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Sermon Notes

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The New Heaven and the New Earth

Revelation 21:1-8

In 2004, Randy Alcorn published a massive book on Heaven called... HEAVEN!

Randy Alcorn wrote it because he was shocked to find that many people actually DREADED the thought of going to heaven... because they have this view of heaven as an ethereal, spiritual, non-physical place in which we are all sitting on wispy clouds and strumming harps of gold... singing "Amazing Grace"... and when we've been there ten thousand years, we've no less days to sing 'Amazing Grace' than when we first begun!"

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain portrayed that faulty view of Heaven... Miss Watson, the strict Christian woman who was taking care of Huck was continually warning him that he would not go to heaven with such a loose lifestyle. Huck said about her, "She went on and told me all about the good place. She said all a body would have to do there was go around all day long with a harp and sing forever and ever. So I didn't think much of it.... I asked her if she thought Tom Sawyer would go there, and she said, 'Not by a considerable sight.' And I was glad about that, because I wanted him and me to be together."

Clearly such a view of heaven was utterly unappealing to Huck... and if we're honest it is to us as well

Alcorn wrote his book to help drive away such depressing views of heaven...
BUT WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

There is no other way to learn about heaven than to study scripture... and no better place in all the Bible than these last two chapters of Revelation

We're going to take our time going through them, to squeeze all the sweet juice we can out of this INCOMPLETE VIEW that words can afford

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

I. Our Heavenly Mindedness Glorifies God

A. God Has Commanded Us to Fill Our Hearts with Heaven

Colossians 3:1-4 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

B. The Greater the Suffering, the Sweeter are Meditations on Heaven

1. Brothers and sisters being persecuted for their faith feed their souls on heavenly meditation

Matthew 5:11-12 *"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

2. Prison cells filled with invisible light, streaming from heaven into the hearts of the suffering children of God

Brother Yun... "The Heavenly Man"... leader of house church movement in China... When Brother Yun was arrested the first time, he was only 17 years old. At that time, he was ministering at a meeting far away from home. After he was caught, he was thrown into a freezing cold prison cell. There was no heat in the cell and his winter coat had been thrown into the snow by the security police who had caught him. He began to sing Psalm 150 aloud. The more he sang, the more he was filled with joy. Gradually, his frozen hands and feet regained feeling and he no longer felt cold. This would be a regular pattern in his imprisonments... he was called "Heavenly Man" because his hope in heaven was so clearly on display in his imprisonments

3. On southern plantations before the Civil War, slaves working out in the cotton fields would sing constantly of heaven... the only solace they had in a life of unremitting sorrow, pain, and injustice

"Swing low, sweet chariot... coming for to carry me home!

I looked over Jordan, and what did I see
 A band of angels coming after me
 I'm sometimes up and sometimes down
 But still my soul feels heavenly bound

"Swing low, sweet chariot... coming for to carry me home!

C. Our Present Affluent Life Reduces this Sweetness

Proverbs 27:7 He who is full loathes honey, but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.

1. The Bible says we are “aliens and strangers” here in this world
2. Those who lived by faith in the past knew this and saw this present world as temporary, and in many cases hostile to the health of their souls
3. But when all our needs are met, our stomachs are full of good things, our beds are warm, there is no danger on the horizon, it is so easy to forget God and our heavenly future

Deuteronomy 8:12-14 When you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God

D. Multiple Benefits of a strong yearning for heaven

1. Strong yearning for heaven proves what your treasure is

Matthew 6:19-21 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

2. Strong yearning for heaven develops Christian character... fearlessness, boldness, perseverance
3. Strong yearning for heaven greatly glorifies God

Psalm 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

4. Strong yearning for heaven makes all life God-centered
5. Strong yearning for heaven helps us realize how insignificant are our present worldly concerns... both our successes and our sufferings:
6. Strong yearning for heaven results in holiness, purity from worldliness

Colossians 3:4-6 SET YOUR MINDS ON HEAVENLY THINGS... When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry

7. Strong yearning for heaven drives missions and evangelism

- a. ETERNAL HOPE is the one thing non-Christians do not have; they are “without hope and without God in the world”

1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

8. Strong yearning for heaven enables us to persevere through suffering

Romans 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

9. Strong yearning for heaven keeps us vigorously serving God to the end of our lives

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

- E. So... as we finish our sermon series in Revelation, we get two magnificent chapters of extended details on the heavenly future!

