

# Revelation 21

...I saw a new heaven and a new earth...

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- IV. JOHN IS COMMANDED BY JESUS TO RECORD THE VISION HE SEES AND THE WORDS HE HEARS, v. 5-6
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This seen in chapter 21 fits in the chronological advancement of the text as coming directly after those things which we have learned about in chapter 20 concerning the millennium, the first and second resurrection, and the first and second death. At this point the narrative takes us into the **eternal state**. “The evidence of Revelation 21:1 is so specific that most commentators do not question that the eternal state is here in view.”<sup>1</sup> So after the millennium and after satan’s last, and short lived attempt to defeat God, and after the white throne judgment comes this amazing seen captured in chapters 21-22 of Revelation which are said to be by some the “the most glorious chapters in the Bible...opening up the wonders of the endless ages of eternity, and the fruition of all the great plans of a loving God”<sup>2</sup>

## I. A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH, v. 1

### A. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth:...”

1. This was depicted in **20:11**. We saw there that the heaven and earth attempted to flee from the presence of the Lord but found no place to. Therefore we are told in **2 Peter 3:10-13** that the heavens will pass away with a great noise (the real big bang), the elements shall melt with fervent, and the earth and all works that had ever been wrought on earth by man will burn up!
2. We need to remember a few things when we read here that God is going to create a new heaven and a new earth:
  - a) That this that is being spoken of here is not a mere renovation of the existing heaven and earth we see and live in today but a creating of an entirely new heaven and earth. It is just as is said to us in **Isaiah 65:17-18**, “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and *the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind*. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever [in that] which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.” The fact that the new will not be the old renovated is also demonstrated to us in that the new heaven and earth are vastly different in nature than the existing ones today. The earth today is covered with about 70% water, the earth to come has no sea on it. The earth today is not eternal and won’t forever remain before God but the earth that is to come will (**Isaiah 66:22**).
  - b) That the heaven that is being spoken of here is speaking of the material heaven. That is the atmospheric heaven and the celestial heaven. This is not referring to where God is, where his throne and kingdom is. That heaven is eternal and will always be as it is. It is immaterial and needs not to be expunged of the curse which God has placed upon the material heaven due to the fall and sin of man.
3. Not since the creation of the heaven and earth that now are has God created something new from absolutely nothing. Here he is seen once again composing a great work of creation.
4. Some might argue, that if God is so perfect then why does he need a *second chance* to make an earth that will truly be as he intended it to be? But God was not capricious in creating the first heaven and first earth. This that we read of is not a “redo” by God. The creating of the first heaven and earth had to be done. The time lived by man on the first earth served his purposes by providing a probationary period of time so He could from his creation draw out those people that would willingly follow him and live with Him in loving fellowship for endless ages to come. And remember we can’t point the finger at God for the messed up world around us, that is our fault not His. Looking back to the creation account we see clearly that at

<sup>1</sup> The Revelation of Jesus Christ, John F. Walvoord, p.312

<sup>2</sup> The Revelation Record, Henry Morris, p. 435

the end of God's creation week he said it was all "very good"! That was before man fell.

B. "there was no more sea"

1. As said above, about 70% of the earth's surface is covered with water. Not so with the new earth. There will be no bodies of water on it. It will all be habitable land. "The present sea is needed...as a basic reservoir for the maintenance of the hydrologic cycle and the water-based ecology and physiology of the animal and human inhabitants of the earth."<sup>3</sup>
2. This perhaps will be do to the fact that the persons that will live on this new heaven and new earth will have no need of water anymore as they will be in there glorified bodies. The Lord's resurrected body is not composed of flesh and blood as ours is at the moment but only of flesh and bone (Luke 24:39, Philippians 2:21). We are told in scripture that we will receive a body like unto his. A spirit-drive body as opposed to a blood-drive body.

II. NEW JERUSALEM COMES DOWN FROM HAVEN, v. 2

A. "And I John saw"

1. This is the first time since the first chapter that John refers to himself by name. He wants to press on the reader that he himself, the last of the apostles, has seen this very thing take place.

B. "the holy city, new Jerusalem"

Current hydrologic system

- 70% of earth's surface covered in water
- 330 million cubic miles of water
- 1.5 trillion tons of rain every day

1. Holy refers to something that is set apart. In this case the city, the new Jerusalem, is holy because it is and ever will be the dwelling place of all the saints of God along with God himself.

2. The Jerusalem that now exists has also been called a "holy city" (Matt 4:5, 27:53, Rev 11:2). This tells us that Jerusalem is and always will be set apart for God's own purposes even though his chosen people which live there today might not be walking in His ways. This then differs from the new Jerusalem in that there no one will be rebellious or stiff necked because no one there will be a sinner.
3. Imagine a city that you can actually, genuinely call holy! Jesus said in John 14:1-3 that he has gone to prepare a place for us! It is this holy city we behold in the passage before us.

