

HEAVEN

Lesson 3 w/Answers

Grasping Redemption's Far Reach

In this our next lesson in our study of heaven, we examine some of the topics discussed in Section 3 of Randy Alcorn's book. This section covers Chapters 8 - 10 of his book and is entitled "Grasping Redemption's Far Reach".

Looking at the New Earth being prepared for us as our final home with God, our "heaven on earth" if you will, we will get a glimpse of the eternal home that awaits us at the end of this age when the present heaven and earth are completely destroyed and a new heaven and a new earth come down from God as he restores his creation.

God's plan from eternity past has always been to restore His creation to its original intent, without sin, and enabling mankind to have eternal fellowship with God. Let's look at this plan in more detail and see what God's Holy Word specifically says about this New Earth.

Read the scripture passages below and consider the following questions:

1. Read Revelation Chapters 21 and 22; then read Hebrews 11:10, 11:16, 13:14 and John 14:2. What insight does each of these passages provide us about our home on the New Earth mentioned in Revelation?
 - a. Hebrews 11:10
 - i. ANSWER: "For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God."
 - b. Hebrews 11:16
 - i. ANSWER: "Instead, they were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them."
 - c. Hebrews 13:14
 - i. ANSWER: "For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come."
 - d. John 14:2
 - i. ANSWER: "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you."
2. Just as God planted a garden in Eden, He will plant a garden down the center of the new city of Jerusalem. What tree from the Garden of Eden will he plant in the new garden, in the new city, in the new heaven? (see Genesis 2:8-9 and Revelation 22:2)
 - a. ANSWER: As with God's original creation he will place the "Tree of Life" in the garden of the new city of Jerusalem.
3. We encountered the concepts of "the new city" and "the new heaven and earth" in our review of Revelation Chapters 21 and 22. Are these terms mentioned anywhere else in the Bible, or only in the book of Revelation? (see Isaiah 65:17, 66:22, and 2 Peter 3:13)
 - a. Isaiah 65:17
 - i. ANSWER: "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind."
 - b. Isaiah 66:22
 - i. ANSWER: "'As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,' declares the LORD, 'so will your name and descendants endure.'"
 - c. 2 Peter 3:13
 - i. ANSWER: "But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness."

4. Look again at Isaiah 65:17. What does God say will happen to things in the past when we enter this new heaven and new earth?
 - a. ANSWER: He says that the old things, the former things, the past things will be forgotten and never thought of again - our sins, our mistakes, our shortcomings - all of it gone for good, for eternity!
5. When will there be no more death, crying or pain? When we leave this earth and go to "heaven"? (see Revelation 21:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 15:22-25)

SUMMARY ANSWER: No; not when we leave this earth and go to the present heaven. In fact, we know from studying the events around God's throne that just before the return of Christ, there is sadness in heaven as those slain for their witness about Christ cry out for justice and are clearly aware of their own deaths and martyrdom of many other innocent people. It is only after the final judgment that death and pain and tears are gone forever; and then the new heaven and new earth come down from God. That is when there is no more pain and no tears, just joy.

- a. Revelation 21:1-4
 - i. ANSWER: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'"
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:22-25
 - i. ANSWER: "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet."
6. Read Isaiah Chapter 60 and note what God is telling his chosen people about the new heaven, new earth, and the new city of Jerusalem. How closely does this parallel Revelation Chapter 21 and 22 and God's desire to restore both His creation and His chosen people?
 - a. ANSWER: Clearly God's description of the new heaven, the new earth and the new city of Jerusalem has his chosen people as the center focus. His restoration of his creation and the keeping of his promise to Abraham, Isaac and Joseph are central in this passage. God is not simply bringing about a new creation - he is restoring his original one, complete with animals, vegetation, dwellings, a city and people, all with a purpose. Our eternal hope is in Christ, and our eternal home will be just that: a new physical dwelling place where we will live among God's restored creation, where we will walk, and even talk, with Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit in perfect unity. What a day of rejoicing that will be!

So we see that God's desire is to completely restore his entire creation. Our eternal destination is a real physical place called the new heaven and the new earth, where we will live in the new city Jerusalem. We will exist in resurrected bodies, eat food, and live in new homes created especially for us. God will walk with us and we will have contact with Him, His son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit as we live out in eternity God's plan for us. What excitement, what a hope, to know that God has a plan for each of us that runs through eternity! What a joy to know that, as created beings, God will restore us to his original intent! He will provide us a purpose and a relationship unlike anything that we have ever experienced on this earth.

Rejoice with me today as we consider this eternal hope, this new heaven and new earth that God is creating for us through his son Jesus. And while we're at it, let's pray today that God will lead others to accept the gift of Christ so that they may also enter in to this great eternal destination.

Have a great week everyone, and thanks for studying with us.

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