

**Series Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Behold I Am Coming Soon**

**Today's Message: The New Heaven and the New Earth and the New Jerusalem  
Revelation 21:1-2**

Before we bring the New Heaven and the New Earth into view, I need to take a moment to bring clarity to a particular point I made last week. I am so glad that we have discussions on the message throughout our Sunday afternoons here at Sovereign Christ. Last week was a most helpful discussion for me because even though, every week, I spend considerable time studying the Scripture and reading the comments of other pastors and theologians in preparation for the message, there are some parts that are so hard for me to understand.

This past Sunday our discussion centered around, who exactly will enter the Millennial Kingdom? In the message I stated that anyone who survived the Tribulation would come in. I was primarily thinking of surviving unbelievers straggling in at the last. This was my explanation for the succeeding generations of the millions of people who would be ready for the final rebellion led by Satan after his release from the Abyss.

But, it becomes clear that Revelation indicates that NO unbelievers would survive the Great Tribulation.

Who will enter the Millennial Kingdom? **1)** The Church (The Bride of Christ) will have resurrection bodies; **2)** OT saints and Tribulation saints, having received resurrection bodies will enter; **3)** Believers having survived the Great Tribulation will enter the Millennial Kingdom in their earthly bodies. These people have been saved through new birth, but still alive in their mortal bodies. And, because **the Millennial Kingdom is not Heaven** they can live just fine, except that they still have a sinful nature.

Therefore,, a believer who survives the Great Tribulation and enters the Millennial Kingdom will: **1)** enter because they were saved by grace through faith and given new birth; **2)** enter but still subject to weaknesses of a human body, even death; **3)** enter but will still struggle to resist the relentless sinful suggestions of the sinful nature.

However, it is sobering to think that the generations produced by the union of surviving believers who enter the Millennial Kingdom, will be the very ones who reject Jesus Christ and join the final rebellion of Satan when he is released from the Abyss. The generations of these believers are still slaves to the sinful nature, though nurtured by believing parents (originally)-- in body and in their minds Again, this really underscores the doctrine of the depravity of man.

Now we come to heaven!

If you were planning a vacation of a lifetime you would do whatever it takes to be ready on the day of your departure. You would plan for your transportation, your lodging and your transportation once you arrive. You would do other things as well. In preparation you would get yourself ready. You would have the right clothes, appropriate for the vacation, the right sunglasses and swimsuit, if the need be. You would do everything you could to stay away from sick people in order to be as healthy as possible for your long awaited trip! In fact, if the vacation is really exciting, you probably would fill much of your time happily thinking about it!

How much more when it comes to Heaven? The Bible tells us much about Heaven. And the Spirit fills the Christian with many thoughts concerning heaven. We should not be surprised at this!

Philippians 3:20 reminds believers that “our citizenship is in heaven.”

Colossians 3:1-2 urges us to “set [our] hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

And, just like we would guard our health before that great vacation, James teaches something similar when he sends a serious reminder that worldliness is enmity with God. We can't be rightly preparing for the joys of heaven if we love the world and things in it.

We should be cheered by the thought of heaven. Every blessing connected to our spiritual lives that we have here on earth now, is connected in a much deeper way to spiritual blessings kept in the heavenly realms for us then (Eph. 1:3; 1 Peter 1:4). What's even greater in heaven, all the things our faith hoped for in Christ will become visible! We will see Jesus and know Him without any hindrances! We will hear the voice of the Father and be filled with His beyond-comprehension presence in Christ and the Holy Spirit. Heaven has secured every believer who has passed on before us! It holds our rewards safely and securely. And heaven is our home for eternity! Home!

Here are some good thoughts given to us by John MacArthur about how thinking about, and longing for heaven serves as an important influence on a believers life: “A genuine and strong longing for heaven: **1)** is a sure indicator of genuine salvation (Luke 12:34); **2)** energizes a believer to become transformed in living with high and noble character (Rom. 12:1-2); **3)** brings abiding joy and comfort when trouble and trials come (2 Cor. 4:17); **4)** is a preservative against sin. With your eyes on heaven a Christian is less likely to be trapped in earthly temptations (Rom.8:5-6). **5)** will invigorate your service to others, serving with fervor and zeal, knowing that the heavenly reward is greater than any temporal, earthly reward (Rom. 12:9-13). And, **6)** honors God above all else. If your focus is on heaven your focus will turn to God (Col.3:1-3).

Scripture speaks of 3 heavens. The first heaven is the atmosphere encompassing the earth. The second heaven is what we call outer space, the universe. The third heaven is Heaven, where God dwells. Heaven is a real place. We don't know where Heaven is, but we do know that when believers die on this earth, they immediately go to Heaven (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8)! And when the believers, who are alive at the Rapture, will be instantly transported to heaven (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-55)!

