

Revelation 21:1-4 – The Joys of Jerusalem

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Someone sent me a simple little snippet this past week that is really true: “I looked at the back of the Book and we win.” That is what makes the Bible so special to you. You lost perfect paradise when your parents sinned in the Garden of Eden, but at the end of the Book, God’s Word tells you that you get it back. God loved you so much through Jesus Christ that he asked him to pay the bloody price of your freedom so you could be restored to that perfect garden in perfect righteousness. And what joys you receive! And that is what we are going to examine.

Our headings are: **The Appearance of Jerusalem** (the new one), **The Adorning 修饰 of Jerusalem**, and the **Accompaniment of Jerusalem**.

Our goals are: That you **will see the culmination 顶点 of the great commission** through Christ, that you will then **long for it**, and that you will **work so others could enjoy it through believing in Christ**.

The Appearance of Jerusalem

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.

1. When God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden he commissioned them to have **dominion** over the entire earth. But they lost that place in the Garden because of sin and they also lost the ability to have dominion over the earth. Yet, you see the **promise of restoration** of that perfect place throughout the Bible. When God rescued **Noah** from the floods and he came out of the ark, he was greeted with **a whole new world**, though he did not have much riches. But because of sin the people soon had to be forced through confused languages to all parts of the earth as punishment. Then when God **rescued Israel from Egypt**, they went to **Canaan – a rich land of milk and honey**, and in possession of much of the wealth of the Egyptians. But they soon lost all they owned through sin. **Now in John’s account**, you see the church finally coming back to a place of perfection-with riches in the heart and hand with all fullness.

2. But notice the word “**new**.” A **new** heaven and a **new** earth. The regular word for new is “Nayos.” But this “new” is different. The “new” meant newness in kind (kainos) – something that wasn’t there before. The point was that on this new earth there will be no more sin and darkness. There will be a new kind of earth. In this new earth the sea will not exist anymore. No one will drown-as was common in the Mediterranean Sea – a watery graveyard for many. The point was because of the preaching of the Gospel people would believe and not go to hell (drown in the sea).

3. While this new heaven and earth will make their proper and full appearance in the future, clearly, as you **will see in the rest of this chapter**, there was a beginning of the fulfillment of this prophecy even among the New Testament church. Of course you realize that this Jerusalem will not be a literal city that will fall out of the sky and be set up in Palestine sometime in the future. No, **Jerusalem is the New Jerusalem – the church**. This new heaven and new earth continues to come and you are a part of making this happen today. Adam, Noah, and Moses failed. But not Christ. Look at how Isaiah described the new earth being created by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. 20 "No more **shall an infant from there live but a few days**, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the **child shall die one hundred years old**, But the **sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed**. 21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and **eat their fruit**.

The context shows you that Isaiah was speaking of a new heaven and new earth but he was **not speaking of the end of the world**. It could not be the end of the world. There is no “**getting old**” in heaven. There is no “**lifetime of a tree**” in heaven. There is no “**having children**” in heaven. There is certainly no “**sinner**” in heaven. There is **no farming in heaven**. So this was obviously speaking of something on earth...and it is rightly called a “new earth.” For as the Gospel spreads and as salvation spreads, the world would become better...and better.

4. The **Apostle Peter also wrote about the soon arrival of the new heavens and new earth. He wrote about these things in order to comfort those who were being persecuted by the Jews.**

2Peter 3:12 looking for and hastening **加速** the **coming of the day of God**, because of which the heavens will be dissolved **溶解/消散**, being on fire, and the **elements** will melt with fervent **炽热的** heat? 13 Nevertheless we, **according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in**

which righteousness dwells.

Peter said that all the **elements** would burn when the new heavens and the new earth come. This sounds like the end of the earth, but you have to keep in mind the context. "Elements' is only used to refer to elements of the ceremonial worship system of the Jewish system. (Galatians 4:9) It does not refer to the earth elements – Hydrogen, Helium, Lithium, Beryllium, Boron, Carbon, etc. So he is likely referring to the destruction of Jerusalem where there were the elements of ceremonial worship. Indeed the elements of Jewish worship were really burned up with fervent heat...and melted with Rome invaded Jerusalem in AD70. Further, if you read the carefully, you will find that Peter is quoting roughly from Isaiah 65 and 66...about the new heaven and new earth - a restoration of all things through the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Look at the 2nd part of what Peter said...the underlined part...This is what God promised through Isaiah.

