

21.1 The New Heaven and the New Earth (21:1–8)

Introduction: Rev. 21:1–8 The seventh bowl continues. We might expect the Great White Throne judgment to end the last of the seven bowl plagues. But it does not. One more scene remains. It may seem strange to call this scene a plague or a bowl judgment. It describes the future joy of the saints (Rev. 21:1–7). But it also shows that those in the lake of fire are **shut out from the blessings of the new creation** (Rev. 21:8). The structure of the passage shows that the last plague continues here. The theme of misery and punishment also continues. So this section belongs to **the scroll of judgments** first introduced in chapter 5.

And I saw: These words introduce the eighth and last scene of the seventh bowl judgment. It is a picture of **new beginnings** and **joy for the saints**. It stands in sharp contrast to the lake of fire in the seventh scene (Rev. 20:11–15). We find it hard to grasp what is in both scenes. But behind both pictures lie real and certain truths. There are two possible destinies, one terrible and one glorious. This scene is a dramatic turnaround. Until now, the seven-sealed scroll has revealed evil and misery. Now it reveals bliss. This scene closes the direct revelations of the scroll. The next section Rev. 21:9–22:5 is a poetic repetition and expansion of Revelation 21:1–8.

Revelation 21:1

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. **And I saw a new heaven and a new earth:** John now sees a new heaven and a new earth. They replace the old heaven and earth that fled away (Rev. 20:11). This new creation comes after the Millennium and after the Great White Throne judgment. It is not a picture of the present church age. It is a future event. The idea comes from the OT prophets (Isa 65:17; 66:22; Ps 102:25–26; Isa 51:6).
2. **For the first heaven and the first earth** The word **for** gives the reason for the new creation: the first heaven and earth are gone. Sin and death spoiled the first creation. It became a place of rebellion and separation from God, like territory occupied by the enemy. So God must replace it. He will bring a whole new order of life, with no death, mourning, crying, or pain.
3. **Passed away:** What does **passed away** mean? The same idea appears in **fled** (Rev. 20:11). A natural question is will the old creation vanish completely, or will God renew it?
 - (a) Some say **God will renew the old creation**. They point to several passages (Rom 8:19–22; Acts 3:21; Matt 19:28). Paul speaks of creation being set free. Peter speaks of the restoration of all things. Jesus

speaks of the regeneration. They also note that the Old Testament speaks of the earth lasting forever. Part of it was promised to Israel as an everlasting possession (Gen 48:4; Ps 119:90; Eccl 1:4). They also cite **I make all things new** (Rev. 21:5). Some argue from the word **make** rather than **create**. But this argument fails, because both words are used for creation (Matt 19:4).

(b) Others say the **old creation will disappear completely**. They also use Scripture (Ps 102:25–26; Isa 34:4; 51:6; Matt 24:35; 2 Pet 3:7, 10–13). These verses seem to describe the old being discarded and replaced. The wider Bible evidence is evenly balanced. It does not settle the question.

(c) How to resolve this? The answer is that the **immediate context decides it**. In Rev. 20:11, the old creation dissolves and vanishes. Then in 21:1, a new creation appears, without a sea. So this is **an entirely new creation**. God makes all things new. He does not repair the old creation that lies under the curse of sin. This is not a failure of God's plan for the first creation. God intended this from the beginning. He allowed evil to have its day, and then He will remove it completely.

4. **And there is a sea no longer:** Why will there be no sea? Most interpreters rightly see the sea as a symbol (Rev. 13:1; 20:13). It stands for disorder, violence, and unrest in the old creation (Isa 57:20; Ps 107:25–28; Ezek 28:8). The sea is not evil in itself. But it is often hostile to mankind. For example, the sea kept John a prisoner on Patmos. It separated him from the churches of Asia. The sea is the **first of seven evils** that will no longer exist. The other six are: death, mourning, crying, and pain (Rev. 21:4), the curse (Rev. 22:3), and

night (Rev. 21:25; 22:5). Some say **no more sea** simply repeats that the old creation passed away. This view is not correct. John links sea with heaven and earth when he wants to stress the whole creation (Rev. 5:13; 10:6; 14:7). Also, the verse says there **is** no sea, not that there **was** no sea. The present tense describes the condition of the new creation. The sea is absent there.

