**THOUGHT FOR TODAY: Jesus Didn’t say “I am finished.” He said “It is Finished.” He was just Getting started!**

**A NEW HEAVENS, A NEW EARTH, AND A NEW JERUSALEM**

**All things made new.**

[**Revelation 21:1**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/21/1/s_1188001) **Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.**

1. **Now I saw**: We can say that Revelation [chapter 21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/21/1-27/s_1188001) begins a new section of the Book of Revelation:
	1. Jesus, the *Lord of the Churches* ([**Revelation 1:1**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/1/1-20/s_1168001) **to** [**3:22**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/3/1-22/s_1170001)).
	2. Jesus, the *Lion over the nations* ([**Revelation 4:1**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/4/1-11/s_1171001) **to** [**20:15**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/20/1-15/s_1187001)).
	3. Jesus, the *Lamb among believers* ([**Revelation 21:1**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/21/1-27/s_1188001) **to** [**22:21**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/22/1-21/s_1189001)).
2. **A new heaven and a new earth**: The idea of a new earth, with a new atmosphere and sky is a familiar theme in the Scriptures. Many of the prophets, both Old and New Testaments, spoke of this **new heaven** and **new earth**.
	1. [**Isaiah 65:17-19**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/isa/65/17-19/s_744017) **(NLT) “Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore. Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation! And look! I will create Jerusalem as a place of happiness. Her people will be a source of joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and delight in my people. And the sound of weeping and crying will be heard in it no more.**
	2. [**Psalm 102:25-27**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/psa/102/25-27/s_580025) **(NLT) Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth and made the heavens with your hands. They will perish, but you remain forever; they will wear out like old clothing. You will change them like a garment and discard them. But you are always the same; you will live forever.**
	3. [**2 Peter 3:12-13**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/2pe/3/12-13/s_1159012) **(NLT)** **looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God’s righteousness.**
	4. It’s worth remembering that the **new heaven** referred to doesn’t mean the *heaven* where God is enthroned. The Bible uses the word *heaven* in three senses. The ***1st heaven*** is the earth’s atmosphere, the “blue sky.” The ***2nd heaven*** is outer space, the “night sky.” The ***3rd heaven*** is the place where **God** lives in glory. When the Scriptures speak of a **new heaven**, they mean a new “blue sky” and a new “night sky,” not a new heaven where God dwells.
	5. The ancient Greek word translated **new** here (*kaine*) means “new in character, ‘fresh’.” It doesn’t mean “recent” or “new in time.” This isn’t just the *next* heaven and the *next* earth; this is the *better* heaven and *better* earth replacing the old (**the first earth had passed away**).
	6. We know this because Jesus said that heaven and earth *shall* pass away, but His Word would live forever ([**Luke 21:33**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/luk/21/33/s_994033)). Also, in [**Isaiah 65:17**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/isa/65/17/s_744017) God said prophetically that He will create a new heaven and earth, and the ancient Hebrew word for “create” (*bara*) means to “create out of nothing,” instead of re-fashioning existing material.
	7. Some take this “newness” as only a spiritual and moral change. But there seems to be a genuine physical transformation in mind: **there was no more sea**.
	8. **A new heaven and a new earth**: Is this **new heaven** and **new earth** the Millennial earth shown in [**Revelation 20**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/20/1-15/s_1187001), or is it something beyond? It definitely seems to be past the Millennial earth.

**The New Jerusalem descends from heaven.**

[**Revelation 21:2-4**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/21/2-4/s_1188002) **Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is with* men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be thei*r God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”**

1. **The holy city, New Jerusalem**: This is the Jerusalem of hope ([**Hebrews 12:22**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/heb/12/22/s_1145022)), the place of our real citizenship ([**Philippians 3:20**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/phl/3/20/s_1106020)).
	1. The terms **holy** and **new** distinguish the city. Because it is **holy** and **new**, it is different from any earthly city. The name **Jerusalem** gives it continuity with earth, especially with the place of our redemption.
	2. It is significant that this glorious dwelling place of God and His people is described as **the holy *city***. Cities are places with many people, and people interacting with each other. This *isn’t isolation*, but a perfect *community* of the people of God.
	3. The Christian concept of heaven as a city — a place of life, activity, interest, and people.
	4. Man has never known a community unmarred by sin. Adam and Eve only knew a limited community without sin, here in the **New Jerusalem**, we have something totally unique: a sinless, pure, community of righteousness, a **holy city**.
	5. This kind of city can *never* be the achievement of man, but only a gift from God.
2. **Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband**: John used the most striking, beautiful image he could think of. The most beautiful thing a man will ever see is his bride coming down the aisle, ready to meet him. John said that this is how beautiful the **New Jerusalem** will be.
3. **The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them**: Moses’ tabernacle represented the dwelling place of God on earth; this **tabernacle of God** is the reality of His presence.
4. **He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people**: This states the essence of *God’s desire* and *man’s purpose*. Simply, God’s desire is to live in close fellowship with man, and man’s purpose is to be a people unto God.
	1. This is the greatest glory of heaven, and the ultimate restoration of what was lost in the Fall. (Spurgeon) “I do not think the glory of Eden lay in its grassy walks, or in the boughs bending with luscious fruit-but its glory lay in this, that the ‘Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day.’ Here was Adam’s highest privilege, that he had companionship with the Most High.”
5. **The former things have passed away**: The New Jerusalem is distinguished by what it does *not* have — *no* tears, *no* sorrow, *no* death or pain. Later it will be shown that the New Jerusalem has *no* temple, *no* sacrifice, *no* sun, *no* moon, *no* darkness, *no* sin, and *no* abomination.
	1. (Seiss) “Man comes into the world with a cry; and goes out of it with a groan, and all between is more or less intoned with helpless wailing… But the Halleluiahs of the renewed world will drown out the voice of woe forever.”
6. **God will wipe away every tear from their eyes**: (Seiss) “‘*Every tear*,’ for they be many; — tears of bereaved affection, such as Mary, and Martha, and the widow of Nain wept; — tears of sympathy and mercy, such as Jeremiah and Jesus wept over the sins and the calamities of Jerusalem; — tears of persecuted innocence, tears of remorse and penitence for faults and crimes against the goodness and majesty of heaven; — tears of disappointment and neglect; — tears of yearning for what cannot now be ours; — these, and whatever others ever course the cheeks of mortals, shall then be dried forever.”

