

THE NEW JERUSALEM **Revelation 21 - 22**

THE NEW EARTH AND HEAVEN. Revelation 21:1

Earlier in Revelation 20:11, at the beginning of the Great White Throne Judgment, John tells us, *"the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them."* It appears that at this time the present earth and heaven will be destroyed by fire.

There are many Bible references to the fact of the final destruction of the present earth:

1. Matthew 25:35, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."* (Also Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33)

2. 2 Peter 3:7, *"...the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men"*.

3. 2 Peter 3:10, *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in 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."*

4. 2 Peter 3:12-13, *"Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."*

These scriptures clearly teach that this present earth will be destroyed by fire, and a Jerusalem will be created. The old heavens and earth where sin for centuries reigned supreme, with sorrow, suffering and pain will be ended forever. This earth, home to millions who died in their sins rejecting the God who loved them and died for their sin will no longer exist. In the entire universe there will be no place for sin and rebellion. It is fitting and proper that this place of sin be destroyed and forever forgotten!

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW JERUSALEM. Revelation 21:2-8

Jerusalem is referred to in Scripture as the Holy City and was blessed by God. It was on earth the center of God's promises. (Matt. 4:5, 27:53) Yet, the old Jerusalem was blessed of God and symbolized Him; it was a work of man's hands. This New Jerusalem comes down from heaven unto the earth totally the work of God. It is to be the eternal residence where of the saints dwell with God in their midst. (Rev. 21:2-3) John says that it is prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. We can certainly identify with this analogy when we think of the great expense and attention to detail that accompanies a bride's preparation for her marriage. Everything must be perfect and when the groom sees his bride he see her in all her beauty. The magnificence and splendor of the bride

takes away the breath of the groom and all who see the bride. This gives us but a small inkling as to the beauty and splendor of the Jerusalem.

In John 14:1-3, Jesus comforted his disciples by telling them of the many "mansions," that he would prepare for them in His Father's house. The word, "mansions" actually means an "abode", and is so translated in other places in the New Testament. The reality of Christ's promise unfolds as the saints see now their new eternal abode. Some might criticize the translation of word "abode" as "mansions." However, what is prepared for God's children will certainly be described as a mansion and even in greater terms. Paul said, *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."* (1 Corinthians 2:9) The truth is that the word "*mansions*" is inadequate in describing God's prepared abode for His saints.

The proclamation that dedicates the Jerusalem comes from heaven. *"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."* (Revelation 21:3) What an unfathomable declaration! The saints of God will live with God forever and He will be in them. One cannot grasp the full meaning of this statement. What we do know is it will be wonderful to live with our Creator and have Him living within us. All those present will be reconciled unto God and there will be nothing between us to prevent us experiencing the fullness of being a child of God.

A great deal of information about this New Jerusalem is given in the following verses. It is important the child of God realize what is being described is the place where he will forever abide and be in the presence of Lord and Savior.

It is appropriate that the next statement is that God shall, *"wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for all the former things are passed away."* (Rev. 21:4) The child of God should rejoice in knowing that sin, and all the pain that sin brings will be no more. Halleluiah!

In verse 5-6, John records that Christ, who is sitting on the throne states all is new, and these things are true and faithful, that Christ is Alpha and Omega, meaning the beginning and the end. He states the promise will be fulfilled in that all who thirst can drink of the water from the fountain of life freely. Jesus, in John 4:10, 13, promised the Samaritan woman, that He would give "living water" and she would not thirst again. She will be there, as will all the saints of God, and shall drink of that water freely forever.

Verse 7, states that he who *"overcomes shall inherit all things."* Those that overcome are those who trust in God's provision for their salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is NOT saying that those overcome will merit salvation by their work consistency or steadfastness! This false idea contradicts everything in God's word He has revealed about grace, mercy and how salvation is received. To overcome simply means to believe God and accept His free offer of grace by faith. God emphatically states, *"For*

by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9) No man is righteous and has nothing to offer for atonement for his sins. (Rom. 3:10) Thus those who are present when the Jerusalem is presented are there solely because they believed and by faith accepted God's offer of pardon for sin.

Note that in verse 8, the adjectives which are used to describe those that will not be present and have been cast into the Lake of Fire (Gehenna). The list begins with the "fearful" which means "faithless" and the "unbelieving." Those that are condemned are those that refused to allow God to forgive their sins. These people died in unbelief and "in their sins." Their unbelief condemned them, because that if they had but believed God would have graciously saved them and washed away all their sin. The list is given by God for the sake of those living now who can be forewarned of their destruction if they will not repent. This list says, *“abominable (disgusting), and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”* (Rev. 21:8) God in His love gives ample warning to the unsaved who relish in their sins of the wages of their actions.

