

Revelation Chapter 21

Verses 21:1-2: Chapters 21 and 22 are a description of the eternal state (following the Millennium and the final judgment), centering in the “new Jerusalem” as the eternal habitation of the saved (compare Heb. 11:10; 12:22-24).

“The first heaven and the first earth” are replaced by the New Heaven and the New Earth, predicted by Isaiah (compare Isa. 65:17; 66:22).

The present universe will thus be cleansed from all the effects of sin (compare 2 Peter 3-7, 10-13).

Since there will be “no more sea”, the increased land space will be fully capable of handling large numbers of redeemed people from all ages.

The New Jerusalem is fully described (in 21:10 – 22:5).

It is a holy city, totally separate from sin. (compare verses 8, 27; 22:15).

It is being “prepared”

(Greek *hetoimazo*; compare John 14:3), as the habitation of the bride of Christ (compare verse 9).

“From God” shows its divine purpose, and “out of heaven” its divine origin.

Revelation 21:1 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

As the chapter opens, all the sinners of all the ages, both demons and men, including Satan, the beast and false prophet, are in the lake of fire forever.

The whole universe has been destroyed, and God creates a new universe to be the eternal dwelling place of the redeemed.

“A new heaven and a new earth”:

The entire universe as we now know it will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10-13), and be replaced by a new creation that will last forever.

This is a Old Testament reality (Psalm 105:25-26; Isa. 65:17; 66:22), as well as a New Testament one (Luke 21:33; Heb. 1:10-12; see note on 20:11-15).

“There was no more sea”:

Currently three-fourths of the earth's surface is water, but the new environment will no longer be water based and will have completely different climatic conditions (see notes on 22:1-2).

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10).

“A new heaven and a new earth”:

The "new heaven" is the atmospheric heaven around and above the earth.

This area has been the domain of Satan (see Eph. 2:2), and must be purified before the heaven of God can come down to the new earth.

This new earth will be a perfect environment similar to that of the Garden of Eden.

A unique distinction of this new earth will be that the vast oceans of water that now cover three fourths of the world's surface will not be included, leaving much more habitable land for the population of the redeemed.

This "new heaven and new earth" are actually a heavenly pattern of what the Garden of Eden was a miniature of on earth.

We will see the Tree of Life restored with water that flows from the throne of God.

It didn't rain in the Garden of Eden.

Plants were watered from beneath the earth.

The water in the Garden of Eden flowed out in four rivers (symbolic of enough for the whole world).

This river that flows from the throne of God is the same water that Jesus told the woman at the well, if she drank it, she would never thirst again.

Verses 21:2 – 22:5:

By this point in the chronology of Revelation, Old Testament saints, tribulation saints, and all those converted during the millennial kingdom will be incorporated into the ultimate redeemed bride and will dwell in the New Jerusalem.

John described the consummation of all things in Christ and the New Jerusalem descending into the eternal state (compare 19:7; 20:6; 1 Cor. 15:28; Heb. 12:22-24).

Revelation 21:2 "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

"New Jerusalem" (compare 3:12; Heb. 11:10; 12:22-24; 13:14).

This is the capital city of heaven, a place of perfect holiness.

It is seen "coming down out of heaven" indicating it already existed; but it descends into the new heavens and new earth from its place on high.

This is the city where the saints will live (compare John 14:1-3).

This city is the bride of Christ as well; just in the same way that Babylon was an evil city and was the apostate church, all at the same time.

"Bride":

An important New Testament metaphor for the church (compare Matt. 25:1-13; Eph. 5:25-27).

John's imagery here extends from the third part of the Jewish wedding, the ceremony.

Believers (the bride), in the New Jerusalem come to meet Christ (the bridegroom), in the final ceremony of redemptive history (see note on 19:7).

The whole city, occupied by all the saints, is called the bride, so that all saints must be finally included in the bride imagery and bridal blessing.

God has brought home a bride for His beloved Son.

All the saints live with Christ in the Father's house (a promise made before the church began (John 14:2)).

Now John sees the new holy city which is not heaven, but is called that since everyone who will be in it is holy.

This is Christ's Kingdom.

"Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection" (20:6).

