

The New Heavens and New Earth

James Smyda

Recorded on September 25, 2021

I'm sure for all of us when we think of the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles and the millennium, we think of a plush, beautiful earth, the earth is a Garden of Eden and a land of plenty, plentiful crops and everything being in abundance. As you know, for that to take place there is a stark transition between that and what is going to take place during the Day of the Lord. During the Day of the Lord we have unprecedented devastation that is going to take place on the earth and by the time the Day of the Lord is finished, the earth is literally going to be in a state where it can barely sustain life. It's literally going to be in a very, very critical situation. To make that transition, from an earth that is absolutely destroyed to this Garden of Eden, this beautiful, utopian setting is going to require supernatural intervention for God to heal the earth and to make it into this new creation.

What we're going to do today is look at this particular subject. If you would like a title for this sermon, it's:

New Heavens and New Earth

If you've been in the church of God for many years, perhaps like me since birth, you probably remember a time where we thought of the terms of new heaven and new earth, not as a millennial thing but something that happened after there was no more physical human beings. What we're going to see today, that doesn't really fit the context where a lot of these scriptures are mentioned. As a result of the fact, oftentimes, as I grew up in the church, we heard sermons at the Feast with lots of speculation of about how this destroyed earth was going to be repaired by human beings. We were going to have these work crews and other things that they were doing to clean this up. It was well intentioned and I'm not trying to pick on anyone because I believed that growing up too. If we understand the magnitude of the devastation that will take place during the Day of the Lord, it's not a logical picture. The devastation is going to be so severe that it will absolutely require supernatural intervention from God to turn this around and to make the earth not only inhabitable, but to be this beautiful Garden of Eden scene. I think sometimes that we have trouble wrapping our minds around the severity of the devastation that will take place during the Day of the Lord. The reason being, we think of disasters in our context. Natural disasters that we see on the news and they are always of a regional nature. If you think about it, if a hurricane hits a particular area or a tornado tears something up or an earthquake or a wild fire comes through an area, we see the footage and severe devastation but we know that it is limited to a geographical region. It happened in that particular area; it didn't happen everywhere, it just hurt a particular area. That's how our minds tend to think of it. We have to get outside that type of mindset to be able to realize the severity of this devastation.

Let's first of all go to 2 Peter 3 which addresses the subject. But it also addresses the normal human tendency to think that things will always fit into the context of which we relate to, how our minds tend to conceptualize things. That's sometimes our difficulty in understanding all this.

2 Peter 3:1 *Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),
2) that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,
3) knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,
4) and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."* (NKJV)

In other words, things always stay within the realm I understand and what I've seen.

*5) For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,
6) by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.
7) But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.
(NKJV)*

This is a reference to the Day of the Lord.

Continuing in verse 10)

*10) But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.
11) Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,
12) looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? (NKJV)*

You can see that it's making a very dire prediction here. We oftentimes have some trouble wrapping our mind around the magnitude and the extent of this devastation that is going to take place. To set the context of this sermon and see the need for a supernatural healing, we first have to get a concept of the severity of the devastation that will take place during the Day of the Lord. Let's just briefly review that in Revelation 8. We are not going to go through the entire Day of the Lord and everything that happens, but what I want to do is cover some of the main points that illustrate for us the severity of the devastation that will take place on the earth because of the plagues of the Day of the Lord.

Revelation 8:7 *The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.*

8) *Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.*

9) *And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.*

10) *Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.*

11) *The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.*

12) *Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night. (NKJV)*

Notice we have a lot of severe plagues here, but notice one of the big things it's attacking—both salt and fresh water. We're going to see when we turn to chapter 16 where we get to a point where all the water is blood—both fresh and salt water. You think about that, it's going to kill all marine life because they can't live in that. It's going to wipe out plankton in the ocean, which provides about 50% of the oxygen supply for the planet. Think how much of the greenery—not only animals but plants—depend on hydration and depend upon water. Turn it all to blood and think how much global devastation you're going to have. Turn to Revelation 16 and we will see where it goes from one-third to being everything.

