

# Heaven Came Down!

## Revelation 21:1-2, 9-10

East Berlin Community Church

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### Introduction

- *"There's no place like HOME!"*<sup>^^</sup>
- People of faith have always been looking for their heavenly home
  - Abraham
    - Lived as an alien, a sojourner
      - Hebrews 11:9-- *"By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."*
    - Looking for the "city which has foundations"
      - Hebrews 11:10-- *" he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*
  - Members of the "hall of faith"
    - Hebrews 11:13-16-- *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."*
  - Jesus spoke of this "heavenly city"
    - John 14:1-3-- *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 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. 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."*
  - Believers who die today are enjoying their heavenly home.

## Heaven Came Down!

### A. The Two Visions of the Descent of the Heavenly City

1. **Revelation 21:1-2**-- *"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. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*
  - a. This advent occurs after the creation of the New Heavens and Earth
  - b. This descent is to the surface of the earth
  - c. The city comes fully prepared. No "fixer upper"
  - d. This is where we will live for eternity.
2. **Revelation 21:9-10**-- *"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."*
  - a. This descent is partial. The city is suspended between heaven and earth.
  - b. Differing views: Eternal State or Millennial Kingdom?

## B. The Two Differing Views; Eternal State or Millennial Kingdom

1. **Eternal State:** The suspended city will continue down until it settles on the earth at the beginning of the eternal state.
  - a. **The parallel between the original creation account and the new creation of Revelation 21-22**
    - 1) Genesis 1 records the general account of creation; whereas Genesis 2 elaborates, filling in the details regarding the creation of man and woman.
    - 2) Revelation 21:1-5 records the general account of the new heavens and earth; whereas Revelation 21:9 and following elaborate, filling in the details of the celestial city.
  - b. **Certain characteristics of the city are eternal in character.**
    - 1) The presence of the glory of God.
    - 2) It has no temple.
      - Revelation 21:22-- *"But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple."*
    - 3) No night in the New Jerusalem
      - Revelation 21:25-- *"Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there)."*
    - 4) The throne of God will be in the holy city.
      - Revelation 22:3-- *"And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him."*
    - 5) There will be no more curse.
  - c. **Bottom line:** Since the New Jerusalem of verse 2 and the holy city of verse 10 are one and the same, and since it is related to the new heavens and new earth, they both must represent the city in eternity.
2. **Millennial Kingdom and Eternal State**
  - a. **Two descents:** One at the beginning of the Millennium at which time the New Jerusalem will be suspended over the earth. (Revelation 21:10); and the second descent at the beginning of the Eternal Kingdom at which time the New Jerusalem will settle here on earth.
  - b. **Support for both Millennial Kingdom and Eternal State**
    - 1) **The principle of retrospection in the book of Revelation.**
      - a) The structure of the Book of Revelation
      - b) The presence of "parenthesis"-- supplemental information that contributes to understanding the timeline
      - c) Revelation 21:9-22:5 is another parenthesis, filling in more details regarding the Millennium and the relationship of the New Jerusalem to it.
    - 2) **The participation of the Vial Angel**
      - Revelation 21:9-10-- *"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."*
      - a) John's previous encounter with a Vial angel
        - Revelation 17:1-5-- *"Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was*

*written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."*

- b) In both of these encounters the angel is carrying the seven bowls filled with God's judgment, indicating that he has not yet poured out the judgment on mankind.
  - c) When the angel pours out the seventh bowl, he announces that "it is done".
  - d) The Great Harlot, Babylon, is completely destroyed
    - Revelation 16:19-- *"Great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath."*
  - e) A party breaks out in heaven, revealing that the bride is ready, the marriage has already taken place, and the bride with the groom are ready to be revealed to the world.
    - Revelation 19:1-8-- *"After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."*
  - f) John then witnesses the arrival of the bride of Christ from heaven-- the holy city descending. This occurs at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom
- 3) **There are certain details that do not fit the eternal state**
- a) **The presence of "nations" and "kings of the earth"**
    - Revelation 21:24-- *"And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it."*
    - Revelation 21:26-- *"shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it"*
  - 1) **Various ways to explain away the mention of nations and kings.**
    - (a) Saved nations and kings means only believers-- and the fact that kings will pay homage shows that there is equality in the eternal state. All will worship Christ alike.
    - (b) Mortals will somehow survive the Millennium and go into the eternal state in mortal perfected bodies. They will procreate, fill the earth, form nations with kings over them.
    - (c) God will create a new human race to go along with the new heavens and earth. They will procreate, fill the earth, form nations with kings over them.
  - (2) **All of this is conjecture.** But what we do know is that there will be nations and "kings of the earth" during the Millennial reign of Christ over the earth.
  - b) **The "exclusion" statements**
    - Revelation 21:27-- *"But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."*

- Revelation 22:14-15-- *“Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.”*
- (1) If Revelation 21-22 relates only to the eternal state, then why the exclusion statements. Of course, only born again, saved individuals will enter into the city.
  - (2) And who are the “dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murders, the idolaters, the liars” who are pictured as outside the city with no right to enter?
    - (a) Does not make sense if related to the eternal state.
    - (b) Makes perfect sense if related to the Millennial Kingdom age since children will be born to mortals who will have a sinful nature, and thus all of these sins will be possible.
- C. **Conclusion:** Revelation 21:9 through 22:5 describes the eternal habitation of the resurrected saints during the Millennial Kingdom which will expand into the eternal state.
- 1) **This answers the question as to where we will be and what we will be doing during the Millennial Kingdom and into eternity.**
    - a) **Previous assumption:** We would be here on earth with glorified bodies, and that Jesus Christ would rule here on earth over Israel on a throne set up in the Millennial temple.
    - b) **However, the evidence has revealed that...**
      - (1) Jesus Christ will rule from heaven as the King of kings and Lord of lords, and that a “prince” who He assigns will rule on the throne in the earthly Jerusalem over Israel.
      - (2) We can rule and reign with Him from our heavenly home, the New Jerusalem.
      - (3) We will be enjoying all the blessings and glories of heaven in our glorified bodies during the Kingdom age. No pain, no sorrow, now death, rejoicing in the presence of the Lord!
      - (4) Like on a “cruise ship”, all of our needs will be met in heaven! We will not want to leave. We might be able to visit the earth during the Kingdom age, but we will return to our heavenly home where we will live forever and ever!
  - 2) **This also answers the question as to where we will be at the end of the Millennium when God destroys the present heavens and earth with fire.** We will be safe in the “New Jerusalem”, the Holy City.