Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. (Revelation 21:1/ESV)

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.” (Isaiah 65:17/ESV)
New Heaven and New Earth

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New Heaven and New Earth

What Are “New Jerusalem”, “New Heaven”, and “New Earth”?  

In Revelation and in other books of the Old and New Testaments we learn about a “New Heaven”, “New Earth”, and “New Jerusalem”. Parts of Revelation clearly refer to something that will exist after the second coming of Jesus. Revelation 3:12 mentions the “new Jerusalem”. Revelation 11:15 seems to refer to the New Heaven. Also, Revelation 21:1-5 seems to suggest that there is a closeness between the new heaven and the new earth that does not now exist between the old heaven and the old earth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bible Books</th>
<th>Bible Verses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. (Revelation 3:12/ESV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” (Revelation 11:15/ESV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” (Revelation 21:1-5/ESV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God (Revelation 21:9-10/ESV)</td>
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Other references to the “New Jerusalem”, “New Heaven”, and “New Earth” are found here.

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Isaiah</td>
<td>God spoke to Isaiah. “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.” (Isaiah 65:17/ESV)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaiah</td>
<td>“For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me”, says the Lord, “so shall your offspring and your name remain. ... Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (Isaiah 66:22/ESV)</td>
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1 In Revelation 21:1-3, “the first heaven”, may refer to the earth’s atmosphere, because it is mentioned together with earth. In the second instance the context of “out of heaven from God” suggests a place higher than the earth’s atmosphere - God’s dwelling place.
New Heaven and New Earth

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>2 Corinthians</td>
<td><em>For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.</em> (2 Corinthians 5:1, 17/ESV) ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Peter</td>
<td><em>Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.</em> (2 Peter 3:11-13/ESV)</td>
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From Jesus’ lesson of the budding fig tree we learn that His words transcend creation as it now exists. Regardless of what the “New Jerusalem”, “New Heaven”, and “New Earth” may be like, Jesus’ words will continue to apply.

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<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” (Matthew 24:32-35/ESV)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several commentators have speculated on the meaning of the “New Jerusalem”, “New Heaven”, and “New Earth”. Some of their comments are shown below.

Jerome’s (circa AD 340-AD 420) “City of God - On the Beatific Vision”, indicates that we -- ... shall in the future world see the material forms of the new heavens and the new earth in such a way that we shall most distinctly recognize God everywhere present and governing all things, material as well as spiritual, and shall see Him, not as now we understand the invisible things of God ... God will be so known by us, and shall be so much before us, that we shall see Him by the spirit in ourselves, in one another, in Himself, in the new heavens and the new earth, in every created thing which shall then exist; and also by the body we shall see Him in every body which the keen vision of the eye of the spiritual body shall reach. Our thoughts also shall be visible to all, for then shall be fulfilled the words of the apostle ... in 1 Corinthians 4:5. ³

*Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.* (1 Corinthians 4:5/ESV)

Augustine of Hippo (354-430), in his book, *Of True Religion*, makes numerous references to the kingdom of heaven, the new heaven, and the “new and heavenly man”. Augustine states that “... there will be, as it is written, a New Heaven and a New Earth, and there souls will not have to do

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² Paul said that we are a new creation if we are in Christ. When we were baptized and believed, scripture tells us that we entered into Christ’s death and resurrection. So anyone who is in Christ has entered into a new creation. We have entered into Christ’s triumph over death and the old order of things.

their part in toiling, but will reign over the universe.” Augustine comforted his readers with these observations about our Christian belief --

“The Holy Incarnation, the birth from a virgin, the death of the Son of God for us, His resurrection from the dead, ascension into heaven, and sitting at the right hand of the Father, the forgiveness of sins, the day of judgment, and the resurrection of the body, are not merely believed, when the eternity of the Trinity and the mutability of created things are known. They are also judged to be part and parcel of the mercy of the most high God, which he has shown towards the human race."  

Martin Luther (1483-1546) - No writing on the “new heaven”, the “new earth”, or the “New Jerusalem” was discoverable either on the Internet or in the complete Luther’s Works, American Edition. However, he did cite 2 Peter 3:13 on that topic in a letter to Philipp Melanchthon. He wrote --

If you are a preacher of mercy, do not preach an imaginary but the true mercy. If the mercy is true, you must therefore bear the true, not an imaginary sin. God does not save those who are only imaginary sinners. Be a sinner, and let your sins be strong, but let your trust in Christ be stronger, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world. We will commit sins while we are here, for this life is not a place where justice resides. We, however, says Peter (2. Peter 3:13) are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth where justice will reign. We, however, says Peter (2. Peter 3:13) are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth where justice will reign.  

