

Revelation 21

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It's been difficult, these past two weeks, to concentrate on writing and teaching. Many thoughts and fears, some rational, some irrational, seeking to overwhelm and crowd out the peace and comfort of the Holy Spirit. It has been a microcosm of our reality in these last days... what we've been studying together. We have walked through the entire book of Revelation... learning and understanding what God has in store for us, His children, and for the unbelieving World and yet, as we live here and now... It would be easy for any of us to give up, thinking, 'what's the use?... the world just keeps getting worse and worse... why doesn't He come back?' But I didn't want to give up as we are about to finish this most important book... Jesus Christ's final message before He returns for us at the Rapture. I want to complete this and finish it well; I want to complete life and finish well... we all do.

The Lord Jesus Christ intended these last two chapters to be what keeps us going, even when the going is hard... He meant this to be what would help us to 'finish well' until we stand before Him... whether each of our individual races is finished through death at old age, death through persecution, death from sickness or accident or whether we remain alive until the Rapture. This small glimpse of our eternal reward and glory is what He planned to help us continue moving forward, setting our minds on the things above, fixing our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith.

In our journey through Revelation, we've just come through the most momentous time in all of human history... the soon coming Rapture, the Tribulation, Christ's Return at Armageddon, the Antichrist and False Prophet cast into the Lake of Fire, the Millennial Reign of the Lord Jesus Christ with us, His Bride, ruling and reigning with Him while Satan has been bound in the Bottomless Pit, being released for a short time at the end of the Millennium to lead a final rebellion against God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan was then cast into the Lake of Fire and the lost dead, from all time, were raised to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment after which they were all cast into the Lake of Fire.

That brings us now to the final two chapters.

Chapter 21: Now I saw a **new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

The word John uses here for *new* is ***kainos: of a new kind, unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of.*** It means, not just another, newer model of the same thing... it means new as in completely different... as if you rode an old bicycle which finally broke down and God provided you with an interstellar rocket ship... what God has planned for us is beyond even our ability to imagine.

We can imagine the kind of world we will live in during the Millennium, the 1000 year reign of Jesus Christ on Earth, it will be a '*reperfected*' version of something familiar... like in the Garden of Eden before sin brought death and decay to everything. When we think of the most beautiful places of Earth today... we can imagine a little of what the Millennial World will be like.

But this... this NEW Heaven and NEW Earth are completely beyond our understanding... we have no frame of reference. God has shown John some of it and John is able to describe a little of it for us but in reality... we are unable to grasp what God has planned.

The present Heaven and Earth will have 'passed away.' Peter wrote, 'But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which ***the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.***'¹¹ Therefore, since all these things ***will be dissolved***, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which ***the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and***

the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, ***look for new heavens and a new earth*** in which righteousness dwells. 2 Pet 3:10

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing, and her people a joy. ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people. Isaiah 65:17

We don't know how He will do it, but He will do it. He created everything and everything is held together by His will. 'For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. *All things were created through Him and for Him.* ¹⁷ ***And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.***' Col 1:16

At His exact planned moment, He will cause it to cease to exist and will then create something completely new and unimaginable... only He can imagine and create the wonders He has planned for us... and it says there will be no more ocean in the New Earth... maybe rivers and lakes, but no ocean.

² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.

Old Jerusalem, the capital city of earthly Israel has been destroyed. This is not a remade Old Jerusalem... this is God's city, God's home... He created it... it is to this glorious city, God's home, that the Lord Jesus Christ went to prepare places, homes, apartments for each of us...

'Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² ***In My Father's house*** are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go ***to prepare a place for you.*** ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.' John 14:1

Jesus didn't go to prepare the Father's House... He went to prepare places ***in*** the Father's House.

'I desire that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am.' John 17:24

Imagine you are a member of a European Royal House... a large extended family. You all live in a huge palace... 437 rooms on 5 floors in 4 wings surrounding central fountains and gardens. Every one of you has your own large, elegant apartment consisting of 7 rooms in one of the 4 wings.

Now imagine it 10,000 times larger and more elegant and then realize, that imagination is but a shadow of the New Jerusalem.

This is the Father's House... this is where He lives and where we will live... this is the Capital City of Heaven and New Earth. This is God's House... this is where we will live with Him and where He will live among us as a Father with His beloved children.

