

Lesson 25
Revelation 21

The New Heaven and New Earth

Memory verse: "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."(John 14:2-3)

Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that God has set eternity in the hearts of men. That is to say there is a longing in the heart of man for eternal life. Without the hope of life after death, without the hope of eternity, without the hope of heaven, life is reduced to what Macbeth said after the death of the queen, "A tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

And so the anticipation of a future life is very important. The anticipation of heaven is the only reality that can make life here and now have any lasting meaning. As you come to the conclusion of the Bible because Revelation is the end, you come to the conclusion of the Bible you come to the description of heaven. God's final word to us is here is what heaven will be like. And the Bible then closes with a dramatic presentation of the wondrous reality of heaven, the hope in the future that makes life in the present worth living. Here is the place, here is the sphere, here is the habitation and here is the experience of the saints forever.

However, this will occur after the thousand year millennial Kingdom that is described in chapter 20. It will occur at the time when God judges all the ungodly at the Great White Throne. After the millennial Kingdom is over, Christ destroys the last satanic rebellion, the universe is renewed and then the ungodly are brought before God at the Great White Throne judgment. After the Great White Throne judgment, the first heaven and the first earth having passed away, chapter 21 verse 1 says a new heaven and a new earth come into existence.

When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, He included a marvellous promise to believers. He said to them in Matthew 5:12, "Your reward in heaven is great." Jesus also included in the Sermon on the Mount a command to "Lay up treasures in heaven."

In the nineteenth chapter of Matthew, it is recorded that Jesus told the rich young ruler these words, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven and come follow Me."

In Luke 23 it is recorded that Jesus said, "Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven." Interesting, isn't it, that Jesus talked about the treasures of heaven, the reward of heaven, the riches of heaven.

The Apostle Paul followed up on that and reminded believers that he was thankful for the hope laid up for him in heaven. He talked about a crown which is righteousness. He talked about a crown which is rejoicing, a crown that belongs to all those who love the Lord's appearing.

And Peter echoed the sentiment of Paul when he said that we have an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for us, 1 Peter 1:4. Heaven is our place. It's where our inheritance is. It's where our reward is. It's where our hope is. It's where our treasure is laid up. Heaven is our eternal home and the place of eternal glory. So, we're looking at heaven, particularly in Revelation 21 and 22, city of the eternal state, none other than what is called the new Jerusalem, the holy city, our forever home. It's the place where we're going to spend eternity.

So who is going to be in heaven? Those people who have seen the parched character of their souls, that is those people who recognize their sinfulness, those people who come with a broken and a contrite spirit, those people who come morally bankrupt, those people who come begging, meek and lowly, those people crushed because of their lack of satisfaction and alienation from God in the absence of spiritual water, and those people who exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You have the two things that follow us all the way through the New Testament, repentance from sin, a turning from spiritual wasteland and faith exercised in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are the people who will come into heaven.

Things to learn: 1) Citizens of the City 2) Nature of the New Jerusalem 3) Temple of the New Jerusalem

Discussion questions:

1) What can we learn from John's description of the citizens in the eternal city of God found in verses 1 to 8?

Q2. How much do we know about the nature of this New Jerusalem from verses 9 to 21?

Q3 How would it change your perspective of worship from John's recording in Rev 21: 22-27 of the New Jerusalem?