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Sermon Notes

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## **The New Heaven and the New Earth**

### **Revelation 21:1-8**

#### I. Our Heavenly Mindedness Glorifies God

##### A. God Has Commanded Us to Fill Our Hearts with Heaven

***Colossians 3:1-4*** *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

##### B. The Greater the Suffering, the Sweeter are Meditations on Heaven

1. Brothers and sisters being persecuted for their faith feed their souls on heavenly meditation
2. Prison cells filled with invisible light, streaming from heaven into the hearts of the suffering children of God
3. In the south before the Civil War, slaves would sing constantly of heaven... the only solace they had in a life of unremitting sorrow, pain, and injustice

##### C. Our Present Affluent Life Reduces this Sweetness

1. The Bible says we are “aliens and strangers” here in this world

***Hebrews 11:13*** *All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.*

2. Those who lived by faith in the past knew this and saw this present world as temporary, and in many cases hostile to the health of their souls

***1 Peter 2:11*** *Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul*

3. But when all our needs are met, our stomachs are full of good things, our beds are warm, there is no danger on the horizon, it is so easy to forget God and our heavenly future

***Deuteronomy 8:12-14*** *When you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup> then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*

#### D. Multiple Benefits of a strong yearning for heaven

1. Strong yearning for heaven proves what your treasure is

***Matthew 6:19-21*** *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

2. Strong yearning for heaven develops Christian character
  - a. Continually thinking about heaven transforms your mind and therefore your character as much as continually thinking about worldly things would do the opposite
  - b. A heavenly-minded person is the most likely to be patient, kind, displaying consistent Christian contentment
3. Strong yearning for heaven greatly glorifies God
  - a. By yearning for heaven, we are saying to God that nothing in life can satisfy us

***Psalm 73:25*** *Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.*

4. Strong yearning for heaven makes all life God-centered

Puritan Joseph Hall:

“Lord, that man is truly holy whose understanding is enlightened with right apprehensions of you and heavenly things; whose will and affections are rightly disposed to you, so that his heart is wholly taken up with you, his conversation being in heaven; who thinks all time is lost in which he does not enjoy you and a sweet and holy communion with you, walking perpetually with you, and laboring in all things to be approved by you.”

5. Strong yearning for heaven helps us realize how insignificant are our present worldly concerns... both our successes and our sufferings:

Another Puritan:

“Nothing hath greater influence into a Christian’s practice here in this world than the serious consideration of our everlasting estate in the world to come; the glory and happiness which is prepared for the elect, and those eternal torments which are reserved for workers of iniquity.... It is the greatest folly in the world for men to be busied about many things that little concern them, and in the mean time neglect the one thing necessary.”

6. Strong yearning for heaven results in holiness, purity from worldliness
- a. This is the very application that both Paul and John give to heavenly meditation

***Colossians 3:1-6*** *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. <sup>5</sup> ¶ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.*

***1 John 3:2-3*** *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

7. Strong yearning for heaven drives missions and evangelism
- a. That is HOPE... a strong sense that the future is indescribably bright
- b. ETERNAL HOPE is the one thing non-Christians do not have; they are “without hope and without God in the world”
- c. If we are continually meditating on heaven, thinking about it, talking about it, this will happen:

***1 Peter 3:15*** *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*

8. Strong yearning for heaven enables us to persevere through suffering

***Romans 8:18*** *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

9. Strong yearning for heaven keeps us vigorously serving God to the end of our lives

***1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.***

- E. So... as we finish our sermon series in Revelation, we get two magnificent chapters of extended details on the heavenly future!

## II. The New Heavens and New Earth Revealed (vs. 1)

***Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.***

### A. The New Heaven and the New Earth: a Physical, Spiritual Reality

1. Randy Alcorn's book... people expressing concerns about heaven
2. This is the consummation of God's intention in creation
3. A physical AND spiritual reality
4. We should picture walking in a magnificent new world, exploring its beauties and mysteries
5. Like Lewis and Clark's expedition of the Louisiana Purchase
6. Like [SPANISH EXPLORER]'s search for "El Dorado," the city of gold...
7. Discovering the secrets of the glory of God in the new universe

***Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.***

8. I often felt that Genesis 2 gave the picture of a new world to be explored...

***Genesis 2:9-14 And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground-- trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. <sup>10</sup> ¶ A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup> (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) <sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.***

