

REVELATION PART FOURTEEN - Chapter 21 – The New Heaven and New Earth

This chapter describes the New Heaven and New Earth, the perfect eternal place that we have all been yearning to go to all our lives.

1. There is very little description about this new place because there is really no need to describe it to us because we all know what we would like in this place. It is like any love story which commonly ended with, “they live happily ever after”, in which there was no need for elaboration over the couple’s life after marriage nor about them growing old together.
2. We already have an image of such a place in our hearts, but they have been damaged by the Greek thinking, which separates the spiritual realm from the physical. If we were to remove the misconceptions that a man can have many wives, most marriages would naturally fall in place.
3. There is not much to describe because it is the grand finale of the love story of God finding a Bride for His Son, and the conclusion is that all would live happily ever after. That is it! It is unlike the Millennial Kingdom, which is quite complicated, which speaks of a mix of resurrected bodies and natural bodies of people coming together, and where there is a bigger Israel with recovered tribes, etc.

Revelation 21:1-8: Description of the New Heaven and New Earth**Verse 1**

1. John saw a New Heaven and New Earth. Revelation 21:1 looks very similar to Genesis 1:1, in which the ending and the beginning are similar, with God creating a New Heaven and New Earth except that this new creation would be much better than the one created in Genesis.
2. Does “new” mean you cannot recognise it totally as heaven and Earth?
 - a) It is not the case because even with new bodies, we could recognise each other. If the New Earth is not recognisable as Earth, it cannot be called “Earth”.
 - b) It simply means that it would be perfectly renovated but without the mutations and deformities in it. This means that it is similar and yet different. The New Earth would still be recognisable.
3. The old heaven and Earth melted away (also see 2 Peter 3:10).
4. There will be no more sea in the New Heaven and Earth.
 - a) Half of today’s world is covered by sea. The sea is the sewerage plant of the current Earth where all the rivers flow into it, otherwise the rivers will be polluted beyond imagination. The sea has salt and due to its salinity, it is able to purify the water by the natural water cycle process (i.e. the process by which sea water is evaporated by the Sun and falls as clean rainwater).
 - b) In the New Heaven and New Earth, there will not be a need for such a sewerage plant; hence, there will be no need for the sea.
 - c) However, it does not mean that there will be no water on the New Earth. There will be lakes, rivers, etc., filled with fresh water. Vast majority of the people

today go to the seaside only to view the sea, and many usually would then go back to the swimming pool in their hotels or condominiums to swim. Many would prefer not to swim in the sea as salt water is unpleasant.

Verse 2

1. John saw a new holy city, the New Jerusalem came down out of the New Heaven to the New Earth.
 - a) This new city would be the only capital (or capital city) in the new world of the unified Heaven and Earth, which is unlike the current world where there are many capitals competing and fighting for power and money.
 - b) This means that God's permanent address is New Jerusalem.
2. Hebrews 11:10 says Abraham was looking for a city whose foundation and builder is God. Abraham saw this New Jerusalem long ago by faith.
3. Is this a city or a bride? Or is it a place (city) or people (bride)?
 - a) Revelation 21:2 says the holy city that came down was prepared as a bride. Therefore, it is both a city and a bride, just like Israel is both a people and a place.
 - b) God chose his people, Israel, and gave them a place called Israel. A city is a place (or community) and a bride speaks of intimacy.
 - c) We, the people of God, is the Bride; but we are also very close and is thus a community or a city.

Verse 3

1. This is the most amazing part of the last two chapters of the Bible. We do not go to heaven, but God comes to us to be with us. This means heaven comes to us.
2. Heaven is a place where God is. Heaven is a realm, not a physical place. Just as my home is where my heart and family is, and if the family is taken away, it is no longer my home.
3. People always think that our God is a passive God, and He just sits up there and wait for us. This is definitely not so. Our God is Immanuel, whom we know walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in Genesis Chapters 1 to 3.
4. Unfortunately, in the sin-cursed world, God is separated from us, and is no longer in this world. However, God sent His Son to be with us, and He calls His name Immanuel which means "God with us". Christ walked on Earth amongst men. After Christ was risen, God sent the Holy Spirit to live in us!
5. In the New Heaven and New Earth, all three persons of the Holy Trinity will be with us on the unified New Heaven and New Earth. This is reconciliation and perfection when our Creator lives with us forever and we see Him face to face.
6. From the verses in Revelation 21:3-8, we will see that heaven is about a person rather than a place.
 - a) The word "He" is in every verse. It is about the Creator, Jesus.
 - b) People will say that the world will come to an end. The end is to be with a person. "Who is this world coming to?" would be a better question. The world is coming back to its Creator from whom it was separated.

- c) This is a love story of God who loves us but who was separated from us by sin. God allowed all these events to take place so that we can all come right back to Him after He had conquered it.
- d) What is the end of the world?
The end of the world is the beginning of eternal time with a person, our Creator, lover and God, Jesus Christ.

