

Heaven, the Final Exodus and the Fullness of Emmanuel (Revelation 21:3)

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In 1952, Florence Chadwick attempted to swim to California from the offshore Catalina Island

- The young swimmer was already the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways
- This day the Pacific Ocean fog was thick and she could barely see the boats alongside her
- Florence swam 15 hours with limited visibility, as family encouraged from a nearby boat

But one wrote: ‘physically and emotionally exhausted, she stopped swimming and was pulled out. It wasn’t until she was on the boat that she discovered the shore was less than half a mile away. At a news conference the next day she said, “All I could see was the fog...I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it.” [Randy Alcorn relates that to us] We live our lives in a fog of trouble, worry, doubt, depression, health problems, unemployment, financial uncertainty, strained relationships...and loss of loved ones...we live in a world of struggle, suffering...All these things create a fog. It’s difficult to see in front of us. We end up focusing on the fog because we can’t see the shore. Sometimes we feel like giving up because we don’t have the strength to stay afloat any longer. This is where the people of God throughout the ages had a source of strength and perspective that for some reason we don’t talk much about today: Heaven. It was their north star by which they could navigate their lives. It was their great reference point...That world awaits [Christians] on the other side of all this fog that surrounds’¹

- James 4:14 ‘*Your life is like the morning fog [or a mist]—it’s here a little while, then it’s gone*’ (NLT)

How did Paul make it, 3x shipwrecked, a day and night adrift at sea, etc.?² Paul saw the shore!

- Phil. 3: ‘*...straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal...for which God has called me heavenward...our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus*’³

A paraphrase of 2 Cor 4: ‘*That is why we never give up... the things we see now will soon be gone... we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen...[that] last forever*’⁴

Turn to the final chapters of the Bible for the final heaven and new earth

Rev 21:4 clears the fog and everything else. *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.*”

Rev 21:3 will be our text. The context of this book is written for endurance in tribulation, 1:10

- At the end of the 1st century on the island of Patmos a lonely exile sees the shore of glory

John writes in Rev 21:3: *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*

This is the new world, v. 1, we who by faith see where they’re going can know we will make it!

- v. 3 starts with Exodus language, ‘*dwelling place of God,*’ but with a final fulfillment forever
- v. 3 ends with Emmanuel/*God with us* language, God with man, with them/us as our God

1. Heaven is the Final Exodus (=exit or departure)

2. Heaven is the Fullness of Emmanuel

We just finished studying the past book of Exodus, but there’s a future final exodus in this book

- We finished with many chapters on the tabernacle, it all pictures Christ, and His heaven
- In the NASB, heaven’s throne says this in v. 3: ‘*Behold, **the tabernacle** of God is among men...*’
- Young’s Literal Translation: ‘*the tabernacle of God is with men, and **He will tabernacle with them**...*’

Heb 8-9 says Christ⁵ is at the throne in heaven where He ‘*serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man...[it says the tabernacle Moses built in Exodus was a pattern] a copy and shadow of what is **in heaven**...the greater and more perfect tabernacle... For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered **heaven itself**, now to appear for us in God’s presence...once for all*’

- Heaven itself is or has the tabernacle that the Exodus one was patterned after, Ex 25-40 pictures heaven

The priest and each piece of furniture in the tabernacle are previews of coming attractions Jesus fulfills in glory

- In Rev 1 John sees Jesus in glory walking among golden lampstands, like a priest in the OT tabernacle
- In Rev 3 Jesus in glory is at the door ready to eat in fellowship 1-on-1 (like small table of the presence?)
- In Rev 8 there's an altar of golden incense in heaven for prayer, 3rd piece of furniture in the Holy Place
- 11:19: *Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple.*
- Everything in the OT tabernacle/temple is in Revelation, even the manna hidden inside the ark, 2:17!
- The language of tent, sanctuary, robes the priests wore, etc., all of that in its final form is in Revelation!
- So all those chapters in Exodus and Leviticus aren't tedious, they teach us our glorious heavenly future!

Rev 21:3 says *behold, see heaven is the final fulfillment of Exodus and everything*

Look at Rev 21:7: *The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.*

- Exodus is where God first calls His people 'my son' (4:22-23) and promises 'I will be your God' (6:7)

In heaven, Rev 21:12 says (end of v. 12) '...the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed'

- That's Exodus language, a priest had on himself names inscribed of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel⁶
- A priest wore a breastplate with 12 gemstones, Rev 21:19-20 repeats the stones New Jerusalem wears⁷
- Some of the 12 are slightly different from OT to NT language, but the heavenly city is reflecting Exodus
- The OT said names were to be remembered on the heart on this square breastplate same length, width⁸

¹⁶ *The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width...* [the end of verse says its height was equal to both]

- Only 1 other place in scripture measured like that: the tabernacle/temple Holy of Holies, a perfect cube⁹
- It seems that old small holy sanctuary becomes a new huge holy city where everywhere is His dwelling!

