

The New Creation

Revelation 21-22



Approaches to the New Creation

1. Literal, future material universe after the coming of Christ;
2. Symbolic of heaven, the eternal abode of the glorified saints;
3. Symbolic of the New Covenant community (church) that has replaced Old Covenant Israel.

#1. Description of the earth (garden, trees) with a new Jerusalem (literal city) along with a literal walls, etc.

#4. Some can take elements from each.

That is, #1 and #3. That is, The church has already “tasted of the powers of the age to come” (Heb 6:5).

Revelation 21:1-4

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.”

The phrase “new heaven and a new earth” is found first in Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22 and is typically applied to this present (new covenant) age. Quoted also in 2 Peter 3:13 (likely alluding to Isaiah).

Isaiah 65:23 in 1 Cor 15:58

65:25 in Luke 10:19

66:1f in 1 Tim 3:15

66:8 in Gal 4:26

66:11 in Matt 5:6

66:12 in John 14:27

66:15f in Matt 22:7

66:18 in Matt 8:11

66:19 in Col 1:27

66:20 in Rom 15:16

Symbols of Revelation 21:1-4

1. A new heaven and new earth (v. 1): the new and everlasting covenant
 - Isaiah 65:23 in 1 Cor 15:58; 65:25 in Luke 10:19; 66:1f in 1 Tim 3:15; 66:8 in Gal 4:26; 66:11 in Matt 5:6; 66:12 in John 14:27; 66:15f in Matt 22:7; 66:18 in Matt 8:11; 66:19 in Col 1:27; 66:20 in Rom 15:16.
2. “sea was no more” (v. 1): no Gentile or “unclean” nations.
3. “holy city,” “new Jerusalem,” “bride” (v. 2): the church
4. “dwelling place of God with man” (v. 3): The restoration of God’s people in the new covenant (Ezek 37:27).
5. “former things passing away” (v. 4): A new reality in Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:17; Isa 43:18-19).

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#3. We have already seen the woman also refer to the city (Revelation 17:18, “the woman whom you saw is that great city.”). We have already been introduced the bride in chapter 19 (cf. Eph 5:31-32) which is a reference to the church, God’s new covenant people. Jerusalem is described as the wife of the Lamb in verse 9.

#4. Ezekiel 37:27 says, “My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their

God, and they shall be my people.”

#5. “old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

people: “Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing” (Isa. 43:18–19).

There are eternal and abiding realities in the new covenant age because of Christ.

- There is no cause for sorrow. Christ has abolished death (1 Tim 1:10). Whoever lives and believes in Christ shall never die (John 11:25). We sorrow but not as others do who have no hope (1 Thess 4:13).

Revelation 21:5-8

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.”

Who is seated on the throne and speaking? Christ.
He is the Alpha and Omega in chapter 1 (cf. 1:8; 17-18; 22:13, 16).

This new life is yours in Christ.

In John 4:10, 14; 7:37f) he also speaks about coming to the foundation of the water of life.

He promises this to the “one who conquers” which is explained in the letters to the seven churches (cf. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).

These opening 8 verses provide an thorough introduction for the last two chapters. They introduce themes that will be expounded through these chapters.