Verse 4

1. There will be no more tears, pain or death.
 - a) We see all sorts of sicknesses and viruses like Covid-19 spreading to so many countries this year. Practising medicine is a rich business on Earth now.
 - b) Isaiah 33:24 says the New Heaven and New Earth has no sick people.
2. It is easier to describe the New Heaven and New Earth by specifying what negatives will not be there.
 - a) For example, if a man of today were to go back to stone age days, it will be easier for him to describe the current world by saying what the negatives are not there, for e.g. people do not need to toil the whole day in the farm, there is no more sunburn on their back, etc.; rather than sharing with them about modern technologies such as the adoption of computers at the workplace, the comfort of air-conditioners, etc.
 - b) Thus, verse 4 describes what will not be there. To describe what is present in the New Heaven and New Earth, symbolism will be required because there is no current words or vocabulary to describe the things in the future state yet.

Verse 5

1. It says "Behold, I am making all things new." The term "new" in this verse does not mean totally new. It is a new version of the same things, for e.g. new bodies, new water, new sea (fresh water), and new relationships without problems. Work is not new, but work is new in the sense that it will be enjoyable and satisfying, rather than the wearisome work we are used to, today.
2. He also said, "Write this down for these words are trustworthy and true."
 - a) In other words, He is saying that He cannot describe this newness to us but we are to just trust Him that it will be new.
 - b) It is again just like a man of today going back to his stone-age tribe; he would likely tell his tribesmen that he could not describe the current world to them but they must simply trust him that the current world is a better place.
 - c) This is why God did not give more description about the New Heaven and New Earth; because we cannot understand it anyway as we have never experience this kind of things.

Verse 6

1. It says, "It is done, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." It is the same as the books of Genesis and Revelation, which is the beginning and the end respectively. If we read the Bible without reading these two books, then our

Christianity is without the understanding God intended. What God had started, He will finish beautifully. It will be much better than ever and fully completed. This means that no one can stop God, and whatever God starts, He will finish.

2. It also says, "To the thirsty, I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment." To thirst, is always a picture of a level of dissatisfaction in endless cycles in our present world, but in the New Heaven and New Earth, there will be endless satisfaction. The springs of water will keep coming out all the time, and we need not look for it.

Verses 7-8

1. The phrase "those who conquers" in verse 7 refers to those who conquered sins by trusting in Christ who had died for our sins.
2. Every one of us would have committed some of the sins described in verse 8 and we can only conquer these sins through the Conqueror Christ who rose from the dead victoriously. We conquer them by being united with the Conqueror. If we join the losing team, we will lose.
3. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 say that we were all like these sinners but we are now justified by faith in Christ. So, we have to conquer all our sins, such as fear (of being mocked by people), laziness (in not looking for spiritual things to do), and pride (in thinking that we can reach heaven on our own), etc. We have to conquer these things, and everyone has to put in effort to seek God in church, etc. But the real conqueror is Christ.

Revelation 21:9-27: Description of the New Jerusalem

Verse 10

An angel took John on a tour of the New Jerusalem on a high mountain, and when he looked up, he saw the New Jerusalem coming down, out of Heaven.

Verse 11

1. The city was brilliant like jasper, and clear as crystal.
2. There are a lot of descriptions here, but are they literal or symbolic?
 - a) They are both.
 - b) For example, every time we take the Lord's Supper, the cup and bread are literal; but the Lord's Supper also has symbolic meanings which signify both Christ's death and resurrection.
 - c) Similarly, water baptism has both literal and symbolic meanings too. We literally enter the water but it symbolises union with Christ in death, burial and resurrection. So, when we read these descriptions, we must remember that it is both literal and symbolic at the same time.
 - d) God is trying to show us somethings through physical things, and at the same time, He wants us to understand the spiritual meanings represented by these things.

- e) Jasper and clear crystal could mean that it is not made of brick walls that block things out. One can see through the city clearly, and these walls are just apparent barriers, not real barriers.

Verses 12-13

1. There was a great high wall around this great city. The shape of the city was described as a cube. This will be elaborated on later. Wall signifies possession. The significance of this is that those who are inside the wall belong together. Again, there is a literal wall, but it is also symbolic in signifying possession.
2. There were 12 gates and 12 angels.
 - a) We are made in the image of God, but angels are made to minister to us. (See Hebrews 1:14) In the current world, we are blessed by the angels though we cannot see them. However, in the New Heaven and New Earth, we can see these angels.
 - b) Many Christians cannot accept the fact that there are angels, but God is showing us that the spiritual world is real. There are angels right next to us now.
 - c) These 12 angels at the 12 gates remind us that these angels are faithful servants who have been serving us all these while.
3. The names of the 12 tribes are written on the 12 gates to remind us that our Salvation came from Israel. Jesus was born a Jew, so we cannot hate Jews or accept the Replacement Theory that throws the Jews out and replaces Israel with the Church. The Old Testament was written by Jews and the entire Bible was written by the Jews except for the book of Luke.

