

Loris First Baptist Church
“52 Vital Doctrines of The Bible”

Doctrine #52 – The New Heaven and the New Earth

Note: Most information based on pages 369-373 of the book “Major Bible Themes” by Lewis Sperry Chaffer.

The New Heaven and the New Earth

1. In **Revelation 21:1**, following the judgment of the great white throne and the destruction of the first heaven and the first earth, John writes, *“I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.”*
2. The new heaven is not described at all, and all that is stated about the new earth is, *“There was no more sea”* (**Revelation 21:1**).
3. The strange silence of Scripture on the appearance of both the new earth and the new heaven is nowhere explained; instead our attention is directed immediately to the holy city of The New Jerusalem.

The General Description of the New Jerusalem

1. John records what he saw in these words: *“I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”* (**Revelation 21:2**).
 - a. The immediate problem that faces all interpreters is the meaning of what John saw.
 - b. If one accepts the plain statement, John saw a holy city described as New Jerusalem in contrast with the old earthly Jerusalem which had been destroyed when the earth was destroyed.
 - c. The city is described as coming *“from God out of heaven.”*
 - 1) It is most significant that the city is not said to be created, and it apparently was in existence during the preceding period of the millennial kingdom, possibly as a satellite city above the earth; as such, it may be the millennial home of the resurrected and translated saints.
 - 2) It is quite clear from descriptions of the millennial earth that no city like the New Jerusalem was on earth itself.
 - 3) Some believe Christ was referring to the New Jerusalem when He declared in **John 14:3**, *“I go and prepare a place for you.”*
 - 4) Here in Revelation the New Jerusalem is seen coming out of heaven, apparently destined to rest upon the new earth.

d. John further describes the city “*as a bride adorned for her husband.*” (Revelation 21:2)

- 1) Some have understood this is to be a reference to the church as a bride.
- 2) However, as later revelation brings out, the New Jerusalem includes all the saints of all ages, and it is, therefore, preferable to consider this merely a descriptive phrase rather than a typical reference.
- 3) The New Jerusalem is lovely, just as the bride adorned for her husband is lovely. Accordingly, while the city is a literal city, it has the loveliness of a bride.

2. Although comparatively few passages in the Bible deal with the subject of the new heaven and the new earth, the truth is not introduced for the first time in Revelation.

a. In **Isaiah 65:17** God declared, “*For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.*”

- 1) This verse occurs in a context of the millennial earth, and some feel it is referring to renewed Jerusalem in the millennium.
- 2) However, it may be preferable to consider it as a reference to the New Jerusalem which will be on the new earth as seen in the background, while the renewed Jerusalem in the Millennium is seen in the foreground, as in:

Isaiah 65:18 “*But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create for I WILL CREATE JERUSALEM to be a delight and its people a joy.*”

b. Another reference is in **Isaiah 66:22**, where it states, “*For as THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.*”

NOTE: While the earthly Jerusalem is destroyed at the end of the Millennium, the New Jerusalem will remain forever just as the seed of Israel will remain forever.

c. In **2 Peter 3:13**, another prediction is made of the new heavens and the new earth, characterized as the place “*wherein dwells righteousness.*”

NOTE: Throughout Scripture, accordingly, it may be concluded that the new heaven and the new earth are considered the ultimate goal of history and the final resting place of the saints.

3. Having introduced the new heaven and the new earth and the New Jerusalem, John proceeds to describe their major characteristics in **Revelation 21:3-8**.

a. There God will dwell with men and will “*be their God.*”

- b. Sorrow and death and pain will be abolished, as John states, “*For the former things are passed away*” (**Revelation 21:4**).
- c. This is confirmed in **Revelation 21:5** by the statement, “*Behold, I make all things new.*”
- d. In the New Jerusalem Christ, as the Alpha and Omega promises, “*...To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son*” (**Revelation 21:6-7**).
- e. By contrast, the unsaved described by their works and lack of faith are declared to “*have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death*” (**Revelation 21: 8**).
- f. In contrast with the first death, which is physical and spiritual, the second death is eternal separation from God.

Vision of the New Jerusalem

1. John is invited to behold “*the bride, the Lamb’s wife*” and is carried away “*in the spirit to a great and high mountain....*”

Revelation 21:9-10 “*One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, ‘Come, I will show you the bride, THE WIFE OF THE LAMB.’ And he carried me away IN THE SPIRIT TO A GREAT AND HIGH MOUNTAIN, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.”*

2. Here John sees the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God.
3. In the description which follows, in **Revelation 21**, the New Jerusalem is declared to have “*the glory of God*”; the city is brilliant with light “*like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal*” (v. 11).
 - a. Although the jasper is sometimes used of stones of various colors, and most jasper stones today are not clear, the stone in view here is declared to be precious and clear as crystal.
 - b. The impression must have been one of incredible beauty and brilliance.
4. The verses which follow describe the city itself as surrounded by a great wall over 200 feet high, with twelve gates in the wall attended by twelve angels.
 - a. On the gates are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.
 - b. The city is square in shape and faces north, south, east and west, indicating that apparently there are directions in the new earth as there are in the present earth.

