

This chapter follows the millennial reign of Christ and the final rebellion. The dead were raised, and the Great White Throne judgment took place. Death and Hades and all who are not found in the book of life were thrown into the lake of fire. From chapter 19 verse 11 we began studying about the King coming to reign. This chapter begins with the King preparing a new heaven and a new earth for the bride. <sup>1</sup> *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.* Revelation 21:1

At one point in history the land of Israel was so polluted by the Canaanites and then by the Jews that it needed seventy years without them to be restored (2 Chronicles 36:21<sup>i</sup>). Around 150 BC the earthly temple of the Jews was so polluted that it had to be torn down and rebuilt under Simon the Hasmonean. In a similar way, the history of man's evil on the earth will come to an end and a total renewal will be needed to enter the eternal realm of perfection. That is why the first verse begins with the new heaven and new earth which King Jesus has prepared for His bride, the church.

Some people interpret this in light of Peter's prophecy that the elements will melt with fervent heat (2 Peter 3:12,13<sup>ii</sup>). Just as Jews purified stone pots with fire, so the Lord will purify the earth and its atmosphere. Others see this as a completely new universe, perhaps very different from this one. They point to Jesus' saying that heaven and earth will pass away (Luke 21:33<sup>iii</sup>; Psalm 102:25-27<sup>iv</sup>). The word in Greek translated as new means "fresh or new in character" as opposed to another word that means "new in time." Isaiah predicted that God would create a new heaven and earth in Isaiah 65:17<sup>v</sup>. The Hebrew word for create (bara) means to create out of nothing.

The end of the first verse tells us that there is no more sea. I really enjoy the ocean, so I prefer to think of this as symbolic apocalyptic language for evil people (see Isaiah 57:20<sup>vi</sup>; Jude 12,13<sup>vii</sup>). To the ancients the sea represented a place of fear and foreboding, of the unknown, qualities which in this new world will be no more. Perhaps this is referring to the waters upon which the prostitute sat which was described as peoples and multitudes and nations and languages in rebellion towards God (13:1<sup>viii</sup>; 17:15<sup>ix</sup>; Psalm 89:9<sup>x</sup>). Place names and bodies of water are mentioned in prophecies so the new earth will be similar in some ways. We will pass from a realm of time into eternity, which is very hard for us to currently comprehend.

<sup>2</sup> *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* Revelation 21:2 New Jerusalem is the city of God, which is the people of God, His bride. If you are in Christ, you are already a part of that city. We have seen that people in the world are a part of Babylon the great whether they know it or not. In a similar way those who are in Christ are already citizens of New Jerusalem (Philippians 3:20<sup>xi</sup>). The author of Hebrews tell us, <sup>22</sup> *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, <sup>23</sup> and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,* Hebrews 12:22,23

It is a holy city in contrast to the vile city referred to as Babylon. Babylon's focus was selfish pleasures and idolatry. New Jerusalem's focus will be our King, Jesus! It is referred to as Jerusalem, the place of our redemption. It is a place where there will be

fellowship with the community of all who are in Christ and have become like Christ, filled with eternal joy and peace. We will finally experience the perfect church, and our presence will only add to the joy and unity. We long for it even now. That is why some people hop from church to church seeking it, not realizing if they find it their presence will corrupt it. But that will never be the case in New Jerusalem. We cannot find it here for it comes down from heaven. Meanwhile we find the present church a place of refinement and growth while knowing the perfect assembly is coming.

One of the most important things to a bride is her appearance on her wedding day. I cannot relate as I am male, but I have seen this play out in wedding after wedding. There are even TV shows dedicated to picking out the wedding gown. We have no need to concern ourselves with our gown for **we will be robed in the most glorious gown ever, the righteousness of Christ Jesus (Isaiah 61:10<sup>xii</sup>)**. We will not just have the glory we had in Eden before the fall, which was innocence, but we will be robed in the very righteousness of Jesus (Romans 13:14<sup>xiii</sup>). That is our adornment, and *nothing* is more beautiful! Just as a groom is overwhelmed by the sight of his bride coming down the aisle, so Jesus will be as New Jerusalem descends, for He will have finished His work in us (1 John 3:2<sup>xiv</sup>). Our heavenly Father will be presenting us as a bride to the Son. Who gives this woman in marriage? Her heavenly Father does to His own Son. I think that is why weddings bring tears to our eyes. Our hearts instinctively know the symbolism represents something more wonderful than we can possibly dream.