Revelation 21:2

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

1. **And I saw the holy city:** John sees a city coming down from the new heaven to the new earth. It is part of the new creation. The city's inner and lasting quality is **holiness**. This links it to the old Jerusalem, which the Bible also calls **holy** (Isa 52:1; Matt 4:5; 27:53). It is called **new Jerusalem**. This name assumes there was an old Jerusalem. The old city was stained by sin and disobedience. But the hope of a renewed Jerusalem always remained. The new Jerusalem is far greater than anything in the old creation. In Rev. 21:10, the city has the same name, but without the word **new**. The overcomer in Philadelphia was promised the name **new Jerusalem** written on him (Rev. 3:12). This proves his right to live in that city. God's throne will be in the new Jerusalem on the new earth. So the city becomes **the link between the new heaven and the new earth**.

2. **The new Jerusalem:** The new city does not mean Israel has lost her hope. God promised to dwell among His people (Ex 25:8; Lev 26:11–13; Ezek 37:26–27; Rev. 21:3). This hope is fulfilled first in the **millennial kingdom**, before the new creation. The old Jerusalem is good enough for the Millennium, but not for the final, eternal state. The OT does not clearly separate the old and new Jerusalem. Some passages suggest the earthly city only needs to be purified (Isa 54:11; 60; Ezek 40–48). Others suggest the old city was too stained and must be replaced. Rev. teaches the second view. When John wrote, Jerusalem had been in ruins for about twenty-five years. Even before it fell, the church spoke of a heavenly city in a figurative sense (Gal 3:20; 4:26–27; Heb 12:22). But these verses do not prove the new Jerusalem already exists in heaven. **This city belongs to the new creation, not the old.**
3. **Descending out of heaven from God:** John has a special view. He sees the holy city in the act of coming down. This same description appears in two other places, both describing this same event (Rev. 3:12; 21:10). The city comes **out of heaven**. That is its place of origin. It comes **from God**. He is its maker.
4. **Prepared:** In Rev. 19:7, the bride prepares herself. There the bride is the people of God. Here the city is simply **prepared**. The one who prepares it is not named. And here the bride is the holy city.
5. **As a bride:** In Rev. 19:7, the word used is **wife**. Here a more specific word is used: **bride**. Both words together describe the Lamb's wife (Rev. 21:9). The picture of a bride-city shows two truths:

- (a) The **bride** shows God's personal relationship with His people.
- (b) The **city** shows the shared life of the people in fellowship with Him.

As is common, the name of the city stands for the people who live in it. So **the bride is both the people of God and their dwelling place**, the new Jerusalem.

- 6. **Adorned for her husband:** Her adornment for her husband explains how she is prepared. The Greek word for **adorned** gives us the English word **cosmetics**. The same word describes the adorned foundations of the city later (Rev. 21:19).

Revelation 21:3

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 their God.

- 1. **And I heard a loud voice:** This is about the twentieth time in Revelation that John hears a loud voice. The loudness shows how important the message is.

2. **From the throne:** The voice comes from the throne, as in Rev. 19:5. We cannot tell whose voice it is. But it is **not the voice of God**. God speaks for the first time in Rev. 21:5. This is an announcement about God, not directly from Him.
3. **Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men:** The word **behold** calls special attention to this message. **Tabernacle** recalls the tabernacle in the wilderness. There God's glory dwelt among His people. But in the new Jerusalem, His presence will be **closer and more intimate than ever before**. Earlier, John saw the tabernacle in heaven (Rev. 13:6; 15:5). Now it is on the new earth, among redeemed people. This is a return to the fellowship God had with man **before sin entered** (Gen 3:8). Sin brought the curse and separation. Now that separation is gone. This relationship is the **greatest reward** of the new Jerusalem, far above all its other blessings (Ezek 37:27; 48:35). It fulfils God's promises to His people (Lev 26:11; Jer 24:7; 30:22; 31:1, 33; 32:38; Ezek 37:27; 48:35; Zech 2:10; 8:8; 2 Cor 6:16). This verse echoes Rev. 7:15. But there God spreads His tabernacle **over** them. Here He is **with** them, which shows an even closer bond. Rev. 7:15 described a **temporary** rest in heaven. This verse describes the **permanent** condition of all the saints.
4. **With men:** This truth is the **centre of John's whole description** of the new Jerusalem: God's direct presence with men. Verse 3 repeats this truth **five times**. The theme appears again and again:
 - (a) The overcomer will have God as his God and be His son (Rev. 21:7).

