

**Revelation 21 – New Heaven! New Earth! New Jerusalem!**

**“<sup>1</sup> Then I saw...”**

Then is one of those words in the Bible that we call timestamps.  
And we find these kinds of words throughout the Scriptures.  
The word **“Then”** begs the question – When was **“Then”**?

And here in **Revelation 21:1** –  
We’ve now moved through the great tribulation;  
We’ve moved through the millennium, the thousand year rule of Jesus on the earth;  
We’ve moved through the great white throne judgment.

John says – **“<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,  
for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.”**

**“new heaven”, “new earth”** – **Revelation 21:1** tells us that the universe as we know it is one day going to disappear.

When I was in the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade I remember getting a National Geographic issue. And it had an article on the universe that really fascinated me. As a middle-schooler it actually blew my mind. It was this series of photographs that began with a picture of our solar system. And then it showed a picture of our solar system in the Milky Way galaxy. And then it backed further into space and showed our galaxy in a cluster of other galaxies. And it back out further and further until our galaxy was lost in the vastness of what was merely a portion of the universe. And I remember as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, not being a Christian, but just being in awe of the sheer vastness of the universe, standing in awe of how those images really represented only a fraction of the incomprehensible expanse of the universe.

And **Revelation 21:1** says that all of that is going away.  
I want you to write these in the margin of your Bible – **Matthew 24:35** and **Isaiah 65:17, 18**.

Jesus said in **Matthew 24**: **“<sup>35</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away...”**

In **Isaiah 65** God says – **“<sup>17</sup> For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. <sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create...”**

I don’t know how many of you have been able to travel outside of the United States; but my wife, Valerie, and I, we’ve been privileged, spoiled by the Lord, to go to some amazing places in serving the Lord. One of them was a place called Millstatt, Austria. It’s in the Austrian Alps. And we stayed there at the Calvary Chapel Conference Center. And it’s in a facility that has the name Schloss Heroldeck. It’s really amazing. It has a turret. It’s like a castle. And we stayed in what is called ‘The Speaker’s Room’. From the bedroom window there in this turret, from the top of the turret you look down onto the lake. They say that the lake is as deep as the Alps around it are high.

Valerie and I have had the opportunity to go to the North Shore of Oahu to do evangelism – somebody has to, right? We took a team of 25. It was actually the coldest winter on record in Oahu. And all we brought was shorts and tee-shirts. Our band was playing outside. And it was like 48 degrees. We were freezing. But when we were there we got to go see the Pipeline Masters surf contest. And that year the swell was so massive that Pipeline was breaking on the third reef. The bigger the swell the farther out it breaks on the several reefs that are there. And it was so massive it sounded like thunder. It was epic to see.

We got to stay on the island of Moorea in Tahiti on Cooks Bay. That’s not bad, huh? That was when we were taking a team of 40 kids to Australia. And on the way back they said you can stop in Tahiti or Hawaii. And I thought, *‘Well, most kids are going to Hawaii; but not many go to Tahiti. So let’s go do that.’* And we got there and budgeted about \$10 a day for meals. And it cost \$5 for a can of Diet Coke. So we were in trouble, other than the beauty. But we got to see those places – the sunsets, the incredible snorkelling.

I don't know how many times Valerie and I have driven through the Yorkshire Dales.  
The pastoral beauty is unmatched on the planet.  
And then take that out beyond the beauties we can just observe on planet Earth to the stars and the planets.

And **Isaiah** says this – **“the former things shall not be remembered or even come to mind.”**

Write in the margin of your Bible there in **Revelation 21:1 – Hebrews 12:26-29** – from the **New Living Translation**.

**“<sup>26</sup> When God spoke from Mount Sinai his voice shook the earth, but now he makes another promise:**

**“Once again I will shake not only the earth but the heavens also.”**

**<sup>27</sup> This means that all of creation will be shaken and removed, so that only unshakable things will remain.”**

The **King James Version** says – When God does this **“only those things which cannot be shaken will remain.”**

The universe we're living in, the planet we're standing on – they are going to go away.  
And we need to realize that's a statement of fact and ask ourselves – What are its implications today?  
Well, the universe that we live in and the planet we're standing on going away means that –  
Everything that this world values, everything that this world lives for will be shaken until none of its left standing.

