

Revelation 21:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

Analysis

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth (καὶ νέον οὐρανὸν καὶ γῆν καὶ νέην)—John uses kainos (new in quality, fresh) not neos (new in time), indicating not mere replacement but transformation and renewal. This fulfills Isaiah 65:17's prophecy: 'I create new heavens and a new earth.' Peter likewise describes heavens and earth renewed by fire (2 Peter 3:10-13).

For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away (οὐρανὸς καὶ γῆς πρώτης ἀπῆλθεν)—The verb apēlthan (departed, passed away) indicates not annihilation but transformation. The creation cursed by sin (Genesis 3:17-19, Romans 8:20-22) gives way to restored glory, the 'regeneration' Jesus promised (Matthew 19:28).

And there was no more sea (καὶ οὐκέτι θάλασσα)—In Hebrew cosmology, the sea symbolized chaos, danger, and separation (the primordial deep of Genesis 1:2). In Revelation, the sea yields the dead (20:13) and births the beast (13:1). Its absence signifies complete order, safety, and unhindered access to God—no barrier between the nations and the Lamb's throne.

Historical Context

John wrote from exile on Patmos (c. AD 95) during Domitian's persecution. This vision of cosmic renewal would profoundly comfort churches facing the Roman

Empire's oppressive might—reminding them that Caesar's 'eternal' Rome would pass away, but God's new creation endures forever. The sea's absence held special meaning for island exile John and landlocked Asian churches who viewed seas as threatening barriers.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the promise of a renewed creation (not mere escape to heaven) affect your view of physical existence, work, and caring for the present earth?
2. What 'seas' of chaos or separation in your life does Christ promise to ultimately remove in the new creation?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	εἶδον	οὐρανὸς	καινήν	καὶ	γῆ	καινήν	ό	γὰρ
And	I saw	heaven	a new	And	earth	a new	G3588	for
G2532	G1492	G3772	G2537	G2532	G1093	G2537		G1063

πρώτη	οὐρανὸς	καὶ	ἡ	πρώτη	γῆ	παρῆλθεν	καὶ	ἡ
the first	heaven	And	G3588	the first	earth	were passed away	And	G3588
G4413	G3772	G2532		G4413	G1093	G3928	G2532	

θάλασσα	οὐκ	ἔστιν	ἔτι
sea	no	there was	more
G2281	G3756	G2076	G2089

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 3:13 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Isaiah 66:22 (Parallel theme): For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

Revelation 21:5 (Parallel theme): And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

2 Peter 3:10 (Parallel theme): But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Revelation 20:11 (Parallel theme): And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

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