

Heaven – Everything Made New

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Revelation 21:1-5

The end of the end times is the beginning of the new. God says He is making all things new. This has been a repeated theme throughout the Old Testament prophetic works. God would bring a day of wrath followed by a newness for the land. John's vision repeats this theme and presents it in a new way.

New Earth & New Jerusalem

In Revelation's presentation of heaven there are three themes presented. The first two are that the New Jerusalem comes down to earth, and with it comes a new life on earth.

Revelation 21:1-5 NIVO

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

1. Heaven is the Jerusalem above come to earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

John's vision says that the Jerusalem that is above comes down to earth. Hebrews speaks of a heavenly city (Heb. 11:16; 12:22; 13:14). It says the earthly tabernacle was a copy of the heavenly one above (Heb. 9:24).

John describes the city in glorious details. High walls, 12 gates for each of the 12 tribes of Israel. 12 foundation stones for each of the 12 apostles. The foundation stones have the colors of gems.

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Rev. 21:10-14 NIVO)

The glory of the city is beyond human description. John uses gemstones to describe the beauty and glow of the city. The streets are not of paved gold, but of an iridescent, glowing gold color. The color reflects the glory of God.

The city is large. Large enough to house all of God's people. The city is also called the wife of the Lamb. It is the dwelling of the people of God. It exists now in heaven above. When loved ones die in the Lord, they enter the city gates above.

Don Piper, *90 Minutes in Heaven*, describes walking through the gate. The light from the glory of God fills the city. Music and the beating of angels wings filled the air. He sensed love and peace. God's people were there. It seems the goal is to get through the gate into the city.

After sin has been removed and after the devil has been removed, all that kept the holy presence of God from the earth has been removed. So, God will then bring Jerusalem above down to earth. It shines in all of God's glory.

2. All creation is made new.

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"

When God said He is making all things new, that means all of the created order is being transformed. It is being transformed from its decay nature to a non-decay nature. Under sin, the created nature groaned in its decay, waiting for the age of the new order to come (Rom. 8:18-19). Because sin is no longer present, death, disease, frustration is no longer present.

⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

What this means for us is that life will be full and abundant. The Old Testament prophets foretold of the abundance of life when the new age comes.

Joel 3:18 NIVO

¹⁸ "In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the LORD's house and will water the valley of acacias.

Amos 9:13 NIVO

¹³ "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills.

We often think of heaven as paradise, a place of joy and pleasure. It is far more. It is a renewed life. The renewal takes us back before sin entered and brought destruction. It is life that is lived in abundance of God's provision. There will be no frustrations. Remember, though, heaven is paradise because God is there. Many want heaven who care nothing of God. It should be the other way around.

New Eden

The other theme is that of a return to Eden. It is actually a combination of themes as well, combining the New Jerusalem with the prior relationship we had with God at Eden.

Revelation 22:1 -5 NIVO

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

³ **No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.**

1. Heaven is Eden Renewed.

- The river of life

John's vision takes up a theme seen earlier in Joel and Ezekiel. A river flows from the throne of God. Joel 3:18 is the first to cite the river in the restoration. Ezekiel chapter 47 gives a greater development of the idea. The river flows from the temple down to the dead sea and causes everything to come to life. In Revelation, the river flows from God's throne. Because it comes from God's throne, it is filled with the power of life from God. Everything it touches is full of life. Eden had four rivers at its source. There was no city in Eden. So the vision reaches beyond Eden.

- The tree of life

Yet, we see the idea of the tree of life in John's vision. Both in Ezekiel and here, the tree of life grows on the banks of the river that comes down the center of the city. It has fruit every season. Its leaves bring healing. We remember the Tree of Life from the Garden of Eden prior to the Fall. Adam and Eve are driven out of Eden so they do not take of the Tree of Life in an unredeemed state. Yet, it appears here and in Ezekiel as a renewal of Eden.

In Revelation, the scene changes slightly. Instead of the river flowing from the temple of God, it flows from God's throne. The river of life and the tree of life indicate that God has returned us to the prior state of Eden, before the Fall. Yet, it is more than Eden. It is a city full of the glory of God.

- **No more curse**

New Eden is possible because the curse and consequences of sin has been removed.

God is returning us to His purposes prior to sin's entrance into the world. The curse of sin and its decay is removed. Now life will be in its perfect state. People and animals will live in harmony. We will enjoy the fruit of the land.

Will we eat in our new bodies? What we will need in our resurrection bodies is yet to be known. Yet, before the curse came, Adam and Eve were in the garden. They ate of the food in the garden. If the fruit and leaves of the tree of life are for eating, it seems we will eat. Jesus ate in his resurrected body, so likely we will continue to enjoy food. I'm hoping for chocolate ice cream!

Randy Alcorn, in his book on heaven, believes we will do many of the things we enjoy here now. Heaven will be activity, not boredom. The things we enjoy in life now will be enjoyed later. We will all wear "Life is good" T-shirts! Or maybe better, "God is Good, all the time."

2. Heaven is God dwelling with His people.

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."

Part of the Eden renewal is that God dwells among his people. This was the case with Adam and Eve. They walked in the garden with God. God was present with them. Yet, sin cast us out of God's presence. That is changed in heaven. With Jerusalem coming down, God also comes down to dwell with us.

We must note that in John's description of heaven, there is no temple. No temple is found.

Rev. 21:22 NIVO

²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Rev. 22:4 NIVO

⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

God himself dwells in the city. A temple is a representation of God. There is no need for something to represent God when God and Jesus are with us. John says we will **see God's face**. We will live face to face with God and Jesus.

There will be no night.

No light is required because the luminance of God's glory is the light we need. Our bodies will be resurrected bodies, not needing rest. Darkness of night is also associated with evil. There will be no evil so there will be no darkness.

Hold on because heaven is coming!

Whatever happens here on earth. Hold onto faith in Jesus. Don't let anything destroy your faith. You need faith to enter through the gate into the city. Outside are the dogs, the immoral, the wicked. Those who hate and disdain our Lord Jesus will not enter the city. Ask God to help you have a strong faith for the days to come.