*<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.* Revelation 21:3 God showed Moses the dwelling place of God in the heavenly realm and asked him to make a copy of it on earth (Hebrews 8:5<sup>xv</sup>). That was the tent erected for the worship of God in the wilderness wandering. Later a temple in Jerusalem replaced the tent. Before it was erected God told Solomon that manmade building could not house the God of the universe (Acts 7:49<sup>xvi</sup>), nevertheless God gave plans for the building as it was a focal point for the worship of God's holiness.

In John 14:3 Jesus said, *And I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.* When we read that, do we realize He is speaking of preparing us to be the heavenly city in which He will dwell? 1 Peter 2:5 reads, *<sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* Paul says it in 1 Corinthians 6:19a <sup>19a</sup> *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?* Individually we are temple of God and corporately we are as well. New Jerusalem coming down from heaven will be the manifestation of that reality.

We will never again have to leave His physical presence. We will never again stray. God will be our God, and we will be His people forever (Jeremiah 32:38<sup>xvii</sup>)! Jesus tabernacled among us for 33 years of His life (John 1:14<sup>xviii</sup>), but He will come again never to depart from us, and we will be the tabernacle, the holy tent, the city in which He resides. I am sure we cannot begin to grasp the joy of being fully in His presence undistracted by our old nature. **His love will overwhelm us forever!** I think of it as wave after wave of revelations of His awesomeness. The more we mature in Christ even now the more we should be experiencing this future state in the present. One of the great blessings of that age is that we can have an audience with Jesus' physical presence

whenever we choose. But in prayer we can commune with Him even now whenever we please (Hebrews 4:16<sup>xix</sup>). Remember the promise of this future wonder to inspire your prayer time until then.

*<sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.*” Revelation 21:4 The old is gone and the new has come. This was the plan from the beginning, to make a bride for the Son, a bride who could appreciate His grace, love, and mercy. The process has been painful because of our own sin and its consequences, but that pain will be forgotten as God wipes the tears from our eyes. Death, which is one of the greatest pains, which is losing loved ones, will be no more! It is swallowed up in victory. No more sorrow, for sorrow is the result of sin. Nor will there be any crying, unless perhaps there are tears of joy. There will not even be pain. Pain is a blessing in this life to show us something is wrong, but nothing will be wrong then. All the former things will have passed away. Hallelujah!

Sometimes the description of something not yet experienced is best described by what it is not. *The New Jerusalem is distinguished by what it does not have—no tears, no sorrow, no death or pain. Later it will be shown that the New Jerusalem has no temple, no sacrifice, no sun, no moon, no darkness, no sin, and no abomination.*<sup>xx</sup>

In chapter 7 verse 17 we are told that God will wipe away every tear from our eyes, so this is a repeat of that promise. It was first given through Isaiah. *<sup>8</sup> He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.* Isaiah 25:8 When Scripture repeats an expression, it is to emphasize it. A threefold repetition means it is absolute! Isaiah gives another description of that day in Isaiah 35:10. *<sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* We taste the joy of the Lord now in part, but then there will be fulness of joy and it will never fade. Whatever you are going through now, keep this promise before you to give you hope to endure.

*<sup>5</sup> 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.”* Revelation 21:5 Jesus is on the throne of heaven. What a comfort that should be to all believers. He is more than able to make all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28<sup>xxi</sup>).