- c. The wall rests upon twelve foundations which, according to verse 14, bear the names of the twelve apostles.
5. The city is measured and found to be 12,000 furlongs or approximately 1,500 miles square, and it is equally high.
 - a. This has raised the question as to whether the city is in the form of a cube or a pyramid.
 - b. It probably is preferable to consider it a pyramid, as this explains how the river can flow down its sides as pictured in **Revelation 22:1-2**.

Revelation 22:1-2 *“Then the angel showed me THE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb DOWN THE MIDDLE OF THE GREAT STREET OF THE CITY. ON EACH SIDE OF THE RIVER stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”*

6. In general, all the materials of the city are translucent and permit light to pass through without hindrance. Even the gold is like clear glass (**Revelation 21:18**).
7. The foundations of the wall of the city bear the names of the twelve apostles, representing the church, and are garnished with twelve beautiful stones offering every color in the rainbow and, in the brilliant light of the city, providing a breathtakingly beautiful sight (**Revelation 21:19-20**).
8. The gates of the city are declared to be large, single pearls, and the street of the city is transparent, pure gold (**Revelation 21:21**).
9. The city has no temple because God dwells in it (**Revelation 21:22**) and has no need of sunlight or the moon or the stars, for the glory of God and the Lamb provides the light (**Revelation 21:23**).
10. The saved among the Gentiles (“the nations”) walk in the light of the city and enter freely by the gates, which are not shut because *“there shall be no night there”* (**Revelation 21:25**).
11. The inhabitants of the city, according to this description, include the saints of all ages.
 - a. Not only Israel and the Gentiles are mentioned, but also the twelve apostles who represent the church. The author of the book of Hebrews itemizes those in the New Jerusalem:

Hebrews 12:22-24 *“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF ANGELS in joyful assembly, to THE CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to GOD, the judge of all men, TO THE SPIRIT OF RIGHTEOUS MEN made perfect, to JESUS the mediator of a new covenant...”*

- b. From this it may be concluded that the church will be in the New Jerusalem, as well as *“the spirits of just men made perfect”*—referring to all the saints not included in the church, both Jews and Gentiles—and the angels, and Jesus as the Mediator of the new covenant.

12. In his further description of the New Jerusalem, John describes “a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (**Revelation 22:1**).
13. The tree of life bearing twelve kinds of fruit is described as being in the middle of the street of the city and on each side of the river and providing for the healing or the health of the nations (**Revelation 22:2**).
 - a. If this is a description of the eternal state, the question has been raised why healing is necessary.
 - b. The difficulty is resolved if the translation is accepted, “for the health of the nations.”
 - c. It may be that the fruit of the tree of life in addition to the water of life is the explanation of the endless existence of the bodies the saints will have in eternity.
14. In further descriptions of the city, John states, “*There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him*” (**Revelation 22:3**).
 - a. Their blessed estate is that they will be able to see God face to face and will have His name in their foreheads (**Revelation 22:4**).
 - b. John repeats the fact that the new city will be brilliant and not need artificial light, and he concludes with the word from God, “*Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book*” (**Revelation 22:7**).
15. Considering the fact that the new heavens and the new earth will be the eternal abode of the saints, it is remarkable that there is comparatively little description of it in the entire Scripture.
16. It is clear that the Bible is primarily intended to provide light for our present path. At the same time, a sufficient glimpse is given of the glory that is to come, to beckon us on in our life of faith.
17. Undoubtedly there is much more to be revealed than the brief glimpses we have here in these concluding chapters of the Book of Revelation.
18. Although God has revealed to some extent to His people what “*eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither [what] has entered into the heart of man*” (**1 Cor. 2:9**), there is undoubtedly much more that God will reveal to man in eternity.
19. The half has not been told, and our great God will delight to the endless reaches of eternity to manifest his love and grace to those who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.
20. The Bible, which alone discloses the wonders of heaven, is equally explicit in its declarations concerning the conditions under which sinners of this fallen race may enter there.
21. Notwithstanding, multitudes are assuring themselves they will be privileged to enter heaven who, at the same time, are giving no heed to those counsels of God in which He explains the only way given among men whereby they must be saved.

22. Not every person will be found in heaven; that glory and bliss is for the redeemed.

23. Redemption is absolutely dependent on a personal acceptance of the Redeemer.

Romans 3:21-25 *“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST TO ALL WHO BELIEVE. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT CAME BY CHRIST JESUS. God PRESENTED HIM AS A SACRIFICE OF ATONEMENT, through FAITH IN HIS BLOOD. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in His forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand UNPUNISHED...”*

1Peter 1:18-21 *“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that YOU WERE REDEEMED from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. THROUGH HIM YOU BELIEVE IN GOD, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and SO YOU FAITH AND HOPE IS IN GOD.”*

24. Such acceptance is a transaction most simple and yet so vital and conclusive that the trusting soul will be assured above all else that he is depending only on Christ for salvation.

