

LESSON 4

John's Vision of the Heavenly City

Revelation 21-22

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. I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away, Revelation 21:1-4.

Class Overview: In this lesson, we will study John's breathtaking vision of the New Jerusalem. After the fall of Babylon and the defeat of evil, God reveals the holy city coming down from heaven, radiant with His glory and prepared like a bride for Christ. Revelation 21-22 paints a picture of a new creation, God's permanent dwelling with His people, the end of sorrow and death, and a city of unmatched beauty. This vision assures us that heaven is real, certain, and far greater than anything we can imagine..

Class Objectives:

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Explain the meaning of a "new heaven and new earth" in Revelation 21:1-2.
 2. Describe the significance of God dwelling permanently with His people.
 3. Identify the promises of no more death, grief, crying, or pain.
 4. Interpret the imagery of beauty, radiance, and perfection in the New Jerusalem.
 5. Apply this vision as a source of hope and encouragement in daily life.
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Introduction:

Near the end of Scripture, after Babylon's fall and evil's defeat, John is shown a breathtaking vision: the New Jerusalem descending from heaven by God (Revelation 21–22). If Abraham longed for a city with foundations, and if we are searching for the city to come, John reveals what that city looks like.

Revelation 21:1-4 opens the picture: *"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth ... I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away."*

This vision appears at the end of the Bible for a reason. The story of Scripture doesn't conclude with judgment, war, or destruction. It concludes with a homecoming—the marriage of the Lamb and His bride, God dwelling with His people, and the end of everything that causes sorrow.

For believers who were weary, persecuted, or afraid, this vision served as an anchor. And it continues to do so for us. When life feels uncertain and the world feels dark, we turn to the last pages of Scripture and remember: this is how the story ends.

When you think about heaven, what part of John's vision in Revelation 21–22 stands out to you the most?

The New Creation: A New Heaven and a New Earth

John begins his vision in Revelation 21:1-2:

"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. I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband."

From the Text

1. A new heaven and a new earth

- The old order—marked by sin, corruption, and death—is gone.
- Isaiah 65:17 had promised: *"For I will create new heavens and a new earth; the past events will not be remembered or come to mind."*
- This is not a patchwork repair of the old creation but God's complete renewal.

2. The sea was no more

- In biblical imagery, the sea often represents chaos, danger, and separation (Psalm 46:2–3; Revelation 13:1).
- The removal of the sea symbolizes the end of all that threatens God's people.

3. The holy city, the new Jerusalem

- Unlike Babel or Babylon, which man tried to build, this city comes *down from God*.
- It is described as a bride, beautiful and prepared for her husband, pointing to purity, joy, and an intimate relationship.

Application

- The hope of heaven is not just escape from this world ... it is renewal. God is making all things new.
- Chaos, danger, and separation will be gone forever.
- Heaven is not a human achievement but God's gift, prepared like a bride for His people.

How does John's vision of a "new heaven and new earth" expand your view of what heaven will be like?

God's Dwelling with His People

Revelation 21:3-4 continues John's vision:

"Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away."

From the Text

1. God's dwelling is with humanity

- The word "dwelling" (Greek *skēnē*) echoes the tabernacle in the wilderness, where God's presence was among His people (Exodus 25:8).
- In heaven, there will be no separation, no veil, no temple needed—God Himself will live with His people permanently.

2. They will be His people

- This is the covenant promise fulfilled. Repeated throughout Scripture (Leviticus 26:11–12; Jeremiah 31:33), it now reaches its ultimate completion.
- What Israel anticipated in shadows becomes full reality in eternity.

3. The end of sorrow

- God personally wipes away every tear.
- Death, grief, crying, and pain—all the things that have marked human existence since the fall—are forever gone.
- This is not just relief from suffering; it is the full reversal of the curse.

Application

- The greatest blessing of heaven is not golden streets or pearly gates—it is God's presence.
- The end of sorrow gives us endurance now. Romans 8:18: *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us."*
- Our hope is not just survival, but joy—the joy of being fully at home with God.

Which part of this promise speaks most deeply to you: God's presence, or the end of sorrow—and why?

The Glory of the New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:9-11, 18-21 gives us a glimpse of heaven's beauty:

"Then one of the seven angels . . . spoke with me: 'Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.' He then carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, arrayed with God's glory. Her radiance was like a precious jewel, like a jasper

stone, clear as crystal . . . The building material of its wall was jasper, and the city was pure gold clear as glass. The foundations of the city wall were adorned with every kind of jewel . . . The twelve gates are twelve pearls; each individual gate was made of a single pearl. The main street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass."

From the Text

1. The city as a bride

- The angel calls the city "the bride, the wife of the Lamb." The New Jerusalem represents not only a place but also God's people—redeemed, purified, and joined to Christ forever.

2. The radiance of glory

- The city shines with God's glory, like precious jewels reflecting light. This is not about earthly wealth—it's about brilliance, beauty, and holiness.

3. Imagery of perfection

- Streets of transparent gold, walls of jasper, gates of pearl—all symbolize unmatched beauty, purity, and permanence.
- These images remind us: nothing man has built, no matter how impressive, compares with what God has prepared.

Application

- Heaven is described in terms of beauty to stir our longing and lift our imagination.
- These images remind us that heaven's glory comes from God Himself—not from the materials, but from His presence.
- If God prepared something this glorious for His people, we can endure whatever trials we face now with hope.

Why do you think God uses such rich imagery (gold, jewels, pearls) to describe heaven? How does that shape your longing for it?

Conclusion


John's vision closes the Bible with hope. The old order is gone, and God reveals a new heaven and a new earth. The holy city descends, radiant with glory, prepared like a bride for her husband. God Himself dwells with His people, wiping away every tear and removing death, sorrow, and pain forever. The New Jerusalem shines with beauty beyond imagination, reflecting the glory of the One who lives there.


This vision is not meant to satisfy curiosity but to strengthen faith. For weary believers, it reminds us: this world is not our home. For suffering Christians, it promises: the pain will not last. For all of us, it calls us to keep seeking the city to come.


Heaven is the glorious city where God dwells with His people forever, the promise that gives us hope today.


For Discussion

1. What does John’s description of a “new heaven and new earth” teach us about God’s plan for creation?


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2. Why is God’s presence with His people the greatest blessing of heaven?


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3. Which of the promises in Revelation 21:4—no more tears, death, grief, or pain—speaks most powerfully to you today?


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4. Why do you think Scripture uses imagery of gold, jewels, and pearls to describe heaven?


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5. How can this vision of the New Jerusalem strengthen your endurance and hope right now?

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