

Dr. David Mathewson, Revelation, Session 28, Revelation 21—New Creation, Bride, New Jerusalem Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Mathewson, Revelation, Session 28, Revelation 21— New Creation, Bride, New Jerusalem, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt from Dr. Dave Mathewson's course on Revelation **explains Revelation 21**, focusing on the **new creation and the New Jerusalem**. Mathewson **interprets the text through the lens of the Old Testament**, drawing parallels between the new creation and Isaiah's prophecies of restoration. He emphasizes that the **new creation is not simply a heavenly realm**, but a renewed earth where God dwells with his people, fulfilling God's original intent for humanity. The **New Jerusalem is presented as symbolic of God's perfected people**, with its architectural details reflecting the temple imagery of Ezekiel and other Old Testament texts, ultimately representing the union of God and his redeemed.

**2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 28 – Double click icon to
play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (New Testament → Revelation).**



**Mathewson_Revela
tion_Session28.mp3**

4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture on Revelation 21:

Briefing Document: Revelation 21 - The New Creation and the Bride, New Jerusalem

Introduction:

This lecture focuses on Revelation 21, specifically verses 1-21, which introduces the final, climactic vision of the book: the New Creation and the New Jerusalem, often referred to as the "bride." Mathewson emphasizes that this chapter presents the culmination of God's redemptive plan. He also argues that the text should not be taken as literal descriptions, but as symbols for the people of God.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. The New Creation:

- **A Radical Transformation:** The lecture emphasizes the concept of a *new* creation, not simply a restoration of the old. As Mathewson states, "I am making everything new." This highlights a qualitative difference, a complete revamping of the present creation, stripping it of sin, evil, death and the destructive effects caused by Satan. This is in contrast to the first creation which was harmed, thwarted, and upset by sin (Genesis 3).
- **Old Testament Allusions:** This new creation is linked to Old Testament prophecies, specifically Isaiah 65:17 ("Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth") and Genesis 1:1 (the initial creation). Mathewson notes that Isaiah 65 speaks of a future restoration that goes beyond physical return from exile, anticipating a new creative act. John sees this fulfilled in his vision.
- **Continuity and Discontinuity:** The new creation involves both continuity and discontinuity with the old. The word "new" stresses qualitative newness. The language of destruction and passing away is used to emphasize the transformational nature of the renewal that has taken place.

- **A Physical Reality:** The final destination for God's people is not some ephemeral, disembodied existence in heaven. Mathewson stresses that we were created as physical beings for a physical earth. "The whole sweep of Scripture ending up in Revelation 21 does not present God's people as somehow attaining a heavenly disembodied spiritual type of existence... God's intention is to restore us to the way he originally created us."

1. The Absence of the Sea:

- **Symbol of Chaos and Evil:** The phrase, "there was no longer any sea," is significant. Mathewson argues the sea represents chaos, evil, death, and the abyss, from which the demonic beasts of Revelation emerge. It's a place "inimical to and hostile to God's purposes and his people."
- **Barrier Removed:** The sea, therefore, also symbolizes the barrier or obstacles to God's people's full inheritance, "now it has been removed."
- **Exodus Motif:** The removal of the sea is also tied to the Exodus motif, symbolizing the parting of the Red Sea that allowed Israel to escape slavery. Just as the sea was a barrier to the promised land in the Exodus, it is removed to allow the people to enter the new creation. In other words, it represents an "eschatological Red Sea... dried up as a barrier to God's people being able to cross over and enter their promised land."

1. The New Jerusalem:

- **The Bride of the Lamb:** The New Jerusalem is presented as a bride, "prepared as a bride, beautifully adorned for her husband." This ties back to the wedding banquet imagery of Revelation 19, but here it's developed in more detail. The people of God are often depicted as the "bride," and here the bride appears to be equated with the New Jerusalem city.
- **A Symbol of God's People:** Mathewson makes a key point: The New Jerusalem is primarily symbolic of the consummated, perfected people of God, not just a physical city. In other words the "Bride New Jerusalem Temple" is symbolic of the "end time people." John's primary concern is to describe the nature of the perfected people of God. While there may well be a physical city, "John's point more is going to be described the nature... of the people themselves."