9. How much BETTER this perfect world, with perfect people, ready to give God all the glory for the details of his new creation

#### B. Must Be Predicted and Revealed

1. That this is our future must be revealed by God through the Holy Scriptures... there would be no other way to know about it and prepare for it
2. The phrase "New Heaven and New Earth" first in Isaiah 65-66

***Isaiah 65:17-18 "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. <sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.***

***Isaiah 66:22 "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure.***

3. Peter uses the phrase as well:

***2 Peter 3:13 in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.***

4. Clearly relates to present universe... and the first creation

***Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.***

#### C. The First Heaven and First Earth Passed Away

***Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,***

1. We covered this last time, in discussing this verse

***Revelation 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.***

2. So also these

***Hebrews 1:10-12 "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. <sup>11</sup> They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. <sup>12</sup> You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."***

3. Peter makes it plain how totally destroyed everything we see around us will be

***2 Peter 3:10 the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.***

***2 Peter 3:12 That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.***

D. Continuity and Difference... Like the Resurrection Body

1. Lots of debate about whether the New Heavens and New Earth will be created ex nihilo... out of nothing... like the first universe; OR made from the purified stuff of the present universe
2. I think it will be like the resurrection body... continuity and difference
3. The old, decaying, mortal body is SOWN in weakness, corruption, dishonor, and death; IT is raised... IT is raised... not created new out of nothing
4. BUT 1 Corinthians 15 uses amazing words

***1 Corinthians 15:42-44 The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; <sup>43</sup> it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; <sup>44</sup> it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.***

IMPERISHABLE... GLORIOUS... POWERFUL... SPIRITUAL

The last phrase: "a spiritual body" shows a mysterious combination of spirituality and physicality

We will be able to touch the new earth, walk on the ground of the new earth... feel it touching our resurrection bodies... it will be a RESURRECTED EARTH

Continuity is essential to the promise made to Abraham:

***Genesis 13:14-15 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. <sup>15</sup> All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.***

***Hebrews 11:13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance.***

E. No Longer Any Sea

1. The text says amazingly: "There is no longer any sea"

2. To many, this is distressing! The sea can be spectacularly beautiful; people have powerful memories of walking on a beach, watching the sunset over the water, turning it red, orange, purple... glistening with radiant sunlight
3. However, the sea is also a source of terror to many; it was the sea that God used to destroy the world the first time in the Flood of Noah
4. The sea harbors unnamed sea monsters that the ancient Hebrews were in terror of, that the Psalms and Isaiah say God slew

***Psalm 89:9-10 You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.  
<sup>10</sup> You crushed Rahab like one of the slain***

5. Jonah spoke of the waves and breakers that swept over him as he sank to the depths of the sea

***Jonah 2:3 You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.***

6. The churning sea was the source of all the evil empires that arose in Daniel's vision

***Daniel 7:2-3 Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. <sup>3</sup> Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.***

***Isaiah 57:20-21 But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. <sup>21</sup> "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."***

***Revelation 17:15 the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.***

7. Taken literally, the fact that there will be no sea in the New Earth shows an entirely different ecology; it could be well assumed that the resurrection body will need no water to survive; so there is no longer any need for the weather cycle we have now, with the ocean providing

From the sea we get 70% of our oxygen, generated by marine plants

From the sea we get 83% of our rainwater

Apparently the ecology and biology of the New Earth will be radically different

Also, the surface of the present earth covered by water is 71.1%. If all of that surface area became land, how vast would be the world we would be exploring and living in!!

Some people now think of the crowded, overpopulated earth... it's not true, it's a pagan way of thinking... but the New Earth will have 4 times as much surface area to support a much smaller population

It would shock me if 10% of the human race ends up converted...

***Matthew 7:13-14 Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. <sup>14</sup> But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.***

5% of the earth's population inhabiting 4 times the surface area... vast areas to explore, settle, work, develop!