Revelation 16:3 *Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. (NKJV)*

Notice we have gone from one-third of the sea to all of it. It says this is going to wipe out all marine life. Not only that, but when you think of the oxygen supply for the planet, approximately half of it comes from plankton in the ocean. The other half comes from trees and other green plants that take in carbon dioxide and put out oxygen. But if you wipe out everything that lives in the sea, you just wiped out half the oxygen supply for the planet. Think of the devastation that would take place.

4) *Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. [Now all the fresh water is being wiped out]*

5) *And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things.*

6) *For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due."*

7) *And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."*

8) *Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.*

9) *And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. (NKJV)*

Continuing in verse 17)

17) *Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"*

18) *And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.*

19) *Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.*

20) *Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*

21) *And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great. (NKJV)*

As you can see, we've got massive devastation that is, quite frankly, hard to wrap our minds around. When we think about a wild fire or hurricane or something that destroys an area, we may be awed by the footage we see on the news but we know that's limited to a region. We don't think of these things as happening to the entire planet and it's affecting everyone everywhere. In Jeremiah 4 we see it describes the earth after the Day of the Lord. It is basically using the exact same Hebrew terminology to describe the earth after Satan's rebellion. When God had to recreate the earth after just being so destroyed it was "*without form and void*". That's exactly what's going to be the state after the Day of the Lord.

Jeremiah 4:23 *I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; [That's tohu and bohu, the exact same Hebrew terminology in Genesis 1] And the heavens, they had no light.*

24) *I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and forth.*

25) *I beheld, and indeed there was no man, And all the birds of the heavens had fled.*

26) *I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, And all its cities were broken down At the presence of the LORD, By His fierce anger.*

27) *For thus says the LORD: "The whole land shall be desolate; Yet I will not make a full end.*

28) *For this shall the earth mourn, And the heavens above be black, Because I have spoken. I have purposed and will not relent, Nor will I turn back from it. (NKJV)*

This is a result of the day of His wrath, of all the plagues He pours out upon mankind and on the earth—it will be absolutely, totally destroyed. Notice in Isaiah 24, a similar description.

Isaiah 24:1 *Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste, Distorts its surface And scatters abroad its inhabitants.* (NKJV)

In verse 6.

6) Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men are left. (NKJV)

Clearly, we're talking about the Day of the Lord and all the devastation that will take place. As I mentioned, if you are like me, you grew up in the church. My parents were baptized before I was born, so all of my childhood I grew up attending the Feast and numerous times during those years, I heard sermons that basically painted the picture that after the Day of the Lord, God will be mobilizing the troops—the humans—and they'll go out and plant trees and much efforts will be put into cleaning it up. When you understand the magnitude of the devastation that is going to take place, that's just not realistic. It's not something that mankind can go fix through physical effort. This is going to require supernatural intervention. Realistically the earth is not going to be in any shape for sustaining human life for any length of time without God intervening and supernaturally healing it.

Turn over to Ezekiel 47, where we find a picture of how God plans to address this problem. What we have here is a description of healing waters that come out from the temple in Jerusalem and we see, as it's described, that these waters go out in two directions and as they flow, the rivers connect with trees and make their way to the ocean. Everywhere they go, they heal the land. It's a supernatural healing that takes place.

Ezekiel 47:1 *Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar.*

2) He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side.

3) And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles.

4) Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist.

5) *Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed.*

6) *He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river.*

7) *When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other.*

8) *Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed.*

9) *And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes.*

10) *It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many.*

11) *But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt.*

12) *Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine." (NKJV)*

This same river is mentioned again in Zechariah 14:8.

Zechariah 14:8 *And in that day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur. (NKJV)*

As you can see, God is going to basically set this up where these healing waters start flowing out and as they start to circle the earth and the rivers go to the oceans, everywhere it goes, it supernaturally heals the land. This is what enables this transition from this completely destroyed earth that is *'without form and void'* and can barely sustain life to this beautiful Garden of Eden setting that we see in so many of the millennial prophecies. The way that this is described, particularly in the book of Isaiah, is as a new creation. This is something new that God has created because, as you are going to see He doesn't just restore the earth back to what we experience today, He turns it into a Garden of Eden setting where the deserts bloom and the cypress trees that require a lot of water are growing, where there used to be deserts. Let's turn to Isaiah 41:17.

