

# THE NEW HEAVENS (21:1-22:5)

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*“Look! I am making all things new!”*

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<sup>1</sup>Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth had ceased to exist, and the sea existed no more. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city – the new Jerusalem – descending out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband.

<sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying:

*“Look! The residence of God is among human beings. He will live among them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them. <sup>4</sup>He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will not exist any more – or mourning, or crying, or pain, for the former things have ceased to exist.”*

<sup>5</sup>And the one seated on the throne said:

*“Look! I am making all things new!”*

Then he said to me,

*“Write it down, because these words are reliable and true.”*

<sup>6</sup>He also said to me,

*“It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the one who is thirsty I will give water free of charge from the spring of the water of life. <sup>7</sup>The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup>But to the cowards, unbelievers, detestable persons, murderers, the sexually immoral, and those who practice magic spells, idol worshipers, and all those who lie, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. That is the second death.”*

<sup>9</sup>Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven final plagues came and spoke to me, saying,

*“Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb!”*

<sup>10</sup>So he took me away in the Spirit to a huge, majestic mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.<sup>11</sup>The city possesses the glory of God; its brilliance is like

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a precious jewel, like a stone of crystal-clear jasper.<sup>12</sup>It has a massive, high wall with twelve gates, with twelve angels at the gates, and the names of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel are written on the gates.<sup>13</sup>There are three gates on the east side, three gates on the north side, three gates on the south side and three gates on the west side.<sup>14</sup>The wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup>The angel who spoke to me had a golden measuring rod with which to measure the city and its foundation stones and wall.<sup>16</sup>Now the city is laid out as a square, its length and width the same. He measured the city with the measuring rod at fourteen hundred miles (its length and width and height are equal).<sup>17</sup>He also measured its wall, one hundred forty-four cubits according to human measurement, which is also the angel's.<sup>18</sup>The city's wall is made of jasper and the city is pure gold, like transparent glass.<sup>19</sup>The foundations of the city's wall are decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation is jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,<sup>20</sup>the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.<sup>21</sup>And the twelve gates are twelve pearls – each one of the gates is made from just one pearl! The main street of the city is pure gold, like transparent glass.

<sup>22</sup>Now I saw no temple in the city, because the Lord God – the All-Powerful – and the Lamb are its temple.<sup>23</sup>The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God lights it up, and its lamp is the Lamb.<sup>24</sup>The nations will walk by its light and the kings of the earth will bring their grandeur into it.<sup>25</sup>Its gates will never be closed during the day (and there will be no night there).<sup>26</sup>They will bring the grandeur and the wealth of the nations into it,<sup>27</sup>but nothing ritually unclean will ever enter into it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or practices falsehood, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

<sup>22.1</sup>Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life – water as clear as crystal – pouring out from the throne of God and of the Lamb,<sup>2</sup>flowing down the middle of the city's main street. On

each side of the river is the tree of life producing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month of the year. Its leaves are for the healing of the nations.<sup>3</sup>And there will no longer be any curse, and the throne of God and the Lamb will be in the city. His servants will worship him,<sup>4</sup>and they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>Night will be no more, and they will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will shine on them, and they will reign forever and ever.

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*Father,*

*I believe you have a great future before us. Your plans are higher and better than any we have for ourselves. Motivate us to live in light of the glory you prepared for us.*

*Amen*

**Sometimes people who read this passage refer to this as “Heaven.” Is the new heaven the place we will live forever? Why or why not?**

**What is the connection with the new heaven and earth of *Isaiah 65:17-19*?**

**Why do you think it mentions that “*there is no longer any sea?*”**

**What does the “holy city, new Jerusalem” represent (22:2,9; cf. 19:7; 21:9; 22:17)?**

**What will it be like to have God “dwell” among us (21:3-4)?**

**What are the “former things” that “have passed away?”**

**What does the phrase “Behold, I am making all things new” mean (21:5)?**

**What is promised to those who are thirsty and who conquer?  
Are these the same thing?**

**What are the eight characteristics of 21:8?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

**Why does one of the angels with the seven bowls speak (21:9; with 17:1-5 and Ezekiel 40:1-5)?**

**What is the significance of the 12 tribes and the 12 apostles?**

## What can you discover about the dimensions of this city?

Ken Easley gives us a good description of the stones of this city: Most of these stones are mentioned only here in the New Testament. What follows is a brief description of what we know about them:

1. **jasper**—a green semiprecious stone; perhaps green quartz (4:3)
2. **sapphire**—a blue stone, either *lapis lazuli* or the modern sapphire
3. **chalcedony**—a gray or green stone, named for the city of Chalcedon
4. **emerald**—another green stone; probably the same as modern emerald (4:3)
5. **sardonyx**—probably a banded stone, such as onyx or agate
6. **carnelian**—a red semiprecious stone, perhaps red quartz (4:3)
7. **chrysolite**—a yellow semiprecious stone such as yellow quartz
8. **beryl**—a blue-green semiprecious stone such as modern aquamarine
9. **topaz**—probably yellow or brownish; perhaps like modern topaz
10. **chrysoprase**—a yellow-green semiprecious stone, perhaps quartz
11. **jacinth**—a blue semiprecious stone, sometimes translated “hyacinth”
12. **amethyst**—a purple semiprecious stone, probably like modern amethyst<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kendell H. Easley, vol. 12, *Revelation*, Holman New Testament Commentary; Holman Reference, 400.

