

Session 1. Foundational Principles for Understanding

INTRODUCTION

We're looking at Ephesians 1:9-10, and we're beginning a series called "Understanding Heaven on Earth."

Tonight we're going to look at some of the really basic principles. Now, for those of you who have been around for a while, this will be a lot of review, but many of you are new in the last number of weeks or a month or so. We need to pay attention and really get the foundation to understand the sessions that will follow after this.

Those of you who are familiar with this basic principle of how God is going to bring heaven and earth together, as I was reviewing it today, the truth of it is so awesome. It's not just that it fits into the eschatological theme; it's like an awesome reality.

DWELLING IN THE ETERNAL HABITATIONS

Hear this like it's the first time that you've ever heard it, those of you who've been around for a while: "[God] having made known to us the mystery of His will" —God has a mystery in His heart. God has a secret plan that He has had in His heart from the beginning, and that plan is this— "that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth" (Eph. 1:9-10).

That is a staggering reality, that God would bring both dimensions together, and that that would be our eternal dwelling place on the earth. I'm talking about you and me five hundred years from now, and five thousand years from now, and five million years from now. We will be living in a context where the two realms are brought together, and it's our home.

THE CENTERPIECE OF GOD'S PURPOSE

A. It has always been the centerpiece of God's purpose. This is the plan that God began with; it's called the mystery of God, that Jesus would come to the earth to establish His kingdom rule on the earth. When Jesus comes, He will bring the two realms together at the second coming on the earth.

Now, to some this is a completely new idea. That's one of the most foundational points of understanding in the Scriptures about the future.

B. Heaven is the supernatural realm, and we understand that.

THE PHYSICAL REALM WILL ENDURE FOREVER

C. The earthly realm is the physical realm. It's the place that God has chosen for human process to take place, for human emotion and physical sensation to reach their fullest expression. The reason that's important is because the thing that causes people to stumble and to be confused in the study of heaven is this point right here.

Heaven will have human process, it will have physical sensation, and it will have human emotion in a way that, if the natural realm didn't exist, it wouldn't take place. That's one of the biggest points that people trip over when we study heaven from the biblical point of view. It actually has physical and human processes involved.

Most people don't think much about heaven except for the fact that it's exciting and it's far away and it's cool and we're all going to be happy with streets of gold and gates that are pearls and music and Jesus, and it doesn't go much more specific than that.

When you begin to think about it thoroughly, the idea that we will have emotions and the idea that we will have physical sensations and feelings and the idea that there will be human processes that are necessary for the government of heaven to operate—that people will think, make decisions, share those decisions, deploy a workforce to oversee and implement those decisions—those dynamics will be a part of our life for ever and for ever and for ever.

“THE EARTH ABIDETH FOREVER”

I have in the middle of paragraph C that the earth will continue forever. There are quite a few passages on that, and amongst the theological circles there's a debate about this, and many theologians maintain that this present earth will last forever. There are some good verses on the other side, as well, that this world will be annihilated and discarded, and God will start a brand-new one.

I've looked at it energetically for some time and the reason I say that I'm convinced is that it doesn't seem to me like a gray issue. It seems like a clear issue. This present earth, this earth that you're living on right now, will last forever. When He created the earth originally, 8,000 miles in diameter, He put all the ingredients right into the earth, right through the center.

Through those 8,000 miles, all of the ingredients have been wisely deposited by God, knowing that in the days to come we will understand new combinations of all the minerals and materials and the ability for them to multiply. God so created with such perfect wisdom that this earth will be sufficient billions and billions and billions of years from now for the processes of life to continue in fullness. That's thinking it through on the front end before you act, if you can create with that kind of clarity.

HE SHALL DWELL WITH THEM, AND BE THEIR GOD

D. This is all just foundational and introductory. God’s purpose has always been to live together with His people face to face on the earth. He doesn’t just want to bless the earth; God the Father wants to dwell on the earth face to face as His home, as His dwelling place in the physical realm on the earth.

This is a very difficult thing to happen because of God’s blazing holiness and because God will not violate the free will of human beings. If God came to the earth right now, His holiness would be so bright and so blazing it would destroy all the nations and it would destroy the peoples on the earth in the natural realm.