- **Temple Imagery:** The New Jerusalem is also presented as a temple, drawing heavily on Ezekiel's vision of the end-time temple (Ezekiel 40-48). Mathewson emphasizes that the New Jerusalem is the fulfillment of the temple, "the people themselves are now the temple where God finally takes up residence in a new creation." This is also reinforced by the use of gold in the description, as gold played a significant role in the construction of the Temple. He connects to texts in 1 Kings which use "gold" to describe the temple of Solomon.

1. **Old Testament Covenant:**

- **Dwelling of God with His People:** The phrase, "Now the dwelling of God is with humanity, and he will live with them," echoes the Old Testament covenant formula found in Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 37. This is a key theme: God dwelling with his people. In other words "the new covenant that Ezekiel anticipates has now been finally consummated and fulfilled."
- **New Covenant:** Mathewson notes that unlike the Old Testament covenants, which focused on Israel, the new covenant in Revelation 21 includes people from all nations, echoing Revelation 7's description of a multitude from "every tribe and tongue and language."

1. **Architectural Descriptions of the New Jerusalem:**

- **Divine Presence:** The city is described as radiant with God's glory. Its brilliance is compared to precious jewels like jasper. The use of jasper links back to chapter 4, indicating the merging of heaven and earth.
- **Precious Stones:** The description of the city's makeup draws heavily from Isaiah 54:11-12, which anticipates the restoration of Jerusalem with precious stones. These precious stones "may represent the people themselves who now are the building blocks or make up the New Jerusalem."
- **The 12 Gates and Foundations:** The city has 12 gates, each named after the 12 tribes of Israel, and 12 foundations, named after the 12 apostles. This signifies a unification of the Old Testament (Israel) and the New Testament (the Church), with God's redemptive plan encompassing all.

- **The City is a Square:** The fact that the city is “laid out like a square” may be a reference to Babylon, drawing a contrast between the harlot Babylon and New Jerusalem. It also harkens back to the temple as described in Ezekiel 40-48, “in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of Ezekiel 40 through 48, other features of the temple, the altar, and the mercy seat are also described as square.” The square further reinforces the concept of the city being the new temple. The city is also described as having an equal length, width and height which is reminiscent of the language used to describe the “holy of holies” in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:20)

1. **Overcoming and Inheritance:**

- **Promise of Reward:** The lecture emphasizes that Revelation 21 is the fulfillment of the promise to those who overcome (Revelation 2 & 3).
- **Inheritance:** Those who overcome inherit the new creation and will have a special relationship with God as sons. This is tied to the Abrahamic promise of inheriting the land, and to the Davidic covenant formula in 2 Samuel 7:14.

1. **Hearing and Seeing Contrast**

- **The Bride vs the City:** Mathewson notes that John “hears” that he is going to see the bride of the Lamb, but what he “sees” is the New Jerusalem. This indicates that the people of God (the bride) are the same as the New Jerusalem. This is another example of John using two images that portray the same thing.

Key Quotes:

- “I am making everything new.” (God, in verse 5, about the new creation).
- “Now the dwelling of God is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.” (Verse 3, emphasis on the covenantal relationship).
- “The primary destiny is not to go to heaven, at least if by heaven we mean some airy, ephemeral, disembodied existence.”
- “The New Jerusalem is meant as a symbol for the consummated, perfected people of God themselves.”

Conclusion:

Dr. Mathewson's lecture presents Revelation 21 as the culmination of God's plan, depicting a radical transformation of the world into a new creation. The New Jerusalem is the center of this new reality, representing the perfected people of God as both the bride and the temple. The lecture emphasizes the symbolic nature of the vision, linking it deeply with Old Testament prophecies and covenant themes and suggesting it is about the people of God rather than a physical place.

This briefing document should provide a comprehensive overview of the main points covered in the provided lecture excerpts.

4. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 28, Revelation 21—New Creation, Bride, New Jerusalem