**All things new.**

[**Revelation 21:5**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/21/5/s_1188005) **Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”**

1. **He who sat on the throne said**: This is an authoritative announcement, coming from the throne of God itself. This is one of the few times in Revelation where we clearly see God speaking directly from His throne.
2. **Behold, I make all things new**: This statement is in the present tense, “*I am making everything new*.” This is the consummation of God’s work of renewal and redemption, having *begun* here and now in our present time.
3. Paul saw this transformation at work on *this side* of eternity: *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day… Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* ([**2 Corinthians 4:16**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/2co/4/16/s_1082016)**,** [**5:17**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/2co/5/17/s_1083017))
4. **All things new**: This is a brief glance at the thinking behind God’s eternal plan — to allow sin and its destruction in order to do a greater work of making **all things new**. At this point in His plan of the ages, the plan is complete. **All things** **are** **new**.
5. Our instinct is to consider innocence as man’s perfect state, and wish Adam would have never done what he did. But we fail to realize that redeemed man is greater than innocent man, that we gain more in Jesus than we ever lost in Adam. God’s perfect state is one of redemption, not innocence.
6. When God finally completes this work of making **all things new**, they will ***stay* new**.

**Write, for these words are true and faithful**: John was probably so astounded by these words that he forgot to **write** — and must be reminded.

**The invitation and a warning.**

1. [**Revelation 21:6-8**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/21/6-8/s_1188006) **And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”**
2. **It is done!** God’s eternal purpose in Jesus is now accomplished. [**Ephesians 1:10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/eph/1/10/s_1098010)has been fulfilled: ***that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in Him****.* At this point, all things have been resolved or summed up in Jesus — **it is done!**
3. **I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts**: Drinking and thirst are common pictures of God’s supply and man’s spiritual need. Drinking is an **action**, but an action of receiving.
	1. (Spurgeon) “What does a thirsty man do to get rid of his thirst? He drinks. Perhaps there is no better representation of faith in all the Word of God than that.
4. **He who overcomes shall inherit all things**: Those who overcome by faith in Jesus, as in ([**1 John 5:5**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1jo/5/5/s_1164005)**)** will enjoy a special relationship with God (**I will be his God and he shall be My son**).
5. **But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable… have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone**: Those who reject Jesus and make themselves a fugitive are specifically prohibited from entering the New Jerusalem.
	1. **Cowardly**: Is cowardice enough to send a person to hell? “John is not speaking of natural timidity, but of that cowardice which in the last resort chooses self and safety, before Christ.

**New Jerusalem, An angel will show John the city in greater detail.**

[**Revelation 21:9-10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/21/9-10/s_1188009) **Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,**

1. **I will show you the bride… showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem**: Passages like this make some wonder if the New Jerusalem is a literal *place* at all. Some suggest that it is really just an exotic symbol of the Church, the Bride of Christ.
2. **I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife**: This heavenly city is *literal*, but it is called **the bride, the Lamb’s wife** because it is the place where all God’s people are gathered.

**The city’s brilliance, wall, gates and foundation.**

[**Revelation 21:11-14**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/21/11-14/s_1188011) **Having the glory of God. Her light *was like* a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names of t*he twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. Now the wall of the city had *twelve foundations*, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

1. **Her light was like a most precious stone**: John was first impressed by the *glory* of this city. She shared in the **glory of God**, and it was expressed in the radiant light shining from her.
2. **She had a great and high wall**: The wall was not needed for defense, because there were no more enemies.
3. **Twelve gates… and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel**: The names of the tribes on the gates communicate the unity and heritage that the people of God have with Israel. God will never forget the tribes of Israel, even unto eternity.
	1. **Three gates on the East, North, South and West**: Many believe the arrangement of gates looks back to the camp layout used during the Exodus ([**Numbers 2**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/num/2/1-34/s_119001)).
	2. **The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb**: The foundations are an eternal testimony to the apostles, and their permanent place in God’s plan.
	3. The New Jerusalem and the church are founded upon the apostles ([Ephesians 2:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/eph/2/20/s_1099020)).

