

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 29TH, 2024 // REVELATION

THE NEW JERUSALEM (REVELATION 21:1-4) ONLY ONE CITY REMAINS

The focus has been on this evil city/culture called Babylon the Great, but by the end of Ch. 20 there is nothing left of the universe except God's people.

- John sees something so beautiful and remarkable that human language is stretched to its limit to try to describe it. He sees a **“new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.”**

“THE SEA WAS NO MORE”

The ancient culture reading this for the first time would have regarded the sea as a place of separation and evil; it was feared, unexplored, and uninhabitable.

- This imagery speaks to there being **no separation between us and God**, fulfilling His desire to dwell with us. Without the sea, **we'll be free to explore all of the new earth and heaven.**

THE “NEW” HAS COME

The Greek word translated as “heavens,” used in Revelation 20:11 and here in Revelation 21:1, often refers to the atmosphere, the sky, and the stars.

- What John is seeing is a new, perfect, and completely glorified earth as well as a new, perfect, completely glorified universe.

THE NEW JERUSALEM DESCENDS FROM HEAVEN

In this vision, John sees coming down out of “heaven” (from the sky) a holy city, the new Jerusalem. This new dwelling place for the people of God is a gift from God and not the achievement of man.

- John could not think of a more beautiful image to compare heaven to than that of a **bride adorned for her husband.**

THE RESTORATION IS COMPLETED!

John hears a loud voice from the throne declaring that **“God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them”** (v. 3).

- From the beginning, God's plan was to be in perfect fellowship with humanity on Earth. However, sin fractured the relationship between us and God. The Bible is the story of God restoring that relationship through Jesus.

THE OLD THINGS ARE GONE!

The last two chapters of the Bible are connected to the first chapters of the Bible. In Revelation 22 we will see the same “tree of life” signifying the restoration of Eden (Genesis 2:9).

- Not only will God dwell with humanity, but He will **“wipe away every tear”** as any trace of pain from this life is forever removed!

MAKING ALL THINGS NEW (REVELATION 21:5-8) “...THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA”

We have most recently seen God as judge, but now John describes the one on the throne as Creator.

- John is told to write these things down because the words he is hearing are **“faithful and true.”** God tells him, **“It is done,”** meaning every promise ever made has been fulfilled. All has been redeemed and made new.

WHO WILL INHERIT THESE THINGS?

God says He will give freely from the spring of the water of life to the thirsty. Those who **“hunger and thirst for righteousness”** (Matthew 5:6), meaning those who have a desire for God and the things of God.

- The **“one who conquers”** does not speak of perfect people but of **imperfect people who yearn for a perfect God.**

WHO WILL NOT INHERIT THESE THINGS?

Redemption is available for all who “thirst,” but the reality is that not all people “thirst” for God or the things of God.

- Those whose desires are outside of God will not “inherit these things.” This section ends with a broad list of the kinds of people we are to avoid being or we will squander our inheritance.
- **Cowards:** those who cower to culture
- **Faithless:** those who lack saving faith
- **Detestable:** people who do unspeakable things
- **Murderers:** those who kill people (hatred)
- **Sexually Immoral:** anyone who lives outside biblical sexual boundaries (lust)
- **Sorcerers:** drug use, intrigue with magical arts
- **Idolaters:** those who worship other gods
- **Liars:** those who do not tell the truth

A HEAVENLY TOUR (REVELATION 21:9-21) “HER RADIANCE WAS LIKE...”

John is led to a “high mountain” by “one of the seven angels, who had held the seven bowls” to see this final vision of Heaven. This is similar to Moses seeing the Promised Land in Deuteronomy 34:1-4.

- It is from this vantage point that John will attempt to describe the indescribable, giving us a glimpse of eternity.

THE CITY WALLS

John says the city had a “massive high wall.” Ancient cities displayed their wealth, importance, and magnitude with their surrounding walls.

- The height of the walls and materials used were not chosen for protection from outside enemies (evil has been destroyed), but to show the value of what is inside the walls.

THE CITY GATES

Each wall of the city has three gates with a name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel written on each gate, and the twelve foundations had the twelve apostles of Jesus.

- This signifies our connection to the Jewish people and how this city will be comprised of both OT and NT saints.

JOHN IS GIVEN THE MEASUREMENTS OF THE CITY

The city is described as a perfect cube that measures “12,000 stadia” (about 1,400 miles) in length, width, and height. The walls are “144 cubits” (about 200 feet) thick.

- In perspective, **this city is about 1,960,000 square miles, which is about half of the United States. The city doesn't stop there, it goes up another 1,400 miles!**

GATES ARE MADE OF GIANT PEARLS

Jesus used pearls to symbolize pursuing the Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew 13:45-46.

STREETS OF PURE GOLD

The streets are described as being made of “pure gold clear as glass.” Gold is seen as yellow because of the impurities, so these golden streets that are clear as glass represent perfect eternal purity.

ANISOTROPIC STONES

The city is constructed with stones that, when pure light is shown through them, emit every color of the rainbow. The glory of God illuminates the city (v. 23), and His pure light shines through the walls, emitting colors everywhere.

- John uses the most precious things of this Earth to describe the most precious place there has ever been.

THE GLORY OF GOD (REVELATION 21:22-27)

GOD THE ALMIGHTY AND THE LAMB ARE ITS TEMPLE

The OT temple was the place where God's presence dwelt, and the people of God went to the temple to be in His presence. In the NT, we see that the people of God are the temple, and He puts His Spirit in us.

- In eternity, we see we will dwell in and among the temple, meaning **we will reside in and among Him!**

NO NEED FOR A SUN OR MOON

The sun is not needed because God's light fills every space without end. The moon is not needed to illuminate the night because it never goes dark—God's light never ceases to shine.

- Physical light is often used as a picture of spiritual and moral purity. So, an eternal lamp speaks to permanency in the destruction of sin and evil.

“...KINGS OF THE EARTH WILL BRING THEIR GLORY”

This doesn't mean there are separate kingdoms in The Kingdom of Heaven, but that there will be many diverse nations all united together in the city.

- The diversity of the Kingdom only adds to the beauty. Differences will no longer separate us but are celebrated as we unite in worship of the Lamb.

“ITS GATES WILL NEVER CLOSE”

Earthly cities of this time would close their gates at night as protection from enemies, but there is no need to close the gates of this city as “nothing unclean will ever enter it.”

- The open gates also show that we will be free to explore a new earth and universe for all eternity, and it will be better than we can even imagine (1 Corinthians 2:9).

THE FATHER'S HOUSE (JOHN 14:1-4)

- Do we thirst for God and the things of God?
- Have we given in to culture and pursued what pleases us?
- In this life there will be troubles, but we hold to these promises. We find the strength needed from **prayer, church, and reading the Word.**
- **If we believe Christ is preparing a place for us, are we following the path that leads home?**