

Note

Revelation – Part 13 of 15

Summary

The last two chapters describe the new heaven and new earth. There is a yearning in everyone for a new earthly paradise in life, and a new eternal home in death. Eternity has truly been set in the hearts of man. The resurrected Christ is the first fruit and model for all believers' future resurrected bodies. The bible speaks of three heavens, the third being a realm of the spiritual dimension. Christ will unite all creation again in Himself. The rightful dominion given in the beginning in Genesis will be restored in the end in Revelation.

Transcript

Revelation – Part 13 of 15

Today we come to the last two chapters of the Beautiful Book, Revelation chapters 21 and 22. These two chapters describe the New Heaven and the New Earth.

There is a yearning in every human heart for these two things, a New Earth and a New Heaven. Instinctively, men go everywhere in the world looking for paradise- that beautiful garden, that mountain, that beautiful river scene. The tourist industry is a multi-billion dollar industry because people yearn to look for a place where they can sit down and look at this "paradise", a flawless creation, not disturbed by man. Then they go home and buy an expensive house so that they can have a garden and sit there and enjoy the garden. Why all this love for green grass and trees and flowers and fruits? It's a yearning for something we lost, a yearning for peaceful surroundings and environment. That's the Garden of Eden lost, paradise lost. Now, many people think, well, it's gone. Satan stole it from us, God lost round one, so God builds heaven. Nonsense, God never loses. Satan is the loser. He destroyed the Garden of Eden, God will make one even more beautiful called the New Earth. God wins mightily because He is going to make a New Earth.

Secondly, every human heart, including the so-called agnostics, and even atheist, believe that when they die, they go to some nice place with no more problems. Unbelievers believe that! They say, "Well, my father's gone, he's a good man, now he's in a better place." How does he know? It's a yearning in every heart. God has made our souls immortal. Rarely does a man say, "My father's gone to dust. He has gone back to the earth." You see, man was made in the image of God. God put eternity in our heart and that is stated somewhere in Ecclesiastes. You don't think a chicken or a pig has a spirit, you rarely think about that, it's just good meat. But the human heart yearns for eternity, God puts eternity in our hearts for this place called heaven. People look up in the sky at night and talk about heaven. These

are things that are just put in the human heart, whatever culture we come from. It has nothing to do with education, culture, or the era we live in.

Revelation (Chapters) 21 and 22 culminates, in just two chapters, in the New Heaven and the New Earth. Now, interestingly, there is very little in the Bible about heaven, far more about hell. And a lot more about the Millennial Kingdom, especially the Old Testament prophecies that we went through. In fact, almost all those glorious prophecies of the unseen future in the Old Testament are about the Millennial Kingdom, written largely to the Jews, who felt that God, "You promised us so much, where? David ruled for a while, Solomon ruled and it's gone. We've been punished all these years. You made a promise to Abraham, You made a promise to our ancestors. We are the chosen race, where? We were scattered!" But in 1948, God got them back. And then there will be a Millennial Kingdom. We read about that, for 1000 years. And God said, "I will gather My Jews back." So we saw that. And the Old Testament prophecies prophesied largely about the Millennial Kingdom and hardly a word about heaven.

So because there's so little about heaven, what happens? We have people who never read Revelation, which is normal, or even if they read, they started in Chapter 1 and by the time they reached Chapter 10, they gasped in confusion, and they hardly ever reach Chapters 21 and 22. And so they have a void in understanding what is Heaven, the New Heaven and the New Earth. They have no concept. In church, honestly, how often have you heard preaching about the New Heaven and the New Earth? Even if you go to google where you can find tons of material about everything else on earth and the Bible, there's not a lot about the New Heaven and the New Earth, whether in teaching or in preaching. There are some obscure ones, obscure writers and obscure preachers generally, with a few thousand people listening to it. But when you have some other topic on Christianity, there are millions and millions who watch it. On New Heaven and New Earth? Almost never. Do you know why? Because even your own preachers don't even know much about it. So it's a void. So what fills the void? Imagination fills the void. What kind of concepts do most Christians have of heaven? Again, we have the Greek curse, I call it the Greek curse, where the Greeks separated the spiritual from the secular, the spirit from the physical. So for Christians, almost 2000 years ago, our thinking has been very (Greek). Our spiritual work is go to church on Sunday, listen to preaching, go to Bible studies, go to prayer meetings - that is serving God and that's very spiritual. We go to office, that's the secular world, just get through this nonsense so that we can go to the spiritual place called the