New Jerusalem will be coming down to the new heaven and new earth mentioned (in verse 1).

The old heaven and earth which was (in 20:11), fled away and was no more.

The city is illustrated as a bride because it contains the bride and takes on her character.

John saw the bride adorned for her husband because the time for the consummation had arrived.

The concept of the bride includes not only the church, but all the rest of the redeemed from all the ages who will live forever in that eternal city.

1 Cor. 15:28 "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all".

Verses 3-5:

"Tabernacle of God":

The presence of God will be with His "people", and He will forever "dwell with them".

A primary purpose of redemption will be accomplished: the complete fellowship of God with His redeemed people.

In the eternal state, there will be no "tears, death, sorrow, crying," or "pain".

Everything will become "new".

God's promises are "true", and He is always "faithful" to His Word (compare 19:11).

Revelation 21:3 "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God."

"The tabernacle of God is with men":

The tabernacle was the original symbol of God dwelling with His people.

In eternity, mankind will dwell with God.

In that eternal state, we will not only enjoy fellowship with our redeemed loved ones but will also have actual fellowship with God Himself.

"Tabernacle" here means dwelling place of God.

No longer will He be far off.

No longer will He be "veiled" in the human form of Jesus Christ, in a cloud, a pillar of fire or in a Holy of Holies (compare Lev. 26:11-12; Deut. 12:5).

Heaven to me, is where ever Jesus is.

Just like God walked with Adam in the garden of Eden, He will be in heaven with us continually.

The Bible says, if we are not ashamed of Jesus here on this earth, He will not be ashamed of us in heaven.

He will claim us as His very own.

He will fellowship with us all the time.

Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Revelation 21:4 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

"Wipe away all tears":

Since there will never be a tear in heaven, nothing will be sad, disappointing, deficient, or wrong (compare Isa. 53:4-5; 1 Cor. 15:54-57).

All tears, pain, sorrow, and death will be removed in that heavenly New Jerusalem where Christians will live.

This is the exact opposite of the curse that resulted from Adam's sin (see Gen. 3:16-19).

The effects of the curse are removed, and all things are made new.

God does not merely repair the creation; He re-creates it for His children to enjoy for all eternity.

Just as the disciples knew security when Jesus was there to take care of all their needs, we will know perfect peace and joy in heaven.

Jesus is the king of peace.

Jesus defeated death on the cross.

The biggest fear of mankind is death.

We just read where the Christians will not taste the second death.

This fear is gone away.

Death will no longer hang over the Christian.

The Christian has eternal life (not death).

There won't be any reason to cry for in heaven.

The devil and all his problems he brought upon the Christians have been thrown into the lake of fire.

Every negative thing has been done away with.

Revelation 21:5 "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

"The One who sits on the throne said", is the same One "from whose presence earth and heaven fled away (Rev. 20:11).

Here we see God sitting on the throne saying that He "makes all things new".

When we are saved we become a new creature.

We know this saying is true for the believer.

Just as He did not throw us away and get a new person: He says here "I make all things new".

He did not say He made new things.

He just takes the old things and transforms them into new.

Here we see that Jesus commanded John to write, because all the things he has been shown are true.

Jesus is the truth.

"True and faithful" (compare 3:14; 9:11).

God always speaks truth (John 17:17).

Verses 6-8:

"It is done":

The eternal purpose of God to gather a holy, devoted people for Himself has now been accomplished.

"Alpha and Omega" (see Rev. 1:8; 22:13).

"Beginning":

God is the origin and source of all things (compare Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12).

“End”:

He is also the goal or aim of all things (compare Rom. 10:4).

“The water of life” represents eternal sustenance and provision (compare 22:1; Psalm 36:9; Isa. 55:1; Jer. 2:13; John 4:14), available “freely” by faith (22:17).

“He that overcometh” is the one who has genuine, saving, persevering faith (compare 2:11; 3:5; 1 John 5:4-5).

He will “inherit” all that belongs to him as a “son” of God (compare John 1:12; Rom. 8:16-17; Gal. 3:29; 4:7).

But sinners, who have shown their rebellion against God by their life-style of sin, have already been cast into the “lake” of “fire” (20:12-15; compare 22:15).