Isaiah 41:17 *The poor and needy seek water, but there is none, Their tongues fail for thirst. I, the LORD, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.*

18) *I will open rivers in desolate heights, And fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, And the dry land springs of water.*

19) *I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, The myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the cypress tree and the pine And the box tree together,*
20) *That they may see and know, And consider and understand together, That the hand of the LORD has done this, And the Holy One of Israel has created it.*
(NKJV)

He makes this clear that this is something He supernaturally does. He's making a new creation with this. We can just look at the description and know we don't have cypress trees growing in the desert today; cypress trees need lots of water and the desert is dry. It's not a matter of trying to restore things back to where they were, He is making a beautiful Garden of Eden setting of the earth; something we haven't seen before. This is a new earth. We'll see later when we look at the context of the scriptures that talk about the new heaven and new earth, it's referring to a millennial setting. When we understand it's a new creation, it's something that we have not seen before, of the earth being in this type of setting and then you realize this truly is a new earth. This is something He has recreated and made totally new. Turn to Isaiah 43 and notice several references in this regard.

Isaiah 43:18 *Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old.*
19) *Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert.*
20) *The beast of the field will honor Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I give waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My people, My chosen.*
21) *This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare My praise.* (NKJV)

Notice He's saying He is doing a new thing. This is a new earth because this description doesn't match anything that we've experienced in our time. This isn't a restoration from the devastation back to where we were, this is a new earth. This is a beautiful Garden of Eden setting that's probably beyond our comprehension. Notice Isaiah 51:3 also.

Isaiah 51:3 *For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.* (NKJV)

We just have this wonderful utopian setting here—this Garden of Eden—and you can see now with the earth being in this state, how you would have this description of the earth being like a Garden of Eden. It also makes sense when you think about resurrecting all the people who have lived throughout all mankind—you have a huge population you have to feed, don't you? If you think about that, if you're going to make all of these areas fertile, that's how you're going to have a food supply to be able to deal with all these people and how you will have abundance. Today we have big areas like the Sahara Desert, it's not usable land to sustain people. If you're turning all the deserts into areas where cypress trees can grow and there's a lot of green and lots of water

everywhere, now you have a lot of usable land that you didn't have before. So basically, you reformed all of this, not only to make a beautiful utopian setting but also for the practical needs you're going to have for bringing back all these people that you want to work with at this time. Sometimes I like to joke when I look at things like this and sarcastically say,

"It is almost like some Master Planner designed it that way. It's like somebody really thought all this through and thought of all the details and brought all this together because He planned it all from the beginning before He had even got started."

If you are like me and have grown up in the church of God or have been in for many decades, you have probably often heard the words New Heavens and New Earth, associated with the millennium. Not with a setting where there would be physical human beings, but you would associate it with beyond mankind, when it's all over. If you notice and go through all the scriptures that make this reference, you're going to see in a lot of the context, it's very obvious we're talking about a setting with physical human beings on a physical planet. There's really only one scripture that can get confusing in that regard and we're going to look at that one in detail. First, we'll go back to 2 Peter 3:10. We read this before, but I want to read through this context until we get to the reference of new heavens and new earth.

2 Peter 3:10 *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*
11) *Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,*
12) *looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? (NKJV)*

As we covered before, this is an obvious reference to the Day of the Lord and this is referring to all the devastation that we read through in the book of Revelation that will take place there. Notice the next verse.

13) *Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (NKJV)*

Notice the chain of events here. You have listed, all the issues that are going to happen during the Day of the Lord, the devastation that takes place and the very next thing you have referenced is looking beyond that and it mentions a new heaven and a new earth. Oftentimes that gets associated with a time when there are no human beings, but if we look at the references to this particular phrase in the book of Isaiah in chapter 66 and verse 15, it becomes very clear that we have to be talking about a time when there are physical human beings. The references and the context are going to make that very obvious.

Isaiah 66:15 *For behold, the LORD will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire.*

16) For by fire and by His sword The LORD will judge all flesh; And the slain of the LORD shall be many. (NKJV)

Notice we're obviously talking about the day of His wrath, about the Day of the Lord context. Let's just keep following the context here.

17) Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, To go to the gardens After an idol in the midst, Eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse, Shall be consumed together," says the LORD.

18) "For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory.

19) I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles.

20) Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

21) And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites," says the LORD.

