



A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES

Week 81: The Eternal State, Part 1

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Review:

- A. Last week, we concluded our three-part study of The Millennial Kingdom (TMK).
- B. We've learned a lot of things about this future period:
 1. It is a 1000-year timeframe during which Jesus Christ reigns over the whole earth from Jerusalem.
 2. True believers now and Tribulation-era martyrs will have the role of co-reigning and judging with Jesus Christ.
 3. People will live for hundreds of years. It is likely that the "mortal" righteous of that time will in fact, not die.
 4. Many nations and people groups will entreat the Jews in order to seek a personal audience with Jesus Christ.
 5. Satan will be bound and incarcerated during the entire 1000 years, however people will still choose to sin.
 6. There will be one last final rebellion of many people against Jesus Christ at the very end of The Millennial Kingdom. This will be orchestrated by Satan who will be released to deceive all the nations one final time.
 7. This rebellion will be supernaturally put down by Jesus Christ, and Satan will be thrown into Hell.
 8. The Great White Throne Judgement concludes The Millennial Kingdom, and ALL unbelievers from ALL ages of human history will be resurrected to make an appearance at this event.
 9. They will be judged for their choices and deeds. None of them will be found in The Book of Life, and all of them will be thrown into Hell, also known as 'the second death.'

NOTE: That is just a quick once-over. The details of those three lessons on TMK can be found by going to the Solid Bread website (www.solidbreadllc.com) where the class notes and audio files are available.

Today, we begin a two-week study on the eternal state, and to begin that, turn to **Revelation Ch. 21**.

I. OVERVIEW:

- A. In **Revelation Ch. 21**, John is given a vision of the eternal state, the New Heaven and New Earth, and the New Jerusalem.
- B. Some scholars blend the details of the previous chapter with the details of this chapter. They do not see much difference between The Millennial Kingdom and The New Heaven and The New Earth. But the differences are very clear:

1. The Millennial Kingdom was a restored time on earth, but The New Heaven and New Earth is a perfect time.
2. Sin and death still were present in The Millennial Kingdom, but they are entirely absent in The New Heaven and New Earth.
3. Satan still had a role to play in the conclusion of The Millennial Kingdom, but in The New Heaven and New Earth, Satan is in Hell and will never again have any role anymore.
4. In The Millennial Kingdom, the current earth was restored, and as we will see in The New Heaven and New Earth, the current heaven and earth will pass away and an entirely new Creation begins.

NOTE: These are just a few high-altitude comparisons between the two states or conditions, and these things are mentioned, as well as some additional details, in **vss. 1-5 of Revelation Ch. 21:**

II. Some basic conditions of The New Heaven and New Earth:

- A. The prior heaven and earth – the one in which we live now, will be entirely gone (**Cf. 2 Peter 3:10-13;**). This passage gives us some additional details:
 1. Our present earth (including the version from TMK) will “*disappear with a roar.*” Everything will be gone in one final climactic event
 2. Everything we now know will be destroyed by fire. (It will not be a flood this time; God will use a different means). NOTE: Fire is often equated with introducing a purifying process in the Scripture
 - a. **EX: (Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:13 – speaking of our deeds and works in this life)** “*their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work.*”
 - b. The disappearance of the prior order of things will include everything we know on earth and in the cosmos. It will all become new.
 - c. Jesus Himself talked of this event in **Matthew 24:35** – “*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.*”
 3. There will not be any sea. This is an interesting detail. Various interpretations of this detail include:
 - a. The sea represents a negative element in Scripture since the sea covered Pharoah and his army, since it is the dwelling place of Leviathan, the serpent whom the Lord will slay (**Cf. Isaiah 27:1**), and since the wicked and the Gentile nations are compared to the sea (**Cf. Isaiah 57:20; Daniel 7:3**), and so on.
 - b. These are interesting suggestions, but I offer the fact that the sea today accomplishes the need of cleansing pollution, which is ultimately due to sin. It will no longer be necessary in the eternal state.

- B. There will be the Holy City, also known as The New Jerusalem (NOTE: We will study this Holy City more next week, however, here are some details about it from this passage):
1. Again, I need to comment on the tendency of many interpreters to take the description of this city as being symbolic of some deep spiritual truth rather than the description of a literal city.
 - a. This is the view of cults such as Mormonism and Christian Science.
 - b. We will see later on, John is given a tour of this Holy City, and that includes its physical dimensions.
 - c. This conforms to **Ezekiel Ch. 40+** where the physical dimensions of The Millennial Temple are provided, proving that it was not allegorical either.
 2. The Bible is clear. This is a future literal city which God has prepared as the ultimate dwelling place for all the faithful in their glorified eternal existence beyond this life.
 3. It comes down to earth from heaven.
 - a. This recalls Jesus' words in **John 14:3**:
"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."
 - b. The Holy City is a physical place and structure prepared by God. Whether or not it is one and the same with the "place" **John 14:3** mentions (this is debated, but I think it is), it will eventually move from heaven to this new future earth.
 4. It is a beautiful city, pictured here *"as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband."* Visually, this will be a stunning city to behold.