- (b) God's glory fills the city (Rev. 21:11).
- (c) God's throne and the Lamb's throne are in the city.
- (d) His servants will see His face (Rev. 22:3–4).

5. **The tabernacle of God:** Many features of the city also point to this close relationship:

- (a) The **light of the city** is God's glory (Rev. 21:11, 23; 22:5).
- (b) The **jasper walls** recall the One on the throne (Rev. 21:11, 18; 4:3).
- (c) The **gates** are named after Israel's tribes (Rev. 21:12).
- (d) The **foundations** are named after the apostles of the church (Rev. 21:14).
- (e) The **cube shape** of the city is like the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple (Rev. 21:16, 22; 1 Kgs 6:20).
- (f) The **precious stones** of the foundations recall the high priest's special access to God (Rev. 21:19–20).

6. **He will dwell with them:** This promise controls the whole section on the new creation (Rev. 21:1–22:5). The same word was used in Rev. 7:15. It recalls earlier prophecies (Ezek 37:27; Zech 2:10; 8:8). It points to the **Shekinah glory** of God in the old tabernacle. As it was **before the Fall**, God now dwells with men.

7. **They themselves will be His peoples:** The word **people** here is **plural: peoples**. Israel is usually called God's **people** in the singular. The plural shows that God's people now **reach beyond Israel**. God promised to bless all peoples through Abraham (Gal 3:8, 16, 26–29). **Many nations**, not only Israel, will enjoy His presence (John 10:16). John widens the old idea of one people to include **all the redeemed peoples** (Jer 7:23; 30:22; Hos 2:23; Rom 9:25).
8. **God Himself will be with them:** The word **Himself** adds emphasis. It shows that the end of all things has come, when **God will be all in all** (1 Cor 15:24–25, 28). God's name appears **five times** in verses 2–4. This recalls the creation account, where His name appears **thirty-four times in thirty-four verses** (Gen 1:1–2:3). **God with them** also recalls Christ's name **Immanuel**, **God with us**. That name reaches its fullest meaning here.
9. **Their God:** These final words fulfil God's promises (Ex 29:45; Lev 26:12; Jer 30:22; 31:33; Ezek 11:20; 37:27). They are the opposite of the judgment in Hosea: **You are not My people** (Hos 1:9).

Revelation 21:4

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. **And He will wipe away every tear:** The previous verse gave the positive blessing: God dwells with His people. This verse now describes the new Jerusalem **by what will be absent**. This is easier for us to grasp. We know only an old earth damaged by sin. We have never lived in a perfect world (1 John 3:2). The new conditions are **beyond our present understanding**.
2. **Every tear from their eyes:** The words **every tear** are singular. They show God's **great compassion for each person**. He notices even the smallest detail. God showed this same care to the great multitude in heaven (Rev. 7:17; Isa 25:8; 65:19). These are tears of **grief and pain** from life in the old creation. They are not tears of repentance (Isa 61:3–10).
3. **There will be death no longer:** We can hardly imagine a world without death. Four evils are named: **death, sorrow, crying, and pain**. All four entered the world when man first sinned (Gen 3). Their removal is the **reversal of the curse** that came with sin. The word **sorrow** (mourning) is linked with death. The word **crying** and sorrow will come upon Babylon when God judges her (Rev 18:7–8, 11, 15, 19). But here there will be no mourning or crying for any reason. The word **pain** probably refers to physical pain, like that under the fifth bowl judgment (Rev. 16:10–11). Instead of pain there, here it will be **peace and joy** (Isa 35:10; 51:11).
4. **Because the former things have passed away:** This gives the reason why death, sorrow, crying, and pain are gone. This includes every evil of the old creation, which sin had badly damaged (Isa 42:9; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15). All the four miseries named in this verse is now removed.

