

## The Book Of Revelation Study 98

*Revelation 21:1-8 (NASB)*

<sup>1</sup> *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.*

<sup>2</sup> *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.*

<sup>3</sup> *And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,*

<sup>4</sup> *and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."*

<sup>5</sup> *And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He \*said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."*

<sup>6</sup> *Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.*

<sup>7</sup> *"He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.*

<sup>8</sup> *"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

As we read through this text last week we saw that it unfolds six features of the final and eternal heaven, called the new heaven and the new earth:

1. The appearance of the New Heaven and the New Earth,
2. The capital of the New Heaven and the New Earth,
3. The supreme reality of the New Heaven and the New Earth,
4. The changes in the New Heaven and the New Earth,
5. The residents of the New Heaven and the New Earth,
6. The outcasts from the New Heaven and the New Earth.

We have already looked at the appearance of the New Heaven and the New Earth, and so we will today begin with the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the features that of "The capital of the New Heaven and the New Earth" and go from there.

### THE CAPITAL OF THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

*Revelation 21:1-8 (NASB)*

<sup>2</sup> *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.*

As the next stage in his vision unfolds, the apostle John moves from a description of the new heaven and the new earth in general to a description of the capital city of the eternal state.

Since the text plainly identifies it as such, there is no reason to doubt that **the holy city, new Jerusalem**, is an actual city.

The **new Jerusalem** is not heaven, but heaven's capital.

It is not synonymous with heaven, because its dimensions are given in **21:16**.

It will be the third city named Jerusalem in redemptive history.

The **first** is the historic Jerusalem, the City of David, which currently exists in Palestine. Scripture repeatedly calls it the **holy city** (11:12, Neh. 11:1, Isa. 52:1, Dan. 9:24, Matt. 4:5; 27:53) because it was set apart for God's purposes.

The **second** Jerusalem will be the restored Jerusalem where Christ will rule during the millennial kingdom.

But the **new Jerusalem** does not belong to the first creation, so it is neither the historic city, nor the millennial city; it is the altogether new eternal city (*vv 10; Heb. 11:10; 12:22-24; 13:14*).

The old Jerusalem, in ruins for twenty-five years when John received this vision, is too stained with sin, too much a part of the old creation to survive into the eternal state.

The **new Jerusalem** is called the **holy city** because everyone in it is holy;

**Revelation 20:6a (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup>*Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection;*

The concept of a city includes relationships, activity, responsibility, unity, socialization, communion, and cooperation.

Unlike the evil cities of the present earth, the perfectly holy people in new Jerusalem will live and work together in perfect harmony.

In his vision, John saw the **new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God**, its "architect and builder"

**Hebrews 11:8-10 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup>*By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.*

<sup>9</sup>*By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;*

<sup>10</sup>*for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*

The implications here is that it already exists, a truth reinforced by Hebrews;

**Hebrews 12:22-23 (NASB)**

<sup>22</sup>*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,*

<sup>23</sup>*to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,*

All of heaven is currently contained in the **new Jerusalem**; it is separate from the present universe, which is tainted by sin.

Believers who die go to "heavenly Jerusalem", where Jesus has gone before them to prepare a place for them

**John 14:1-3 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup>*"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.*

<sup>2</sup>*"In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place*

for you.

<sup>3</sup> "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

When God creates the new heaven and the new earth, the **new Jerusalem** will descend into the midst of that holy new universe;

**Revelation 21:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,*

It will serve as a dwelling place of the redeemed for all eternity.

Since the throne of God will be in the **new Jerusalem**, which will come down to the new earth, that city will be the bond between the new earth and the new heaven.

Further describing heaven's capital city, John notes that it was **made ready as a bride adorned for her husband**. The city is pictured as a **bride** because it contains the bride and takes on her character.

The imagery is drawn from a Jewish wedding, which typically had three parts.

1. The betrothal, which was like a modern engagement, but more legally binding. The betrothal of the Lord's **bride** took place in eternity past when God pledged to His Son a redeemed people.
2. The next stage was the presentation, a time of celebration and feasting leading up to the actual wedding ceremony. The presentation of the **bride** took place following the Rapture of the church, when believers are taken to heaven.
3. The third stage was the ceremony, which for the Lord's **bride** began at the marriage supper of the Lamb and stretched through the millennial kingdom.
4. The final stage was the consummation, which corresponds to the eternal state.

John saw the **bride adorned for her husband** because it was time for the consummation.

**Adorned** is from the verb *kosmeo* (to order, or to arrange); the related noun *kosmos* (translated *adornment*) is the root of the English word "*cosmetics*". In other words the **bride** has become appropriately ordered in all her beauty.

By this time in Revelation, the **bride** concept expands to include not only the church (as it has since Acts 2) but also all the rest of the redeemed from all the ages who live forever in that eternal city.

This is the moment described by Paul;

**1 Corinthians 15:28 (NASB)**

<sup>28</sup> *When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.*

Now!

**THE SUPREME REALITY OF THE  
NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH**

**Revelation 21:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> *And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,*

The supreme glory and joy of heaven is the Person of God;

**Psalm 73:25 (NASB)**

<sup>25</sup> *Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.*

Here, as twenty times previously in Revelation, a **loud voice** heralds an announcement of great importance.

