which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." He goes on to say, "According to his promise we are looking for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2Pe 3:3-13).

The new Jerusalem

John saw a beautiful city descend upon the new heaven and earth. He calls it "the holy city, the new Jerusalem" (Rev 21:2). The vision of this city is described in detail further on in the chapter (Rev 21:10ff). Jesus anticipated this vision in his message to Philadelphia (Rev 3:12).

A bride adorned

John likens the glorious city to "a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev 21:2). This metaphor of the bride is repeated (Rev 21:9, 22:17).

Paul says, "The Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother" (Gal 4:26). Paul uses the wife metaphor for the church of Jesus Christ (Eph 5:22-32).

Such highly figurative language may not sit well in the analytical mind, but it does touch the heart. When Jesus pictures his church as his holy bride and the mother of us all, he chooses an analogy soaked in joyous love.

The tabernacle of God

John hears an announcement from the throne, "Behold the tabernacle of God is among men and he will dwell among them..." (Rev 21:3)

This is a parallelism, a common poetic form in the word of God. The metaphor of the tabernacle of God among men is followed with its literal meaning that God will dwell among them.

The tabernacle in the time of Moses, was the tent of worship in which God dwelled. Later it was replaced by the temple in Jerusalem. It served to connect the people with God in a special way. God is of course present with us today and we have fellowship with him (1Jn 1:3). However in the new Jerusalem God himself will be the temple (Rev 21:22), and the presence of God will be utterly unveiled to us.

Every tear from their eyes

When the saved go to heaven, they will take many sorrows with them. But God "shall wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Rev 21:4). He will take away every sorrow, every pain. There will be no more place found for them in heaven —no more than there was for the old heaven and earth where those sufferings were endured. They will all pass away forever. Instead we will be given a new world where all things are as they ought There will be gladness never spoiled. "The first things have passed away... behold I am making all things new" (Rev 21:4-5).

Alpha and Omega

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet. Jesus declares, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (Rev 21:6, Rev 22:13).

Jesus is claiming that "In him dwells all the fulness of the deity bodily" (Col 2:9). See Alpha and Omega, Jesus is God.

Water of life

The water of life promised by Jesus (Rev 21:6, Jhn 4:14) is seen in a later vision as a river coming from the throne of God. Eternal life is the greatest promise and gift ever offered to human beings. Yet it is freely available to anyone who thirsts for it...

Inherit ... be my son

There's an inheritance for all the sons of God (Eph 1:11). Any man or woman can become a son of God (Rom 8:15-17).

This inheritance is imparted by the will of God through the covenant he mediated to humankind through his Son (Heb 8:6). It is an inheritance reserved in heaven for us (1Pe 1:3-5).