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. **Then He who sat on the throne said:** Verses 5–8 show John’s **pastoral purpose** most clearly. Here Almighty God Himself shows His personal concern. John pauses his description of the new Jerusalem to **write** these special words of God. The **one sitting upon the throne** is the same person throughout the book. He was last mentioned in Rev. 20:11. This is the **first** time the **Father** speaks **directly** since Rev. 1:8. In fact, these are the only two places where He is clearly named as the speaker. Other voices came from the throne (Rev. 21:3) or from the temple (Rev. 16:1, 17). These may be His voice, but the text does not say so

Rev. 1:8. “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty”

2. **Behold, I make all things new:** **Behold** marks a special announcement, as in other places (Rev. 1:7; 21:3). These words are not spoken to John alone. They are for **all the blessed people of God** (Isa 43:18–19). There is a **secondary meaning**. God’s grace already renews the hearts of believers today (2 Cor 5:17). This promise is the completion of that work. But some say the main meaning is an ongoing renewal, even now in the old order (2 Cor 3:18; 4:16–18; 5:16–17; Col 3:1–4). This view misses the time order that runs through John’s

visions. The **primary** meaning is God's **future** work of creation: bringing into being the new heaven and the new earth. The **secondary**, not the primary, meaning could be the ongoing **present** work of God in the life of a believer.

3. **And he says:** Here the speaker changes. That is why some manuscripts add **to me** after **he says**. The change is clear because verse 6 says **And He said**, returning to the One on the throne. The new speaker is **an angel**, as in Rev. 14:13. He is probably the angel-guide who last spoke to John (Rev. 19:9–10).
4. **Write:** The angel gives John a command with a reason. This is the third time John is told to write certain words (Rev. 14:13; 19:9; see also 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). Perhaps, amid all he was seeing, John was overwhelmed and forgot his original command to write down his visions.
5. **For these words are faithful and true:** **For** This word gives the reason for the command. Some say this clause is what John must write. But the object of **write** is the content of verses 1–5. With growing emphasis, the angel tells John to record the promise of **perfect** blessing in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 19:9). This is **a solemn guarantee** that the revelation is true. The same statement appears in Rev. 22:6. In Rev. 19:9, God's words are again called **true**. Both words, **faithful** and **true**, describe Christ Himself (Rev. 3:14; 19:11). **These words** refers to Rev. 21:1–5a. These great promises **rest on a firm foundation**. Believers can be sure they will come true in God's time. We cannot fully understand or describe them now. But that does not change the **certainty** of their future fulfillment.

Revelation 21:6

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.

1. **And He said to me, 'It is done':** The One on the throne speaks again. *They are done* is almost the same as His word in Rev. 16:17: *It is done*. He then says, *I am the Alpha and the Omega*. He said the same about Himself in Rev. 1:8. This confirms that *God Himself is speaking*.
2. **It is done!:** What is *done*? It may refer to the *words* in Rev. 21:5. More likely, it refers to *all things* that God makes new (Rev. 21:5). The tense shows that the *work now stands finished*. What God spoke has been fulfilled. The state of completion has arrived. This announcement sets the scene for the promise of verse 7 and the warning of verse 8. Both belong to the *new earth*, after the old world has passed away.
3. **I am the Alpha and the Omega:** This title shows God's complete *control* over all things. His sovereign rule and eternal nature guarantee that He is *fully trustworthy*. His words are faithful and true. What He begins, He is able to finish. He does not change. The old creation came from Him, and the new creation will also come from Him. Christ says the same about Himself (Rev. 22:13).

