

REVELATION—UNVEILING THE END, ACT 3 THE FINAL CURTAIN

STUDY ELEVEN

Heaven at Last

Revelation 21:1–8

Popular opinions about heaven are almost always wrong. We're not going to be sprouting wings and strumming a harp on a cloud. Did you know that heaven in the future will be on solid ground?

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

ALL people share a faint, nagging sensation that we are strangers in this world. Nothing about this earth convinces our hearts to settle down and make it home. Even in those cozy moments when we sit by a fireplace with a cup of warm coffee enjoying the company of the people we love, we know this feeling of home won't last. There must be something more. Something eternal.

In his book, *Heaven: The Heart's Deepest Longing*, Peter Kreeft describes this homesick feeling:

We have a homing instinct, a “home detector,” and it doesn't ring for earth. That's why nearly every society in history except our own instinctively believes in life after death. Like the great mythic wanderers . . . we have been trying to get home. Earth just doesn't smell like home. However good a road it is, however good a motel it is . . . it is not home. Heaven is.¹

In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, we invite you to listen to your heart. Where does your heart long to be?



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Share with the Lord in prayer your longing to be at home with Christ. Let this prayer prompt your own words.

Father, the more I try to feel comfortable in this world, the more my heart yearns for my true home with You. Speak to me through Your Word and give me a soul-satisfying taste of the heaven I long for. In Jesus' faithful name I pray. Amen.



Heaven at Last

Revelation 21:1–8



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Revelation 21 marks the culmination of God’s original plan to redeem fallen humanity and restore creation. In Genesis, God promised a deliverer—the “offspring” of the woman who will crush the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15). That messianic hope was passed on to Abraham, to his son Isaac, then to Jacob, and to Jacob’s descendants. It was illustrated in God’s deliverance in Exodus, longed for by the judges, amplified in the kings, and predicted in the prophets.

Finally, it was fulfilled in the Gospels when Jesus died for our sins and arose victorious over death. But not until the events in Revelation will the themes of redemption and new creation come to a climax—when the trumpet sounds and Christ returns to defeat Satan and sin once and for all.

In a great conflagration, the old, cursed creation “will melt away” (2 Peter 3:12), and God will fashion “a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1). The saga of Scripture comes full circle. “The old order of things has passed away” (21:4 NIV). Paradise lost will be paradise reborn—only better!



Observation: Our Heavenly Home

Rather than a garden, though, God will provide a spectacular heaven-on-earth home in which His people will dwell. In God’s presence, our heart’s deepest longings will finally be satisfied. Let’s use our skills of observation² to find out what our eternal home will look like, what life will be like there, and who will be its residents.

What Heaven Will Look Like—Revelation 21:1–2

How did John describe what he saw in *Revelation 21:1–2*? What replaced “the old heaven and the old earth”?

In Revelation, the sea represented a foreboding place, a breeding ground for evil (*Revelation 13:1*). John’s readers associated the “sea” with darkness, death, and chaos. What would John’s statement, “the sea was also gone” (21:1), have meant to them?

Heaven at Last

Revelation 21:1–8

What Life Will Be Like—Revelation 21:3–6

John’s vision commenced with a “loud voice like a trumpet blast” (Revelation 1:10). Loud angelic voices punctuated John’s vision many times. Here are a few significant loud-voice pronouncements in Revelation:

- “Who is worthy to break the seals?” (5:2)
- “Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne!” (7:10)
- “The world has now become the Kingdom of our Lord.” (11:15)
- “The accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down.” (12:10)
- “It is finished!” (16:17)
- “Praise the LORD! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.” (19:6)

Now, in a climactic shout from heaven, what did the last angelic voice declare in [21:3–4](#)? What will *not* be in heaven?

God Himself then spoke from His throne. What words of hope did He offer in [21:5–6](#)? What will be in heaven?

We are caught in the web of a cursed world, surrounded by evil, fighting battles within and without. No wonder we turn to fantasy to escape. This is no fantasy! Heaven is the most “real” our existence could possibly be. We are surrounded with the Alpha-and-Omega presence of the living God.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Heaven at Last

Revelation 21:1–8

Who Will Be There—Revelation 21:7–8

Who will be in heaven, according to *Revelation 21:7*? What promise did God give?

Who will not be in heaven, according to *21:8*?

