

ECHOES OF HEAVEN

A Devotional Meditation on Nasso (Elevate

Numbers 4:21-7:89; Judges 13:2-25; Psalm 115:1-18; Revelation 21:5-8

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May 30, 2026

A friend of mine is excited about how New Testament writers based their works on the Tanakh, or Old Testament. There are, he says, echoes from the Hebrew Bible in the Greek scriptures. That's why he is publishing [The Echoes Bible](#), which pairs New Testament books with corresponding works of the Torah. Matthew, for example, pairs with Genesis, and Romans with Leviticus.*



Photo by Johannes Plenio, [on Unsplash](#).

These connections give us context for the Apostolic Writings and add tremendous depth and understanding to our faith. It's more than simply recognizing that the New Testament authors quote extensively from Moses and the Prophets; it's discerning the continuity in the scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

Let's look at a familiar passage from Revelation and see if it corresponds with anything in the Torah. Regarding the end of this age, when God establishes the New Heaven and the New Earth, John writes:

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

Revelation 21:5-8 ESV

This passage informs the Christian understanding of eternal life in heaven for the righteous, and eternal punishment in hell for the unrighteous. If we look closer, though, we see that this isn't a scene in heaven, but on earth in the New Jerusalem. The One on the throne is God, or at least one who reigns as God's representative. This is a point of contention between Christians and Jews. We agree that Messiah will reign in the New Jerusalem, but until he comes – or returns – we will continue to disagree on whether Messiah is God, and if Yeshua is the Messiah. Nevertheless, we can find agreement on how Messiah's Kingdom is organized.

* *The Echoes Bible*, Bob O'Dell, Dr. John David Martin, Mark L Proeger MDiv, Dr. Susan E. Udry, eds., 2025, <https://www.echoesbible.com/>.

For one thing, it's a heavenly Kingdom manifested on earth. That's what we understand from passages like this:

The heavens are the LORD's heavens,
but the earth he has given to the children of man.

Psalm 115:16 ESV

God made the earth as the home for humankind and the place where he would interact with us. He has always intended to dwell with us, but for that to happen, we have to be holy as he is holy. He has been working on that for all of recorded history. That's why he inserted himself into our reality in various ways, culminating in the person of Messiah Yeshua, whose work on the cross activates the power of God's New, or Renewed, Covenant of redemption.

The process of redeeming and perfecting humanity and the earth is, and always has been, a partnership. God does his part, and we do ours. Jews and Christians have ways to describe this process. Both understand the need for repentance, which means turning away from whatever separates us from our Creator, and turning toward his ways of living and thinking. Those who don't go through that process find themselves cut out of God's redeemed reality. That's what John writes about in Revelation.

So where's the echo of John's description of God's world order? It's in Numbers:

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Command the people of Israel that they put out of the camp everyone who is leprous or has a discharge and everyone who is unclean through contact with the dead. You shall put out both male and female, putting them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camp, in the midst of which I dwell." And the people of Israel did so, and put them outside the camp; as the LORD said to Moses, so the people of Israel did.

Numbers 5:1-4 ESV

This passage reminds us that redemption is tied to the Covenant nation of Israel. At the center of the camp of Israel was the Tabernacle, where the Presence of the Almighty rested. That is the pattern John describes in the New Jerusalem, which itself is a reminder that God's Covenant nation is tied to a geographical location where his holy Temple has stood and will stand again. There is no Temple in the New Jerusalem, however, because God himself will dwell there.

This is why everyone who is defiled must be removed outside the place God has sanctified for himself and his people. Notice that God doesn't do everything. He commands his sanctified people to remove the defiled ones from the camp of Israel, and we can infer that he will do the same at the end of the age. But first, they must sanctify themselves, which is what distinguishes them from the ones being removed.

Is there any hope for the ones being removed? There was in the camp of Israel. The defiled ones could be sanctified when that which made them unclean was resolved, but they had to go through the protocol to avail themselves of the cleansing process. It's the same in the New Jerusalem. What happens to those who remain outside the camp at that time sounds very unpleasant, but even then our merciful God may yet hold out hope for them. That's a matter yet to be revealed. Which means the wise course of action is to get clean and stay that way as we learn from the whole word of God.