4. **The beginning and the end:** God describes Himself in a similar way in Isaiah (Isa 44:6). Elsewhere, Christ is called **the beginning** of the church (Col 1:18) and of the world (Rev. 3:14). Here, **God is the first cause and the final goal** of all things (Rom 11:36; Eph 4:6). The same is true of Christ (Rev. 22:13). The word **end** can also mean **goal** (1 Tim 1:5; Rom 10:4). God works through Christ. So **this title belongs to both the Father and the Son** (John 1:3; Col 1:12–20; Heb 1:2–3).
5. **I will give to the one who thirsts:** Thirst is a picture of **deep spiritual need** (Isa. 55:1; Psa. 42:1–2; Psa. 63:1; Isa. 12:3; Isa. 44:3). Here, God uses it as a **promise to the faithful**. The same promise appears in three other places (Rev. 7:17; 22:1, 17; John 4:13–14; 7:37–39). Contrast those who forsook God, the fountain of living waters (Jer 2:13; 17:13). The word **I** is repeated for emphasis. It means: I, **and no one else**, will give.
6. **From the fountain of the water of life:** This water is far better than the cup offered by the harlot Babylon (Rev. 17:4; 18:3).
7. **Freely:** The promise assumes a thirst that is **ready and eager** to receive. The gift is **free**. It is part of the privilege of belonging to God's family (Rev. 21:7). Here, God **gives** the water freely and the thirsty one **receives** it freely (Rev. 22:7).

He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

1. **He who overcomes:** God's promise to the overcomer takes the same form as the **seven promises** to the seven churches (Rev. 2–3). This is the **eighth promise** to the overcomer. It completes the other seven and, in a sense, includes them all. For the first time since Rev. 3:21 and 16:15, the promise is made to the **individual believer**, not to the faithful as a group.
2. **Shall inherit:** This is Revelation's **only mention of an inheritance**. But the idea of being an heir is common elsewhere in the New Testament (Matt 5:5; 19:29; 25:34; Rom 4:13; 1 Cor 6:9). This is one of many points where **John** and **Paul** agree (Rom 8:17; Gal 4:7). Here, **inherit** means **to take possession of** or **to share in**.
3. **All (these) things:** **These things** refers to the **all things** God makes new (Rev. 21:5). The overcomer will inherit **God's new creation**: all the glories of the new Jerusalem that John is about to describe.
4. **I will be to him God:** This promise was first given to **Abraham**, and then to others (Gen 17:7–8; Ex 6:7; 20:2; 29:45; Lev 26:12; Num 15:41; Deut 29:13; 2 Sam 7:24; Jer 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; Ezek 11:20; 34:24; 36:28; 37:23, 27; Zech 8:8). It repeats the heart of Revelation where God wants to dwell with his faithful (Rev. 21:3). The future tense looks ahead to **fulfilment after the resurrection** (Luke 20:36; Rom

8:23). John knows believers already have a relationship with God (1 John 3:1). But he looks forward to the **full inheritance**, not only the pledge or down payment we have now (Eph 1:13–14).

5. **He will be to Me a son:** These words were first spoken to **David** about his descendant (2 Sam. 7:14). Later they referred to Solomon, and then to **the great Son of David, the Messiah** (Psa. 89:26–27). In the NT, this Davidic promise points to the **close bond between the Father and Jesus**. Here John applies this Messianic promise to **Christ's bride**, the believers. But he makes one change. The original in OT says, **I will be his Father**. John writes, **I will be his God**. This keeps a **unique place for Jesus** as the one and only Son of God (John 1:17–18). This is the **only mention of sonship** in Revelation. John prefers the picture of **priesthood** to show the believer's closeness to God. He does not stress sonship. In the same way, he mentions God's love for His people only a few times (Rev. 3:9, 19; 20:9).

Revelation 21:8

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."

1. **But:** The word **but** introduces a contrast with previous verse which described the overcomers. The verse lists those who are **not overcomers**. There are **eight types of sinners** in this list. It differs in some points from

other lists (Rev. 9:20–21; 22:15). It also recalls Paul's list of those who will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9–10). The sins are eight in number. But in the Greek, one article governs the whole list. So those who commit them form a **single** group.

2. **Cowardly:** The word **cowardly** means **fearful**. It refers to those who **turn away from faith in Christ** when faced with persecution and opposition. Without steadfast endurance rooted in faith, they are **not true followers of the Lamb**. The word appears elsewhere in the NT (Matt 8:26; Mark 4:20). The coward will not admit his fear. He may claim his behaviour comes from reverence or caution. But he is one of those who **draw back** to destruction (Heb 10:38–39). Such people never took Jesus' words to heart: whoever saves his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Christ and the gospel will save it (Mark 8:35). God has not given His people **a spirit of fear** (2 Tim 1:7).
3. **Unbelieving or unfaithful:** This word can mean **unbelieving**. But here it fits better as **unfaithful** or **untrustworthy**. They are the opposite of Christ, who is the **faithful one** (Rev. 1:5; 2:10, 13; 3:14; 17:14; 19:11). Unfaithfulness is closely linked to cowardice. **All cowards are unfaithful, but not all the unfaithful are cowards**. People break loyalty to Christ for other reasons too, such as sexual sin. Paul uses this word for non-Christians (1 Cor 6:6; 7:12–15; 10:27; 14:22–24; 2 Cor 6:14–15). But here it describes **professing Christians** who deny their faith by word or action.

