

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH-Red Bud, Illinois

Adult Bible Class

“A New Heavens and the New Earth”

Chapter Twenty-One:

When a product is advertised as “new and improved” we skeptically and rightly realize that it is the same old item with an added ingredient, a difference scent, and a higher price. What is described for us in Revelation 21 truly is more than new and improved. It is a restoration of God’s perfect creation. All the sin which tarnished the holiness of God’s universe and corrupted the nature of God’s creatures is gone. The absence of sin is filled by the presence of Jesus Christ, who has removed that sin by His own life, death and resurrection.

Verses 1-4: “The Dwelling of God is With Men”

Heaven (sky) and earth had fled from the One seated on the white throne in 20:11. They were stained by sin and could not remain in the presence of the holy God. Now they are replaced by a new order of creation, a paradise restored for the people of God where He will dwell with them as He did with His first people in the Garden of Eden.

Isaiah 65:17-19 ¹⁷ "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. ¹⁸But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. ¹⁹ I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in My people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more."

Verse 1: What has happened to the “first heaven and the first earth”? _____

+The sea was a place of danger and chaos for people in the ancient world, so for there to be no sea was good news. The beast of Revelation 13 came out of the sea. This symbolically shows that everything evil and threatening is removed.

Verse 2: What earthly image is used to describe this “holy city”? _____

Who is the husband for this bride? _____

+“The Holy City, the new Jerusalem” is not the earthly location, but where all God’s people, the “bride,” live.

Verse 3: To what John sees is added what he hears. What is that? _____

+The distinction between heaven as the place of God’s presence and earth as the dwelling of God’s people now is blurred. Here heaven comes to earth; God comes to dwell with His people personally.

+This personal dwelling of God with His people was begun and foreshadowed by the incarnation of Jesus in human flesh (John 1:14).

+The emphasis here is on God’s actions. There is no hint of our deserving any of this goodness.

Verse 4: “He will wipe every tear from (out of) their eyes” see also in 7:17 of the believers in heaven. The effects of sin that we feel here will not trouble us there.

What is not going to be in this “new Jerusalem”? _____

What now happens to “the old order of things”? _____