John Calvin (1509-1564) wrote --

By these metaphors [New Heaven, New Earth] he promises a remarkable change of affairs; as if God had said that he has both the inclination and the power not only to restore his Church, but to restore it in such a manner that it shall appear to gain new life and to dwell in a new world. These are exaggerated modes of expression; but the greatness of such a blessing, which was to be manifested at the coming of Christ, could not be described in any other way. Nor does he mean only the first coming, but the whole reign, which must be extended as far as to the last coming … Thus the world is (so to speak) renewed by Christ; and hence also the Apostle (Hebrews 2:5) calls it “a new age,” and undoubtedly alludes to this statement of the Prophet. Yet the Prophet speaks of the restoration of the Church after the return from Babylon. This is undoubtedly true; but that restoration is imperfect, if it be not extended as far as to Christ; and even now we are in the progress and accomplishment of it, and those things will not be fulfilled till the last resurrection, which has been prescribed to be our limit.  

Matthew Henry (1662-1714) states in his Commentary on the Whole Bible (Concise) --

The new heaven and the new earth will not be separate from each other; the earth of the saints, their glorified, bodies, will be heavenly. The old world, with all its troubles and tumults, will have passed away. There will be no sea; this aptly represents freedom from conflicting passions, temptations, troubles, changes, and alarms; from whatever can divide or interrupt the communion of saints. This new Jerusalem is the church of God in its new and perfect state, the church triumphant. Its blessedness came wholly from God, and depends on him. The presence of God with his people in heaven, will not

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5 Martin Luther, Letter 99.13, To Philipp Melanchthon, 1 August 1521, Quoted in “Martin Luther and Bible History - Luther in Exile at the Wartburg Castle”, http://www.for-martin-luther.com/history.html. Accessed September 22, 2015.

New Heaven and New Earth

be interrupt as it is on earth, he will dwell with them continually. All effects of former trouble shall be
done away. They have often been in tears, by reason of sin, of affliction, of the calamities of
the church; but no signs, no remembrance of former sorrows shall remain. Christ makes all things new.  

John Wesley (1703 – 1791), in his *Wesley's Explanatory Notes* states that --

After the resurrection and general judgment. St. John is not now describing a flourishing state of the
church, but a new and eternal state of all things. For the first heaven and the first earth - not only the
lowest part of heaven, not only the solar system, but the whole ethereal heaven, with all its host,
whether of planets or fixed stars … All the former things will be done away, that all may become new.  

*The Lutheran Study Bible* indicates that this is a Perfectly restored creation (i.e., without sin)
fulfilling Jesus’ prophecy in Matthew 24:32-35 (cited above) and as explained by Paul in
Romans 8:19-21 (quoted below).

Scripture repeatedly underscores that one of the greatest blessings of the new heavens and new earth is
that restored mankind will again behold God face-to-face and live in His immediate presence. … The
new creation has already begun to appear through the preaching of the gospel and the work of the Spirit.
However, it will not be completed until the day of Christ’s return.  

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was
subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself
will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of
God. (Romans 8:19-21/ESV)

The Abingdon Bible Commentary indicates that --

… there is no more doubt about the future than about the past if God has determined it. The song of the
elders celebrates the coming of the Kingdom, the Last Judgment, and the final reward of the servants of
God. … a new universe appears, not new in the time sense of being young and not old, but new in
quality, transformed, like but unlike the other. … This New Jerusalem signifies the manifestation of the
divine presence; God is to dwell with men and the inhabitants of the city are to be His people.  

Biographies of Persons Mentioned in the Bibliography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Augustine of Hippo        | Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430) was born on 13 November, 354 at Tagaste, now Souk-
                           | Ahras, about 60 miles from Bona (ancient Hippo-Regius), which was at that time a small
                           | free city of proconsular Numidia which had recently been converted from Donatism.
                           | Although eminently respectable, his family was not rich, and his father, Patricius, one of
                           | the curiales of the city, was still a pagan. However, the admirable virtues that made |

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Monica the ideal of Christian mothers at length brought her husband the grace of baptism and of a holy death, about the year 371. He lost his faith and later converted back to Christianity. At forty-two, became a bishop and occupied the See of Hippo for thirty-four years. He understood well how to combine the exercise of his pastoral duties with the austerities of the religious life, and although he left his order, his episcopal residence became a monastery where he lived a community life with his clergy, who bound themselves to observe religious poverty. The episcopal house of Hippo became a veritable nursery which supplied the founders of the monasteries that were soon spread all over Africa and the bishops who occupied the neighboring sees. Augustine earned the title of patriarch of the religious, and renovator of the clerical, life in Africa.