The source of the **voice** is not revealed. It is not God, but probably an angel.

The portentous announcement he makes is *"Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men."* (*tabernacle, tent, dwelling place*)

God will pitch His tent among His people; no longer will He be far off, distant, transcendent.

No more will His presence be veiled in the human form of Jesus Christ, even in His millennial majesty, or in the cloud and the pillar of fire, or inside the Holy of Holies.

This is an amazing reality;

**Matthew 5:8 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup> *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

Christ's prayer recorded in John will be answered;

**John 17:24 (NASB)**

<sup>24</sup> *"Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.*

There will be no temple in heaven;

**Revelation 21:22 (NASB)**

<sup>22</sup> *I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*

Their presence will permeate heaven and will not be confined to one place of manifestation.

So staggering is this truth that heavenly voice repeats it several ways.

**Revelation 21:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> *And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,*

**Revelation 22:3-4 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> *There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will*

serve Him;

<sup>4</sup> *they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.*

What will it be like to live in God's glorious presence in heaven?

**First**, believers will enjoy fellowship with Him. The imperfect, sin-hindered fellowship that believers have with God in this life will become full, complete, and unlimited.

In his classic book on heaven entitled *"The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, seventeenth-century Puritan Richard Baxter describes the intimate communion with God that believers will enjoy in heaven.

*Doubtless as God advanceth our senses, and enlargeth our capacity, so will he advance the happiness of those senses and fill up with himself all that capacity. We shall then have light without a candle, and perpetual day without the sun. we shall then have enlightened understandings without Scripture, and be governed without a written law; for the Lord will perfect His law in our hearts, and we shall be all perfectly taught of God. We shall have joy, which we drew not from the promises, nor fetched home by faith or hope. We shall have communion without sacraments, without this fruit of the vine, when Christ shall drink it new with us in His Father's kingdom and refresh us with the comforting wine of immediate enjoyment.*

*To have necessities, but no supply, is the case of them in hell.*

*To have necessity supplied by means of the creatures, is the case of us on earth.*

*To have necessity supplied immediately from God is the case of the saints in heaven.*

*To have no necessity at all, is the prerogative of God himself.*

*(The Practical Works of Richard Baxter [reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981], 7, 16)*

**Second**, believers will see God as He is.

**1 John 3:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup> *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.*

Such an unveiled view of God is impossible for mortal men.

No living person has ever seen God in the fullness of His glory. He is invisible and dwells in unapproachable light. To be exposed to God in all His glory would mean instant death for any living person.

But in heaven, *"the pure of heart, shall see God"* since they are perfectly holy.

They will be given an eternal and expanded vision of God manifest in His shining glory;

**Revelation 21:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup> *And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.*

**Revelation 22:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> *And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.*

Even the saints in heavenly glory will not be able to comprehend all the infinite Majesty of God's wondrous being. But they will see all that glorified beings are able to comprehend.

It is any wonder that Paul, thinking of the glory of heaven, had *“the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better” (Phil 1:23)*

Fanny Crosby echoed Pauls’ sentiments in her wonderful old Hymn “My Savior First of All”

*When my life, work is ended and I cross the swelling tide,  
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see,  
I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,  
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.*

*Thru the gates to the city, in a robe of spotless white,  
He will lead me where no tears will ever fall,  
In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight,  
But I long to meet my Savior first of all.*

**Third,** believers will worship God.

Every glimpse of heaven in Revelation reveals the redeemed and the angels in worship. That is not surprising, since Jesus said;

**John 4:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup> *“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.*

In heaven, the glorified, perfected saints will offer God perfect worship.

**Fourth,** believers will serve God;

**Revelation 22:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> *There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;*

It is said of the saints in heaven pictured in **7:5** that *“they serve day and night in His temple”*

The believers’ capacity for heavenly service will reflect their faithfulness in this life.

All believers will be rewarded with capacities for heavenly service, but those capacities will differ

**1 Corinthians 3:12-15 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> *Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,*

<sup>13</sup> *each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.*

<sup>14</sup> *If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.*

<sup>15</sup> *If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

**1 Corinthians 4:5 (NASB)**

***<sup>5</sup> Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.***

Fifth, this is the most astounding of all, the Lord will serve believers.

Jesus told a parable reflecting that truth in Luke;

**Luke 12:35-40 (NASB)**

***<sup>35</sup> "Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit.***

***<sup>36</sup> "Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks.***

***<sup>37</sup> "Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them.***

***<sup>38</sup> "Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.***

***<sup>39</sup> "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into.***

***<sup>40</sup> "You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."***

Jesus pictures Himself as a wealthy nobleman, who returns to His estate after a long trip. Find that his servants ministered faithfully in His absence, He rewards them by taking the role of a servant and preparing a feast for them. So will it be for believers in heaven, forever to be served a heavenly feast of joy by their Lord.

Next time now we will take up the changes in the new heaven and the new earth, the residents in the new heaven and the new earth, the outcasts from the new heaven and the new earth.