

Major Bible Themes

52 Vital Doctrines of the Scriptures Simplified and Explained

Adapted from the book *Major Bible Themes*
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The New Heavens and the New Earth

- Introduction
 - Following the destruction of the current universe, God creates a completely new universe (Rev 21:1).
 - This verse also tells us that the new earth will not have a sea.
 - ✦ This is an important interpretive clue since any O.T. passage which mentions the sea cannot be referring to the new earth.
 - ✦ The unrighteousness associated with the sea is incompatible with the new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Pet 3:13).
 - The sea gives up its dead for the GWT judgment (Rev 20:13).
 - The four great beasts (Gentle kingdoms) of Daniel (Dan 7:3) and the ten-horned beast (Rev 13:1) come up out of the sea.
 - The promise of the creation of the new heavens and new earth is mentioned in Isa 65:17 which is the beginning of a passage (Isa 65:18-25) that describes the conditions of the Millennium.
 - ✦ Isa 65:18 mentions Jerusalem, not the New Jerusalem, indicating a prophetic shift between verses 17 and 18.
 - ✦ Prophetic shifts are common – we find a shift between 1st and 2nd Advent in the middle of a verse in Isa 61:2 (cf. Luke 4:17-21).
 - The new heavens and new earth are also mentioned in Isa 66:22 as an example of that which will endure forever.
 - We should be looking forward to this new universe (2 Pt 3:13).
- The New Jerusalem
 - In Rev 21:2, the Apostle John sees a vision of the New Jerusalem.
 - ✦ This holy city comes down out of heaven from God.
 - ✦ The New Jerusalem will have been made ready as a bride, marvelously adorned.
 - The Church, a living body of believers, makes herself ready for the wedding in heaven (Rev 19:7).
 - The city, an inanimate object, is made ready.
 - The New Jerusalem pulls together all marital images (Jer 31:32; Hos 2:19; Isa 62:4) as all the people of God will inhabit this city.
 - There is no need for a tabernacle on the new earth as God will dwell among the people in the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:3, 22).

- While tears will be wiped away in the Millennium (Isa 65:19), all negative aspects of our fallen earthly life are eliminated by God in the new universe (Rev 21:4).
- Everything is made new in the new universe (Rev 21:5) indicating that those Millennial saints who were still in their old, fallen bodies will receive their new spiritual bodies.
- This is the eternal state for all believers, but unbelievers will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire (Rev 21:6-8, 27).
- An angel shows John specific details of the New Jerusalem.
 - ✦ The city has the glory of God (Rev 21:11).
 - ✦ The city is radiant, like a crystal-clear jasper (Rev 21:11).
 - ✦ The city is surrounded by a 200+ foot high jasper wall with twelve gates, three on each side (Rev 21:12-13, 17-18).
 - ✦ Each gate has an angelic attendant and is named after one of the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev 21:12).
 - ✦ The wall sits on twelve foundation stones, each one named for one of the apostles of the Lamb (Rev 21:14).
 - ✦ The city is huge – 1500 miles cubed (Rev 21:15-16).
 - ✦ The foundation is adorned with beautiful stones (Rev 21:19-20).
 - ✦ Each gate is a single pearl (Rev 21:21).
 - ✦ The street of the city is pure, glass-like gold (Rev 21:21).
 - ✦ The city is illuminated by the glory of God (Rev 21:23).
 - ✦ The gates of the city are never closed and the entire new earth is illuminated by its Light (Rev 21:24-25).
 - ✦ Those who had been believing Gentile kings on the old earth will bring glorious gifts of honor to the city (Rev 21:24, 26).
 - ✦ A river of the water of life flows from the throne of God (Rev 22:1).
 - ✦ The tree of life is planted once again on the new earth spanning this river (Rev 22:2).
 - ✦ The tree of life provides a healthy benefit for the resurrection bodies of the people (Rev 22:2).
 - ✦ The new universe will not be under the curse and everyone will be servants of God (Rev 22:3).
 - ✦ Everyone will see the face of God and His name and the name of the city will be on their foreheads (Rev 22:4; 3:12).
 - ✦ There will be no light other than the Light of God (Rev 22:5).
- The Eternal State
 - The new heavens and new earth will be the eternal abode of everyone who believes in God's provision for salvation.
 - Given that, it is somewhat remarkable that the Bible does not say more about what the new universe will be like (Dt 29:29).
 - It is possible that the prophecy which begins again in the Millennial Kingdom (Joel 2:28) may give more details.

- The distinctive characteristic of the Church as a heavenly people will likely remain for all eternity.
- People will be able to go back and forth between the new heavens and new earth – as in Jacob’s ladder (Gen 28:12).
- In the eternal state we will have the blessing of sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to His word without any distractions (Luke 10:38-42).
- We will never be omniscient (only God is omniscient), so we will be learning from Jesus forever (Luke 2:52; Heb 5:8).
- We will have the blessing of casting our crowns before the throne of God and singing His praises forever (Rev 4:8-11).
- In spite of having little information about the eternal state, we know that it will be amazing because we know the character of God and that He will provide a place of blessing for the saints.
- Questions
 - What is revealed concerning the new heavens and the new earth?

 - Why is the New Jerusalem described as a bride adorned for her husband?

 - What do Isa 65:17 and 66:12 reveal concerning the new heavens and new earth?

 - How does 2 Pet 3:13 characterize the new heavens and new earth?

 - Describe the characteristics of the new heavens and new earth as given in Rev 21:3-8.

 - What is the general picture of the New Jerusalem as seen by John in Rev 21:11?

 - Describe the shape, wall and gates of the New Jerusalem.

 - Will Israel and the angels be in the New Jerusalem?

 - How large is the New Jerusalem?

- What characterizes all of the materials of the city and how does this contribute to its brilliance?
- Describe the breathtaking beauty of the precious stones of the foundation of the city.
- What names are written on the foundation stones of the city?
- Why does the city have no temple and not need the light of the sun, moon or stars?
- Are saved Gentiles also in the city?
- What evidence is there that all the saints for all the ages will be in the New Jerusalem?
- How do the water of life and the tree of life possibly relate to the endless existence of the resurrection bodies of the saints?
- What will the saints do in the New Jerusalem?
- How do we account for the fact that, apart from these chapters of Revelation and a few verses elsewhere, there is little information about the eternal state in the Bible?
- What do we have to look forward to for all of eternity?