The OT holiest place was 30'x30'x30' for only 1 man 1 day a year, this city is 2 million square miles open to all

- Maybe some symbolism here but giant gates that never close clearly mean it's bigger and better forever

God's glorious presence was in the OT Holy Place, in heaven it's the whole place!

Everything in the holy of holies was pure gold. End of v. 21 says heaven will have streets of gold, pure as glass

- Inside the tabernacle/temple everything precious was gold, in heaven, what's outside, pavement is gold!

Key difference: ²² *And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.*

- There's no temple to go to in the heavenly city, the whole city and temple is God, Christ dwelling there
- The end of v. 23 says there's no lampstand needed like in the OT, Jesus the Lamb is the light of heaven

Behold God tabernacles among us and we see His glory

Turn to ch 15 and remember Ex 40 ends with glory cloud smoke filling the sanctuary tent so Moses can't enter.

15:5 *After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened... ⁸ and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary...*

- Sound familiar? NKJV in v. 5 has 'tabernacle of the testimony in heaven' (exact phrase from Ex 38:21)
- And this chapter announces there's plagues coming of judgment, much like Moses announced for Egypt
- In Rev 11 a Moses-like witness turns water to blood and brings plagues and calls it symbolically Egypt¹⁰
- In Rev 16:4 an angel pours judgment 'into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood...'

What was local in Exodus now becomes global judgment, the end of v. 3 says every living thing in the sea died

- 16:10 is a plague of darkness on the whole kingdom, also like Egypt, and sores in v. 11, also like Egypt
- v. 13 at the end of the verse has unclean frogs coming up, like Egypt's frog plague but demonic spirits
- There's another plague in ch 8 of locusts like the plague on Egypt, and those also seem to be out of hell

Egypt was plagued with hail, it will be worse in Rev 16:21: *great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.*

- But like Pharaoh hardened his heart and didn't repent, the end of v. 9 says hardened sinners won't repent
- In Rev 13 the final Pharaoh-like king has his false prophet counterfeit miracles, much like back in Egypt

Go to Rev 12. All this symbolism in this book isn't to confuse us about the future, it's to connect us to the past

- 12:1 is a woman with 12 stars (think Israel, 12 tribes). **12:13** *And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness...*
- Sound like the serpent-crown Pharaoh after male children? He's defeated, Israel flees to the wilderness

Old Pharaoh was cast down by an angel of death killing Egypt's sons, whoever wasn't covered by lamb's blood

- Like v. 11, OT Israel conquered the satanic slave-master 'by the blood of the Lamb' as they exited Egypt
- Pharaoh pursued Israel to a wilderness, furious like 17, but God protected her from drowning in water like v. 16

God says in Ex 19:4: *'what I did to the Egyptians...I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.'*

- Rev 12 says God will do that to all enemies to bring a final exodus like that, like the wings of an eagle
- And ch 10 starts with an angel coming in a cloud and pillar of fire on land and sea, like Israel at Red Sea
- If you want to understand Revelation better, think of it as the final Exodus, Jesus wins, heaven is in Him
- Go to ch 15 and remember Exodus 15, God delivered through the sea so they worship on the other shore

Don't think chronological, think cycles,¹¹ Revelation is replaying from different angles

15:2 *And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God...*

- That's language of heaven, like our opening story, John could see the shore and knows they'll make it!

³ *And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! ⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you...*

- This is amazing! God is amazing! Like the nation of Israel after the sea, all will sing the song of Moses!
- This is great and amazing grace, and heaven sings of the final Exodus, and heaven is the final Exodus!
- Look at Rev 7 for one more vision of the heaven that's now before the final heaven that's new in Rev 21
- In Rev 5 heaven sings of the Lamb's blood redeeming us to be a kingdom of priests (phrase in Ex 19:6)

That's how we see 'God and sinner reconciled'

7:9 *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes...*

[Who are these? v. 14, John replies] *"you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them [YLT 'tabernacle over'] with his presence. ¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*

- In Ex 15 thirsty Israel in the heat of the sun was led by God to springs of water, all that pictured heaven
- Jesus will take away thirst for water and even tears of water, He's the living water welling up life eternal
- In Ex 16 God satisfied Israel's hunger, here in v. 16 Jesus is all-satisfying for all needs of all His people
- Every tongue and tribe in v. 9 includes the tribes of Israel, and v. 1-8 name each tribe sealed and saved

Even so-called lost tribes won't be lost forever, I agree with Spurgeon and others here Israel repents in the end¹²