The script writers of The Passion movie put this on the lips of Jesus, torn and bruised, as He was carrying His cross. *“Behold I make all things new!”* It was out of place in the Scripture’s timeline but as I think that was inspired. That was how Jesus made it possible for all things to be made new, especially you and me, new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17<sup>xxii</sup>). Paul wrote that the creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed, which is the day we get our heavenly bodies (Romans 8:19-22<sup>xxiii</sup>). That is because when that happens the curse of sin on the world will be lifted. I understand the Millennium to be where the lion lies down with the lamb (Isaiah 11:6-9<sup>xxiv</sup>). I think our atmosphere will probably be restored to the Garden of Eden conditions. And yet during that 1000 years people will still be free to sin and suffer the consequences including the swift correction from those who reign with Jesus (Zechariah 14:16,17<sup>xxv</sup>).

But in our passage today, we are even way beyond that, with a new heaven and new earth. It is a totally new beginning, a fresh start, a world without sin, where God's reign will be joyfully embraced forever and ever! He created and now according to Isaiah He recreates. How different that second creation will be we cannot know, but we can see it in Jesus' resurrected body and to some extent in the descriptions that follow.

Once again, we have the expression that these words are trustworthy and true. This is another triple repeat. We read in 19:11<sup>xxvi</sup> that it is the name on Jesus' thigh, and we will see it again in the next chapter (22:6<sup>xxvii</sup>) He is the Word made flesh. What we are reading is about His nature. This revelation we are studying is a revelation of Him, His plan, His purposes, and what His pure and perfect heart will accomplish.

*<sup>6</sup> 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.* Revelation 21:6 The last verse gave us His name, Trustworthy and True, and now we have two more names. He is Alpha and Omega, in other words, the A to Z. It is all about Him. He is the eternal timeless God. He knows the future because He is already there (Isaiah 46:10<sup>xxviii</sup>). His words cannot fail. He began this creation and will end it and begin a new one that is never ending!

Then Jesus gives a declaration that seems to be out of Isaiah 55:1. *<sup>1</sup> "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.* Those who thirst for truth are freely given the water of life. The pastor of the Kohala Baptist Church has a five-gallon bucket of water in front of his house which is at the top of a popular canyon hiking trail that ends on a forested black sand beach. On the bucket he has a quotation of Jesus to the woman at the well. John 4:13,14 *<sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

Astronomers search for signs of water on distant planets because they believe any form of life must have water. But Jesus is talking about more than existing. He is speaking of spiritual hunger for spiritual life. In the Sermon on the Mount, He pronounced a blessing on those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, promising they would be filled (Matthew 5:6<sup>xxix</sup>). This is another way to say the same thing.

How many people never thirst for the spiritual water of life? They are satisfied with the dry, dead vanities of this world. Jeremiah said that His people had committed two evils. They forsook the fountain of living water and hewed out cisterns that are broken and can hold no water (Jeremiah 2:13<sup>xxx</sup>). Jesus is saying that if we want more than His creation, He will give us more. And the only thing more than the creation is the Creator. His Spirit in us is a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

We often tell guests from Japan to watch out for those "spiritual things" that want to charge you for spiritual truth. God gives spiritual truth to those who desire it without payment. If it costs, then it is most likely a fraud. Why would a loving Creator withhold truth or hide it to those who are seeking it? Why would He give it to some who would profit financially from it? He offers it freely if we will just thirst for it (John 7:37<sup>xxxi</sup>). It cost Him everything, but He gives it freely to all who will come to Him.

*<sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.* Revelation 21:7 What is it that we conquer? Chapter 13:8 tells us we

overcome the evil one by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. Those in Christ who have a testimony of becoming new creations in Him will know God as their Father and that they are sons and daughters of God. That is their heritage. They overcame the lies and temptations of this fallen world.

Some people would ask why the verse only says sons and not daughters? It is because sons inherit the Father's estate. Only in rare cases did daughters inherit. Just as both sexes are considered the bride, both are considered as sons. We must get over the cultural nonsense of the Bible being bigoted against women. Those who say such things just do not understand the deeper meaning behind the words.

*<sup>8</sup> 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 21:8 There are only two types of people, sons of God and those who will experience the second death, citizens of heaven or citizens of Babylon. We are all in one camp or the other, blessed beyond measure or destined for the lake of fire. Revelation continues to lay out this stark contrast, an either-or scenario. It gives us a promise and a warning. We will humble ourselves let Jesus reign in our hearts, or our pride will get in our way of accepting God's love. The revelation of this book is meant to put the fear of God in us which helps us make the right choice and to present the contrasting differences in the outcome.

