

# The Old and New

*Revelation 20:11-21:8*

## BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 20:11-15 NKJV] 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is [the Book] of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. [Rev 21:1-27 NKJV] 1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 8 "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

## INTRO

As we dive back into Revelation 20-21, we find ourselves at the very end of the story. But as it is with God, the end of one story is actually the beginning of a new, better, eternal story. While I'm thoroughly convinced that our universe didn't begin with a big bang, I'm confident that it ends with one!

In earth's past, there were two major events that marked, or should I say marred humanity: the fall in the garden and the judgment of mankind during the time of Noah.

Later, Jesus came to earth to become the second Adam. He took the curse and bore God's judgment for sin on the cross. He rose victoriously from the dead. Spiritually, he was undoing what the fall had done. But he's not finished. In the future, He will physically reverse the curse through his 1000 year reign on earth, and instead of judging the world with water, the final judgment will be one of fire. Then all things will become new and everything will be completed and right for all eternity.

- Two weeks ago we studied the coming kingdom of Christ; that in the future, there will be a time when Jesus physically rules and reigns on this earth in order to fulfill every promise He made to Israel, the church, and creation in this timeline. His kingdom will reign on this earth for 1000 years. But Jesus' kingdom isn't prophesied to be a 1000-year reign; it's prophesied to be an everlasting reign, and it is! It will move from this world and Jerusalem as we know it to a new earth and a new Jerusalem.
- But before we get to that transition, we must deal with the reality that not everyone is a part of the Kingdom of Jesus, and all the new things He will do.
- The end of chapter 20 records for us a very sobering reality of the event that brings an end to the universe and time as we know it. We pick up in chapter 20:11.

## APPLICATION

Satan, after being bound, was allowed to be loosed one short time. When he was, he went back to his same old ways, deceiving and bringing the nations into opposition against King Jesus. Even after enjoying all the benefits of Christ's reign, the new generations that populate the earth will not have known the previous state of things.

- Just as Eve was beguiled in the garden of Eden, the kings of the nations that are on earth under the reign of Christ will be allured by Satan's lies. They will be convinced that Christ is keeping something good from them and is oppressing them. The master liar will convince them that the freedom of Christ is really bondage, that the light of Christ is really darkness, and that the truth of Christ is really deception. They will believe him to the point that they band together to form a coup d'etat. Their intention is to overthrow Christ.

They utterly fail. The fire of God devours them before a battle even begins. And this truly was necessary.

- Eternity with Christ must be a willing choice. Right now, people have the opportunity to choose Jesus, who was crucified for their sins and rose to give them life, hope, forgiveness, and peace. At the end of time, people will still have to willingly choose Christ. You might view Satan's release as one final test for remaining humanity. Who will choose to enter into eternity, the new heaven's new earth? Sadly, most on the earth choose what Adam and Eve chose in the garden: to rebel against God and His authority.

Well, before eternity begins, judgment is necessary.

## BIBLE PASSAGE

**[Rev 20:11-15 NKJV] 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**

## APPLICATION

This scene should cause all people to quiver in their boots. But we need to understand what we're looking at. This event has been rightfully coined "The Great White Throne Judgment." After the 1000 years are complete, and Satan is judged, God the Father tears the veil of eternity and shows His face. His glory is so radiant and magnificent that the physical universe that we know today can't handle the sheer force of His glory and appearance. Peter describes this event:

## BIBLE PASSAGE

**[2Pe 3:11-13 NKJV] 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**

## APPLICATION

The word "elements" in Greek is where we derive the English word "atom" from. It means "The first things."

- The "God particle" that seems to holding the physical universe together will dissolve, causing the universe to become unhinged in the presence of its creator.
- **[Col 1:16-17 NKJV] 16 For by Him (Jesus) all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**
- **[Heb 1:3 NKJV] 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power...**
- When God lets go, nothing survives!

When the physical universe dissolves, all that's left is the throne of God, His power, His authority, and His truth! Remember what Jesus said in three of the gospels?

**"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."**

And now it is that word by which all people who previously lived in rebellion against God will be judged by their creator.

- It is important to understand the audience. Remember when John says, "I saw the dead, small and great..." that he is referring to all the dead who HAD NOT partaken in the first resurrection as described in chapter 20. ([Rev 20:5 NKJV] 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.)
- We are talking about 3 main groups of people at this judgment:
  - Those who died without faith in Christ historically.
  - Those who will die without Christ in the tribulation period.
  - Those who died rebelling against Christ at the end of His 1000-year reign.
- **[Heb 9:27 NKJV] 27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...**

1:10



several things I want to point out about what it means to be part of this white throne judgment:

## 1 Everything will be Exposed

### BIBLE PASSAGE

**[Mar 4:22 NKJV] 22 "For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.**

### BIBLE PASSAGE

**[Heb 4:13 NKJV] 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**

---

#### APPLICATION

The shame of the cross was that Jesus would be exposed for sins he didn't commit so that we could be clothed in His righteousness.