C. God will live with mankind (**Cf. vs. 3**)

NOTE: It's interesting to note the change from the terms of The Millennial Kingdom to the terms of The New Heaven and New Earth. In The Millennial Kingdom, God lives among His people, the Jews, in Israel. Here, God *"dwells with men (or mankind)."* While some Israel-centric elements continue into The New Heaven and New Earth, God now dwells the same way amongst all.

1. *"They will be His people...He will be their God, etc."* Again, similar language as to how God was described living with the Jewish nation in The Millennial Kingdom, but here the audience is broader; it's with ALL saints.
2. It's easy to overlook a very important matter here. This is an entirely unveiled view of God which we will experience. This is impossible for mortal men. The Bible says:
 - a. No living person has ever seen God in the fullness of His glory (**Cf. John 1:18; 6:46; 1 John 4:12**);
 - c. The Bible says He is invisible (**Cf. Colosians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17**) and that He *"dwells in unapproachable light"* (**Cf. 1 Timothy 6:16**);
 - d. Exposure this way to God by mortal man would mean instant death for any living person (**Cf. Exodus 33:20**).

- e. But, all that changes when we are glorified. In heaven, **“the pure in heart . . . shall see God”** (Cf. **Matthew 5:8**), and here in **Revelation 21:3**, God will live among men since they will be absolutely and perfectly holy.
3. Then in **vs. 4**, we see that other things are done away with that are presently a part of THIS life.
- a. **“(God) will wipe away every tear from their eyes...”**
NOTE: Crying and weeping are normal expressions and reactions we’ve all known since we were babies. It’s part of this life, but it will not be part of The New Heaven and New Earth.
 - b. NOTE: The Greek term for **“wipe away”** here is also used of **“blotting out”** names from the **Book of Life (Cf. Revelation 3:5+)**.
 - c. This term is used to describe both the justice and mercy of God, and there may be an interesting connection between the two to see.
 - God blots out the names of unbelievers from the Book of Life even as He wipes away the tears of believers.
 - We all have family and friends whose names will be blotted out from the Book of Life. As much as we love those people now, we will not experience the consternation or regret of them coming under the perfect and righteous judgment of God.
 - We will see God’s judgments THEN as they are: without any shred of imperfection. We will glory MORE in the justice of God at that time than we will experience any pain or regret.
 - All the memories of pain and suffering will be forgotten in the wonder of the new order which God will create in The New Heaven and New Earth.
 - Again, there is this interesting connection. The only exception to this state of bliss will be those whose names were blotted out of the Book of Life. Because they, having been cast into outer darkness (Hell), will continually weep **(Cf. Matthew 8:12)**.
 - d. The Bible then tells us that **“there will be no more death”**
 - This is the final fulfillment of the promise of the OT prophets that death would be swallowed up **(Cf. Isaiah 25:8; Hosea 13:14)**.
 - Death was not a part of the original created order, but came by sin, as a result of its curse following the disobedience of Adam **(Cf. Genesis 3:19)**.
 - Throughout history past and future, the curse of death extended even beyond the Second Coming of Christ and into the Millennial Kingdom **(Cf. Isaiah 65:20)**.
 - As we learned, it’s not until Death and Hades are cast into the Lake of Fire at the Great White Throne Judgment **(Cf. Revelation 20:14)**, that Death no longer has a role to play.

➤ **1 Corinthians 15:26** says, *“The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”*

III. **Some comments from the Throne of God (vss. 5-8)**

NOTE: All the content of these 4 verses are spoken by God the Father. Let's break these down into a few subsets:

A. *“I am making everything new”*

1. The point here is everything will be new in quality and in kind. It's all going to be better.
 - a. What God creates in The New Heaven and New Earth will far surpass anything which mankind has ever imagined: **(Cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9)** *“But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’”*
 - b. Our old creation has long groaned under the weight of sin and corruption. It will be delivered by a new creation.
2. IMPORTANT POINT: The redemption that is outlined in the Book of Revelation is much broader, and it has more ramifications, than just the individual redemption of sinful men.
 - a. It also extends to the redemption (renewal) of the earth and the entire cosmos.
 - b. The earth and all its creatures and features, while presently being the object of depraved man's worship, will disappear.
 - c. In its place will be an order of things that are far superior and beyond our wildest and most reverent imaginations.

B. *“Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true...”*

NOTE: John is instructed in the last part of **vs. 5** to carefully record what God the Father is about to say.

