

Session 10

JESUS MAKES ALL THINGS NEW

Revelation 21:1-27

Memory Verse

Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God.

– REVELATION 21:3, CSB



Jesus Makes All Things New

THEOLOGICAL THEME: In eternity, God will redeem everything, making all things new.

CALL TO ACTION: We are to live today in the promised reality of the new heaven and earth.

Over 20 years ago, the costliest storm on record to ever hit the United States, striking the southeast, was Hurricane Katrina. It caused around \$161 billion in damage. The flooding was catastrophic. Over 1,800 people died. Entire communities were decimated. The destruction was widespread and tragic.

In New Orleans, multiple levees were overwhelmed and ultimately failed, leaving 80% of the city underwater. Mississippi's entire shoreline (which spans 70 miles) was hit by Katrina's three-story-high storm surge, destroying bridges, roads, homes, and businesses. The devastation stretched all the way to Alabama. In Dauphin Island (a small barrier island in Alabama), over 300 homes were destroyed, and in some cases, parts of the island where homes stood were washed away completely. The situation was bleak.

But in the midst of the storm, people stood together. There were many beautiful stories of humanity joining together for the good of the community. People loved their neighbors in significant ways, helping clear debris and pick up the shattered pieces of people's lives. Churches mobilized to participate in the recovery effort, acting as the hands and feet of Jesus.¹

So many areas had to be literally made new. And today, over 20 years later, many impacted communities are thriving. Some may be even stronger than before after living through the pain.

Despite Jesus's victory over sin and death, we still live through devastating storms because we still live in the devastating reality of a fallen world that is marked by sin.

But God has promised His people a new beginning that will surpass the greatest stories told on earth. This is the final word of Revelation. God is going to make all things new. And it is going to be good.

? Have you ever had to rebuild after some type of destruction—whether literal or metaphorical?

? What happened, and how did God work through that situation?

Session Summary

Today's passage picks up after the final eternal defeat of evil. Jesus wins. Those who don't believe in Jesus will be thrown into the lake of fire, spending an eternity apart from God, but there is eternal beauty in store for all believers.

God will make everything new. He will redeem all of creation. Our world, marked by sin, will get a divine new start, and the results will be wondrous. There will be no more death, grief, or pain. We will be eternally secure and safe. And the real prize of eternity is that we'll be face-to-face with God and His incredible goodness for eternity.

1. All Things New (Revelation 21:1-8)

? How is the new creation described in this passage?

? What is the relationship between God and humanity in these verses? Why is this significant?

Last week, we talked about Jesus's certain final victory. At this point in Revelation, we pick up after the enemy has been eternally defeated, and now, God is making everything new. He is doing just what He promised through the prophet Isaiah:

*“For I will create new heavens and a new earth;
the past events will not be remembered or come to mind.
Then be glad and rejoice forever
in what I am creating;
for I will create Jerusalem to be a joy
and its people to be a delight.”*
Isaiah 65:17-18

In Revelation 21, John saw “a new heaven and a new earth” (v. 1), which we deeply need. Think of all the ways sin has polluted our world. We can and should slow down the decline and fight for what is right, but our power here is limited. God has no such limitations. The broken world that exists now will pass away, and God will redeem it. He will make all things new in the way only He can.

Think of the most beautiful thing you have ever seen in God's creation. Can you picture it? Now imagine what will be in store for us in the new, redeemed creation. Think how much better that sight will be. It is hard to wrap your head around! The church father Augustine of Hippo said:

“If these are the beauties afforded to sinful men, what does God have in store for those who love him?”²

John mentioned the sea in verse 1. In ancient times, the expanse of the sea was largely unexplored. It was a mysterious and scary thing. In Scripture, the sea often represents chaos and wickedness, so there is a good chance the description of the sea as being “no more” represents wickedness and chaos being no more and is not a literal description (we won't know for sure this side of heaven).³

The New Jerusalem is depicted as “coming down out of heaven” (v. 2), and “God's dwelling is with humanity” (v. 3). In eternity, we get to live with God! This is the prize of heaven. And God “will wipe away every tear” (v. 4). Death will be finished. Grief? Gone. Pain? It will have passed away. The old, broken, sinful order and everything that comes with it will be gone. What a wondrous future waits for us.

It's no wonder the apostle Paul said:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.