Many of you know my testimony. I was five years old and heard every week from my father's preaching that there is heaven with Jesus or hell with the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and liars, as well as Satan and his demons. I prayed every night for Jesus to come into my heart. One night after praying to be saved for the hundredth time, the voice of the Holy Spirit spoke in my heart and asked me a question. “Don't you want me because I love you?” That was God's invitation, not because I was afraid of hell, but because heaven is the result of being willing to receive His love. I said, “Yes, Jesus, **I do.**” I did not realize it was a wedding vow. The fear of God brought me to the love of God. And the kindness of God led me to genuine repentance (Romans 2:4<sup>xxxii</sup>) and a growing relationship (2 Corinthians 3:18<sup>xxxiii</sup>). Allow me to pass on that invitation from Jesus to you. Don't you want Him because He loves you? Church, do you take Jesus the Messiah, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end, the Holy One, the only begotten of the Father, who gave His life that you might live, to have and to hold from this day forward, forsaking all others to cleave only to Him, to be your wedded Lord and king forever, because death will never separate you?

Questions:

- 1 Why there be a new heaven and a new earth?
- 2 What does “no more sea” indicate?
- 3 What is Mount Zion?
- 4 What will we wear at the marriage feast?
- 5 What is the place God is preparing for us?
- 6 How does verse 4 speak to your heart?
- 7 What descriptions do we have of the new earth?
- 8 What is living water? How do we get it?
- 9 Why are men and women called sons?
- 10 Do you take this man to be your Lord and king forever?

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<sup>i</sup> **2 Chronicles 36:21 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

<sup>ii</sup> **2 Peter 3:12-13 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

<sup>13</sup> But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

<sup>iii</sup> **Luke 21:33 (ESV)**

<sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>iv</sup> **Psalms 102:25-27 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. <sup>26</sup> They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away,

<sup>27</sup> but you are the same, and your years have no end.

<sup>v</sup> **Isaiah 65:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.

<sup>vi</sup> **Isaiah 57:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt.

<sup>vii</sup> **Jude 1:12-13 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted;

<sup>13</sup> wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

<sup>viii</sup> **Revelation 13:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.

<sup>ix</sup> **Revelation 17:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.

<sup>x</sup> **Psalms 89:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them.

<sup>xi</sup> **Philippians 3:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

<sup>xii</sup> **Isaiah 61:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>xiii</sup> **Romans 13:14 (NIV)**

<sup>14</sup> Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

<sup>xiv</sup> **1 John 3:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

<sup>xv</sup> **Hebrews 8:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain."

<sup>xvi</sup> **Acts 7:49-50 (ESV)**

<sup>49</sup> "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? <sup>50</sup> Did not my hand make all these things?"

<sup>xvii</sup> **Jeremiah 32:38 (ESV)**

<sup>38</sup> And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

<sup>xviii</sup> **John 1:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

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<sup>xix</sup> **Hebrews 4:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

<sup>xx</sup> David Guzik, *Revelation*, David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible (Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik, 2013), Re 21:2–4.

<sup>xxi</sup> **Romans 8:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

<sup>xxii</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

<sup>xxiii</sup> **Romans 8:19-22 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

<sup>xxiv</sup> **Isaiah 11:6-9 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. <sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

<sup>xxv</sup> **Zechariah 14:16-17 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths. <sup>17</sup> And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.

<sup>xxvi</sup> **Revelation 19:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

<sup>xxvii</sup> **Revelation 22:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."

<sup>xxviii</sup> **Isaiah 46:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

<sup>xxix</sup> **Matthew 5:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

<sup>xxx</sup> **Jeremiah 2:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

<sup>xxxi</sup> **John 7:37 (ESV)**

<sup>37</sup> On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

<sup>xxxii</sup> **Romans 2:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

<sup>xxxiii</sup> **2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.