

Chapter 21

When we come to chapter 21, the last battle has been fought and won; Satan has been cast into the 'eternal lake of fire and brimstone' (where the Antichrist and False Prophet **are**, having been there 1000 years); the last person has appeared before God and been judged at the Great White throne; the problem of sin has been solved, never to show itself again for all eternity; hell has been cast into the lake of fire (the final hell); death too, has been cast into the fiery lake; and finally, all those whose names were not in the 'book of life' have been cast into the eternal lake of fire.

Remember: While John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos God gave him the 'revelation of Jesus', along with an outline of events that are to take place after the 'rapture' of the Church, which takes place in Rev.4:1.

- A. **21:1.** 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth'. **Note:** According to Scripture, there are three heavens: The atmospheric heaven, (2) The starry heaven, and (3) The 'third heaven', the abode of God (II Cor.12:1,2,4,7-9).
- Some believe the 'third heaven' (God's dwelling place) will not be made new, inasmuch as it is holy, perfect, and is neither marred nor scarred by sin. (I agree.)
 - Here, John speaks of the 'atmospheric heaven', that which has been the domain of Satan and his cohorts (Eph.6:12). It will be made new.
 - 'a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away'. Listen to the words of the Apostle Peter, '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. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth' (II Peter3:10,13).

Note: This 'passing away' of the first heaven and the first earth does not mean annihilation, but a passing from one condition to another. The words 'pass away' were translated from Greek: 'parerchomai'; not meaning 'termination of existence' or 'annihilation', but to pass from one condition of existence to another. **Example:** It's like the person being 'born again'. It's the same person, yet, 'new-born', a 'new creature in Christ Jesus'.

- For years man has spoken of a 'new world order', yet, with something altogether different in mind than the 'order' mentioned here. On this occasion, God is preparing everything for the ultimate 'new world order'. Actually, this is the 'renovation' (or sanctification; purging) of planet earth. During the Millennial Reign of Christ, when He shall rule 1000 years in righteousness and justice, the earth will be in its 'redeemed state', with Christ as Ruler and King. Yet, carnality will be present. The 'Adam nature' will still have its abode in the hearts and lives of many who are still in their mortal bodies. But this renovation will do away with every trace of sin, and, its results.
- Some 800 years before John received the 'Revelation of Jesus Christ', the Prophet Isaiah wrote, 'For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind'. Too, when Peter spoke of the Flood (II Pet.3:6), he said, 'Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished'. **Note:** The planet earth did not pass out of existence when covered by water, nor will this earth cease to exist when it passes through the fire. **Example:** When Noah stepped out of the Ark, he saw a 'new earth', cleansed and ready for a 'new beginning'. And it's the same for those redeemed; at salvation, 'old things are passed away, and all things are become new' (II Cor.5:17). Amen!

- The Psalmist said, He 'laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed forever' (Ps.104:5). And David's son, Solomon, said, 'One generation passeth away and another cometh, but the earth abideth for ever' (Eccl.1:4).

21:2. 'And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband'. That must have been a beautiful sight for John to behold! **Note:** And the wonderful part is: One of these days we too (the saints of God) are going to behold that very city! Amen!

- Some teach, just as there are 'three heavens', there are 'three Jerusalems' mentioned in the New Testament: (1) The earthly Jerusalem, (2) The heavenly Jerusalem (Heb.12:22), and (3) The 'New Jerusalem' (the 'Holy City'). (I'm not sure. Yet, it seems that numbers 2 & 3 are likely one and the same.)

Think about it: The 'new earth' that John saw is not described, although, without doubt, it's going to be a 'Paradise' such as mortal man hasn't seen since the days of the Garden of Eden. Yet, the 'heavenly Jerusalem', the 'Pearly White City' that John saw coming down from God out of heaven, is described in detail. And the only earthly term he could give us, that we might have a reasonable idea as to its splendor and beauty and magnificence, is: It appeared like unto a 'bride adorned for her husband', which is surely the most beautiful sight a man can behold this side of heaven.