The “second death” is eternal death (compare 20:14).

Revelation 21:6 "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

“Alpha and Omega” (see note on 1:8).

It is done.

These words mark the end of redemptive history.

This is a statement (Gr. gegonan) of divine finality.

It represents God's promise that this new state will be forever.

Alpha and Omega is the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

Hence, this phrase represents the sum of all things.

In (Rev. 1:11; 22:12-13), it is used of Christ.

Here it is used of God the Father ("He that sat on the throne"), indicating the deity of both the Father and the Son.

Just as Jesus said on the cross "It is finished".

You see, Jesus is the way to get to the water of life.

In fact, He is the water.

He is life (see article "[Tree of Life - River of Water of Life](#)").

He who hungers and thirst after righteousness shall be filled.

There is nothing before Him and nothing after Him.

"Him that is athirst of salvation and eternal life (compare Psalm 42:1-2; Isaiah. 55:1-2; and John 7:37-38).":

Heaven belongs to those who, knowing their souls are parched by sin, have earnestly sought the satisfaction.

A citizen of heaven is described as one who "thirsts", signifying those who recognize their desperate spiritual need, "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matt. 5:6).

"Water of life" (compare 7:17; 22:1, 17).

The lasting spiritual water of which Jesus spoke (John 4:13-14; 7:37-38; compare Isa. 55:1-2).

Revelation 21:7 "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

"He that overcometh" (compare 1 John 5:4-5).

Anyone who exercises saving faith in Jesus Christ (see note on 2:7).

An overcomer is one who exercises saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A person who in faith drinks the water of salvation freely offered by God.

Each of the seven letters to the churches (in Rev. chapters 2 and 3), end in the promise of he that overcomes will inherit these things.

Just as a bride is an equal inheritor of all that is her husband's, so the Church, the Bride of Christ, will inherit all that is His.

He even promises that He will be our God and we shall be His son.

These terms of endearment are experiences we as Christians shall enjoy forever (see article "[Christian - How Do I Become a Christian?](#)").

"Inherit":

The spiritual inheritance all believers will receive (1 Peter 1:4; compare Matt. 25:23), is the fullness of the new creation (compare Rom. 8:16-17).

From this scripture, we see there is something we must overcome.

If we are faithful to Him in the face of all odds, we will inherit eternal life.

The New Testament is actually an inheritance to the believers.

If we believe, we can collect on that inheritance.

Whoever we are faithful to, is our God.

If he is our God, He will claim us as His son.

Revelation 21:8 "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

A solemn, serious warning about the kinds of people who will be outcasts from the new heaven and the new earth in the lake of fire.

The New Testament often goes beyond just citing unbelief in listing character and lifestyle traits of the outcast, so that believers can identify such people (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19; compare John 8:31).

The contrasts between (verses 7-8), are graphic.

They represent the age-old concept that there are only two kinds of people with God, believers and unbelievers.

They experience two different lifestyles on earth and go to two different eternal destinies.

Believers go to "eternal life" while unbelievers experience "the second death," which is the lake of fire.

Fear is not of God.

Fear is the opposite of faith.

In fact, it is mentioned twice here by saying "fearful and unbelieving".

Jesus cannot be someone's Savior, unless they believe that He is their Savior.

The Bible speaks of sins such as homosexuality as being an abomination.

Here, we see those who do abominable things taking part in the second death.

Abomination, meaning vile, polluted, detestable, wholly caught up in wickedness and evil.

Here, we see those who do abominable things taking part in the second death.

Notice here this says "murderers", not accidental killing or killing in war.

This is premeditated murder, or those who hate their neighbors.

We see here "whoremongers".

This is a person who has dealings with prostitutes, especially a sexually promiscuous man (this means not only in the physical but also in the spiritual).

"Sorcerers" has to do with the occult and also drugs (see note on 9:27).

"Idolaters" has to do with anything or anyone you put ahead of God.

"Liars" can do more harm than you can imagine.

Many have a tendency to tell little white lies, but any untruth is a lie.

Those whose lives are characterized by such things give evidence that they are not saved and will not enter into the heavenly city.