**How do the materials used in the foundations of the city's walls, the gates, and the paving of the city's street indicate about the purpose of this city (21:18-21, with 22-24)?**

**What five things “won't be” in this city (21:22-27)?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Who are “the nations” (21:24-26)?**

**What do we know about the tree of life (Genesis 3:22-24; Revelation 2:7)?**

**How will man be able to see God's face (22:4)?**

**What parallels do you see with the creation accounts in Genesis?**

# THE LAST WORDS (22:6-21)

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*“Do not seal up the words of the prophecy contained in this book, because the time is near.”*

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<sup>6</sup>Then the angel said to me,

*“These words are reliable and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must happen soon.”*

<sup>7</sup>(Look! I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy expressed in this book.)

<sup>8</sup>I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things, and when I heard and saw them, I threw myself down to worship at the feet of the angel who was showing them to me. <sup>9</sup> But he said to me,

*“Do not do this! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets, and with those who obey the words of this book. Worship God!”*

<sup>10</sup>Then he said to me,

*“Do not seal up the words of the prophecy contained in this book, because the time is near.”<sup>11</sup>The evildoer must continue to do evil, and the one who is morally filthy must continue to be filthy. The one who is righteous must continue to act righteously, and the one who is holy must continue to be holy.”*

<sup>12</sup>(Look! I am coming soon, and my reward is with me to pay each one according to what he has done! <sup>13</sup>I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end!)

<sup>14</sup>Blessed are those who wash their robes so they can have access to the tree of life and can enter into the city by the gates.

<sup>15</sup>Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the sexually immoral, and the murderers, and the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood!

<sup>16</sup>*“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star!”*

<sup>17</sup>And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say: "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wants it take the water of life free of charge.

<sup>18</sup>I testify to the one who hears the words of the prophecy contained in this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. <sup>19</sup>And if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.

<sup>20</sup>The one who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon!"

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

<sup>21</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

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*Father,*

*I believe that what you have to say is relevant to our day and time. Help me to see the importance of these truths to my life today. Make the study this week a culmination of not merely knowledge, but also of resolve to please you in how I conduct my business during the time I have left.*

*Amen*

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George Beasley-Murray in the *New Bible Commentary* suggests there are three major themes being dealt with in these final verses. List beside each theme the verses in 22:6-21 where this is addressed (there may be some overlap):

1. Verses dealing with the *Authenticity of the Visions*
2. Verses dealing with the *Imminence of Christ's Coming*
3. Verses dealing with the *Necessity for Holiness*

**The structure of these last sixteen verses appears confusing. Looking at several different versions yields various paragraph divisions. In the first column make your own outline:**

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<b>My Outline</b>	NKJ	ESV	NLT	NET	NAS	NA27	HCS	BYZ
	6	6	6	6	6-7	6-7	6	6-7
	7	7	7	7			7	
	8	8-9	8-9	8-11	8-9	8-9	8-11	8-9
	9-11	10-11	10-11		10-11	10-11		10-15
	12-13	12-13	12-13	12-13	12-13	12-13	12-13	
	14-15	14-15	14-15	14-15	14-15	14-15	14-15	
	16	16	16	16-17	16-17	16	16	16
	17	17	17-19			17	17	17
	18-19	18-19		18-19	18-19	18-19	18-19	18-19
	20	20	20	20-21	20	20	20	20
	21	21	21		21	21	21	21

**Why is the Lord called “the God of the spirits of the prophets” (22:6; compare 2 Peter 1:20-21)?**

**The phrase “I am coming quickly” is repeated three times in this section (22:7, 12, 20). How is it that Jesus can say He is coming quickly?**

**Notice that the Revelation closes as it began (compare 22:7 with 1:3). Why do you think this warning and motivation so important?**

**Why does John begin speaking directly to the readers again (22:8-9; cf. 1:1, 4, 9)?**

**Why do you think he falls down and worships another angel (cf. 19:10)?**

**What does the command to “worship God” really mean?**

Some churches make a distinction between bowing in worship and prayer to God and bowing and praying in reverence (*veneration*) of saints. **Do you think this is a valid distinction? Why or why not?**

Compare the command in 22:10 with what Daniel was told to do with his visions (8:26; 12:4). **What does this difference tell you about the importance of this revelation to us today?**

The saying in 22:11 seems odd. **What do you think this warning is saying (compare *Daniel 11:10*)?**

**Believers will be rewarded for what we have done (22:12). How is this not works?**

**How do you resolve the tension between salvation, works, and rewards?**

**Does the hope of reward motivate you to serve God? Why or why not?**

**What does the expression “wash your robes” speak of initial justification or ongoing confession (22:14; compare 1:5; 7:14)?**

**What is the invitation in 22:17 (compare Isaiah 55:1 and John 7:37-39)?**

**What happens if we add to or take away from the book (22:18)?**

**How do religious groups today add to or take away from the Bible?**

**What is the theme of the last words of the Bible (22:20-21; compare 1:4)?**

**The practical application of Revelation can be summarized in five words: “*Live in light of eternity.*” How could we do this?**

***What to you are the five great lessons of the Revelation?***

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**
- 4.**
- 5.**