Now that should shake you.  
And it should shake me.  
And that should provoke us to ask ourselves this question –

How much of our lives cannot be shaken?  
How much of our lives consist of things that cannot be shaken?  
Because God says he's going to shake it until the only thing that is left standing is that which can't be shaken.

What's our life made of?  
What does our life consist of?

That passage in **Hebrews 12** continues –

**“<sup>28</sup> Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable (that cannot be destroyed),  
let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with hoy fear and awe.**

**<sup>29</sup> For our God is a devouring fire.”**

The Scriptures tell us that the heavens and the earth are going to melt away in a fervent heat.

Since that is going to happen –  
Since we are going to receive a Kingdom that's not going to be destroyed –  
Since we are going to receive a Kingdom, a new heaven and a new earth –

What should we be doing now?  
When we leave here, when we wake up tomorrow morning – What should we be doing?

Well, the Holy Spirit inspired the author of the book of **Hebrews** to say –  
We should be thankful.  
We should be living like those who are saved from a universe that's going away.  
We should be living like those who have been saved from a universe that's going away.  
We should be thankful. And we should please God by worshipping him.  
We should be thanking him. We should be living lives that are spent as an act of worship.

And I believe this fits so perfectly with [the series that we just finished dealing with the realities of worship and idolatry](#).  
Every aspect of our lives should be vertical.  
Every aspect of our lives should be poured out without restraint in extravagant expressions of thanksgiving & worship.

### That means –

If you're a business man, a business woman –

Your business life should be vertical. It should be an act of worship.

If you're a teacher, an educator –

Everything you do as an educator should be vertical. It should be an act of worship.

If you're a student – all of your classwork, all of your homework, the person you are on campus –

All of it should be vertical. It should be an act of worship.

If you're married –

Your marriage should be vertical. Everything in it should be an act of worship.

Because there's a new heaven coming; there's a new earth coming; and everything in this old one is going away. And when we scatter from here, and you look at everyone in your neighbourhood, everyone in your workplace, some of you might need to stop for gas on the way home, look at the people that are getting out of their cars filling up their tanks as well, the person that is the attendant at the cash register, if you have to stop at a store, the person who is ringing you up, maybe somebody stocking a shelf, tomorrow when you're at work, the people that are in your school, where you hang out, where you work out –

Ask yourself this question – What do you think they think about the world we live in today?

I think it's safe to say that unless they're Christians –

They're all living like this world is never going to end.

They're living as though this world is the ultimate and only reality.

And so they buy into the value system of this world.

When our youngest son, Nathan, was about eight he went through this little season in his life where he got really interested in sports cars, like expensive sports cars. And he would point them out. If one drove by he'd say, "Dad, that's *'this car'* and it's *'this model'*." Of course you see a few of them here and there. But then you go on vacation down in Orange County; and about every car down there in South Orange County is one of those cars. Man, he had a field day on that vacation – "Dad, it's *'this' car*; it's *'that' car*." And one time I said to him, "Here's the deal, bud. It's okay to have a car like that. But there's a big difference between living to get one of those, spending your life to get one of those, and living for Jesus and having Jesus add one of those to your life." And do you know what he said as an eight-year old? He said, "Oh I get that." He was eight; and he was able to grasp it.

**But do we grasp it as adults?** Do we grasp it as young adults? Because the world that is organizing itself without God and against God is telling us that we need to live as though this world will never be shaken –  
*Invest in this thing. Invest in that thing. This one is solid. You just have to buy into it.*

**Revelation 21** tells us that nothing this world offers is unshakable – not one thing in it – it's all shakeable.

So you and I better be building on something that cannot be shaken.

And the question – What are we building on? What is the foundation we're building our lives on?

The Bible begins with the words, "**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**"

That word "**created**" in **Genesis 1:1** is the Hebrew word 'bara' – and it means – to create from nothing.

Only God has the capacity to create out of nothing. Man cannot create something out of nothing.

When man creates he re-assembles existing materials. The word 'asa' is the Hebrew word for that kind of creation.

### But here's the interesting thing –

That word "**create**" in **Isaiah 65**, where God says – "<sup>17</sup> **For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth ...**" – It's the same Hebrew word translated "**created**" in **Genesis 1:1**.

