

## Detailed Study of Revelation Chapter 21

Revelation Chapter 21 presents the **final culmination** of God's redemptive plan. It is a chapter that focuses on **the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem**, signifying the **eternal state** for the redeemed and the **final defeat of sin and death**. This chapter provides hope and a vision of eternal peace, unity with God, and the fulfillment of His promises to His people. In the context of a **dispensational hermeneutic**, Revelation 21 describes the **new creation** that follows after the **Great White Throne Judgment** (Revelation 20), where the eternal destinies of both the righteous and the wicked are decided.

This study will examine the key Greek words, verbs, and phrases in this chapter, unpack the **cultural and historical context**, explain the **images and visions** John experiences, and offer a **theological interpretation** from a **dispensational** perspective. Finally, we will explore how the teachings in Revelation 21 can be applied to the Christian life today.

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### Exegetical Breakdown of Revelation 21:1-27

#### 1. The New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 21:1-2)

**Revelation 21:1-2 (ESV):** *"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. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*

- **Greek Word Study:**
    - **"New" (Greek: *kainos*)** – The word *kainos* refers to **new in quality**, as opposed to *neos*, which means **new in time**. The new heaven and earth are not just a **rejuvenation** or **renewal** of the old, but a **radically transformed** creation, completely free from the curse of sin and death.
    - **"Pass away" (Greek: *parerchomai*)** – This verb means to **go by, pass away, or depart**. The old heaven and earth are gone, as if they have **fulfilled their purpose** and now make way for the new, untainted creation that God will establish.
    - **"Sea" (Greek: *thalassa*)** – The mention of the **sea** being "no more" is significant because, in Jewish thought, the sea often represented **chaos, evil, and separation** (consider the sea's association with **Leviathan**, the symbol of evil in the Old Testament). Its removal suggests that in the new creation, **evil and disorder** are entirely gone.
  - **Theological Insight:** The **new heaven and new earth** represent the complete **transformation** of the world, free from the influence of sin, suffering, and death. The absence of the **sea** signifies a world where chaos, evil, and separation from God no longer exist. The **new Jerusalem**, described as **prepared as a bride adorned for her husband**, represents the **bride of Christ**—the redeemed people of God, who will dwell with Him forever in a place of eternal joy and fellowship.
  - **Cultural and Historical Context:** The concept of a **new creation** echoes Old Testament prophecies, particularly in Isaiah (Isaiah 65:17, 66:22), where a new heaven and earth were promised as part of God's **future restoration** of His people. For early Christians, the hope of this **new world** would have been deeply comforting, especially amidst persecution.
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## 2. God's Presence with His People (Revelation 21:3-4)

**Revelation 21:3-4 (ESV):** *"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.'"*

- **Greek Word Study:**
    - **"Dwelling place"** (Greek: *skēnē*) – This word signifies **tabernacle** or **tent**, recalling the Old Testament idea of God's **presence** dwelling with His people (cf. Exodus 25:8). The idea is that God will **permanently dwell** among His people, in direct and intimate fellowship.
    - **"Wipe away"** (Greek: *exaleiphō*) – This verb means **to wipe off, to erase**, and suggests that God will **remove** all traces of sorrow, suffering, and death from His people.
  - **Theological Insight:** One of the greatest promises in this passage is that **God Himself** will dwell with His people. This is the fulfillment of the ultimate **relationship** between God and humanity. In this perfect state, there will be no more **death, mourning, crying, or pain**—all the effects of sin are removed. This is a radical reversal of the curse introduced in Genesis 3, marking the **final redemption** of creation.
  - **Cultural and Historical Context:** For first-century Christians, the **presence of God** would have been a cherished hope. At the time, God's presence was experienced in a **spiritual sense**, but it was distant. The **promise of God's eternal dwelling** with His people, without sin or suffering, would have been an immensely **hopeful vision** for a persecuted church.
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## 3. The Alpha and Omega: God's Promise (Revelation 21:5-8)

**Revelation 21:5-8 (ESV):** *"And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.' And he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.'"*

- **Greek Word Study:**
  - **"Alpha and Omega"** (Greek: *Alphā kai Ōmega*) – These are the **first and last letters** of the Greek alphabet, symbolizing that God is the **beginning and end** of all things. God is **eternal**, without beginning or end, and He is the **sovereign ruler** of all creation.
  - **"Spring of the water of life"** (Greek: *pege hydōr zōēs*) – This phrase refers to the **life-giving water**, a metaphor for the **eternal life** and **blessing** that God gives to His people. It recalls the promise of **living water** made by Jesus in John 4:10-14.
- **Theological Insight:** The declaration "I am making all things new" emphasizes that the **work of redemption** is not just spiritual but also **cosmic** in scope. God is **restoring** and **renewing** all things. The **water of life** symbolizes the **eternal**

**satisfaction** and **nourishment** that only God can provide. The chapter contrasts the **inheritance of the faithful** with the **eternal separation of the wicked**.

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#### 4. The New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:9-27)

**Revelation 21:9-27 (ESV):** This portion of the chapter describes the **New Jerusalem**, the holy city, that comes down from heaven. It is described in **symbolic terms**, with a focus on its **beauty, holiness, and perfection**. The city is radiant, with walls of **jasper** and streets of **pure gold**.

- **Greek Word Study:**
    - **"City" (Greek: *polis*)** – This term refers to a **place of residence**, but in this context, it symbolizes the **gathering** of God's people, the **community of the redeemed**. The **New Jerusalem** is not just a physical city but a symbol of the perfect **relationship** between God and His people.
    - **"Holiness" (Greek: *hagiosyne*)** – The city is **holy**, meaning it is set apart for God's presence. There is no **sin** or defilement allowed.
  - **Theological Insight:** The **New Jerusalem** symbolizes the **ultimate fellowship** between God and His people in the new creation. Its description as a **perfect city** signifies the **total absence of sin and imperfection**. The **beauty** of the city is not only physical but reflects the **glory and perfection** of God's eternal kingdom.
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#### Application Questions for Today's Christian Audience

1. **How does the promise of a "new heaven and new earth" shape your understanding of the ultimate goal of creation?**  
How can Christians live today with a **renewed perspective** on the world and its future destiny?
  2. **What does it mean for you personally that God will dwell with His people forever?**  
In what ways should this affect your **relationship with God** now, as we anticipate eternal fellowship with Him?
  3. **What comfort can you draw from the idea that God is making all things new?**  
How does this promise affect your view of **suffering and trial** in this life?
  4. **How do the descriptions of the New Jerusalem challenge your current understanding of community and holiness in the Church?**  
How can the Church reflect aspects of the **New Jerusalem**—a place of peace, purity, and worship—on earth today?
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#### Conclusion

Revelation 21 presents a **glorious vision** of the eternal state, where all things are made new, and God's people dwell with Him forever in a place of eternal peace, beauty, and fellowship. This passage brings comfort, hope, and a renewed vision of God's **ultimate victory** over sin, death, and evil. For the Christian today, it calls for a life of **anticipation** and **faithfulness**, living with the awareness that the present suffering is temporary, but the joy and glory of the eternal state are secure. In a world full of chaos and despair, the hope of **the New Jerusalem** serves as a beacon, drawing believers to live in light of God's **ultimate promise** for their future.