

A New Paradise

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There is hardly a human being that does not long for peace, fulfillment, harmony, and happiness or, in other words, for some type of a paradise. The Greek talked about Elysium, the land of the blessed, in which good people would be able to live without worries. Germanic tribes dreamed about Valhalla, a splendid palace, where the warriors would feast on the flesh of boars and drink liquor. They would spend their days with sports, fighting, and hunting. Muslims are looking forward to a garden with abundant food to eat, wine to drink, and noble virgins to serve them. Many have tried or are still trying to create a paradise of their own on this earth. In any case, many yearn for complete satisfaction and perfect bliss.

The first two chapters of Scripture talk about a paradise that humanity has lost, the last two chapters about a paradise which we may gain.

I. Time and Place of the New Paradise

- Rev. 20-21 After the Millennium, when Satan and his followers will be destroyed, a new heaven and a new earth will be created (Rev. 21:1).
- Rev. 21:1-2 The new paradise will be found on planet earth, probably because it was here that the drama of redemption unfolded, and it was here that Jesus had lived and had been crucified.

II. The Features of the New Paradise

1. The City (Rev. 21:10-27)

The New Jerusalem reminds us of the garden of Eden and the temple, and it replaces both. In addition, it is found in stark contrast to the great, but wicked city Babylon (Rev 18:10, 21).

- *Wall* (Rev. 21:12, 17-18): about 210 feet/70 meters high, suggesting security, protection, and peace.
- *Twelve gates* which are constantly open (Rev. 21:12-13, 21): suggesting free access for all those whose names are written in the book of life (v. 27), independent of race, nationality, gender, etc.
- *Size of the city* (Rev. 21:16): about 1380 miles/2200 km, if one side is meant, suggesting that there is sufficient room for everyone (cf. John 14:1-3). The New Jerusalem resembles the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary (1 Kings 6:20) containing also the throne of God (Rev. 22:1, 3).
- *Twelve gates and twelve foundations* containing the names of the old and new people of God (Rev. 21:12, 14, 19-20): pointing to God's faithful people throughout the centuries.
- *Materials such as gold, precious stones, and pearls* (Rev. 21:18-21): pointing to the glory, beauty, and durability of the city.

2. The Nature (Rev. 22:1-2)

- *Water and fruit*: suggesting that eternal life has been secured and that all needs will be taken care of.
- The Old Testament contains also allusions to the end time paradise mentioning a perfect earth and an ideal climate (Isa. 35:6-7).

III. Beings Involved

1. Humans (Rev. 21:4, 7-8, 27; 22:5)

- Only those humans will enter the new paradise who have accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord and have completely committed themselves to Him. Revelation calls them “overcomers.”
- They will have taken part in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6) or will have been transformed at Christ’s second coming. Their bodies will be real bodies (concerning the resurrection body see Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:42-44; Luke 24:36-43).
- They will be freed from all sickness, suffering, and distress (cf. Isa. 35:5-6).
- They will be delivered from death, because death will be no longer.
- Because God enlightens them, they will have more and more opportunities to gain knowledge and an ever-deepening understanding of God and His plan of salvation (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12). However, past events will no longer affect them negatively (cf. Isa. 65:17).
- They will participate in God’s reign.

2. God (Rev. 21:3, 22-23; 22:3-5)

- God will directly dwell among His people. His children can see and meet Him face to face. God and humans will be reunited. Direct access to the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit will be given. Finally, we will be at home. This is the climax of what the new paradise is all about.
- Since God will be personally present and will “tabernacle” among the redeemed (Rev. 21:3), the new Jerusalem will have become the temple.
- God’s glory will provide light and warmth in all areas of life. Therefore, heavenly bodies are no longer necessary as sources of light.

The new paradise will surpass the old paradise by far. Satan and sin will be no more. Instead God will live among His children. It is worth to get there. Therefore, I make sure that my name is included in the Lamb’s book of life (Rev. 21:27).

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