That means that the new heavens and the new earth will be created from nothing.

### And here's the deal –

The new heaven, the new earth – they are not going to be a remodel.

God is not going to remodel the universe.

He's going to make a new one out of nothing.

### And not just new –

The new earth is notably different from the earth as we know it today.  
And it's notably different even from the earth as it will be in the millennium.

That phrase there – **“And there was no more sea”** –

It's important that we understand that this new heaven and this new earth is different than the earth in the millennium.  
There is a list of Old Testament millennium prophecies that mention bodies of water.  
So this new earth without seas is not the earth of the millennium.

Now Bible scholars differ on –

whether or not this is to be understood as literal, referring to oceans,  
or whether it's to be understood in a figurative sense.

Regardless of how this is interpreted, the new heaven and the new earth are very different from our present existence.  
There are places in the Scriptures where the term sea refers to the ungodly, unbelieving people groups.  
They are referred to as the seas that are tossed and fomented, churning in unbelief and rebellion against God.

Hence some take the position –

that it's speaking in figurative language,  
that within the new creation there will be no more unbelief, no more rebellion against God.

And that is absolutely true.

And that is utterly different from heaven and earth today.

You can write **Ephesians 1:10** in the margin of your Bible –

From the **King James Version** –

**“<sup>10</sup> That in the dispensation of the fulness of the times he might gather in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; in him(in Jesus):”**

And also from the **New Living Translation** –

**“<sup>10</sup> And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ— everything in heaven and everything on earth.”**

So this phrase – **“there was no more sea”** – if you want to read that figuratively, referencing unbelieving, ungodly people organizing their lives without God and against God – it works perfect because this is the plan. At the right time God is going to bring everything together under the authority of Jesus.

Now some say this refers to the literal bodies of water;

Which tells us that existence in eternity is something far different from life as we know it today.

At present two-thirds of the earth is covered with water.

If you take this to be literal the new earth will have no oceanic bodies of water.

The only real water that we see referenced in **Revelation 21, 22** is a river that's mentioned in **Revelation 22:22**.

We'll get to that in our next study.

For a lack of a better term that would mean that the new creation will have a new ecosystem.

That would require a totally different anatomy and physiology to support life in that environment.

In other words, our glorified bodies will be much different from these earthly ones.

And I believe the Bible points to this.

In **1 Corinthians 15** we're told that –

Every human being has a body just like Adam's;

But our glorified bodies will be just like Christ's.

**1 Corinthians 15:**

**“<sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust,  
and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.  
<sup>49</sup> Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust (that would be Adam),  
we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven (that would be Jesus).  
<sup>50</sup> I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,  
nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.”**

We are going to have new bodies that will be suitable for the new heaven and the new earth. Everything about the way they process that environment is going to be perfect for that environment. And those bodies will never get sick. They'll never age. They'll never wear out. They'll never grow old. They will be totally and perfectly suited for the new ecosystem of the new earth. Everything about them will be different than what we know today.

Again, when Nathan was about 8 he said, “*Daddy, will we fly when we get to Heaven?*” It's a great question. I said, “*I don't know, son, but transportation is going to be way different than we know here and now. No more 4-bucks per gallon for sure.*”

And though John is impressed with the new heaven and the new earth, his attention is directed to that which is really essential to everything he's seeing.

**“<sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,  
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”**

**“new heaven” – “new earth” – “new Jerusalem”**

Even to this day, in their synagogue form of prayer, the Orthodox Jew still prays,

*“And to Jerusalem thy city return with compassion, and dwell therein as Thou hast promised;  
And rebuild her speedily in our days, a structure everlasting, O Lord, the builder of Jerusalem.”*

**Here's the deal –**

Human history began in a garden.  
It's going to end, or, better yet, begin again in a city.

Now I know – I never knew many of them in Southern California; but since we moved up here – I know a lot of guys who for them the city is nothing and the country is everything. They love the country. When we moved to the foothills everybody would say, “*You must be so excited to be out of the city and to be living in the foothills.*” And I'd be thinking, “*not so much.*” I like the beach. I like the pavement. I like the city. But for those who love the country –

God says paradise is going to be a city.  
God said it, not me.

This new Jerusalem is the city that Abraham was seeking.

