

## REVELATION 21

### A New Heaven and a New Earth

In our last study of the Revelation, we witnessed the Great White Throne judgment of lost sinners. We read about how everyone who refuses to come to Jesus for salvation will one day face Him as their Judge. He will order them to be cast in the Lake of Fire, where they will suffer eternally for their sins.

I thank the Lord that the Book of Revelation does not end there. After that terrible time of judgment we are privileged to get a glimpse of the world that is waiting for us when time is finished and eternity begins.

We are so tied to time and so used to the problems of this life that we cannot really even imagine what Heaven will be like. All we can do is read our Bibles, believe the words they contain and rejoice in what awaits us, even though we cannot possibly grasp it all now. However, in our text today, the veil between time and eternity is pulled back just a little bit, and we are allowed to look into our future in a place called Heaven.

The word “new” is used four times in our text.. This word means “recently made, fresh, recent, unused, unworn”. This passage speaks of that time When God Makes All Things New.

***1 Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.***

#### v. 1 THERE WILL BE A NEW CREATION

– This verse speaks of the day when this world and the atmosphere around it will be done away with. This world has been corrupted by sin and the day is coming when the Lord will do away with this world, (Heb. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 3:7-13). This world is filled with explosive substances: nitrogen, hydrogen, sodium, etc. 2 Pet. 3:10 says that these– “elements” the basic building blocks of all matter, will be destroyed. The smallest building block of the universe is the atom. Everything in the universe is made of atoms. We know today that atoms can be cut, and when they are, tremendous energy is released. The devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – over 200,000 people died because mankind learned how to cut a few atoms. Imagine what will happen to this world when God splits many atoms.

Remember that the atmosphere of our world has been claimed as the habitation of Satan and his demons, ( Eph. 2:2). God will root out the devil and his army. He will cleanse the earth and the atmosphere surrounding it.

– The old heaven and Earth will be replaced with a new heaven and Earth. It will be remade as it was in the beginning, before sin invaded the world and corrupted and ruined creation. In the new world, there will be no more curse of sin. It will be a perfect world created to be enjoyed by a perfected people.

The new world the Lord will make will be so glorious that this old world will pale in comparison.( Isa 65:17-25). Think for a moment about the beauty of this world. Consider the fall when the leaves are all different colors of yellow, orange, red and rust. People travel for hours to see those leaves. Think of the Grand Canyon. When I first saw the Grand Canyon I was in awe yet, when God makes a new world, no

one will even think about the Grand Canyon. It's beauty and grandeur will pale in comparison to what the Lord will do in that future day. I praise the Lord that I will be there to see it.

John closes this verse by telling us that "there will be no more sea". When John penned these words, he was a prisoner on the island of Patmos. He was separated from his congregation in Ephesus by the vast expanse of the Mediterranean Ocean. John is telling us that there will be no separations in the world to come. The sea will cease to exist. The oceans that cover over three-fourths our planet will be removed. There will be separations by natural boundaries.

***2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.***

v. 2    THERE WILL BE A NEW CITY

Not only does John see a new creation, he also sees a new city. He sees a place called the "New Jerusalem". I believe it is the city where the redeemed of God will spend their eternity. This verse gives us a little information about that glorious place.

It Is A Perfect City – Ever since mankind began to populate the earth, he has been in the business of building cities, (Gen. 4:17). Every city built by mankind, has one thing in common. They are all centers of sin and depravity. The larger the city, the larger its population, and the more people there are, the more sin and wickedness there will be. Now, God is building a "***Holy City***"!

Every city is a reflection of its inhabitants. We talk about a city being a place of sin, and the reason it is a place of sin is because it is filled with sinners. This new city reflects the character of its Creator. God is holy, separate from sin and sinners, and He is building a city that will be free from the corruption and presence of sin. Sounds like it's the kind of place I would like to spend eternity.

It Is a Prepared City – "***Prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband***" – When a bride prepares herself for her wedding day, the day she will give herself unconditionally to her husband, she doesn't smear her face with grease and put on sweats. She pulls out all the stops! Her make-up is perfect. Her hair is perfect. She is in her white dress. She is the absolute image of female beauty.

