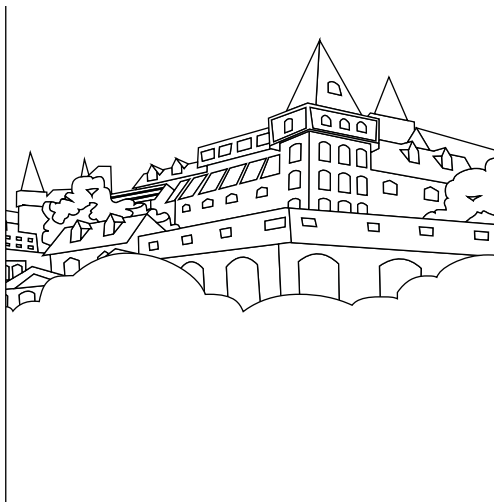


# A vision of heaven



## Colour me!



## Revelation 21:1-7

**John, who had been one of the followers of Jesus, was arrested and exiled because of his faith. While in exile, God showed him what was to come. This is all recorded in the book of Revelation. Right at the end of the Bible, John describes to us his vision of heaven and what believers could be looking forward to.**

I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and so had the sea. Then I saw New Jerusalem, that holy city, coming down from God in heaven. It was like a bride dressed in her wedding gown and ready to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice shout from the throne: God's home is now with his people. He will live with them, and they will be his own. Yes, God will make his home among his people. He will wipe all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death, suffering, crying, or pain. These things of the past are gone for ever.

Then the one sitting on the throne said: I am making everything new. Write down what I have said. My words are true and can be trusted. Everything is finished! I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give water from the life-giving fountain to everyone who is thirsty. All who win the victory will be given these blessings. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

## Commentary

The story of the Bible ends with a shout of celebration. All that has been spoiled and broken is made new again. It's just as God had planned it to be at the very beginning, when he created a perfect world for people and himself to enjoy. The paradise of the garden of Eden has become the perfection of the new Jerusalem on earth.

All the images in this story are positive. The arrival of the new creation will be like a wedding, like a peaceful home, like a place swept clean of all suffering, like a fountain with life-giving water. When John had this vision, it was near the end of his own life. He knew that this was what God had waiting for him and for all who put their trust in Jesus' death and resurrection. In the meantime, Christians were to work towards this victory over evil in God's strength. The one who sits on the throne describes himself as being the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet: God was there at the start and will be there at the end. In an earlier part of John's vision, Jesus describes himself this way too. In other words, Jesus is God and God is Jesus, and all those whose lives are made new because of him will be part of this amazing new heaven and earth one day.

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## Questions

- ▶ From this story, which aspects of heaven do you like the most?
- ▶ How would you describe heaven to someone?
- ▶ Which part of this vision do you find most comforting?
- ▶ In what ways might people be thirsty, and what is this water that God promises to give them to drink?



## Visual aid

Lay out letters of the alphabet on a table, perhaps from a Scrabble™ set. In our language, God says that he is the A and the Z. What might some of the letters in between stand for, if, perhaps, they are words describing heaven?



## Activity idea

Roll out a large piece of paper and use paints, crayons, felt and other craft materials to create an image of heaven. It could be done with words or different colours, with pictures or abstract creations. Make your own “Heaven is...” poster together.



## Prayer idea

John wrote these words to Christians who were facing very difficult circumstances. Pick up on some of the images in the story to create your own prayers of thanks to God for the promise of heaven and for what it will be like. Round off your prayers together by using the opening words of the Lord’s Prayer: “Our Father in heaven, your name is holy. May your kingdom come and your will be done on earth, just as it is in heaven.”

## Key verse

The one sitting on the throne said, “I am making everything new.” (Revelation 21:5)

## Old Testament story link

Isaiah 65:17-23: Here is another picture of the new creation, this time from the prophet Isaiah.



Colour me!

