

# New Creation

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[0:00] Let me switch myself back on. Happy endings are what we want, I certainly want, in films and books and TV shows.

! We go through the drama of the storyline, high points, low points, sickness, betrayal, death, joy, horrors. But it's always nice to get to the end and feel like there's a happy ending.

One of my many favourite stories to watch is Shrek. Weren't expecting that way.

The tale of an ogre who is sent out by a king to go and rescue a princess locked in a tower.

But it turns out this princess is under a curse and she herself turns into an ogre at night time. She's under that curse. And the only way for it to be broken is if true love kisses her.

[1:13] And of course, by the time you get to the end, that true love is Shrek. And instead of not being an ogre at night time, she becomes fully an ogre.

But Shrek loves her and it's a wonderful happy ending for them. Well, we've seen that the Bible starts off so well.

The world made perfectly good. Described as full of colour, full of life, full of light. Then human beings who were made to enjoy a perfect relationship with God and Eden.

Things turn nasty as they rebelled. Darkness came. We were under curse. And we were left asking the question, how can humanity dwell with God forever again?

And we see this finally being worked out at the end of the Bible story in the last few chapters. And we've read Revelation 21 and 22 together.

[2:25] I'm going to show us a few things. At some point in the middle of them, we'll have a discussion about some of it. So, first of all, Satan's defeat.

Satan's defeat. Satan, who came at the beginning in the garden in the form of the serpent.

Revelation shows us that he will be destroyed.

Along with all who haven't turned to the Lord Jesus for salvation. In chapter 20 and verse 10, it says this.

God is going to make the world new.

And as part of that, the devil needs to be defeated. Thrown into the lake of fire. Where he will be punished.

[3:47] Because the world that God is making new, there will be no more sin. No more death. No more evil. No more curse.

But for those who have found refuge in the Lord Jesus, who are found in the Lamb's book of life, they will get to enjoy the new creation that God was going to bring in.

And this is good news that evil is going to be dealt with. The world has suffered wickedness and darkness. The reality of sin.

God's good creation at the beginning turned dark. And so the serpent's finally going to be crushed.

The beginning we had evil death. Satan come in. Now that's going to be destroyed forever. We're not told in the Bible particularly why there is evil.

[4:56] But we are told that there is evil and it will be dealt with. And as you go through the Bible's story, we see at the beginning God as creator and sustainer of all.

But as we go through the Bible's story, we see the depths of God's character, his love, his mercy, his grace. Show the lengths he would be willing to go to so that humanity can dwell with God forever again.

And for that, he is deserving of all honour and praise. And it is good that he deals with wickedness, that justice will be done.

But knowing judgment and final judgment is going to come upon wickedness, I think it should move us to compassion.

I shared a few verses that I heard about. I heard being preached on the FIC conference I was at a few weeks ago, and I thought I'd share them again, because they've really been sticking in my mind just recently from Jude 22, 23.

[6:12] Be merciful to those who doubt. Save others by snatching them from the fire. To others show mercy, mix with fear, hating even the clothing corrupted by flesh.

We need to show mercy to those who are heading towards the judgment that God will bring. Show mercy and compassion to the lost.

Of course, we have opportunities to particularly do that at Christmas time. Let's make the most of the opportunities that God gives. Let's pray for opportunities.

The question we've been asking is, how can humanity dwell with God forever again? Well, we see, as we go into Revelation 21, God dwelling with us.

God making his dwelling with us. We've seen this being worked out through these last weeks.

[7:23] We saw a few weeks ago, on a Sunday morning, Emmanuel, God being with us. It's all been, I've been really struck by how all this seems, is connecting, because we're looking at the Bible.

But Emmanuel, he was mocked and scorned and despised and rejected and put to death on a cross. On the cross, he makes atonement for our sin.

He was making a way for us to restore our broken relationship with God. And the hope that we have is to dwell perfectly with God in this brand new creation.

And we read these words, these wonderful words, in Revelation 21, 1 to 4.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. There was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

[8:29] And I heard in a loud voice, look, God's dwelling place is now among the people. And he will dwell with them.

They will be his God. And God, they will be his people even. And God himself will be with them and be their God.

God is going to dwell right among his people. in the new creation. And it's going to be wonderful.

We have so much to look forward to as Christians.

This wonderful, certain hope of this new creation. No separation now. At the moment, we get a taste of that. We have the spirit dwelling in us. But we'll be finally fully able to be with God.

And he with us. To see him, praise him, freely commune with him. No more sin getting in the way. For the old order of things, it will be passed away.

[9:37] We'll have a perfect relationship with God. And then we, as we move through these verses in Revelation 21, I wanted us to spend a few minutes in verses 15 to 20.

All these numbers and these jewels that Christopher wonderfully read out for us, thank you.

What's going on there? We read about a lot of 12s here.

The city was laid out like a square. As long as it was wide, he measured the city with a rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia. We've got, as you go on, the angel measured the wall.