In Revelations 1:5, it states that Christ, *“loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood.”* In Isaiah 1:18, the Lord tells us that, *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”* Good works does not wash away sin, only the Blood of Christ does that. We all are sinners, and Christ came to save sinners (Matthew 9:13), and will save all who believe. We must also note that verse 8, clearly indicates that the Lake of Fire is an eternal place, and will exist forever the same as the New Jerusalem. To those who deny the eternity of the punishment of God this statement ends any debate.

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM. Revelation 21:9 - 22:5

One of the seven angels who had the seven vials of judgment comes to John and he is shown the New Jerusalem. Note that the angel refers to the city as the, *“bride, the Lamb's wife”*. Walvoord makes the following comment, "Since a city is not a bride nor a wife, the truth here represented is that the city, the residence of the saints of eternity future, is to be compared to a bride for beauty and is intimately related to Jesus Christ the Lamb." (The Revelation of Jesus Christ, John Walvoord, pg. 317)

There are some who believe that this passage of Scripture, regresses back to the Millennium, and that the New Jerusalem will be set in the heavens over the earth and the resurrected saints will dwell there. However, there is no real reason to suppose that this takes place in the Millennium. The coming of the New Jerusalem, and the eternal state, will logically follow the destruction of the present corrupted world, and the end of sin and rebellion against God. For this as well as many other reasons, it seems to be the proper conclusion that this is a description of the future eternal state of saved men and the kingdom of God established for all eternity.

THE CITY IS DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

The city reflects the glory of God, like a clear stone (jasper) which is clear as crystal.

It is surrounded by a great wall. (Rev. 21:12)

The great wall has twelve gates, with an angel attending each one. Each gate is named after one of the twelve tribes of Israel. (Rev. 21:12)

The wall is a rectangle, and each side has three gates. The city is positioned in alignment with the four points of the earth, north, south, east and west. (Rev. 21:13)

The city has twelve foundations, and in them are the names of the twelve apostles. (Rev.21:14) Note that earlier references to the twenty four elders in the book does not tell their identity. This verse may be indicating that the twenty four elders are the twelve sons of Israel (Jacob), and the twelve apostles.

The physical size of the city is described as being a square rectangle measuring "twelve thousand furlongs" on each side. A furlong is length of an ancient Greek race course, which was equal to 1/8 of a Roman mile, or 220 yards. This would make the city a cube, 1363.64 miles on each side. The walls are 144 cubits. A cubit is believed to be 17.5 inches, which would make the walls 252 feet thick. (Rev. 21:16-17)

The walls are made of something that appears to be as jasper, and the city of what appears to be transparent or clear gold. Jasper is an opaque, impure variety of silica, usually red, yellow or brown in color. It is a gemstone and can be highly polished. The city will be pure gold with will be translucent like glass. (Rev. 21:18)

Each of the twelve foundations are covered with a particular type of precious stone. (Rev. 21:19-21)

1st Jasper	7th Chrysolyte
2nd Sapphire	8th Beryl
3rd Chaledony	9th Topaz
4th Emerald	10th Chrysoprasus
5th Sardonyx	11th Jacinth
6th Sardis	12th Amethyst

Each of the twelve gates is made of a pearl, and the streets are made of transparent gold. (Rev. 21:21)

JOHN NOTES THINGS THAT ARE NOT IN THE NEW JERUSALEM. (Rev. 21:22-27)

It does not have, a temple, a sun, moon, evil or closed gates. There is no need of a temple for sacrifices because Jesus Christ the worthy Lamb is there and He is the temple. With Christ there is no need of the sun and moon as light comes for Jesus Himself. All the

saint of God will have full access to God as the gates of the wonderful city will never be closed because there is no night.

Through these gates shall come the nations which shall honor the Lord. This mention of nations indicates that people will live in various nations. The earth will have one great family, but it seems there will be divisions or some distinctions between the children of God. The verse says, "*And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.*" (Revelation 21:26) In truth, marred by sin, no nation of earth truly had honor and glory. The closest any nation can was Israel in Solomon's reign, but even that was marred by his sinful life style. God has always organized everything He has created. It would seem out of character for the New Heaven and Earth not to have organization and structure.

The concluding statement of Chapter 21 reiterates the truth that there will be no sin and anything that defiles in the city.

GOD TELLS US THINGS ARE IN THIS GREAT CITY: (Rev. 22:1)

John next is shown a pure river of water with crystal clear waters flowing from the very throne of God. The wording is somewhat hard to understand, but it appears that the river is flowing down the center of the street and is coming from the throne of God. It would not have to be a large river and would probably be proportional to its surroundings.