F. Summary: a new universe is coming... it will be radiant with the glory of God and will be our home for all eternity... we would know nothing about it, except that scripture reveals that it is coming... the New Heavens and New Earth

### III. The New Jerusalem Descends from God (vs. 2)

***Revelation 21:2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.***

#### A. The Capital City of God's Eternal Empire

1. There will be both a world and a city coming
2. Both are mentioned in Hebrews 11:13-16... a COUNTRY and a CITY

***Hebrews 11:13-16 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. <sup>14</sup> People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. <sup>15</sup> If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> Instead, they were longing for a better country-- a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.***

3. The country implies a world to explore, vast, spacious, teeming with life and scenic vistas... lakes, rivers, hills, forests, fields, spectacular scenery and vast open spaces
4. The city implies a concentration of population... a society... a common language and culture... BEING TOGETHER
5. It is a place of BUILDINGS, of human construction and glorious, lofty displays of human effort
6. This New Jerusalem will descend from heaven already constructed by the

B. The Old Jerusalem was the City of David

1. It was the center of the Jewish world...
2. It was the place God chose out of all the tribes to put his name there
3. The place where the Jews were commanded to go three times a year for pilgrimage to worship God
  - a. The “songs of ascent” were Psalms they would sing together as they ascended up to Mount Zion

***Psalm 84:1-5 How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty! <sup>2</sup> My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. <sup>3</sup> Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young-- a place near your altar, O LORD Almighty, my King and my God. <sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Selah <sup>5</sup> Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.***

4. It was called the city of David because David conquered it from the Jebusites

C. The New Jerusalem is the Perfection of all those Themes... Especially the Place Where God Dwells in Glory in the Midst of his People

D. The New Jerusalem is both a city and a people... the church of Jesus Christ, the bride of Christ is the New Jerusalem

1. But since we will have resurrection bodies, we will need to dwell SOMEWHERE... in some LOCATION... and that is in the New Heavens and New Earth and the HOLY CITY

E. Here...A BRIDE, beautifully dressed for her husband

1. She is radiantly beautiful, ready for her wedding day
2. She is COMING DOWN READY... she was made ready in heaven by God himself... prepared for thousands of years of redemptive history
  - a. Thousands of years of evangelism, rescuing people from Satan’s dark kingdom of Babylon
  - b. Thousands of years of sanctification, of her being gradually made perfect
  - c. In this Christ got her ready, and she got herself ready

***Revelation 19:7-8 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. <sup>8</sup> Fine linen, bright***

*and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)*

***Revelation 21:9-11 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. <sup>11</sup> It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.***

[MORE NEXT WEEK!!]

3. the text says "Adorned" or "beautifully dressed" for her husband... the Greek word is *kosmeo* from which we get the word "cosmetics"
4. The adornment of the bride for earthly weddings involves every area of her appearance
  - a. Her dress is the most costly she will ever wear... many brides' dresses are woven from the costliest silk, shimmering and magnificent
  - b. Her hair is perfectly styled, every hair in place
  - c. Her face is shining with joy and natural beauty
  - d. Her jewels sparkle, costly and tasteful

In American weddings, the bride gets herself ready with her mother and her bridesmaids and professional beauticians who work on her dress, hair, nails, cosmetics...

Traditionally, not only does the bridegroom have nothing to do with getting her beautiful, he's not even allowed to SEE HER until she walks down the aisle

BUT this radiant Bride of Christ, the church, the followers of Christ, will be perfectly ready for the wedding day specifically because Christ made her beautiful

***Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.***

When he found her, she was ugly, sinful, rebellious and wretched... covered with the filth of sin, disgusting to the holy gaze of God

After all this saving work by his atoning blood, his indwelling Spirit, and the ministry of the Word, she will be made ready for the wedding feast of the Lamb

F. The Wedding Image is a Timeless Picture of God and His People

1. In the Old Testament, it was God and Israel...

***Jeremiah 2:2-3 Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: "I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown. <sup>3</sup> Israel was holy to the LORD***

When Israel followed after the Baals, it was considered spiritual adultery... because God was married to his people

2. In the consummation of the New Covenant, it is Christ and the church

IV. The Central Joy of Heaven: God Dwells with His People (vs. 3)

***Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.***

A. God Speaks About the Central Joy of Heaven

1. The voice comes from the throne... this is Almighty God, speaking LOUDLY so all the universe can hear
2. Since the voice is not identified, it could be either God the Father alone, or the Triune God speaking the center of his heart and joys
3. The central joy of heaven is GOD and HIS PEOPLE in face to face, intimate fellowship
4. This was the point of all the wisdom of God in the salvation plan of redemptive plan of God

“NOW... AT LAST... the dwelling of God is with men!!”

