

# God's Revelation of the Future

Community Baptist Church  
Lesson 13

Adult Bible Fellowship  
Fall, 2024

## New Things are Coming

In 21:1-8 we see described new things and new realities that are coming.

### A New Heaven and a New Earth

John sees "a new heaven and a new earth" (21:1), the creation of which is a fulfillment of earlier prophecies. Cf. Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22 as well as 2 Peter 3:13.

### A New Jerusalem

John sees "the holy city, new Jerusalem" (21:2) as it descends from heaven to the new earth.

- This may be the city referenced in Hebrews 12:22-23.
- By analogy with a bride, this city has been prepared in the same way a bride is adorned for her groom. Cf. John 14:2-3.
- As seen in 21:9-10, there is an association of this city with the Church, also pictured as a bride.

### A New Dwelling Place for God

John hears an announcement that "the dwelling place of God is with man" (21:3).

- Today, God's "residence" is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven and man's residence is on earth. This is going to change when God comes to "dwell with" man.

### New Realities

John also hears of some new realities that will be true on the new earth (21:4-8).

- Any tears will be wiped away and there will be no more death (21:4)
- There will be no more mourning, crying, and pain (21:4)
- God is making "all things new" and we can count on it (21:5)
- The past, redemptive history, is over. God says, "It is done." New realities are coming. (21:6a)

- We, "the thirsty," are promised access to "the water of life" and that "without payment" (21:6b).
- We, "the conquerors," are promised "a heritage" that includes the fact God will be our God and we will be God's sons (21:7).
- We are promised an environment where those corrupted by sin will have their lot elsewhere, namely "in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur" (21:8).

## The New Jerusalem and Life in It

In 21:9-22:5 we see "details" about a city, a city called "the new Jerusalem" and of the conditions present in it. This city is associated with the Church, but it also has significant features related to Israel.

- John is taken to see "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb" (21:9)
  - What John is shown is "the holy city Jerusalem" (21:10).
  - Why is this city so closely associated with the Church?
    - First, there was an analogy between this city's appearance and that of a "bride adorned for her husband." Cf. 21:2.
    - Second, Church saints will have written on them "the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem." (3:12)
    - Third, this is the capital city from which Christ will reign over the earth. So even though saints of all nations will come there, as those who reign with Christ, the Church will be there co-reigning with him. (cf. 3:21 and 2 Timothy 2:12)
- John describes this city.
  - It is radiant, "having the glory of God." (21:11)
  - It has a wall with twelve gates and twelve foundations. (21:12, 14)
    - Associated with the twelve gates are twelve angels and the names of the twelve sons of Israel. (21:12)
    - There are three gates on each of the four sides of the city's wall. (21:13)
    - The wall's twelve foundations bear the names of the twelve "apostles of the Lamb." (Cf. Matthew 10:2-4 and Acts 1:26, Matthias replaces Judas).
  - The city is square, being "12,000 stadia" (about 1380 miles) on each side and built using gold. (21:16, 18)

- Mention of "length and width and height" being equal perhaps suggests the city is pyramidal (maybe stepped).
  - The wall's height is "144 cubits" (about 607 feet) and built of jasper. (21:17-18)
  - The foundations are adorned with precious stones. (21:19-20)
  - Each of the twelve gates consists of a "single pearl." (21:21).
  - The street is paved with "pure gold." (21:21)
- There is no "physical" temple in the city. Instead, God the Father and God the Son serve that role. (21:22)
- Illumination for the city is provide by God's magnificent, radiant ("shekinah") glory. (21:23)
  - This light will lighten the way for residents of and visitors to this city. (21:24)
- The gates will never be shut, so there will always be access to this city. (21:25)
  - Visitors, as representatives of their respective nations, "will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations." (21:26)
- John assures us that life in this city will be vastly different than any city we know today. (21:27)
  - Because only the righteous will dwell on the earth ...
    - Nothing that is "unclean" will enter.
    - No one who is "detestable or false" will enter it.
- The angel shows John additional details.
  - "The river of the water of life" is flowing out from "the throne of God and of the Lamb." (22:1)
    - God the Father and God the Son are present here.
  - The river is flowing down the middle of the street. (22:2)
    - Perhaps think of this street as a parkway with its lanes separated by a river having a tree on each bank.
    - On "either side of the river" are growing trees which bear "twelve kinds of fruit" but a different kind "each month." (22:2)
    - These trees "of life" have leaves that provide "for the healing of the nations." (22:2)
      - The idea of "healing" is perhaps "health-giving."
      - However, keep in mind the description of the resurrected body given by Paul. It will be

"imperishable" and "immortal." (1 Corinthians 15:53-54)

- The effects of the Fall went away with the old earth, never to reappear on the new earth. (22:3)
- Again John mentions that "the throne of God and of the Lamb" will be in the new Jerusalem. (22:3)
- "His servants will worship him." (22:3)
  - To whom does the word "servants" refer?
    - On the new earth there may be three distinct groups of human beings: the Church, the nation of Israel, and the Gentiles (the nations).
    - In light of verse 5, even though everyone on the new earth will worship, these "servants" may refer to the Church, to those who "will reign forever and ever."
  - To whom do the words "his" and "him" refer?
    - Both the Father and Son were just mentioned.
    - In light of verse 4, it seems best to understand this as the Father.
      - "His name" will be on the forehead of these servants. (22:4)
      - In 3:12 the Son, writing to the church of Philadelphia, says he will write the Father's name on the "conquerors" (i.e., us in the Church).
- Similar to what had already been stated, in the new Jerusalem there will be no night because God, who dwells there, lightens it.

Note: All references are to the book of Revelation unless otherwise specified.