Let's look at Revelation 21:1-2

**I. (21:1-2) John Saw the New Heaven and the New Earth and the New Jerusalem**

A. "...a new heaven and new earth..."

1. New, as in literally, not figuratively, but literally something new.

a) Isaiah predicted it: **see Isaiah 65:17 and 66:12**

b) This "new" means:

(1) Brand new

(2) Fresh and never before seen

B. New because "the first heaven and the first earth had passed away..."

1. It passed away; we saw it "flee" from the presence of God in 20:11

a) The old earth was defiled by human sinfulness. (Is.24:5)

b) The ground itself was defiled by the sin of murder (Num.35:33-34; Eze 36:17)

c) Plagues and death corrupted the earth

(1) The ground is pock-marked with graves all over the earth.

d) **2 Peter 3:10**, "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, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed."

2. Why a new heaven and new earth?

a) Because the old earth was ruined. It was worn out. (see Psalm 102:25-26)

(1) Sin took its toll on the earth.

(2) But, as Psalm 102:26 seems to imply, the Lord will put on a new heaven and new. "Like clothing you will change them and they will be changed."

C. "...and there was no longer any sea."

a) One thought: The new heaven and new earth would no longer need the refreshment and cleansing which water brings. The Lord will provide!

b) Another: "sea" is often used metaphorically, symbolic of the absence of sin. A profound Truth: The New heaven and New Earth will have no sin.

D. (21:2) John saw the New Jerusalem

1. The city of God

a) The old city was destroyed and trampled; it was corrupted.

(1) Isaiah 1:21: Once the "faithful city" had become "a harlot".

(2) It had been trampled by Gentiles (see Ps. 79:1; Lk 21:24; Rev.11:2)

b) The new city is called "the Holy City"

- (1) Now is **Psalm 48:1-2** fulfilled! “Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, His holy mountain. It is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth. Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King!”
- (2) Now is **Joel 3:17** fulfilled! “Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again.”

## 2. New Jerusalem

- a) Not heaven, but heaven’s capital. A NEW eternal city
  - (1) It is the 3rd Jerusalem:
    - (a) Historic Jerusalem; the City of David
    - (b) Restored Jerusalem: Christ ruled from there
    - (c) A NEW Jerusalem: brand new; never seen before
- b) Coming down out of heaven from God to the New Earth
  - (1) The eternal home of the redeemed people of God!
- c) Prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband
  - (1) Not the bride; **but certainly reflects the beauty of the bride!**
  - (2) This holy city, the New Jerusalem, beautifully prepared by God as the perfect home for His Bride, Israel. You can learn from Jesus’ work in preparing a place for His Bride, the Church, and overlay the same care, love and beauty that the Lord Jesus put into the design and built by our Lord Jesus Christ, when you see the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, beautiful for His bride and perfectly prepared for God and His people!
    - (a) John 14:2, “In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go and prepare a place for you.” (that relates to the place where the Raptured Church arrived when she was taken up to heaven.
    - (b) So, here it is! The New Jerusalem, made by God, displaying His glory, majesty, wisdom, love, and devotion to and for His Bride— His precious Bride— redeemed by the precious blood of Christ!
- d) Prepared for the consummation of the **forever union!**
  - (1) Remember the order of the Wedding of Christ and His bride:
    - (a) **Betrothal**: Before the creation of anything, when the Father pledged to His Son a redeemed people (Eph.1:4)

- (b) Presentation: the Bride/ Church presented to the Son after the Rapture in heaven.
  - (c) Ceremony: Ceremony (19:7) in heaven, and Wedding supper of the Lamb (19:9) on earth in the restored Jerusalem, lasting the entire Millennium on restored earth!
  - (d) Consummation: The Forever Union thrives in the New Jerusalem!
  - (e) The Forever Union: There is a mystery yet to be comprehended in my mind concerning this gathering of the Bride into the New Jerusalem. Why a mystery?
    - (i) The Lamb has already married His Bride, the Church, in Heaven.
    - (ii) The marriage supper of the Lamb has taken place during the Millennial Kingdom.
    - (iii) Now, there must be a gathering, a marriage involving God and Israel, and even the Tribulation saints.
      - (a) To Israel God promised to marry her.
        - (i) Hosea 2:14-16; 19-23
        - (ii) Romans 9:25
    - (iv) And, ultimately, “the New Jerusalem must represent the consummation of each of the wedding motifs where **all** the people of God inhabit the Holy City enjoying eternal, intimate communion with God face-to-face (Rev. 22:4)”<sup>1</sup>
- E. One final word: a brief introduction to Revelation 21:3-5, and the New Order of things.
1. Remember, Abraham was commended for his faith as “he waited for the city which has foundations, **whose builder and maker is God.**” (see **Hebrews 11:8-10!!**)
  2. And, I’ll just say this, the order of things will rest on God’s eternal union, comfort and love for His people.
    - a) I think of Isaiah 40:1-2, “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service

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<sup>1</sup> This great quote from Tony Garland brings some clarity to the mystery. Ultimately, when Christ finishes all His work, He will hand the kingdom to His Father. **See 1 Corinthians 15:28**

has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

- (1) Heaven will be for Israel a most comforting Eden-like place where there will be no more sin, or death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

- II. **(21:3-5) John Heard The Voice of God Pronounce a New Order of Things**
- III. **(21:6-8) John Heard The Voice of God and His Final Verdict Concerning The Overcomers and the Unfaithful**