It's like God has been waiting, and yearning, and working for this moment for thousands and thousands of years

All the patience, and pain, and compassion, and suffering, and powerful work will have come to a sweet consummation

Now AT LAST, we get to be together

B. The Timeless Desire of God as Stated Again and Again in the Old Testament

*Leviticus 26:11-12 I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you.  
<sup>12</sup> I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.*

*Jeremiah 7:22-23 For when I brought your forefathers out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices,  
<sup>23</sup> but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people.*

*Jeremiah 24:7 I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.*

New Covenant predicted in Jeremiah:

*Jeremiah 31:31-34 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup> It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup> "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. <sup>34</sup> No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

So also Ezekiel:

*Ezekiel 36:25-28 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. <sup>28</sup> You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.*

The final word in Ezekiel:

*Ezekiel 48:35 And the name of the city from that time on will be: **THE LORD IS THERE.***

### C. The Dwelling Glory Finally Fulfilled

1. God says here that at last he will PUT HIS DWELLING AMONG his people
2. The Greek word relates to the “Shekinah” glory of God, the glory cloud which God used to show his people that he was in their midst
3. The word is literally “dwelling glory”... the cloud that filled the Tabernacle, which was a physical, visible symbol of God’s desire to dwell with the Jews

4. The same thing happened when Solomon dedicated his temple; a glory cloud filled it
5. Ezekiel: the glory cloud departed from the Temple,, the problem was the people's SIN... God could not dwell with them
  - a. Many have linked it to the image of the burning bush... how Moses saw the FIRE in the midst of the bush, but the bush was not consumed
  - b. God revealed himself at Sinai as a CONSUMING FIRE
  - c. He told Moses he could not go with that sinful nation anymore, because he would have to rise up in his holiness and destroy them

***Exodus 33:3 Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.***

6. But now, in the consummation of the New Covenant and the saving work of God, he will dwell in FACE to FACE communion with his people!!

***1 Corinthians 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.***

D. This is the Reward of Heaven!!

1. God is an astonishing being, full of light and love and glory
2. He is infinitely wise... his understanding has no limit
3. There is no end to what we can and will learn about him
4. Remember this mysterious statement about Christ in his second coming glory

***Revelation 19:12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.***

5. Forever we will be studying the infinite mystery of the Godhead... Father, Son, Spirit... we will never tire of drinking in his attributes—his self-existence, holiness, power, mercy, and especially love
6. God is our reward

***Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."***

E. What's Amazing? Why Does God Want to be with US??

1. It makes perfect sense that we would want to know the infinite greatness of such a being
2. But why does he want anything to do with us?

***Genesis 18:27 Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes..."***

***Luke 18:13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'***

***Isaiah 6:2-3 With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."***

We are not worthy of his attention... and yet Jesus displayed how DEEPLY God wants to be with us

***Luke 22:15-16 And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup> For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."***

The Father of the Prodigal Son:

***Luke 15:20, 23 "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. ... Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate."***

Jesus states plainly how much the Father loves us:

***John 16:26-27 In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. <sup>27</sup> No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God."***

3. God deeply desires to spend eternity with us, once all our sins have been covered by the blood of Christ and our hearts have been transformed to be just like Jesus'

This face to face fellowship with God is our heavenly reward, our eternal inheritance... we get HIM and he gets us!

All the other blessings of heaven are far less... but let's talk about them

V. Other Joys of Heaven: No More Death, Mourning, Crying, or Pain (vs. 4)

***Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."***

## A. Intimate Comfort of all the Grief We've Ever Experienced

1. He will wipe every tear that might stain our faces at that point
2. This involves everything the church has just been through...
  - a. The Antichrist, the Tribulation, the intense persecution, the terrifying pursuit by the forces of the Beast to slaughter the people of God
  - b. But also everything else... all the grief we've experienced in losses and crosses we've born in this world... widows, widowers bereaved of beloved spouses, parents bereaved of beloved children who died tragically, all the pain we went through in our toilsome journeys to heaven
  - c. AND sorrow that we have for the lost... like Jesus weeping over Jerusalem or Paul in "great sorrow and unceasing anguish" over the lost... in heaven, there will be NO SORROW over the damned
3. BUT especially Jesus will wipe away tears, and heal any pain we feel at JUDGMENT DAY... the very last thing we went through in the old order: giving Christ an account for our lives... we will all feel the loss of the wood, hay, straw we had to tell him about