Verse 14

1. There were names of the 12 Apostles of Christ on the 12 foundations of the wall. Judas was removed and was replaced by Matthias.
2. Why were these 12 Apostles regarded as the foundations?
It is because the truth that enabled our Salvation was given by God through these Apostles' teachings and writings.

Verses 15-17

1. The angel had a measuring rod to measure the city of New Jerusalem. Does God need to measure it? Of course not. Measuring speaks of ownership which is just like a surveyor who surveys a piece of land that belongs to you.
2. The measurement of the city was a cube of 12,000 stadia, unlike most earthly cities which are in squares only.
 - a) We see the number 12 repeated many times, such as 12 gates, 12 Apostles, 12 angels or 12000 stadia. The number 12 speaks of God's people and His government. God will govern in this city.
 - b) The distance of 12000 stadia is about 2000 km. A cube of 2000 km is about the size of Europe and it will fit into a hollow moon's spherical shape which

means it is very big and all of God's redeemed people can fit into this city of New Jerusalem. It also implies that the inhabitants can fly (or levitate) and will be able to move up and down this big city. Today, no one can even build a building with 2000 floors, not to mention a city of 2000 cubic km.

- c) A cube speaks of perfect proportion. The Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle was also a cube.
- d) The measurement of the thickness of the wall yielded about 70 metres.

Verse 18

1. The city was made of pure gold and it was like clear glass. Again, the word "like" is used because there is no vocabulary to exactly describe it yet. It is like a man who had returned to his stone-age tribe, and he could only describe the mobile phone as oblong, but would not be able to exactly describe it as he had no vocabulary for it in the stone-age.
2. The description "glittering pure gold but transparent" means there must be a new material created by God since there is no such material discovered until today.

Verses 19-20

1. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with 12 kinds of precious stones.
2. Gemmologists divide stones into 2 types – Isotropic and anisotropic gems. Until the laser light instrument used by gemmologists was discovered, this categorisation was not possible.
3. All these 12 stones in verse 18 are anisotropic gems. The question that puzzles us is, how did John know about such anisotropic gems? This can only be by the inspiration of God.
4. The foundation of the wall adorned with such glittering and precious gems must be so amazing to behold.

Verse 21

1. The 12 gates were each made of one single pearl.
2. The street of the city was lined with pure gold like transparent glass.
3. The gate is so massive, yet it is made from a single pearl. A pearl signifies 'beauty out of pain'. Cultured pearls are made by putting a particle of sand into an oyster, which causes the oyster to produce a mucus to coat the sand layer by layer to prevent irritation to the oyster itself. It reminds us that all these beauty was made possible only through the sufferings of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and it was Jesus who enable us to enter into the gate of the New Jerusalem.

Verses 22-23

1. John saw that there was no temple in the city because the temple is the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb.

- a) A temple is where God's presence is, so there is no need for a temple here because His presence fills the whole place.
 - b) In the Old Testament, the Israelites only saw God's presence in the form of a cloud over the Ark of the Covenant.
 - c) We are called the temple of God because the Holy Spirit dwells in us.
2. The city has no sun or moon because the glory of God gives light. Jesus Himself is the Light.

Verse 26

All the nations will bring their glory and honour to Jerusalem.

1. This means that there is still uniqueness in this New Heaven and New Earth, where every tribe and every nation will be there.
2. There will be such great diversity, and yet perfect unity, as God has always wanted. Our God is not boring, and He does not want uniformity.

Verse 27

1. We can only get a glimpse of what this New Heaven and New Earth is like, but we cannot fully comprehend it all.
2. Just like the stone-age man who returned to his tribe from this world, and after describing so much, his tribe would still not be able to understand him; but one thing is for sure, they would all want to go there. This is because there is yearning for perfection in our hearts.
3. However, we have never seen or experience this kind of perfection and glorious place (as described in these two chapters of the book of Revelation) with such amazing diversity and yet amazing unity in language and love. We would definitely want to go there.
4. However, as clearly specified in this verse, we have to be sure that our name remains in the Book of Life at the end of our life so that we can be there.

The fact is that it is impossible for God to give us more details such that we can understand it fully; because if we can fully understand it, then it is not heaven but just a good place. This New Heaven and New Earth is so unlimited, and hence it is only described in Revelation Chapters 21 and 22, and not much elsewhere in the Bible.

May God put into our heart, the desire to be in this amazing place for all eternity, where our heart will be filled with the rivers of the water of life, and that all will come to trust in the Saviour who had already conquered the sins in our life.