THE REASONING BEHIND HIS PURPOSES

God has a plan so clear and so precise, and He has put it into the hands of Jesus as a man to cause this plan to unfold, where things are going to happen under Jesus’ leadership on the earth so that God Himself will be able to come and live on the earth without destroying the earth in His holiness and without violating the free will of the people in the nations. That means they will walk righteously and they will walk in holiness, so that there will be no need to destroy the earth in the full sense of the word.

THE SPIRIT OF BURNING AND FIRE

There will be a spirit of burning and fire that will come on the earth, but it won’t remove the earth. It will only touch the surface of the earth. It will be an important part of cleansing, to prepare the way of the Father, but the earth itself will still remain.

AND NOW OUR GOD SHALL DWELL WITH US

The ultimate plan of God’s heart is here in Revelation 21:3. I can’t think of another Bible verse that stretches our minds and imaginations more than this. It’s talking about the physical earth: “Behold, the tabernacle of God” —or the house of God, God’s house, the house that is particular to Him.

In one sense, the whole universe is His, and everything is His, but we are talking about the express and specific dwelling place of God the Father as a person in a way that is particular to His Personhood. He will bring His tabernacle to the earth, and He will dwell with people on the earth. “The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they will be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God” (Rev. 21:3).

God Himself will be here. Not just His Son and the Spirit, but the Father Himself will live on the planet with us.

E. In the Millennial kingdom, the thousand-year reign of Jesus, which we’ll look at for just a minute in a few minutes, Jesus’ primary mandate is to prepare the earth for the Father’s coming. That’s one of the main reasons for the Millennial kingdom. There are

other reasons as well. He's going to bring the nations to righteousness and prepare the way of the Father.

There will be a rebellion. There will be a short rebellion at the end, and it will be instantaneously destroyed. Then God will come and burn the surface of the earth with fire and cleanse it entirely and prepare it for His own tabernacle to come to the earth.

Jesus' leadership for a thousand years is a critical part of the divine strategy. It's a necessary dimension, because of God's holiness, to prepare the earth for this unthinkable event of God putting His tabernacle down on the earth.

THE NATURAL HUMAN PROCESSES WILL BE AT WORK STILL

F. Jesus will rule the earth with natural human processes. When Jesus is ruling for a thousand years on the earth and when we have resurrected bodies with Him on the earth, natural human processes won't be suspended, but rather they will be significantly enhanced by the power of the resurrection and the supernatural dimension of the Spirit.

For a thousand years on the earth, the natural human processes will still take place. For instance, after the judgments of the book of Revelation, when the cities are rebuilt, first they will have to clear out all the rubble. You think of 1945 in Europe or Asia, where the cities were bombed out and it took years to repair those cities, years and years, because the human process was involved.

That same type of process will be involved. However, with the saints being involved in it, with resurrection abilities enhancing the process, the human, earthly process will still be in place.

THE PHYSICAL NATURE OF THE LIFE TO COME

G. As Gentiles, we think of worshipping Jesus in the supernatural conditions of heaven. We emphasize His deity and we call Him the Son of God, and that's all true. But the Jewish mindset is very different. They don't think of worshipping the Messiah in heaven; they think of reigning with the Messiah on the earth.

In the Jewish mindset, they don't think of the Messiah as the Son of God; they think of Him as the Son of Man or as the Son of David, either one. Those two realms are coming together; we're going to be a part of it. We're going to watch it and we're going to have resurrected bodies, but our bodies are going to be material, and our bodies will be physical as well.

We'll take a session on the resurrected body because we have such a strong mindset of the future being only spiritual and not being physical and material. It really stretches us to understand it from a biblical point of view.

The reason we have to do this is because, even though heaven is exciting, only one part of it seems exciting; we have confidence that it's going to be filled with joy and goodness and brightness, but at the same time, because we don't think of heaven rightly, we don't think of it at all.

Because we think of it without the physical, material dimension, and because we don't think of heaven rightly, the result is that we don't think of heaven.

It's critical that we labor in our understanding to overcome the Greek philosophy and mindset that everything is spirit and that things that are physical are bad, or inferior, when the truth is that God wants the material and the spiritual realm to dwell together for His fullness to be manifest.