Structure of Revelation 21-22

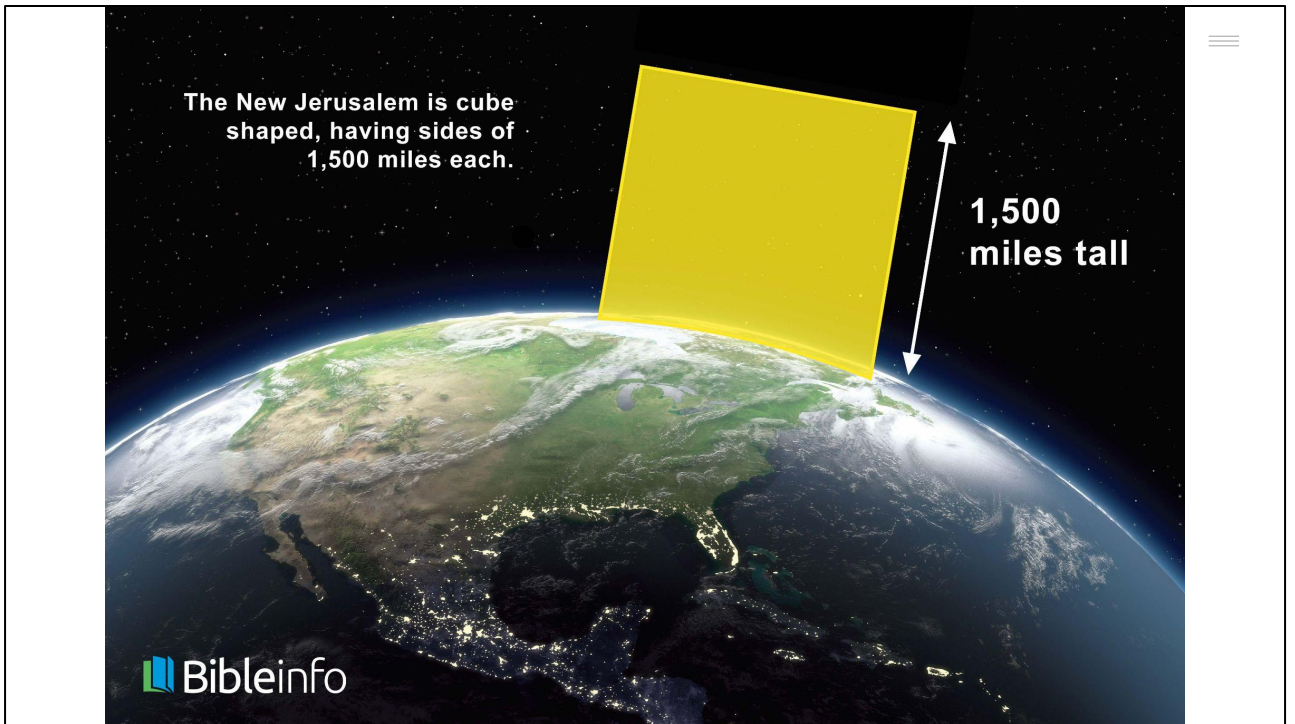
Content	Introduction	Body
New Jerusalem	v. 2	21:9-21
God dwelling among men	v. 3	21:22-27
Renewal of the world	v. 5a	22:1-5
“These words are true and faithful”	v. 5b	22:6-10
Work completed: “I am Alpha and Omega”	v. 6a	22:11-15
Final blessing: water of life for all who thirst	v. 6b-7	22:16-17
Final curse on the rebellious	v. 8	22:18-19

Revelation 21:9-14 (New Jerusalem)

⁹ Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— ¹³ on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Revelation 21:15-21 (New Jerusalem)

¹⁵ And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. ¹⁶ The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. ¹⁷ He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. ¹⁸ The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.



Are these literal descriptions of a city?

From <https://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/new-jerusalem>

The height of the city is 2400 kms.

The ISS orbits the earth at 250 miles (400 kms).

The article goes on to explain that the 12 gates will be cut from a single pearl (Rev 21:12, 25).

The city will be transparent (Rev 21:11, 18, 21)

The city will be 12 foundations made of precious stones (Rev 21:14).

The walls will surround the city, being 216 ft thick (Rev 21:12, 17, 18) made of pure jasper.

There will be no sun or moon (Rev 21:23) and no night (Rev 21:25).

Symbols of the New Jerusalem

1. The city as the bride is a clear reference to the church (v. 9).
2. The “beauty” of the city/bride is the radiance of the glory of God (v. 11; cf. Rom 8:18; Col 1:27; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 2:14; Heb 2:10; 1 Pet 5:1).
3. The walls and gates (vv. 12-13; cf. Isa 60:18): salvation and universal access.
4. The foundations (v. 14; cf. Eph 2:20; Heb 11:10) are built by God on the word of the apostles.
5. The measuring of the city (vv. 15-17) recalls Ezekiel 40. In this case, the whole city is a temple (cubic, v. 16, 22).
6. The gems recall the gems worn by the high priest (Exod 28:15-21)
7. Gold streets, transparent city (v. 21) refer the sanctified believers.

