

Session 1 Foundational Principles for Understanding Heaven on Earth

I. THE CENTERPIECE OF GOD’S PURPOSE: BRING HEAVEN AND EARTH TOGETHER

⁹ ***Having made known to us the mystery (hidden plan) of His will...10 that He might gather together in one ALL things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth.* (Eph. 1:9-10)**

- A. The centerpiece of God’s eternal purpose is for Jesus to come back to fully establish His Kingdom rule over all the earth as He joins the heavenly and earthly realms together.
- B. ***Heaven*** speaks of the supernatural realm where God’s presence is openly manifest. It is the place believers go to (last 2,000 years) as a “temporary holding pattern” for disembodied spirits.
- C. ***Earth*** speaks of the physical realm as the place where natural process, human emotion and physical sensation reach full expression, thus, requiring a resurrected body. The earth will continue forever (Ps. 37:29; 78:69; 104:5; 105:10-11; 125:1-2; 1 Chr. 23:25; 28:8; Isa. 60:21; Ezek. 37:25; Joel 3:20). Theologians debate on whether this present earth will be renovated (renewed) or annihilated after the Millennium. I believe it will be renovated.
- D. God’s purpose has always been to live together with His people ***face to face on this earth***. This is the most difficult yet ultimate reality that God determined to accomplish through Christ. The dilemma is that God cannot violate His blazing holiness and yet will not violate man’s free will. He had to provide a salvation that created the context for Him to dwell face to face with humans.
³ ***Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (Rev. 21:3)***
- E. In the Millennial Kingdom, Jesus’ primary mandate is to ***prepare the earth for the Father’s coming*** by bringing all the people and nations to mature righteousness (1 Cor. 15:24-28).
- F. Jesus will rule the earth with the natural human processes ***not suspended***, yet significantly ***enhanced*** by the supernatural dimension of the Spirit. We see aspects of this when Jesus appeared and taught His disciples for forty days in His resurrected body (Jn. 20-21; Acts 1).
- G. As Gentiles, we think of worshipping Jesus in the supernatural conditions of heaven emphasizing His deity as the Son of God. The Jewish paradigm, focuses on reigning with the Messianic King in the natural conditions of the earth emphasizing His humanity as the Son of David.
- H. There are 3 types of people on earth when Jesus appears in the sky at the Second Coming. The ***redeemed*** are those who will be raptured. The ***reprobates*** take the mark of the Beast and will be judged. The ***resistors*** are the unsaved survivors of the Tribulation who refuse to worship the Antichrist. They are “those who are left.” They will have the opportunity to be converted after Jesus returns. They will populate the Millennial earth (Isa. 4:3; 10:20; 11:11; 49:6; 65:8; 66:19; Jer. 31:2; Ezek. 20:38-42; 36:36; Dan. 12:1; Amos 9:9-10; Joel 2:32; Zech. 12:14; 13:8; 14:16).

II. WE MUST UNDERSTAND JESUS' 1000-YEAR EARTHLY REIGN OVER ALL NATIONS

- A. The Millennium speaks of a literal 1000-year period in which Jesus rules all the nations on earth as He rules every sphere of life (political, social, agricultural, economic, spiritual, etc.)
⁴ *I saw thrones, and they (saints of Rev. 19:14) sat on them, and judgment was committed to them...They lived and reigned with Christ for 1,000 years. 6 ...they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him 1,000 years. (Rev. 20:4-6)*
- B. This period of global blessing is initiated by Jesus' coming to establish a 1000-year period of righteousness and unprecedented blessing for the whole earth as Jesus restores life to conditions seen in the Garden of Eden (Rev. 20:1-6; Isa. 2:1-4; 9:6-9; 11:1-16; 51:1-8; 60-62; 65:17-25; Ps. 2:6-12; 110:1-7; Mt. 5:5; 6:10; 17:11; 19:28; Acts 1:6; 3:21). The Millennium is a term that speaks of Jesus' 1000-year rule (*millennium*: Latin “*mille*” or ‘thousand’ and “*annus*” ‘a year’).
- C. At this time, all the kings of the earth will be born again and will worship Jesus (Ps. 72:11; 102:15; 138:4; 148:11; Isa. 60:10-11; 62:2; Rev. 12:5; 15:4; 21:24).
¹¹ *Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. (Ps. 72:11)*
- D. Scripture emphasizes that the saints will be given leadership roles so as to reign with Jesus on earth in the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5; Mt. 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom 8:17).
- E. Jesus will be the King over all the other kings in the Millennium (Rev. 19:16). In other words, Jesus will govern a worldwide Kingdom from Jerusalem in partnership with two sets of kings: the *Millennial kings* with non-resurrected bodies, and the *resurrected kings* (saints). Together they will establish a biblically based, social order that affects every sphere of life.
- F. The two functions most emphasized for the saints are: priests and kings (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).
- G. As priests, the saints will worship, intercede and communicate the knowledge of God to others i.e., non-resurrected people on the Millennial earth and saints and angels in the New Jerusalem.
- H. As kings, the saints will reign (rule) with judicial responsibility and authority. This role involves authority to evaluate the past (judging) and to determine action plans for the future for the people and areas that they are over. The ruling saints will appoint people into positions in the infrastructure that are within their sphere of Kingdom responsibility. This will include training and managing the people who are appointed. The saints will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:2).
- I. Jesus taught that there is a great difference in the measure of glory and greatness that we all experience in God's Kingdom. There will be great diversity of positions, functions and people.
⁴¹ *There is one glory of the sun...and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. 15:41-42)*