"Lake which burneth with fire (see note on 19:20).

"Brimstone" (see note on 9:17).

"Second death" (see note on 20:6).

After we are forgiven of our sins and born again, we must practice salvation.

We must not have the habit of sinning.

We may slip and sin, but if we do, we have an advocate with the Father.

Repent and ask forgiveness, and then as Jesus told the woman who the Pharisees had caught in the art of adultery, "Go and sin no more".

Do not practice sin.

The horror of it all if you do not change from these evils, is that you will be thrown into the lake of fire.

Verses 9-21: These verses describe the beauty and glory of the "holy Jerusalem".

It is called Christ's "bride" (compare verse 2), a reference perhaps to the church as the city's principal inhabitant.

It is an expression of the "glory of God".

The "wall" shows its security and protection.

Its "gates" show accessibility.

Saved "Israel" is also present.

It has dimensions of approximately 1500 miles cubed.

The "gold" and "precious stones" may be earthly materials glorified (compare 1 Cor. 15:50-54).

They depict the glory, beauty, and eternal quality of the city.

"Jasper" is green, "sapphire" is blue, "chalcedony" is green, "emerald" is green, "sardonyx" is red and white, "sardius" is blood red, "chrysolite" is yellow or gold, "beryl" is green, "topaz" is greenish gold or yellow, "chrysoprasus" is green, "Jacinth" is bluish purple, and "amethyst" is purple quartz.

The effect is a magnificent city of brilliant gold adorned with gems of every color.

There appears to be only one "street" (compare 22:2), also made of "pure", radiant "gold".

Verses 9-10: "The Lamb's wife":

The New Jerusalem takes on the character of its inhabitants, the redeemed (see notes on verse 2; 19:7-9).

Revelation 21:9 "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."

From the past, at the beginning of the millennium, one of the seven angels who poured out a bowl or vial appeared to John.

"Seven vials" (see note on 15:7). "Seven last plagues" (see note on 15:1-8).

Now the angel was to show John the Lamb's bride, the Lamb's wife.

New Jerusalem is likened to a bride because the redeemed are forever united to God and the Lamb.

At this point, the marriage has already taken place (in 19:7), and now is referred to as "The Lamb's Wife.

Revelation 21:10 "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,"

That great city, the holy Jerusalem.

The Lamb's wife is described as the new city of Jerusalem.

This magnificent city is where the bride of Christ (the Church), will live forever.

The most dominant characteristic of the holy city is the presence of God's Glory, which personifies God's presence with His people.

The Glory that departed from the Old Jerusalem (see Ezek. Chapters 8 to 11), is restored to the New Jerusalem of the future.

John's incredible vision began when the angel carried him away in the Spirit (in Rev. 1), where he received the visions that make up the book of Revelation.

John's visions were not dreams, but spiritual realities, like the one's Paul saw when he was also caught up to the third heaven (see note on 1:10).

From John's vantage point atop a great and high mountain, he repeats his observation (of verse 2), that New Jerusalem came down out of heaven from God, emphasizing its divine origin.

Note what is described here is not the creation of heaven, but the descent of what already existed from eternity past.

Now it's being situated in the center of the new heaven and the new earth (see the article called ["New Heaven and the New Earth"](#)).

Revelation Chapter 21 Questions

1. Why was there a new heaven and earth?
2. In chapter 21 and 22 of Revelation, we see what restored?
3. What is the new heaven and new earth?
4. What were the four rivers symbolic of?
5. What is the Holy city?

6. What was it prepared as?
7. What else is this also?
8. The tabernacle of God is with _____.
9. He will be our _____.
10. What does tabernacle mean?
11. Where is heaven, to the author?
12. What things will be no more in heaven?
13. Who is the King of Peace?
14. What are Christians promised they will not taste?
15. Did God make all new things?
16. Why was John to write?
17. When He was finished, what did He say?
18. He who _____ and _____ after righteousness shall be filled.
19. Who shall inherit all things?
20. Who shall have their part in the lake of fire?
21. What is the lake of fire?
22. Fear is what?
23. Name an abomination to God.
24. When he carried John to the mountain, what did he show him?