***2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.***

***1 Corinthians 3:12-15 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, <sup>13</sup> his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. <sup>14</sup> If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. <sup>15</sup> If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.***

The "wood, hay, straw" are our sins, both sins of commission and omission... any times we failed to share the gospel, or care for the poor and needy... as well as things we did in secret that will be brought to light

The painful experience of giving Christ an account for everything may well result in tears on Judgment Day...

But they will be the LAST TEARS WE EVER CRY!!

4. And see the tender mercies of Christ in that his own hand will wipe them away!  
How gracious he is to cover our weaknesses and deficiencies

## B. No More Death

1. The final enemy will at last be destroyed

***1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.***

2. All the destruction and sorrow and fear and anxiety and intense loss and pain caused by death will end forever
3. We will live forever and ever... we will not age in the New Heaven and New Earth... we will not grow weary or see our capabilities diminish

“When we’ve been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun... “ we will be every bit as vigorous and eager and capable as when we first begun

4. Our relationships with each other will never end
5. The projects we work on, we can keep developing and improving... we will not have to leave our work to another person to carry it on

**C. No More Mourning... No More Crying**

1. Grouping these together, we will feel no anguish in our hearts
2. No grief... no regrets... no sorrow whatsoever
3. We will remember our earthly lives—even our sins and unsaved loved ones—and we will feel **NO SORROW WHATSOEVER** for them
4. Sorrow has been **SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY!**
5. There will be no new sorrows... no shocking turn of developments in the New Heaven and New Earth that we never expected
6. We will never be disappointed at how things turn out or are developing there
7. No mourning, no crying

**D. No More Pain**

1. It’s hard to comprehend a world with no pain, but that is the world we are heading to

I remember smashing my thumb once a few years ago while making one of my kids’ beds... I was pulling hard on the sheet and my hand slipped off and smashed the wall; furthermore, I bent back my thumbnail when it happened...

I cried out in pain... and then started thinking about this one statement: "In the New Heaven and New Earth, there will be NO MORE PAIN!"

But I wondered how that could happen? Will we be so perfect in our movements that we will never smash our thumb on a wall, or stub our toe?

2. One thing is for sure... the long-range chronic pain that many of you feel at a disease will be NO PART OF HEAVEN
3. Neither will any accidents; certainly no war or crime or any other physical attack
4. But even trivial accidents like I mentioned will be no part of heaven
5. Pain is a signal to the brain that some damage has just happened to the body and you need to stop doing what you're doing
6. Possibly there will be continual and instant healing in the New Heaven and New Earth:

***Revelation 22:2 On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.***

More next week on this death-free, mourning-free, tears-free, pain-free world to which we are going!!

## VI. God's Present Invitation to an Eternal Home (vs. 5-7)

### A. God's Direct Activity in Creating this Coming World

***Revelation 21:5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."***

1. God speaks from the throne... he speaks with the voice of kingly power and authority
2. BEHOLD... LOOK AT THIS!! Watch and see what I AM DOING
3. God is directly active in crafting a New World... his creative power is on direct display before our eyes
4. It is a comprehensive NEW CREATION...
  - a. We who have come to Christ are already NEW CREATIONS in our souls... in our inner beings

***2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.***

- b. Now God is making everything around us new as well... the ground under our feet will be new... the sky above us will be new... the mountains and hills and rivers and lakes will all be made new
- c. This is no materialistic evolution as though forces of nature are making this happen
- d. This new world in which we will live for all eternity is the direct craftsmanship of the King, seated on his throne

#### B. The Command to WRITE

***Revelation 21:5 Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."***

- 1. The King commands John to write down what he sees, for all of the generations of his children that would follow
- 2. The writing is a temporary necessity... because we cannot see it yet, with our own eyes

***1 Corinthians 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.***

- 3. The imperfect, somewhat DIM mirror into which we are looking is the SCRIPTURE...
- 4. The words are trustworthy and true... but they are only WORDS
- 5. How much better at last when we will see clearly, face to face, with our own eyes
- 6. But the WRITTEN WORD is enough for us NOW... and it is perfectly true and trustworthy