THE REPROBATES, THE RIGHTEOUS, AND THE RESISTING REMNANT

H. This is only for those who are really new here, because we say this over and over. You have to understand this because many verses won't make sense later if you don't understand paragraph H here. You will be confused about many Bible verses.

There are three types of people on the earth when Jesus appears in the sky at the second coming. Number one, there are redeemed, and all the redeemed will be raptured at the time of Jesus' second coming, not beforehand.

It's not a secret rapture before the tribulation; it's a rapture related to His second coming after the Church has proven herself victorious over darkness through the greatest hour of pressure, called the Great Tribulation. The saints will be raptured at that time.

Then the reprobates, the people that take the mark of the beast, cannot be saved. They are reprobate, meaning they have no ability and no desire to respond to the mercy of God. It's not just that they can't because God won't accept it, but they have no desire to. They are truly reprobates.

Then there's the third category, which is the one that's often surprising to people because everyone is pretty clear about categories one and two. It's the resisters, it's the tens of millions and it might be hundreds of millions who were neither born again, nor took the mark of the beast.

THE RESISTERS REPOPULATE

Those are the ones who will be on the earth who will repopulate the earth. My guess is, it's probably a couple hundred million, but there's no way of knowing. Compared to six and a half billion now, and we're going to move towards seven and eight billion, a couple hundred million is a very small percentage.

It may be less than that. I don't know. I like to put those verses in there for those who are new at this, and for whom it's a completely new idea, to give you a chance to go and look it up and see if these things are so, as the Scripture says.

REJOICING IN REVELATION

Again, for those of you who have been around for a while, just rejoice in the truth of these ideas that are so true to you. Holy Spirit, I ask You that You would speak it like it's fresh and new, these awesome truths, for those of us who have heard them over and over.

We can't understand the truth about heaven in its fullness in terms of what the Scripture has said, and the Scripture has given profound insight on it, if we don't understand Jesus' earthly rule. There are two many verses that don't make sense.

Jesus is going to rule the earth for a thousand years, and He will bring the nations into righteousness. That's the idea of it, to prepare the way for the Father and to show forth His judgments as just. This is a whole big subject that I don't want to develop, but it's another reason for the Millennial kingdom, to show forth His judgments through history as being just.

Jesus will rule all the nations of the earth. He will rule every sphere of life, political, social, agricultural, economic, financial, every sphere of life in every city and nation of the earth will come under His leadership in a very specific way. It's the most glorious thing imaginable, except for what comes after it, when the Father comes to the earth.

THE PROGRESSIVE NATURE OF GOD'S BLESSING

B. This period of global blessing is initiated by the second coming of Jesus. It will bring unprecedented blessing to the whole earth. The conditions of the Garden of Eden will cover the whole earth.

That won't be immediate. Jesus won't come, and on the day that He comes, the Garden of Eden will spring up everywhere. That's not how it's going to happen.

The Garden of Eden-type conditions will spread slowly and progressively from Jerusalem throughout the nations. There are some nations that will be the very last to enter into this blessing. It will literally take a thousand years to accomplish this worldwide. It won't happen in one generation.

C. It's in this time, in this thousand-year period, when all the kings of the earth will be born again. There are six passages in the Bible where it says that all the kings of the earth will worship Him, every single one of them.

Some people don't believe in the Millennial kingdom, and they don't believe in Jesus' earthly kingdom, and I ask them about these verses, and they say, "I don't really know when all kings worship Jesus." There is a time when every king that is in office, every

president, will worship Jesus extravagantly. They will be born-again worshippers of Jesus; that is a glorious reality.

SAINTS IN RESURRECTED BODIES

D. The saints will have material resurrected bodies, not ghost-like bodies where someone hugs you and fall right through you, and they fall to the ground and say, “Oh.” And you say, “Sorry, I forgot to tell you that.” It’s not that. We will have resurrected bodies where we eat, fellowship, speak to one another, give knowledge, train one another, and have new relationships.

There will be, my guess is two to three billion saints when you add up all the ones through history and the great revival at the end. Did you know that if you’re on the earth at the time of the rapture and you know a thousand people, on the day of the rapture you will still only know a thousand people?