John 3:16-18 *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAS ETERNAL LIFE. For God DID NOT send His Son into the world to condemn the world, BUT TO SAVE THE WORLD THROUGH HIM. Whoever believes in Him IS NOT CONDEMNED, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because He has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”*

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Doctrine #52 – The New Heaven and the New Earth

1. Read Pages 1-6 from the Doctrine#52 Study Guide by next Wednesday.
2. Answer the following Questions about “The New Heaven and the New Earth” as you read:

a. The New Heaven and the New Earth

- 1) According to Revelation 21:1, following the judgment of the great white throne and the destruction of the first heaven and the first earth, what did John “see”?

- 2) True or False. We know a lot about what the New Earth looks like and what will be doing there, because Scripture reveals many things about our future home. (page 1, top)

b. The General Description of the New Jerusalem

- 1) From where did John see the “New Jerusalem” come? (page 1, middle; Revelation 21:2)

- 2) True or False. It is quite clear from Scriptural revelation that no city like the New Jerusalem described in Revelation 21 has ever been on earth to date, nor is any city like it described as being part of the Millennial Reign of Christ. (page 1, bottom)

- 3) True or False. While some consider John’s reference to the New Jerusalem as a “bride adorned for her husband” to refer to the “church” of Christ, it is more appropriate to interpret the New Jerusalem as a “literal” city which is so beautiful, it can be compared to the loveliness of a bride prepared for her husband. (page 2, top)

- 4) True or False. The subject of the new heaven and the new earth which occurs immediately following the Millennial Reign of Christ is introduced for the first time in the Book of Revelation.
(page 2, middle; Isaiah 65:17-18; 2Peter 3:13)

- 5) According to Isaiah 65:17, God has promised to create new heavens and a new earth. What else is something this verse promises about the future?

- 6) While the earthly Jerusalem is destroyed at the end of the Millennium, what remains forever according to Isaiah 66:22? (page 2, bottom-middle)

- 7) Throughout Scripture, what may be considered as the ultimate goal of history and the final resting place of the saints? (page 2, bottom)

- 8) What are some of the “former things” that John says are “passed away” in the new heavens and the new earth? (page 3, top; Revelation 21:4)

- 9) In contrast to the “blessings” that the saved will inherit in the new heavens and the new earth, what do the “unsaved” inherit based on their works and lack of faith? (page 3, top; Revelation 21:8)

- 10) What is the “second death” referring to as mentioned in Revelation 21:8? (page 3, top)

c. Vision of the New Jerusalem

- 1) According to Revelation 21:11, the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven and looks like “*a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal*”. What is the impression John is trying to make in his description of this city? (page 3, bottom)

- 2) According to verses found in chapter 21 of the book of Revelation, what are some characteristics of the the wall and gates that surround the New Jerusalem? (page 3, bottom; Revelation 21:12-14)

- 3) How many miles long, wide, and high is the New Jerusalem? (page 4, top; Revelation 21:16)

- 4) True or False. It is reasonable to assume that the New Jerusalem may actually be a “pyramid” rather than in the shape of a cube. (page 4, top; see Revelation 22:1-2)

- 5) According to Revelation 22:1-2, what flows from the throne of God and down the middle of the great street of the New Jerusalem?

- 6) In general, according to Revelation 21:18, what is something that all of the materials that God used to build the city have in common? (page 4, middle)

- 7) How did John describe the “gates” of the New Jerusalem city? (page 4, middle; Revelation 21:21)

- 8) According to Revelation 21:22-23, the New Jerusalem has no temple and has no need of sunlight or the moon or the stars. What is the reason John gives for this? (page 4, bottom)

- 9) What do the twelve apostles, which make up the foundation of the city walls, represent in reference to the New Jerusalem? (page 4, bottom; Revelation 21:14; Hebrews 12:22-24)

- 10) According to the author of the book of Hebrews, "*the saints of just men made perfect*" are part of the citizenship of the New Jerusalem. Who are these "people"? (page 4, bottom; Hebrews 12:22-24)

- 11) According to Revelation 22:2, what is the purpose of the tree of life bearing twelve kinds of fruit and what is a good reason for why this tree is necessary? (page 5, top)

- 12) What will be on the foreheads of everyone living in the New Jerusalem? (page 5, middle; Revelation 22:4)

- 13) According to Revelation 22:7, who will certainly be "blessed" by God?

- 14) While the Bible is primarily intended to provide light for our present path, a sufficient glimpse is given of the glory that is to come for what apparent purpose? (page 5, middle-bottom)

- 15) True or False. There is way more to the new heavens and new earth that God has NOT revealed in Scripture to believers than what He has revealed to us in His Word.
(page 5, bottom; 1Corinthians 2:9)

- 16) According to the complete revelation of Scriptures, not every person will be found in heaven. That glory and bliss is ONLY for whom? (page 6, top; see Matthew 7:13-14 and Matthew 7:21-23)

- 17) In order to experience the wonders, beauty, and joy of the new heavens and the new earth, it is critical that you are "redeemed" before you die. What is "redemption" absolutely dependent upon?
(page 6, top; Romans 3:21-25; 1Peter 1:18-21)