

## 4. A NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

In this series, we have journeyed through the rapture, the return of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment. After all this, God will create new heavens and a new earth. Then the heavenly city, New Jerusalem, will come down out of heaven upon the new earth.

**Revelation 21:1-6:** *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a beautiful bride prepared for her husband.*

*I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will remove all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever.*

*And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making all things new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true." And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega--the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give the springs of the water of life without charge!*

Does that remind you of what God said to Moses, *"Build a tabernacle that I may dwell among them"*? It grieved God to eject Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Therefore, he instituted a plan, fulfilled through his Son, to restore his ability to live on the earth with his people. *"Look the home of God is now among His people, He will be with them and they will be his people."* The old world and its evil are gone forever.

*So he took me in spirit to a great, high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.* Revelation 21:10

It was filled with the glory of God and sparkled like a precious gem. Crystal clear. Unlike anything on earth. People who have died and come back from heaven describe gold streets that are translucent like crystal, building and mansions.

**Revelation 21:15, 22-25:** *The angel who talked to me held in his hand a gold measuring stick to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.*

*No temple could be seen in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. The nations of the earth will walk in its light, and the rulers of the world will come and bring their glory to it. Its gates never close at the end of day because there is no night.*

The city is 2,200 kilometres long, wide and high. It is huge and will be the capital city of the new earth, an earth that will be a paradise.

**Revelation 22:1-4:** *And the angel showed me a pure river with the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, coursing down the centre of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations.*

*No longer will anything be cursed. For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him. And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads.*

They will see his face. That is the ultimate in the city. We will see God's face. Face to face.

This city is an awesome place. Note three things about it:

1. **It is a city** – cities have authority, they have leadership, they have order, there is government, there appears to be nations and kings in the new earth.
2. **It is the Bride** – this speaks of love. It will be our home. There is only one marriage in the new heaven and earth and that is the Bride of Christ married forever to Jesus.
3. **It is the Temple of God** – it speaks of the presence of God. It is the Kingdom of God fully and physically manifest on earth. It is the home of Christ and his Church with God and is accessible to the saved nations.

Note there are some parts of the Garden of Eden present. There is a river and there is a tree. What tree is missing? The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There will never again be any potential to sin.

## **THE PLAN FULFILLED**

The entire Bible is a history of God building a dwelling place that he could come and live among His people. Jesus said, *"I will build my church."* He means he is building a universal church on earth. He means he is preparing a Bride. The new heaven and earth sees the complete fulfilment of God's plan of the ages. There is incredible life after death for those who believe!

**1 Corinthians 15:23-28:** *But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised first; then when Christ comes back, all his people will be raised. After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having put down all enemies of every kind. For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. And the last enemy to be destroyed is death.*

*For the Scriptures say, "God has given him authority over all things." (Of course, when it says "authority over all things," it does not include God himself, who gave Christ his authority.) Then, when he has conquered all things, the Son will present himself to God, so that God, who gave his Son authority over all things, will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere.*

Jesus will humble all his enemies beneath his feet. The devil and all his demons will be beneath his feet. Sickness, death, rebellion against God, poverty and war will be beneath his feet. When he has done that he brings it to his Father and says, *"It is all for you."*

There is a day coming when our God will be utterly supreme over everything, everywhere. That is where we are headed. That is where God is taking us. The earth today does not look like that now, but Jesus reigns. He is building his church – people who only look with natural eyes cannot see it. God is at work by his Spirit. God is doing it, He knows the end is coming and he is not willing that any should perish but that everyone should have everlasting life. In that day, Jesus will present all of creation to the Father, having restored it, and the Father will present the Bride, the glorified church to the Son.

Think of it - Christ, the second Adam, will stand with his Bride, the second Eve, in a new creation! What the first Adam and Eve failed to do in ruling the earth in righteousness, the second Adam and Eve will achieve. *“The end of God’s ways,”* said Freidrick Oetinger, *“is loveliness.”* Who knows what purposes will unfold as Christ and his Bride rule a new universe for eternity, under the Father’s approving smile?

That is worth living for and holding on in faith and hope for. That is better than the temporary pleasures of sin or whatever else this world has to offer. *“We are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised,”* said the apostle Peter, *“a world where everyone is right with God.”* (2 Peter 3:13). God revealed these things not so that we would be escapists fantasising about a future world while we take a cruise ship to eternity, but so that we could live with purpose and unshakeable hope in this present life.

## CONCLUSION

**1 Corinthians 15:58:** *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the woof the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*

This is the last verse of 1 Corinthians chapter 15 – a chapter about the resurrection and ultimate triumph of Jesus over all things. Therefore, or because of these things, we are to live responsibly here and now.

This should make us see all of life as our field of work. What we do here will have reward there. I believe in continuity in the new earth. Economics, science, technology, work, art, music etc will be there. God will waste nothing we do here, if done for him.

Love his appearing. Fix our hope on this. Live well now. Endure hardship now. Be steadfast and immovable; abound in the work of the Lord.

**2 Corinthians 4: 16-18(NLT):** *“That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are quite small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever! So we don’t look at the troubles we can see right now; rather we look forward to what we have not yet*

*seen. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.”*