

# Adult School of Ministry

Lesson for Sunday, October 10, 2021

**The New Creation:** God will make a new heaven and a new earth where there will be no sin or sorrow.

Scriptures: Revelation 21:1-27; 22:1-21.

The Lesson Overview: Isaiah prophesied that God will “create new heavens and a new earth”, 65:17, and the Apostle Peter made mention of this prophecy (God’s promise) in his Second Letter (3:13). This entire lesson is based on a prophetic vision of the new heaven and earth given to the Apostle John, told in The Revelation, chapters 21-22. These two chapters provide far more information about the new heaven and earth than is found anywhere else in Scripture. For this reason, the concluding chapters of The Revelation occupy a prominent place in Christian thought about the world to come and what will be the everlasting state of those saved by faith in Jesus Christ.

Historical Background: Most Christian sources say John the Apostle was exiled to the island Patmos by the Roman Emperor Domitian, AD 95-96. An elderly man by this time, tradition says he resided in a cave on the island and remained there 18 months before being allowed to return to Ephesus. He wrote The Revelation either while he was on Patmos, or after he returned to Ephesus. However, some Bible scholars say John was exiled to Patmos by the Roman Emperor Nero, AD 67-68. Greek Orthodox scholars suggest John was not exiled to Patmos, but traveled there from Ephesus (about 60 miles southwest of Ephesus by ship) of his own accord, to minister to the Christians on the island.

## Lesson Outline:

1. All Things Made New: Revelation 21:1-8.
  - A. Vision of the New World, vv. 1-4.
  - B. Inhabitants of the New World, vv. 5-8.
2. The New Jerusalem: Revelation 21:9-27.
  - A. The Lamb’s Bride, vv. 9-21.
  - B. Living in Divine Light, vv.
3. Invitation To New Life: Revelation 22:1-21.
  - A. Paradise Regained, vv. 1-5.
  - B. The Great Invitation, vv. 6-21.

## Discussing The Lesson:

### 1. All Things Made New: Revelation 21:1-8.

#### A. Vision of the New World, vv. 1-4.

- 1) As reported in Matthew (24:35), Mark (13:31), and Luke (21:33), Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away.” In a vision, John saw the present heaven and earth as they “fled away; and there was found no place for them.” In their place, John saw “a new heaven and a new earth” come into view. On the new earth, “there was no more sea”, v. 1.
- 2) The Apostle Peter wrote, “The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up...the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved”, 2 Peter 3:10, 12.
- 3) The Earth is this planet on which we live. We are less certain about what is meant by the word heaven (or heavens). Some think this refers to the atmosphere that surrounds the earth, while others think it may mean our solar system, the universe, or the abode of God and the holy angels.
- 4) Immediately after seeing the new heaven and earth come into view, “John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven”, v. 2.
- 5) This holy city was dressed in the apparel of a bride, and is clearly identified as “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife” in Revelation 21:9-10. Therefore, the New Jerusalem, the holy city, is the Church, triumphant and glorified. While John never specifically says so, verse 3 strongly suggests this holy city descending from God out of heaven comes to rest on the new earth.
- 6) As the holy city, the New Jerusalem, the triumphant Church, came to rest on the new earth, John heard a voice from heaven declaring that God Himself will dwell with His people, v. 3.
- 7) As believers in Christ, God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit dwell with us now, and in us by the Spirit, but in that new world we will enjoy the presence of God in a way, and to an extent, we cannot even imagine in this present world.
- 8) The one statement that summarizes the blessings of that new world, is, “the former things have passed away”, v. 4. There will be no “tears...death...sorrow...crying...pain.” These things, common to our present life, will have no place on the new earth and in the community of God’s redeemed people.

#### B. Inhabitants of the New World, vv. 5-8.

- 1) In John’s vision, “He that sat upon the throne”, v. 5, was God (see Revelation 4:1-3, 8, 11). However, in verse 6, here, the one on the throne identifies Himself as “Alpha and Omega,” a title ascribed to Christ in Revelation 1:8, 11.

- 2) Therefore, John saw that God and Christ will make all things new, v. 5. The Son does what the Father does (John 5:19); and what God says will be done, is as certain as if it were already done, v. 5.
- 3) The inhabitants of the new world will be those who are the children (sons) of God by faith in Christ, and “shall inherit all things”, v. 7. Those who will not inhabit the new world are identified in verse 8. These “shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death”, v. 8.
- 4) Scientists speculate that the Earth and our solar system will be destroyed by an enlarging sun billions of years from now. As Christians, we expect this world to pass away, and a new world to come, as promised by God in the Bible.
- 5) Life in this world is both good and bad, and also precious; but who does not long for a world where life will be unmarred by all the things that can spoil living here?
- 6) The promise of life forever in that new world is given to all who trust in Christ for salvation. This accentuates the importance of trusting in Christ as our Savior and Lord.

