

Truth for Today

The Bible Explained

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New Things: The New Jerusalem - Millennial and Eternal

Good morning and welcome to *Truth for Today*, the Bible Explained. The title of our study today is "The New Jerusalem, Millennial and Eternal, Revelation 21". This is the third talk in a series called, "New Things". I hope that after hearing the title you are not heading to your radio to change the channel because you think it sounds too difficult? Please hang around and listen to a wonderful subject which I will try and explain as simply as I can with God's help.

Since around 1969, the city of Dubai has risen out of the desert and it is still being built. I visited Dubai recently and I was struck with all the modern infrastructure. The roads are wide and straight and have no pot holes, the buildings are very high and shine in the sun, islands have been made in the sea, creeks have been made to run through the city and golf courses add a touch of green to the landscape. Everything looks new, well at least from a distance. Houses and apartments only four years old are classed as old by estate agents. Dubai is probably one of the newest cities in the world, but already when you look closer there are signs of wear and tear. Revelation 21 tells us about new things in the future; a new heaven, a new earth and the Holy City, New Jerusalem. God declares in Revelation 21:5 "*Behold, I make all things new.*" When God makes these things new in the future they will remain new and they will never grow old and show any signs of wear and tear.

On a previous visit to Dubai I went up the Burj Kalifa, the highest building in the world at the time. The view over the city was quite breathtaking. There was a storm brewing, the skies were darkening and flashes of lightning were lighting up the sky. It was amazing to see the city below that man had built out of the desert and at the same time see the power of God in the heavens.

As I watched the scene, Daniel 4:29-33 came to mind. Nebuchadnezzar was a mighty king who ruled over all people and nations in the world at that time. He did acknowledge that God had been good to him and that everything he had came from the hand of God. But later in his life he was walking on the roof of the royal palace, reflecting as he looked over the city and he said; "*Is this not the great Babylon that I have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and the glory of my majesty*" (Daniel 4:30). Nebuchadnezzar's heart had changed; he was denying that it was God who had given him all things. Nebuchadnezzar's heart had become full of pride at what he had built. God came in and dealt swiftly with Nebuchadnezzar, telling him that his kingdom would be taken away from him and that he would be driven away from man and he would eat grass with the cattle (Daniel 4:32). After a while, Nebuchadnezzar came to recognise that it was God who had blessed him and he acknowledged that only God's kingdom would last forever. Pride affects us all! Don't allow your pride in any way to keep you from accepting God's way of salvation, which is repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ, God's Son who gave Himself as an offering for your sins.

When you buy a new car, everything is gleaming and perfect; it's quite special. But only after a few days of jumping in and out, the mats pick up dirt, there is dust on the dashboard and soon there are visible signs of wear and tear. When God created this earth it was perfect; He said so Himself. Man's sin has caused the deterioration of this earth when he disobeyed God, away back in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 3:1-7). The ground was cursed and thorns and thistles began to grow (see Genesis 3:17-18). Even a new born baby is affected by sin. You cannot see it and you might not accept it, but its little heart is already stained because of sin (see Psalm 51:5).

In 2 Corinthians 5:17 we read, "*If any man be in Christ he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*" The renewed man acts upon new principles, by new rules, with new ends, and in new company. The believer is created anew; his heart is not merely set right, but a new heart is given to him. He is the "*workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*" (Ephesians 2:10). Though he is the same person, he is changed in his character and conduct. He has been born again or "*born from above*" (see John 3:3). The stain of sin in his heart has been blotted out, or washed away, and in God's eyes he is reconciled to Himself because of the blood of Christ shed at Calvary.

God now looks on the believer as if He was looking on His perfect Son. In Psalm 51:1-7 David acknowledges that he was a sinner from birth (see Psalm 51:5). Even although he loved God, he had such a deep sense of his sin that he was continually thinking of it with sorrow and shame. David wanted his sins to be blotted out from his memory but the

stains are not so easily wiped clean. As Christians, the stains or scars of the sins we have previously committed, although they have been forgiven by God, still may have an effect on our lives and memories.

