

Revelation 21:1-8 | The New Beginning

There are some parts of Scripture that need no sermon at all

- And are, perhaps, better off without one
- There are some things we read in Scripture that are simultaneously crystal clear and yet beyond our comprehension
- This is such a passage
- Last week, we learned about The End – this, is the New Beginning **(Read Revelation 21:1-8)**

We come to the end of the Bible... the end of the story... really, the New Beginning

If we compare it to the first beginning (Genesis) we see clearly the ways in which it is really the new beginning

- Genesis tells us God created heaven and earth
 - Revelation tells us of the new heaven and the new earth brought about by God
- In Genesis the luminaries are called into being: the sun, moon and the stars
 - In Revelation we are told, "**And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb**" (21:23)
- Genesis reveals the cunning power and deceit of the devil and the destruction he works
 - Revelation tells us the devil will be bound and hurled into the lake of fire
- In Genesis humanity rebelled and was driven from the garden and an angel was stationed to guard the way to the tree of life so that humanity could not partake of it
 - In Revelation humanity is redeemed and beckoned inside the gates having had his and her "**right to the tree of life**" restored (22:14)
- Genesis shows us a paradise lost
 - Revelation shows us paradise regained
- Genesis pictures the sadness of humanity running and hiding from the presence God in rebellion and shame
 - Revelation shows us the beautiful communion of humanity reunited with the presence of God: "**Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them. And they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them.**" (21:3)

God will be with us – the joining of heaven and earth – the end of separation (= **Eternity**)

Remember what has happened to bring us to this point:

- The beast and the false prophet have been defeated
- Babylon and the harlot have been destroyed
- The Dragon (Devil) and Death have been vanquished forever
- Sin and evil have been fully and finally judged
- **The first things have passed away** (21:4)

Now, all the cumulative affects of evil & sin, death & the devil, the harlot and Babylon, the false prophet & the beast are permanently done away with

Every stain of sin, every scar of wrong, every trace of death has been removed

- By judgment—being put in the proper place
 - "**The first things have passed away**" (end of v. 4)
- **2 Peter 3:10 & 13, NASB**
- Out of the **fires of judgment** there has emerged—for those who have overcome—newness
 - "**Behold, I am making all things new**" (beginning of v. 5)
 - Students differ as to whether:
 - Its **new** in the sense of having **no continuity** with the present world
 - Or **new** in the sense of the present world being **rejuvenated** (renewed)

This work of a new beginning is an ancient promise made to God's people Israel

- **Isaiah 65:17-19**, NLT

Others have been brought into these promises (The Church) and will share in them

- **1 Peter 1:3-9**, NLT

This (**Rev 21**) is that **inheritance** --- the final reward and experience of trusting Jesus

- See **verse 7**
 - He who **overcomes** shall inherit these things...
- **1 John 5:1-5**, NASB
 - By faith in **Jesus** (contrast **v. 8**)

The joyous promise of the text is the eternal and full experience of:

- God's presence (**v. 3**) Cov. Lang. (dwelling = biggest part) (Garden; tab; temple; incarn)
- God's comfort (**v. 4a**) Caring Intimacy
- God's intent (**v. 4b**) Imagine!?!
- God's provision (**v. 6**) True Satisfaction

Psalms 16:11, NASB

We achingly long for this time (Cf. **Rom 8**)

- We are homesick for Eden. We're nostalgic for what is implanted in our hearts. It's built into us... We long for what the first man and woman once enjoyed—a **perfect beautiful Earth with free and untainted relationships with God, each other, animals and our environment**. Every attempt at human progress has been an attempt to overcome what was lost in the Fall. –Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*¹

What we see in **Rev. 21** is The Ideal (better than **Eden**)... but we must not relegate it to only the future... we do not only wait for it and hope or it, we **pursue it and live it now**

- This **redeeming grace** and **transforming power** of God is also at work now
- "**Behold, I am making all things new**" (beginning of **v. 5**) – **Present Tense**
 - **2 Corinthians 3:18**, NIV
 - **2 Corinthians 5:17**, NASB
 - **2 Corinthians 4:16**, NIV

The **redeemed universe of the future** is foreshadowed by the **redeemed people of the present**

- **2 Corinthians 6:16b-7:1**, NASB
- **2 Peter 3:11-14**, NIV

And, God's presence is with us now

- Unseen and by faith
 - There is coming a day when our faith will become sight

¹ Alcorn, *Heaven*, 77.