Isaiah 65: 17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy.19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.

5. Yes, perfect righteousness is not present on the earth, but that is the direction to which you must press, and that is the promise of God's Word. We have the beginnings of it now. Work hard.

The Adorning of Jerusalem

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

1. While the old Bride – the Old Jerusalem – was about to be excommunicated and destroyed for her perpetual 长期的 violation of the covenant – her spiritual adulteries, the New Jerusalem, the new Bride – was being prepared to take her place. And as is the case with most cultures, the Bride is well prepared for marriage.

2. Look at the New Testament description of Christ's new Bride. Isn't she being well-prepared for marriage?

Ephesians 2: 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

Hebrews 12: 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

1Corinthians 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—

And here is a little sense, not just of the present, but also the progressive 进步的 glorious adorning of the Bride for the Bridegroom. The day will come when she will be perfected.

Philippians 3: 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

3. Keep in mind that the Bride is not IN the New Jerusalem. The Bride IS the New Jerusalem. Brothers and sisters, this is one of the reasons the Lord's Supper is so important. You are the Bride and you are eating with the Bridegroom. It is the marriage supper of the Lamb in the beginning form. You must not treat it lightly. You must be present for it. It is true that the Lord's Supper is not greater than preaching...but it is not less...and it has a personal attachment. Zealously look forward to it.

The Accompaniment of Jerusalem

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.

1. Ezekiel gave this same picture of God living with his people when he described God's destruction of Gog and those who followed him, Magog. After their destruction, God established and united his people again. Previously they were split by sin and war. About that Chilton wrote: "Ezekiel writes

some of the most elaborately 精巧地 detailed chapters in the Bible (Ezek. 40-48), in which he describes an ideal Temple-City, a New Jerusalem in which God Himself dwells among His people and sends blessings out from His Throne to the ends of the earth.”

2. Why will God dwell (and even now is beginning to dwell) with his people now? He will dwell with his people because in a sense Adam’s original task has already been completed. Christ has captured sin, death, and hell. Man was commanded to have dominion over the world...and the 2nd Adam completed it the ground work. So while Revelation 21 is an end of the world scenario, there is a present working out of the work of Christ in reality. What’s the biblical proof, you might ask?
3. a. Jesus said he would be with his people to the end of the age as his people go out to make disciples OF all the nations – not “disciples IN all the nations.” Matthew 28. Also...
John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
Remember, the word used for ‘dwelt’ is not the normal word. It means to “tabernacle.’ So Jesus is “tabernacling” among us.
John 14: 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.
- b. And doesn’t the Apostle Paul say also that God lives in us.
2Corinthians 6: 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."
- c. This promise of God’s presence is historical. In this you see the continuity of God’s plan.
Leviticus 26: 11 I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor 憎恶 you. 12 I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.
- d. Ezekiel spoke not only historically but futuristically also of God living among his people. He saw God living with the whole earth—and all of this taking place before the end of the world and the final judgment.
Ezekiel 37: 26 "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 "My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 28 "The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.""

Conclusion:

The New Heavens and the New Earth will be, but has started already. The Bride will be perfectly adorned in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, but she is already being prepared and will be perfected in time. Christ will be with his Bride in fullness in the future, but he never leaves her side today even as she reproduces and fills the whole earth with his children.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Amazement! This is true Christian self-esteem... You realize how precious you are in the eyes of the Lord. You were brought to freedom through the blood of your Creator. You are royalty. Now, you are called to play a part in this most incredible task of not just being in Christ’s kingdom, but to work to see it purified. And you are more than up to the task because Christ has given you everything you need – you have his authority to tell others about him...to bring them to church...to encourage them when they are weak...to rebuke them when they sin... Do you get this?

Finally, you see how God treats his Bride – with such love and support. But you, if you do not know him, will see his other side...and it is not a pleasant one. He is a loving Bridegroom but he is a just God who destroys those who reject him. May your eyes be opened today if you don’t know him and may you look to him...and talk to him...and find help.