Well, the Lord Jesus is preparing this city for His bride, the church, (John 14:1-3). He isn't building a few cabins on the hills of glory. He isn't preparing a place that is common and run of the mill condos. Jesus is preparing a city that is the epitome of perfection and beauty. He is preparing a place that is worthy of God. Right now, you and I live in tents of flesh, 2 Cor. 5:1. One day, we will fold up these tents and move into a mansion. That has been the hope of the believer since the days of Abraham, (Heb. 11:9-10).

***3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."***

#### v. 3-4 THERE WILL BE A NEW COMMUNION WITH GOD

v. 3 – This incredible verse lets us know that when we arrive in Heaven, our days of separation from God are over. Yes, God dwells in our hearts, 1 Cor. 6:19, and the Lord will never leave us nor forsake us, (Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20). However, here and now we still sin and grieve the Holy Spirit of God in us, but there is coming a day when the hindrances of sin, the flesh and distance will be removed and we will see God face to face, (Job 19:26; Matt. 5:8). In Heaven, all we will see is the presence of the Lord! Praise God! We will see the One Who loved us enough to send His Son Jesus to die for our sins on the Cross. We will see the Lord and that will be Heaven!

v. 4 – When we leave this world and step into that Heavenly realm we will see the Lord God. He will minister to us in a personal, and profound way. In fact, while Heaven will give us more than we can imagine, it will also take away some things that we will be glad to see go forever.

1. No More Sadness – **“God will wipe away every tear from their eyes”** – The word “wipe” means “to obliterate, erase, wipe out, blot out”. In other words, God will once for all erase tears from our existence! Tears are a part of our walk here, (Ps. 23:4). This is a valley of weeping and death.

Once a man who was getting his shoes shined and the shoeshine boy was stumbling a little and wasn't doing a real good job and the man was in a hurry and he was all irritated and ill-tempered that day and he said, “What's the matter with you, can't you do any better than that shining shoes?” And when he did, tears began to run down the face of that poor shoeshine boy. The man saw him crying and said, “I'm sorry son. I didn't mean to make you cry.” And he said, “Oh, no sir, you didn't make me cry. My mama died this morning and I'm just shining a few shoes to get up a little money to buy some flowers to put on her grave. No sir, you didn't put the tears in my eyes, you just brought them out.”

There are times when this life can cause the tears to flow. But, God sees your tears and He cares about them all, (Ps. 56:8; 1 Pet. 5:7). God cares for you, and one day, He will wipe away every tear from your eyes. Forever! No more tears over sickness, sin, separation, sorrow or suffering. Tears will be banned from Heaven.

2. No More Separation – **“no more death”** – Death is all around us and it stalks us all. Nearly every person in this room had been touched by death. Nearly every person here has lost someone they love to that monster called death. Every person in this room has a date with death, (Heb. 9:27)

In Heaven, there will be no more death! According to 1 Cor. 15:26 death will be destroyed one day. We saw that destruction take place in Rev. 20:14. Because Jesus conquered death, those who believe in Him are going to a place where there will be no dying; no mortuaries; no wreaths on graves, and no sad families gathered around a deceased family member's body. Never again will loved ones watch those they love slip out of time and into eternity. There will be no death in Heaven. Praise be to God!

3. No More Sorrow – This word means “mourning”. It refers to a broken heart. Have you had any sorrow in your life? Have you ever experienced a broken heart down here? Have you ever walked through the deep waters of affliction and heartache? There will be no more of that where we are going. No more broken hearts over sin and all the trouble that it brings! Praise the Lord, we are headed to a place that will never be darkened by the problems of this world.

4. No More Crying – Never again will the anguish of the heart spill out through the eyes. There will be no arguments, no hurt feelings, no wayward children, no problems, and no heartaches. There will be nothing in Heaven that will spoil the serenity and peace of your heart. Wow!!
5. No More Suffering –No calamities, catastrophes, valleys, trials, burdens, fatigue, sickness, disease, and no broken lives or shattered minds. There will be nothing to cause us to become weary and worn. There will be no loads to carry ever again! All that will be banned from the shores of glory!
6. No More Source – ***“for the old order of things have passed away”*** – All the causes of our pain, our sorrow, our suffering, and our crying will be done away with. All the sin/ evils we face here are the result of the work of sin in and around us. Sin will not be there to entice us to sin.( Rev. 20:10). The flesh will not be there, (1 Cor. 15:49-54). Sin will not be there, (Rev. 21:27). While Heaven will be glorious for all that will be there, some of the greatest things about Heaven is what won't be there.

