

98. The Book of Revelation—21:4

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(11-2-22)

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Revelation 21:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...

As we come to Revelation 21—we move from time into eternity.

Remember that the Millennial Kingdom is not eternity being that it has a beginning and an end—it is a thousand years in duration. The thousand-year Millennial Kingdom will be the culmination and climax of human history—and thus still apart of time.

Revelation 20 focused on the thousand-year reign of Christ upon the earth, and so now as we move from Chapter 20 to Chapter 21—*we move from time into eternity.*

At this point all of human redemptive history has come to an end.

The millennium is over, Satan has been judged—and the wicked have all been raised and cast into the lake of fire, which means at this point—only eternity remains (the 'only' thing we have been waiting for as believers!).

Revelation 21:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now I saw a new heaven...

In Scripture there are three "heavens" mentioned—

1. *First is the atmospheric heaven that surrounds the earth consisting of the air we breathe—the place where the birds fly.*
2. *The second 'heaven' is outer space or planetary heaven consisting of the sun, moon, stars and all the celestial objects.*
3. *The third heaven is what the Bible also calls the "Heaven of heavens" or the dwelling place of God Himself.*

In 2 Corinthians 12:2 Paul talked about being caught up to the 'third heaven'...

Revelation 21:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth...

This is not new in the *chronological* sense—but new in the qualitative sense.

The Greek word for 'new' is *kainos*—and it means something that is "brand new, fresh, never seen before."

This present *heavens* and *earth* are not some kind of gigantic ‘fixer-upper’ that God is going to rehab—He’s going to vaporize them and create something brand new—something that has never been seen before or tainted by sin (2 Peter 3:10-13).

Revelation 21:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, **for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...**

Everything that has been defiled by sin and Satan will be purged (destroyed) by fire and made new.

Since the earth was defiled by sin—it will be destroyed by fire; and since the atmosphere (the air surrounding the earth), is the present domain of Satan, the “*prince of the power of the air*”—this will also be “*purified by fire*” (i.e., ‘*burned up and replaced*’).

Revelation 21:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. **Also there was no more sea.**

Why God will do away with the oceans and seas of the world isn’t known.

Many suggest it’s because they won’t be needed any longer to purify the earth of pollutants because there won’t be any pollution on the new earth.

One author—

“Over 70 percent of the surface of our world is covered with salt water. The average depth of the ocean is 2.3 miles. Why does our planet need such a massive covering of salt water? Answer: To cleanse the earth and make life possible. The earth is bathed in God's great antiseptic solution composed of about 96 percent water, 3.5 percent salt, and about .5 percent trace constituents — chlorine, magnesium, calcium, and the like. The salty brine of the ocean purges, cleanses, and preserves our planet, making it fit to live in.

Many of the pollutants and waste we produce get washed out of the soil and into our streams and rivers; others we deliberately dump into the rivers. The rivers wash these materials to the sea. The antiseptic salinity of the sea absorbs, scrubs, and breaks down these pollutants and wastes. The sun heats the sea, causing only pure, clean water vapor to float up into the sky, forming clouds which bring refreshing rain back to the land — a continuous cycle of cleansing and renewal. But in the new heaven and new earth there will be no more pollution, no more decay, no more need for cleansing, and thus no more need for a salty sea.”

“No more [salt] seas” does not necessarily mean no more water of any kind in the eternal state.

Warren Wiersbe—

“It simply indicates that the new earth will have a different arrangement as far as water is concerned. Three fourths of our globe consists of water, but this won’t be the case in the eternal state. In John’s day, the sea meant danger, storms, and separation (John himself was on an island at the time!); so perhaps John was giving us more than a geography lesson.”

Another well-known author had this to say on the subject—

“From a metaphorical perspective, commentators have seen the absence of the sea as symbolic of the absence of evil. (The Bible says that Satan’s throne is in the midst of the sea!)

Robert L. Thomas summarizes:

'It is not that the sea is evil in itself, but that its aspect is one of hostility to mankind. For instance, the sea was what stood guard over John in his prison on Patmos and separated him from the churches of Asia.... The sea is the first of seven evils that John says will no longer exist, the other six being death, mourning, weeping, pain (21:4), the curse (22:3), and night (21:25; 22:5).'"

