

Series title: The Big Picture

Sermon title: New Heavens & New Earth

Scripture reading: Revelation 21:1-5

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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We come today to the end of our biblical themes series through the Bible. From the very beginning of creation, God's purpose was to build his kingdom on Earth.

He created everything that exists and he created mankind and put him in a place, a garden, to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

But man sinned and rebelled against God.

The whole Bible is a story of God making a people who will dwell in God's place and live under God's rule.

Michael Williams describes the Bible in one sentence like this, *"God made it, we broke it, Jesus fixes it."*

Tom Schreiner sums up the Bible in this way, *"God reigns over all things for his glory, but we will only enjoy his saving reign in the new heavens and new earth if we repent and believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is*

the crucified and risen Lord and who gave himself on the cross for our salvation."

But my favorite sentence summary of the Bible comes from Doug Wilson. He said, *"Scripture tells the story of how a Garden is transformed into a Garden City, but only after a dragon had turned that garden into a howling wilderness, a haunt of owls and jackals, which lasted until an appointed warrior came to slay the dragon, giving up his life in the process, but with his blood effecting the transformation of the wilderness into a Garden City."*

We come today to the future, the end of the Bible. We've been looking at what God HAS done but now we turn to what God WILL DO later.

God started in a garden but he's moving to a city; a new Jerusalem it's called in the Bible.

What will it be like? Who will go there? How should I live my life here on this planet in light of eternity?

Turn to Revelation chapter 21.

I. WHAT WILL THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH BE LIKE?

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.

1. It'll be new.

Not like what we have now. Creation as we see it today has been corrupted by the Fall but it will be transformed in such a way that it is called new. Here Revelation says it will 'pass away'. **2 Peter 3** mentions the old will be demolished or burned up. Whether it will be burned up totally or refined by fire to the degree that it is totally new, we aren't sure.

What we do know is that it will be so different that it is called 'new'.

When it says, "the sea was no more" it is probably literal here but the sea symbolized chaos or violence in Hebrew thought, so it could also be a picture of peace.

There are some that believe that the world will simply get better and better until we reach a certain Utopia that we could call 'heaven'. But I believe there will be a cataclysmic transformation into a new creation.

2. It's a real place, not a euphoric state.

Revelation 21:2

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Also

Revelation 21:9

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God,

This was a struggle for me to think through.

For sure, the Bride, the wife of the Lamb is the church in Scripture but it clearly says that it is a city.

Ten times it mentions that it's a city and even gives us exact dimensions of the city "by human measurement" v. 17. Is it literal or figurative? I conclude that it's both.

It seems to me that the New Jerusalem is a place that is so prepared for the church of Jesus Christ that we could say that the New Jerusalem IS the church.

I'm not sure that makes sense. As an illustration, I think that we could conclude from our own lives this makes sense.

Illustration: If you went on vacation to Thailand and returned to find every single person in Hong Kong gone...vanished....would Hong Kong still be Hong Kong? No. There would be an empty feeling and you probably wouldn't want to live here by yourself. Hong Kong is the people and not the buildings. The city and the people are so intertwined that we could call the city and the people one and the same.

Well, how do we know that this is a real place?

Well, Jesus has a resurrected physical body. He's not a phantom and neither will we be. If we are going to heaven to be ghosts floating on the clouds, Jesus will be out of place. He has physical body forever, albeit a glorified body. Same but not the same. And we will have a body like Jesus' body.

1 Corinthians 15:49 says, **"Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven."**

Also, Jesus said himself that he was going to prepare a place for us in **John 14** and that in his Father's house are many rooms.

I think it's consistent with the Scriptures to believe that just as we live in a physical created place now, we will also live in a physical place there.

What will the New Jerusalem be like?

Firstly....this New Jerusalem will be a new place.

Secondly, it will be a real place.

Thirdly, it will be a magnificent place.

3. It'll be magnificent.

Revelation 21:11

having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— 13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16 The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia.[d] Its length and width and height are equal. 17 He also measured its wall, 144 cubits[e] by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. 18 The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of

the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

This will be a place you'll want to live in forever. Can our minds even comprehend how magnificent it will be?

But, the best part about it won't be its beauty.

4. God will be there.

21:3

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. 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." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

21:22

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

The reason it will be great is because God himself will be there, face to face. No more faith without sight.

Faith will become sight.

Think of that! To see him face to face! And we will be able to enjoy him with all our might. No more struggle to love him. No more sin. No more pain. Oh, what a joy it will be to be able to love him with 100% of your heart, soul, mind and strength.

Would you want to go there if God weren't there? Is it God you want to be with or would it be enough just to have a nice place to live?

Listen, our whole life on earth is meaningless if we die and miss eternity with God in this place. We want to make sure we go there!

II. WHO WILL GO THERE?

6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life

without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

And

22:17

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

22:14-15

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. 15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Who will go to the New Jerusalem/ Heaven?

-Those who are thirsty. Are you thirsty?

-Those who conquer. Or better understood as, has Jesus conquered for you?

-Those who wash their robes in the blood of Christ.

Have you been washed in the blood of Christ?

-Those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Let's put things in their proper perspective this morning. **Mark 8:36** says, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?"

Nothing else matters in the world right now except that you listen to me and answer this question.

Where will you spend eternity?

Do you want to go to the New Jerusalem and live with Christ forever and ever in that awesome place or do you want to go to as it says in **Revelation 21:8**...to "the lake that burns with fire and sulfur"?

III. HOW...AS A CHRISTIAN SHOULD I LIVE MY LIFE HERE...TODAY... IN LIGHT OF THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH?

We currently live in the *GAP* now between Genesis 12's promise, Jesus' commission to take gospel to nations (Matthew 24:14) and Revelation 7:9

How should I live my life in light of the New Jerusalem and eternity?

The Bible is consistent in telling us the proper perspective on life today in light of eternity.

-**2 Peter 3:10-18** "What kind of people should we be?"

You know what it says over and over again, even from the lips of Jesus?

STAY AWAKE!

-**Matthew 24:42** "Stay awake", "Unaware" "Be ready"

-**Matthew 25:5** "became drowsy and slept"

-**1 Thessalonians 5:6** "Let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober."

-**1 Corinthians 15:58**- In light of our future resurrection, "Be steadfast, immovable...etc"

-**Matthew 6:9** "Don't lay up treasures on earth."

-**Matthew 24:14** "Take the gospel to all nations" hasten the day!

We are to obey the last orders we were given by Jesus until he comes.

Are you ready?

Are you awake?

May God grant us to live for him and honor him.

May God grant us to not love the world or the things in the world, but as strangers and aliens we keep our

eyes on the city which is to come and serve the Lord and his purposes with all our hearts.