4. **Abominable:** The next group shut out of the Holy City is the **abominable**. The word means **defiled** or **polluted**. It is rare in the NT (Rom 2:22) but common in the Greek OT (Ex 5:21). Here it refers to those defiled especially through **worship of the beast** (Rev. 17:4–5; 21:27). These are not people who commit one detestable act (Titus 1:16). Their **very nature has been soaked** in the abominations they practiced all their lives. The context points beyond idolatry alone (Rev. 17:4). It includes the **shameful** and **unnatural vices** of the pagan world.
5. **Murderers:** Those who follow the beast will place **little value on human life** (Rev 9:21; Mark 7:21; Rom 1:29). By choosing the beast instead of the Lamb, they will **share in the killing of the saints**. So they become murderers (Rev. 17:6; 18:24).
6. **Fornicators:** Sexual immorality often goes together with murder and the idolatry of the beast's movement. Fornicators have often tried to **pass themselves off as Christians** (Rev 2:14, 22; 1 Cor 5:10; 1 Tim 1:9–10). But whatever front they put up, they have **no share in the joy** of the new creation.
7. **Sorcerers:** Sorcerers are also linked with idolatry. In the OT, sorcery is always tied to **worship of false gods** (Ex 7:11; Deut 18:11; Dan 2:2; Mal 3:5). Paul also places sorcery with idolatry (Gal 5:20). Sorcery will play a large part in the beast's future deception (Rev. 9:21; 13:13–14; 18:23; 22:15).

8. **Idolaters:** Even now, many who claim to be Christians are **idolaters** (1 John 5:21; 1 Cor 5:10–11; Eph 5:5). Under the beast's rule, idolatry will be the **norm**, not the **exception** (Rev 9:21; 13:14–15). The new Jerusalem has no room for them (Rev. 22:15).
9. **All liars:** The last group is **all liars**. In Rev. 22:15 they are described as everyone who **loves and practices a lie**. Lying carries a constant mark of shame in this book (Rev. 2:2; 3:9). These are mainly those who **lie by denying Christ**. But it also includes dishonest Christians who cheat (Acts 5:3) and lie to one another (Col 3:9). Contrast the redeemed, in whose mouth no lie was found (Rev. 14:5). Liars are **foremost among the excluded**. They appear in all three lists of those shut out of the new creation (Rev. 21:8, 27; 22:15).
10. **Shall have their part:** Their **part** is their **inheritance**. It stands in sharp contrast to the inheritance of the blessed (Rev. 21:3–7). Their names are **not** in the Book of Life (Rev. 20:15). They will join Satan, the beast, and the false prophet in the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14–15). The verse does not say directly that they are kept out of the new Jerusalem. But being in the lake of fire implies that penalty and more. They had **no part in the first resurrection** (Rev. 20:6).
11. **In the lake which burns with fire and brimstone:** Rev. 22:15 says simply that they are **outside** the city. The lake of fire as a picture of punishment reflects the **strict justice of the OT** (Isa 34:10; 66:24; Dan 7:10; Rev. 14:11; 19:3). Fire and brimstone is a well-known **instrument of God's wrath**. It probably goes back to the judgment of **Sodom and Gomorrah** (Gen 19:24; Ps 11:6; Isa 30:33; Ezek 38:22; Rev. 14:10; 19:20).

12. **Which is the second death:** As in Rev. 20:14, the **lake of fire is the second death** (Rev. 2:11; 20:6). These are the **last words of the One on the throne**. But Jesus is yet to speak. He will give the great invitation (Rev. 22:17) and the final blessing (Rev. 22:21).

21.2 The Holy City (21:9–22:5)

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