Notice the next two verses.

22) For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain.

23) And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. (NKJV)

He's talking about flesh coming before Him. First, notice we have the word "flesh" in there so we are obviously talking about physical human beings. He says from new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, they will come before Him to worship. If we just understand the context it is very obvious it is referring to a millennial time frame. Otherwise why would He be referring to them coming before Him to worship from Sabbath to Sabbath and new moon to new moon? I'm sure you are probably familiar that there are lots of scriptures in the Bible that make it very clear that during the millennium, the sacrificial system is going to be practised. There is going to be a physical temple, a physical priesthood, you see the sacrifices and grain offerings—all of that is described in quite graphic detail. God the Father is going to return with Christ as well, to the earth, and He is going to be dwelling in this physical temple, in the Most Holy place, behind the veil just like He did with Ancient Israel and what was the practice? When you sacrificed, you came to the temple, you came before Him to sacrifice there. In Numbers 28, we'll see the reference here to understand the context

and we can see where it's obviously talking about a time with human beings. Numbers 28 and 29 describe basically all the details of the sacrificial system. I covered some of this a few days ago when I spoke, covering specifically the sacrifices that took place during the Feast of Tabernacles and I focused on the number of bulls and the descending number of bulls as you go forward in the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles. If you go through all of these chapters in detail, you will see these details. If you have a New King James translation of the Bible you can easily see this because they have the sub-headings entered into the text. It starts off with the daily offerings, the Sabbath offerings and then monthly offerings—these are on the day of the new moons—then you go through all the Holy Days that begins with Passover and it takes you all the way through to the eighth day and all the sacrifices that were done. Remember how the sacrificing was done—you had to sacrifice at the temple; you had to go where God dwelt and bring your sacrifice there before Him. That was one of the rules that was instituted after they had the tabernacle and then later the temple—you couldn't just sacrifice anywhere, you had to do it there at the temple.

Numbers 28:9 *And on the Sabbath day two lambs in their first year, without blemish, and two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, with its drink offering—*

10) this is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering. (NKJV)

This is why He says, from Sabbath to Sabbath, they'll come before Me—before His presence—to worship. Notice He also says from new moon to new moon. Notice verse 11.

11) At the beginnings of your months you shall present a burnt offering to the LORD: (NKJV)

I'm going to skip over all the details in the next couple of verses because I don't want to get bogged down with all the details of all the specific sacrifices. What I want you to notice is He mentions that, at the beginning of your months, they had to come to sacrifice as well. That's the day of the new moon. How do we know that? Turn to the next chapter, Numbers 29:1, this is referring to the offerings that were done on the Feast of Trumpets.

Numbers 29:1 *And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets. (NKJV)*

So, we know we are specifically talking about the Feast of Trumpets and that was the first day of the seventh month—the beginning of the month. Look down in verse 6; we're skipping down to all the offerings that were commanded to be done that day.

6) besides the burnt offering with its grain offering for the New Moon ... (NKJV)

A day of the new moon was the first day of the month, because that's the biblical definition of the first day of the month, the day of the new moon. In addition to the offering specific to Trumpets itself, because it was in a day of the new moon that's what else they had to do that day as well. When you read the reference in Isaiah 66, he says they are going to be coming before me from new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, what is He talking about? Physical human beings were bringing their sacrifices to the temple where God dwelt to sacrifice to Him on those days to fulfill these commandments. Obviously when he says, it is in the context of the new heaven and new earth, it has to be talking about the millennium. There's no other way to interpret that because we are talking about physical human beings, doing physical sacrifices at a physical temple. Obviously referring the new heaven and new earth it has to refer to the replenished earth that would have taken place during the millennium. In Isaiah 65 we see another similar reference. The context is going to help us out here.

Isaiah 65:17 *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.*

18) But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy.

19) I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.

20) “No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. (NKJV)

We're referring to physical life spans.

21) They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

22) They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23) They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them.

24) “It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.

25) The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,”

Says the LORD. (NKJV)

Notice the description here, we talked about life spans of people, planting vineyards, building houses, talking about children—we obviously have a context here of physical human beings. The only conclusion we can come to, is that the new heaven and new earth has to be referring to the replenished earth that will take place during the millennium. The newly created earth, as I covered before, is unlike anything that we have seen previously. Why it is to be called a “new” earth is because it is something

totally new to what has been experienced in the past. Obviously, we are talking a context of physical human beings. So this has to be a millennial context.

