

Handout Lesson 24: Revelation Chapter 21

Do the Synoptic Gospels provide a blueprint for the events John witnessed?

Matthew Chapters 23-25	Revelation Chapters 2-20
Matthew 23:1-32 ~ Jesus' condemnation of the Old Covenant leadership	Revelation Chapters 6-17 ~ The Seal, Trumpet, and Chalice Judgments
Matthew 23:33-36 ~ Jesus predicts judgment for His generation	Revelation Chapters 2-3 ~ The letters to the seven churches
Matthew 24:1-25 ~ The great tribulation and destruction of Jerusalem	Revelation 18:1-19:10 ~ The great tribulation and destruction of the Prostitute and False prophet city of Jerusalem
Matthew 24:26-25:30 ~ The Second Advent of Christ	
Matthew 25:31-46 ~ The Last Judgment	Revelation 20:11-15 ~ The Last Judgment
Matthew 28:18-20 ~ Command to spread the Gospel of salvation	Revelation 19:21 ~ The White Rider (Christ) leads the battle to carry the Gospel to the world

To make the seventh vision be the eighth use of the phrase *kai eidon* (And I saw), he used it twice in Revelation 20:11 and 12 even though it was the same vision. The number 8 is associated with resurrection, regeneration, and salvation.

Instead of the more frequently used Greek word *neos*, which means “chronological newness,” 21:1-2 uses the word *kainos*, which indicates “newness in kind or of superior quality.” Chapter 21 describes a “new” creation entirely superior to the past because now humanity and nature are reconciled to God. Look for both eights and twelves in Chapter 21!

The Greek word *parousia* (par-oo-see-uh or par-oo-see'-uh) means “presence” or “appearance,” and its most common use concerned the “presence” or “appearance” of a king or his representative when visiting a vassal people to judge their loyalty. Jesus' *parousia* to His people after His Ascension:

1. in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Old Covenant in AD 70
2. in the visible form of bread and wine in the Eucharist
3. to each of us after our death in our Individual/Particular Judgment
4. His final appearance at the end of the age of humanity and the Final/Last Judgment

2 I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride dressed for her husband.

John sees the central aspect of the New Creation (see Phil 3:20-21). This reality of the eschatological (end times) New Creation is also the progressive reality of the New Jerusalem, the Church throughout the generations of Church History. The New Jerusalem is not only the Church established definitively by Christ to rule on earth. It is also a kingdom progressively fulfilling His will on earth down through time until the day when He will institute it finally in consummate, absolute perfection as the heavenly Jerusalem, the Bride taking her place beside her Spouse.

In verse 3, John heard a “loud voice” call from the throne in heaven. The earlier revelations of “the voice” of God point to this last vision:

Voice #1 Rev 16:1	<i>Then I heard a loud voice from the sanctuary calling to the seven angels, ‘Go and empty the seven bowls [Chalices] of God’s anger</i>
Voice #2 Rev 16:17	<i>The seventh angel emptied his bowl into the air, and a loud voice boomed out from the sanctuary, “The end has come.”</i>
Voice #3 Rev 19:5	<i>Then a voice came from the throne; it said, “Praise our God, you servants of his and those who fear him, small and great alike.”</i>
Voice #4 Rev 21:3	<i>“Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, “Look, here God lives [tabernacles] among human beings.”</i>

5 Then the One sitting on the throne spoke. “Look, I am making the whole of creation new. Write this, ‘What I am saying is trustworthy and will come true.’”

The phrase “trustworthy and true” will be repeated in Revelation 22:6. Again, we must appreciate the fact that this statement is true now as well as on the “Last Day.” St. Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *So for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old order is gone, and a new being is there to see.*

The individual and the community of believers are recreated, renewed, and restored to Paradise through the work of Jesus Christ. This cosmic and universal restoration has already begun through the outpouring of the Gospel. Christianity is, in essence, the redemption and renovation of the whole earth. The Gospel makes all things new in Christ.

Notice in verse 6 that the One who sits on the Throne names Himself *the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End*. The titles appear five times: three times as the Alpha and Omega in Revelation 1:8; 21:6 and 22:13 and twice as “the beginning and the end” in Revelation 21:6 and 22:13.

21:8 condemns nine classes of sinners to perdition in the Hell of the Damned.

Rev 21:12-20 are full of twelves, the number representing perfection in government and authority, repeated eight times in the Greek text. The number twelve is also the symbolic number for Israel. Seven is the number of spiritual perfection and fullness, but eight is the number of redemption, salvation, and regeneration!

#1. Rev 21:12	<i>It had a great high wall with twelve gates</i>
#2. Rev 21:12	<i>and with twelve angels at the gates</i>
#3. Rev 21:12	<i>the names of the twelve tribes of Israel</i>
#4. Rev 21:14	<i>The wall of the city had twelve foundation stones</i>
#5. Rev 21:14	<i>on them were the names of the twelve Apostles</i>
#6. Rev 21:16	<i>He measured the city...it was twelve thousand furlongs</i>
#7. Rev 21: 21	<i>The twelve gates</i>
#8. Rev 21: 21	<i>were twelve pearls</i>

The repetition in the use of the number twelve indicates that the description of the Heavenly Jerusalem is symbolic and represents the perfection of her place as God’s authority.

There are also eschatological (end times) overtones that point to the heavenly Jerusalem at the end of time in the Book of Isaiah, which St. John described in the Book of Revelation (see Rev 21:9-27 and 22:5). Some of the wording is virtually the same; for example, compare Isaiah 60:3 with Revelation 21:24.