Revelation 21:2 (NKJV)

²Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Notice the emphasis here—**"Then I, John saw..."**

As beautiful as the **new heavens** and **new earth** are no doubt going to be—they are totally overshadowed in John's mind by the unveiling of the **New Jerusalem!**

The New Jerusalem is called **"the Holy City"** in contrast with the earthly Jerusalem—which spiritually was called 'Sodom' and 'Egypt' in Revelation 11:8.

The **New Jerusalem** is not heaven—but the capital of heaven. It is not synonymous with heaven—because its dimensions are given in 21:16. (Comment on its size and the size of the new earth)

➔ Some believe (because the verbs relating to the New Jerusalem are in the present tense) that the New Jerusalem will exist before the eternal state and be orbiting the earth during the Millennial Kingdom. The saints will live there during that time—and then it will 'land' on the new earth as the eternal state begins.

The second statement in this passage that gives us insight into this city is John's description of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, **"coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband."**

Ray Stedman—

"We all love weddings. The climax of every wedding is that moment when the bride makes her entrance at the beginning of the aisle, beautifully dressed for her husband. All heads turn. You hear that collective intake of breath as every eye is instantly captivated by the literally breathtaking sight of the beautifully adorned bride. In that moment the poor fellow standing at the altar in his rented tux is completely forgotten. It is the bride — so achingly beautiful in her white gown and gossamer veil — that has captured all eyes and every heart."

Revelation 21:2 (NKJV)

²Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, **prepared** as a bride adorned for her husband.

The word **"prepared"** in v.2 is the same word in the Greek used by Jesus when He told His disciples—

John 14:2 (NKJV)

²In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Many expositors regard the promise of Jesus in John 14:2, *"I am going to My Father's house to prepare a place for you"*—as referring to the Father's house located in the New Jerusalem.

Here we see that place prepared for His saints like a bride prepared for and presented to her husband.

So, this New Jerusalem will be our heavenly capital city—

Hebrews 11:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 11:8-10 (NKJV)

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

The New Jerusalem is our true home.

➔ Listen: The story of Samuel Morrison coming back to America after spending 25 years in Africa as a missionary and happening to be on the same ocean liner as Teddy Roosevelt coming back from a 3-week safari hunting trip...

Revelation 21:3 (NKJV)

³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

The most important thing about the city is not the streets of gold or the pearly gates—no, the most important thing about this city is that—*God dwells there!*

The Bible gives an interesting record of the places God dwelt (His presence fills the universe, but not in terms of fellowship)—

- *First, God dwelt or visited with man in the Garden of Eden.*
- *Then He dwelt with Israel in the tabernacle and later the temple.*
- *As Israel continued to sin—God had to depart (Ezekiel 10:1-5).*
- *Later, Jesus Christ came to earth and dwelt (“tabernacled”) among us (John 1:14).*
- *Today, God does not live in man-made temples (Acts 7:48–50), but in the hearts of His people (1 Corinthians 6:19–20) and in the temple of His Church (Ephesians 2:21–22).*
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Revelation 21:3 (NKJV)

³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

Three times in verse 3 it tells us that God will dwell “with” His people—which means that Jesus will never be separated from them ever again.

Jesus took on a human ‘tent’ (body) and tabernacled among us for 33 years—and then He went away and has been gone for 2000 years—but someday He is coming back and will dwell with us and we with Him in the house of the Lord forever! (Psalm 23:6)

Revelation 21:4 (NKJV)

⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes...

Psalm 56:8 (NKJV)

⁸ You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; *Are they* not in Your book? [Comment on ‘tear bottles’ or ‘tear-catchers’]

**Notice that GOD will wipe away every tear from our eyes—
not parents or pastors or friends any longer—
not anyone but God Himself!**

There are some things you just can’t delegate to someone else to do—God said, this is one of those things that I and I alone can and will do.

You might be crying now but God promises that when you see Him face to face—He will wipe away your tears and hold you in His arms welcoming you home to heaven!

There will be no more tears because—in His presence there is fullness of joy!

Isaiah 51:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ [the redeemed of the Lord shall] ...come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Psalm 16:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

Heaven will be an existence completely devoid of all the negatives we have known during our earthly lives.

Some believe that these are tears over wasted opportunities—but John goes on to specify why there won’t be any tears shed in heaven—

Revelation 21:4 (NKJV)

⁴ ...there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

Heaven will be the absence of all the negatives—an existence where there won’t be any death or pain of any kind from the hardships His people endured on the earth during their lives.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#). | Reach out to us [here](#).