

Revelation #52**August 20, 208'****Series Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Behold I Am Coming Soon****Today's Message: Everything is New in Heaven! Revelation 21:3-8**

One of the best words in Revelation is the word “new”. In Revelation 21 there is the New Heaven and the New Earth and the New Jerusalem. Then, John records words which we will study today, which carry the same theme as in verses 1 and 2; he heard the words, “...for the old order of things has passed away.” In other words, there is a new order that is new—never before seen or experienced. Brand new! Just like the New Heaven and the New Earth and the New Jerusalem!

In our verses today we have the glory revealed of a new relationship. It is a new relationship because it is not just the spiritual relationship that we had with God through Christ while living in these present bodies here on this present earth! It is new because the redeemed people of God are with Him and He with them, forever, physically!

In this present age we are first spiritually regenerated by the Spirit according to the will of God, but we are not physically made new. We participate in growing in the grace and knowledge of God, but this too is incomplete as we constantly struggle against the sinful desires of the flesh. As we struggle and war against the flesh we learn to enjoy the companionship of the Holy Spirit, who counsels and consoles and comforts us as we sojourn both in the world and in this earthly tent. While in this life, and as we are growing in our sanctification we develop a deep longing to be clothed with the imperishable, heavenly body. 2 Corinthians 5:4 reads, “For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.” Now, here, in these temporal, earthly bodies we only “see as in a glass darkly,” but we know that when we are in heaven we will see Him face to face (1 Cor. 13:12)!

This new relationship with God, which is founded on the Gospel of God, will be enjoyed by us in a permanent, eternal, bodily relationship with God! It is accurate to assert that this is what the very goal of redemption has been since the beginning—since Genesis: To be with God and God with us forever, dwelling in His heaven! I agree with many theologians and pastors who have written that the “crimson thread of redemption,” that runs through the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, has this new relationship at its heart! When I read Philippians 3:20-21, I can’t help but think that this is what Paul has been taught by the Lord Jesus Christ when he writes, “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.”

The message today reveals the new order of things and the new relationship that we desperately long for! **First**, the new order begins with no physical or spiritual separation, and no limitations of access to God (v3). **Second**, the new order is free from mourning, regret, guilt, sorrow, grief and death (v4). **Third**, the

new order, though future to us, is the inheritance of the overcomers (the faith filled followers of Christ) (vv5-7). **Fourth**, the new order will be missed by the unrepentant, who loved their sin more than knowing God (v8).

I. (21:3) The New Order has no physical or spiritual separation, and no limitations of access to God.

- A. An eternal purpose of God dwelling in the midst of His people is fulfilled in Revelation 21:3!
 1. God has long promised His purpose of dwelling with His people
 - a) It is a promise made long time ago to His people
 - (1) "I will be your God": (Genesis 17:7: promise to Abraham and his descendents.)
 - (2) "You will be my people": (Exodus 6:7: God promises the Israelites both to be His people and that He is their God.)
 - (3) "And I will dwell among/ in the midst of you": (Ex.25:8; 29:45)
 - b) Leviticus 26:11-12 repeats this three pronged promise: "I will put my dwelling among you... And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people."
 2. Do you see God's heart: To Dwell! To Dwell! To Dwell among, or in the very midst of His people, and to be their God!
 - a) A longing for deep, intimate, personal relationship with His people.
 - b) To establish a relationship of mutual fidelity!
 - (1) Not just temporal and earthly, but eternal, as we see in Revelation 21:3!
- B. A Biblical theology of God dwelling among His people:
 1. God tabernacled among His people Israel in the wilderness by means of the *shekinah glory*!
 - a) After the tabernacle was complete, we read in Exodus 40:34 that "the cloud covered the Tabernacle (Tent of Meeting), and the *shekinah glory* of the Lord filled the tabernacle.
 - (1) The "cloud" hid the *shekinah glory* of God.
 2. After Solomon built the "B-eth-El", or House of God, the cloud filled the House of God so the priests could not stand to minister because the *shekinah glory* filled the House of God. (See 1 Kings 8:10-11)
 3. When Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth John 1:14 declares the glorious appearance of the God-man this way, "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the Only Begotten, who came from the Father, full of grace and Truth."
 - a) His body concealed the *shekinah glory* of God, much like the "cloud."
 - b) Only at the Transfiguration was a glimpse of His shining glory revealed.
 - (1) See Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36

- c) But the beautiful relationship between God and His people is best seen both at the incarnation of Jesus and since; since He gave His Spirit to dwell in His people!
 - (1) But not everyone who saw Him or hears of Him believes and therefore, does not have fellowship with Him.
 - (a) Even a believer's fellowship is hindered by the world, the flesh and the devil.
 - 4. At present time the dwelling of God in us through the the indwelling Holy Spirit
 - a) Who indwells individual believers (John 14:15-17; 1 Cor. 6:19)
 - b) Who indwells the Church (the body of Christ) (I Cor. 3:19; Eph.2:18,21,22)
- C. But Revelation 21:3 there is no temple (Rev. 21:22), for God Himself will dwell with/among/present with His people in the New Jerusalem!
 - 1. A new order: The dwelling of God is with men
 - a) The "men" must indicate the population of the redeemed who now have received "bodies like His (Christ's) glorious body!" (Phil. 3:21)
 - b) "He will live with them"
 - (1) The manifest presence of the glory of the Triune God will be visible in the face of our dear Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God!
 - (a) He was raised bodily and ascended to heaven in body!
 - (b) The Father and Spirit remain invisible, yet the *shekinah* glory of God is manifest in Christ!
 - 2. The new order: God's purpose of dwelling with His people and being eternally with them and eternally worshiped by His people will be fulfilled!
 - a) What began as a promise in Genesis is fulfilled in Revelation 21 as the Redemption of the people of God is complete!
 - b) The New Order–Heaven– has no physical or spiritual separation from God, and no limitations regarding our access to God: He with us and us with Him forever!
 - c) We will forever behold the radiance of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, without any hindrances between us and God.
 - (1) We will behold with unveiled faces and with pure, undefiled bodies! (2 Cor. 3:18; Philippians 3:21; Revelation 21:3-4)

