

Life: God's promise of a new home

September 25, 2015

- *The Bible Studies for Life* lesson for Oct. 11 focuses on Revelation 21:1-8.

Several years ago I did what many would consider to be the most dangerous thing in my life. I bought a house. It's not that I just bought a house. My wife and I have purchased several homes throughout the years. What was different about this house was that I bought it without my wife seeing it. Naturally, she saw some pictures, but they never do a home justice. God blessed me on this home purchase, because my wife liked the house. We still live in it today.

For many, the idea of owning a house is just a dream. For others, their house becomes a source of major problems in their lives as repairs to the air conditioning unit, roof, foundation and major appliances seem to continue without end.

God promises a home for all who have their faith in Jesus Christ. It's a home we have yet to see, and it promises to be problem-free.

Our new home will be in God's presence (Revelation 21:1-3)

What awaits every Christian? "A new heaven and a new earth." The first verse rings with echoes of Genesis 1:1 where God created the heavens and the earth. That's the Hebrew way of saying the universe. God created the universe, and in Revelation 21:1, God will make the universe brand new.

John may have had Isaiah 65:17-23 in mind as he penned this description of what will be. Everything will be radically new. The newness carries the idea of a superior quality. The universe still will be recognizable, but everything

will be brand new.

John's description of the new universe notes the absence of the sea. This creates a quandary for those who love to fish. If there's no sea and thus no fishing, will it really be heaven? Not to worry, the sea represented chaos and disorder to the ancients. It may be termed as the anti-creation, so in the new universe, there will be no sea. There will be nothing in it that even represents the power of evil.

Next, John saw a new Jerusalem coming down from God in heaven signifying its divine origin. God will build the new Jerusalem and no human will help in constructing the divine city. The idea of a new Jerusalem coming from heaven above may be found in Galatians 4:26 and Hebrews 12:22.

John's readers knew the Babylonians had destroyed Jerusalem in 587 B.C., and the Romans had repeated the action in 70 A.D. They would have rejoiced at seeing a new Jerusalem, and the sight of it would be glorious much like the splendor of a marriage celebration. The description of verse 2 declares the new Jerusalem will be like a beautiful bride.

The main theme of the entire passage comes in verse 3. God will dwell with his people. The newness of the universe will be the experience of God's constant and immediate presence among his people without end.

Our new home will be perfect (Revelation 21:4-5)

In God's presence, tears will be wiped away and presumably stopped. Pain and suffering of all types will be left in the old order. There is a saying that you can't take your money with you when you die. Well, you can't take your problems, your pain or your suffering with you, either. They all will remain behind when you go to heaven.

Verse 5 is a restatement from God that he was making all things new. John

was instructed to write down the words to encourage believers with the description of what was to come.

Our new home is based on our relationship with Christ (Revelation 21:6-8)

Jesus spoke in verse 6, calling himself the Alpha and the Omega, just as he had done in Revelation 1:8. Jesus is the Beginning and the End. John saw the very end, and what he found wasn't a cataclysmic event but a person, Jesus Christ. With his next words, Jesus promised to give a drink to those who thirst without cost from the spring of the water of life. The woman at the well in John 4 heard these words from Jesus, too. In heaven, all believers will realize what was promised to her.

The experience of heaven lies in the future for those who overcome. As John writes directly to Christians facing persecution, he encourages them to persevere. The reward will be the special Father/child relationship with Almighty God.

After such a wonderful description of heaven, what possibly could go wrong? For those who do not have their faith in Jesus Christ and who live a life that totally rejects God, everything will go wrong.

A fiery lake of burning sulfur is not a popular idea today. You may ask how a loving, compassionate and forgiving God could send anyone—no matter how evil—to such an end? He doesn't. These individuals chose not to be with God.

Remember, John uses vivid language to describe the fantastic images he sees. Many of these images are indescribable. They defy language. What is total separation from God like? John used the image of a lake of burning sulfur. What could be worse?

Questions

1. Compare and contrast heaven and Eden. Why didn't God just put humanity in the environment described in Revelation 21 from the very beginning?

2. Why will there not be any sin in heaven? Will the choice to sin just not be taken, or will there be no opportunity to sin in heaven?