There is one other verse that mentions this and which often confuses the subject. We are going to take a little time analyzing the particular verses in Revelation 21. I am going to suggest that these verses these references, are exactly the same and match all the other references on the new heaven and new earth. Growing up in the church, you've probably seen two perspectives and I totally admit I have been guilty of both of them throughout my life. One was taking the reference in Revelation 21 and assuming this has to be referring to a time beyond human beings, when there are to be no human beings and then you try to get all the other references in Isaiah and in Peter to match that. You have to do some severe mental gymnastics to get that to work. As we just went through, the context in Isaiah is very clearly talking about physical human beings.

The other perspective of it is, you look at the Isaiah references in 2 Peter and say, this is obviously referring to the replenished earth after the Day of the Lord and then, Revelation 21 is something different. We try to separate that reference out and there are two reasons why we do that and they are found in the first four verses. We're going to take a little time dissecting this. I think if we analyze it in detail, we can see that this scripture matches all of the others and the reference is consistent throughout the Bible.

Revelation 21:1 *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. (NKJV)*

That's typically one of the first problems.

2) Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3) And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4) And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (NKJV)

What normally happens is that the logic goes like this and I will absolutely plead guilty—there are sermons on the website of me saying some of the things I'm about to correct today. We assume two things. We assume no more sea—that obviously means no more bodies of water. If there are no more bodies of water, which therefore must not be talking about a physical planet here. Then we take verse 4 and say, we're obviously not talking about a time where there could be any physical human beings. So, we assume there has to be no water and we are beyond all of mankind being made God beings. There's a couple of problems with that. If you read through Revelation 21 and 22, what you will see (and I'll cover some of this today in more detail) you have two concepts going on. Obviously New Jerusalem is a spiritual concept. It describes us as the bride, who is dwelling together with the Father and the Son. You will even see that in

Revelation 21 where John has the vision and says I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife and what does he show them? He shows them the city. So we are obviously talking about a spiritual concept. But you are also going to see references to physical human beings in these chapters as well. You have two concepts going on here. What happens at the beginning of the millennium? Christ and the Father come down to the earth, we have all known that for some time. We know that one of the jobs of the Firstfruits is to work with all of mankind as well. What are the Firstfruits composed of at that time? They are spirit beings—they have been resurrected to eternal life. So you have the Father, the Son, all the first fruits who are all spirit beings, who are on a physical earth, working with physical human beings. We have two things going on. One of the mistakes we often make is trying to make this totally spiritual or totally physical and you have to do mental gymnastics to get either of those to work. If you understand that you have two concepts going on in these chapters, it makes it easier.

Let me start with one of the things that opened my eyes on the subject. Look at verse 3.

3) And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (NKJV)

Notice it says it's men. I have to say, much of my life I have looked at that and thought, it's former men who are now God-beings. I've made that argument for years. The problem being, that's not what the Greek word means. Let me read to you the definition of the Greek word translated there in the English word *men*. It's transliterated into English as *anthropos* and Strong's #444 and according to the Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zohiates, here's how it's defines this word. I'm not going to read you everything Zohiates writes up on this but give you a synopsis of this.

Man, "a generic name in distinction from gods and the animals. In the New Testament, used to make the distinction between sinful man whose conduct, way or nature is opposed to God; a man or woman, an individual of the human race, a person. Spoken in reference to his human nature, a man, i.e. a human being, a mortal. Here is included the idea of human infirmity and imperfection, especially when spoken in contrast to God and divine things."

It's obvious by the definition it's referring to physical men. I can tell you that when I first became aware of this concept, I was a hard sell. So, I looked at it and thought maybe there are other references in the Bible where John may have used this word in a figurative meaning. Where he is referring to physical man and they are not spirit beings. So, I searched for such a reference. I looked up every time that word was used and went through all of John's writings in first, second and third John and in Revelation and there is not a reference where he uses it that way. He has the perfect opportunity in Revelation 7 and 14, because in both chapters he's looking forward into the future where it's physical human beings who have been born into the Kingdom of God and he

never uses the term like that to describe them. So, when it says the tabernacle of God is with men, it is referring to physical men.