## 2. The New Jerusalem: Revelation 21:9-27.

### A. The Lamb’s Bride, vv. 9-21.

- 1) An angel invited John to come and see the bride of Christ, v. 9. What the angel showed John was “the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God”, v. 10. The residents of that holy Jerusalem are the community of God’s people, redeemed from sin by Christ.
- 2) Therefore, the holy Jerusalem is “the bride, the Lamb’s wife”, v. 9. In John’s vision, the holy Jerusalem was shining with the light of the glory of God’s presence. It sparkled like a jasper stone (a diamond), “clear as crystal”, v. 11, refracting and projecting the colors of the rainbow, the sign of God’s mercy and faithfulness.
- 3) In The Revelation, the number 12 is symbolic of the people of God. The recurrence of the number 12 in these verses – “twelve gates” bearing the names of the “twelve tribes” of Israel, and the “twelve foundations” bearing the names of “the twelve apostles,” identify the New Jerusalem as all people redeemed by Christ from both old and new covenant eras, vv. 12-14.
- 4) The dimensions of the holy Jerusalem (the New Jerusalem) reveal it to be spacious enough for all the redeemed to inhabit, v. 16. Even the largest cities on earth today would be small by comparison with the New Jerusalem, which, in the shape of a cube will measure 1375 miles in length, width, and height, vv. 15-17.
- 5) There will be nothing common or unclean in the New Jerusalem, vv. 18-21. “Every part is most beautiful, and every part most precious. The

meaning, then, is that every member of the glorified Church is of priceless worth, most precious in the sight of God” (The Biblical Illustrator).

B. Living in Divine Light, vv. 22-27.

- 1) There will be no temple (Greek: naos-“shrine, sanctuary”) in the New Jerusalem, because God and Christ “are the temple of it”, v. 22. God is light (1 John 1:5), and Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12).
- 2) The New Jerusalem will have no need of the light of the sun, moon, and stars, because the glory of God and Christ will be the light of that holy city, v. 23.
- 3) The gates of the city will never be closed to guard against enemies that come in darkness, for there will be no night there, v. 25. Neither will there be the spiritual darkness of anything evil, v. 27.
- 4) All whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life will be the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, v. 27.
- 5) After telling about seeing in a vision the new heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1), John’s focus shifted entirely to telling about the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2 through 22:5).
- 6) Therefore, whatever we can surmise about life on the new earth, must be concluded from what is revealed about life in the New Jerusalem. For this reason, Christians have always spoken of life on the new earth as being the same as life in the New Jerusalem, and there is no reason to think otherwise.
- 7) The most important thing we can know about the new earth and the New Jerusalem is that, both will be inhabited by those saved by Jesus Christ, a vast multitude of people that cannot be numbered (Revelation 7:9-10).

3. Invitation To New Life: Revelation 22:1-21.

A. Paradise Regained, vv. 1-5.

- 1) Christ’s promise to faithful believers in Him is, “To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7).
- 2) Human access to paradise and the tree of life was lost by Adam’s sin (Genesis 3:22-24). But access to paradise and the tree of life are regained by Christ for all who are saved by Him.
- 3) In a vision, John saw the new world and the New Jerusalem as paradise regained, where all the ills of this world will have vanished away. There will flow the river of the water of life, v. 2.
- 4) “There shall be no more curse”, v. 3, speaks volumes about the blessedness of the life to come for believers in Christ. There, all who have trusted in Christ for salvation will live in fellowship with God and Christ, and with one another, forever, vv. 4-5.

B. The Great Invitation, vv.6-21.

- 1) John's description of life in the New Jerusalem ends abruptly with Revelation 22:5, and his attention returns to other matters. In particular, verse 7 contain the promise of Christ to come again, and John verifies the reliability of the information set forth in this book called The Revelation, vv. 6-11.
- 2) Then, Christ's promise to come again is repeated, vv. 12-13, with the assurance of divine blessing on those who obey Christ's commandments, v. 14, and the warning that all who persist in doing evil will be excluded from the New Jerusalem, v. 15. After this, Jesus speaks, identifying the message in The Revelation as His message to the churches, v. 16.
- 3) The great invitation is found in verse 17. The invitation to receive everlasting life by in Christ is extended to all who will accept it. Receiving everlasting life by faith in Christ is symbolized by partaking of "the water of life freely." The invitation to drink the water of life is extended to "whomsoever will," by the Holy Spirit and the Church (the Bride of Christ).
- 4) This great invitation is the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) being fulfilled by believers in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, proclaiming the Gospel, teaching all nations, and making disciples to Jesus Christ. The rest of The Revelation (22:18-21) is John's conclusion of the book.
- 5) God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and the giver of life, breath, and all things to all people, has given us a glimpse in The Revelation of the conclusion of human history on planet Earth.
- 6) Good will ultimately, triumph over evil, Christ and His kingdom and church will be victorious over Satan, and God will make a new world free from the curse of sin and its consequences.
- 7) As believers in Christ, we have much to look forward to, living for Christ here and living with Christ forever. With all of this in mind, let us "be ready always to give an answer to every person that asks, a reason for the hope that is in us" (see 1 Peter 3:15). Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, is the reason for our hope.

Call to Discipleship: Jesus Christ has promised access to paradise and the tree of life to believers in Him who are overcomers (Revelation 2:7). Believing in Jesus Christ, "this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith" (1 John 4:40). Overcoming faith in both faith in, and faithfulness to, Jesus Christ. We can be faithful to Christ, because He will be faithful to us.

Ministry In Action: Encourage and pray for one another that you will keep faith in Christ, and will remain faithful to Him. Pray for one another that you will be enabled by the Holy Spirit to influence people to come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.