

THE REVELATION

A New Heaven & A New Earth

Revelation 20:7—21:8

As we come to John's vision of the end of the thousand year reign of Christ and His followers upon the earth, we are told of the final judgment and the appearance of a new heaven and a new earth. In this judgment, those whose names are written in the Book of Life are exempt from scrutiny—coming under the grace of God, while those whose names are not found in the Book of Life are examined on the basis of their deeds—both good and bad. In the end, death and hades are cast into the Lake of Fire along with the devil and his angels while the followers of God and of the Lamb are ushered into a new heaven and a new earth.

I. The Last Rebellion and the Final Judgment—The Great White Throne

- A. Satan is released for a short period in order to give those who have been under the rule of Christ against their true desire a chance to express their genuine preference. (20:7-8)
- B. As before, the focus of their hatred is Jerusalem, the capitol city of the reign of Christ, but before they can even fire the first salvo, fire comes from heaven and devours them all. (Rev. 20:9)
- C. Now the devil is thrown into the Lake of Fire, never to rise again. (Rev. 20:10)
- D. The judgment of the Great White Throne examines the lives of all humanity of all ages from Adam to the present. Those whose names are not found in the Book of Life were judged on the basis of their deeds. Because no one can pass this test, all whose names were not found in the Book of Life were thrown into the Lake of Fire with the devil and his angels. (Rev. 20:11-15)

COMMENTS: the Lake of Fire is a literal place of conscious torment which lasts for ever. There are no second chances and there is no end. It was not intended for humanity at all, but for the devil and his rebellious angels (Matthew 25:41); however, those who persist in following him must likewise share his destiny. It is with great sadness that God exiles human beings to this awful place of eternal torment. (Ezekiel 18:23; I Timothy 2:3-4; II Peter 3:9)

II. The New Heaven and the New Earth

- A. There will come a new heaven and a new earth. (Rev. 21:1)
 - 1. The first earth has passed away (II Peter 3:10)
 - 2. God does not do away with heaven and earth, but creates a new heaven and a new earth for the habitation of redeemed humanity.
 - Our destiny has never been purely spiritual and ethereal in nature: redeemed humanity is restored to physical and spiritual wholeness to live as intended on a redeemed earth
- B. The focal center of the new heaven and earth will be a New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2)
- C. God will dwell upon the new earth with us and He will always be physically present in the Person of Jesus Christ.

COMMENTS: We were never intended to be like God or to become like God, as some teach. We were created to be human, and we will always be human. Redeemed and restored humanity is a return to the humans we were created to be in the ultimate sense.

III. A Final Place of Peace, Safety, and Complete Sufficiency

- A. There will be no more tears (Rev. 21:4)
- B. Everything will be new and fresh—eternally (Rev. 21:5)
- C. Our deepest needs and longings will be met (Rev. 21:6)
- D. Our relationship and fellowship with God will be unbroken forever (Rev. 21:7)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.

NOTES

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. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. '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." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 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 water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." 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." 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. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick. The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass. I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Paul R. Martin
Lead Pastor
Alliance Bible Church
of McHenry, IL