And it was 144 cubits thick. And you've got the jewels. There's 12 of them. 12 gates, 12 pearls.

[10:54] What's all that about? Well, it seems that 12 is a significant number in the Bible. There were 12 tribes of Israel. There were 12 apostles. And it seems to be describing the completeness of God's people.

And the measurements are huge. 12,000 stadia, 1,400 miles apparently. And when it talks about the walls being 144 cubits thick, that is apparently 12 squared.

It's signifying completeness. A secure city with the complete people of God being completely in the presence of God.

The jewels that were mentioned, there were 12 jewels. There were similar jewels to the ones that the high priest wore on his breastplate as he got to go into the Holy of Holies in the Old Testament

temple.

And they represented the 12 tribes of Israel as he went in. And now, here are all of God's people in God's place, in the Holy of Holies, if you like.

[12:11] And it's the same shape, it's a cube shape, like the Holy of Holies was. God's people fully together in God's presence. So that's the second thing, God dwelling with us.

Third thing, Eden restored. We're going to split into our little groups here and have a little discussion about this bit.

So, we've read these verses, but why don't you scan through them again and answer these two questions. How is Eden restored?

How is it even better than the beginning? And we'll spend five or so minutes in our groups and chatting before we feed back about some of these things.

Who wants to kick us off?

[13:19] There's a river of life. River of life? Pardon? There was also in Eden. But there were...

What's the difference with this? Anyone? Oh, this one's flowing out from the throne of God. Yeah. There were... I think there were three rivers in Eden? Four. Four rivers in Eden. There were... There were... Here, there's just the one river of life and it's flowing from the throne of God.

So it's like Eden, but better. Excellent. Nothing impure. Nothing impure. Yeah.

Unlike in Eden where Satan came in. Um... It's in that secure place and...

[14:22] Evil has been defeated. Yeah. Other things? yeah yeah yeah and they were created to rule over God's creation weren't they and now they are reigning forever and ever with with God yeah yeah no need for temple God was present with Adam and Eve in the garden but but this is very much central and and what did you say there's no need for a temple yeah no need to come to God through sacrifice and priests expand on that please yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah we're looking forward to Christ yeah absolutely yeah yeah we're being built into that spiritual yeah yeah and it reaches its yeah yeah yeah yeah thank you Ray no night no night yeah whereas uh in the beginning

God created the the sun to for the day and the moon to govern the night but but here there's no night there is no darkness um what what's the light is it the sun no yeah yeah God himself um no sun glory of God the tree of life is in in in both and here in revelation but in revelation the tree of life almost seems to be everywhere yeah yeah yeah yeah we've got access to to life yeah yeah yeah yes wonderful any any other things before yeah hmm no time we won't be looking at our our clocks oh interesting interesting yes it will just keep coming hmm it doesn't say it but I don't think we'll be looking at our clock we'll we could just be there for eternity every month don't know how literally we take it we we certainly won't run out of time hmm there's a bit we've got the picture of Jerusalem hmm this is even better hmm hmm and Jerusalem is where the temple was and here temple God's dwelling place with his people yeah cool let's let's let's come back together I'm sure there's there's a few other things that we probably haven't got down but many wonderful things in that passage um in that place where we will be um God's people dwelling in God's place enjoying his blessing um this is a happy ending but far far more isn't it um living like we've never lived before um there's moments on earth where we probably feel um truly alive we might say truly wonderful experience places we find particularly amazing and awesome um

I've loved spending the last couple of summers in the lake district surrounded by mountains and lakes and felt like this is this is incredible this is I'm in awe of God's creation but this will eclipse even those times um this will be wonderful um and finally um final final thought um that I was pondering on um Christ is at the center of all this um beyond all the majesty and the splendor of the new creation uh wonderful place Eden restored but even better um we see that the star is is Christ in in in these verses it talks about um in verse 20 t uh john says i did not see a temple in the city because of the lord almighty and the lamb are its temple the center of worship for the jewish people was uh the temple but here uh it's the lamb and the lord almighty uh the city does not we've mentioned already does not need um i've got these thoughts on this slide does not need the light of the sun um because the glory of god is its light instead of being in awe at a wonderful sunset or a wonderful sunny day will be in awe instead of the son of god the lamb of god who died to give us life

um and it's before uh the lamb um that we read some wonderful words of ten thousand times ten thousand um praising god and saying some wonderful things and i thought to end our time um particularly looking at god's word um i thought we'd do two things i thought firstly we would say uh these words um together um from revelation chapter five in praise to the lamb of god and then after that we'll sing a song which points us to um the glory of um emmanuel's land as uh the song describes it as um so shall we do those two things together in praise uh of the lamb let's let's stand um as we say these things so together worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise then i heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them saying to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb be praise and glory and glory and power forever and ever the four living creatures said amen and the elders fell down and worshipped we're going to sing together