Revelation 21: The New Creation and the Bride, New Jerusalem Study Guide

Quiz

1. According to Revelation 21:1, what two things have passed away and what is no longer present in the new creation?
2. The first heaven and the first earth have passed away, and the sea is no longer present. This signifies the removal of the old order and its association with chaos and evil.
3. What Old Testament passage is the primary text behind the idea of a "new heaven and a new earth" mentioned in Revelation 21:1?
4. The primary text behind the idea of a new heaven and a new earth is found in Isaiah 65:17, which speaks of God creating a new creation as a restoration and fulfillment of His promises.
5. What does the absence of the sea symbolize in the new creation according to Mathewson's lecture?
6. The absence of the sea symbolizes the removal of chaos, evil, and death associated with the sea monster and the abyss throughout Revelation. Additionally, the sea is a reference to the Red Sea and the Exodus motif, now dried up, as a barrier that is no longer in place.
7. According to Mathewson, what is the ultimate destination of God's people as described in Revelation 21:1?
8. The ultimate destination of God's people is not a disembodied existence in heaven, but rather a physical life on a new earth, restored to God's original intention for humanity.
9. How does the lecture describe the relationship between the New Jerusalem and the Bride of the Lamb?
10. The lecture explains that the New Jerusalem and the Bride of the Lamb are essentially the same entity, where the New Jerusalem is a symbol for the consummated and perfected people of God, not just a literal city.

11. In Revelation 21:3, what Old Testament covenant formula is referenced, and how does it apply to the new covenant relationship?
12. Revelation 21:3 references the Old Testament covenant formula found in Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 37, highlighting God's dwelling with his people. In the new covenant, it now includes not just Israel, but also people from every tribe, tongue, and language.
13. What is the significance of the precious stones and materials used to construct the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:11-21, according to the lecture?
14. The precious stones and materials, like jasper, sapphires, and gold, symbolize God's glory and presence within the city. They also represent the members of the people of God themselves as building blocks of the New Jerusalem.
15. According to the lecture, what is the significance of the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem having the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve foundations having the names of the twelve apostles?

This signifies the unification of Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church, demonstrating the consummated people of God through history, all centered around Christ.

1. What does the square shape of the New Jerusalem, described in Revelation 21:16, symbolize?
2. The square shape is a symbol that alludes both to Babylon, highlighting a contrast, and to the temple described in Ezekiel, indicating that the New Jerusalem is the dwelling place of God, as was the temple, which is also square in its depiction.
3. In Revelation 21:16, the city is described as being as long, wide, and high. What Old Testament text does this reflect?
4. This language reflects 1 Kings 6:20 which describes the dimensions of the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple, thereby once again highlighting the New Jerusalem as the new temple, the dwelling place of God.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the “new creation” in Revelation 21, connecting it to both the Old Testament prophecies and the overall narrative of the book of Revelation.
2. Analyze the symbolism of the New Jerusalem as both a bride and a city, explaining how this dual imagery reflects the nature of God's relationship with his people.
3. Explore the ways in which Revelation 21 uses Old Testament allusions, specifically from Isaiah and Ezekiel, to depict the consummation of God's redemptive plan.
4. Explain the meaning and implications of the statement "the sea was no more" in Revelation 21:1, considering both its symbolic and thematic significance.
5. Compare and contrast the concept of “heaven” as it is commonly understood with the ultimate destination of God’s people as described in Revelation 21, and evaluate what is gained by understanding the earthly emphasis of Revelation 21.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **New Creation:** The transformation and renewal of the heavens and earth, following the final judgment, representing a new beginning free from the effects of sin, evil, and death.
- **New Jerusalem:** The holy city descending from heaven, symbolizing the consummated and perfected people of God and their eternal dwelling place with God, presented both as a city and a bride.
- **Bride of the Lamb:** Symbolically represents the people of God who are unified with Christ in a perfected relationship in the new creation; often equated with the New Jerusalem itself.
- **Ex Nihilo:** A Latin term meaning "out of nothing," referring to creation from nothing.
- **Eschatology:** The study of the end times or last things, including the destiny of individuals and the world.
- **Alpha and Omega:** The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, used to refer to God, emphasizing his eternal existence as the beginning and end of all things.
- **Covenant Formula:** A phrase found in the Old Testament that highlights the unique relationship between God and his people, using phrases like, "I will be their God, and they will be my people," indicating God's personal relationship with his people.
- **Stadia:** An ancient unit of length, approximately 607 feet, used to measure the dimensions of the New Jerusalem.
- **Cubits:** An ancient unit of length, approximately 18 inches, used to measure the walls of the New Jerusalem.
- **Jasper:** A precious stone with a clear, crystalline appearance, used in the description of the New Jerusalem and its walls, symbolizing divine glory and purity.
- **Temple:** A place of worship and God's dwelling place, often used as a symbolic representation of God's presence among His people.
- **Exodus Motif:** The theme of God's deliverance of his people from slavery, often involving plagues, a Red Sea crossing, and a journey to a promised land; which is used as a literary device or analogy throughout the book of Revelation.

