

**Revelation**  
**The Lamb of God: On His Throne and Among His People**  
*Home!*  
**Revelation 21**  
**Study Notes**

**Home Group Questions**

- Read Revelation 21:1-8. What questions arise? What captures your imagination?
- Work through the “11 truths from the text” listed in the notes below.
- Discuss the application points:
  - If you are not a believer, there is still time to repent
  - The Lord will be with us through eternity, and he is with us now – make your relationship with him a priority
  - The more heavenly minded you are the more earthly good you will be
- Pray for your missionary, and pray for our Mission Fair on October 12 – more details, soon!

**Quotes and Thoughts from the Sermon**

**C.S. Lewis:** If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.

**Vern Poythress:** The removal of the sea means the permanent removal of all challenges to God’s order, and hence the peace and stability of the new world.

**Bruce Metzger on the dimensions of the New Jerusalem:** In ancient times, the cube was held to be the most perfect of all geometric forms. By this symbolism, therefore, John wants us to understand that the heavenly Jerusalem is absolutely splendid, with a harmony and symmetry of perfect proportions.

\*note – the dimensions for the holy city are

**Scotty Smith:** The whole city becomes the Holy of Holies. The bride is perfected in righteousness and God’s shekinah (glory) radiates the whole realm through the Lamb!

The gates are never closed because fellowship and communion with God will never cease. Everyone whose name is written in the Lamb's book of life is welcome.

### **11 Truths from the Text – with Sermon Notes**

Here is the way I will approach Revelation 21 today. I am going to list 11 things to look for as we read through the chapter in a few minutes. I won't spend much time on these 11 principles and interpretive points before reading through the text and applying it to our lives. These points are all listed in the study notes along with some excellent quotes that did not make the sermon. If you access the notes, you need not worry about writing before the screen changes. Will this be like drinking from a firehose? Yes. Will it provide much to think about for those who wish to go deeper on their own or in home group? Hopefully, so! First:

1. The first two chapters of the Bible describe God's creation; the last two chapters of the Bible describe God's new creation.

Genesis 1-2 and Revelation 21-22 are like bookends. God's perfection is on full display in both texts. Second:

2. If the sea in Revelation 21:1 is symbolic, then you can look forward to beach trips in the new creation!

When you look at this text from both directions, it makes so much more sense, at least to me, to view much of what is said here as symbolic. It is not just that you decide, "Okay, I am going to take this as symbolic and that as literal." Almost of all the interpretive questions can be linked to multiple OT and NT texts, which makes a symbolic interpretation more plausible. So, it is with our third point:

3. The new creation likely indicates that God renews the heavens and the earth in the same way he renews individuals who trust in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Will the heavens and earth be destroyed after which God will create a new heaven and earth ex nihilo, or "out of nothing"? 2 Peter 3:12- 13 says that we are: 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Commentators think this either means annihilation or a cleansing, like a scrubbing of the surface. I will say that everything else is Scripture that I am aware of seems to indicate more of a renewal. Jesus' resurrection and our resurrected bodies as described in 1 Corinthians 15 would point in this direction as well as 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." I think you will see the similarity in language when we come to Revelation 21. Fourth:

4. The beauty of the new creation is as much relational as it is material.

Where is home for me? Wherever Alison is. Where is my eternal home? Wherever Jesus is, no matter how Revelation 21 plays out. Fifth:

5. The depiction of the new creation is as much negative (what it is not) as positive (what it is).

There will be no more crying, no more mourning because there will be no cancer, no death, no physical or relational pain – there will not even be any crying. A beautiful place is even better when all is well with your soul. All will be well in eternity. Sixth:

6. Both God the Father and Jesus identify as the Alpha and Omega (Revelation 21:6 and 22:13).

We think of Jesus as the Alpha and Omega, and indeed he is, but in Revelation 1 and here in chapter 21 it is God the Father who is the Alpha and Omega. Seventh:

7. Even as chapters 21 and 22 point to eternity with the Lord, a distinction is made between those who belong to Jesus and those who do not.