You will meet the other two to three billion people one by one; you will meet them and you will learn their story, one by one. You won’t get a chip and a download where you cross through a zone and you know everyone’s stories and you’re connected to everyone. It won’t be that way.

GETTING TO KNOW THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

You will actually connect to people one by one, like you do now. It will be more effective. The connection will be deeper because there won’t be elements of pride and sin, but the elements of knowledge will go much faster. However, these elements of knowledge and relationship will still be necessary.

You will have to hear their story, and part of their story will excite you more than other parts of their story, and you’ll connect with them, and then you’ll go and tell some of your other friends about them, and then you’ll have them over and they’ll tell their stories again.

One day a long, long, long, long, long time from now, you will have a relationship with all two to three billion people plus, I don’t know, I have people calculating the number somewhere between five and fifty billion people in the Millennial kingdom who end up saved. There are all different ways to figure that way. I don’t have an answer that I have confidence in yet, but it’s billions. All of them will be a part of the family, too.

You will know some of them, especially if you’ve been a part of ruling and reigning in a part of the earth; you will know those you are laboring alongside. You will actually know them. There will be human process involved in our resurrected bodies, just as there was human process involved in Adam before there was any sin.

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

E. Jesus will be the King over all the kings in the Millennium. He will be King of all kings. We know that there are but two sets of kings He will be over. He will be King of all kings. He will be King over the Millennial kings, over those who are leaders of nations with natural bodies, over natural nations, but He will also be King over all the resurrected kings.

There will be two sets of kings in the Millennium. Some of you may be kings over a nation, or you may be governors over an area, and in some ways that would be a king as well, if you're using the definition of the ancient world when this was written.

There were many that were kings in the ancient world who would have had the same authority of a mayor or a governor. Actually, it would be much less of a sphere because a mayor of a big city is bigger than a country in those days. There will be two sets of kings, and Jesus will be King of those kings.

DEFINING HEAVEN AND EARTH

III. Defining heaven and earth. We have to get some clear definitions if we're going to go forward, because it will be very confusing if you don't grasp this.

Now we're beginning a bit of new material for those who have been around for a while.

THE GOOD, OLD EARTH

A. Earth in Scripture is used to describe our planet in four different time-frames. This is the terminology that I'm going to be using in the weeks to come. I'm saying we're going to do this for six weeks, but actually there's much more material in the Bible; I'm just saying it because that gets us up to the OneThing Conference, and then we'll go on from there.

There is more material, and we can't cover it all in six weeks. The first description of the earth is what I would call the original earth. That's the earth that God called "very good" in Genesis 1, when He looked at the earth and said, "That is very good."

That earth really matters to us because we're going to gain many insights about the future from studying Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. It's the earth before there was any sin and before there was any darkness on it.

We're going to find out what God did when there was no sin, and when there was no defilement of His purposes. We're going to get a dynamic insight into what God would do if there was no sin to contend with. God never changes, and what was His wisdom before gives us insight into what His wisdom is in the future. The applications are different, but the wisdom of God doesn't change. The original earth is the first one.

THIS PRESENT EARTH

Secondly, we're going to talk about the present earth. That's obviously the one that's under the curse of sin, and the one that causes us so much heartache. Even in this present earth, there is still so much splendor. Can you imagine the beauty of the earth? Many of you have travelled to different places, or you've seen documentaries of the wonders of creation from the skies to the mountains to the oceans and the depths of them.

It is staggering, and this is an earth that is marred with sin and with a curse. It's beautiful and stunning, although there are parts of the earth that are very barren and desert-like and dangerous that destroy human life.

THE MILLENNIAL EARTH

Third is the Millennial earth; that's what we talked about a few minutes ago. The Millennial earth will only be a designation for a thousand years; for a thousand years we will be on the Millennial earth. It's the same planet, it's the same glorious rock that God created back in Genesis 1.

THE NEW EARTH

The fourth is the new earth. The new earth doesn't happen until after the Millennium is over, and God sends fire on it to prepare it for His coming. He removes every vestige of darkness from all of history. In particular, there is a momentary rebellion, a very short-lived rebellion at the very end. It is instantly dealt with and fire purifies the earth, and then it prepares the time for the Father's coming on the earth.