church, the four walls and do spiritual things. And then that's our worship to God. So we separate the two. And even when we go to church, there's the spiritual people who do spiritual things like preaching, and the rest are just greeters and do other things. Nobody bothers, even the pastor doesn't stand the door to greet you because that's so secular. It's all secular. It's not spiritual. If he sits in the front row of the church long before that, bows his head and prays, what a spiritual preacher we have! But just to go and greet the old lady and help her up the stairs, that's secular! So we've separated all that and so heaven becomes a spiritual place. So what's our concept of heaven? We go to heaven, we must do spiritual things because it's spiritual, right? So what do you do? No Bible studies needed since you are already know God, correct? What do you want Bible study for? What do you need all the training for? No more evangelism training, no more discipleship training, then what is there for us to do? Play your guitar or your harp and sing because that's the only thing you can do that is spiritual. And so their picture of heaven is us angelic looking, we don't look like ourselves, but kind of cherubic looking, wearing hopefully, spiritual looking white robes, and we sit on clouds and sing and sing until 10 zillion trillion years later. That's heaven for the average person. No pain, no death, but nothing else except singing. You ask them what else they do in Heaven. "I don't know." You can't blame them. The Greek mind has cursed Christianity, and cursed our concept of eternity. I'm not looking forward to sitting on a cloud by myself praising God, morning, noon and night. So that idea has degenerated heaven, that's why there is nothing much to preach about it. But then, we learn in Revelation, we will have resurrected bodies, repeat, "bodies". And if we are born again, in the Millennial Kingdom we will be in resurrected bodies. And we have physical and spiritual bodies. Let's just look at John Chapter 20. The best example is the resurrected body of Jesus. He's the first one resurrected, we will follow, so we can see the model already. This is the resurrected Jesus on the morning after His resurrection and Mary Magdalene is looking for Him.

John 20:15

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to Him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means teacher).

In Hebrew, it's "Rabbi" and in Aramaic, it's "Rabboni". Now, what do we learn from this? When she went to the empty grave, she saw somebody

there and respectfully, she didn't stare at him. She thought he was just the one in-charge of the area around the tomb, the gardener taking care of the tomb. And she said, "Sir, where's the body now? What happened to the body? Did you take Him away?" She dared not look at Him. And then this person said, "Mary." Oh, she looked up and she saw it's Jesus. Now what's the point of this story? The point is when she saw Him, she heard His voice, recognizable, physical voice (we all have a voice identity) and a visual identity, "Jesus!" Of course she didn't call Him, "Jesus", nobody called Him, Jesus. "Rabbi!" but in their Aramaic dialect, "Rabboni!" which is what she always called Him. I hope you understand that your resurrected body will look pretty much like your physical body. Now, let's go on a little bit more.

John 20:26-28.

Eight days later, His disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see My hands; and put out your hand, place it in My side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Thomas knew this is Jesus and saw His hands, the scars, the nail prints left there. "Put your hand there." You can't do that with the spirit, there is nothing to touch, if you touch a spirit, you touch air, looks like something but it's air! Wow, that's a real body. We're going to be in heaven, in a real, physical, resurrected (body). Physical, but not the same physical constituents as now. But physical, not spiritual. We are not floating on clouds, weightless on clouds.

I labour on this because I hope it helps you prepare for heaven. The whole purpose of the Bible is to prepare us to live on earth, and more importantly, to prepare us for the future. That's what we always tell our kids, "Be prepared for the future. Think long term." Think long term, you can't think longer term than New Heaven and New Earth, that's eternity.

Luke 24:39, Jesus said to them,

"See My hands and My feet, that it is I myself. Touch Me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Bones! Very light bones of course, you can go through doors, but the fact is, it is flesh and bones. Now for the Greek mind, this is not possible. The physical is bad, physical things are bad, secular jobs are worthless, just get over it. It's 44 hours, you've got no choice, work so you can earn your keep and don't care about too much about your testimony in the office. But how you

behave in church is everything, how you sing is everything. How you treat your subordinates, how you treat your maid at home is not relevant. It's secular. But here, you see, you and I will be in this physical body, much improved, a resurrected body, but still a body, recognizable. How do you want to look in heaven? As good testimonies of how you took care of the temple of the Holy Spirit, your body, looking like you never bothered with it? We bother so much about our looks when we go to a party for 3 hours. How about heaven? So I hope that this helps us to grasp that you're not going to heaven and then zapped, your body's gone. (You think), "bodies are useless, it's dirt. It is dust, you know?" No, no, it will be resurrected as you and me. How will you be? What shape will you be? Shape, in a full sense, not just your bodily shape.

Next question, is heaven a place? Where is it? Nothing is said much about it but in the Bible, it tells us of three heavens. Let's look at 2 Corinthians 12:2, Paul was brought up to see some things you and I, no human on earth, previously have seen. He was raptured to heaven, so to speak.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:2,

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up (that's the word "raptured") to the third heaven - whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know, God knows.