You will see this in verse 8 and next week in 22:10-12. Throughout Revelation, there is an implied call for repentance. There might be more to it, though. If heaven is better with a knowledge of hell because we are not only aware of what we are saved to but also to what we are saved from, then it might also be true that hell is worse because those who refuse Jesus will not only know what they are condemned to, but what they have missed. It struck me two weeks ago when I was reading Matthew 25 during the sermon that perhaps that is the reason the sheep receive their rewards before the goats receive their judgment. If it doesn't make sense now, it will when Revelation 21 is our reality. Eighth:

8. The Holy Spirit is present in both Revelation 21 and 22, although he is not as frequently mentioned as the Father and the Son. Never forget that the Holy Spirit is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father and the Son. This is our amazing God!

Much more about the Trinity next week. Ninth:

9. If the new Jerusalem is the bride of Christ (the Church), then the metaphors of these last two chapters in Revelation should encourage us as we contemplate an eternity with Jesus.

“I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” So the new Jerusalem is the church? Yes! We will see later in the text, though, there seems to be a real city, and it is the spectacularly gorgeous New Jerusalem. Know that when the writers of the Psalms rejoice in God’s delight of Zion, his delight is in you, brothers and sisters, no matter the pain in your heart. I find great comfort in this truth and so many more than can be gleaned from meditating on this chapter. Tenth:

10. Believers from both the old and new covenants comprise the bride of Christ.

The names of the twelve tribes of Israel are inscribed on the gates of the holy city, and the names of the apostles are written on the twelve foundations of the city. Old and new covenants – all believers. Hallelujah! Last:

11. Under the old covenant, the Tabernacle and the Temple represented God’s presence and the need for a sacrifice for sins (judgment). There is no temple in the new creation because there is no need for sacrifice; God is present with his people through eternity.

### **Scripture Associated with the Message**

**Isaiah 65:17 “For behold, I create new heavens  
and a new earth,  
and the former things shall not be remembered  
or come into mind.**

18 But be glad and rejoice forever  
in that which I create;  
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,  
and her people to be a gladness.

**19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem**

**and be glad in my people;**  
**no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping**  
**and the cry of distress.**  
 20 No more shall there be in it  
     an infant who lives but a few days,  
     or an old man who does not fill out his days,  
 for the young man shall die a hundred years old,  
     and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.  
 21 They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
     they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
 22 They shall not build and another inhabit;  
     they shall not plant and another eat;  
 for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
     and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.  
 23 They shall not labor in vain  
     or bear children for calamity,  
 for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord,  
     and their descendants with them.  
 24 Before they call I will answer;  
     while they are yet speaking I will hear.  
 25 The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;  
     the lion shall eat straw like the ox,  
     and dust shall be the serpent's food.  
 They shall not hurt or destroy  
     in all my holy mountain,"  
 says the Lord.

**The sea most often represents chaos in Revelation (13:1; 15:2; 17:1, 15; 18:11-19), but not always (4:6).**

**Oceans were part of the first creation (Genesis 1:9-10; Job 38:8; Psalm 95:5). If the sea in Revelation 21 is symbolic, you can look forward to beach trips in the new creation.**

**John 1:14** And the Word (Jesus) became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**John 2:19** Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will

you raise it up in three days?” 21 **But he was speaking about the temple of his body.**

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

**Isaiah 62:5** For as a young man marries a young woman,  
so shall your sons marry you,  
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,  
so shall your God rejoice over you.

**Revelation 21:6** And he (**God the Father**) 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.

**Revelation 22:13** **I (Jesus) am the Alpha and the Omega**, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

**Notice how Father (Revelation 21:6), Son (John 7:38) and Spirit (John 7:39) all provide the same life-giving water of salvation:** **John 7:37** On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

**The New Jerusalem as a perfect cube in Revelation 21** is like the Holy of Holies (perfect cube, though much smaller) in the OT – **1 Kings 6:20; Ezekiel 4:41.**