II. The New Heavens and New Earth Revealed (vs. 1)

A. The New Heaven and the New Earth: a Physical, Spiritual Reality

1. This is the consummation of God’s original intention in creation

The Bible begins with Creation and ends with the New Creation

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away

2. New Heaven and New Earth will be a physical and spiritual reality

3. We should picture walking physically in a magnificent new world, exploring its beauties and mysteries

4. Like Lewis and Clark’s expedition of the Louisiana Purchase

5. Discovering the secrets of the glory of God in the new universe

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

6. Genesis 2 gives the picture of a new world to be explored...

Genesis 2:10-14 *A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. ¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there*

So also the New Heaven and New Earth has a river as well:

Revelation 22:1-2 *Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month.*

B. HEAVEN Must Be Predicted and Revealed... or we would not know

1. The phrase "New Heaven and New Earth" first in Isaiah 65-66

Isaiah 65:17-18 *"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.*

C. The First Heaven and First Earth Passed Away

Revelation 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,*

1. We covered this last time, in discussing this verse

Revelation 20:11 *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.*

2. So also Hebrews 1, quoting Psalm 102

Hebrews 1:10-12 *"In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ¹¹ They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. ¹² You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."*

3. Peter makes it plain how totally destroyed everything we see around us will be

2 Peter 3:10 *the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.*

2 Peter 3:12 *That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.*

D. Continuity and Difference... Like the Resurrection Body

1. Lots of debate about whether the New Heavens and New Earth will be created ex nihilo... out of nothing... like the first universe; OR made from the purified stuff of the present universe
2. Just the name NEW HEAVEN and NEW EARTH implies continuity
3. I think it will be like the resurrection body... continuity and difference
4. BUT 1 Corinthians 15 uses amazing words

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 *The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*

IMPERISHABLE... GLORIOUS... POWERFUL... SPIRITUAL

The last phrase: "a spiritual body" shows a mysterious combination of spirituality and physicality

We will be able to touch the new earth, walk on the ground of the new earth... feel it touching our resurrection bodies... it will be a RESURRECTED EARTH

Anthony Hoekema: "Resurrected bodies are not intended just to float in space, or to flit from cloud to cloud. They call for a NEW EARTH on which to live and to work, glorifying God. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body makes no sense whatever apart from the doctrine of the NEW EARTH."

E. No Longer Any Sea

1. The text says amazingly: ***"There is no longer any sea"***
2. To many, this is distressing! The sea can be spectacularly beautiful; people have powerful memories of walking on a beach, watching the sunset over the water, turning it red, orange, purple... glistening with radiant sunlight
3. However, the sea is also a source of terror to many; it was the sea that God used to destroy the world the first time in the Flood of Noah
4. The sea harbors unnamed sea monsters that the ancient Hebrews were in terror of, that the Psalms and Isaiah say God slew

***Psalm 89:9-10 You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.
¹⁰ You crushed Rahab like one of the slain***

5. The churning sea was the source of all the evil empires that arose in Daniel's vision

Daniel 7:2-3 Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. ³ Four great beasts... came up out of the sea.

6. Taken literally, the fact that there will be no sea in the New Earth shows **an entirely different ecology**

From the sea we get 70% of our oxygen, generated by marine plants

From the sea we get 83% of our rainwater

Apparently the ecology and biology of the New Earth will be radically different

Also, the surface of the present earth covered by water is 71.1%. If all of that surface area became land, how vast would be the world we would be exploring and living in!!

Some people now think of the crowded, overpopulated earth... it's not true, it's a pagan way of thinking... but the New Earth will have 4 times as much surface area to support a much smaller population

AND fewer people... It would surprise me if 10% of the human race ends up converted...

Matthew 7:13-14 Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

5% of the earth's population inhabiting 4 times the surface area... vast areas to explore, settle, work, develop!

Summary: a new universe is coming... it will be radiant with the glory of God and will be our home for all eternity... we would know nothing about it, except that scripture reveals that it is coming... the New Heavens and New Earth

III. The New Jerusalem Descends from God (vs. 2)

Revelation 21:2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

A. The **Capital City** of God's Eternal Empire

1. There will be both a glorious world and a radiant city

I have seen some amazing sights in some of the greatest cities in the world... my heart LOVES nature, the scenes of natural grandeur in the National Parks... the rocky Maine coastline in Acadia National Park; the soaring, majestic forests of the Redwoods in northern California; the stunning purple Grand Teton mountains of Wyoming; the wide, slow, relentless flow of the Mississippi River; Old Faithful, the sulfurous geyser in Yellowstone

But the sights of some of the greatest cities of the world can be almost as breathtaking... I spoke at a conference in New York City and stayed on the 30th floor of a nice hotel in Avenue of the Americas and looked at a man-made Grand Canyon of lights up and down that skyscraping avenue; I climbed the Eiffel Tower at twilight and saw Paris ignite with electricity – human lights twinkling as far as the eye could see – that’s why it’s called the “City of Lights”; I loved the old world feel of Prague in the Czech Republic... with its quaint European architecture and cobblestoned town squares and its historic Charles Bridge crossing the Vltava River... artists gather there to paint the bridge itself with its spectacular view of the Prague Castle – the largest ancient castle in the world... this past summer I walked along the Thames River in London and saw some of the most famous man-made structures in Europe – the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben, as well as the Tower Bridge, frequently called “London Bridge”

I have also seen the sprawling and historic Forbidden City in Beijing, with countless interior courtyards and gates, which was built for the Emperors of China, built from 1406-1420, over 70 years before Columbus discovered the New World!