5. FAQs on Mathewson, Revelation, Session 28, Revelation 21—New Creation, Bride, New Jerusalem, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Revelation 21: The New Creation and New Jerusalem

1. **What is the significance of the "new creation" described in Revelation 21, and how does it differ from the original creation?**
2. The "new creation" in Revelation 21 represents a radical transformation, not just a simple restoration of the old. It's a complete revamping, stripping away sin, evil, death, and the destructive effects of Satan that harmed the original creation. This new creation fulfills Old Testament prophecies, especially from Isaiah 65:17, and represents a qualitative newness where God's original intention for humanity is finally realized. Unlike the original creation which was marred by sin, the new creation is characterized by the absence of these negative forces.
3. **Why is it significant that "the sea was no more" in the new creation?**
4. The absence of the sea is deeply symbolic. In the context of Revelation, the sea is associated with chaos, evil, death, and the abyss from which demonic forces emerge. Its removal signifies the complete eradication of these destructive elements. Additionally, the sea references the Red Sea and the Exodus motif. Just as the Red Sea was a barrier to the promised land, its disappearance symbolizes the removal of all barriers preventing God's people from fully inheriting the new creation. It represents an eschatological "drying up" to allow God's people to enter into their promised land.
5. **How should we understand the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 – is it a literal city or something else?**
6. The New Jerusalem is primarily a symbol for the consummated and perfected people of God, not simply a literal, physical city. It's presented as both a bride, beautifully adorned for her husband (Christ), and as the new temple, the dwelling place of God. The architectural details and precious materials symbolize God's glory and presence within His people. While there may be a literal aspect, the central emphasis is on the transformed nature of God's people and their restored, intimate relationship with Him.

7. **How does Revelation 21 connect the New Jerusalem to the Old Testament temple?**
8. The New Jerusalem is heavily laden with temple imagery. Its square shape, described in Ezekiel and reminiscent of Solomon's Temple's Holy of Holies in 1 Kings 6:20, underscores its role as the new dwelling place of God. Like the Temple, it's filled with gold and precious stones. In this sense, it's the ultimate fulfillment of the temple, signifying that God's presence now dwells among his perfected people, who are themselves the living temple.
9. **What is the relationship between the New Jerusalem and the Bride of the Lamb in Revelation 21?**

The New Jerusalem and the Bride of the Lamb are essentially the same entity, representing the unified and perfected people of God in their consummated relationship with Christ. The bride symbolizes the intimate bond between God and His people, while the New Jerusalem is the space where they dwell together. John "hears" he is going to see the bride of the Lamb, but then "sees" the New Jerusalem. This indicates that the people of God are the same as the New Jerusalem and it shows how John uses two images to portray the same thing. The imagery highlights their purity, beauty, and readiness for union with Christ.

1. **How does Revelation 21 fulfill Old Testament covenant promises and how does the new covenant expand upon the old?**
2. Revelation 21 uses the Old Testament covenant formula (e.g., "I will be their God, and they will be my people") to show the fulfillment of God's promise to dwell with his people, which is originally found in Leviticus and Ezekiel. Unlike the Old Testament covenants that primarily focused on the nation of Israel, the new covenant as depicted in Revelation 21 includes people from every tribe, tongue, and language, signifying that God's salvation is universal and includes all believers. The twelve gates named for the tribes of Israel and the twelve foundations named for the apostles symbolizes this unification of the Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church.

3. **What is the significance of the precious stones and materials used to construct the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21?**
4. The precious stones and materials like jasper, sapphires, and gold in the New Jerusalem symbolize God's glory, presence, and radiant holiness. Additionally, these materials are connected to Old Testament passages like Isaiah 54:11-12 which describes the restored Jerusalem as being made of such materials. They may also represent the redeemed people of God, serving as the building blocks of this eternal city. The description emphasizes the beauty and splendor of God's dwelling and the perfection of his people.
5. **Does Revelation 21 teach that our final destiny is a disembodied existence in heaven, or is it something different?**
6. Revelation 21 emphasizes that our final destiny is *not* a disembodied existence in some ethereal "heaven," but a physical life on a renewed earth, restored to God's original intention. God's intention is that his people would live physically in a restored creation, not as disembodied spirits in an abstract "heaven." The emphasis is on the tangible nature of the new creation and God's dwelling among His people on the new earth.