John said, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away" (Rev. 21:1). That phrase "passed away" is the same word that's used in 2 Corinthians 5:17—"For you are a new creation in Christ, and the old has passed away" (paraphrased). It doesn't mean annihilated. You were not annihilated; your personhood was not annihilated. Your sin and your past passed away. It's the exact same word.

"Then I, John, saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God" (Rev. 21:2) —and it came down to the earth, is the idea.

There are four earths that are important to understand as you go forth in your study of heaven on earth. The original earth becomes a very important part of our study; the present earth, the Millennial earth, and then the ultimate is the new earth.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EARTHS

The Millennial earth and the new earth have some differences. In the Millennium, the righteousness of God is substantial, but it isn't ultimate. God's righteousness is on the earth, but there is still sin on the earth. Righteousness is substantial, but it's not ultimate and perfect. In the new earth, righteousness will be perfect everywhere on the earth.

LOOKING FOR NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH

It says in 2 Peter 3:13, “We... look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” It means in the fullest sense. When Peter talks about this here, he’s not talking about the Millennium. He’s talking about only righteousness. There will be no vestige of darkness at all on the new earth.

There will be pockets of sin on the earth during the Millennial kingdom. There will be a penal system. There will be criminals. It’s a very small amount.

There are plenty of scriptures that talk about some of the negative elements in the Millennium. It’s very minimal and very reduced. It’s far less than anything we have ever seen in history. Jesus will be the King of all the kings of the earth.

There is coming a time where we will have a new earth. It’s interesting that it says, “Now we look for a new earth”—we look for it! This is something we need to be occupied with, studying and understanding the new earth.

Again, I will repeat what I said earlier: One of the reasons we don’t study, or don’t look for it and it’s not really on our minds and it’s a vague idea is because we don’t understand heaven and earth coming together.

Because we don’t understand heaven, therefore we don’t study heaven. We don’t look to heaven; we don’t think much about it except in its most vague terms. We think about it wrongly; therefore, we don’t really think about it. We think about it as really ethereal and floating on a cloud far away. By faith we know it’s going to be cool, but it doesn’t seem that cool; but by faith, it is!

PICTURING IT IN OUR HOLY IMAGINATIONS

We’re supposed to give up things now by faith, because we think it’s going to be awesome, but we can’t picture it at all. Beloved, God wants us to be able to picture it in our holy imaginations, to picture some of it, enough of it to really lay hold of us.

We will never know all the details, but we will know enough details to really get hold of our attention. God will expand our understanding. He will give us living understanding and holy imagination about these things that will be based on the Word of God.

FOUR DIFFERENT REALITIES ABOUT HEAVEN

B. Now we’re going to look at four different realities when the Bible talks about heaven. Each of these comes into play in our understanding of heaven.

First, the first reality is called the first heavens, which is the atmosphere or the sky above us.

When the Lord says that there's going to be a new heaven, it's talking about a new atmosphere above the earth, and it's also talking about a new solar system and a new universe. We're talking about the heavens and the stars, the starry heavens.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE COSMOS

When the Scripture says there's going to be a new heaven, it's talking of the entire universe, not just the clouds above us in the weather patterns. We're talking about how all the heavenly bodies will be renovated. It's a huge statement that God is going to give us a renovated galaxy, a glorious, resurrected galaxy.

The resurrection of one Jewish Man will extend to the entire heavens and the universe.

When Jesus died and paid the price for our sins, it wasn't only our sin as individuals, it was the curse of the entire created order, on the earth, on the animals, in the atmosphere, and in the universe itself. The curse is lifted because of the death of Jesus.

One Man died and all of creation is renovated and released from the curse. The magnitude of what Jesus accomplished, the magnitude of Him becoming a Man, when He is fully God, and being crushed by the wrath of God, is so massive, but what He accomplished is also massive.

Some imagine that what was accomplished is that we were forgiven the penalty for our sin, which is huge, and now we're going to go somewhere far away forever. Beloved, He didn't just forgive us for the penalty for our sins. He cleansed all of the created order that God originally created and said that it was good.