***5 He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6 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 water without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. 8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”***

v. 5-8 THERE WILL BE A NEW CONDITION

v. 5-6 – God issues a promise. He basically says, “You can count on this! I am going to make everything new again!” This old world is going to vanish away, (Isa. 51:6). On the other side of that, we have the Lord's promise that He will make a new world that is far better than this one ever could be. God has some precious gifts to give to those who dwell in that new world with Him. The inhabitants of that city need never fear death. They are partakers of everlasting life. They were given this life free of charge when they received Jesus as their Savior. They were given a drink of living water and they will never thirst again. This is just a reminder to the saints that our heavenly existence is an eternal existence.

v. 7 – ***“Will inherit all this”*** – When you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you became a child of God, (Rom. 8:15; 1 John 3:1-3). You also became a legal heir of all the things that belong to the Lord God, (Rom. 8:17). In Heaven, you will receive your inheritance, (1 Pet. 1:3-5). You will also have intimate fellowship with the God Who redeemed you. In heaven, we will not be servants, we will be sons and daughters. We will enjoy tremendous intimacy with God the Father. I cannot imagine all that will be involved in that, but I can say that I am looking forward to it with great anticipation.

v. 8 This passage closes on a tragic note. After reminding us about Heaven, who will be there and what we will enjoy, we are reminded that not everyone will go to Heaven. Some will not enter that city, but they will be forced to spend their eternity in the Lake of Fire. Let's examine this list of those who will be banned from Heaven:

The Cowardly/Fearful – Those who allowed fear of the Lord or the fear of man to keep them from coming to Jesus.

The Unbelievers – Those who refused to believe and receive the Gospel, (John 8:24).

The Vile – Those who gave themselves up to vile, wicked lifestyles.

The Murderers – Those who willingly took the lives of others.

The sexually immoral – Those who gave themselves over to live lives of sexual perversion.

Those who practice magic arts (See Deut 18:10-13)

Idolaters – Those who give themselves to the worship of false gods and false systems of belief.

All Liars – Those who do not know the truth, but live a lie. John 8:44 tells us lying is the devil's main language

If you saw yourself in that list, I invite you to come to Jesus today. He will forgive your sins and prepare you for a home in Heaven. If you refuse Him and reject His offer, there is nothing for you, but the flames of Hell forever. Do you have the blessed hope today? If you do, then you ought to get down before the Lord and praise Him for His grace in your life. If you don't then you need to come get those things right with God today.

I don't know about you, but I am looking forward to that day when the Lord makes all things new! I know that I am saved! I know that my sins have been forgiven and that I am headed to Heaven when I leave this world.

#### The New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb

***9 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.***

John has a vision (the angel carries him away in the Spirit) that takes him to the capital city of heaven, The New Jerusalem. Described as a bride because it draws its character from its occupants (the church 19:7), and all of God's redeemed people. In an amazing journey he is able to see what the unaided human eye could ever see. Paul saw similar spiritual realities when he was caught up to the Third Heaven (2 Cor. 12:2-4)

The first stop for John was the top of a "***mountain great and high.***" From that spot the angel showed John the Holy City of Jerusalem. The apostle repeats his observation from v-2 that the "***Holy City came down out of heaven from God.***"

***11 It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.***

The most distinguishing characteristic of the capital city is that it is the throne of the Almighty God and is filled with the glory of God. So much so the city will not need the sun or the moon (v-23). Her brilliance is like a very costly stone. It looked as if the light was shining through the very costly and crystal-clear stone Jasper (diamond). The city looked like one gigantic precious stone.

Heaven is described as a huge flawless diamond refracting the brilliant light and glory of God.

**12 It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. 14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

v-12- The city is surrounded by a gleaming high wall (indicating that it is not a vague floating place). There are twelve gates in this wall, each gate attended by an angel (to attend to God's glory and serve God's people. These gates have the names of the twelve tribes of Israel inscribed on them (celebrating forever God's covenant relationship with Israel).