Calvin, John
Jean Calvin (born Jehan Cauvin, 1(1509 - 1564) was an influential French theologian and pastor during the Protestant Reformation. He was a principal figure in the development of the system of Christian theology later called Calvinism. Originally trained as a humanist lawyer, he broke from the Roman Catholic Church around 1530. After religious tensions provoked a violent uprising against Protestants in France, Calvin fled to Basel, Switzerland, where he published the first edition of his seminal work *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1536. Calvin's writing and preachings provided the seeds for the branch of theology that bears his name. The Reformed and Presbyterian churches, which look to Calvin as a chief expositor of their beliefs, have spread throughout the world.

Engelbrecht, Rev. Edward A.
Rev. Edward A. Engelbrecht is Senior Editor for Professional and Academic Books & Bible Resources, Concordia Publishing House and the General Editor of *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

Henry, Matthew
Matthew Henry (18 October 1662 – 22 June 1714) was an English commentator on the Bible and Presbyterian minister. He was born at Broad Oak, a farmhouse on the borders of Flintshire and Shropshire. His father, Philip Henry, had just been ejected under the Act of Uniformity 1662. Unlike most of his fellow-sufferers, Philip possessed some private means, and was thus able to give his son a good education. Matthew went first to a school at Islington, and then to Gray's Inn. He soon gave up his legal studies for theology, and in 1687 became minister of a Presbyterian congregation at Chester. He moved again in 1712 to Mare Street, Hackney. Two years later (22 June 1714), he died suddenly of apoplexy at the Queen's Aid House (41 High Street) in Nantwich while on a journey from Chester to London.

Howard, W. F.
Wilbert Francis Howard (1880-1952) was a Baptist theologian and contributor to the *Abingdon Bible Commentary*.

Jerome
St. Jerome (ca. 340-420) was born at Stridon, a town on the confines of Dalmatia and Pannonia and died at Bethlehem. He went to Rome, probably about 360, where he was baptized, and became interested in ecclesiastical matters. From Rome he went to Trier, famous for its schools, and there began his theological studies. Later he went to Aquileia, and towards 373 he set out on a journey to the East. He settled first in Antioch, where he heard Apollinaris of Laodicea, one of the first exegetes of that time and not yet separated from the Church. From 374-9 Jerome led an ascetical life in the desert of Chalcis, southwest of Antioch. Ordained priest at Antioch, he went to Constantinople (380-81), where a friendship sprang up between him and St. Gregory of Nazianzus. From 382 to August 385 he made another sojourn in Rome, not far from Pope Damasus. When the latter died (11 December, 384) his position became a very difficult one. His harsh criticisms had made him bitter enemies, who tried to ruin him. After a few months he was compelled to leave Rome. By way of Antioch and Alexandria he reached Bethlehem, in 386. He settled there in a monastery near a convent founded by two Roman ladies, Paula and Eustochium, who followed him to Palestine. Henceforth he led a life of asceticism and study; but even then he was troubled by controversies, one with Rufinus and the other with the Pelagians.

Luther, Martin
Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483 in Eisleben in the Holy Roman Empire - in what is today southern Germany. He died 18 February 1546. He was the second son born to Hans and Margarete (Lindemann) Luther. He later entered the Augustinian Monastery at Erfurt. In 1513, he began his first lectures on the Psalms. In these lectures, Luther's critique of the theological world around him began to take shape. Later, in
lectures on Paul's Epistle to the Romans (in 1515/16) his critique became more noticeable. It was during these lectures that Luther finally found the assurance that had evaded him for years. The discovery that changed Luther's life ultimately changed the course of church history and the history of Europe. He had discovered (or recovered) the doctrine of justification by grace alone.

Wesley, John

John Wesley (17 June 1703 – 2 March 1791) was an Anglican cleric and Christian theologian. Wesley is largely credited, along with his brother Charles Wesley, as founding the Methodist movement which began when he took to open-air preaching in a similar manner to George Whitefield. In contrast to Whitefield's Calvinism, Wesley embraced the Arminian doctrines that were dominant in the 18th-century Church of England. Methodism in both forms became a highly successful evangelical movement in Britain and later in the United States. His work also helped lead to the development of the Holiness movement and Pentecostalism. Wesley helped to organise and form societies of Christians throughout Great Britain, North America and Ireland as small groups that developed intensive, personal accountability, discipleship and religious instruction among members. His great contribution was to appoint itinerant, unordained preachers who travelled widely to evangelize and care for people in the societies. Under Wesley's direction, Methodists became leaders in many social issues of the day, including the prison reform and abolitionism movements.

Bibliography