Before I look into Revelation 21 in more depth I would like to give you a simple timeline of future events as the Bible teaches.

The next event on God's calendar is the Coming of the Lord. It is also known as the Rapture and you can read about in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

- The Lord Himself will come into the air and every believer alive and the bodies of those who have died will be taken from this scene and into heaven to be with Him. This is private affair and unbelievers will not see this happening.
- Then a terrible tribulation period will come upon this earth and on those who have been left behind. This horrendous period will end with the battle of Armageddon.
- Then the Lord's feet will touch the Mount of Olives and every eye shall see Him.
- The Lord will deliver the faithful remnant, and those who have refused the mark of the beast during the tribulation.
- The Lord in power will save Israel from the nations who surround them. Satan will be restrained and bound and there will be relative peace on this earth as the Lord rules in righteousness for a period of a thousand years. This period is called the Millennium. Isaiah 65:20 indicates that there will be some outbreaks of evil during this period, but they will be immediately dealt with.
- The curse of sin will be removed from the earth and the earth will flourish once more with even the desert coming to life with foliage.
- There will also an orbital change as the sun and the moon will shine together during the millennium.
- Isaiah 65 also tells us that the wolf and the lamb will feed together and people will live for a long time. It will be an amazing time on the earth. But once Satan is released after a thousand years, man will again show his true heart and he will allow himself to be deceived and will turn away from the Lord.
- Revelation 20:9 tells us that the nations will rise up against the camp of the saints, and the beloved city: and fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them.
- Then the earth and heavens as we know them will be burned up and the eternal period begins where righteousness will dwell. Have you ever thought about eternity? A period that goes on forever and ever and ever! I pray that you have made plans for eternity! Where are you going to spend eternity?

Revelation 21:1-8 is one of only four places in the Bible that speaks of the eternal state, or the conditions of eternity. The others are 2 Peter 3:12-13, 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 and Ephesians 3:21. The earth and heavens as we know them today will be burned up. Everything that man has done and achieved in this world will be destroyed. Only what is done for God is carried forward into eternity. God is going to make a new heaven and a new earth, but this time man will not be allowed to spoil it.

In Revelation 21:5 God says, "*I make all things new*", not nearly new, but brand new. Everything in the new heaven and new earth will be perfect and it will always be new as there will be no sin to stain it. These eternal conditions are the fruit or force of what God is in Himself. Because God is God He must have a state of condition according to His nature, one displaying the perfection of light and love. God will display an absolutely perfect state of things in the new heavens and the new earth.

We are told very little about eternity in the Bible, so we have to take note of what is said. It is interesting to note the things we are told that will not be in eternity:

- There will be no sea! Sea in the Bible speaks of turbulence, strife and the warring nations.
- The eternal scene will be one perfect peace; there will be no wars or rumours of wars and everyone will live in perfect harmony.
- There will be no death! So there will be no more funeral services to attend as we are going to live forever.

- There will be no more sorrow or crying! You will never have to sorrow at the death of a loved one. You will never feel down or sad and there will be nothing that will cause you to shed a tear. How wonderful and amazing it is to consider that the Almighty God of heaven and earth who loves you will wipe the very tears from your eyes!

Oh, how my heart wells up with thanksgiving and praise to Him when I think of this. But, does that mean at some point there will be tears for God to wipe away? On thinking about this, I wonder if as we stand before God at the judgment seat of Christ having our life reviewed, the tears will flow. The words of that lovely hymn come to mind:

*“More, so much more,
More of my life than I e'er gave before,
By and by when I look on His face,
I'll wish I had given Him more”.*

Grace Reese Adkins, © 1948

Dear Christian friends, try and serve the Lord as if you were meeting Him tomorrow.

