

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: 8b
The Incredible Journey
Of The
Church Age Believer
March 21, 2003

INTRO: In a series of messages like this if you miss a message it leaves a hole in your understanding of where we are. Let me encourage you if you are not clear on any part of this series to get the tapes and cover any unclear sections. If you have a clear understanding of each section as presented here then you can reevaluate these messages in light of other views when you come across them.

To briefly review from a visual perspective where we are turn your outlines over and on the backside you will find in diagram form where we are.

You will notice that in Phase 4 we are in heaven but we come down to the new earth. We covered the coming down to earth in the last message because that is how this part of the journey begins. We saw that the Church returns from heaven to earth in the New Jerusalem. Today we want to consider how our journey continues here on the new earth.

B. Continued with God on the new earth

In a few messages we will finish this series. During these last messages we want learn as much as we can about the new heaven, the new earth and the New Jerusalem. What is at the end of a journey, makes a difference whether I want to go there or not. Would you be interested in going to this place we call the new heaven and the new earth if I told you that you will become an impersonal being. You will never think, see, smell, hear or feel anything anymore? Would you be interested if I told you there would be no time, no space, no people, no God, no Jesus? Or, would you be interested if I told you there would be murderers, thieves, drunkards and immorality there? Would you be interested if I told you it was a place of sorrow, a place of always remembering your failures your losses etc.?

Would you be interested in going to an unending destiny if all I could tell you is what I think will be after this life and I had no support for my views? In Israel, the young suicide bombers are promised a glorious heaven if they will give their own life to kill Jews. They are pumped

and primed from childhood through school days that they will have a wonderful, lust satisfying hereafter if they commit suicide by taking a few Jews with them. And on what ground are they given these grand promises? A few passages of their own writings that are twisted to suit their purpose. And oh, what a sad moment, when the bomb goes off, and the Jews blood is splattered all over the bus or restauraunt, and the missguided Arab wakes up in an undending existence that is drastically different from what he was promised. And now he is in a state that cannot ever change.

Would you be interested if all I had preached in this series had no solid ground? But now I can tell you with full assurance, that not only am I willing to guide others into this understanding, I am willing to live or die for it myself because it is based on the Word of God.

For our understanding on the new heaven and new earth we are dependent now almost entirely on the book of Revelation for information. The Old Testament prophecies much about the tribulation and the millennium but very little regarding the new creation. In the Old Testament the new heaven and new earth are mentioned only twice and both times in the book of Isaiah. And in those passages we are given very little insight into what it will be like during the eternal ages of the new heaven and the new earth.

When we come to Revelation 21 and 22 we learn a number of things about life in eternity that we cannot learn anywhere else in the Bible. I need to mention one significant difference of understanding that affects these chapters. There is a view held by a number of theologians that Revelation 21:1-8 speaks of the eternal state while 21:9-22:7 speak of the New Jerusalem in the millennium. I mention that for your benefit so that when you read other theologians you will understand that not all take the view I take. I take the view that Revelation 19-22 give us a chronological progression of endtime events from the end of the tribulation, with which Revelation 4-18 deal, to the new heaven and new earth. We are going to look at the eternal state in three sections; the new heaven, the new earth and the new Jerusalem. So let us look at the new heavens first, and at what is changed and what is not changed.

1. The new heaven

a. What is changed

There are those who say that the old heaven and earth are annihilated and it is made "brand spankin' new." I have mentioned to you that the word *new* used here is *kainos* and does not allow for that. There are only two references in the Old Testament to the new heaven and new earth and both are found in Isaiah. But there is a very interesting passage in the Psalms to the passing of the present heaven and earth (Ps. 102:25-26). This passage contrasts a changing world to an unchanging God. The second scientific law of thermodynamics tells us that our present universe is running down like a wound up clock. It is not evolving or becoming bigger and better; it is running down.

However, the world will not run down and then run out at its own slow pace. Hebrews chapter 1:10-12 is a quote of Psalm 102:25-26 (read). Verse 11 tells us the heavens will perish. Vines dictionary says of this word, "The idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of well being." We are told further in verse 11 that they grow old like a garment. That is they become worn out. They no longer accomplish the purpose for which they were originally made. Verse 12 tells us what will happen to them. They will not be annihilated. The writer says, "You will fold (or better roll) them up and they will be changed."

It is very important to note that they are not annihilated but *changed*. The Greek word is instructive here. It is the word *allasso*. It means *to transform* or *change*. It comes from the Greek word *other*. In Greek when you want to speak of some other thing that is of a different sort than the one you are speaking of you use the word *heteros*. If one wants to speak of some other thing or person of the same sort one calls that *allos*.

For example in John 14:16 Jesus spoke of sending the Holy Spirit. When He referred to the Holy Spirit He spoke of Him as "another comforter." Jesus had been their comforter but He would send another (*allos*) comforter, that is another of the

same sort. The present heaven and earth will be changed but they will be formed into another of the same sort. That is why John called them a *new* heaven and a new earth. This same word is used in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 which speaks of what happens to our bodies at the rapture. We too will be changed but we will not have an entirely different body from before. It will be changed but it will be another of the same sort.

Some theologians teach that we will have a whole new universe without sun and moon. Notice in this light Revelation 21:23. This is to read into this verse more than is actually said. Notice that it says the city has *no need* of the sun or the moon to shine in it. It does not say there is no sun or moon, nor does it say the sun and moon do not shine on it. It says the city has no need of it because it has a light source right within the city. Nowhere does it say that the new earth does not have need of the sun or moon, nor does it say there will be no sun and moon. Isaiah 66:22-23 indicates that the moon will continue in this time period.