When God made the universe, the heavens and the solar systems, and then made the earth itself, He said that it was good, and the devil wanted to come and ruin it, and I have good news for you: The devil didn't cause God to abort His original plan with the heavens and the earth.

God's plans for the heavens, the solar system, and the physical earth are not aborted. They will all come to pass and He will dwell with His people in the midst of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

That is the first heavens, talking about the atmosphere and the skies and the stars and the solar system.

THE HEAVENLY PLACES

Then the Scripture talks about the mid-heavens, or the heavenly places. This is the place from which high-ranking demons rule. It's called the heavenly places.

The heavenly places have a negative connotation, but the saints are also said to be in heavenly places. That would mean the next one, the third heavens, which is the place where God's throne is; that's the third heavens, and that's where saints go now.

When the saints die, they go into the third heavens right now. They go into the presence of God. The third heavens are where the angels live, and the disembodied spirits. It's where the saints go who don't have their resurrected bodies.

Of course, I've said this many times, that the reason the saints don't have a resurrected body in heaven is because they don't need a physical body to relate to the environment of heaven. They only need a physical body when the two realms come together. They don't have material food in heaven, like the saints will have material physical food on the earth, who will eat it with pleasure and have no problems.

THE FOURTH HEAVEN

Now this is important, this little point here. The fourth use of the word heaven is usually what is meant when we talk about heaven in the future, like our reward in heaven; it's referring to the New Jerusalem, but the New Jerusalem's ultimate destination is on the earth.

I have a number of verses (Mt. 6:20, 19:21) where Jesus said, "Your reward is in heaven," and He didn't mean, "Your reward is on a cloud." He meant that your reward and your treasures are in the New Jerusalem. Of course, when the New Jerusalem enters into its purpose, when it's established in the reason that God created it, it's on the earth.

WHO'S IN THE NEW JERUSALEM RIGHT NOW?

Someone asked me a question: "Well, is anyone in the New Jerusalem, and are they doing it right now?"

I don't know. I don't know. Right now I think of the third heaven, and possibly the third heaven overlaps with the New Jerusalem. I don't understand those details. All I know is that the purpose of the New Jerusalem is seen when it comes to the earth.

That is when its purpose is manifest and understood. Our residence is in that city, and that city is coming down. While we are on the earth our treasures, our rewards are in that city, but the city is on the earth, and the glory of that city fills the earth, eventually, over time. It's not the first day, but Jesus will see to it that the glory of that city will be implemented in the entire earth throughout the Millennium, step by step, process by process.

When it talks about your reward being in heaven, your reward is in the New Jerusalem, and that is what constitutes heaven and earth. In the new earth, all the glory of God in the New Jerusalem, which is where God's throne is, will completely permeate the new earth. There is nothing to hinder it.

The glory of the New Jerusalem will substantially touch the Millennial earth, but it will ultimately and completely touch the new earth.

Those are the four different understandings and realities about heaven. It's critical that you understand them, or you'll get confused about different Bible verses. "You're talking about heaven? Well, I'm not sure what's going to happen..."

THE CORRIDOR OF GLORY

C. The New Jerusalem will descend above the earth. I don't have this written exactly right: The New Jerusalem will descend to the earth in two stages. In stage one, it's above the Millennial earth. It's a partial but substantial descent of the New Jerusalem.

It's important to understand that, and the reason is, if you're really new at this, it's so new that you're thinking, "Wow, okay, I'm not following all of this." That's why I'm trying to go slowly and simply tonight. It's important to understand this, because there are a number of passages that don't make sense if you don't understand this distinction.

When you read it, you get confused. You say, "Wait, I thought the New Jerusalem didn't come until the end. What's going on now?"

You have to understand that the New Jerusalem descends to the earth two times.

The first time, the descent of the New Jerusalem is partial, but substantial, and it comes, and it's over the natural city of Jerusalem during the Millennium. It's not on the earth, but it is connected to the natural city of Jerusalem.

The term we have used through the last several years is that there's a "corridor of glory" between them. The New Jerusalem and the Millennial Jerusalem are dynamically connected, but the New Jerusalem is not; it's resting, but it's in close proximity to the earth.

