When Eternity Begins: The New Heaven and the New Earth
Revelation 21:1–8

There are three kingdoms of God: the Church of Jesus Christ is referred to as a kingdom where God the Father “has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Colossians 1:13); when Christ comes a second time He sets up an earthly kingdom known as the Millennium where He will rule and reign over this earth from Mount Zion in Jerusalem for one thousand years (Revelation 20:1–6); once the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth is finished, Christ’s eternal reign begins with a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away, and the holy city, the New Jerusalem, comes down out of heaven and rests on the new earth; there is an earthly kingdom and a heavenly kingdom and one immediately follows the other. In our last talk, we spoke of the earthly kingdom, the Millennial reign of Christ from Mount Zion in Jerusalem; in today’s talk we will speak of His eternal, heavenly kingdom of a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1–8).

In the eternal kingdom:

The Properties of the Universe Will Change (21:1)

“The designing of a new heaven and a new earth...” “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth...” There are two words in the Greek language translated “new”; there is neos, meaning new in time; there is kainos, meaning new in quality, that which is far better than the old; the word that is used in our text is kainos, meaning new in quality.

I own a 1957 Chevy and a 1957 Thunderbird; they are wonderful classic automobiles; I also drive a 2016 Lexus; if I were to say the Lexus is new in comparison to the classic cars I would use the word neos, new in terms of time,
as it is a much later model; if I were to say the Lexus is new in that it has features, comfort, and rideability that were unknown when my classics were built, I would use the word *kainos*; my classics are every bit as much a car as is the Lexus, but the quality of the Lexus in every way is vastly superior to my classics.

We live in this old world and marvel at the beauty of its creation, but there is coming a new heaven and a new earth that will be vastly superior in every way to the old one.

*The destruction of the old order...* “...for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.” God destroyed this world the first time by a flood; he will destroy it a second time by fire. Peter writes, “But the present heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men... But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?” (2 Peter 3:7, 10–11).

Then Peter writes, “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new (*kainos*) heavens and a new (*kainos*) earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13). Peter is telling us the very thing that John is teaching us in Revelation 21; God is going to destroy this present creation and totally recreate it. Peter says in verse 7 that the present earth is preserved by the Word of God and by His Word it will be destroyed and recreated!

*The disappearance of the sea...* “Also there was no more sea.” While “sea” in Revelation represents Gentile nations, such as in the seven-headed beast coming out of the sea whom we identified as the Antichrist (Revelation 13:1) for, John wrote, “the waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” (Revelation 17:3).

However, in our text, we believe the “sea” refers to great bodies of water; our planet is 70% covered by oceans with an average depth of 2.3 miles; ocean and seawater have antiseptic saleni which purges, cleanses, and preserves our planet. However, in the new world to come, sea and ocean water is not necessary
to purify and preserve this new world; this allows for more population than has ever been on the earth at one time.

I am sorry if I have disappointed you, but in heaven, you will not have a hilltop mansion overlooking the ocean, and for those of you who like to go ocean fishing, it will not happen on this new earth; however, there is the river of the water of life that proceeds from the throne of God; maybe that is filled with fish (Revelation 22:1).

In the eternal kingdom:

**The Presence of the New City Will Appear (21:2)**

*The character of the city*... “Then, I John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem...” It is a “holy city”; no sin will be found there; just think: no crime, no rape, no murder, no thievery, no violence of any kind; no need for policemen, or for jails or penitentiaries; no homelessness, no destructive gang warfare, no swearing, no blaspheming God’s name.

*The contrast to the earthly Jerusalem*... “New Jerusalem...” It is a new (*kainos*) Jerusalem; it is a city of unmeasurable quality beyond present Jerusalem, or for that matter, beyond any city that has ever existed; we will describe the unmatchable beauty of this city in our next lesson.

This city already exists; it is the capital of heaven and the place where God dwells among His people; this is what Jesus referred to when He said, “In My Father’s house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there you may be also” (John 14:2–3); dwelling in that city today are all the beloved saints who have gone on before us; they are with the Lord right now and that day will come when we will join them. Amen!

*The coming of that city to the new earth*... “...coming down out of heaven from God...” The New Jerusalem is currently in heaven where God dwells; however, once this present universe is destroyed, and the new heavens and earth are created, the New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven and rest on the new earth.

*The comparison of that city*... “...prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” It is going to be a beautiful city. Every bride wants to look her very best for her
wedding day. From a woman’s standpoint, it is the most important day of her life; she will go to a lot of expense and time to choose the right wedding dress; to have her nails and toes manicured and polished as well as having her hair looking just right; for the wedding night she will have selected something beautiful and sexy from Victoria’s Secret; everything has to be perfect and beautiful; so it is with God when He presents to His church the holy city, the New Jerusalem.

Jews throughout the ages had visions from God for a rebuilt and recreated Jerusalem (see Isaiah 60:11–22; Ezekiel 40–48); even writers between the Testaments had their dreams for a new Jerusalem; in the apocryphal book of Tobit we read, “And the gates of Jerusalem shall be builded with sapphire and emerald, and all thy walls with precious stones. The towers of Jerusalem shall be builded with gold, and their battlements with pure gold. The streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with carbuncle and stones of Ophir, and the gates of Jerusalem shall utter hymns of gladness, and all her houses shall say, Hallelujah!”