So what change does the present heaven undergo? I believe that everything affected and touched by sin will be burned up. I suppose that all the satellites in the sky, any structures made on other planets by sinful man and all areas affected by pollution will be cleansed. I expect that the remade heavens will not be subject to the second law of thermodynamics. That law will be changed. This new system will not be running down.

But there are some things that will remain unchanged. Let us look at those.

b. What is unchanged

1) Time

I have mentioned to you before that contrary to common opinion, it seems that time will always remain. We sing these words in one of our hymns, "When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more." This view comes from one single solitary reference in the Bible (Rev. 10:6). The word used here could

refer to time but it more likely speaks to *delay* as it does in some other references.

It have no doubt that time will be forever. That is what the words *everlasting* or *forever* speaks of. Eternity speaks of time without beginning and without end. Everlasting speaks of time without end. When we think of that our small computers want to crash. If Revelation 10:6 speaks of *delay* instead of *time* then there is no reference in all the Bible that indicates that time will cease. Furthermore, in Revelation 22:2 we find the tree of life bearing fruit every month. There we have a time measurement. A month is a unit of time. So, I conclude that there will be time.

2) Space

It has sometimes been speculated that in eternity we will not have time or space. Some have imagined eternity without time or space. Some have even speculated that a fourth dimension will be added to the existing three that we have. I even have a book titled, *The Seven Dimensions*. The overriding word on these views is "speculation." From my study of Scripture I conclude that eternity will be made up of units of time; seconds, minutes, days, months, years, decades, etc..." I conclude also that there will be space in its three dimensions, length, width and height. Notice in 21:16 that the angel is to measure the city with a reed. The city is 12,000 stadia by 12,000 stadia, by 12,000 stadia. The exact distance meant is not certain because there were various lengths given to the stadia. 12,000 stadia is approximately 1350 miles. Nevertheless this city has length, width and height. That is space.

But what about the new earth? Well, let's take a look at it.

2. The new earth

In the interesting passage from Psalm 102:25-27 quoted in Hebrews 1:10-12 we find that the same change that takes place in the heavens takes place in the earth as well. The earth is changed, not into something entirely different but an earth of the same sort we have. In Revelation 21:5 God says He will make all things new. We are going to look at what will be there in the new earth and what won't be there.

a. Who and what will be there

1) The New Jerusalem

In Revelation 21:1 we are introduced to the new heaven and new earth. In 21:9-11 we find the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven to the new earth. So the New Jerusalem will be on the new earth. The place Jesus said in John 14 that He was going to prepare for believers will be on the new earth. We are going to look at this city in greater detail in a later message. Now we want to see who the inhabitants of the new earth will be.

2) The inhabitants (Personal beings)

a) God

(Read Rev. 21:3) More incredible than anything I know, is the fact that God Almighty Himself will dwell (skeenoo) with man. God Almighty is going to be personally present in the New Jerusalem. It was always my view that when we went to heaven we were going to be with God in heaven forever. Here we learn that ultimately, it is God Almighty who comes to dwell with man forever!

b) Jesus Christ

And so God Almighty will be there. It is not surprising then that the Lord Jesus will be there as well. The section in Revelation that deals with the new heavens and new earth is from Revelation 21:1-22:5. That is a mere 32 verses. And amazingly,

the name Jesus or Christ does not occur one single time. But He is referred to by another title, and that exactly seven times. The title given to Jesus Christ in this section every time is "the Lamb" (21:9, 14, 22, 25, 27; 22:1, 3, read *21:22-23). So God will be there and Jesus Christ will be there. It is not surprising then to us that there will be angels as well.

c) Angels

In Revelation 21:12 we find that the New Jerusalem has 12 gates and each of the twelve gates of the city has an angel attending it. When John is first transported in the spirit to heaven John sees an innumerable host of angels (5:11-12). So we conclude that God Almighty will be there; Jesus Christ will be there, and angels will be there.

d) God's people

Last, God's people will be there. Notice that Revelation 21:3 says that God will dwell with His people. The word people speaks of a group of persons. Then in 21:24 we have identified for us exactly who God's people are (read). All the saved of all ages will be there.

There will be as many kinds of personalities as there are people. It will be a place where the social life reaches its ultimate glory and perfection. Imagine doing things with your best friends. Imagine getting to know people who lived at creation, getting to know people who lived in the tribulation, or in the millennium. It will be glory.

Furthermore, people will have a body and they will have the five senses, touch, taste, smell, hearing and sight. All of those will reach perfection on the the new

earth. The mind will function at full capacity for the Scriptures tell us that knowledge will be like the sand of the sea. The potential of people in the new earth is limitless and unimaginable.

So the New Jerusalem will be on the new earth and God Almighty, Jesus Christ, angels, and saved man will dwell on this new earth. But we want to now look at the government of this new earth, for it will be governed as our closing chapters in Revelation clearly tell us.

CONCL: Well, we began this message by looking at the new heavens and saw that the present heavens were changed, just like our bodies are changed at the rapture. And we said that this new heaven and new earth are not subject to the laws of thermodynamics. And so, though change comes to this present heaven, time and space remain unchanged.

The we began to look at the new earth and who and what will be there. We saw that the New Jerusalem would be there. So the place that Jesus went to prepare for believers as He said in John 14 will be there. God Almighty will be there. Jesus Christ, referred to seven times as the Lamb of God, will be there. Angels will be there and all of saved mankind will be there.

Well, because there will be millions upon millions of people there, it stands to reason that there will be government there as well. That is what we will see in the next message, and more. Until then, may we, by the blessed hope that lies before us, be found faithful in our walk with the Lord.