**Hebrews 11:**

**“<sup>10</sup> For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.”**

And this new Jerusalem is anticipated all the way back to **Revelation 3**.  
There in the margin of your Bible write **Revelation 3:12**.

**“<sup>12</sup> The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it,  
and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God,  
the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.”**

Jesus said that to Christians living at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

### Two Observations –

#### First –

It's declared that the new heaven comes down out of heaven from God.

And John is watching this happen. In advance John is watching this city come down out of heaven from God.

And we are going to be there to watch this new Jerusalem come down out of heaven from God. It's mind-blowing.

#### Second –

Nothing is said about the new Jerusalem being created at this moment.

The language implies that it was already in existence in Heaven before this event.

Now there are those who believe that the words of Jesus in **John 14** are pointing to this.

**John 14: “<sup>2</sup>In my Father's house are many rooms.**

**If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”**

And as John beheld the new heavens and the new earth and the beautiful new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, he says,

**“<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud (or a great) voice...”**

This is the last of the 21 times that that term **“loud voice”** or **“great voice”** is used in the book of **Revelation**.

The greatness of the voice tells us that what's about to be revealed –

is of great importance

and proceeds from great authority.

**“<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.**

**He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.””**

The most significant thing about the city is that God dwells with his people.

Before the fall of man we're told that God walked with man in the Garden of Eden.

After the fall of man we're told in the Bible that God dwelled with Israel –

first in the tabernacle within the Holy of Holies,

and later within the temple within the Holy of Holies there.

And then we're told in **John 1:14** that God became man.

**John 1: “<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”** – literally – tabernacled among us, pitched his tent among us.

And today God does not dwell in manmade buildings, he dwells in the bodies of his believers.

**1 Corinthians 6: “<sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”**

That's the reality of the Christian life.

But we cannot even come close to fully understanding the glory of God who dwells within us.

And we will not comprehend it until we see him face to face.

**Revelation 21:3** informs us that God is going to make his dwelling place with man.

In other words, mankind will dwell forever in the very presence of God and the tangible expression of God's perfection. God's glory refers to the perfection of his nature and his attributes.

But there is a glory the Bible speaks of that seems to be the tangible visible expression of the perfection of his nature. The Bible says that at this moment, on this side of **Revelation 21**, God dwells in light that is unapproachable. In the Scriptures it says that no man or woman living in these bodies has ever seen God; Because it says that no man or woman living in these bodies can see God and live. But there is coming a time when God is going to make his dwelling place with men and women. And redeemed men and women will dwell forever in the very presence of the living God and the tangible expression of his perfection. And that is the reason God created us. We were made to have fellowship with God in all of his glory.

But the Bible tells us that sin destroyed that intimacy between man and his maker. You remember how after man sinned that God came seeking Adam; and he said, *“Adam, where are you?”* It wasn't a matter of God needing to get out his GPS to locate Adam. It was a question of, *“Adam, what have you done. You were walking with me. And you destroyed all of that.”* I believe that before Adam and Eve sinned and disrupted their fellowship with God, I believe they were clothed in the very glory of God. And as Eve lived in, moved in, experienced life together as man and woman in a perfect creation in the manifested glory of God, the same glory of God that was manifested in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and later on in the temple, the same glory of God that was manifested on the Mount of Transfiguration when the glory of Christ's divinity shined through the veil of his humanity. And it says that his garments became whiter than anything imaginable. And his visage was brighter than the sun.

And now in **Revelation 21** God has restored man to that which God had intended for man from the very beginning. Way back at the very start of our study of this amazing book we said that there was a very direct and critical relationship between **Genesis** and **Revelation**.

**Genesis** answers the question – How does it all begin?

**Revelation** answers the question – How does it all end? – or more accurately – How does it all begin again?

Because the Bible is not so much the beginning, middle, ending. It's beginning, middle, beginning.

**Genesis** tells us about paradise lost.

**Revelation** shows us paradise restored.

**Genesis** saw fellowship with God broken.

**Revelation** shows us God dwelling with man.

**Genesis** gives us the beginning of sorrow and death.

**Revelation** shows us the end of sorrow and the end of death.

**“<sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”**

No more death! No more sorrow! No more crying! No more pain!