---

## 2 Everything will be held accountable

---

#### QUOTE

**“In God's justice system, no one ever gets away with anything they've done wrong.”**

---

#### ILLUSTRATION

The idea of the books being opened indicates that every action, deed, word, and thought is recorded in heaven. God's record-keeping is impeccable. And why does God do this?

- It's not because God enjoys writing down every bad thing we do in the hopes of eternally torturing us for it. If that's your view of God, it's been poorly informed.
- God does this because He is the fairest judge. Yes, God is a judge, but no one will ever receive a penalty that they don't justly deserve. And in order to measure one's guilt, ALL the evidence must be presented, and it will be.
- There will be no partial; no one will be able to bribe the judge to cover a mishap.

- Even everything good that was done will be mentioned and viewed... but don't get your hopes up. The sad reality is that all the good that a person does cannot, and should not, be a counterweight to the bad. That wouldn't be true justice.
  - **For example, if someone murdered your family in cold blood, how would you feel if the judge released them from their sentence because the week before, they served dinner at the homeless outreach?**

## QUOTE

“ God doesn't grade on a curve but on a cross.

## BOOK OF LIFE

This is where the "other book" comes in. It's the Lamb's book of life.

**15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**

I believe this is the same book of life that Paul the Apostle talks about in Philippians 4:3, where Paul talks about the saints whose names are "in the Book of Life."

I believe that God refers to this book in the context of its place in judgment in the book of Malachi:

**[Mal 3:16-18 NKJV] 16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. 17 "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him." 18 Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.**

What does it mean to "fear the Lord?" To honor Him, to respect Him, and to obey Him. And what has God called every man to do?

- To believe in the name of His only begotten son Jesus Christ, savior of the world, sacrifice for sin, risen and exalted King. There is no other name under heaven by

which we must be saved than Jesus Christ.

- **[Psa 2:11-12 NKJV] 11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.**

### 3 Everything will be eternal

#### BIBLE PASSAGE

**[Dan 12:2 NKJV] 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.**

#### APPLICATION

The end result of the judgment is that all those who have decided to carry their own sins rather than trust in Christ will be cast into the same eternal destination as the antichrist, the false prophet, and the dragon (Satan): The lake of fire that burns forever and ever.

- Earlier in the text, when Satan was cast into this lake, we saw that the antichrist and false prophet were still there, conscious after 1000 years.
- Chapter 20:10 describes the lake of fire as a place of torment that lasts forever and ever. Just as the Kingdom of Christ will be forever, and life will be eternal with the Lord, so will there be an eternal consciousness in judgment.
- Death and the grave are also cast into the lake of fire - the reason being there will be no more death from this point forward in God's new world, but those who didn't choose the life of Christ will spend eternity with death. Hell will be a conscious death forever. A constant realization that you chose the path of death rather than the path of life.



## ETERNAL LIFE

I confess that it's difficult to know exactly what to take literally, figuratively, allegorically, and poetically in this book; all of us have to confess a certain level of ignorance concerning some things.

- But one thing seems clear to me... Jesus is coming back, and He is going to make all things new, and the new heaven and new earth He will create (or recreate) is going to be more than we could ever comprehend in the here and now.
- Eternity is beyond our human ability to comprehend.

Remember in Acts when Paul was stoned to the point of death?

- Many believe that this is when he might have entered the third heaven; this is probably the same place John was.

He writes in 2 Corinthians 12 - *...he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

We will look at four points in these 8 verses regarding what our eternal destination will be like:

# 1 Everything will be New

## APPLICATION

The new heaven and Earth were prophesied in Isaiah 65:17: **"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind."**

The word "new" here is very important. It literally means refreshed.

The same word is used in 2 Corinthians 5:17 - **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

- This is the process in which God takes the old and transforms it into something new.

EXAMPLE: If you are in engineering or the medical field, you might recognize the term “autoclave.” This is the instrument used in the process of sterilization for medical instruments. It uses intense heat and pressure to make that instrument new again.

- In a certain sense, this is what God Does to the world; He runs it through His autoclave and reforms it from the atoms up. Nothing that once was will be the same. It will be the way God always intended it to be.

## APPLICATION

Not only are there a new heaven and earth, but a new city, the New Jerusalem (verse 2):

**2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**

Take heed to this word prepared:

- **It reminds of John 14:2-3: [Jhn 14:1-3 NKJV] 1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, [there] you may be also.**

I believe Jesus is personally preparing this city, and within it, he is building you and me a special space.

- What does the first chapter of Genesis, Hebrews, John, 1 John, Colossians, and Revelation have in common?
- They all say the same thing: JESUS IS THE ONE WHO CREATED EVERYTHING!
- Everything we see and know was made by, through, and for Jesus. And He’s prepared a new home for us!
- Remember what Hebrews 11 says about the faith of Abraham?

**[Heb 11:10 NKJV] 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.**

Everything will be new! New perfect bodies, a new city, a new mansion, a new heaven, and a new earth. How wonderful it would be to wake up every morning and everything that you

had was brand new! That would be fun. And yet heaven will be filled with newness for eternity!

