

11051-A June 19, 2011
What Heaven is, Really.
Revelation 21:9-27

I. Luke 24:36-44. The resurrection of Jesus is the paradigm for understanding the destiny of the universe. It will be regenerated. Matt. 19:28

- A. It is material, but more ...
 - 1. Jesus appeared through locked doors
- B. It is recognizable, but better ...
 - 1. Jesus was recognizable, yet more vibrant.

II. Revelation 21:1-8. The New Universe.

- A. The initial vision. 1-2
 - 1. A new material creation.
 - 2. A new “Jerusalem” coming from God into this dimension.
- B. The interpretation. 3-4
 - 1. It is about a dwelling place for God among us.
 - 2. It is about the reversal of the trauma of this age.
- C. The new order of things. 5-6a
 - 1. All New. The Lord is making all things new (kainos)
 - 2. Utterly True. This is faithful and true, write it down.
 - 3. Foregone Conclusion. It is done. The transcending of time.
 - 4. Grounded in God as Ultimate Reality. The Alpha & Omega
- D. The promise and the warning. 6b-8
 - 1. To the thirsty, water of life for free.
 - 2. To the unrepentantly evil: the lake of fire.
 - 3. *This life is a choice between only two ways: The Gospel or Evil*

III. What heaven is really like. The New Jerusalem up close. Rev.21:9-27.

- A. Eternally fulfilling life together ... 9-14
 - 1. A Covenant Relationship: Bride
 - a) Why to so many movies end with a couple getting married?
 - b) Because marriage promises something we long for: security, intimacy, unbreakable love, shared beauty, physicality in union.
 - 2. An Eternal Civilization: City. John 17:16-23.
 - a) The ultimate designed community.
 - b) Even people who don't like designed communities want one; they just want to design it themselves.
 - c) Fresh and beautiful in ways we cannot imagine.
 - 3. Entered through the covenant that God establishes.
 - a) The Old and New Testaments tell the same story—Christ.
 - (1) OT Tribes; NT Apostles; Angels at the gates.
 - (2) God does not make private deals with people. We must come to him through the covenant he supplies.
 - (3) That is why Jesus institutes the New Covenant in his Blood.

B. In the midst of stunning physical beauty and value ... 15-21

1. Why the symbolism? Because words fail to describe the reality, beauty and value.
2. Measurements. 1400 miles cubed; walls over 200 feet thick
 - a) Half way across the U.S., cubed
3. Jewels: all the most precious aspects of this life
 - a) The high priest had many of these on his ephod
4. *Everything beautiful that we long for in this age, but that this age cannot supply.*

C. Because God is the center of it ... 22-26

1. The city is cubed: the only other cube in the Bible is the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle/temple—God living in the midst of the material world.
2. No temple because God himself is in the middle of it.
3. No sun or moon because God supplies the light.
4. *There is a permanently open interface between matter and spirit reality. And we enter some of this today as we become Christians and part of the body of Christ (imperfect as this age's manifestation of it is). 1 Cor.3*

D. And His sacrifice supplies it. 27. The Lamb's book of life

1. Two sober warnings appear in this chapter. Evil people, people not separated legally from their evil/sin, cannot and will not enter this final reality of grace.
2. The implication in both warnings is that these are *unrepentant* people, who have rejected the Lord's grace in favor of their own autonomy.
3. Yet, one would think, looking at the list of bad deeds (and they certainly are bad deeds) that characterize such people, that the way into the kingdom would be to avoid doing bad things like these. That's how the Pharisees interpreted the Law, and how moralists today interpret all such passages. But that is not what the text says. The text proclaims not moralism, but the gospel of Christ ...
4. The reason people inherit this new age is not because they avoided being bad (though they certainly are expected to fight sin in their lives), but because:
 - a) They were thirsty. Verse 6
 - b) They were covered by the blood of the Lamb. (The Lamb's book of Life)
5. The Lamb is the *Passover Lamb*. *The people benefited from the Passover Lamb by simply trusting the Lord, putting the blood over their lives.* God made the sacrifice for us because we could not do it! He has accomplished our complete salvation singlehandedly!

IV. **Luke 24:45-48.**

- A. Luke's version of the great commission: tell people that new life is available for free because Christ the Lord has suffered and been raised from the dead.
- B. *God is alive and resurrection is afoot. This is the gospel.*