In stage two, the New Jerusalem descending to the earth is total, and it's ultimate. It's on the earth. There is no "Corridor of Glory"-type reality necessary.

THE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE TWO JERUSALEMS

D. We're not going to go through this tonight, but I'm just pointing it out to you. I'm going to give you five reasons why the New Jerusalem is distinct from the Millennial Jerusalem. These are five reasons, and there are more than this, why the New Jerusalem does come down during the Millennium, but it's distinct and it's not synonymous with the earthly Millennial Jerusalem.

We're not going to go through those five reasons, but I wanted to put them there, and you can read them on your own time if that interests you.

E. Jesus will take everything good in heaven and everything good in earth, and He will join them fully together.

F. The New Jerusalem descending to the Millennial earth will create a brand-new situation. This happens at the second coming. When the New Jerusalem descends down to the Millennial earth, a whole situation is created for the earth because the two realms are now dynamically operating as one reality.

The two realms are dynamically operating as one reality. I have written there at the end of paragraph F that the Millennial earth and the new earth are similar, but there are differences. So when we talk about life in heaven during the Millennium, and we talk about life in heaven during the new earth, there are differences between them.

You are going to enjoy heaven on earth during the Millennium for the thousand years, but you will actually have more liberty, and it will be more dynamic in the new earth.

A FEW WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Again, if this is new to you, take just a little effort and you'll get the four heavens and the four uses of the word *earth*. It's not so difficult; it really is not.

I can just imagine if this was the first time I heard this, or maybe the second, I would be like the deer staring in the headlights thinking, "I'm not getting any of this."

Just work through this; it's not so hard to get it; it really is not. It's actually pretty simple once you've heard it three or four times and discussed it a few times with a friend.

Look up a couple of Bible verses and see if it is true. Don't believe anything that you can't see proven in the Scriptures, but don't throw away anything just because your upbringing didn't talk about it. If your upbringing is like most people's, you have never talked about heaven, except for in a couple of really vague ways.

Whatever you do, don't write it off simply because your denomination or your children's church didn't talk about it when you were a kid in the youth group. If we do that, we will have to throw away most of the Bible, because most of the Bible isn't really talked about in the midst of the different religious backgrounds.

WHY ARE HEAVEN AND EARTH COMING TOGETHER?

IV—Why are heaven and earth coming together? Again, this is such a critical part of understanding heaven. We can't go fast and bypass this reality. Heaven and earth are coming together, and why is this critical?

It is only when heaven and earth come together that God's fullness can be expressed.

A. God purposefully created the universe in two distinct realms back in Genesis 1:1. He created the heavens and He created the earth. He created the spirit realm and He created the natural realm. He created the universe in two distinct realms. God requires the spirit realm and the material realm to come together to express His full personality.

There are things in His personality that are not fully experienced or expressed only in the spirit realm. There are things in His personality that cannot be fully expressed just by the anointing in the physical realm.

The two realms have to come together with all of God's family. I'm talking about billions participating in it long-term. I'm talking about long-term for many, many, many years before the fullness of God can be openly seen.

THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S GLORY REVEALED

It is the only environment in which God's fullness can be seen. God wants to express the fullness of what is in His heart. The most staggering thing happened, and it's that God allowed His fullness to be expressed in a human being. His name is Jesus. Of course Jesus is fully God from eternity past, but Jesus was not a man. That was a new experience. Becoming Man was something He was not before He became Man.

THE FULLNESS OF JESUS EXPRESSED

It's more than that: Jesus, in touching the natural realm in His personhood, having a physical body and being the fullness of the supernatural realm, expressed the fullness of the Father in the physical and the natural dimensions that are necessary for all of God's personality to be manifest openly to His creation.

It's not just that His purpose is seen instantly. It's billions of His family members living in it together for billions of years, before the fullness of all that is in God's heart can be seen. The angels don't see it in the heavenly realm; they have to come together. The idea of the fullness is such a staggering concept, and it is so huge.

LOOKING TO THE ORIGINAL EARTH

V—Looking to the present earth. This is very important. We're going to end in just a moment, but we're going to get you ready for next week. Here is the key sentence; I didn't say it exactly right. I should have said, "Looking to the original earth." It's true that we do look toward the present earth, but more specifically to the original earth, to understand the new earth.