- When prophecy reaches this point, 'time', as we know it, will no longer be reckoned for the redeemed who have entered into eternity with their ever-present God. Daniel said, 'His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed' (Dan.7:14b).

V.2b. 'coming down from God out of heaven'. **Note:** There are two major schools of thought: (1) The 'new Jerusalem' will come down from heaven to be God's eternal capital on the earth in the vicinity of present-day Jerusalem, or, (2) 'It will come close to the renewed earth, and will have a near relation to the earth; but it is nowhere said that it ever alights on the earth, or ever becomes part of the earth's material fabric' (Seiss). (Most scholars believe it will come to rest on this earth. I believe it will be suspended above the earth.)

- 'The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it' (Rev.21:24).
- 'The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it' (Rev.21:24).

V.3. 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them'. In that day, there will be no need for a Temple, or Tabernacle, or Sanctuary in which to worship. God will be ever-present (v.22).

- II Cor.6:16. 'God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people'. **Note:** This is what God has longed for since the 'fall' of Adam. And in that day, it is going to be a reality. Adam's 'fall' interrupted God's plan for man, but it didn't alter His plan.

V.4. Some believe this verse has nothing to do with the Church, nor with Christ the Lamb; but speaks of Jehovah God, Himself, who wipes the tears from the eyes of those dwelling on the new earth. **Note:** Verse 7 seems to verify this.

- No more death, sorrow, crying, pain, suffering, or misery. The curse of sin has ended. **Chorus:** What a day, a glorious day, that will be!

V.5. Jehovah God makes a 'divine proclamation', saying, 'I make all things new'. **Note:** He will not repair the old nor improve on that which has been. He will make all things new.

V.6. 'It is done'. It is a settled fact. **Note:** A well-known writer of yesteryear said, 'All creation, all promise, all prophecy, all love, all mercy and grace, and all salvation - have their source in Jehovah God; and in him is their fulfillment'. Amen! When God has His hand in a thing, it cannot fail.

- Any who may be thirsty can be satisfied at the 'fountain of the water of life'.

V.7. To 'overcome' is to get the better of; to win. 'Overcomers' shall inherit all things. A tremendous promise! **Note:** Some of what the overcomer will inherit is listed among the 7 churches of chapters 2 & 3 churches representing the entire 'church age'.

- A. Ephesus - 2:7. To eat of the tree of life.
- B. Smyrna - 2:11. Will not be hurt of the second death.
- C. Pergamos - 2:17. Eat of hidden manna.
- D. Thyatira - 2:26. Will be given power over the nations.
- E. Sardis - 3:5. Be clothed in white raiment; and, will not have name blotted out of book of life.
- F. Philadelphia - 3:12. Be made a pillar in the Temple of God.
- G. Laodicea - 3:21. Grant to sit with me in my throne.
- Too, for the overcomer, God will be his God, and he will be God's son. **Note:** The 'love of God' is beyond comprehension for the human mind. In fact, it's impossible for man to know the fulness of God's love until we receive our glorified bodies.
- My prayer is: May God help us all to be 'overcomers'. Too, that's why I believe Rom.12:1,2 is so important. 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God'.

V.8. A sermon was preached to sinners with this verse as text, entitled, 'Your Next Door Neighbor in Hell'. (Something to think about.) **Illus.** If a couple is planning a family, or desiring to purchase property to build a new home, surely they wouldn't want such as these mentioned here in this verse as neighbors. Yet, for those who reject Christ and end up in hell, that will be their lot.

- 'Fearful'. (According to Greek: Cowardly, ashamed, afraid to confess Christ or to identify themselves with Jesus, the Gospel, or with Christians. **Note:** Many have lost their souls because of this very thing.)
- Abominable. Causing disgust and hatred. (When God calls something an 'abomination', to Him it is disgusting. He hates it.)
- Fornicators. Engage in illicit sex, that which is outside of marriage.
- Sorcerers. Those who claim to communicate with the spirits of the other world (witchcraft, Spiritism, devil-worship, etc.)
- Idolaters. Give worship to someone, or something, other than God - whatever it might be.
- Liars. Possibly the most detestable of them all. **Note:** When speaking of the Church at Ephesus (Rev.2:2), Jesus said, 'I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars'.
- 'the second death' is the result of being a part of the 'second resurrection'. It is to be separated from God forever in the torments of the damned. **Note:** It is believed the 'first death' is either 'being dead in trespasses and sin', or 'physical death'.