C. "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

1. Prepared

**John 14:1-3**

"<sup>1</sup> Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many mansions: if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also."

**Hebrews 11:16**

"But now they desire a better [country], that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to

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<sup>3</sup> The Revelation Record, Henry Morris, p. 437

be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

### **1 Corinthians 2:9**

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

2. Adorned = to ornament, adore. God not only is preparing a place suitable for us to live but he is adorning it with beauty.

## III. THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN AND FORMER THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY, vv. 3-4

### A. “the tabernacle of God [is] with men”

1. This is that which occurred in the incarnation. Jesus, God almighty, put on flesh and was with men! It says clearly in **John 1:1-4**, 14 that the word (Jesus) who made all things became flesh and dwelt amongst us. His first coming then foreshadows the eternal state. We will ever be with Him because He will be with us!
2. The word for dwell in **Revelation 21:3** is that same exact word as in **John 1:14**. It means to fix one's tabernacle, have one's tabernacle, abide (or live) in a tabernacle (or tent). He pitched His tent with men or He tabernacled amongst men. God will one day do this again and the next time will be for all eternity.
3. God did this in the tabernacle of old as well, only then in the presence of His shekinah glory. **Leviticus 26:11-12**

### B. “with them”

1. The Lord says three times in one verse that he will be with us. One gets the sense that He really desires to be with us when reading this verse.

### C. “No death, no sorrow, no crying, and no pain; the former things are passed away”

1. A total removal of the curse that now abides on earth today (Gen. 3:17-19).
2. Currently life is as it says it is in **Job 5:7**, “man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.” But it will be one day no more like this (**Isaiah 25:8-9**).
3. Jesus in this day will remove all that causes grief and consternation in our hearts and lives!

“This great deliverance, of course, has been purchased dearly, at the cost of infinite sorrow, pain, sweating, and dying on the part of God himself, through Jesus Christ, the son of God and Son of man.

“Were men and women to endure sorrow throughout their lives? Therefore, He would become ‘a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief’ (Isaiah 53:3-4). Were they to suffer the physical pain of thorns and thistles and a multitude of other messengers of satan sent to buffet them as they struggled through life (2 Corinthians 12:7? Well, He would wear a very crown of thorns (John 19:2) and endure such wounds and bruises and stripes (Isaiah 53:5) as no other man would ever know. Would it require the sweat of bitter labor, the strong crying of never-ending toil for men to wrest a meager sustenance from a cursed and reluctant ground under the bondage of futility and decay (Romans 8:20-22)? But he was willing to sweat great drops of

blood (Luke 22:44) and to pour out strong crying and tears (Hebrews 5:7) in order to give rest to all 'who labour and are heavy laden' (Matthew 11:28)."<sup>4</sup>

IV. JOHN IS COMMANDED BY JESUS TO RECORD THE VISION HE SEES AND THE WORDS HE HEARS, v. 5-6

A. "he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

1. In a different method was most of the rest Bible communicated to man. But in the same way as it is all from the Lord. Here John Himself was told by God to write something down as God Himself was making His final two chapters of the canon as we know it.

B. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."

1. See **Revelation 1:17-18**

C. "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

1. Salvation is a free gift and quenches the deepest need within man.

2. **John 4:13-14**

"<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: <sup>14</sup> But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

**John 7:37-39**

"<sup>37</sup> In the last day, that great [day] of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. <sup>38</sup> He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. <sup>39</sup> (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given]; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

3. Salvation is a free gift!

**Ephesians 2:8**

"<sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: <sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast."

V. OVERCOMERS INHERIT ALL THINGS WHILE OTHERS ARE CAST INTO THE LAKE WHICH BURNS WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, vv. 7-8

VI. NEW JERUSALEM CHARACTERIZED AS THE LAMB'S BRIDE, vv. 9-11

A. "In keeping with the earlier revelation of 21:2, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, is here characterized as 'the bride the Lamb's wife.' Since a city is not a bride nor a wife, the truth here represented is that the city, the residence of the saints of eternity future, is to be compared to a bride for beauty and is intimately related to Jesus Christ the Lamb." John F. Walvoord

B. "...even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal..."

The mention of this stone which is costly to men but used lavishly in the new Jerusalem (21:19) is

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<sup>4</sup> The Revelation Record, Henry Morris, pp. 440-441