If we look at it like that, we realize that we have two concepts going on. New Jerusalem is a spiritual concept—this is the bride and the Father and the Son together—but what are they doing in the millennium? They are working with physical humans.

Now let's look at this reference of "*no more sea*". Let's again read verse 1.

Revelation 21:1 *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also, there was no more sea. (NKJV)*

If we take that to be an absolute, literal reference, we would have to conclude that means no more bodies of water. We know during the millennium there are bodies of water; we just read about the river that flows into the oceans and there are bodies of water. Let's also consider something else. We are reading in the book of Revelation, aren't we? This is a book full of symbolic language. There is nothing unusual about the book of Revelation stating things in very symbolic language and not necessarily meaning those terms literally how we might take the English words, but creating a symbolic picture. Let's consider something else. What else might "*no more sea*" be a reference to, that is not really referring to no more bodies of water? Consider something else. What else do we know happens before the millennium starts? It is pictured in the Day of Atonement—it's the azazel goat, the binding of Satan. We know Satan is out of the picture.

Now let's notice something interesting. How is Satan pictured in the Old Testament? He is pictured as a sea monster; he's pictured as a monster whose domain is the sea. The beast power, which we know he is the power behind—these are the physical empires that he works through—what are they pictured as? Coming up out of the sea. It's a very consistent reference. Turn to the book of Job 41:1.

Job 41:1 *Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, Or snare his tongue with a line which you lower?*

2) *Can you put a reed through his nose, Or pierce his jaw with a hook?*

3) *Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak softly to you?*

4) *Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him as a servant forever?*

5) *Will you play with him as with a bird, Or will you leash him for your maidens?*

6) *Will your companions make a banquet of him? Will they apportion him among the merchants?*

7) *Can you fill his skin with harpoons, Or his head with fishing spears?*

8) *Lay your hand on him; Remember the battle— Never do it again! (NKJV)*

This is God talking to Job, using the picture of Leviathan, referring to Satan and He's teaching a lesson to Job—I've taken Satan as My servant. I have a hook in his nose, he does My bidding for Me, I can control him—I have him like a dog on a leash. But you don't want to mess with him, he'll eat you for lunch. You don't want to take on this guy

but he's nothing to Me. To understand exactly what He is referring to, go down to verse 33.

33) On earth there is nothing like him, Which is made without fear.

34) He beholds every high thing; He is king over all the children of pride.” (NKJV)

Obviously, a sea monster—a literal sea monster that you would hook with a hook—is not the king over all the children of the pride, is he? That's Satan, but again the imagery here is he is a sea monster. Let's notice this is numerous times throughout the Old Testament and it refers to his domain as the sea. Isaiah 27:4.

Isaiah 27:1 *In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea. (NKJV)*

Satan's domain is referred to as being in the sea. We aren't going to read every scripture that mentions this. If you do a search on the term Leviathan, you'll see a number of scriptures that we don't have time to cover today. But for one more, turn to Psalms 104:24.

Psalms 104:24 *O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions—*

25) This great and wide sea, In which are innumerable teeming things, Living things both small and great.

26) There the ships sail about; There is that Leviathan Which You have made to play there. (NKJV)

In other words, the area where Leviathan, who we know is Satan, plays, is referred to as the sea. Notice also, if we look at the beast empires, as Revelation tells us Satan is the power behind the beast; he gives them their power, they are able to do what they do because of his influence behind them, but notice how they are pictured—always pictured as rising out of the sea. Look at Daniel 7:1.

Daniel 7:1 *In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.*

2) Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. (NKJV)

What we are about to see is coming out of the sea.

3) And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

4) The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. (NKJV)

The chapter goes on describing that in detail—I don't want to get lost in all those details—but notice he is seeing the beast and as we know, these are successive empires that would rule the area. We won't get into all of that but I want you to notice how they are pictured. They are pictured as monsters coming out of the sea. In Revelation 13 and we'll see the same thing.