II. (21:4) The New Order is free from death, mourning, crying and pain.

- A. What does this mean?
 - 1. It means that the threat of and the former reality of death and its stench is gone, forever!
 - a) How? Death and Hades were removed from the New Creation at the end of the judgment at the Great White Throne (**see Rev. 20:14**).
 - 2. It means that all memory of death and separation are removed
 - a) God wipes away every tear from their eyes

- (1) I think it means that God will wipe our minds of Death's sorrow, except perhaps some glorious remembrance of our salvation from sin through the Gospel of Christ!
 - 3. It means that there will be no sorrow for past sins, no remorse for past failures, no sense of loss over loved ones who are lost, no regret for things not finished.
- B. "For the old order of things has passed away."
 - 1. We would do well to hold on to an eternal view of things in our daily lives remembering that "what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal!" (2 Cor.4:17)
 - 2. We are counseled in 1 John 2:15, 17, "Do not love the world or the things in this world..." [because] "...the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."

III. (21:5-7) The New Order is the inheritance of the Overcomers

- A. The Voice from the throne is God the Father.
 - 1. He confirms that He is making everything (the New Creation) New!
 - a) New Heaven
 - b) New Earth
 - c) New Jerusalem
 - d) New resurrected glorious bodies like Christ's glorious body!
- B. The Voice commands John to write down the things to come in 21:6-8
 - 1. It must be written because the Revelation will be read by the 7 Churches and beyond, including our time in history.
 - a) Therefore, it serves the *reader* with
 - (1) An incentive for the believer to live with an eternal worldview.
 - (a) Remembering the temporal nature of the world and the eternal blessings of knowing God through Christ.
 - (b) To be faithful when tested and to endure hardships.
 - (2) An invitation to those who read to come out from their unbelief
 - (a) To thirst (become cognizant of spiritual thirst)
 - (b) To drink of the Living Water by faith and become an overcomer!
- C. Who are the overcomers?
 - 1. 1 John 5:4-5 tells us, "For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."
 - 2. These overcomers are the only ones who:
 - a) will inherit the heavenly blessings, and
 - b) Have eternal fellowship with God!
 - (1) "I will be his God and he will be my son."
- D. Heaven is for everyone who trusts in God by believing in the Saving work of Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead.

1. Heaven will be populated by people born of God, sanctified (grown up) by God so that Heaven will be filled with people that look like Jesus, the Son of God!

IV. (21:8) The New Order will be missed by unrepentant people who loved their sin and the world more than they loved God.

A. John lumps the unrepentant in the following categories:

1. **The Cowardly** (fearful): These were they who loved the world. They took the mark of the beast and worshiped his name— they compromised out of fear! These fearfully denied Jesus Christ before men, out of fear (Lk. 12:8-9). Men like the Pharisees who, though believing, but for fear of being put out of the synagogue, refused to publicly confess Christ. “They love the praise of men more than the praise of God. (John 12:43)”
 2. **The unbelieving**: There are NO UNBELIEVERS among the overcomers. Lack of faith in the Son results in condemnation! “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him. (John 3:36)
 3. **The Vile** (abominable): These people freely drank from the cup of the abominations of the Harlot (Rev. 17:4). In short, they lived a lifestyle partaking in behaviors that God hates. They lived their lives in rebellion against God’s Law.
 4. **Murderers**
 5. **The sexually immoral**: these people fearlessly partake in every form of sexual behavior prohibited by God in His Law. Fornication (sex outside of marriage), Adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, sexually abusive conduct (with mentally infirmed people, with the defenseless including child molestation, rape, sexual slavery of adults, the sexual exploitation of children among those people who buy and sell them, etc.)
 6. **Sorcerers**: “those who prepare drugs for magical purposes or ritual witchcraft.”¹
 7. **Idolaters**: People who take part in idol-worship or seek false gods or prophets. This would include people who entice others to participate in sexually immoral practices and idolatrous rituals.
 8. **All liars**: Including people who suppress the truth about God, deceiving other people. This includes promoting false ideas about God (See Romans 1:18-23)
- B. This chilling verse, which John was commanded to write down, is a last call to repentance. If the joys of heaven cannot win someone to Christ, a strong warning from God is required.
1. Many people may object to these words of condemnation, saying that they are not like anyone described here.
 - a) But, even if they claim not to be a coward, etc, their unbelief will condemn them (John 3:36). And if they claim not to be a liar...well, the Bible says this: “Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is

¹ Tony Garland provided this definition taken from *Friberg’s “Analytical Lexicon of the Greek NT*

the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist– he denies the Father and the Son (1 Jn 2:22).

- C. But God is merciful to the repentant! Many Christians were once what is described in verse 8. But, as Paul says to those who did come to believe: “That is what you once were. But you were washed, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor. 6:11). **Jesus came to save sinners! Be saved today!**