—Romans 8:18

As believers, we are spiritually made new (2 Corinthians 5:17), but in the end, God says, “I am making everything new” (Revelation 21:5). The Alpha and Omega will come through on all His promises.⁴ Unbelievers are destined for the second death in the lake of fire (v. 8), but believers are headed for eternal life with God, where living water flows freely (v. 6). This gives us cause for rejoicing and an urgency to share about Jesus.



What is the thing you most long for God to make new in your life or the world?

2. The New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:9-21)



How did John describe the new Jerusalem?



What might be significant about the materials described and the numbers used in this description?

In this passage, one of the angels who had participated in the bowl judgments carried John in the Spirit to a great mountain from which he could view the wonder of what God was doing.

John described what he saw as shining with God's glory (v. 11), brilliant like precious jewels. There were gates of pearls and streets of gold. Scholars aren't agreed on whether this description is literal or symbolic. Either way, the reality of this city will surpass our greatest imaginations.

The number twelve is repeated several times in this passage. Twelve is a significant number for God's people. God chose a family through which to bless the nations, and from it came the twelve tribes of Israel. Their names were written on the gates in John's vision. Jesus chose twelve disciples. John also saw their names on the foundations of this great city.

Since ancient times, people who fund building projects have often put their names on what has been built. In this heavenly city, God uses the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles to lay the foundation for what He is building.⁵

There are also gates on all sides. People from all directions are welcome here. The gospel is for everyone who receives the gift of salvation offered through Christ.

As the apostle Peter spoke in Acts: "Now I truly understand that God doesn't show favoritism, but in every nation the person who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35).

? Who is God calling you to share Christ with, that they might gain access to the New Jerusalem?

The city is shaped like a cube, resembling the holy of holies in the temple (1 Kings 6:20). Access to this space was carefully controlled; not just anyone could enter. Only the high priest, once a year, could enter the holy of holies. When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain that separated this space from the rest of the temple was torn in two (Mark 15:38), and now all believers have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of them. In eternity, God will dwell everywhere with His people, in every space.

3. No Need for a Temple (Revelation 21:22-27)

? What was John's point in making clear that there is no longer a need for an earthly temple in this new city?

? Consider the description of light in these verses. How have we seen light used by God throughout Scripture, and why is it significant here?

Our passage concludes with a further awesome description of this eternal reality.

There is no physical temple in this city because God will be with us. The whole world will be His dwelling, so there will no longer be a need for an earthly temple. According to the NIV Application Commentary, “Believers will experience God’s presence in its full intensity, as never before.”⁶

We won’t even need the sun or the moon because the light of God’s glory will continually shine, and the Lamb will be our lamp (v. 23). In Scripture, darkness is often associated with sin and life apart from God, but in this new reality, there will be no night as we rely exclusively on God’s continual light.



Where do you need God’s light in your life now? How does the coming of God’s eternal light encourage you in living today?

In ancient cities, gates provided critical security. The gates would close at night for protection. In the new city of God, evil and sin have been defeated for good. No threat remains to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). No unclean thing will ever enter. There will be nothing “detestable or false” (v. 27). Those written in the Lamb’s book of life will be safe and secure with God forever.

Conclusion

We live in a broken world, full of tears, sin, gut-wrenching death, and unimaginable pain (emotional and physical). This is our current reality. Believers have been made new in a spiritual sense, but there will come a day when God will make all things new.

We will dwell with Him, in His new creation, for eternity, and we will live with Him and enjoy His goodness forever. This reality will be free of pain, death, and grief. There will be no more tears, and the “previous things” will pass away. We will rest, reign forever with Him (Revelation 22:5), and enjoy purposeful work.⁷ We don’t know exactly what this will look like, but we can be sure it will be good. We can look forward to it with joy and hope in our hearts.

For now, we should be motivated to share the gospel with as many people as possible, so that more will experience this glorious coming reality. As John recorded near the end of this book:

Both the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let anyone who hears, say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely. —
Revelation 22:17



How does this description of our eternal home differ from your past understanding or expectations? Does anything here surprise you?



How does this give us hope for the future? How can we encourage one another in this hope?



How should what we have learned in Revelation impact how we live our lives today?

Memorize

Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God.

- Revelation 21:3, CSB

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- ⁴Christopher A. Beetham and Nancy L. Erickson, eds., *The NIV Application Commentary on the Bible*, One-Volume Edition, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2024), 1322.
- ⁵*Ibid.*
- ⁶*Ibid.*
- ⁷Mark Ward, “Heaven,” in *Lexham Survey of Theology*, ed. Mark Ward et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018).