**The dimensions of the city.**

[**Revelation 21:15-17**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/21/15-17/s_1188015) **And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. Then he measured its wall: one hundred *and fort*y-four cubits, *according to t*he measure of a man, that is, of an angel.**

1. **The city is laid out as a square**: The New Jerusalem’s length, height and width are equal. This means that it is either a cube or a pyramid. A cube is reminiscent of the Holy Place of the tabernacle, suggesting that the entire city is the Holy Place.
2. **He measured the city with the reed**: The size of the New Jerusalem is enormous; **twelve thousand furlongs** (0.125 miles) equals 1,500 miles. This is the same distance from Maine to Florida; the square footage would approximate the size of the moon.
	1. (the idea of splendor. And, more importantly, that of room L. Morris) “A city of this size is too large for the imagination to take in. John is certainly conveying for all.”
	2. **According to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel**: In this case, the cubit measure of a man is the same as an angel’s measure of a cubit.

**The beauty of its structure.**

[**Revelation 21:18-21**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/21/18-21/s_1188018) **The construction of its wall was *of jasp*er; and the city *was pure* gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city *were ador*ned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation *was jasp*er, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates *were twel*ve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city *was pure* gold, like transparent glass.**

1. **The construction of its wall was of jasper**: When we read of **jasper** and **pure gold** and **all kinds of precious stones**, we should take these as literal representations; yet they express realities of another world. We can gain a brief glimpse of what John saw, but we can’t even begin to see it in fullness until we see it with our own eyes.
	1. (L. Morris) John’s use of riches in his description “is his way of bringing out the very great value of what God has for His people.”
2. **Jasper… sapphire… chalcedony**: The precise identification of these gemstones in modern terms is difficult, but the impression is of unending, staggering beauty.
	1. If there is any Biblical reference point for this assortment of gemstones, it is probably like the High Priest’s breastplate ([**Exodus 28:15-21**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/exo/28/15-21/s_78015)). *(They say that at least 8 of these gemstones are found on the breastplate)*
3. **Like clear glass… like transparent glass**: (Walvoord) “The constant mention of transparency indicates that the city is designed to transmit the **glory of God** in the form of light without hindrance.” (Shekinah glory**)**
	1. If the dimensions and descriptions seem confusing or impossible, there are two main principles to keep in mind. 1st, we must understand the *ideas* communicated in the details (glory, beauty, splendor, and so forth). 2nd, we must understand that this is the city *whose architect and maker is God* ([**Hebrews 11:10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/heb/11/10/s_1144010)). *We should expect it to be beyond our comprehension*.

[**Revelation 21:22-23**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/21/22-23/s_1188022) **But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the *sun* or of the *moon* to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light.**

1. **But I saw no temple in it**: In the ancient world, it was unthinkable to have a great city without many different temples. It’s like saying today, “I saw a great city but I saw no bank in it” or “I saw a great city but I saw no shopping mall in it.” Nevertheless, in this city there was **no temple in it**.
2. **For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple**:
	1. (Alford) “The inhabitants need no place of worship or sacrifice, the object of all worship being present, and the great sacrifice Himself being there.”
3. **No temple… no need of the sun or of the moon**: This reminds us that heaven will be a place of *pure* worship. The things we use to help us worship, but often end up *distracting* us in worship (such as buildings, music systems, customs, and so forth) will no longer be an issue. Our focus will be totally on the Person we worship, **the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb**.
	1. In heaven, none of our joy, beauty, or knowledge will be based on *created things*, but only on the *Creator*.
4. **The Lamb is its light**: Light speaks of *joy*, for in the Scriptures light and joy go together. Light speaks of *beauty*, because without light there is no beauty. Light speaks of *knowledge* and in heaven we will all know Him as He knows us.

**Access into the city.**

[**Revelation 21:24-27**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/21/24-27/s_1188024) **And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.**

1. **The kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor into it**: What about these **kings of the earth**? Who are they? This is difficult to understand, and different commentators have different suggestions.
	1. (Hocking) “How encouraging to note that not all were destroyed when the nations came to do battle ­ against Jerusalem and the Lord Himself. There will also be ‘kings of the earth’ who will be a part of the eternal state.”
2. **There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles**: Does this mean that such people will threaten the city? It isn’t necessary to say that this is the idea, because all sinners and death have been cast into the Lake of Fire ([**Revelation 20:11-15**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/20/11-15/s_1187011)). Instead, (Johnson) “The exhortation warns present readers that the only way to participate in the future city is to turn one’s loyalties to the Lamb ***now***.”