

## April 26, 2026—“*The New Creation*”

Can you remember a time when you got to experience a dream or vision of your future actually come true? You know, like finally getting to stand at the front of that wedding ceremony, or finally hear the doctor pronounce, “It’s a girl!” or finally see your favourite hockey team hoist the... well, forget that one. Has there been a time you can remember when a dream or vision you carried for some time was finally realized?

In our family, we’ve been enjoying that these past few weeks, now that my wife Becky has fully completed a 5-year retraining program. After investing the bulk of any spare time she’s had to test prep, clinical hours, theoretical and practical exams, a research paper and then presenting that research paper, she has finally got to the finish line of a 5-year journey that’s repeatedly looked forward to one thing: reclaiming the weekend! And since she finished at the end of March, she’s been able to enjoy all these experiences of reality that, for the past five years, she’s mostly just dreamt about: waking up with no alarm, pattering away at a little to-do list. She’s even had time to take a few lessons in pickleball! After five years of dreaming about that experience, we now greet each other at the end of our workweeks with this meme of [Daniel Craig](#).

This idea of a long-anticipated dream or vision finally being experienced as reality is the downbeat of the opening section of Revelation 21. In the last few chapters, John has been painting pictures to describe the finish line of reality and the story of Jesus’ activity in the world. And after describing the end of what we’ve learned to understand as “empire” (the cultural combination of power and money), and then describing the end of all evil, John starts to paint a new picture in chapter 21.

What we need to understand most, though, if we're going to appreciate today what John's original hearers would have received back then, is that the vision John introduces in the first few verses of Revelation chapter 21 isn't, in fact, all that new.

Consider what I mean when it comes to the "new heaven and new earth":

<p>Then I saw "<b>a new heaven and a new earth,</b>" for the <b>first heaven and the first earth had passed away,</b> and there was no longer any sea.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Revelation 21:1</p>	<p>See, <b>I will create new heavens and a new earth.</b> The <b>former things will not be remembered,</b> nor will they come to mind.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Isaiah 65:17</p> <p><b>As the new heavens and the new earth that I make</b> will endure before me," declares the Lord, "so will your name and descendants endure.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Isaiah 66:22</p>
--	---

This idea was a pre-existing idea of the impact of a promised Messiah—that, through a Saviour sent from God, God would fully and completely renew and restore all things.

Now consider verse 2: this "Holy City" described as the "New Jerusalem":

<p>I saw <b>the Holy City, the new Jerusalem,</b> coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Revelation 21:2</p>	<p>Awake, awake, Zion, clothe yourself with strength! Put on your garments of splendor, <b>Jerusalem, the holy city.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Isaiah 52:1</p> <p>The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you (<b>Jerusalem</b>) <b>will be called by a new name.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Isaiah 62:2</p>
--	--

Again, these phrases John is using are not new; they're pre-existing prophecies of what would happen as a result of God sending His promised Saviour to the world. The "finish line" would include the establishment of a new society where God's Spirit dwelt.

In that vein, consider the further description John provides in verse 3:

<p>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! <b>God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.</b>”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Revelation 21:3</p>	<p><b>My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ezekiel 37:27</p>
--	---

Appreciate that what John is doing here is simply quoting well-known and deeply-longed-for passages of Old Testament prophecy back to his original hearers—here, describing the dynamic in this new society where God’s people enjoy God’s presence.

He continues that thought in verse 4, where, again, he isn’t providing much new:

<p><b>‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain,</b> for the old order of things has passed away.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Revelation 21:4</p>	<p><b>The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces;</b> he will remove his people’s disgrace from all the earth.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Isaiah 25:8</p> <p>I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; <b>the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Isaiah 65:19</p>
--	--

Do you see what John is doing here? In this “vision” he’s sharing, he’s not providing new vision to his hearers; he’s *confirming* that, through this experience Jesus has given him, he’s *experienced* the reality of these Old Testament prophetic visions for Himself.

Appreciate that the downbeat of these early verses isn’t on what John saw; it’s on the fact that he got to see it for himself. The emphasis is on the, “I saw... Then I saw... And I heard...” What he shared wasn’t *new* vision; these were hyperlinks to *existing* visions for the future that people of faith longed to be fully realized one day.

What John is doing here is not *providing* vision; he's *confirming* the reality of vision that's already been provided. And—on top of that—he's not the only one.

In verse 5, John hears the voice of God—the first time in this entire book of Revelation that God has spoken. But even what he hears from God is not a new reality:

He who was seated on the throne said, " <b>I am making everything new!</b> " Revelation 21:5a	See, <b>I am doing a new thing!</b> Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? Isaiah 43:19
--	--

Back in Isaiah's time, the language of God doing a new thing had a "springing up" budding-toward-the-future orientation—appropriate for prophecy about a coming Messiah. Now, the subtle twist of what John hears directly from God is not future-oriented; it's in the *present tense*. God Himself declared He's fully restoring reality!