The new heaven & earth, the new Jerusalem will be diametrically opposed to the character of this present universe. Now I want you to think about that – No more death! No more sorrow! No more crying! No more pain!

We have zero frame of reference for that kind of existence. How do you and I even begin to process such an existence when all we know is tears, sorry, weeping and pain? Even the best of our joy, the best of our moments of peace, the best of our happiness has always been limited, has always been interrupted by tears, sorrow, weeping, pain. The day Valerie and I got to go and see our brand new first grandchild – inexpressible, amazing joy – seeing our daughter become a mom – amazing. But there are tons of grandparents who have had that same experience; and they've had that kind of joy, that sense of expression, *‘Wow, our lives have come to this. It's so beautiful to see.’*

Lots of grandparents have been in a hospital when that day was supposed to happen. And the baby dies in birth or the mom dies in birth. There is not a parent here who doesn't shudder in one of those strange moments when you think of something horrible happening to your kids. Why is that? Because every parent and every kid, whether kid before parent or parent before kid they've seen the people they love and that have brought them joy get sick and die or died in tragic ways.

The best that we have – the joy of a wedding – how many of those have ended in the tears of divorce? And even the weddings that have lasted decades – One of the most influential men in my life, Pastor Romaine, when his wife died his life started to fall apart really fast. He was in his sixties when his wife went to be with Jesus. And from that moment forward it's like you could see that his desire to live on earth wane. He just wanted to be in Heaven.

The best of our joy, the best of our peace, the best of our happiness is limited by and interrupted by everything broken about this world. That's been the story of planet Earth ever since **Genesis 3**. But look – “**for the former things**” – that would be death, sorrow, crying, pain – “**have passed away.**”

Now this is so awesome for us to consider as we launch into the [Route 66 series](#).

There's a reason that **Genesis** and **Revelation** are the book ends of the Bible;

Because the other 64 books sandwiched between **Genesis & Revelation** are the story of God at work to fix all this.

Each in their unique way are a part of the story of God's redemption. I can't wait to spend a week looking at each book of the Bible to find its place in this great account of God at work to fix everything that was ruined by sin.

Everything that we see in this chapter is the result of God doing for us –  
that which we did not earn,  
and that which we do not deserve;  
It's called grace.

The world that we know today is warped by sin.

When God finished creating he looked at this place; and he said, “**This is very good.**”

And then man sinned. And ever since **Genesis 3** –

Nothing in this world has been very good;

Nothing in this world has been perfectly good.

**This is so radical** – The pain and the pathos that man has experienced is all because of the ravages of sin – physical sickness, the loss of loved ones, children, wives, husbands suffering because of man's sin, the pain of having hurt God by our sin – all of that is the ravages of sin. But for redeemed sinners all of this is going to pass away. We cannot begin to imagine what that's going to be like.

I can't remember how long ago that song was written – ‘**I Can Only Imagine**’.

I remember when it first came out my wife loved that song so much.

But do you know what? – Really we can't even imagine.

It's really not a very accurate lyric – “*I can only imagine*”.

No you can't imagine because all we have is tastes of joy, tastes of peace.

How do you imagine something that is outside of your capacity to imagine?

**“<sup>5</sup> And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”**

**Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.””**

That opening statement – “**Behold**” – it means – look, see.

God is saying to John, “*John, come here and look at this. I am making everything new.*”

And this word “**new**” –

It means – more than just recently made;

It means – new in character.

It's a whole new category.

Again, this is a drastic departure from anything known to us in our present state of existence. Everybody likes new.

We all like the smell of a new car, right?

We like it so much that there are people that are willing to spend thousands of dollars more just to have it.

We all like the smell of a new house.



Have you ever walked through a model home, and thought, ‘*This smells so nice.*’ Why is that? Because nobody lives there, right? There are no baby smells around. There is no five-year old sweaty smells around. Do you know what’s really interesting is if you blindfolded me and brought me into a children’s ministry area I could find the pre-school area with my nose because there is this sweaty pre-school smell in every pre-school children’s church classroom I’ve ever been in. As sweet and lovable as they are those little guys get heated up really good when they’re together like that; & they just stink it up. There is no grown dad after a Mexican meal smell around the house in a model home.

I love the smell of a new leather Bible. It’s a great smell.  
I open up that box, and just smell it. It’s kind of a legal drug.