Revelation 13:1 *Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea [notice the beast comes out of the sea], having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. (NKJV)*

We're not going to go through all the details that are described with the beast but just notice that you have Satan described as Leviathan, as a sea monster. We know he's not literally a sea monster, it's a symbolic picture that he's associated with and his domain—the place he plays—is the sea. The empires that he is the power behind that do his evil bidding for him, what are they pictured doing? They are coming up out of the sea. We know all of this is symbolic—it's not literally tied to oceans, it's all a symbolism picture—but you can see how the Bible uses the picture of the sea. Now think of that in terms of Revelation 21. If you're talking about the beginning of the millennium and you have the resurrected saints, coming down to the earth and are going to work with mankind and you have a new heaven and a new earth that we saw in Isaiah—that's how the millennial earth is described—and it also says there is no more sea. If Satan is bound, then that would apply; “no more sea”, because you don't have Satan's influence anymore.

Let's look at another verse in Revelation 21. Another verse here that can be a tripping up issue is verse 4. I'm going to suggest a couple of ways we might look at this and notice an interesting parallel.

Revelation 21:4 *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” (NKJV)*

We normally read this—I know I have as well—assuming that we are talking about a time where there are no more physical human beings. I'm not going to give you a dogmatic interpretation of this particular verse, I'm going to suggest that there are possibly two ways to look at this. One, is a forward-looking statement that God is coming down to work with mankind and the ultimate goal is all being spiritual. There's another possible way to look at this as well. As we noticed before, there are multiple verses particularly in Isaiah that refer to new heavens and new earth. What I want you to consider is how similar the lay out of the statements made in Revelation 21 directly match Isaiah 65. keep your finger here but look at Isaiah 65:17. We read all of this before but I'm just going to read a couple of verses here and I want you to notice the concepts and the order of how it's laid out.

Isaiah 65:17 *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.*

18) But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. (NKJV)

Notice we're going to see in verse 18 and 19, joy with weeping and crying being eliminated.

19) I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. (NKJV)

We have weeping and crying being removed, we have new heavens and earth and the next verse is going to talk about extremely long lifespans. I've read verse 20 to you out of the New King James earlier, let me read this out of the New Living Translation, I think it's a little clearer.

20) "No longer will babies die when only a few days old. No longer will adults die before they have lived a full life. No longer will people be considered old at one hundred! Only the cursed will die that young! (NLT)

If you look at a number of translations, you can find lots of nuances on that particular verse. If we take this verse for what it says, it suggests in the NLT is that you have a picture where as long as people are being obedient to God and not being rebels, they are going to have a very long lifespans; hundreds of years—they are going to live centuries. It does say if you die shorter, you could be cursed. We covered earlier in Zechariah 14; you have people who will just say that they aren't going to the Feast. I'm sure God is going to have a point where if people are rebellious enough, He's had enough of them. This suggests very long lifespans of people during the millennium as long as they are obeying God.

So, what do we have? A reference to new heavens and a new earth, weeping and crying going away, very long lifespans of people. Death as we know it now is three score and ten and if you get much more than that, you're lucky and then we all die because that's the normal course of events—that's not the norm anymore. It's the exception.

Now consider the order of events in Revelation 21. In Revelation 21:1, what did we start off with? Reference to a new heaven and a new earth.

Revelation 21:1 *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. (NKJV)*

Again, I would suggest that's no more of Satan's domain. We have the tabernacle of God with men but if you go to verse 4 there is more:

4) And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” (NKJV)

So you have a new heaven and new earth, weeping and crying going away and a reference to no death. I'm not going to give you a dogmatic interpretation of this, I'll say there are two ways to look at this. One is a forward reference to saying that's the ultimate objective, that death will be done away with. But again, you could also look at that from a standpoint that this matching exactly to Isaiah 65 because you have the reference to new heavens and new earth and again, the same concepts following, painting the exact same picture. You can decide which way you want to look at that but I would suggest Revelation 21 is the exact same reference as Isaiah 65, Isaiah 66 and 2 Peter 3. That the New heaven and new earth is the replenished earth that we will experience at the beginning of the millennium where God heals it from all the devastation of the Day of the Lord and you have this Garden of Eden utopian setting.

As we go forward throughout the rest of this Feast of Tabernacles, looking forward to the wonderful time that we have, hopefully we can glean from these scriptures and look forward with great anticipation to a new heaven and new earth in which righteousness dwells.