And then—as if to emphasize this point to the third degree—God provides this next instruction to John, recorded at the end of verse 5, serving as a final confirmation:

***Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."***

Like a sales negotiation, where things only get serious and official when you "put it in writing", John hears God tell him to put this collection of Old Testament prophecies that have swirled around his eyes, ears, and mind onto paper, as a most official, legally-binding of sorts, can-be-fully-counted-on final confirmation of this future reality.

Can you sense the escalating downbeat of this passage that introduces this final section of Revelation? What starts as John's confirmation ("I saw it!" "I saw it!" "I heard it") was then confirmed by God Himself ("I am making all things new!") and then, as if that wasn't enough, signed on the dotted line by God Himself, just to make it official.

Remember that John has been painting a picture of the finish line of Jesus' activity in the world. So far, though, He's vividly described what *won't* be there—there won't be empire, and there won't be its underlying evil, because Jesus defeated those things once and for all through His sacrificial death on the cross and His resurrection.

What John is now starting to provide to his original audience is some description of what the finish line *will* look like. And to introduce this section, instead of providing new content, John provides his original hearers with existing content they would have all been familiar with—so familiar that these phrases summarized and captured their deepest heart cries. These phrases represented their vision and dream of the future.

What John is doing here is confirming it. He's confirming it by His own testimony of experiencing it—like a kid who comes back from Disney and tells their grandparents, “I saw Mickey and Minnie!” or what someone returning from traveling to an historical tourist destination says when they share with their friends, “I got to experience \_\_\_\_\_!”

John is sharing His eye-witnessed experience of seeing and hearing the very prophetic promises that defined their hope in Jesus. And then, on top of that, he shares the very voice of God confirming it. And then, on top of that top of that, he shares God's command to put it in writing—putting an exclamation on the ALL-CAPS of these promises delivered. John is fully, completely confirming the full, complete renewal and restoration of humanity, as the promised and already-coming-true work of Jesus.

Think of how this landed to John's original audience: plagued by persecution for following Jesus by the powers that be. This final “vision” was intended to embolden his hearers with the encouragement to stay faithful in following Jesus—confident that the finish line God promised, through Christ (their hope!), *is* fully becoming reality delivered!

The real question, then, is: how this does message land with you, today? On the one hand, I doubt there are many of us who are experiencing overt persecution for having faith in Christ—at least, I doubt there are many of us living under the constant threat of being martyred for following Jesus! At the same time, I know there are many of us who feel beaten down by this life. What does it mean that, through Jesus, God is already making all things new, and will one day complete His work of fully restoring and reconciling the world? What does it mean to the grief you're carrying, that doesn't feel like it'll ever lighten up this side of eternity? What does it mean to the heartbreaks and abandonment you've felt from people? What does it mean to the financial stress or crippling anxiety you carry, that doesn't seem like it will ever go away? What does it mean to the chronic pain or debilitating condition you live with? I hope, in the same way this vision was originally intended to inspire John's original hearers with hope, that it would embolden your confidence and encourage you to stay faithful in your focus and reliance on Jesus. Jesus *is* fully, completely, renewing and restoring all things!

At the same time, I hope that this is also a challenge to at least some of us. Some of us these days don't really find ourselves suffering very much at all. Some, in fact, find ourselves benefitting from many of the dynamics of empire—enjoying a degree of privilege, maybe even at the expense of other people. Personally, I hope today's text wakes us up and recalibrates our own vision of the finish line, to appreciate how the Jesus story actually ends—so that we can align our lives more purposefully to that end. What vision of comfortable retirement, or home or property ownership, or family circumstances dominates our thoughts and efforts, when God's vision of a fully renewed and restored humanity is the future that's actually delivering? Which is worth living for?

See, today's passage is rooted in a fundamental truth: the future you most long for is the future you give your life for. If you most long for a certain relationship, that's what you'll most live for. If most long for a net worth, that's what you'll most live for.

Jesus-through-John is inviting and encouraging us to align our vision for the future with His Kingdom-come, God's-will-be-done vision for the finish line, where the effects of Jesus' death and resurrection are fully and completely realized through a renewed and restored society. Next week, we're going to dig deeper into what that means (by understanding the symbolism of these concepts more deeply). Today is merely meant to serve as a confirmation that this, in fact, *is* the finish line God is in the process of delivering, inspiring us to live in more of an "on earth as it is in heaven" way.

Last week, talking about the end of evil, Jeff Martens conceded that—in light of that finish line—we live in an "already-but-not-yet" intermediate. He said that so we'd appreciate the "...but-not-yet" aspect of our reality. But today's John-witnessed, God-confirmed, signed-sealed-and-delivered confirmation of a fully renewed and restored reality begs us to embrace the "already". Just like the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:

***If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:  
The old has gone, the new is here!***

The opportunity to experience the difference Jesus makes isn't something we need to wish for, one day. It's available right here, and right now! The opportunity to contribute to and, in turn, experience more of the effects and implications of His Risen Life and the transformational power of His unfailing love are available to us right here, right now!

The future you most long for is the future you give your life for. What will it take for us to most long for the fullest, deepest experience of Jesus' love coming to life?!