

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"New Heavens and New Earth"

Revelation 21:1-8

Introduction

1. The Book of Revelation is divided into two major sections (1:19): a. The things which were seen (1:10-18) even the things which are (2:1-3:22) b. The things which shall be hereafter (4:1-22:21).

2. The millennium has run its course (20:1-10). The close out of the period relates to the Great White Throne judgment (20:11-15). The stage is set for eternal matters.

3. Loving devotion is shown toward the Lamb throughout everlasting ages (21:9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22:1. 3). This accents the place of redemption in God's view for eternity (Eph. 1:5-6, 12, 14).

4. Certain specifics are included in the plan of God for eternal blessedness. Among them are these:

1. THE PRESENCE OF FINAL THINGS vv. 1-4

This is marked by:-

a. The Presence of New Things

1) Positively v. 1

The verb "pass away" (παρηλθε parelthe) has been the subject of hot debate. Some see the fact as dissolution, but not annihilation, hence some sort of transition. Others believe the literality of the words must not be questioned. They support a brand new creation. The God Who brought the first heaven and earth into existence out of nothing can surely hurl it into nothingness. In view of this, Scripture affirms:-

a) There is a new (καινός kainos) heaven. This means a fresh and unused heaven.

b) There is a new (καινός kainos) earth. This means a fresh and unused earth.

c) There is no new sea. The earth becomes one large landmass. Three-fourths of the earth's surface is restored for habitation.

Note: Supporting this dramatic fresh start for eternity is the belief in an omnipotent God. Additionally numerous other Bible references confirm this

sort of cataclysmic change (Isa. 65:17; 55:22; Heb. 12:26-28; 2 Pet. 3:10:17; Rev. 20:11).

2) Negatively v. 4

Here is the passing away of effects of sin:

a) No tears The word "all" is singular, therefore "every" single tear will go!

b) No death This final enemy is now gone (1 Cor. 15:54-57). Thanatology is removed from the vocabulary.

c) No sorrow, no crying, no pain These concerns linked by three negative particles (οὐτε oute), therefore heartaches gone; crying hushed; bodily problems eliminated. These bitter "pills" of the ages, termed "former things" (τὰ προῖτα ta prota) have "passed away" (aorist). Surely this shows a new order has been established. Brother, what a day that will be.

b. The Presence of the Bride v. 2

1) Identified Three times "Holy" City is mentioned in Revelation (11:2; 21:2; 22:19). There are three Jerusalems: the heavenly (Heb. 12:22), the earthly (Rev. 11:2), and the mystical (Rev. 21:2, 10).

2) Sourced Clearly the city comes "from" (ἀπό απο) God and "out of" (ἐκ ek) heaven. This is exactly what one expects since the Church knew the glories of God's dwelling place. The positioning of the Bride is not revealed.

3) Prepared This is a perfect passive verb noting the marriage in heaven (14:7-10) continues into eternity. Moreover, the bridal attire displays the continued adornment (perfect tense) of the Bride (the Church) for her Husband (the Lord). Hence, the established relationship persists with all the bridal affections. Marvelous!

c. The Presence of God v. 3

1) Declared The loud voice may signal the voices of angelic response to events. The redeemed may also be participants. Whatever, the glory of God's presence is for all to know.

2) Defined Two ways define God's presence: a) His tabernacle is now with men. b) God will dwell with men. Note, the root for "tabernacle" (noun) and "dwell" (verb) are the same.

3) Detailed There is a reciprocal relationship indicated here. The "men" (generic, ἄνθρωπος anthropos) are to be God' s people and God will be with them and be their God.

Note: This entire revelation baffles the human mind. It is too wonderful for anyone to fully comprehend. Those who believe the Bible accept it all through faith.

2. THE PROVISION OF FINAL THINGS vv. 5-7

a. What God Does v. 5

Obviously, it is the triune (trinitarian) God Who sits (present tense. He never abdicates His throne) on the throne (cf. 4:2, 3, 10, 5:1). He is sovereign.

1) He Affirms The text uses "behold" two times (v. 3; here). God makes all things new (fresh and unused). God said it, that settles it, it is for us to believe it.

2) He Instructs John is commanded to record the facts as he hears (cf. v. 3). The reason for inscribing the facts is that they are authenticated by God as being true (real, genuine) and faithful (reliable, trustworthy). What magnificent reasons. Moreover, what He did is declared "done" (Γέγονε Gegone i.e. perfect tense) – really done!

b. Who God Is v. 6

God is identified at the One Who has a Name given only to deity (cf. 1:18; Rom. 11:36). There is none other besides, above, or otherwise, but He only (cf. Isa. 44:6, 8; 45:21, 22).

c. What God Provides vv. 6, 7

1) He provides water of life. This must be fullness of life (cf. John 4:14). It is all given freely or gratuitously (same word used of hatred of Jesus in John 15:25). So the relish for divine things is eternally satisfied.

2) He provides an inheritance. This is made available to those overcoming (present tense). What an inheritance – all things, not just a part of the whole!

3) He provides Himself. The same one who delights in divine things and overcomes is promised God personally. Mind transforming!

4) He provides a relationship. The Father (God) executes a sonship. Since it is already true of every believer (John 1:12), this must be the eternal enjoyment of it.

3. THE PROBLEM OF FINAL THINGS v. 8

Eight classes of sinners are listed as excluded from His presence in the eternal state. These are the:

a. Fearful The root of this term refers to one who is timid and cowardly (δειλός delos). Those afraid to confess Christ as Saviour or identify themselves with His Gospel. Such are not as expected to be (Ro. 1:16, 17).

b. Unbelieving To disbelieve what the Bible teaches concerning salvation is the single sin which condemns a soul to hell (John 16:7-11).

c. Abominable The perfect passive participle used here means to make foul, turn away in disgust from. Speaks of moral, physical, and spiritual uncleanness. Only found in N.T. here and Rom 2:22.

d. Murderers It is a solemn matter to meddle with what belongs only to God – human life. Woe to those who abort babies!

e. Fornicators The entire arena of pornography should be included here. This term (πορνεία porneia) is to be distinguished from adultery (μοιχεία moicheia). This dreadful sin is condemned by God.

f. Sorcerers The general term of pharmacology is the root of this term. Contextually it has reference to one devoted to the magical arts, hence one who professes to know the spirits. These are conjurers, necromancers.

g. Liars Every degree and kind of falsehood is considered. What is contrary to God' s character is clearly consigned here.

Note: All the above are kept out of God' s eternal felicity and have their part in the lake of fire which continually burns with fire and brimstone. This is eternal punishment and called the second death.

Conclusion Following the Great White Throne judgment, eternity emerges. This is the finality of all things. It is the ultimate goal to which God' s purpose is moving. Have you received God' s Son as your Saviour and are you among those destined for the new things He has provided? Oh, make ready today by believing the Gospel. Amen.