Truly the great cities of the world have displayed the ingenuity and creativity of the human race, and even if done out of pride, there is an element of the glory of God in what humans can craft

Cities represent people TOGETHER, in society together... doing work together... experiencing history together... building amazing structures together

2. Now both NATURAL beauty and ARCHITECTURAL beauty are mentioned in Hebrews 11:13-16... a COUNTRY and a CITY

Hebrews 11: 16 ... they were longing for a better country-- a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

3. The country implies a world to explore, vast, spacious, teeming with life and scenic vistas... lakes, rivers, hills, forests, fields, spectacular scenery and vast open spaces
4. The city implies a concentration of population... a society... a common language and culture... BEING TOGETHER
5. It is a place of BUILDINGS, of human ARCHITECTURE, construction and glorious, lofty displays of human effort
6. This New Jerusalem will descend from heaven already constructed by the hand of God

B. "Jerusalem": The Old Jerusalem was the City of David

1. It was the center of the Jewish world...
2. It was the place God chose out of all the tribes to put his name there
3. The place where the Jews were commanded to go three times a year for pilgrimage to worship God

Psalm 84:1-5 How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty! ² My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

C. BUT the City of Jerusalem had to be REDEEMED by the blood of Christ

Isaiah 1:21 See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her-- but now murderers!

Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

- D. The New Jerusalem perfectly pure... the Perfection of the Old Testament purpose... Especially the Place Where God Dwells in Glory in the Midst of his People
- E. The New Jerusalem is both a city and a people... the church of Jesus Christ, the bride of Christ is the New Jerusalem
 1. But since we will have resurrection bodies, we will need to dwell SOMEWHERE... in some LOCATION... and that is in the New Heavens and New Earth and the HOLY CITY
- F. Here...A BRIDE, beautifully dressed for her husband
 1. She is radiantly beautiful, ready for her wedding day

2. She is COMING DOWN READY... she was made ready in heaven by God himself... prepared for thousands of years of redemptive history
 - a. Thousands of years of evangelism, rescuing people from Satan's dark kingdom of Babylon
 - b. Thousands of years of sanctification, of her being gradually made perfect
 - c. In this Christ got her ready, and she got herself ready

Revelation 19:7-8 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ⁸ Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

Revelation 21:9-11 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

3. the text says "Adorned" or "beautifully dressed" for her husband... the Greek word is *kosmeo* from which we get the word "cosmetics"
4. The adornment of the bride for earthly weddings involves every area of her appearance
 - a. Her dress is the most costly she will ever wear... many brides' dresses are woven from the costliest silk, shimmering and magnificent
 - b. Her hair is perfectly styled, every hair in place
 - c. Her face is shining with joy and natural beauty
 - d. Her jewels sparkle, costly and tasteful

In American weddings, the bride gets herself ready with her mother and her bridesmaids and professional beauticians who work on her dress, hair, nails, cosmetics...

Traditionally, not only does the bridegroom have nothing to do with getting her beautiful, he's not even allowed to SEE HER until she walks down the aisle

BUT this radiant Bride of Christ, the church, the followers of Christ, will be perfectly ready for the wedding day specifically because Christ made her beautiful

Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

When he found her, she was ugly, sinful, rebellious and wretched... covered with the filth of sin, disgusting to the holy gaze of God

After all this saving work by his atoning blood, his indwelling Spirit, and the ministry of the Word, she will be made ready for the wedding feast of the Lamb

G. The Wedding Image is a Timeless Picture of God and His People

1. In the Old Testament, it was God and Israel...

Jeremiah 2:2-3 Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: "I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown. ³ Israel was holy to the LORD

When Israel followed after the Baals, it was considered spiritual adultery... because God was married to his people

2. In the consummation of the New Covenant, it is Christ and the church

IV. The Central Joy of Heaven: God Dwells with His People (vs. 3)

Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

A. God Speaks About the Central Joy of Heaven

1. The voice comes from the throne... this is Almighty God, speaking LOUDLY so all the universe can hear
2. The central joy of heaven is GOD and HIS PEOPLE in face to face, intimate fellowship

“NOW... AT LAST... the dwelling of God is with men!!”