Heaven is made up of those who have turned by faith alone to the Lord Jesus Christ alone and have found their thirst satisfied in Him. They are the overcomers. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: God’s Pronouncement from His Throne

Throughout Revelation, the Lamb spoke, the elders spoke, the angels spoke, but in *Revelation 21:5–8*, John wrote down what God Himself spoke. First, God pronounced, “Look, I am making everything new!” (*Revelation 21:5*), which is the climax of the book of Revelation and the culmination of all things.

The word *new* is qualitative, meaning “better.” God will not simply re-create His original design. Rather, He will make something new—what the original design was supposed to become. More wonderful than the beginning. What makes God’s “new” creation better? (Hint: look at the surrounding verses to draw your interpretation.)

God’s new creation won’t be a little like the old earth. It’s eternal. It’s brand new, fresh. It’s different in appearance. Different in atmosphere. It’s completely new. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Heaven at Last

Revelation 21:1–8

Second, God declared, “It is finished!” (Revelation 21:6). The Greek term suggests absolute finality—“a permanent condition that has fully arrived.”³ What was God communicating to His people languishing in a dead-end, sin-cursed world?

Finally, God made three “I” statements in [21:6–7](#): “I am . . .” (21:6), “I will give . . .” (21:6), and “I will be . . .” (21:7). These statements refer to God’s *person*, His *provision*, and His *presence*. Taken together, what do they tell us about God and His relationship with us?

What do these verses say to your heart?

Some think that earthly fame, fortune, or pleasure will satisfy, but these people aren't informed. They don't know that the water that's worth drinking is free! It comes from the One who alone can provide it. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: I Will Be Your God

God delighted in His close relationship with Adam and Eve as He walked with them “in the cool of the day” (Genesis 3:8 NASB). Sin, however, severed that intimacy when God “banished them from the Garden of Eden” (3:23). Ever since that tragic separation, God set out to restore His close relationship with those He loved.

From the following verses, write down the ways you see through biblical history God giving His people a taste of dwelling with Him and a promise of something better.

[Genesis 17:5–7](#) _____

[Exodus 6:6–7](#) _____

Heaven at Last

Revelation 21:1–8

Leviticus 26:11–12 _____

Jeremiah 31:33 _____

Zechariah 8:7–8 _____

John 1:14 _____

2 Corinthians 6:16 _____

Ephesians 2:21–22 _____

All these incidences looked forward to the day that John foresaw when the angel declared,

“Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people.” (Revelation 21:3)

Our hearts long to be “home” with God—where God will be with us and we will be His people for eternity. What do you think that experience will be like for you?

“God Himself will dwell among us.” There will be an intimacy like we have never known before. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Heaven’s “No Mores”

The best way that John could describe our eternal home with God was to imagine what it will be like without sin’s effects. In his commentary, Pastor Chuck Swindoll lists “Twelve ‘No Mores’ in the New Heaven and Earth” from Revelation 21–22. Some of the points that appear later in Revelation 21–22 will whet your appetite for our next studies, but it’s encouraging to see them all in one place. As you read the list, hear the words sing to the deepest longing in your heart.

1. *No more sea*—because chaos and calamity will be eradicated (21:1).
2. *No more tears*—because hurtful memories will be replaced (21:4).
3. *No more death*—because mortality will be swallowed up by life (21:4).
4. *No more mourning*—because sorrow will be completely comforted (21:4).
5. *No more crying*—because the sounds of weeping will be soothed (21:4).

Heaven at Last

Revelation 21:1–8

6. *No more pain*—because human suffering will be cured (21:4).
7. *No more thirst*—because God will graciously quench all desires (21:6).
8. *No more wickedness*—because all evil will be banished (21:8, 27).
9. *No more temple*—because the Father and Son are personally present (21:22).
10. *No more night*—because God’s glory will give eternal light (21:23–25; 22:5).
11. *No more closed gates*—because God’s doors will always be open (21:25).
12. *No more curse*—because Christ’s blood has forever lifted that curse (22:3).⁴

What do you most long for in the new heaven and the new earth?

Take John’s vision of your future home in heaven with you today. Because of Christ’s death and resurrection, you have a guaranteed place in heaven. Give Him praise!



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, nothing this world offers compares to dwelling with You in my forever home in the new heaven and the new earth. I long for the day when there will be no more tears and sorrow, when my body is liberated from pain, and I soar free in the wonder of Your presence. May that day come soon! In Jesus’ name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Peter J. Kreeft, *Heaven: The Heart’s Deepest Longing* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 39.
2. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the article, “[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)”
3. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Revelation*, Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014), 301.
4. Swindoll, *Insights on Revelation*, 301.

For the 2024 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll’s messages. Copyright © 2004, 2024 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

