

Revelation Bible Study

Remember, Revelation is a book of comfort to the Christian!!

Chapters 20:11-22:21

Conclusion

At this time view the picture labeled Conclusion 20:11-22:21. It provides us with visions of heaven.

The Dead are Judged

20:11-15

(Notes to help understanding)

20:11 white throne...seated on it. In the inaugural vision of heaven (4:1–5:14) which introduced the prophetic message of Revelation, John had seen this “throne” and “One sitting” on it (4:2). Here in 20:11 the throne is described as “large” and “white.” In 4:2 the throne of God and his presence upon it are the *central and dominant* feature; around the throne are the twenty-four thrones of the elders (4:4) and the four winged creatures (4:6–7). Here in 20:11 the throne of God and his presence on it are the *only* feature, for now God on his throne is the supreme judge before whom the entire human race stands. Perhaps for this reason John notes the *large size* of the throne, for it alone is present, and the “throne and the One sitting on it” occupy and fill the entire scene. (CC)

20:12 great and small. This presupposes a bodily resurrection of all people, including those who rejected Christ. 1Th 4:13–18. (TLSB)

20:12 book of life. The idea of a “book of life” in which God records the names of all the people who have saving faith and who belong to him reaches back into the OT.

20:12 judged according to what they had done. The righteous do not earn salvation by their works, but their good works were recorded so that they might now be rewarded by the One who was at work in the saints (Php 1:6; 1Th 2:13), causing them to produce good fruit. (TLSB)

20:14 lake of fire. Finally, at the End in the judgment of God “death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire” (20:14). Already in 19:20 the beast and the false prophet (the harlot) were cast into the lake of fire. The devil (the mastermind behind them) was thrown there too in 20:10. Now here in Rev 20:14 John sees “death and the grave” join them.

Summary of 20:11-15

The church has finished her mission. The *demonic* enemies who persecuted her have been banished to hell. She has been adorned as the bride of Christ (19:6–8). Now the moment has arrived for the last and final judgment of the *human race*. (CC p. 581)

(Meditation/Discussion)

1. What lessons did you learn from this section? How will they impact your life?
2. What comfort can you take from this section?
3. What is a favorite verse in this section?

The New Jerusalem

21:1-27

(Notes to help understanding)

21:1 New Heaven, Earth. God's promise of a new heaven and a new earth is found in 2 Peter 3:10-13, where the apostle reminds his hearers that the present heaven will pass away with a loud crash, and the elements will burn and be destroyed, and the earth will be laid bare. Christ during his earthly ministry asserted that the present heaven and earth will pass away. Though he did not describe the new heaven and earth, he did refer to the transcendent quality of the life to come (Luke 20:34-36) which will be in paradise (Luke 23:43). (CC)

21:1 No...Sea. To ancient people the sea held a terror especially when its boiling waves threatened and often destroyed human life (e.g, Ps 107:23-30). In the early stage of creations the waters were associated with the darkness and the primeval formlessness and chaos (Gen. 1:2). The sea is the home to the evil serpent (Amos 9:3), Leviathan. In the earthly ministry of Jesus too, the sea was a threat to the apostles, a threat which Jesus conquered (e.g., Mt. 8:24-27; 14:24-33). The sea is the primeval ocean, symbol of chaos; its disappearance is assurance of God's total victory. The absence of the sea from the new heaven and earth in the context of 21:1-8 suggests not the absence of water in the geo-physically renewed earth, but an absence of any fear of water and terror that the sea evoked, especially the absence of any painful reminder that God's saints had once been separated from him. (CC)

21:3 Dwelling of God. When the new heaven and earth will actually be created, no visual tabernacle will be present. Its presence will not be necessary, for God's actual and personal presence among his people, which was represented by the tabernacles in the OT and which the tabernacle represents here in John's vision of the new heaven and earth, will have become a permanent reality.

21:4 Wipe every Tear. No longer will weeping characterize the condition of God's people as in the present life of tribulation. The awareness of sin against God and its attending sufferings is a major cause of tears in the condition of repentance (Is. 22:12; Joel 2:12; Mk 14:72), and such tears flow openly in the face of death. But in the new heaven and earth all sin and its guilt are forever gone, and the last enemy, death has been destroyed.

21:5 Trustworthy & True. These words of God are certain and cannot be negated. They will be fulfilled, for God is ever faithful to his Word.

21:10 Mountain Great & High. This was the best vantage point to see such greatness. In Scripture, mountains are often the location of great revelations (Sinai/Horeb, Moriah/Zion, Sermon on the Mount and the Transfiguration).

21:11 Glory of the Lord. This is glory that brings about great dignity, honor, praise and worship. This is not reflected light like that of the moon but it is the light of the sun itself. The glory of the

Lord is also shown in Exodus 40:34 when the Lord filled the tabernacle in the wilderness and in 1 Kings 8:11 when the ark is brought into Solomon's temple. It is a very special way that shows his people that he keeps his promises.

21:11 Jasper...Crystal. Jasper is a rare gem which is green in color, but lustrous as crystal. These are the most precious of stones and yet they cannot compare to the glory of the Lord.

21:12 High Wall. Usually a wall around a city was for protection and defense. Such physical protection would not be necessary for the bride of Christ in the new heaven and earth because all her enemies will have been vanquished. It suggests that in the new heaven and earth God's people will forever be under God's gracious protection so that never again will they suffer attacks or be afflicted. Moreover, they will never be tempted by evil or fall into sin and death.