- Some say God must get the Gentile church out of the way to resume with Israel, but I don't see that here v. 9-14 may be Christianity's greatest worldwide growth ever (uncountable) coming out of the great tribulation?
- Massive salvation through judgment. Jesus said 'I will build my church and gates of hell cannot prevail'
- Like Exodus plagues, He shields His own from wrath, v. 15 NAS *'will spread His tabernacle over them'*

That takes us back to ch 21 *'behold the tabernacle of God...He'll tabernacle with them...wipe away every tear'*

Heaven is the Final Exodus (salvation through judgment) and #2. The Fullness of Emmanuel

21:3b: *'...He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.'*

We'll sing 'Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!'¹³

- 1st page of the NT says the virgin-born would *'save his people...Immanuel (which means, God with us)'*

That's from Isa 7, Isa 8 speaks to *'your land, O Immanuel'* where enemy plans can't stand *'for God is with us'¹⁴*

- The fullness of that I think is fulfilled in the renewed earth of Rev 21, where heaven is Immanuel's land
- The same John who wrote this wrote the Word who is God *'became flesh and tabernacled among us'¹⁵*
- In Christ God dwelt with His people, and it goes on to say from His fullness they have all received grace

Same root words as Rev 21:3, they beheld His glory, God in Christ tabernacling, *'behold the tabernacle of God'*

- The fullness of Emmanuel will be received in heaven, God with us dwelling with us in glory we can see

Now we see dimly like a mirror fogged up, then we'll see face to face

Matthew's Christmas story says Jesus is Immanuel, then Magi of other nations bring treasures

- The Magi walked in that light from heaven, in Rev 21:24 nations walk in heaven's light

It says saved kings of the earth will bring to the King of heaven their glory or honor, treasures?

- It will be way more than 3 kings of Orient bearing gifts, it's redeemed rulers worldwide

²⁶ *They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.* Imagine tribal rulers bringing cultural honors?

- It seems every nation will have some national treasure or ethnic honor for Christ's glory

Come, Desire of nations, come, fix in us Thy humble home ...

Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies, with the angelic host proclaim...

- Magi followed the light of that bright star, Rev 22:16 says Jesus is the bright morning star

- We read earlier King Herod wanted to destroy baby boys he saw as a threat to his throne

In Rev 12 v. 4 ultimately Satan *'stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled...'* Mt 2 says that fulfills *'out of Egypt'*

- Christmas was the new Exodus, like Egypt's king killing boys after birth, but she delivers the deliverer
- The same serpent is behind King Herod, but this baby boy would rule the nations and heaven on a throne
- Jesus is the male child prophesied in Gen 3:15, the seed to be of woman who will be the snake-crusher
- Revelation is the last Exodus and last Adam, restoring all that sin lost in Gen 1-2, ruling a renewed earth
- Man was made in God's image that sin distorts, in Rev 21 we're remade in the image of *'God with us'*

Rise the woman's Conquering Seed, bruise in us the serpent's head

Adam's likeness now efface, stamp Thine image in its place

Second Adam from above, Reinstat us in Thy love, Hark the herald angels sing...

Rev 21:5 is a final new Exodus: *'he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."*

- And we can think of these final chapters as a final Christmas after His 2nd advent, Emmanuel's fullness
- Think about the best Christmas party ever, it will be better in v. 4 (no more tears sorrow, crying, pain)
- Think about a live Christmas tree. Imagine a Christmas Day parade and you're riding on streets of gold.

Look at 22:2 *through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

- This is far better than any live Christmas tree that dies and maybe even now leaves or needles are falling
- It's a tree of life that heals anything from this past life, like a carol lyric says He's *'risen with healing'*
- It's not just a giving tree in December, every month it keeps giving forever to taste and see He is good
- All the best holiday fruits and foods are foretastes of heavenly feasts like and family fellowship in glory
- Jesus is coming and He's bringing gifts in v. 12. Jesus spoke of rewards in heaven, treasures in heaven
- What we do in this life matters, and what we do for Christ will last in heaven, but it doesn't get us there

22:17 *'The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.'* It's a free gift, not earned or deserved

- You'd be insulted if someone opened a Christmas gift and then insisted on paying you or working for it
- God's gift of eternal life is only received by empty hands, thirsty coming and desiring what is priceless

Don't think your good or trust good you do, faith alone gets water of life, the faithless get the lake of fire, 21:8

- Hell is real and eternal, heaven is for those who trust in the blood of Lamb slain who's risen and reigns
- v. 14 says you must have washed robes for this life, i.e. washed of sins by trusting Him dying for them
- We read heaven's shout: *'who will not fear and glorify His name... Come and worship'* Christ the King

His greatest gifts: 22:3 *No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.* ⁴ *They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*

- The greatest gift is Himself, seeing the fullness of Immanuel, God with us, no sin or any of its effects!