Vs.9,10. 'Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife . . . and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem'. **Note:** John saw this while 'in the spirit'. Yet, for you and me, we will not only be present in that day, we will literally experience it - not in a dream, nor vision. Actually, John is saying that the 'bride', the 'Lamb's wife', will consist of all those who reside in the New Jerusalem.

- There is much controversy as to 'who' the 'bride of Christ' actually is. **Note:** This was discussed in Chapter 19.

V.11. John begins to give a description of the New Jerusalem, a city of 'twelves'.

- The dictionary gives several meanings for the word 'jasper'. It is likely a 'diamond', shining like a crystal. (A diamond in a gold setting.)

Vs.12-14. The 'wall' had 12 gates (entranceways), each of solid pearl; with names of 12 Tribes of Israel inscribed. **Note:** The encampment of the Children of Israel during their 40 years or wandering in the wilderness was in this same order as mentioned here. Yes, God is a God of order. Too, Jesus is the 'Pearl of great price' (Matt.13:46); and He is the 'only way to God' (Jn.14:6). Here, since the 'gates' have the names of the 12 tribes of Israel, they will surely have 'access to the city'.

- Twelve angels are stationed at the 12 gates: To admit those allowed in, and to keep out those not allowed in.
- The 'wall' has 12 foundations of precious stones, upon which are written the names of the 12 Apostles. And it is 144 cubits (216') high. **Note:** Some believe this speaks of the thickness of the wall rather than its height. If so, this would help explain the reason for its 12 foundations.

Vs.15-21. The length, width, and height of the 'city' is 12000 furlongs (1500 miles in each direction).

Note: Some believe it will be as a 'pyramid', with its height tapered to a point. Others believe it will be a 'cube', such as the 'Holy of Holies' of the Old Testament tabernacle, which measured 15 cubits by 15 cubits (cube). (This is what I believe as well.)

Vs.21b-27. The Interior of the New Jerusalem. We have seen the walls, foundations, gates, and angelic guards. Now, we enter through the gates into the city, itself.

- First, we see the 'street of pure gold'. **Notice:** 'Street' (singular) here, and in Rev.22:2. One writer said that all who live in this city will live on 'Main Street', and there will be no 'back streets'. **Note:** The Gr. 'platela' is the same word used in Matt.6:5; 12:19; Lu.10:10, etc. - all, of which, are translated 'streets'. With 12 gates (entranceways), you would think there would have to be at least 12 'boulevards' or 'avenues'.
- 'No temple therein'. No need for a 'meeting place' or 'house of worship'. 'For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it'. (We in them, and they in us.)
- 'No need for light' (sun or moon). 'For the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof'. **Note:** During the millennial reign of Christ, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun; and the light of the sun will be increased sevenfold (Isa.30:26). But, here, the glory of God outshines them all. This doesn't mean the sun and moon will cease to shine during the eon of ages; only that there will be no need for them in the New Jerusalem. Through eternity, the sun and moon, and day and night, will not cease here on earth.

Vs.24-26. 'Nations of them which are saved (spared) shall walk in the light of it'. **Note:** These are the 'Sheep nations' (Matt.25:31-46), which were friendly to Israel during the reign of Antichrist; and, those who refused to follow Gog and Magog when Satan was loosed for a little season from the bottomless pit. They will traffic in the light of the New Jerusalem. **Note:** Some believe they will pass in and out of its gates, which will never be shut.

- Too, they will have natural kings over them ('kings of the earth'), and these kings will bring their glory and honor into the city.

V.27. The tragedy of Genesis 3 will never be repeated - under no circumstances, nor by any means.