But in a figurative sense we only get brief whiffs of those things in this world.  
Right now we live in a world marked by decay and deodorizers.  
We live in a world marked by anti-oxidants and showers, Botox and bathtubs –  
This billion dollar industry that exists in people’s desire to stay biologically new, to stay hygienically fresh – Why?  
Because sin ushered in decay and death.

*For those who live for the next new thing they will end up with no thing.*

There are people who spend their lives chasing the carrot that the god of this world has dangled in front of them.  
And it’s a carrot they’ll never really get. It’s an idol that always lies. It’s an idol that will always fail.

This is so huge – The world that is organizing itself without God and against God is chasing something that is in reality only a counterfeit of the real thing.

You see –  
Man was hard-wired for new.  
Man is hard-wired to have life that is always new.

Had Adam and Eve never sinned –  
They would have never aged.  
Death would have never happened.

Before **Genesis 3** –  
Everything smelled new for Adam and Eve;  
Everything was new all of the time.  
That was the nature of everything  
That was the character of everything before sin.

But our first parents bought into the lie of lies.  
And the lie of lies says, “*You guys can have new without God.*”  
But you can never have life that is new apart from relationship with God who makes all things new.  
And by way of that decision to say, “*I can have new without God; I can have life without God*” –  
As a result of that choice death, decay and entropy entered this world.  
The world is chasing the counterfeit, seeking new without seeking God.

That’s why Jesus said, “**Seek first the kingdom of God.**”  
That’s why Jesus said, “**Lay up for your selves treasure in heaven, not here on earth, where rust and moths corrupt them, where thieves can break in.**”

Now I’m not saying we can’t or shouldn’t buy a new house, a new car.  
But never ever should we ascribe to those things’ ultimate value.  
You don’t want to be seeking them instead of seeking God.  
You want to be seeking God.  
You want to be seeking his kingdom, and let God add those things to your life.

Now apparently John is so blown out by this announcement that God is making, and the implications of that, God has to get his attention, and say, *“Write this down, John.”*

**“Write this down, for these words are true and faithful.”**

*“John, you can’t understand it. You can’t take it in. But write it because it is going to happen.”*

The question is not – Will this happen?

The question is –

Are we living as though this is going to happen?

Do we allow the reality of what for sure is going to happen, because God says this is going to happen?

Are we composing a value system based on the promise of God concerning new heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem?

Or are we establishing a value system based on the counterfeit value system that you can have something new, that you can have something that gives life, apart from God who alone makes all things new & who alone possesses life?

And once again the book of **Revelation** challenges us concerning the reality of –  
being practical atheists,  
while being a professing Christian.

We nod our heads in agreement –

*God wrote it. I believe it - yes – new heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem.*

*He’s going to make all things new. The former things are going to pass away.*

But then practically we live as though we don’t believe it.

We can never run away from the truth of his Word.

Let me roll back a little bit more. First of all, you guys are awesome. You’re here studying the book of **Revelation 21**. And a lot of you have been here since we started it. You are amazing. And you’ve seen the value of this book. And I believe that as you’ve been here, and you’ve opened your heart to what the Holy Spirit inspired John to pen in this book, the Revelation of Jesus that John received from God in this book, that your lives have been transformed, that there is something that you know about Jesus and love about Jesus more than ever before.

But the sad thing is that there is a whole lot of people who don’t even crack open the book of **Revelation**. And they think, *‘What would **Revelation 21** have to say to my life?’* LOTS!

**“<sup>6</sup> And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.**

**To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.**

**<sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.””**

**“It is done!”** –

Now this does not mean that there are no future works of God in eternity.  
It means that God’s redeeming work is completed.

**“the former things have passed away.”**

All those who have trusted in the saving work of the cross of Jesus are now with God in a new heaven & a new earth.  
There is a new Jerusalem.

And God says the work of redemption is done.  
But the works relating to eternity are now to begin.

Jesus pointed out that we’ll be serving him in his eternal kingdom.

**And here's the deal – And it's a REALLY BIG DEAL!**

Nothing that Jesus does ends in failure.

I wonder how many of us have started something; and it ended in failure –  
not for lack of attention,  
not for lack of effort.