***Psalm 12:6 And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times.***

#### C. Now Comes My Invitation... Really God's Invitation

- 1. God wants to invite everyone who reads these words, everyone who hears these words... he wants to invite you to COME and to ENTER this perfect world when the time comes

***Revelation 21:6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.***

2. He says "IT IS DONE" or more literally "IT HAS BECOME"... like he is saying "I have brought this new world into reality... I have made it become real"
3. The word "become" involves a process, a work now completed
4. God has been planning and working on this coming world for all of redemptive history
5. He points again to the LINEAR HISTORY that by then will have come to an end
  - a. Christ is the ALPHA and the OMEGA... the beginning and the end
  - b. The first world, the one that will have passed away by then had a beginning and it will have an end
  - c. And CHRIST is that beginning

***John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.***

- d. And CHRIST will be that end... he will bring the first universe to a close
- e. But even more importantly... he will speak into existence a NEW WORLD that will have NO END

***Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.***

6. And God wants everyone who is thirsty for it to enter NOW
7. Based on the WORD you are hearing... NOW is the time to secure your place in that eternal world

***Revelation 21:6 To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.***

D. Are you THIRSTY?

1. The image is one of a deep yearning... down to the fiber of your being!!

2. Saying, "I yearn to be there! I want to live that perfect life in that perfect world!"

3. The image of thirsting is used regularly in scripture

***Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.***

***Psalms 42:1-2 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.  
2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?***

***John 4:13-14 "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."***

***John 7:37-38 Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."***

4. Is that you?

- a. Do you want full forgiveness of sins?
- b. Do you want to be reconciled to God?
- c. Do you yearn to be in his presence and drink from his goodness?
- d. Do you yearn to be in a world with no death, mourning, crying, pain?
- e. Do you yearn to be in a perfectly righteous world, with no sin at all?
- f. Are you thirsty?

5. Christ is offering this water of eternal life NOW and TOTALLY FREE!!

***Isaiah 55:1 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."***

E. The Gift is Given Freely to Those Who Overcome

***Revelation 21:7 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.***

1. To overcome = to believe in Christ...

***1 John 5:4 everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.***

2. The promise: you will be an HEIR... you will INHERIT this marvelous new universe... this New Heaven and New Earth... you will be adopted as a son or daughter of the living God

## VII. God's Terrifying Warning of Who Will Be Excluded (vs. 8)

***Revelation 21:8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars-- their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."***

- A. Cowardly = Those who were too fearful of what people would think to follow Christ... too fearful of the consequences of faith... when trouble or persecution came for the gospel, they QUICKLY FELL AWAY
- B. Unbelieving = all those who rejected the gospel of Christ; they heard but had no faith
- C. The Vile = abominable; worthy of being detested because of their corruptions; morally ugly
- D. List of Sins
  1. Murderers
  2. Sexually immoral
  3. Magic arts... "sorcerers" ... *Pharmakos*... users of drugs in witchcraft
  4. Idolaters
  5. All liars
- E. Ultimate End: the fiery lake of burning sulfur... the SECOND DEATH

## VIII. Applications

- A. Top Priority: Accept God's Gracious Invitation to Come and Drink Freely from the Water of Life flowing from Christ!!!
  1. Double incentive: to inherit heaven... to avoid the lake of fire
  2. This is the most momentous decision you could ever make
  3. COME TO CHRIST NOW... while there is time and freedom to do it
  4. The invitation is FREE... the living water is FREE...
  5. You cannot pay for it; you cannot earn it

## B. Christians

1. Delight in heaven daily... read Revelation 21-22 regularly
2. Set your heart on THINGS ABOVE... and on THINGS TO COME
  - a. Look forward to the New Heavens and the New Earth
  - b. Delight in the beauty of that coming world; realize this present world is so temporary
  - c. Yearn for the New Jerusalem that is being prepared even now by Christ in heaven
3. Let heavenly meditation delight you; let it free you from the sinful pleasures that so allure your soul... PURIFY your life to be made ready for heaven
4. Proclaim the gospel THIS WEEK to someone... speak of these delights of heaven; warn them of the terrors of hell