21:15 Measure the City. In Revelation 11 the measuring was to ensure protection; here it serves to show the size and symmetry of the eternal dwelling place of the faithful.

21:16 Length, Wide, High. Thus a perfect cube, as was the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle and the temple.

21:19 Every...Precious Stone. This suggests that the holy city glows with and reflects the very glory of God himself, and so she reminds John of God's splendid and glorious presence in the city.

21:21 Pure Gold. Gold indicates that the city and its main street convey the supreme royalty of God's glory.

21:24 Nations walk by its Light. In eschatological terms, John here sees the consummation and final fulfillment of the prophecy in Is 60:1-6 concerning the nations and kings who will see the glory of Yahweh coming to His people, a preview and type of this ultimate fulfillment occurred in the journey of the Magi from the east to worship the Christ Child.

21:25 No Night. Night here represents the spiritual darkness of sin and evil.

21:26 Glory & Honor of Nations. This represents all that they did for the Lamb while they were here on the old earth, for which they receive reward in the Eternal City.

21:27 Lamb's book of life. Only the elect, whose names are written in the book of life, are saved.

Summary of Chapter 21

John is now prepared to see *beyond* the end of the first world to the creation of "a new heaven and a new earth." The "Holy City" combines elements of Jerusalem, the tabernacle, the temple and the Garden of Eden.

(Meditation/Discussion)

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3. What is a favorite verse in this section?

The River of Life

22:1-6

(Notes to help understanding)

22:1 River of Life. This is so pure that it is “clear as crystal.” In the Garden of Eden a river flowed which watered Eden and then became the source of four rivers which watered different regions of the earth. This river can best be understood as a symbol of that life which God alone can grant and sustain.

22:1 Tree of Life. Rev. 22:1-5 does not use the designation “the Garden of Eden.” Nevertheless, the description in these verses calls to mind, especially the mention of “the tree of life.” The Hebrew word for “Eden” means “luxury, delight, pleasure.” The proper name of “Eden” seems, then to imply that it was a garden which was rich and luxurious in its vegetation and contained every delightful pleasure of life in communion with God (Gen. 2:9-10).

22:3 Throne of God. For the first time John sees the Lamb with the Father. In the first Eden, before the fall, God dwelt with people. Now in the second Eden the triune God will dwell with his people.

22:4 See His Face. In ancient times criminals were banished from the presence of the king (Esther 7:8; cf. 2Sa 14:24). One blessing of eternity will be to see the Lord face to face (cf. 1Co 13:12).

22:6 Trustworthy & True. These words may be applied to the whole Scripture.

Summary of 22:1-6

In these verses John sees another depiction of the new heaven and earth, this time reminiscent of the Garden of Eden. Though Eden itself is not explicitly mentioned, “the river of the water of life” (22:1) and especially “the tree of life” (22:2) are obvious allusions to the primeval paradise. CC p. 623)

(Meditation/Discussion)

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3. What is a favorite verse in this section?

Jesus is Coming

22:7-21

(Notes to help understanding)

22:12 Coming Soon. This passage underlines the extreme urgency of the church’s mission to proclaim the Gospel and to persevere in the righteousness and holiness that are hers by grace.

22:12 My Reward. It is the reward which Christ himself earned, and which he freely gives to all believers by grace. The reward itself is the gift of eternal life in God's holy presence, earned for God's people by the death and resurrection of the Lamb of God.

22:13 Alpha & Omega. This title is the most comprehensive, for it dominates and embraces the other two. It refers to the magnitude of the eternal presence of God far above and beyond all creation.

22:13 First & Last. This title is applied only to Jesus. He alone bears this title because he died and rose again to rescue God's people in order to bring them back to life. The incarnation, death, and resurrection are predicted only of God the Son, Jesus Christ.

22:13 Beginning & End. He who is "the Alpha and the Omega" above and beyond all creation is now also "the Beginning and the End" of all that he created. And because he is "the Beginning and the End" of all creation, he will make it new and restore it to its original condition.

22:16 I, Jesus. This is the only time in the entire NT that the Lord used His personal name to identify Himself. Jesus personally authenticates the prophetic message.

22:17 Come! The message of Jesus in 22:1-6 "rouses in all Christians the desire, never long dormant, for His return." As the church calls out for her Lord to come, she also cries out to all people of the world to come and drink of the waters of salvation freely, by grace (Is. 55:1).

22:18-19 Adds...Subtracts. The warning that Jesus gives here, while directly applying to the book of Revelation, should also be applied by inference to the entire Bible, since Revelation is the climax and conclusion to the entire canon. Moses in Deut 4:2 told the Israelites not to add or subtract from the commands of God (cf. Deut 12:32; Prov 30:6; Jer 26:2).

22:20 Come, Lord Jesus. This is also to be the prayer of every Christian individually, and of all Christians collectively, for it is the prayer of Christ's bride, the church.

Summary of 22:7-21

Rev 22:6–21 is the epilogue of this prophetic work of John. The epilogue serves not only as a farewell, but also as an affirming "amen" to the certainty that this prophetic message of Revelation is the last word from the Lord of the church until he comes. The epilogue declares the absolute authenticity of this work of John and the urgency for it to be heeded immediately by the church, "for the time is near" (22:10). (CC p. 639)

(Meditation/Discussion)

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