III. DEFINING EARTH AND HEAVEN

- A. Earth in Scripture is used to describe our planet in four different time frames. First, the original earth which God called “very good” (Gen. 1:31) before Adam sinned. Second, this present earth which is under the curse of sin (Gen. 3:16-19; Rom. 8:20-22). Third, the Millennial earth will be established in substantial righteousness and justice by Jesus' coming to establish a 1000-year period of unprecedented blessing (Isa. 2:1-4; 9:6-9; 11:6-9; 65:20-25). Fourth, the New Earth which is established in perfect righteousness after the Millennial Kingdom is completed (2 Pet. 3:13). This is the time when the Father will dwell on earth with His people.

¹ I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...² I saw... the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven...³ Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them...God will be with them... (Rev. 21:1-3)

¹³ We...look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Pet. 3:13)

- B. Heaven in Scripture can be used to refer to four different realities. The first heavens refers to the sky (atmosphere) above the earth. The mid-heavens (heavenly places) refers to the place from which high ranking demonic powers rule (Eph. 2:2; 6:12). The Third Heaven is the place of God's Throne and where angels and disembodied saints live (2 Cor. 12:2). I refer to the Third Heaven as the “present heaven.” The fourth usage refers to the New Jerusalem or heaven on earth. It is the place of our heavenly rewards (Mt. 6:20; 19:21; Mk. 10:21; Lk. 12:21, 33; 18:22).
- C. The New Jerusalem descends to just above the Millennial earth in two stages. Stage one of the descent of the New Jerusalem is partial yet substantial at the Second Coming (Rev. 21:10). Stage two is total and ultimate and occurs at the after the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 21:2).
- D. There are at least **five reasons** that the New Jerusalem is distinct from the Millennial Jerusalem (not resting on earth, yet close to it). First, the Kings of the earth come into the New Jerusalem during the Millennium to bring their glory (Rev. 21:24). Second, the leaves are for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2). Third, the angels guard sinners from entry (Rev. 21:12, 22:14-15). Fourth, the New Jerusalem lights up the saved nations on the Millennial earth (not unsaved ones) (Rev. 21:24; 20:7-9). Fifth, the size of the Millennial Jerusalem is approximately 10 square miles (4,500 rods x 4,500 rods) (Ezek. 48:30-35; 45:6; 48:15-19). The New Jerusalem is 1500 miles.
- E. Jesus will take everything (good) in heaven and earth and bring them fully together. The physical properties of the Millennial earth and then the New Earth will consist of tangible substance. The earthly realm requires a resurrected body that the saints may have greater expression and experience. Demons seek the greater expression that comes in possessing (dwelling in) humans.
- ⁴³ When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. ⁴⁴ Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' (Mt. 12:43-44)*
- F. The New Jerusalem descending to the Millennial earth will create a new situation in which the spiritual and physical realms will dynamically operate together. The Millennial earth and the New Earth are similar but will have differences.

IV. THE FULLNESS OF GOD

- A. God purposefully created the universe in two distinct realms. God requires the spirit realm and the material realm to come together to fully express His personality and purposes (Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19; 4:13; Col. 1:19-20; 2:9-10; Jn. 1:16; Rom. 11:12, 15).
- ¹⁹ *It pleased the Father that in Him (Jesus) all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself...whether things on earth or things in heaven...* (Col. 1:19-20)
- ¹⁹ *To know the love of Christ...that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.* (Eph. 3:19)
- B. **Heaven** speaks of the supernatural spirit realm of God's presence. **Earth** speaks of the material physical realm where human emotions and physical sensation reach their fullest expression. We will live in context to a concrete reality along with supernatural splendor (New Jerusalem) as we are filled with the Spirit. The physical properties of the Millennial earth (then most probably the New Earth) will have material substance (gold, steel, wood, food, animals, etc.).

V. LOOKING TO THE PRESENT EARTH TO UNDERSTAND THE NEW EARTH

- A. We are to set our mind thus our imagination on the things above and to look forward to them.
- ¹ *Seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.* (Col. 3:1-2)
- ¹⁴ *Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things (New Earth)...* (2 Peter 3:14)
- B. What God did in Gen. 1-2 is a picture of what He thinks is good (wise and loving for us) when sin is not an issue. We see heaven best by looking below at this present earth through the lens of Gen. 1-2. God made the original earth and the New Earth for us or with us in mind.
- ⁹ *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard...the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.* (1 Cor. 2:9-10)
- ²¹ *For all things are yours; 22 whether...the world or life or death, or things present or things to come--all are yours.* (1 Cor. 3:21-23)
- C. The fact that we were made from the dust or from the material creation (before sin) points to the fact that we were strategically designed by God to live in and love the material creation. God planned this because He chose to dwell with His people on earth. One of the most common errors that causes us to misunderstand heaven coming to earth is that the spirit realm is good and is God's solution to the bad and weak earthly (material) realm.
- D. Gen. 1-2 and Rev. 21-22 are the two bookends of the Bible, one is a natural and the other is a spiritual dimension of the New Earth. God purposely revealed the physical realm to us before the spiritual. We look at the natural realm to get important and substantial insights into the spiritual.
- ⁴⁶ *The spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.* (1 Cor. 15:46)