In other words, we look backwards to see what God created; we even look at the present earth, and there is truth in it, but that's not what I meant to say there, though it's true. We can look at the present earth and we can get significant clues as to life on the new earth, because the new earth is substantially an earth, whatever defines earth by God's definition.

The earth and its properties will continue. It is renovated and new; it's not a new entity. The essence of the earth will be the same, and that is why God titled it "the earth." Man did not title it the earth, God did.

What happened in Genesis 1, and what was meant by "the earth" in Genesis 1 is what is meant by "the new earth" in the book of Revelation.

What we don't want to do is, we don't want to miss the significance of the fact that God titled them the same, because the substance of the new earth, its roots and foundations, is understood by understanding the earth that we are on right now.

What we're going to do is to look at Genesis 1 and 2, and we're going to get significant clues. I want to encourage you to read it and check it out yourself.

We're going to get significant clues from Genesis 1 and 2 as to what God would do if there was no sin involved. How would He create? The fact is that God never changes, because when God created the earth in Genesis 1, He created it with us in mind. He wanted material human beings with material bodies. He created the environment of the earth in a way that would suit us, and in a way that would work with us. Again, this is before there was any sin.

So God creates the new earth with the same zeal to make it friendly to people who are physical. The new earth isn't an ethereal vapor. The new earth is everything that the earth is in its goodness, without sin.

SETTING OUR MINDS ON THINGS ABOVE

A. Look at the verse here in Colossians 3:1: "Seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2).

Now, the things above we can sum up in the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is coming down. We are to set our minds on the realm and the reality where the New Jerusalem is, in its God-ordained context on the earth. That is what we are to set our minds on, and to understand.

The reason that so few set their minds on this is because the earth, the things above, the things in the New Jerusalem that are coming down, are misunderstood. Again, they are so ethereal that they don't make sense. We can't relate to them yet.

Paul the apostle says, "No, it's critical that you set your mind on those."

How do you set your mind on an ethereal realm? How do you do that? The reason people don't do it is because they can't imagine it, and they can't relate to it. None of it makes sense to them.

So the only other option, if we're not setting our mind on the things above, the New Jerusalem that is coming down to the earth, which is heaven, if we don't set our minds on heaven, the only other alternative we have is to set our minds on the present earth.

BE HEAVENLY-MINDED

There's not a third option. I don't mean that we don't understand God's order on the earth, but heaven on earth needs to have a substantial place in our thinking and in our pondering; in our holy daydreaming, in our planning, in decision-making related to this heaven on earth that is yet to come.

Again, if people don't do this, the only other option is to set their minds on the earth, and that is the condition of the body of Christ.

Look at what 2 Peter 3:14 says: "Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things" — he's talking about the things of the new earth, because that is what 2 Peter is all about, the new earth; he says, "Looking forward to these things."

Here is the issue: Do we have enough instruction to look forward to it in a practical way? In a way that is real, and not just in an ethereal, "Yeah, I'm going to be on a cloud somewhere; it's going to be cool, I just believe it is. I can't picture it, and it doesn't make sense, but I am..."

Beloved, we end up not looking forward to it; we just end up ignoring the concept.

You've heard the old saying, "He's so heavenly-minded that he's no earthly good." I have never met such a person. I've met a person who's an airhead; I've met a person who's totally unreliable, a space cadet-type person, but they aren't heavenly-minded, they're unreliable. They're spacey. They're not faithful.

That is what we're talking about. They don't do what they say.

That's not being heavenly-minded.

Really, the truth is the exact opposite. There is no one who's so heavenly-minded that they're no earthly good. They are so earthly-minded that they are no earthly good. It's exactly the opposite.

The only way we will be most effective on the earth is by being heavenly-minded. If the earth is what fills our minds, we will never enter into our potential effectiveness on the earth. We're talking about this present earth.

OK, we're just going to end with that. We will take up with looking at some of the implications of Genesis 1 and 2, to the future to which God is bringing the body of Christ on the new earth in the years to come after the second coming. Let's stand.