You and I might –  
start something, and not finish it,  
or start something, and not finish it well.

But Jesus always finishes what he begins.  
Look at him in his first coming.

He said, *“I didn't come to be served. I came to serve and to give my life a ransom for many.”*

And there came a moment in his public ministry where he set his face towards Jerusalem.

The purpose of his coming would not be thwarted. He could not be deterred. No one would detour him from it.

He headed for an appointment that he had from before the foundations of the earth to die in our place for our sins on the cross, and three days later conquer the grave.

Jesus always finishes what he begins.

**Philippians 1:6** – concerning the saving of a soul, Paul says –

**“I am sure of this that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”**

And this is so encouraging – I don't know about you; but I don't look very much like a finished product right now.  
I'm so encouraged to know that Jesus never fails in a project.

The good news is that I know that God is able to save to the uttermost those who will come to him by Jesus.  
He's going to save me to the uttermost.

And God says **“<sup>6</sup> ...To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.”**

This is the first of three promises made in verses **6 & 7**. This is the fulfilment of the invitation of **Isaiah**.  
Write **Isaiah 55:1** in the margin of your Bible there. I'll read it from the **New Living Translation** –

**“Is anyone thirsty?**

**Come and drink—even if you have no money!**

**Come, take your choice of wine or milk—it's all free!”**

God is saying everything that your heart and soul has ever thirst for in the knowledge of God will be satisfied absolutely and completely.

**“<sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”**

Who is this person that conquers?

Who is this person that – some of your translations might read – overcomes?

Again, put **1 John 5:4, 5** in the margin of your Bible there next to verse 7.

**“<sup>4</sup> For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world.**

**And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.**

**<sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”**

So this promise in verse 7 –

**“<sup>7</sup> The one who conquers – the one who overcomes –  
will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son” –**

That promise is not to everyone.

The person who will have that heritage,  
The person who is going to be called a child of God –  
is the person who has been born again.

It's only made to the man or the woman who has believed in Jesus, been born again;  
And as a result they remain faithful, when everything seeks to seduce them from loyalty to Jesus.  
And they'll say, *“No, Jesus, I'm yours.”*

And then in radical contrast to those in verse 7 who overcome, verse 8 describes the people who –  
don't overcome the world,  
but rather are overcome by the world, overcome by sin.

**“<sup>8</sup> But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers,  
idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second  
death.”**

**“the cowardly” –**

Those who are afraid to stand up for Jesus.  
This would be especially true of those who took the mark of the beast.  
But I think it speaks of those who would say,  
*“Look, I didn't mind raising my hand that night when the lights were all down.  
And I didn't mind saying that prayer loud enough for the person sitting next to me to hear it.  
I didn't mind going forward when there was an invitation to come forward and receive Jesus.  
But stand up for Jesus, like live for him in the face of adversity and opposition – not so much.”*  
That is fearful.

**“the unbelieving” –**

Those are men and women who would not put their trust in Jesus.  
It's those who put their confidence concerning eternal life someplace else than in the Son of God.  
See, faith is objective. Faith is not subjective.  
It's not about you. It's about the person or thing that you're placing your confidence into.  
It's those who did not believe the promises of God;  
It's those who did not receive the promises of God concerning eternal life in Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote this to the **Galatians** –

**“This life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”**

There is no Christian life apart from faith – none.  
The Christian life begins with faith.  
But it doesn't just begin by faith – It's sustained; It's lived day by day by faith.  
There is no other way to live the Christian life.  
And that's a challenge because our flesh hates faith – it hates it.

“**the detestable**” – some translations read – “**the abominable**” –

It’s a reference to those who practice, who do things –  
that God calls “**detestable**”,  
that God calls an “**abomination**”.

I want to walk very carefully here. And I need you to listen to me through to the end of this–

**Leviticus 18:** “<sup>22</sup> **You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.**”

**Leviticus 20:** “<sup>13</sup> **If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination.**”

That stands in utter contrast to the way the cultural elite in the world define that lifestyle.  
Today those who live that lifestyle – they’re called admiral; they’re called noble.

Going back a few years when the movie ‘Brokeback Mountain’ came out the advertisement said, “*All of America is falling in love with Brokeback Mountain.*” Here’s a little factoid. The five leading nominations for best picture that year collectively they grossed only 20% of the Chronicles of Narnia. That’s how few people collectively saw those top nominated movies, one of them being ‘Brokeback Mountain’.