## APPLICATION

**[Rev 21:3-7 NKJV] 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.**

What will be different?

### **How God dwells with us will be different:**

- God is triune in nature. God the son, Jesus, walked among the earth with his followers, God the Holy Spirit now dwells inside his followers, but God the Father has never revealed his full glory to any man.
- Man's sinful flesh could not survive in the presence of the Father, His glory is far too powerful for us to handle.
- In eternity the triune God will reign, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, will be ruling as one God. We will be in our new bodies and we will be able to look upon God's glory.
- What will happen to us then? Will we fall over dead? No! We will have an intimate, face to face relationship with Him. It will be different because we will be completely freed from the curse and from our flesh:

### **How we dwell on earth will be different:**

- When man was created man was in a perfect environment. No sin.
- As a result there was no pain. No knowledge of what it meant to be sad or ashamed. There was just perfect fellowship with God.
- But Adam sinned, and through his sin entered into the world and ruled through death. Genesis 3:17:

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. What a horrible reality to step into.

- They had it all! They could eat whatever they wanted. They could hang out with God in the garden. They could go and chill with the animals whenever they wanted to.

- They were both naked in perfect bodies in a perfect place and God commanded them to “Be fruitful and multiply!” (We can save that for the message on marriage!)

And then, all of a sudden, sin and transgression break perfection, and things become difficult, painful, and sorrowful.

### 3 Everything will be healed

#### BIBLE PASSAGE

**4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."  
5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."**

#### ILLUSTRATION

I heard of a tombstone engraved with just six words, “I told you I was sick!” No one heeded the warning... There’s a gravestone in Richmond, Virginia under which the body of Margaret Daniels is buried. It reads, “She always said her feet were killing her, but nobody believed her.” Sin created a fallen world that makes us vulnerable to sickness, and pain, and ultimately death. But here in Revelation 21 sin is no more. Now sin’s symptoms can be treated. Grief goes! Tears dry. Psalm 30:5 proves true, “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” Here the morning breaks!

## APPLICATION

These words can be trusted! The former things will pass away:

- The former system of life that we once knew while living in time will be completely gone.
- We get the sense that even though the 1000-year reign of Christ is a great time, it's still not perfect. There is still death, there is still sorrow, and there is still humanity, but not after God makes everything new.

No more sadness or crying:

- The emotion of sorrow will no longer exist. You couldn't get sad even if you tried. Isaiah prophecies of this:

**Isaiah 51:11 - So the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**

Think about what sorrow is. It's the lack of joy. It's the result of things that didn't go right. Just as darkness is the absence of light, and there will be no more night in eternity because the light of God consumes all, sorrow is the absence of joy, and there will be no more sorrow because fullness of God's joy will consume every space.

How many in here have experienced deep sorrow because of sin, death, or pain? One day, life will be free of the pain.

## 4 Everything will be good

### BIBLE PASSAGE

**[Rev 21:6-7 NKJV] 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be**

**My son. [Rev 21:8 NKJV] 8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."**

## APPLICATION

Alpha and omega - first last

[Isa 44:6 NKJV] 6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I [am] the First and I [am] the Last; Besides Me [there is] no God.

## QUOTE

“Second death - ‘born once, die twice; born twice, die once.’”

## BIBLE PASSAGE

### 2 Thessalonians 2:12 (ESV - English Standard Version)

<sup>12</sup> in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

## BIBLE PASSAGE

### 2 Peter 2:13 (ESV - English Standard Version)

<sup>13</sup> suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with

you.

## APPLICATION

This particular thought ends with the contrast we started with.

- There will be only two groups of people in the end: Those who overcame partook of the water of life, and have inherited the kingdom as sons and daughters of God, and those who rather chose unrighteousness, rejecting the offer of Christ to become new creations. And yes, only new creations in Christ will inherit the coming new creation.

Cowardly – literally the word fearful.

- These are the people that are almost Christians. They know and see the truth, but they are too fearful about what that kind of commitment might require from them, so they don't make the decision.

Then we have the rest of the list (I don't have time to go through each one. But as we look at this list, we realize that we all have been some of these!) How can anyone make it to heaven?

**1 Corinthians 6:9 - Don't you know that those who do wrong will have no share in the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, who are idol worshipers, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, abusers, and swindlers-- none of these will have a share in the Kingdom of God. There was a time when some of you were just like that, but now your sins have been washed away, and you have been set apart for God. You have been made right with God because of what the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God have done for you.**

If you've murdered, stolen, or lied, or done so in your heart, you can go to heaven. If you are an alcoholic or a drug addict, you can go to heaven, but there is a precondition! You have to be cleansed of your sin. You have to come to the cross of Jesus Christ and believe in him with faith and receive his forgiveness and his righteousness.

Sadly, I believe hell is going to be filled with "almost Christians."

- Remember Acts 26 when Paul was preaching to King Agrippa. We are told:

**Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." Paul replied, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that both you and everyone here in this**

**audience might become the same as I am, except for these chains."**

Don't be an "almost Christian." If you choose against having a new identity in Christ, then you are choosing to keep your sinful identity before God.