

The 4th Sunday after Epiphany ~ Sunday, January 28, 2024

“Heaven: The Future of the Coming Heaven”

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

#1: _____.

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...” (Revelation 21:1)

The Biblical vision for the conclusion of history is cosmic _____; a new creation in this age. Heaven is the beautiful, holy habitation of God, and earth is the realm of creatures, sinful and fallen in Adam. However, in the age to come, the dwelling of God will be with _____. Heaven and earth will be one and we'll dwell in the _____ of the Lord forever

Notice that the heaven to come is described in verse 2 as a _____, the “new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

The heaven to come is a city in which God and human beings live in perfect fellowship and _____, where sadness, sickness, suffering, sin, and death are no more.

TWO KEY IMAGES

• a _____-city.

It is permeated with the _____ of God, beautiful like precious stones, shining and radiant. The walls and gates that are never closed tell us that it's _____, the supremely safe place, free of threat and danger.

In describing the temple-city this way, John's telling us that the whole people of God _____ here. It's the true, final, and utterly secure _____ and dwelling of every sinner saved by grace since Adam was expelled from the garden, from the old covenant and new covenant churches.

The angel accompanying John measures the city to show us just how _____ it is, and the measurements, with equal length, width, and height, describe a perfect cube. This is meant to remind us of the _____, at the very heart of the original temple in Jerusalem

“I saw no temple in that city, for its temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.” (Revelation 21:22)

Although describing the walls and the foundations by likening each to a different _____ to reinforce how spectacular, beautiful, and glorious this

place will be, there's so much more going on than that. This is another reference to the temple imagery drawn from the OT scriptures.

The high priest wore this tunic every time he went into the Holy of Holies to _____ on behalf of God's people, whose names were literally written over the heart of the high priest. However, in heaven, Jesus, the Great High Priest, to whom every earthly high priest pointed as a mere type and _____, will dwell in our _____, and we'll live with Him in the city that pulses and vibrates with His glory. There, we'll be truly, forever on His heart, always with Him in the Holy of Holies, where He'll be ever attentive to our deepest soul needs.

The heavenly city—the new Jerusalem—is a temple, a holy place; a place of _____ with God in Christ where His glory dwells and His people are joined in unceasing fellowship with Him and with one another.

• a _____-city.

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.” (Revelation 22:1-5)

This is a vivid picture of Eden _____ and surpassed.

The curse that marred the old world as a result of Adam's fall and expulsion from Eden, is now finally and fully _____.

This image is not a return to the Eden that was lost. Rather, what we're being shown here is that the heaven to come _____ the paradise of Eden that once was, in the same way that Jesus Christ, the last Adam, far surpasses the first _____.

The condition in which our first parents were made and put in Eden was one of _____, and _____. However, when we get to glory, we'll be like Christ, for we shall see Him as He is. And there, we'll be both sinless and infallible. We'll not longer be able to _____. Our condition will far surpass the state in which our first parents were made, for the glory of the exalted Christ will be reflected in our _____ humanity.

The alienation that we feel, the _____ that we feel between ourselves and our environment, will, at last, be undone, and we'll be perfectly at _____.

#2: _____.

“The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.”
(Romans 8:19)

“The whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as children, the redemption of our bodies.” (Romans 8:22)

The whole creation, and we along with it, are groaning, aching, and longing for the dawn of the day of the coming _____. Creation longs for that day not because it will be remade and then human beings will be remade to fit a perfected creation, but rather as Paul says in verse 21; because creation itself will be set _____ from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the _____ of God.

Paul is clear here: We'll be remade in the resurrection and be like Jesus with a glorious resurrection body. Then God will remake everything else to _____.

We can be so shaped by science that we assume human beings are the way we are because we've _____ to our environment. However, the teaching of the Bible is actually that the world is adapted to human beings.

God made the world for _____, shaped it to fit us, that in it we might bring Him glory and serve Him. Adam's sin, of course, ruined all of that, and broke the world, which is why we experience dissonance, alienation, disconnection, and hostility from the natural environment.

We often feel like we don't quite fit, like we don't _____, like something's wrong with us and the world around us. However, in the new creation, we'll be given resurrection bodies, and then the whole _____ will undergo a kind of resurrection of its own. It will be _____, remolded, and reshaped.

underlying presupposition in Paul's teaching here that there's going to be fundamental _____ between this world and the world to come

“We are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”
(2 Peter 3:13)

Although they're dealing with the same subject matter, Paul emphasizes continuity in Romans 8, whereas Peter emphasizes _____.

“The heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.” (2 Peter 3:7)

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved. All these things are thus to be dissolved. The heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!” (2 Peter 3:10-12)

According to Peter, the transition from the age in which we now live into the new creation to come isn't going to happen _____. It won't be the climax of the gradual evolution of this world, perhaps in response to the _____ of Christians, somehow ushered in by our own labours for the kingdom of heaven. Instead, it will be the result of a final conflagration or _____.

Just like our bodies are destroyed in death and then remade by the power of God in the resurrection, the cosmos itself will undergo _____ in the final judgment only to experience a remaking of its own. There will be a _____, not just a different creation.

#2: _____.

• **The patience of _____.**

Paul highlights the _____ of this world and the world to come because he wants to emphasize _____. He wants Christians living and suffering here and now, to long for the renewal of all things and to look forward with _____ to the day when they themselves will be made new and all the world will fit them perfectly at last.

“In this hope we are saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.” (Romans 8:24)

How patiently are you waiting for heaven amidst the the joys and sorrows, ups and downs of everyday living?

• **The patience of _____.**

Peter's emphasis on _____, the final judgment to come, and the great conflagration that will set elements ablaze, is also focussed on patience. However, not on the patience of believing Christians waiting for the day, but rather on the patience of God, who _____ that great and final day in His great _____.

There's a _____ of opportunity in which God invites us to come, know, and receive His mercy and grace in the Lord Jesus Christ who died that we might live. It's open right now, but it will _____ close.

Have you received the mercy and grace of God offered to you in Jesus' finished work on the cross? Are you in Christ?