quickly = *tachos*. When Jesus comes back, it will happen with speed. With Him, He is bringing a **reward** to those who persevere through the Tribulation.

² Morris, Henry M. *The Revelation Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Prophetic Book of the End Times*. Tyndale, 1983.

JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF

Verse 13 —

Who is He that is coming? **The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.** It is Jesus Christ who coming back with the attributes of God, for He is God.

THOSE WHO PERFORM WORKS ARE COMMENDED

Verse 14 —

Do his commandments. Some translations say *wash their robes*. As mentioned in past sessions, variances like this are due to corrupted Greek texts, which all modern translations, I think to the harm of Christianity, have adopted. Throughout the book, the command has been given to overcome, persevere, and do the commandments. *Washing robes* is certainly “doing something,” but I think it is an inconsistent translation, so we should use the King James Version (or another translation based on the Textus Receptus) based on what I believe is the correct Greek text. As we saw in the letters to the seven churches in Asia, a reward was always given for obedience. Here we find the same, **that they may have a right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates of the city.**

THE WICKED ARE IN THE LAKE OF FIRE

Verse 15 —

For without...Where are they? In the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). The word **dogs** was used in ancient times for wicked people.

JESUS IS THE ONE WHO WAS PROPHESED

Verse 16 —

In the churches, that is, the Jewish assemblies during the Tribulation. I **am the root and the offspring of David**; this title is exclusively Jewish. **The bright and morning star** prophesied in Numbers 24:17, “There shall come a Star out of Jacob (Israel)...”

THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, WELCOME

Verse 17 —

In the Garden of Eden, man was cast out and forbidden to reenter (Genesis 3:22,23). Now an invitation is given to **take of the water of life freely.**

First, the **Spirit** welcomes, then the new city and the **Bride** repeats the invitation. God’s plan for the nation of Israel was to be a beacon to the world, where she would draw all men to the Lord. But Israel rejected God’s plan and lost that blessing for a time. Now, Israel’s position is recovered, Satan has been cast into the lake of fire, and for all eternity, Israel will bid all to **come** into the restored **Paradise** of God. As we saw in Session 1, Genesis is the book of beginnings, and Revelation is the book of endings. The last two chapters of Revelation refer back to the first two chapters in Genesis.

JESUS GIVES A FINAL WARNING

Verses 18,19 —

It is obvious that this is Jesus; notice the pronoun “I.” Jesus is giving final remarks, but notice this verse is not in red letter if **any man shall add...if any man shall take away**. This is a warning certainly for this particular prophecy, but perhaps there is an application for all of Scripture—but the point of this passage is this book. All of God’s words in all of Scripture are important, so it’s best to read them literally and not try to read in our own bias.

Since salvation in the dispensation of grace is a gift, not of ourselves and not of works, this cannot be a warning for our dispensation. I could apply, however, in the Tribulation when works will be necessary to enter the Kingdom.

COME QUICKLY LORD JESUS

Verse 20 —

This is the overarching summary of the entire book. Jesus is coming back. We can echo Jesus’s remarks here, “Yes, Lord, please come back quickly!”

GRACE

Verse 21 —

We see **grace** in everything. For example, there was grace in giving the Law; there must be grace even in a dispensation of works. But true grace came from Jesus Christ. And now, in this dispensation, ALL is of grace.³

Because of the grace in which we live, we have a different standing and destiny than those in this prophecy. We can only know of our standing by rightly dividing the word of truth, separating what belongs to Israel and us, the Body of Christ. And while we live in the dispensation of grace today, we look forward to the dispensation of the glory of God, where we will not walk anymore by faith but by sight, for we shall see Him, face to face, as He is!

³ Bullinger, E.W. 1837-1913. Revelation. Kregal Publications. 1984.