

Opening Prayer

Scripture

Revelation 21:1-8

Message

New Heaven and New Earth

My wife and I have been married for 47 ½ years. In those 47 years we have lived in **15 different houses**. I know that some of you who watch these videos have lived in more places. If you were in the military, you may have lived in many places. Some of our moves were for short periods of time. The house that is provided for us now here in Cascade, is the longest we have lived in the same place – 14 years. It's a lot of work to move. Over time we have accumulated a lot of stuff. Packing and unpacking is more of a challenge. We probably should think about cleaning out. But we're not ready to get rid of belongings yet. I don't know how many more moves we will be making while we live in this world. We always try to make a new house, our home, to make it our place, even though we were not always the owner of the house we lived in. That is always important to us. Some day in the future we will make a last move. We will move to our eternal home in heaven. We won't need to pack a truck to take stuff with us to make it our home. It will be home because it will be the place that has been especially prepared for us. It will be the place where we were always supposed to live. We will enjoy our homes in this world, and try to make them ours. But we look forward to that special home in heaven. And we won't regret having to leave behind the things that we have been accumulating in this world.

For the past several weeks I have been talking about a Big Day that is coming in the Future. Theologians refer to that day as the Consummation – the End, when God steps into the timeline of the history of this world and brings an end to the world as we have known it. When that happens, a new age will begin. **We do not know when this Big Day is going to come.** It could come today, or it may not come for a long time yet. The apostle Peter says that some skeptics and unbelievers will mock and make fun of those who are looking forward to this Big Day. **"Where is the promise of His coming?"** Peter challenges us to not be discouraged if there is a delay. God has intervened in the past, and He will do so again in the future. God intervened in History when He created the world. He intervened in history when he sent flood waters to destroy the world in the days of Noah. And He can and will intervene again. Peter teaches us that God's delay in coming is actually gracious. He is not willing for anyone to perish. The more time we have in this world, the more time people in this world have to repent, to turn from sin and become followers of Jesus.

Because we do not know when the day will come, we must be prepared for that day. We must believe the gospel message that tells us that Jesus is the Son of God, and the Savior of the world. There is an **URGENCY** to the gospel message. Be ready for whenever the Big day comes.

In Revelation 21:5, God says: ***I am making all things new.*** This refers to the Big Day that is coming or the Consummation. I have said that there are 4 events that are associated with this consummation when God is making all things new::

- The **return of Christ** (second Coming). The return of Jesus is the next event on God's timeline of His desire to make all things new. The second coming ushers us in to this age of Consummation.
- The **Resurrection** of the Dead. "All who are in their graves will come out...."
- The **Judgment**. "those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned"
- Finally, **the New Heaven and a new earth** (Rev. 21:1)

We have talked about the first 3 of these events that are coming. Today I want to talk about his new heaven and new earth.

When we read the Bible and we see the story of the Bible, we learn that God created humans in His image, to live in a special place that He created for them. They were naked and unashamed. They were pure and holy,

free from any guilt or shame. They walked freely in the presence of God, in intimate relationship with Him. However when humans chose to rebel against God, their moral condition was marred and corrupted. They were banished from the garden and from God's holy presence. But the Bible tells us that it was not only humans who were marred and corrupted by sin. The creation was also impacted. In Genesis 3 when God is pronouncing judgment as a result of sin, He declared that the ground, creation itself was cursed. In Romans 8, Paul writes these words:

¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

As we read about the creation, we see that there is a special bond that exists between God and His creation. He did not have to create anything. But He chose to bring this world into existence. As we read the account of Creation in Genesis 1 and 2, we read that God took special care in creating the world. As each day of creation closes, we read that as God admired His handiwork, He pronounced it good, it was very Good. God took great delight in the beauty of creation. We learn that God in His fulness was involved in the work of creating. God the Father spoke and brought the world into existence. The Spirit of God hovered over the waters. And Jesus, the Son was active in creation.

So we must not miss this reality that there is a special bond, and intimate connection between God and His creation. As the Psalm that I read at the beginning of our time together today says, "***The heaven declares the glory of God, and the sky displays His handiwork.***" But because of sin, creation has been frustrated. It has not been able to display and declare the glory of God to the fullest extent that God intended. Now we read in Revelation 21:5, as God is stepping into the Consummation, as He is making all things new, one of the places where we will see that is in a New Heaven and New Earth. The word that is translated "New" in this verse does not necessarily mean "another" or a "second" heaven and earth, but rather newness in quality. God will restore the heavens and the earth so that it will be as He intended for it to be from the beginning. It is this new heaven and new earth that will be home for those who have believed, to those who have chosen to be followers of Jesus. This will be my final home and yours as a follower of Jesus.

In the last two chapters of Revelation (21 & 22) there is a description of what this place called Heaven will be like. There is a lot of discussion about the images that are used here. Are they intended to be understood literally, or are they only symbolic – word pictures. We are not going to spend any time looking at these physical descriptions of heaven today. But there are some important things about heaven that we must not overlook.

- It is a place where God's people are cherished as a groom cherishes his new bride. The image "new Jerusalem" is a reference to the people of God. The people of God have been beautifully purified, adorned and prepared for the wedding celebration. When was the last time you felt cherished and loved without condition.
- It is a place where God is. God's people will live in a relationship of intimacy with God, in His presence. One of the consequences of sin was that humans were banished from the Garden that God had created for them. They were banished from that place where they walked with God himself. That will be restored in heaven. Their identity will be secure
- It will be a place of comfort and healing – The tears that have come in this world as a result of sin, abuse, neglect, trauma will be wiped away. God Himself will wipe away our pain that has afflicted our spirits and hearts.
- No More! Those things that have caused us pain will be no more. No more death, separation, mourning, crying, pain. The things that have resulted in fear will be gone forever.

The physical description of heaven is that it is a beautiful place. But these other qualities of heaven are even more special to us.

Once again, we are challenged to consider if we have taken the step to prepare for this place. In John 14, Jesus talks about going to prepare a place for us. He said to his disciples, ***You know that place where I am going, and you know the way.*** One of his disciples responded and said, ***Lord, we don't know!*** Jesus' response was: ***I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.***

Through his death on the cross, Jesus has made it possible for you to be cleansed of sin and freed from the consequences of sin. He has made it possible for you to face something as frightening as death, with confidence and hope. Invite Him to be your Savior today.

Prayer

Blessing