So he says there is a third heaven, just to confuse you. But what is the New Heaven, and what is the Third Heaven? In the Bible, the word "heaven" or "sky" has three dimensions:

The 1st heaven is where the birds fly. What you and I, in science, will call "atmosphere" - earth's atmosphere, still have some oxygen there, and it is part of the ecosystem of the earth. So 1st heaven is where the birds fly.

The 2nd heaven is what we would call the universe, the galaxies where zillions of galaxies are (now they're sending rocket satellites out there with telescopes, and they find more and more new galaxies that nobody knew before.) It's literally endless. It's an expanding space. So infinite like God. How do I know that God is infinite? By looking at His universe, the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world or the universe are clearly seen. So that's the 2nd heaven.

3rd heaven - Now, if you took a rocket and you have a super rocket, and you fly endlessly, would you reach the 3rd heaven? I don't think so. It's not a place. There was a moronic atheist, an astronaut, a Russian guy, he was sent up into space and do you know what he said? "I'm up here in the heavens and I don't see a god." Now, that's a classic moron, he just went

a little bit up there. If he had studied a little bit of science, he knows he's got to go a lot further if he wants to look for God. So this kind of people, sad to say, will never enter the 3rd heaven. Where is the 3rd heaven? So if you have a rocket that could go infinitely, could you reach the 3rd heaven? I don't believe so. Check the heaven's expanding space, it goes on and on and on. Where is the 3rd heaven then? I think it's a dimension, a spiritual realm, if I may put it that way. Let's just call it a realm, a place. Just as there's a spiritual realm around me now, I'm sure there are spirits, there are angelic beings maybe watching over me now. It's real, it's a realm here, except I can't see it. So the New Heaven is something that God will just unveil it before our eyes, literally, pull up the curtain. You know, there were many occasions in the Old Testament, where God said, "Look up and you'll see the angels of God" and the man looks up and what does he see? Whole armies of angelic beings he never knew were there. So we all know there are things we cannot see. There's a microscopic world I cannot see, there is Coronavirus right now that we don't see, does not mean it is not there. There's oxygen in the air I cannot see. But it's there. There are realms we cannot see, there's a spiritual, I call it, dimension that we cannot see. With a microscope, maybe you get into part of the microscopic realm. With oxygen, maybe with your nose, you can whiff and get a little bit of taste of the realm of odorless gases that you never knew were there. There is a spiritual realm. Maybe if I can help a little bit, let's just try to grasp this because people will think heaven is up there. It's much more than that and one day, we will begin to figure out this realm. You know, it took a long time to figure out the germ theory. People used to laugh at it before, "Ha, ha, germs? Where are they?" Just like the astronaut who says, "Where is God?" Let's look at Ephesians 2:4-8. It's kind of difficult to grasp these things. I'm going to labour a little bit here to help us understand something bigger than our minds.

Ephesians 2:4-8

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved - and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace, you have been saved through faith. And this is not of your own doing; it is a gift of God....

We are familiar with Ephesians 2:8. "For by grace, are you saved through faith" but we forgot before that, it tells us in this little passage, that when we

are saved, we “are seated”, not “will be seated”, but, are seated in the heavenly places with Christ. See, when we received Christ, we have a union with Christ and spiritually, we are already seated in the heavenly places with Christ. It's hard to grasp. My mind still cannot grasp it. I like the idea. Physically I'm here, but spiritually, I already have a place there. It's like I'm already there. On the flip side, 1 Corinthians 3:16 says, “Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you? So in that sense, the spiritual realm is already in me. And I'm already in the spiritual realm, according to Ephesians Chapter 2. There's a tension there. Physically I'm here, spiritually, in a sense, I'm there. Jesus is up there right now but spiritually, Galatians 2:20 says, “Christ lives in me.” He's there, but He's here. I'm here, but I'm there. Where is there? Let's look at Matthew Chapter 17. That may help us a little bit. Let's go to Matthew Chapter 17, in this familiar passage called the Transfiguration.

Matthew 17:1

And after six days Jesus took with Him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with Him.

This is a scene called the Transfiguration. Christ is showing Peter, James and John, what the resurrected Christ will be like, shining in all His glory. And then appears Moses and Elijah. They recognize them. How? I don't know. But immediately they recognized them. Where was this? Is this heaven? No, no, He was on a mountain, feet planted on the earth, but they saw the spiritual realm on earth. Hard to grasp, right? Right now, there is a spiritual realm around me except that the curtains are not drawn, I can't say, “Hi” to my angel who has been watching me and I can't bind the evil one who is trying to disturb me. The curtains are not drawn. At that moment on that mountain, for moments, the curtain was drawn. So I hope you realize that heaven is not a place you take a rocket to. It's a realm we will be in, fully, with all our senses in our resurrected body forever. I hope that helps.