When we arrive in this New Jerusalem, either by death or by rapture, we will be awestruck by its beauty, for it will be “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

In the eternal kingdom:

The Purpose of God Will be Fulfilled (21:3)

*The presence of God is with men...* “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them.” In the holy city God is going to take up permanent residence; He is going to make His tabernacle with men; the word translated “tabernacle” is *skene*; it is the word for tent, which is a temporary dwelling place; but not so of this tabernacle, for life in heaven will be nothing other than a permanent life with God.

This word *skene* has another word that has no connection to it except in sound and that is the word *shekinah*; it means the glory of God; the Jews would connect these words not only based on how they sounded when spoken, but on their meanings; when they heard one word they would automatically think of the other word; to say the *skene* of God is for Him to dwell with men, that instantly brought the thought of the *shekinah* of God which is to experience His glory; to be in His presence is to experience His glory!
The people shall be His people and He shall be their God... “And they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.” God’s promise to make Israel His people is a truth that runs throughout the OT; In Leviticus we read, “I will set My tabernacle among you... and I will walk among you, and will be your God and you shall be My people” (Leviticus 26:11–12); Jeremiah wrote of the new covenant, that is, those of us in Christ: “And I will be their God and they will be My people” (Jeremiah 31:33); the highest promise of all is that we belong to God and we can have intimate fellowship with Him; in Song of Solomon 6:3 we read, “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.” While this speaks of Solomon and his relationship with his bride, it can also speak of the love of Christ, the Bridegroom for His Bride, the Church!

In the eternal kingdom:

The Past Will be Removed (21:4)

Seen in the wiping of tears... “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes...” When John was caught up into heaven in the Spirit he beheld the throne of God and the One who sat on that throne; he also saw a seven-sealed scroll in the hand of God; an angel proclaims with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” And no one in heaven or earth was worthy; then John writes: “So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it” (Revelation 5:1–4); John is weeping in heaven, and yet our text says “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes”; no more crying. How is it that John wept?

John visited heaven before eternity begins, before the creation of the new heaven and the new earth, before the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven; once eternity begins there will never be a tear that is shed; there will be nothing lacking, nothing wrong, nothing to cry about; it will be a perfect environment.

Seen in the wonders of a new life... “...there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

When we read these lines we can all the more understand why there will be no tears in heaven; there will be no more death, no more sorrow, no more pain, for the things of this world that have caused people heartbreak and misery are no more! The former things have passed away!
Stop and think about this: death is gone; the greatest of mortal curses is gone; death is swallowed up in victory—praise God for that! All sorrow is gone; no more grief, no more distress, no more depression or reason to be stressed out! No more pain, no more aching backs, no more arthritic joints, no more toothaches, or headaches, no more doctor visits, no more time spent in the hospital!

John MacArthur in his study on Revelation gives us a further list of negatives that are positives: “No more prayer, no fasting, no repentance, no confession of sin, no weeping, no watchfulness, no concern, no anxiety, no teaching, no preaching, no learning, no evangelism, no witnessing.” Then he gives us a list of the positives: “perfect pleasure, perfect knowledge, perfect comfort, perfect love. That's heaven.”

Praise God we can start over again in a whole new environment where Satan and sin can no longer demoralize us!

In the eternal kingdom:

The Promises of God Will be Realized (21:5–7)

*Based on God’s ability to create all things new...* “Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold I make all things new.'” (21:5a). This is the first time in Revelation where God speaks; He promises to make all things new; this was the dream of the prophets. Isaiah heard God say, “Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing” (Isaiah 43:18–19a); in what way are all things new? This creation is corruptible; the one to come is incorruptible; it will be an entirely new creation in which time and sin cannot destroy, for neither of them will exist.

*Based on the accuracy of God’s Word...* “And He said to me, 'Write for these words are true and faithful.'” (21:5b). As John hears these words he is told to keep on writing; don’t miss a word or a single thought; when God speaks His words are true and He is faithful to fulfill all that He says; when Christ returns in His second coming He is called “ Faithful and True” (Revelation 19:11).

*Based on His authority to do it...* “And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End...’” (21:6a). When God said, “It is done” it is very much like the words of Jesus on the cross when He said, “It is finished”; the redemptive work for mankind has been completed, His blood has
been shed, His atoning sacrifice has been offered, the justice of God has been satisfied so that mankind can be forgiven.

Now God says, “It is done,” meaning that the redemptive work of Christ is finished; there is no longer any need for people to trust in the shed blood of Christ for salvation; all who are to be saved have been saved; the time of salvation has ended; it is that time when Paul wrote, “Then comes the end, when He [Jesus] delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:24–26). Death has been defeated; salvation has been completed; Christ’s earthly ministry and His Millennial kingdom reign have been completed, so He now turns all the activities of eternity over to His Father God.

