

# The Hope of Heaven

## Part 2

May 16, 2010

This is part 2 of our study on the Hope of Heaven. In our last study, we looked at some of the more common questions that people have regarding the topic of heaven, as well as the book of Revelation. With that out of the way (hopefully!), this week we will begin our study of Revelation 21:1-22:5 itself. In this passage, John gives us both the climax of all of scripture and of all of history. No matter how you get there (i.e., what end-times scenario you find most biblically persuasive), every orthodox understanding of the end times agrees on this vision of the new heavens, new earth, and most particularly, new city (the city of God). However, before we dig in, you need to know that what makes this new city so utterly amazing is not simply what will be found there, but also what won't be found there. That is to say, John culls out so much of the crud that we encounter in this life, in this earth, in this "city" (the city of man) in which we live today and he then says: "Do you see all of that? That won't be present in the new city." So, before we begin our study of the text itself, please think through the following questions:

1) What are some of the things that are present in this world (maybe things you've experienced personally, if you're willing to share) that you hope will be absent in the next?

2) It seems self-evident that man is an urban creature. Why do you think that mankind, for the most part, congregates in cities? What are we seeking? What are we hoping to find in the city of man?

### **Read Revelation 21:1**

*<sup>1</sup>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.*

3) What do you think that John means here when he uses the word "new," as in "new heavens and a new earth"? (Take a look at bible's use of that word in 2 Cor. 5:17 and Ps. 40:3)

4) What is John really saying when he says, "and the sea was no more"? What does water or the seas represent in the bible? (See Gen. 1:2, 7:11-23; Isa. 57:20; Rev. 12:18, 13:1, 15:2, 17:1-2, 18:10-19, 10:13)

### **Read Revelation 21:1-2**

*<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

Please notice the bridal language here. Notably, John is not focused on the bricks and mortar of the new city. He's focused on the people! He's focused on you! Bridal language is common

metaphorical language for the true saints of God in the New Testament and John is saying here that we are a bride who has been prepared for her husband, which is Jesus.

5) What do you think that John is saying about us as God's people? What will God have to change about us (take away and add to us) in order to properly "prepare" us to be equally yoked to Jesus?

6) What do you think your time with God will be like in the new city? How much time or access do you think that you'll have with Jesus in the new city?

**Read Revelation 21:3-4**

*<sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup> 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."*

7) Since John tells us that, in the new city there will be no crying, what do you think that John means when he says that God will wipe away every tears from our eyes? How does Ps. 56:8 affect your thinking? What about 2 Corinthians 4:16-18?

**Read Revelation 21:3-7**

*<sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup> 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."*

*<sup>5</sup>And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."*

8) Why do you think that Jesus said that John is to write this all down and to specifically note that all that he says herein is "trustworthy and true"?

# For Next Week...

## Read Revelation 21:8-14 (English Standard Version)

<sup>8(A)</sup> But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, <sup>(B)</sup> their portion will be in <sup>(C)</sup> the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is <sup>(D)</sup> the second death."

## The New Jerusalem

<sup>9</sup>Then came <sup>(E)</sup> one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of <sup>(E)</sup> the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you <sup>(G)</sup> the Bride, the wife of the Lamb."  
<sup>10</sup>And <sup>(H)</sup> he carried me away in the Spirit to <sup>(I)</sup> a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, <sup>11(J)</sup> having the glory of God, <sup>(K)</sup> its radiance <sup>(L)</sup> like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup>It had a great, high wall, <sup>(M)</sup> 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— <sup>13</sup>on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. <sup>14</sup>And the wall of the city had twelve <sup>(N)</sup> foundations, and <sup>(O)</sup> on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

**Cross references (indicated by the alphabetic superscripts) take you to other scriptures relevant to the verses you're reading. Use the cross references as part of your preparation for next week's message and study. Write notes, questions, comments that you hope to explore next week in your group. Below the cross references are some questions that might help you in your personal meditation.**

- A. Revelation 21:8 : Revelation 22:15; 1 Cor 6:9, 10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5; 1 Tim 1:9; Heb 12:14
- B. Revelation 21:8 : Luke 12:46
- C. Revelation 21:8 : Revelation 19:20
- D. Revelation 21:8 : Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14
- E. Revelation 21:9 : Revelation 17:1
- F. Revelation 21:9 : Revelation 15:1
- G. Revelation 21:9 : Revelation 21:2
- H. Revelation 21:10 : Revelation 17:3; Ezek 43:5
- I. Revelation 21:10 : Psalms 87:1; Ezek 40:2
- J. Revelation 21:11 : Revelation 21:23; Revelation 22:5; Psalms 84:11; Ezek 43:2, 4
- K. Revelation 21:11 : Matt 5:14; Phil 2:15
- L. Revelation 21:11 : Revelation 4:3, 6
- M. Revelation 21:12 : Ezek 48:31-34
- N. Revelation 21:14 : Heb 11:10; 1 Cor 3:11
- O. Revelation 21:14 : Matt 16:18; Eph 2:20

1) Verse 8 lists several sin categories that will land people in the “lake of fire.” Why do you suppose these were singled out? Do they provide a proper summary of all things sinful? What else might you have expected to be on the list?

2) Does verse 8 mean that people who have committed these sins are not able to be saved from eternal judgment? How does Christ and His work fit in here?

3) List all the objects/symbols in the passage. What might each of them represent?

4) What might the “second death” (verse 8) be?

5) What is the significance of the number 12? What other things in the Bible numbered 12?

***Spend some time praying this week that God will give you a clear picture of this “New Jerusalem” and help you contrast it with the “Jerusalem,” the “city,” in which we live today. Ask God to show you your part in the building of the New City of God.***