

1. **Introduction:** Before continuing the description of judgments due sin, let us pause for an interlude to examine the overall picture of what God has decreed for the end of the current age.

- The Bible is a story about the astounding redeeming love of God for His sinful, wayward creation, a love that overcomes all obstacles to achieving His intended purpose. That purpose is to have a people for Himself who can live in His presence forever.
- The Bible tells us that to live in God’s presence, people must be holy as God is holy. To achieve His purpose, God created Adam and Eve, two humans capable of reproduction, to ultimately fill the earth with people. They were created holy and perfect like God and He placed them with Him in a special Garden.
- As created, Adam and Eve were holy, immortal, and perfectly attuned to the created things that surrounded them. But their holiness was conditional. They could continue to be “holy” only if they were perfectly obedient to God. If they chose, for whatever reason, to disobey God, their holiness would be destroyed with dreadful consequences.
- They chose to disobey. They and all their progeny through the ages were sentenced to suffer the consequences of that disobedience.
- The Bible is the love story of how God overcame the missteps of mankind’s journey from their fall into sin in Eden to redeemed life in the New Jerusalem. God’s planned purpose of creating a people of His own who can and will live eternally in His presence is being realized through His actions, at times difficult, but always loving.
- To reach the eternal New Jerusalem, sinners must be restored by obeying God’s call to accept His provision for their salvation through the sacrificial death of Jesus. “In Christ,” sinners will be restored to holiness and will ultimately live eternally in God’s presence in the New Jerusalem.
- In Genesis, we are told that God made His home with Adam and Eve in the Garden, walking and talking with them. He ultimately will make His home in the New Jerusalem among Adam and Eve’s redeemed progeny.

2. **Revelation 21:1-8:** *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. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ 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. ⁴ 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.”⁵ 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.”⁶ 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. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ 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.”

- What does the comment “the *sea was no more*” in 21:1 mean? It does not mean that the sea itself is “no more;” it refers to the “chaos, evil, danger, and separation” the sea represents in Hebrew thought. The possibility of chaos will be gone forever. No more chaos.
3. **New Heaven:** Revelation 21:1-2 presents a stunning reversal of what most believers believe about heaven. *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... and I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.”*
- The redeemed are **not** taken out of this world to a heaven somewhere in space. Instead, God brings the eternal home of the redeemed down to them on the new earth.
 - The old earth we know so well will pass away. Only Adam and Eve before the Fall will have seen earth as God intended it to be. After the Fall, Adam and Eve and all other people saw only the old earth marred and broken by sin. Can we imagine the restored paradise that is the renewed creation?
 - Death - the last enemy of the redeemed has finally been defeated, there is no more death. No more mourning or crying, no longer is there a basis for sorrow. No more pain - everything that wounds has been undone. No more chaos (represented in verse 1 by the absence of the sea).
 - Verse 5, *And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”* Think about it! This is also a startling statement – God is not “making all **new things**.” He is not, as we tend to think, replacing all things with new things. He is “***making all things new,***” restoring everything to its original, as created state. Everything will seem familiar but better.
 - Will we remember life on earth? Perhaps yes – even distasteful parts, but in God’s grace, to remember such things will not result in grief or regret because every element of our former life will be totally redeemed. God may not discard former events but weave them into redemption’s story.
4. **Change in Status of Access to God:** In the days of the Law of Moses, the Holy of Holies was the location God provided where He would be present for His people. It was first in a portable tabernacle, then in Solomon’s Temple, then in the Second Temple. In each of these places, the Holy of Holies was a small intimate cube-shaped space.
- Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies and he alone. Only the High Priest had direct access to God, and just that one time per year. Other people’s access was through the High Priest. A thick veil divided the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place.