Apart from the life-changing power of the gospel of God,  
God says that lifestyle is an abomination.  
And God says such people who practice it are not inheriting heaven.

Now here is why I challenge you to listen to me all the way through this. I think one of the worst bits of modern Christianity is that a lot of Christians single out homosexuality as the only thing worthy of being called an abomination. And they throw it into a special category of sin. And they treat such people in ways that I believe Jesus would never treat them. I think a lot of Christians earn the title ‘homophobic’. Christians, you should not have an irrational fear of homosexuals. I’m not talking about in the sense of – Can they be predators? I’m talking about – Do you have an irrational fear of womanizers? Well, we should be weary of womanizers coming into church, wolves in sheep’s clothing looking to be predators of women. But we shouldn’t have an irrational fear of the guy working in the cubicle next to you or sitting in the desk next to you at school who can’t wait to find the next girl that will sleep with him. For some reason Christians treat the latter worse than they treat the former. There are other things that God calls an abomination.

**Proverbs 6** –

“<sup>16</sup> **There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him:**

<sup>17</sup> **haughty eyes,**” – the King James Version says – “**a proud look**”,

**a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,**

<sup>18</sup> **a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil,**

<sup>19</sup> **a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.**”

I’ve never yet seen someone stand outside a church door with a sandwich board on that says “*Gossips will burn forever in Hell.*” Gossips are an abomination to God. Church is filled with people who gossip. And God says that’s an abomination to him. Yes it’s hard when somebody is living a lifestyle that you know God hates. And there is something so wrong about it that it troubles you. And it ought to never not trouble you. But how do we treat that person?

I think of Jesus with the woman and the well at Samaria.  
She was as far off the radar of God’s grace as any human being could be.  
And it says Jesus had to go there just to be with her.

“**murderers**” – self-explanatory

**“the sexually immoral”** –

It refers to not only those practicing sex outside of marriage.

It means those who traffic in sex – pornographers, musicians, actors - Just last week what did we see on the internet – that big scandal with famous actors and actresses who had posted photos of themselves naked. Now they're upset that somebody hacked their accounts and got their pictures that were put on the internet anyway. – TV and movie producers. Beer companies are some of the worst traffickers in sex. Talk about objectifying women. I don't know of a beer maker that doesn't make women an object of lust for men.

**“sorcerers”** – refers to those who are trafficking in drugs, trafficking in occult activity.

**“idolaters”** – those who don't come to Christ because they valued something more than they valued Jesus.

**“liars”** – those who habitually lie.

And lying is much more than telling an untruth. Lying means not living what you profess.

**1 John 1: “<sup>6</sup> So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not living in the truth.”**

The chapter closes with this amazing description of the New Jerusalem.

And here are a couple of my favourite verses in it.

**“<sup>22</sup> And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.”**

The **King James Version** says – **“And the Lamb is the light thereof.”**

I love those verses. I encourage you to read the whole of it on your own before going to bed tonight. Maybe just take a few minutes and read those verse, and sit down with one another, and read them and look at them. And then dive in and debrief this study.

**And as you read the whole of it Keep this in mind as you read of the beauty of this city** – Our God is a God of beauty. And he will exercise his infinite capacity as Creator and artist by lavishing his beauty upon this city that he's preparing for his people. And perhaps Peter had this city in mind when he wrote about God's varied grace in **1 Peter 4:10**. The word **“varied”** there means varied colored or variegated.

**And then keep this in mind as you read John's description of the various building materials.** All of these materials are materials that reflect or refract light. And this place, this new Jerusalem is all about the glory of God who is light – **1 John** – God is light. The place is all about the glory of God who is light. Every part of it is there to magnify God who is light, to magnify the Lamb who is the light thereof.

*God, thank you for this amazing chapter. Lord, we would ask in the wonderful name of Jesus that you would just press this chapter into our hearts and lives. Change us. Lord, may we be found so aware of your infinite worth, how you have done everything between **Genesis 3** and **Revelation 21** to get us there. As we take the bread and as we take the cup may we think of all that you have done so that we could have a place in **Revelation 21**.*