

“The Dwelling Place of God is With Man”

Revelation 21 Revisited

(Selected Verses: Rev. 20:11, Rev 21:1-3)

Wednesday, April 20th, 2022

The Uncreation (Rev 20:11b)

The New Heavens & The New Earth and The New Jerusalem (Rev 21:1-2)

The Dwelling Place of God Is With Man (Rev 21:3)

Introduction:

We'll be in Revelation tonight, and in particular we will be looking mostly at the first 3 verses of Chapter 21. It's been a couple of weeks since we were in Revelation Chapter 20 & 21 with Pastor Dale so to jog our memories and to bring us all back into focus, we'll remember Chapter 20 is where:

- We see the Millennial Reign of Christ described
- Immediately after, Satan is released where he leads the world into the Battle of Armageddon
- Satan is defeated and cast into the Lake of Fire

Verse 11 of Chapter 20 brings us to what follows: two **amazing** events that take place:

- The Great White Throne Judgment - v.11(a)
- And the “uncreation” of the universe - v.11(b)

This sets the stage for something even far more glorious in Chapter 21 (in my opinion at least). Which of course *begins* with the New Heavens and the New Earth being created and the Holy City (the New Jerusalem), coming down from Heaven.

Looking at the second part of Verse 11 of Chapter 20, what is described is a “passing away” of the current universe. That’s no small event. Even going back and looking how the earth is changed before the Millennial Reign, we see earth being re-configured:

- Mountains are leveled.
- Islands are shaken from their places.
- Heavenly bodies crash to the earth (the 6th Seal)
- All peoples of the earth hide themselves, begging to be hidden from the wrath of the Lamb

So the universe must pass away (rendered as “the earth and the sky” in the ESV). It must be utterly destroyed. Uncreated. Why? Because the universe is contaminated with sin and therefore it cannot be allowed to continue into eternity.

Peter describes this in 2 Peter 3:10-13 saying, *“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. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!”*. Jesus says in Matthew 24:35, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away”*.

In Isaiah 24, we see a prophetic view into this future catastrophe: (v.1) "*Behold, the Lord will empty the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants.*". Moving to Verses 18(b)-20: "*...For the windows of heaven are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble. The earth is utterly broken, the earth is split apart, the earth is violently shaken. The earth staggers like a drunken man; it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again.*". That's epic imagery. You'll recall that the last time the windows of heaven were opened, God ruined the earth with a flood. This time however, He will destroy it through violence and fire. Everything will burn up and disintegrate. As incredible as our current universe is, it was never meant to last.

Revelation 21:1

The uncreation of the universe is followed abruptly by the Great White Throne Judgment. So moving forward to Revelation Chapter 21, beginning with Verse 1. The NEW creation: the New Heavens and the New Earth and the New Jerusalem. This is to be the eternal dwelling place for God and man. Looking at Isaiah Chapter 65:17 we see something really incredible: "*For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.*" The former things shall not be remembered or come into mind? That's really something incredible to ponder. But why would that be? I suppose that it's because those former memories are all colored with sin.

This new earth will defy our wildest imaginations. And we only have one hint of what it's going to be like. Revelation 21:1(c), "*...and the sea was no more*". 2/3rds of our present earth is covered by water. Humans are mostly water. Plants and animals are mostly water. The air has lots of water in it. Glaciers are frozen water. We live in a water-dominated world. With the sea no longer being a thing on the New Earth, it seems to indicate that we will no longer operate with any dependence on water. We can probably allow our imaginations to run free in an exercise

trying to think of what it will be like. But in any case, life in the New Heavens and the New Earth is going to be very, very different.

Revelation 21:2

Let's move now to another aspect of the New Earth and the New Heavens: the holy city, the New Jerusalem. Revelation 21:2 reads, "*And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*" It turns out that there are actually three Jerusalems that are part of redemptive history:

- The First: The historical city of David that we all know as the "Holy City". The label "Holy" refers to the fact that God has set it aside for His divine purposes.
- The Second: This is the Millennial Jerusalem (the seat of Christ during His reign on earth during the 1,000 years).
- The Third: This is the **NEW** Jerusalem. This will be the eternal one. The builder and foundation layer of THIS city will be God Himself. And we who are in Christ will experience it.

I'm reminded of the promise of our Lord from John:14. He tells the disciples:

- His Father's house has many rooms
- He goes to prepare a place
- One day He will return to take them there

Christ is there now, preparing a place for us. He will return soon to bring us there, to be with Him forever. It will be in that Holy City where we will all be gathered together to live.

Consider this: The new heaven and the new earth don't yet exist. After all, we are currently living in the present one (which is yet to be destroyed). But the new heavens and the new earth

are yet to be created. HOWEVER. The New Jerusalem has to already exist because remember that Jesus said He **goes now** to His father's house where He prepares a place for us. If that's true, then that place has to exist for it to be prepared. And it comes DOWN. It already exists.

Revelation 21:2(d) reads, "...prepared as a bride adorned for her husband". Now, I possess no knowledge of Jewish weddings so I needed to spend a great deal of time trying to understand if there were any parallels so that I could better understand the Bride/Groom/Marriage metaphor used here. Here's what I found: there were four basic parts to a Jewish wedding. First there was the engagement of the couple. Parents of both bride and groom would come together and discuss the arrangement. This would be a pledge of some form between the families. Then comes a period of time that the engaged would have no physical contact at all. Then at some point was the formal "presentation" where the bride is brought out and presented. Following that, the groom would be brought out and then a seven-day period of feasting would begin. This would conclude with the wedding ceremony after which the couple would go and consummate the marriage. That's the image we have here in Revelation 21. Here's how it looks:

1. **The Engagement**: This takes place "before the foundations of the world" where the names of God's people are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. The pledge is the Father gives His Son a redeemed people.
2. **The Presentation**: The rapture of the church. The bride is taken to be with the Bridegroom. This is the seven-year period where the church (the bride) is with Christ (the Bridegroom) at the wedding feast of the Lamb.
3. **The Ceremony**: At the end of the wedding feast of the Lamb, we have the ceremony: the Millennial Kingdom. In the metaphor, the bride and the Bridegroom are brought together.
4. **The Consummation**: The eternal state where we (as the bride of Christ) are brought to live with Him in the New Jerusalem where we reside with Him forever.

Revelation 21:3

Revelation 21:3, we read, *“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”*. Here, the New Jerusalem, the Father’s House, is where He dwells with His redeemed. Jesus went to prepare a place in His Father’s house for us. John is given a vision of us being brought by Christ to live in the Father’s house. Living in the same house with us openly - no more in a tabernacle or a temple. God comes and makes His home with us. This is the Father’s house and we who are in Christ, are all there, together.

We will exist in the majesty, the unfiltered “shekinah” of God Himself. We will be His people; His personal treasures. What security we have! To some extent, at least as much as our limited minds can comprehend anyway, we understand the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of us as believers. In the same limited way, we can understand our Lord Jesus Christ as Messiah. But this is the ultimate presence of the Most High God in a way different from every other understanding. And those of us in Christ will abide with Him forever. Amen.