V-13-The gates are arranged in a way that the nation of Israel used to camp around the Tabernacle (Numb 2) (Ez. 48).

v-14- The wall of this great city rests on twelve foundations named after the twelve Apostles, commemorating God's covenant relationship with the church, with the apostles as the foundation (Eph. 2:20). What a city!

**15 The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. 16 The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. 17 The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick.**

Verses 15-16- An angel having a "golden reed" comes to measure the city. A reed was about 10 feet in length, so this measuring would have taken some time. We are told that the city is built like a square at the bottom. It is of equal lengths on all sides (best seen as a cube). We also told that this city measures "twelve thousand furlongs" on each side and that it is as tall as it is wide and long. "Twelve thousand furlongs" translates to about 1,400 miles in each direction. Plenty of room for the redeemed (John 14:2-3).

This city is astounding in its size! If one edge was placed on the Atlantic Ocean, the opposite edge would sit near Denver, CO. If the north edge of the city sat on the Canadian border, the other edge would sit somewhere around Miami, FL. That is one big town! It is even more amazing to consider that it is also 1,400 miles high!

v-17- This city is surrounded by a wall that measures 144 cubits. This is 216 feet. This could refer to the height, or it could refer to the thickness of the wall.

Imagine a city where there is room for all; where there are no ghettos; no mean streets; no wrong side of town. Imagine a city of absolute beauty and sinless perfection. If you can imagine that, then you can imagine home!

**18 The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. 19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.**

V-18- In these next few verses, John describes the materials used to construct the city. He tells us that the wall is made of a diamond and the city is made of pure, transparent gold.

He also tells us that the city rests on a foundation that is loaded with precious gemstones. A brief look at the details of this foundation reveals just how glorious it will be.

- Jasper – Clear like a diamond
- Sapphire - Clear Blue
- Chalcedony - Yellowish Green
- Emerald - Deep Green
- Sardonyx - White with layers of red.
- Sardius - Fiery Red
- Chrysolite - Golden Yellow
- Beryl - Sea Green
- Topaz - Greenish Yellow
- Chrysopasus - Golden Green
- Jacinth - Violet
- Amethyst - Purple

I am certain that these stones speak of God and His character in some way. We cannot understand all they represent today, but when we arrive there, we “will know even also as we are known”, 1 Cor. 13:12.

Imagine, if you will, a city that gleams with the brilliance of God’s glory. Imagine that pure light as it shines through the diamonds, the gold, and all the multi-colored precious stones of that Heavenly city. It will be a glorious sight to behold!

V-21- The gates of that city are made of pearls. The pearl, as you know, is formed out of pain. A grain of sand is trapped in an oyster. That sand irritates the oyster, and the oyster begins to build up layer upon layer of calcium around that grain of sand. After a long while a pearl is formed. The pearl is the only gemstone made by a living organism. The pearl is the oyster’s answer to its pain.

Those gates will remind us that while salvation and the Heaven are provided to us free, it was not cheap! Everything we have was born out of the pain of our Savior on the Cross of Calvary.

Every time we enter that city, we will be reminded of the price He paid to redeem our souls. Heaven is our Lord's gift to us through the pain of His cross! Even the street of Heaven will be glorious to behold. We will walk about on a street that is paved with the purest gold. What a city awaits the redeemed when this life is over.

***22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. 25 On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. 26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. 27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.***

When we arrive in Heaven, our relationship with God will be forever altered. Today, we worship the Lord in churches and temples constructed by human hands. In that day there will be no need for temples and no need for mediators. We will have direct, face to face access with God Himself, Rev. 21:3. What a day that will be! There will be a new intimacy. We will see His face. His Name will be written in our foreheads. We will serve Him in perfection and not be hindered by the many things that come between us and the Lord today. Too many things hinder our service to Him. Too many things destroy our intimacy with Him. None of those things will hinder us in glory! We will enjoy perfect intimacy with our Father, our Savior and with the Holy Spirit. Not only will our relationship with the Lord be changed, so will many of the things we have grown used to in this world. After the earth is replenished and sin is defeated, humans will inhabit the earth and will live as Adam and Eve were intended to live. They will produce children and enjoy life in a perfect world. The gates will never be shut because there will never be any danger or threat against the city. It will be an amazing time when men, angels, glorified saints and the Godhead come together in that city.