

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 8/11/10 Wednesday Evening

Series: *A Walk through the Book of Revelation*

Revelation 21:9-27 "The New Heaven and Earth"--part 2

We have a tremendous hope given to us by our gracious God. We know what's coming. Ponder that. *We know what is coming.* We know where things are heading, and we know it because God has revealed it in His Word.

Discuss: What do we know? Let's list some things we know that are coming...

Review: In the final two chapters of the Bible we see a parallel with the first two chapters of the Bible. How so? In Genesis 1-2, we discover the record of God's creation of the heavens and the earth. It was a paradise, a perfect universe. What do we see in Revelation 21-22? A record of how God will establish a *new* heaven and earth. It will be a perfect paradise that will never end.

The contents of the Bible from Genesis 2 to Revelation 21 is really the story of how the first paradise was lost, and what God did to restore it.

Discussion: The new heaven and earth will be a wonderful place, too marvelous for words. What do you look forward to *most*?

Tonight we're going to take a look at the second part of Revelation 21 this evening. There are three movements to the vision in Revelation 21. We'll review the first two (which we studied last time), and then look at the third...

I. John tells us what he saw (1-2).

A. John saw a new heaven and earth (1).

B. John saw the new Jerusalem (2).

III. John tells us what he heard (3-8).

He mentions two voices who spoke...

A. A voice from the throne spoke (3-4).

Here's what the voice says has happened with the coming of the new heavens and earth...

1. *God's dwelling is with men.*
2. *God will live with His people.*
3. *They will be His people, and He will be their God.*
4. *He will wipe away all of their tears.*
5. *There will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain.*

6. *The old order has passed away.*

B. The One seated on the throne spoke (5-8).

1. *He announced His intent (5).* What is it? To make everything new.

2. *He revealed His identity (6a).*

I am the Alpha and Omega.

I am the Beginning and the End.

3. *He declared a promise (6b-8).*

To the one who is thirsty... (6b)

To the one who overcomes... (7)

To the cowardly, unbelieving... (8)

New material...READ verses 9-27.

III. John describes the new Jerusalem (9-27).

Here's how he saw it...

A. An angel showed it to him (9-14).

Q: What angel? One John had seen earlier in the pouring out of the bowl judgments (9; see 15:1 and 17:1). This assignment was much more pleasant for the angel than the prior one.

A comment about this angel by Robert Mounce is helpful (377), "The angel is undoubtedly the one who in 17:1 summoned John to witness the judgment of the great harlot. This seems to be the purpose of the identical introductions. It also draws attention to the contrast between the great harlot (the wicked city of Babylon) and the bride of the Lamb (the holy city of Jerusalem). One is of the earth, symbolizing the unbridled passion and evil of man, and the other descends from heaven, the epitome of all that is pure and beautiful. It is perhaps overly subtle to find in the different messages delivered by the angel an indication that God's servants do not choose their roles but without question fulfill their mission whether it involves doom or bliss."

The angel allowed John to see the new Jerusalem. John described it in four ways in verses 9-14.

1. *It is the Bride, the wife of the Lamb (9).*

Q: What did the angel offer to do for John in verse 9? "Come, I will show you the bride..." We saw this theme back in 19:7-9 (read). The image of a wedding to express the intimate relationship God has with His people is found throughout the Bible (as the *NIVsb* points out on p. 1945; e.g.--Isa 54:5-7; Hos 2:19; Matt 22:2-14; Eph 5:32)

In Revelation 19 we were told that Bride had made herself ready. In Revelation 21, this bride is introduced as "the Lamb's wife" (indicating the marriage has occurred?).

Q: Then what happened to John, according to verse 10? The angel carried him to a high mountain and showed him something. What? A second feature...

2. *It is the Holy City (10).*

Q: What was happening to this city as John saw it? It was coming down from heaven (a continuation of verse 2).

In Revelation 21 it's important to follow the sequence carefully. First, the angel gave John an invitation and an offer--"Come and I will show you the bride." That's verse 9. Then in verse 10, what did the angel do with John? He "carried him away in the Spirit to a mountain...and showed me the Holy City coming down out of heaven."

Discussion: Where is the bride the angel said he would show John? Does the city *contain* the bride, or in this vision, is the city itself the bride?

Here's what impressed John about the city...

3. *It shone with the glory of God (11).*

Notice the similes again, "Its brilliance was *like* that of a very precious jewel, *like* a jasper..." What's true of precious jewels that would illustrate truth about the new heaven and earth?

4. *It had a high wall, twelve gates, and twelve foundations (12-14).*

The background is Ezekiel 40-48...

--Ezekiel had a vision of the future temple (40:2-4)

--The layout is given in chapters 40-48

--The gates are listed in 48:30-35

--The final words of the vision give the name of that city in 48:35, "THE LORD IS THERE."

Q: What did John say he saw in conjunction with the Holy City in verses 12-14? A "high wall with twelve gates."

Q: What was true of the gates? Three things. One, there were twelve angels at the gates. Two, the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on them. And three, the gates were spaced out around the wall (see verse 13).

Q: What was true of the wall, according to verse 14? It had twelve foundations. Whose names are recorded there?

Discuss: Is it significant that both the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles are mentioned in connection with this city? What is the significance?

B. The angel measured it (15-21).

Q: What specifically did he measure according to verse 15? The city, its gates, and its walls. Here's what John observed about the city...

1. *It was laid out like a square (15-16).*

Its dimensions? 12,000 stadia ("furlongs" in the KJV). That's about 1,400 miles. It seems to be a cube, 1,400 miles long, wide, and high.

2. *Its wall was impressive (17-18).*

Q: How thick? 144 cubits, or 200 feet.

Q: What was it made of?

3. *Its foundations were adorned with precious stones (19-20).*

We don't often think much of foundations in buildings (we assume they are there and are strong, but take them for granted until there's a problem). And we typically don't decorate foundations, but in this city they are!

Q: How so? Twelve different precious stones are mentioned.

4. *Its gates were pearls and its street of pure gold (21).*

Discuss: Why does God give us all these details about the Holy City?

C. John reflects on what he saw (22-27).

1. *He tells us what's not there.*

No temple (22)

Q: Why is it unnecessary there?

No sun or moon (23)

Q: Why are they not necessary there?

No shutting of the gates (25)

Q: Why not?

No night (25)

Will we not need to sleep there?

Nothing impure, shameful, or deceitful (27)

Q: Is it possible that what happened in Genesis 3 will happen again? No. What happened to Eve there? She was *deceived*. What will not be in the new heaven and earth? Anyone who is *deceitful* (or "maketh a lie" in the KJV).

2. *He tells us what is there.*

The Lord God Almighty (22)

The Lamb (22)

The glory of God (23)

The glory and honor of the nations (26)

Those whose names are in the Lamb's book of life (27)

Application: Write down your answers to the following two questions. Then we'll discuss them together...

1. What do we learn about God from this section of His Word?

2. What's the most encouraging truth to you in this text?