God says there will be no more pain! (Revelation 21:4) How good will that be? Recently I suffered with a severe back problem and I have never experienced such pain. I am now happy to say that I am free from pain, but many people have to suffer pain all of their life. As you get older, unfortunately you suffer more pain in your body. We are also told later in the chapter that there will be no temple (Revelation 21:22). The temple was always the place set up where people could go and worship God. But God is going to be with us then. He is going to dwell with us and we will worship Him directly. What a wonderful sphere the believer in Christ is moving on to! Do you ever get tired of this wicked evil world we live in, and crave for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Revelation 21:8 gives you a pointed reminder that as you leave this life in death without the acceptance of Christ as your Saviour, or the Lord comes and you miss the opportunity of salvation, you will find yourself in vastly different conditions in eternity. You will find yourself with Satan and his angels along with all sorts of sinners in eternal torment in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Dear friend be warned, there will be no peace or comfort there and eternity is a long time!

When we move on to Revelation 21:9-27 this is speaking more about the heavenly aspect of the millennial scene. We have the description of the great city, the holy New Jerusalem which is the place where we believers will be. Jesus when He was here on earth showed His affection for the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, the city and the people, have suffered many atrocities at the hand of wicked enemies. The walls and gates were not sufficient enough to protect itself or its people. The New Jerusalem will be different! The gates will always be open so that the residents of the city can go in and out without restriction and there will be no need of protection. There will be nothing unclean or immoral allowed to come into the city. The kings of the earth who are saved shall bring their glory into it. There will be no need of the sun or moon to shine on it as there will be no night, because the glory of God will light it and its lamp is the Lamb (referring to the Lord). The Bible seems to indicate that this holy city New Jerusalem will be just above the earth during the millennial scene.

Revelation 21:9-27 give exact dimensions and descriptions of the building materials that God will use for this new city. There will never ever be a city made by man that will come close to the brilliance of this city. The dimensions are fifteen hundred miles in length, width and height. As an example of the size, draw a line from Edinburgh to Moscow, from Moscow to the North of Israel, from the North of Israel to the North of Africa and then back to Edinburgh. That's a big city! Revelation 21:16 seems to indicate a perfect cube, in length, breadth and height. That being so, doesn't Revelation 21:17 give the thickness of the wall! Depending on our understanding of a cubit the wall will be around 66 metres wide and will be made of a very precious pure jasper stone which will be clear as crystal. Its jasper walls would signify the divine glory is the security of the redeemed.

The city itself will be made of pure gold, clear like transparent glass, even the very streets will be made of gold which would speak of divine righteousness in the presence of the Lord. The city will have twelve gates and each of these gates will be a single pearl. The pearls would be a public witness of Christ's delight in His Church (that is every believer), see Matthew 13:46. The gates as we have said already will never be closed. The redeemed can go in our out, and we will not need a security pass to get in as there will be free access into the city. There will be twelve foundation stones and on them will be the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Every foundation stone will be adorned with every kind of precious stone named in Revelation 21:19-20.

When you are studying prophecy it is very difficult to put things in exact compartments. Some things may be figurative and some are literal. If you need some help I would suggest a book called *“Future Events”* by Walter Scott which would help answer questions you may have.

Thinking again about eternity, Revelation 19:5 suggests that in eternity believers will serve God and we will bring Him unhindered thanksgiving, worship and praise. God will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost (Revelation 21:6). We will get all the food and refreshment we require; we will be satisfied. We will have a new home forever; there will be never again be the stress of moving home. We will be united as one big family; there will be no disagreements over doctrine or theology. We will recognise people it seems, but we will not have the same relationships with them as we have on earth. In eternity we will finally see everything from God's perspective.

In John 14:2 Jesus said; *"In my Father's house are many mansions"*. He goes on further to say to His disciples that He is going to *"prepare a place for you"* (John 14:3). That is a place reserved for every believer who in this life has put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

God's mansions are filling fast so don't be late with your reservation. Have you ever made a reservation at a restaurant and when you arrive there is a huge queue and you walk in past all the people in the line, no matter who they are, rich or famous, and take your reserved place? Dear friends, please be prepared and have your place in heaven reserved. Eternity with Christ sounds wonderful, so don't miss out.

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