Face to face love, and v. 5 says our loving Lord will be a light that outshines the sun

Jonathan Edwards called heaven God's 'world of love' and he said in a sermon everything there will 'show forth the beauty and loveliness of God and Christ, and have a luster of divine love upon them. The very light which shines in and fills that world is the light of love. It is beams of love; for it is the shining of the glory of the Lamb of God, that most wonderful influence of lamblike meekness and love which fills the heavenly Jerusalem with light ... this renders heaven a world of love ... the glorious presence of God in heaven fills heaven with love, as the sun ... fills the world with light ...

There this glorious God is manifested and shines forth in full glory, in beams of love; there the fountain overflows in streams and rivers of love and delight, enough for all to drink at, and to swim in...¹⁶

Remember where we started, the young swimmer exhausted not seeing the shore in the cloud

- We need to encourage others to keep going, see the shore in Rev 21-22, you'll make it
 - Don't give up because of fog or feelings; there's a Lord and land to come that's fairer than day
 - Old hymns call it the sweet by and by, the beautiful shore that by faith we see from afar
 - We sing of a future day 'when faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled back as a scroll'¹⁷
 - This is what kept believers going through the ages, thinking of the age to come in glory
 - It gets the grieving missing loved ones through the holidays: heaven's hope and comfort
 - Seek first the kingdom of heaven, set hearts on heavenly things above, not earthly things
- Believers are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, I think of a family of faith cheering on
- They help us continue with endurance so we don't lose heart, Heb 12 says look to Jesus
 - When weary: consider He endured for you, fix your eyes on Jesus, who and where He is
- Isa 35:3 says: '*Encourage the exhausted...Say to those with anxious heart...fear not. Behold, your God...*'¹⁸
- That chapter goes on to talk about the Lord's return and a new world where the blind see
 - Place of perfect health, harmony, heavenly '*everlasting joy...sorrow and sighing will flee away*'
 - No discouragement, disability or difficulty that clouds this life. See the shore of eternity!

To study more, read Randy Alcorn's Heaven or Jonathan Edwards, Heaven is a world of love

Here's part of what Edwards preached: 'the joy of heavenly love shall never be damped or interrupted by jealousy ... no envy or malice, or revenge, or contempt, or selfishness shall enter there, but shall be kept as far off ... no separation wall, no misunderstandings or strangeness ... no division through different opinions or interests ... There shall be no string out of tune to cause any jar[ring] in the harmony of that world, no unpleasant note to cause any discord ... Every saint there is as a note in a concert of music which sweetly harmonizes with every other note ...

Let what we have heard of the land of love excite us all to turn our faces towards that land, and bend our course ... do not give yourselves much concern about the friendship of the world; but seek heaven where is no such thing as contempt, where none are despised, all are highly esteemed and honored, and dearly loved by all. You who think you have met with many abuses, and much ill treatment from others, care not for it; do not hate them for it but set your heart in heaven, a world of love; press towards a better country. Do not let out your heart after the things of this world and indulge yourself in a pursuit of earthly things ... If you would seek heaven, your affections must be taken off from the pleasures of the world. ... and meditations towards that world of love, and that God of love ... you must live a life of love ... by living love in this world the saints partake of a like sort of inward peace and sweetness. It is in this way that you are to have the foretastes of heavenly pleasures and delights.'¹⁹

I'll end how the Bible ends: *Maranatha, come Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*

¹ Randy Alcorn, Eternal Perspective Ministries blog (source??)

² 2 Corinthians 11:25.

³ Philippians 3:13-14, 20 NIV84.

⁴ 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NLT.

⁵ Hebrews 8:1-2, 5, 9:11, 24, 28 NIV84.

⁶ Exodus 28:9, 21.

⁷ v. 17-20.

⁸ v. 29

⁹ 1 Kings 6:20.

¹⁰ Revelation 11:6-8.

¹¹ I read Revelation 6 and 11 and 14 and 16 and 19 as all culminating in the 2nd coming from different angles, like Isaiah's prophecies. To read chapters 6-18 as chronological prophecies for years before the 2nd coming doesn't seem to me to work (compare 6:14, 17 to 16:20, and the language of 11:15-18 and 14:14-20 where the Son of Man comes on the cloud and it seems all the earth is judged).

¹² For more on this, see my sermon on Revelation 7 at www.sermonaudio.com/gcbc

¹³ Charles Wesley, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing."

¹⁴ Isaiah 7:14, 8:8, 10.

¹⁵ John 1:14 NLT, ISV.

¹⁶ Jonathan Edwards, "Heaven is a World of Love." Available at <https://www.biblebb.com/files/edwards/charity16.htm>

¹⁷ "It is Well with My Soul," "The Sweet By and By," "The Sands of Time are Sinking."

¹⁸ NASB95.

¹⁹ Edwards, *Ibid.*