#1. We should always start from what is clear and move to what is unclear.

The same angel that said, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot” (17:1) now says come and let me show you the bride.

Here is John is carried to a high mountain (v. 10) where previously he was carried into the wilderness (17:3).

#2. Rom 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Col 1:27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

1 Thess 2:12 we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

2 Thess 2:14 To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Heb 2:10 For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

1 Peter 5:1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be

revealed:

The radiance is compared to a precious stone, like jasper, clear as crystal. Perhaps a diamond. Malachi 3:17 says, "They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession (lit. precious jewels)"

#3. Isaiah 60:18, "you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise"

The walls of the new Jerusalem speak of its salvation and the gates access (through Israel and the true Israel Jesus Christ). With three gates on each side, there is universal access into the church.

Luke 13:29, "And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God."

#4. Eph 2:20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, (cf. 1 Cor 3; 1 Pet 2)
Heb 11:10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

#5. The measurements are clearly symbolic and symbolize the perfection of the city. Multiples of 12 (old and new covenants) are used throughout. This isn't meant to be converted to feet, meters, or kilometers.

Listen to Isaiah 54:11-12 about the church: "O afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted,
behold, I will set your stones in antimony,
and lay your foundations with sapphires.

12

I will make your pinnacles of agate,
your gates of carbuncles,
and all your wall of precious stones.

#6. The church is God's new people. Purified by the Lord Jesus. A fitting bride. A new Jerusalem. A New covenant.

#7. Job 23:10

But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

Zech 13:9

And I will put this third into the fire,

and refine them as one refines silver,

and test them as gold is tested.

They will call upon my name,

and I will answer them.

I will say, 'They are my people';

and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

Mal 3:3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD.

1 Peter 1:7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

Revelation 21:22-27 (Dwellingplace of God)

²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Unlike Ezekiel which sees a new temple (a new people restored after judgment). There is no temple here because the glory of the Lord fills the earth, not just the temple. In the new covenant, it is not just Israel, but every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

Before, one needed to go to the temple to meet with God. Now if you are “in Christ” you have fellowship with God. He is our temple.

Revelation 21 and Isaiah 60 Compared

Isaiah 60	Revelation 21
<p>The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory (v. 19)</p>	<p>And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb (v. 23)</p>
<p>And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising (v. 3)</p>	<p>By its light will the nations walk...(v. 24)</p>
<p>Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you (v. 10)</p>	<p>...the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it (v. 24)</p>

Revelation 21 and Isaiah 60 Compared

Isaiah 60	Revelation 21
Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut (v. 11)	and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there (v. 25)
the wealth of the nations shall come to you (v. 5)	They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations (v. 26)
Your people shall all be righteous (v. 21)	nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life (v. 27)

Isaiah 60 prophesied the dawning of a new day. This day began with John and Baptist announcing the ministry of Jesus (cf. Luke 1:76-78; Matt 4:13-16).

This passages speaks about the new covenant age, the coming of the Gentiles into the church and the submission of kings to Christ which has been in progress for nearly 2,000 years and will meet its ultimate expression at the return of Christ.

Significance of Revelation 21

1. The realities of the New Covenant have come to fulfillment in Christ.
2. The glory of heaven is not a gold city or a world without oceans, but a sanctified people in union with the God of heaven and earth made possible by the work of Christ and the preaching of the gospel.
3. God's justified, sanctified, and glorified people are the crowning achievement of his work in this world.
4. The Old Covenant is no more and is never being revived again.

#1. When the New Testament speaks about "last days" they speak about the days of fulfillment. The days when the words of the prophets are coming to pass. This happened at Christ's first coming and continues to pass even today.

They are already/not yet. We are new creatures and we will be made like him at his coming.

#4. Gentiles among the people of God is the eternal reality. There are not two people's of God (Israel and the church), but one, unified, blood bought people, from every tribe, tongue, and nation.