

Read Revelation 21:1-8

What — John recorded all that Jesus showed him so that we might know what is coming. Even more importantly is that we might know and understand God's ultimate plan. Here, nearing the end of the Revelation, John described what happens immediately after the final judgment. A new heaven and a new earth will come down out of heaven. This is amazing for so many reasons, and John seemed overwhelmed by its glory and its beauty. God declared that the plan is complete, "the dwelling of God is with men" and we can live in peace with God because sin has been disposed of. All the results of sin, pain, suffering and death, are put to rest by God and He declares that everything is new. He reminded us again that He is the source of life. Those who are committed to Him will live forever and those who are not will perish. Once and for all sin and those who worship their sin are done away with. This is the second death.

Why — This scripture is amazing because people often fail to realize the overarching ramifications of GOD'S plan for salvation. When I read this scripture, I realize and remember that when man fell, all of God's creation, the creation He gave us dominion over, fell along with us. In MAN'S plan for salvation, man gets to go to heaven. But God's plan involves EVERYTHING being made new- God is literally "re-creating" creation. Man will dwell with God, which was the plan from the beginning. We have learned from our sin and now understand that God is the center of our existence. Heaven is not a bunch of people sitting around in white robes talking to people who look like George Burns (although that might be one option), rather heaven is a recreated earth where we enjoy the presence of God in our everyday life and live on an earth unspoiled by the sin and pain man has created. While God has always been in charge, in the new heaven we are glad that He is and we are seeking ways to follow and worship Him rather than fighting against His will. Imagine what it will be like when WE are in the place of Adam and Eve before the fall. Walking with God in the cool of the day, enjoying all that He has made; this is His plan for us and was from the beginning- And it is ours not because of anything we do. The bible says that we "inherit" this. God gives it to us as an act of grace. We live forever in the shadow and security of His love.

WOW — If the scene does not put a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye by itself, consider some of the specifics God has placed in this scripture for our practical application right now. How many of us endure suffering and struggle in today's world? Most of us do. God said specifically that there will be, "no death or mourning or crying or pain." How many of us think that heaven is too far away to imagine? God made it practical when He reminded us that our desires to know Him will be like a thirst that is quenched forever. Imagine the sensation of need that becomes thirst being met on a spiritual level, PERMANENTLY! Finally, and perhaps most importantly, God reminded us that there will be justice in the world. Many of us wonder why the wicked sometimes seem to prosper in our world. It causes us to question God. Jeremiah put this very question to God in Jeremiah 12:1. "Why do the wicked prosper?" he asks God. God answered once and for all here, reminding us that in the end only those whose faith is in God will survive. The final blessings are reserved for those who were willing to give it all up for God when they had

the chance. All that is wrong with the world will be made right, and justice will be done in the end. Perhaps you are struggling right now. Perhaps the world is getting to you. No matter the circumstances, God ends our story in glory! It is worth looking forward too. Don't forget that. The King of Kings will be just that for everyone in the future. That must be enough for us to make Him King of Kings in our life right now.