1. John records that which he sees and hears for the benefit of the saints. Why?
 - a. The statements which God makes here, concerning the elimination of death, making of all things new, etc. are difficult for people (like you and I) living under the oppression of sin, under the control of depravity, and under the dominion of death, to comprehend.
 - b. So, God emphasizes the reliability of His statements.
 - He wants us to rest in the truth that our present sufferings have a short life span.
 - He wants us to rest in His promises, which requires that we keep one eye on future prophecies.
 - He wants us to live in hope and truth, not in despair and sorrow.
2. God continues with some profound comments....

- a. *"It is done."* This is a statement on a new beginning of blessing. He has created the new order of all things, and the ongoing effects of that creative act will continue into eternity from this point.
- b. *"I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."* This is a claim of profound emphasis; it is about God who is speaking and His uniqueness.
 - This is a unique title of God that is applied in Scripture to both to the Father (here) and the Son (***Cf. Revelation 22:13***). by Jesus (***Revelation 22:13+***).
 - Here, with the creative element in focus, we see that Jesus, who is One with the Father is *"the ruler of the creation of God"* (***Cf. Revelation 3:14***), and He is also the end of it.
 - He causes one epoch of Creation to end, and another to begin.
- c. (Dropping down to **vs. 7**) – *"He who overcomes will inherit all this."*
 - NOTE: Several times in the letters to the seven churches (***Cf. Revelation Chapters 2 and 3***), promises were given to *"him who overcomes."* What does this mean?
 - Through their trust in, and identification with Jesus Christ, the true saints are promised that they will inherit all the promises given to the original overcomer, Jesus Christ. They will receive everything which Jesus is given.
 - For example, they will inherit the kingdom of God prepared for them from the foundation of the world (***Cf. Matthew 25:34***), and so on.
 - As children of God, the Bible tells us that believers are *"heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."* (***Cf. Romans 8:15***).
 - That is an incredible promise! *Anything and everything* which the Father has given to the Son is also the possession of the saints.
 - Paul recognizes this incredible promise and so he and admonished the Corinthian believers in **1 Corinthians 3:21** not to boast or become partisan in their thinking because *"all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours"*
 - These things, which are inherited by the saints come to us without reference of our own merit or effort.

- They are attained solely because of our salvation in Jesus Christ. It is an inestimable value that we accumulate by the Father's hand, and which He passes on to His children by way of their inheritance.

NOTE: This is all the good news. Now, let's wrap up by quickly looking at a matter of stark contrast.

3. *"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile....etc."*

NOTE: Here we have some commentary on those who will experience eternal shame.

4. *"The cowardly"* – The Greek term is "persons showing fear in a shameful way."

- d. The same word is used to describe a lack of faith (***Cf. in Matthew 8:26; Mark 4:40***).
- e. Remember: during The Tribulation, the Beast worshipers took his mark, partly out of fear of losing their lives. They were warned by the angel against doing this.
- f. They were among those who, because of this cowardice, this fear, saved their physical lives for a short while, but ultimately lost both their soul and body in hell (***Cf. Matthew 10:28***).
- g. NOTE: We mentioned the parable of the talents last week. This same cowardly response characterized the wicked and lazy servant who hid his talent in the ground out of fear rather than investing it for the Lord's benefit. He was cast into Hell and outer darkness (***Cf. Matthew 25:25; Luke 19:21***).

5. Also, a few other descriptors are provided:

6. The *"unbelieving:"* This is quite straightforward; these are those without faith. They did not believe the truth and so they are condemned eternally.

- a. There are no individuals who are unbelieving among the overcomers: We are told in **1 John 5:4-5**, *"And this is the victory which has overcome the world, our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"*

7. The *"abominable:"* The Greek term is used to describe those who are detestable, loathsome, and abhorrent.

- a. A more technical dissection of the term indicates these individuals have BECOME abominable because they chose to participate in activities which are considered detestable to God.
- b. As a result, they are unclean. Remember, the cup which the Harlot in **Revelation 17** held was full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.
- c. These abominations, while sinful, are also choices. They all arouse God's anger because they are contrary to His law. Sexually immoral

8. The “*sexually immoral:*” It literally means fornicating ones. It’s used of a man who has sexual relations with a prostitute (***Cf. 1 Corinthians 5:9***).
 - a. Recall, during the Tribulation, the earth dwellers refused to repent of their sexual immorality in ***Revelation 9:21***.
9. “*sorcerers, idolaters, liars:*” These are all qualities and conduct from which the earth dwellers refuse to repent of during The Tribulation. (***Cf. Revelation 9:21***)
 - a. The Bible says in various places that none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. Instead, the wrath of God will come upon them.