On each side of the river will be a tree of life. It is said to be placed on each side of the river, which could mean that it is one tree with its trunk touching both sides of the river or many trees of that kind. The tree bears fruit year round, and the leaves are said to be for, "the healing of the nations." The question that arises is this, "Why the need of healing if there is no sin or disease in the city?" Walvoord answers it this way:

"The word of 'healing' is *'there upon'*, from which the English word 'therapeutic' is derived, almost directly transliterated from the Greek. Rather than specifically meaning 'healing', it should be understood as 'health giving', as the word in its root meaning has the idea of serving or ministering. In other words, the leaves of the tree promote the enjoyment of life in the new Jerusalem, and are not for correcting ills which do not exist. This, of course, is confirmed by the fact that there is no more curse as indicated in verse 3."¹

In the city will be the Throne of God and of the Lamb. Those in the New Jerusalem will serve the Lord and see his face and have His name in their foreheads. As stated earlier in the city there will be no darkness and no need of any light even in concealed places. (Rev. 22:3-5)

THE CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK. Revelation 22:6-21

God's promises are faithful and true. Man, bound in time, impatiently waits for God to bring about His promises. Yet, God's plans will be fulfilled to the letter. And though it

may seem now like a long time, the angel says *"these things must be shortly done."* Once again the imminent return of Jesus Christ is stressed, *"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."* (Rev. 22:7) The surety of these events is seen in the statement of the immediacy of the fulfilling of the promises. It is fitting that the angel confirms to John that the God's word is true. God is faithful, and those who heed the teachings and warnings of the Book will surely receive a blessing.

JOHN IS OVERCOME. (Rev. 22:8-12)

In awe of all he had seen John falls down and worships at the feet of the angel. Note as in Revelation 19:10, when John had early responded in the same way, the angel again tells him sharply not to do so. Angels are servants the same as was John, the prophets and all who live by the Word of God. Yet, the frailty of man is seen in John's reaction. What he saw was so overcoming in its greatest and splendor John falls down at the feet of the angel who sharply rebukes him. Even in the midst of all that John saw his human weakness takes control.

John is told that he should not seal up the revelations which God has revealed to him. The charge then is given to spread the Word of God. (Rev. 22:10-11) To seal something would be to close it or cover it up. John is told not to seal up this revelation from God, because the *"time was at hand,"* meaning the revelation was given to be shared immediately. It seems that verse 11, is saying that after hearing the teachings of the Book, that those who would not heed its teachings and would always remain in their unjust state needed to be warned. The same applies also to those who believe and follow the Lord.

CHRIST'S SURE RETURN. 22:12-17

The present reality is that Christ will return! It is stated emphatically and plainly, and carries a strong warning. Christ will come and there will be a "pay day." Man will receive the blessing of reward for his works in Christ as a child of God, or will receive the reward of eternal punishment for his evil works, because he would not believe in Christ and have his sins forgiven. The message of the Book of Revelation is that man must deal with Christ, now in salvation and eternal life, or in at the Great White Throne judgment which ends in eternal punishment. Christ is the beginning and the end, he must be dealt with, now or later. *"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."* (Romans 14:11) (Also see Phil. 2:10)

Blessed are those that believe. The promises and joys in the eternal bliss of the New Jerusalem await those who trust in Christ.

None that deny Christ, who bear the weight of their own sins, will enter the gates of heaven.

The Book is an invitation. *"Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* Rev. 22:17

CHRIST'S WARNING TO FALSE TEACHERS. Revelation 22:18-19

Verse 18 is a continuation of the statement made by Christ in the preceding verses. Christ states that anyone who hears the words of the book, and adds to it shall be subject to all the plagues it contains.

There are other warnings in the Bible in regard to tampering with God's Word. (See Deut. 4:2, 12:32, Prov. 30:6, Rev. 1:3) It is a serious matter to distort, misuse, and tamper with the Bible. It will absolutely bring judgment for someone to make statements which cast a shadow over the Bible as being the Word of God. Those who add to Scripture, by claiming modern revelations from God are in fact adding untruth to God's Word. Every modern cult founds their existence on the supposed revelation of some false prophet. They who do so are doomed as are those who follow them.

It is also equally gross sin to misuse, mishandle, and misinterpret the Bible in teaching false doctrine. It is the cunning work of Satan to confuse and mislead. Often sincere, but unskilled or mistaught men teach false doctrine. Those that do so are clearly diminishing and denying Christ's warning, and will absolutely bear the judgment of God for their sin. It is a serious sin to deny or to confuse the God's Truth. Why? Jesus said, "*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" (John 8:32) Any false teaching has its negative effect on those who hear it.

THE BENEDICTION. Revelation 22:20-21

John quotes Christ, stating that He said He would come quickly, (Rev. 22:12) and John soundly proclaims, what should be the heart's desire of all the saints of God, "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus*".

The whole of the Bible is a revelation of the Grace of God towards the sinner. It is fitting to conclude, that each who read this book and believe would be a partaker of Grace of God.
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