

Revelation 21:1-5 (ESV): New Heaven and New Earth

Main point: Jesus will create a perfect new heaven and earth, where he will reign and dwell with us forever.



Spiritual Eldercare

Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: The Book of Revelation includes a sweeping vision of the new creation, our final destiny as followers of Jesus. The apostle John received this vision in his old age, and he wrote it down as an encouragement to the early believers to live their faith boldly as they (and we) wait for Jesus to come again and establish his kingdom on earth.

Focus of study:

¹Then 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. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

³And 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. ⁴He 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.”

⁵And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

Questions:

1. *Wow ... this is quite a picture! What is the first thing that John says he sees?*
 - a. V. 1: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.”
2. *I wonder what you think “the first heaven and earth” may be?*
 - a. Here and now: our current reality.
3. *Who created the first heaven and earth?*
 - a. God! [optional reading: Genesis 1:6-10: And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. ...And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.]
4. *What does John see next, in verse 2?*
 - a. “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem.”
5. *In John’s vision, where does this new Jerusalem come from?*
 - a. “Out of heaven from God.”
6. *What does the new Jerusalem look like?*
 - a. “A bride adorned for her husband.”
7. *That’s an interesting picture, isn’t it? Let’s think about it: What is a bride?*

- a. A woman preparing to join with a man in lifelong marriage.
- 8. *What does a bride look like? What might a happy bride be feeling?*
 - a. Beautiful ("adorned")! She's prepared and carefully dressed for her wedding.
 - b. Excited, glowing, ready to be joined to her husband.
- 9. *What happens when two people get married? Where do they live and how do they relate to each other?*
 - a. The two become one. It's an intimate, permanent connection and togetherness.
- 10. *In John's vision, what does he hear after he sees this new Jerusalem coming down?*
 - a. V. 3: "I heard a loud voice from the throne: '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.'"
- 11. *So who will be dwelling together? In other words, who are the bride and bridegroom in John's vision?*
 - a. God and his people. In John's vision, Christ followers will stand before God adorned like a bride ready for her bridegroom, united with him for all eternity.
- 12. *Let's look more closely at verses 3 and 4: "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." In the new heaven and earth, what will our relationship to God be like? What will God do?*
 - a. God will dwell with us, visible and permanent; "God himself will be with them."
 - b. God will wipe away every tear.
- 13. *What will be missing?*
 - a. Death, mourning, crying, pain; all the sad, broken, former things of this earth.
- 14. *In verse 5, John records, "And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Who sits on a throne? What do they do?*
 - a. A king, queen, or other ruler.
 - b. That person is in charge, oversees everything, sets the tone for the entire kingdom.
- 15. *Who do you think is on this throne in the new creation? John gives us a hint in what the person on the throne says: "I am making all things new." Who made all things? Who is the one who will make all things new?*
 - a. Jesus, the Creator.
- 16. *If Jesus is the king of this kingdom, what do you imagine that kingdom will be like?*
 - a. It will reflect the character of God: love, joy, peace, justice, mercy, beauty.
 - b. It will be a fulfillment of the original creation in Genesis: "very good," shalom, a perfect peace and wholeness, God dwelling with his people in loving communion.

John's vision records a new heaven and new earth, where we will live with Christ forever, a physical place with no pain, death, or suffering.

- 17. Ask for prayer requests for today.
- 18. Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
- 19. End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace.

Revelation 21:1-5

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