Behold what manner of love the Father has given unto us, that we should be called children of God! 1 John 3:1

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name. John 1:12

Do you remember when we studied the seven Feasts of God given to Israel? The first four, the Spring Feasts were fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ at His first coming. Two of the Fall Feasts will be fulfilled at His return. The final Feast, Tabernacles, is fulfilled here... the Tabernacle of God comes down out of Heaven... God 'tabernacles' among His people forever... He makes His home among us and we live with Him. God the Father,

with the children He chose for Himself before the World was created... the Bride He chose to create for His Son.

New Jerusalem is the place where our citizenship is **now**. We are citizens of that place... not Earth. We are strangers here... aliens... we don't belong. The citizens of this place hate us; they resent us and want to be rid of us. We are citizens in God's Kingdom of Light... here, it is the kingdom of darkness... we are foreigners here.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His Glorious Body. Phps 3:20

'For we wait for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God... we are strangers and pilgrims on the Earth... and now we desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called our God, for **He has prepared** a city for us.' Heb. 11 It's already been prepared.

⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be **no more death**, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the **former things have passed away.**"

Death, sorrow, crying and pain... all caused by the curse of sin and corruption... all these will have passed away because all sin and corruption will have passed away. Death was cast into the Lake of Fire. Only perfection will remain.

We will have perfect glorified bodies like the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you remember some of the things He did in His new body? He disappeared, He moved through walls, He flew upward to Heaven... and yet He was real... He was not just Spiritual... He was also Physical. He cooked fish and ate; they touched Him. Our bodies will be like His and be able to do what His does. We will never again experience pain or sadness; there will never again be any death or decay... never again any sin... no sinful thoughts or desires... only Joy... complete Joy and Contentment... always, forever... complete Peace... Love, Joy, Peace, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness and Gentleness. Patience and self-control will not be needed... they are only necessary now because of sin or because of trials.

⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I **make all things new.**" And He said to me, "**Write, for these words are true and faithful.**"

Everything will be completely new... different... unimaginably Glorious and Majestic. Anything that an Earthly king has ever imagined and built... God's plans are a million times superior!

He reminds us again... everything He is telling us is absolutely true and reliable... more true and reliable than anything we can see or touch now.

When He says He will destroy and then create a new Heaven and Earth, it's important to remember that He is speaking primarily of the Earth and what is related to it. Obviously some things He will not destroy. We will be with Him in Heaven... we will remain and the place that Jesus went away to prepare for us will remain. The Lake of Fire and all the people in it will remain forever. Remember... when God finished creating... He declared that it was good... done right. The first sin, the first corruption was in the heart of Lucifer himself. Then Man and the Earth were corrupted by sin. The part of Heaven to which Satan has been allowed access has been corrupted to some degree. Whatever parts of Space... this present Solar System and Galaxy to which Satan and His Angels have had access, have been corrupted. All those, at least, will be destroyed and made new... completely new and different.

⁶ And He said to me, "**It is done!** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the **Beginning and the End**. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

Jesus Christ, Lord of Creation... He is the beginning, the initiator, the doer of Creation... and He is the end, the completer, the finisher of Creation. Before Creation, before time... all that existed was God Himself, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit... perfect Oneness, perfect Unity, perfect Fellowship, perfect Love and Goodness. After this present Creation, after time is no more... it will be the same... God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit... perfect Fellowship... but something else will have been added... the plan and purpose of all time and creation... we will have been added into that perfect Unity and Fellowship... us... and the place He will have created for us to live with Himself for all Eternity... the New Jerusalem... and a new unimaginably glorious and joyful Universe. We will live forever... Eternal Life... never ending.

⁷ ***He who overcomes shall inherit all things***, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

Remember at the end of the 7 letters to the 7 churches in chapters 2 and 3... 'He who overcomes... I will grant 'various wonderful rewards...' Who did we discover were the 'overcomers?' Every born again child of God is an overcomer and an heir of God... we are fellow heirs with Christ... heirs of ALL things.

'For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?' 1 John 5:4

'The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...' Rom 8:16

⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

We are all sinners; we all sin... we have all done some of those things. He is not talking about the Children of God... all our sin was forgiven at the Cross. This is speaking of all those who already stood before the Lord Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment, who have now been thrown into the Lake of Fire, to be punished for all eternity... all those throughout History who rejected God's love and forgiveness through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This not only includes those who consciously rejected God's forgiveness in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, but there will also be countless ones who thought they were Christians... those of the Apostate Church whose self-righteousness was based on their own ideas of good work and sacrifice... of being better than others, of being 'good enough,' of not really needing to be forgiven... having decided to be 'followers of Jesus,' 'Christ followers,' 'living like Jesus,' thinking that He was an example to be copied instead of realizing that our only hope of salvation is fully trusting in Jesus Christ and His Life, His Death on the Cross and His Resurrection, recognizing that we could never be good enough.

