

The Kingdom of God #13: The Eternal State

After the end of the Millennium, the resurrection of the wicked, and after the condemnation of the Devil and all his to the lake of fire (Gehenna), what then? There will be a totally new heavens and new earth, and a new Jerusalem where we will live and enjoy God forever. This earth was never intended to be eternal, not even before the Fall, nor in its restored state in the Millennium. It is not perfectly suited for our spiritual, resurrection bodies.

“New Heavens and New Earth”

- Isa. 65:17-25 and 66:22-24 – while these use the phrase “new heavens and new earth”, they seem generally to describe the Millennium conditions. For example, it allows for the possibility of death (65:20), and while there will be extended length of life (65:22), it is not considered everlasting. “New” is not an inapt description of the Millennium conditions anyway – the earth will indeed be restored and renewed following the cataclysmic judgments of the Tribulation, and the destruction wrought at the Second Coming will be somehow “repaired”. The new heavens in that context may be as a result of the great signs in the heavens (moon into blood, sun darkened, stars fall, heavens rolled up like a scroll, etc.)

Note: There is perhaps a hint of this time of restoration in Dan. 12. The Tribulation period is described in various places as being 7 years, in 2 halves. The “half-Tribulation” is said to be “a time, times, and half a time ($1 + 2 + \frac{1}{2} = 3 \frac{1}{2}$)”, or 42 months, or 1260 days ($360 * 3 \frac{1}{2} = 1260$). But Dan. 12:11-12 speaks of 1290 days, and even 1335 days. Perhaps (?) the additional time allows for the physical restoration of the earth, and the institution of Christ’s rule out of Jerusalem.

Why would the OT description seem to combine the Millennium and the eternal state? From their standpoint, they did not need a full distinction, as we have in Rev. 21-22. The OT sees things afar off, and because of that, some distinct things appear together, like mountains in the distance. For example, Isa. 60:1-3 (speaks of first and second comings without distinction), or Dan. 12:2, where the resurrections of the righteous and wicked appear together, when Rev. 19-20 show an intervening Millennium.

- 2 P. 3:10-14 – the day of the Lord – heavens shall pass away with a great noise, elements melt with fervent heat, earth and its works burned up. ... the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Rev. 21-22 – New heavens, new earth, new Jerusalem

In these final chapters, we see

1. That the eternal state consists of a new heaven and a new earth. Everything is totally new. 21:1, 5
2. There are no seas.– 21:1 One of the principal purposes of God in having oceans and seas is to serve as natural dividers between nations, to prevent world conquest and destruction.
3. That there is a glorious, heavenly city that comes down to the new earth – 21:2
 - a. Heb. 11:10, 16 – Abraham looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ... But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.
 - b. Heb, 12:22 - But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem
 - c. Heb. 13:14 - here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.
 - d. The city is called “the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (21:9). Jesus said he was going to prepare a place for us (Jn. 14).
 - e. It is a gigantic cube (12000 furlongs = 1500 miles!). A great wall with 12 gates/angels/tribes. 12 foundations with names of apostles.
 - f. Fantastic building materials and garnishments – jasper, gold, gems, pearl
4. That God himself, through Christ, is literally present – 21:3-4 21:22-23 22:4-5
 - a. Christ is the heavenly Tabernacle (21:3, 22). His person and the atonement are seen figuratively in the furnishings and layout of the OT tabernacle and temple. He will dwell with us. We are His people and He is our God. There will be no physical temple or tabernacle, because Christ is the reality.
 - b. Complete absence of anything negative – 21:4 - no crying, death, sorrow, pain. All those things were of this life. 22:3 – no more curse
5. There is no temple, no sun, no moon. God himself is the temple, and the light of his glory permeates everything – 21:22-25 22:5
6. The inhabitants of this state are all, and only, the redeemed of men, and the holy angels.
 - a. 21:7-8 He that overcometh shall inherit all things, ... but who is excluded? The fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars. They will already have been judged and are in the lake of fire.
 - b. 21:27 – nothing that defiles, or works abomination, or makes a lie. Only those written in the book of life.
 - c. 22:15 – outside are dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and “whosoever loveth and maketh a lie”.