

Behold | Sermons through the Revelation

Sermon #47 | Revelation 21:24-22:2 | Describing Paradise

Revelation 21:24-27 | The Nations of the New Earth

- We know *very little* about what takes place on the new earth, introduced in verse 1, and now *slightly* elaborated in verses 24-27. The totality of what we know is from this chapter.
- We do know that the *saved nations* (v. 24, KJV) live in the new earth.
 - Modern translations simply refer to *the nations* rather than **the nations of them which are saved**.
 - These **nations** are likely political entities (note the use of **kings** in the same verse), but it is very unlikely that there is any recognizable modern nation that exists beyond the end of the *old earth*, which has now **passed away** (v. 1). –don't buy *tickets to heaven* from any form or earthly dealer!
 - It is likely that **nations** are both political but also *ethnic*, by virtue of the word *ethnos* in Greek. Compare Revelation 7:9. If this is the case, then we find an ongoing value of the family and family heritage.
 - These nations have **glory and honor** (v. 26), and thus do not seem to be at war nor subject to tyranny, hegemony, or other political ills of the old earth.
- We know that the nations **walk in the light** (v. 24) of the New Jerusalem.
 - There is no reason to believe this refers to anything more than *physical* light.
 - Within the New Jerusalem **there shall be no night** (v. 25) because it is illumined by **the glory of God** (v. 23), which never departs from the city.
 - While there is no night in the New Jerusalem, *we do not know* whether there is night on the new earth. If the new earth is a sphere, it would have night.
- We know that there is some form of differentiation of persons in the new earth.
 - The **kings of the earth bring their glory** into the New Jerusalem (v. 24).
 - The fact that there are nations and kings implies (but does not prove) that there are different classes of people. We are not told whether the differentiation is a result of works on the *old earth* (rewards) or works in the *new earth*, or not works at all.
- We know that there is purity in the new earth.
 - Verse 27 has had some wild interpretation.

- Some say it means that there will be sin on the new earth, but that those sinners will be barred from entry into the New Jerusalem.
- Some say that this proves that some sinners do not go to hell, but also do not go to heaven (Catholics build their purgatory doctrine, in part, on this verse).
 - The clearest interpretation, in the context of the chapter, is that the earth has been cleansed of all sin and sinners, and thus no sin *exists* to enter into the heavenly city.

Revelation 22:1-2 | The Lifegiving River

- In the millennium, there is a very similar river described in Ezekiel 47:1-12.
 - Though the millennial river is very similar, *things that are similar are not the same*. Note that the millennial river flows into the *sea*, and that the new earth *has no sea*.
 - Based on the Ezekiel passage, Jews teach a concept of *living water* that is much more *natural* rather than *spiritual*. As water is a *source of life*, so this millennial river will be “life-giving” to that desert land.
- The *very similar* river of the New Jerusalem also gives life, likely in the same *natural* way that water does today.
 - From these verses, we add to our understanding of the new earth: It has *water* and *plants*.
- On either side of the river we find **the tree of life** (v. 2).
 - There is no reason to believe that this is anything different from the tree found in Genesis 2:9.
 - The tree *bears fruit monthly* (not 12 different kinds of fruit).
 - This *indicates* that the new earth will have a calendar similar to ours today.
 - This also indicates that the new earth is a sphere, with a *dark part of the day* we would call *night*, for a *month* is based on the *moon*.
 - The leaves are for the **healing of the nations**. We are not exactly sure how this should be interpreted. Since there is no death and no sickness, a tree of *life* that provides *healing* could (should?) be taken to be a tree of blessing and service (the Greek word for *healing* is translated *service* in other passages).

Don't Miss it!

- Paradise is *beyond description*. We can't even begin to comprehend its glory.
- By accepting the *gift* of eternal life, you can *know* that *heaven will be your home someday!*