

Week 11: Chapters 21 & 22

The New Jerusalem

Creation renewed:

- Is it totally new, or renewed? Does it matter how we treat this creation?
- God is celebrated as creator in Revelation 4 – what stance does the faithful Creator have towards creation?
- Romans 8:18-23 – creation set free from bondage to decay
- Resurrection body of Jesus – these are the first fruits (eg 1 Corinthians 15:20)
 - How was it connected to his earthly body?
 - How was it different?
- “Revelation envisions the salvation of the whole creation, not only the redemption of individual souls” Koester p.191
- “The sea was no more” – usage of “sea”
 1. Origin of cosmic evil (and chaos) especially in light of OT background 4:6; 12:18; 13:1; 15:2
 2. the unbelieving, rebellious nations who cause tribulation for God’s people 12:18; 13:1; 17:2,6
 3. the place of the dead 20:13
 4. primary location of world’s idolatrous trade activity 18:10-19
 5. literal body of water, sometimes mentioned with “the earth” – part of old creation 5:13; 7:1-3; 8:8-9; 10:2, 5-6, 8; 14:7; 16:3
- So, no more sea implies:
 1. No more Satan – he is judged
 2. No more rebellious nations
 3. No more death
 4. No more idolatrous trade practices
 5. No more murky and unruly part of God’s creation
- The one on the throne speaks – only 2 times he speaks directly in Revelation (1:8) – and says, “Behold, I make all things new”
 - Note: “it is done!” 21:6; 16:17
 - 15:1 – with these bowls the wrath of God has ended
 - Yet “they will reign forever and ever (22:5)
 - What does this say about the character of God?

The tension of “new” where it is both connected to old creation yet very distinct from the old creation

People of God

City: New Jerusalem

- 12 foundations: 12 apostles 21:14
- 12 gates – 12 tribes 21:12
- Recall 3:12 – “pillar in the temple of my God”
- Revelation 21:19-20 – 12 different gems
 - Jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald, onyx, camelian, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, amethyst
- Exodus 28:17-20 and 39:8-14 – in breastplate for the high priest, the 12 gems represented the 12 tribes of Israel

- Camelian, chrysolite, emerald – turquoise, sapphire, moonstone – jacinth, agate, amethyst – beryl, onyx, jasper
- Gems representative of 12 tribes, therefore, of people, and they are part of the foundation

Tabernacle/Temple

- Rev. 21:3 – “The Tabernacle of God is among mortals”
- Rev. 21:16 – cubic shape of New Jerusalem; 1 Kings 6:20 we learn that the inner sanctuary is cubic in shape
 - Where God would dwell
 - Limited access
- In Exodus 28:36-38, the High priest, only one with access to holy of holies, wore a turban with “Holy to the Lord” on his forehead
- Rev 22:4 – God’s people will be in his presence, see the face of God, and his name will be written on their foreheads
- Similar idea with the priests breastplate and gems – once limited access is now open to all God’s people
- When God’s glory came before, no one could take it (Ex. 40:34, 1 Kings 8:11) – but now the glory of God is the light of the city 21:23

The Rhetorical effect of Revelation (and its ending)

- Final warnings
- 21:8, 27; 22:3, 15 – Why exclusion
 - Another way of saying that the forces that oppose God have no place in the new creation
 - The new creation is distinct because there is an absence of the powers that oppose God and diminish life
 - Note the lists, see 21:8 specifically –To whom is this list catered?
- 22:18-19 – don’t add or subtract from this book, or else...
 - Rooted in Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 12:32
 - Both warn that Israel should not add to or subtract from Law
 - Both sections connected to idolatry
 - You cannot teach that idolatry is consistent with faith, that is either adding to or subtracting from the commands
- “Do not seal up” 22:10 – for the time is near
 - Compare to Daniel 12:4 “keep the words secret and the book sealed” – because its not the end
 - Revelation is an open book, not a coded prediction whose true meaning will only be discovered and sensible for people in the final years of history
- What is your response to Revelation supposed to be?
 - “true prophecy moves people to serve the true God and false prophecy draws people away from God. Prophecy can have to do with the future, but it is not primarily prediction.” Koester p.202
- “Revelation does not suggest that people receive blessing or “keep” the words of its prophecy by speculating about the date of the battle of Armageddon. Rather the “blessed” are those who “wash their robes” through faith in Christ and faithfulness to Christ (22:14), pursuing righteousness and holiness, and resisting evil, impurity, falsehood, and other forms of sin (22:11,15)” Koester p. 202