- Consecrated priests of the tribe of Levi were permitted to enter the Holy Place daily to perform required functions, but only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies.
 - That access situation changed radically when Jesus died on the cross. His sacrificial death opened the way for direct (no Priests involved) interaction with God. “In Christ,” all the redeemed have direct access to the Father. The dividing veil was split from top to bottom, signifying direct access to God.
 - The Christmas message proclaimed God was coming to dwell for a time on earth with His people, but in the New Jerusalem, God will permanently dwell on earth with His people.
5. **Revelation 21:3-7**: *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”⁴ 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.”⁵ 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.”⁶ 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.⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.*
6. **Description of Permanent Home with God (21:9-27)**: In 21:9, an angel says to John, *“Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”* What should we expect to see? Scripture has repeatedly said that the Bride of the Lamb is all the redeemed. We then expect the angel to show us “redeemed people” as the Bride.
- But instead, the angel carries John away and shows him the holy city of “New Jerusalem.” That’s right! The redeemed people of God are the Bride and the New Jerusalem.
 - Heaven is then not primarily about buildings, walls, and gates though they each convey important information. Heaven is about the redeemed finally situated in the family home where they belong. Consider some details.
 - 21:12 says there are twelve gates on which are written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The names of God’s covenant people – our spiritual ancestors – are written directly into the architecture of God’s house for the redeemed.
 - Reuben, Simeon, Levi. ... Joseph and Benjamin. The stories of none of the twelve are forgotten. They are a part of the entrance, the way God provides for the redeemed to enter eternity.
 - In 21:14, John notices that the city of God has twelve foundations and on them are written the names of the twelve apostles. The OT saints are the gates, the entry points into God’s story of redemption.
 - Through the apostles, we have the foundational teachings from God on which our faith stands.

- Entry into the City of God is through the faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, ... Then when in the city, the redeemed stand and walk on the foundations constructed by the Apostles, the teachings on which our faith stands.
 - Thus, the redeemed walk into the City of God through the faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, ... and stand in the City on the gospel preached by Peter, John, Paul, ...
 - Entering the City of God is not like going into a hotel or resort – it is finally arriving at your true home to live among your true family who led the way for you.
7. **What About the Size of The New City of God:** 21:15-17 describes the dimensions of the city. It is a perfect cube (signifying the dwelling place of God) like the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and the First and Second Temples. It is the original on which the 3 earthly models of the Holy of Holies were based.
- Its size is huge. The earthly Holy of Holies was tiny, entered only by the High Priest, once a year on the Day of Atonement. The New Jerusalem replacement is a cube, each side about 1500 miles.
8. **The Holy of Holies in the New Jerusalem is the Entire City:** New Jerusalem is a perfect cube. It is the dwelling place of God with all the redeemed living in His presence. No more separation. No veils.
- Every redeemed person lives face-to-face with the Father. Living “face-to-face” with God has been the longing of Godly people since Eden, where before they sinned, Adam and Eve walked and talked with God face-to-face.
9. **Materials Used for New Jerusalem:** 21:18-21 describe the materials that were used to construct New Jerusalem. The walls shine like jasper. The street is pure gold, clear as glass. The foundations are crusted with beautiful gemstones. It is a home of glorious beauty suitable for the splendor of God.
10. **What is Missing From the City:** Verse 22: There is no temple. God Himself and the Lamb is the Temple.
- Verse 23: There is no sun or moon. God the Father is the light, and the Lamb is the lamp.
 - Verse 25: No closed gates, no locks since nothing unclean or threatening is ever present. Moreover, there is no night because the light of God never diminishes.
11. **Question:** With no sun or moon to mark changing seasons, no night to divide the day, does that mean there is no time in the New Jerusalem? No, it is not that time is absent. Being in the presence of God is to be in a perfect, unbroken, “now.” As always true of God, all moments are simultaneously present. No future to be speculated about, no past to be argued about. Just simply a satisfied, delightful “now.”
- Living in the presence of God, no tears, no misunderstandings, no sin – just at home with family in the New Jerusalem, the city built on the new earth by God for His people.