It's like God has been waiting, and yearning, and working for this moment for thousands and thousands of years

All the patience, and pain, and compassion, and suffering, and powerful work will have come to a sweet consummation

B. The Timeless Desire of God as Stated Again and Again in the Old Testament

*Leviticus 26:11-12 I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you.
¹² I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.*

Jeremiah 7:23 Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people.

New Covenant predicted in Jeremiah:

*Jeremiah 31:31-34 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... ³³ "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. **I will be their God, and they will be my people.** ³⁴ No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

So also Ezekiel:

*Ezekiel 36:25-28 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. ²⁸ **You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.***

The final word in Ezekiel:

*Ezekiel 48:35 And the name of the city from that time on will be: **THE LORD IS THERE.***

C. The Dwelling Glory Finally Fulfilled

1. God says here that at last he will PUT HIS DWELLING AMONG his people
2. The Greek word relates to the "Shekinah" glory of God, the glory cloud which God used to show his people that he was in their midst
3. The word is literally "dwelling glory"... the cloud that filled the Tabernacle, which was a physical, visible symbol of God's desire to dwell with the Jews
4. The same thing happened when Solomon dedicated his temple; a glory cloud filled it
5. Ezekiel: the glory cloud departed from the Temple... the problem was the people's SIN... God could not dwell with them

Exodus 33:3 Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way."

6. But now, in the consummation of the New Covenant and the saving work of God, he will dwell in FACE to FACE communion with his people!!

D. This is the Reward of Heaven!!

1. God is an astonishing being, full of light and love and glory
2. He is infinitely wise... his understanding has no limit
3. There is no end to what we can and will learn about him
4. Forever we will be studying the infinite mystery of the Godhead... Father, Son, Spirit... we will never tire of drinking in his attributes—his self-existence, holiness, power, mercy, and especially love
5. God is our reward

Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."

E. What's Amazing? Why Does God Want to be with US??

1. It makes perfect sense that we would want to know the infinite greatness of such a being
2. But why does he want anything to do with us?

Luke 18:13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

Isaiah 6:2-3 With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Isaiah 6:5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

We are not worthy of his attention... and yet Jesus displayed how DEEPLY God wants to be with us

Luke 22:15-16 "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

The Father of the Prodigal Son:

Luke 15:20, 23 "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him

and kissed him. ... Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate.

3. God deeply desires to spend eternity with us, once all our sins have been covered by the blood of Christ and our hearts have been transformed to be just like Jesus'

This face to face fellowship with God is our heavenly reward, our eternal inheritance... we get HIM and he gets us!

All the other blessings of heaven are far less... but let's talk about them... over the next FEW WEEKS in Revelation 21-22

V. Other Joys of Heaven: No More Death, Mourning, Crying, or Pain (vs. 4)

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

VI. God's Present Invitation to an Eternal Home (vs. 5-7)

A. God's Direct Activity in Creating this Coming World

Revelation 21:5 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."

GOD'S INVITATION

Revelation 21:6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life."

B. Are you THIRSTY?

1. Is that you?

- a. Do you want full forgiveness of sins?
- b. Do you want to be reconciled to God?
- c. Do you yearn to be in his presence and drink from his goodness?
- d. Do you yearn to be in a world with no death, mourning, crying, pain?
- e. Do you yearn to be in a perfectly righteous world, with no sin at all?
- f. Are you thirsty?

2. Christ is offering this water of eternal life NOW and TOTALLY FREE!!

Isaiah 55:1 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

C. The Gift is Given Freely to Those Who Overcome

Revelation 21:7 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

1. To overcome = to believe in Christ...

1 John 5:4 everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

VII. God's Terrifying Warning of Who Will Be Excluded (vs. 8)

Revelation 21:8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars-- their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

VIII. Applications

A. Top Priority: Accept God's Gracious Invitation to Come and Drink Freely from the Water of Life flowing from Christ!!!

1. Double incentive: to inherit heaven... to avoid the lake of fire
2. This is the most momentous decision you could ever make
3. COME TO CHRIST NOW... while there is time and freedom to do it
4. The invitation is FREE... the living water is FREE...
5. You cannot pay for it; you cannot earn it

B. Christians

1. Delight in heaven daily... read Revelation 21-22 regularly
2. Set your heart on THINGS ABOVE... and on THINGS TO COME
 - a. Look forward to the New Heavens and the New Earth
 - b. Delight in the beauty of that coming world; realize this present world is so temporary
 - c. Yearn for the New Jerusalem that is being prepared even now by Christ in heaven

3. Let heavenly meditation delight you; let it free you from the sinful pleasures that so allure your soul... PURIFY your life to be made ready for heaven
4. Proclaim the gospel THIS WEEK to someone... speak of these delights of heaven; warn them of the terrors of hell