

Dr. David L. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 28, Revelation 21--New Creation, Bride, New Jerusalem 6-Min. Video Overview

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Alright, today we're diving into one of the most famous, and maybe one of the most misunderstood, visions in all of history. We're talking about the Biblical vision of the end from Revelation 21. And trust me, it's a picture that really challenges what most of us think about what happens when we die.

So, let's just start with a quick question. When you hear that word heaven, what's the first image that pops into your head? Seriously, take a second- what do you see? For a lot of us, it's probably something like this: you're floating on some clouds, maybe you're playing a harp, and you're stuck in a white robe for, well, forever. And if we're being honest, that picture can sound a little bit boring.

I remember one theologian said that when he described this popular view to a group of teenagers, they were not exactly thrilled about the idea. But what if the Biblical vision for the end isn't about escaping earth at all? What if it's actually about its complete and total restoration? What if it's not about us going up there, but about heaven coming down here? Let's dig into that. You know, the big climactic vision in the book of Revelation doesn't start with some kind of escape plan.

It starts with this radical statement of renewal for creation itself. So, this isn't about leaving our home. You could almost think of it like the ultimate home renovation.

So, the text says, a new heaven and a new earth. And that language is not just pulled out of thin air. It's a direct echo of these ancient prophecies from the book of Isaiah, which described a new creative act by God, like a final, definitive fulfillment of what he wanted for the world all along.

And this brings up a really key distinction. The vision isn't about God just hitting delete on the original creation and starting over from scratch. No, it's about a radical renewal, a transformation that strips away everything that harms and corrupts and causes pain.

So, the huge takeaway here is that our ultimate destiny, according to this vision, is a physical existence on a renewed physical earth. So, the vision keeps going, but then there's this strange and really specific detail. It says there was no longer any sea.

Now, for us, that might sound a little odd. I mean, why would anyone want to get rid of the beautiful sea? Well, you have to remember that in the ancient world, and especially throughout the book of Revelation, the sea wasn't just a big body of water for a beach vacation. It was this powerful symbol of chaos, of evil, the home of monstrous forces that were hostile to God and to humanity.

I mean, think about it. The demonic beast in an earlier chapter rises directly out of the sea. And there's another layer to this too.

This whole vision is kind of framed as a new exodus. So, getting rid of the sea is like God parting the Red Sea one last final time, permanently removing that ultimate barrier of chaos and evil that stood between his people and their true inheritance, the new creation. Okay, so the new creation is established.

And then the author, John, sees this absolutely breathtaking sight: a holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending from heaven down to the new earth. But this is no ordinary city. An angel comes up to John and says, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

But what he actually gets shown next is, well, it's completely unexpected. Now, for context, you got to know that throughout the Old and New Testaments, the bride is this really consistent metaphor for God's faithful people. First it was Israel, and later it was the church.

So John is expecting to see a community of people. But instead of seeing a group of people, he sees a place, a massive, shining, jewel-encrusted city. He was told he would see the bride, but he's shown a city.

And this little symbolic switcheroo is the absolute key to understanding this entire vision. The new Jerusalem isn't just a physical location where people are going to live. No, in this vision, the city is the people.

It's this magnificent architectural symbol for the perfected, unified, and fully restored community of God. And the architecture of the city itself just reinforces this message of unity. Its 12 gates are inscribed with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel, representing God's people from the Old Testament.

And its 12 foundations they've got the names of the 12 apostles, the foundation of the church. It's one single, unified community. And get this, the city's dimensions form a perfect cube.

It's just as wide and high as it is long. This is a direct echo of the most sacred space in the ancient temple of Solomon, the Holy of Holies, which was the very dwelling place of God. The message is unmistakable.

The people themselves have become the new temple. So let's put it all together. We have a renewed earth, and we have a people who have become a city temple.

So what does this all lead to? Well, this brings us to the ultimate climax of the entire biblical story. The entire vision builds to this one stunning reality. The goal of history is not for us to go to God's house, but for God to come and make his permanent home with humanity right here on a restored earth.

This is the ultimate fulfillment of the Bible's most ancient promises. And because God now dwells directly with humanity, all those sources of our pain, death, mourning, crying, and suffering are finally gone. Just like the text says, the old order of things has passed away.

Everything that resulted from a world separated from its creator is wiped totally clean. So in the end, the vision of Revelation 21 challenges us to completely reimagine our final hope. It

transforms it from this disembodied kind of floaty escape into a tangible and deeply relational future, a perfected world where heaven and earth are finally one.

It asks us to consider what if the point was never to leave home, but to finally see it made perfectly new.