

The New Heavens and New Earth

SEEING THE GLORIOUS HOPE OF THE GOSPEL IN A STUDY OF LAST THINGS

God's people will dwell forever with the Lord in the new heavens and new earth and will pursue meaningful activity reigning with Christ for eternity.

What happens after the final judgment?

- Christ will usher in the new heavens and new earth

Revelation 21

1 ¶ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 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. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Note that this speaks of the future, not the gospel age. It follows Revelation 20 chronologically.

11 ¶ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

Will the present creation be replaced?

- 2 Peter 3 appears to teach this:

- 10 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.

- The creation will be purged for renewal, not for destruction:

Romans 8:20-21 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

We will enjoy a renewed earth

Renewed not destroyed:

- analogy to resurrection
- Satan not successful in destroying creation
- the Greek word for “new”

The curse will be lifted:

- Revelation 21:4
- 22:1-3 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 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.

We will enjoy a renewed earth

- It will be suited to redeemed human nature.
- There will be pure worship
 - Revelation 22:3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.
- There will be meaningful activity.
 - Revelation 22:5 They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.
 - *Compare this to Genesis 1:28: “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.”*

God will be the center

Revelation 22:

3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

- Heaven will be on earth, since heaven is where God is.
- We will have direct, unimpeded communion with Christ.
- The glory of God will be our light and our delight.

The new heavens and new earth will fulfill God's covenant promises

- We will inherit the land and enjoy peace. (Abrahamic, Davidic, and new) Rev. 21:1-7, Heb. 11:10,13-16, Rom. 4:13, Isa. 60:18-19
Romans 4:13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.
- Christ will reign as the son of David in Jerusalem. (Davidic and new) Rev. 21:2, 22:3
- God's people will experience forgiveness and perfect righteousness. (new) Rev. 21:7-8,27; 22:2-3,14-15
- God will be our God and we will be His people.

Implications for Present Life

"What's the point if it's all going to be burned up anyway?"

Worthy accomplishments in this age will endure for the age to come.

Revelation 21:24-26 24 By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

Matthew 25:21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

(See also I Cor. 3:11-15, Isa. 60:10-21, Luke 19:12-27.)

More Implications

Knowing that the new earth is our assured inheritance keeps us from clinging too tightly to this world's goods.

Hebrews 10:34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

1 Corinthians 3:21-23 21 ¶ So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, 23 and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Proverbs 13:22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous.

Conclusion and preview

- The new heavens and new earth are the eternal dwelling place of God's people, where we will live forever with Christ, engaged in worship and meaningful activity, with no sin, suffering, or death.
- Preview: What is the overall teaching of the book of Revelation?