In the text, God the Father refers to Himself as “the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End”; what does this title mean? The Father begins all things and He will end all things; He was in charge when it started and He is in charge when it ends; no one comes before Him and no one will come after Him; it should be of interest to note that this same title belongs to Jesus as well (Revelation 1:8); both the Father and the Son share the same title, which means that in essence, Jesus is equal to the Father, for He too is deity!

Based on our assurance of living in this new heaven and new earth… “I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son” (21:6b–7).

There are two descriptive phrases that speak of those who are going to heaven:

1. Those who thirst after righteousness… “I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts” (v.6b); Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6); remember what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well, “Everyone who drinks of this water [the well water] will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life” (John 4:13–14); in John 7:37–38 Jesus said, “If any man thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of His heart will flow rivers of living water.”
Just as man has a natural thirst, he also has a spiritual thirst and that thirst can only be satisfied by letting Jesus come into your life; He will provide living water that will satisfy one's spiritual thirst; it was the psalmist who said, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God” (Psalms 42:1); the person who gets to heaven is the one who drinks of the living water which Christ alone provides.

2. Those who overcome the evil one... “He who overcomes shall inherit all things...” (v. 7a); In 1 John 5:4–5 we read, “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” Putting your faith in Christ, totally trusting in Him will enable you to be an overcomer and inherit eternal life in the world to come.

The word “overcomer” is mentioned several times in Revelation; in 2:7, “To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God” — that is heaven. In 2:11, “He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death” — that is avoiding hell; in 2:26, “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations” — that is ruling and reigning with Christ during the Millennium; in 3:5, “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels” — that speaks of our purity and assurance of salvation before God; in 3:12, “He who overcomes I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God...” — that speaks of our security with God; in 3:21, “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” — this speaks of our being forever in the presence of God.

Who are those who go to heaven? Those who have a parched character of soul by recognizing their broken, sinful condition and who find their satisfaction in Jesus Christ, and those who trust Him to make them overcome in a world system that is bent to overcome them!

The Punishment of the Wicked will be Finalized (21:8)

*Concerning those who do not persevere in the faith...* “But the cowardly...” the word for cowardly is *deilos*, it means to give up; to lack endurance; to quit when
the going gets tough; it is a reference to those who fear persecution; who aren’t willing to accept the cost of discipleship.

It would do us well to remember that the Christian life is a marathon, not a sprint, and we are expected to finish the race regardless of how exhausting or how dangerous the race might be.

Jesus told a parable about people who start out well, but when times get tough they wither away. Remember His parable of the sower and the seed, how some seed fell on rocky soil and the plant sprung up, but it was not well rooted in the soil; when the sun got hot, the plant was scorched and withered away; Jesus explained His parable by saying, the seed is God’s Word and the soil is man’s heart, but if you are not deeply rooted in the Word, when tribulation and persecution arises, immediately you stumble (Matthew 13:5–6; 18–21); Jesus also said, “If you continue in My Word, then you are truly My disciples” (John 8:31); He also said: “He who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 10:22); those who will not make it to heaven are the cowardly; they do not persevere, but give up their faith when times get tough.

Concerning those who pervert the faith... “unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” When we find lists of sins like this they are always written in present tense; that means continuous action; it refers to that which is habitual and is characteristic of their lifestyle (see also 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; Galatians 5:19–21).

Just because a person lies, or is sexually immoral, or commits murder does not mean they cannot be forgiven and be saved; it is not a matter of how many times a sin has been committed, rather, it is a matter of coming to Christ with a truly repentant heart and becoming a new creature in Christ; it is the refusal to do that, that such an individual will spend eternity in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Ted Bundy was one of the most despicable individuals to walk on this planet; he was a serial killer who preyed on attractive women; he would gain their trust, then strike them over the head with a crowbar, handcuff them and drag them into his Volkswagen; his car had no passenger front seat so the victim would lie out of sight in the empty space on the floor; then he would strangle or bludgeon them as well as mutilate them after death; he would dump them at some obscure location, but continually return to the dump site, or even take them home to gain
further sexual gratification; in some cases he would display their decapitated heads in his apartment; in other cases he would sleep with their corpses until putrefaction made it unbearable.

Bundy was finally sentenced to death and died in the electric chair on January 24, 1989; at the time of his execution, Bundy confessed to 30 murders, though the actual number is unknown; the day before Bundy’s execution, hundreds of people stood outside the prison carrying signs which read, “Burn Bundy Burn.”

James Dobson, when with Focus on the Family, visited Bundy in prison the day before his execution; Dobson claims that Bundy made a decision for the Lord and believes he died, having been forgiven by the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ. If that is so, most people would have a hard time believing that God would save someone as evil as Ted Bundy.

It is not the size of your sin or the number of your sins that sends you to hell; it is the refusal to repent of sin, place your faith in Jesus, and by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit receive a divine nature so it can be said, “That person has been born again!” To be born again is to be a new creation in Christ and fit to live in the New Jerusalem on the new earth for all eternity in the presence of his God and his Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ! Amen!