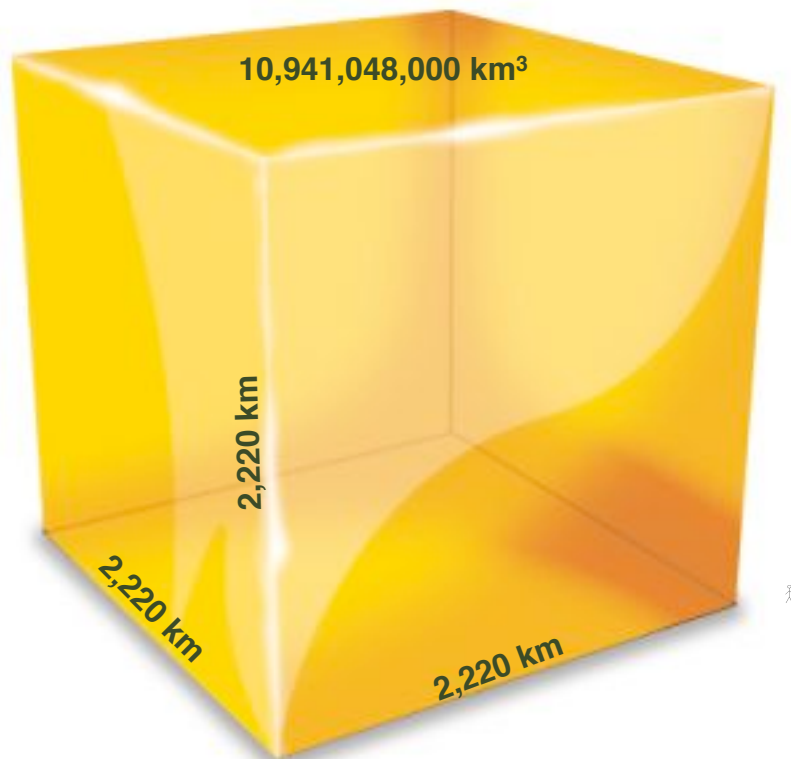
designed to manifest the glory of God. Later in the passage (v. 23), the fact is revealed that the city does not originate its light or radiance, but all illumination comes from the Lamb. The believer in Christ does not generate the light of Christ, but he should both reflect and transmit its glory without blurring the beauty and loveliness of Christ.” John F. Walvoord

#### VII. THE WALL AND GATES, vv. 12-14

- A. “After giving the general appearance of the city, he now itemizes the specific details”. John F. Walvoord
- B. “The first important fact mentioned by John in verse 12 is the wall of the city, describe as ‘great and high,’ an obvious symbol of exclusion of all that is unworthy to enter the city. Though countless saints will enjoy its glory, there is this reminder that only those qualified may enter.” John F. Walvoord

#### VIII. THE DIMENSIONS OF THE CITY, vv 15-17

- A. “the city lieth foursquare”
  - 1. The city is a cube. The word “foursquare” in the greek is *tetragōnos* and refers to a quadrangular shape which does not necessarily refer to a three dimensional figure. However later in this same verse (16) we are given the length, width and height of the city which tells us this is obviously a cube having six equal sides. This would make sense seeing that the Most Holy Place in the OT sanctuary was a cube (1 Kings 6:20).
- B. Twelve thousand furlongs cubed.
  - 1. 12,000 stadia. A single stadia is an ancient Roman or Greek measure of length which equals about 185 meters.  
12,000 X 185 = 2,220,000 meters or 2,220 kilometers



2. “It can be calculated that the total number of people who have lived since Adam’s time and our time is about 40 billion (see *Biblical Cosmology and Modern Science*, by Henry M. Morris). Then, assuming that a similar number will be born during the millennium, and allowing another 20 billion for those who died before or soon after birth, it is reasonable that about 100 billion men, women, and children will be members of the human race—past, present or future.

“Assume also that 20% of these will be saved, including those who die in infancy. This is obviously only a guess, but the Lord Jesus did make it plain that the large majority will never be saved (Matthew 7:13,14). If this figure is used, the New Jerusalem would have to accommodate 20 billion residents. Also, assume that 25% of the city is used for the ‘mansions’ of these inhabitants (John 14:2), with the rest allocated to streets, parks, public buildings, etc. Then the average space assigned to each person would be:

$$\frac{1380 (1380) (1380)}{4 (20) (1,000,000,000)} = \frac{1 \text{ cubic mile}}{30}$$

“This would correspond to a cubical “block” with about 75 acres (30 hectare) on each face. Obviously there is adequate room in the holy city for all who will be there.”

*The Revelation Record*, by Henry M. Morris, p. 451

3. The numbers in the quotation above have been converted to the metric system and placed on the cube image which precedes the quotation.

IX. THE GLORY OF THE CITY DESCRIBED, vv. 18-21

X. THE TEMPLE OF THE CITY, v. 22

XI. THE LIGHT OF THE CITY, vv. 23-24

XII. ACCESS TO THE CITY, vv. 25-27