Now, why this idea? In Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah, as a prophet prophesied that the virgin would conceive and bear a son and His name will be called Immanuel. What does “Immanuel” mean? In Matthew 1:23, it says, “God with us”. God, eternal spirit being, so close to us. When was the last time

that happened? Garden of Eden. When God came down and walked in the garden in the evening and said, "Adam". God with us! Sin came in, and God became apart from us. One fine day, heaven and earth unite and God will be with us. Jesus was a type of this beautiful dream of ours that our creator and we will be together. Jesus was God, incarnate in the flesh walking among men. Could He be with everybody? No, He could just be with His disciples and some people around Him but one day, God will be with all of us. We will have the reality of God's presence with us. How does that feel? Maybe I will try to describe in a moment. So what is this love story about? It is about a union. Marriage is a union, two become one. That's why in heaven there's no marriage. No need for that. You see, marriage was primarily not to reproduce babies, it's primarily to teach us about the closest union possible. In heaven there's no need to teach that anymore.

Let's look and then we'll try to tie up at the end of this.

Ephesians 1:7-10.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Christ came to unite everything together - heaven and earth, us and God, all united. You see, one of the problems of this world is sin divides, even within families, the closest marriage sin divides. Satan's job was to divide men from His creator. Sin continues to divide men from men, and men from God. Christ came to reconcile, to reunite all of us, with each other and with God. That's the goal of salvation. Not just a passport to go to heaven and sit by yourself on a cloud, doing nothing. So what in the end, can we say is heaven and earth? The New Heaven is a uniting of realms that seems so separate, spiritual and physical so separate, physical and physical (so separate), people and people so separate, people and animals so separate, everything has been divided up. So what will we be doing in heaven? Nothing? Retired by ourselves, sitting instead of in a rocking chair, in a rocking cloud? No, Revelation (Chapter) 22.

Revelation 22:5.

And night will be no more. They will need no light or lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

So you and I will not be singing forever. We will be reigning forever and ever, ruling. That's what you'll be doing forever and ever. Reigning and singing are quite different things. Purposeful. We will be doing what God intended us to do in Genesis 1:28. So we jump from the last chapter of the Bible to the first chapter and we see the purposes of God have never really changed. The devil thought he could thwart, stop or hinder God's work. Never, except now, our work in the New Heaven and New Earth will be much better than what Adam did in Eden in the old earth.

Genesis 1:28

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

"Dominion" - isn't this the same word as "reign"? "Rule" is the same. So there is this whole creation for Adam in Genesis to rule over, to potentialize, to make more and to make better, out of perfection to make a greater perfection. You and I will not be given a garden, but a universe, New Earth, New Heaven - to do what? To reign over it, to make it better, more productive, more beautiful, to be even more perfect. So it's not about us sitting and doing nothing. We're going to do lots. We're going to have so much satisfaction. You see God works all the time. That's why the world continues. Jesus said of His Father, "He works, I work, Sabbath and no Sabbath". But productive work is the most satisfying thing on earth. Have you ever grown some tomatoes and they actually bear fruit, isn't that amazing? It's better than sitting in a rocking chair doing nothing. So our problem in life today is a lot of work is futile, pointless, vain and empty. We do a lot and it is sin-cursed; weeds and thistles and thorns; you help a lot and you get criticism and all kinds of problems. So what's the best thing to do, do nothing, retire, and don't have any problems. But imagine in heaven, you can do satisfying, productive work forever and ever. And that satisfaction is described in Revelation. Let's bounce back from the first book to the last book.

Revelation 22:1.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

There's a river of water. What is the river of water always a picture of? It satisfies thirst. What is thirst a picture of? Unsatisfied desires. I am thirsty, I need water and you drink, after a while you're thirsty, you need water, you drink. It's always unsatisfied.

Jesus said to His disciples in John 7:38

Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, "Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

All thirst, all dissatisfaction, always satisfied. Do you know what heaven is? Perfect satisfaction. So my hope is you will prepare for a place where you will reign and rule. If you don't prepare, you reign over less, you rule over less, you'll be satisfied. I give you a little cup, I fill it and it is full. I give you a bucket, I fill it and it is full. I give you a lake, I fill it and it is full. Everyone will be full. But the levels of volume of fullness will be different. Hard to explain but I hope you are grasping some concepts which we have never really thought about, we will be so satisfied. We learn good relationships; perfect relationships will be plenty. We learn how to rule and do work properly, faithful in little on earth, and God will give us much in heaven to be faithful over. Heaven is not a place of growth. Earth is a place we prepare for heaven. And heaven is where we work out and enjoy what we have prepared for. So, as I say, there's no promotion in heaven, there is fulfilment of what we have prepared. So I hope you spend your life on earth being faithful in little things. Hope this helps you with an introduction to Revelation (Chapters) 21 and 22, the culmination of the love story of God.

God bless.