Being a true '***follower of Jesus***' does not mean living like He lived... no one ever could. He lived that perfect life ***for us***. It doesn't mean loving and serving the World... He said, 'Love not the World or the things in it.'

To be a true follower of Jesus means to ***follow Him in death***... to deny one's self... to take up one's cross daily. Daily dying to self... ***that's the only true 'follower of Jesus.'***

The New Jerusalem

⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God, ¹¹ having the Glory of God. Her light *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

New Jerusalem is where the Bride of Christ will be... where we will live forever. Until now, the Bride of Christ has consisted of only the true Church. Now, at the end of time... into Eternity... the Bride will also include Old

Testament Saints, Church Saints and Tribulation Saints... we will all be the people of God, we will all be the Bride of Christ.

This has been the plan and purpose of God from Eternity past... to create for Himself a special, unique people who would forever glorify Him and whom He would glorify forever.

How much will God glorify us? The Word says, 'For man... is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.' 1 Cor 11 An excellent wife *is* the crown of her husband. Prov 12

In other words... God created us not just **for** His Glory, but **as** His Glory... that we would forever be His trophy ... the testament to His Goodness, Grace, Holiness, Love... every aspect of God will be glorified as He glorifies us. As a wife is the glory of her husband... so we, as the Bride of Christ are the Glory of Jesus Christ... we are a reminder to all Creation... forever... of what He was willing to do for us. As God glorifies us, the Bride, He will be glorifying His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ... therefore, we will be eternally glorified beyond measure.

¹² Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³ three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. ¹⁴ Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The Bride will then include all the redeemed from all time.

¹⁵ And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶ The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. ¹⁷ Then he measured its wall: one hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according* to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.

A furlong is 1/8 mile. New Jerusalem is 1500 miles on each side and 1500 miles high. That's about half the size of the continental US as well as being also that same height. That is quite a city! That's large enough for 3.375 billion people, about half the World's present population, to each have a huge apartment... 1 mile long, 1 mile wide, with a ceiling 1 mile high... and that's just our home base when we aren't out traveling the Universe, or ruling and reigning in whatever area of responsibility with which He charges us, as reward for our faithful service now. The Wall is 288 feet high... almost a football field.

¹⁸ The construction of its wall was *of* jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city *were* adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation *was* jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ The twelve gates *were* twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city *was* pure gold, like transparent glass.

Here are some examples of this being beyond our ability to even imagine. Even with all these beautiful, bright, colorful stones... the entire place is made of pure gold... and not gold like we've ever seen. This is gold so pure that it is actually clear... like glass... not to mention the fact that each gate is made from an individual pearl... where did God get 12 pearls that size!? Certainly He could have just created them... or, perhaps they came from gigantic oysters which lived and grew for the 1000 years of the Millennium!

The Glory of the New Jerusalem

²² But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light.

The City has no need of a Temple... God Himself will live with us. We will have complete access to Him always. We will be in perfect fellowship with Him forever.

The light of the Glory of God will illuminate us and all Creation forever. There will be no dark corners in New Jerusalem... His Glory will shine into and through every transparent gold wall. No one will hide because there will be nothing to hide... no sin... no deception.

²⁴ And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. ²⁵ Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

There will still be nations on the New Earth and kings over every nation with the Lord Jesus Christ reigning as King of kings... people not living within New Jerusalem.

It appears that there will be those, like us who will possess Eternal Life but there will also be those on the Earth, making up the Nations of the Earth, who will be able to continue living forever by drinking the Water of Life and by using the leaves from the Tree of Life for healing... we'll see more next chapter.

Humans were created in the image of God... created to think, to imagine, to work, to create... to expand.

Remember, we read... 'Of the **increase of His government** and peace *there will be* no end. Isa. 9:7

The increase of the government of the Lord Jesus Christ will never end. Will we be eternally ruling and reigning in His Kingdom as it expands outward, forever, in His Universe?

God created the entire Universe for a purpose... not just as unseen, hidden invisible blackness. He created it for His Glory. For Him to be glorified in it, it must be seen and experienced and used for His intended purposes.

I'm still thinking on this... but from the different things written, it seems to not be quite as clearly defined as we may have thought. We'll see more of this next time.

The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Psa 19:1

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things of the Earth. Col 3:2