

After witnessing the white throne judgment in the last chapter and the final banishment of sin, John now sees the glorious future that God has planned for His people in the New Jerusalem, dwelling with them and providing for everything they need as they serve Him.

¹ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

“And I saw a new heaven [sky; universe] and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” - The current heaven and earth (universe), which is the the same as where Christ will establish His earthly millennial kingdom, will have ceased to exist at this time. Commentators believe that this is what Peter talks about in 2 Peter 3:10-13 when he speaks of “the elements melting with fervent heat” and occurs at the White Throne Judgment in Rev. 20:11 when God judges the unbelieving dead. It describes God as being the One “from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.” God now replaces the first heaven and earth with a new one that is untainted by sin.

“and there was no more sea” - Why no more sea? The sea suggests judgment, as the world was destroyed by the judgment of the flood in Gen. 7. We saw last week how that the sea, along with death and hell, gave up the dead that were in them so that they could be judged at the “white throne judgment” (Rev. 20:11-15). If you subscribe to the “gap theory” (that there is an indeterminate amount of time between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2 during which Satan rebelled against God) then the water overflowing the earth at that time came from a flood judgment that was a consequence of Satan’s fall and rebellion against God. That water eventually became the oceans and seas that we know today. The fact that there will be no more sea speaks of the fact that all judgment will be a thing of the past for there will be no more sin.

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.

Just before His crucifixion Jesus told His disciples: ² *In my Father's house are many mansions [dwelling places]: 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* (John 14:2-3). Now John is seeing the place that Christ has prepared for His saints to live, like a bridegroom in a Jewish wedding. Christ went away to prepare the place for His bride and now has come the time for Him and her to dwell together. This is the city that Abraham looked for: *“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”* (Heb. 11:10).

³ 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.

As John sees the new Jerusalem coming down, a great voice declares how that God’s “tabernacle” (tent; dwelling) is now with men. God could never dwell with men before because of their sinfulness but now men will be holy and without sin because they have been cleansed by the blood of Christ. The relationship between God and men will be what He has always intended, with men in perfect fellowship with their God.

⁴ And 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 the former things are passed away.

Without sin and the grief it causes there will be no more reason for death (the penalty of sin), sorrow, crying, or pain because all the things that caused them will no longer be present. God will replace those tears with the joy of an eternity with Him, free from sin and its consequences.

⁵ And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. ⁶ And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. ⁷ He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new” – God Himself speaks and declares that He has recreated all things. All that we have known from the past (sin and its wages and the creation tainted by it) are gone and the new heaven and earth are not contaminated with anything prior.

“And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” – God wants to ensure that John writes down what he is hearing and seeing so that his readers will get a glimpse of the future God has planned for His people. He should also write them down because they are the truth and will assuredly come to pass.

“And he said unto me, It is done” – God’s plan has been completed. Sin and evil has been dealt with and redemption of the saints has been accomplished. Christ is apparently speaking and the statement “It is done” is reminiscent of His statement on the cross: “It is finished!”

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end” – Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, so Christ is expressing that everything begins and ends with Him. He created everything and He is the One Who will bring it to a conclusion, all according to His will.

“I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” – Christ supplies all our spiritual needs and everything we need for eternal life. **John 7:37-38** ³⁷ *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.* ³⁸ *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”*

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” – As we saw throughout chapters 2-3, an overcomer is one who has been born again and thus is victorious over sin through faith in the blood of Christ. **1 John 5:4** *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”* Christ guarantees the eternal relationship between Himself and those He has redeemed: “I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” Because we are sons (and daughters), we will inherit “all things” (all blessings) from God.

⁸ But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, 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.

The New Jerusalem, as well as the new heaven and earth, will be completely free from sin. No sinners will have a part in it because they will have been judged in the lake of fire. One interesting characteristic mentioned of those who will be in the lake of fire are those who are “fearful,” which apparently refers to those who professed Christ but were not genuinely born-again as evidenced by the fact that they exercised self-preservation rather than standing for Christ in the face of persecution or death.

⁹ And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

John has already seen the New Jerusalem coming down “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (v. 2). Now one of the angels from the group of seven with the vial judgments invites John to come with him to see “the bride, the Lamb’s wife” in more detail.

Verses 10-21: John is carried away in the spirit to an elevated position that gives him a good view of the New Jerusalem as it descends from God out of heaven. He describes a beautiful city shining with the glory of God like a great diamond, having twelve gates and built on twelve foundations. The city appears to be a cube with each of its sides 1,400 miles long and will be the place where God will dwell eternally with His redeemed.

²² And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. ²³ And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

John saw no temple in the city and indeed there will be no need for a temple as a place of worship. God’s presence and glory will fill the entire city and so there will be no need for a designated place to worship and fellowship with God. There will be no place in the city that you can go where His glory does not permeate and illuminate everything and so there will be no need for external light sources such as the sun or moon.

²⁴ And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. ²⁵ And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. ²⁷ And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Commentators admit that these verses are a bit difficult to interpret. “The nations” may refer to Gentile peoples that are redeemed and will live on the new earth in the light of the New Jerusalem. If so, then the New Jerusalem may be primarily the residence of Israel and the kings of the earth will be allowed to come and go as they please within the city and they use their glory and honor to glorify God. On earth the gates of a city were closed at night to keep enemies out but that will be unnecessary in the New Jerusalem because it will never be night there. All who would defile the city with their sinful presence will be in the lake of fire and never be able to enter the city.

Revelation 22

¹ And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The idea of a life giving river emanating from the throne of God is not new, for we saw this in our studies in Zechariah and Ezekiel. Zech. 14:8 and Ezek. 47:1-12 describe there being a river emanating from the throne of Christ during the millennial kingdom. Ezekiel goes on to describe trees on either side of the river with leaves for meat and medicine. The river and trees are apparently a preview of the New Jerusalem for the tree of life, which was first seen in the Garden of Eden, is present in the city. The entire scene speaks of God’s provision for His people.

³ And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: ⁴ And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

“And there shall be no more curse” – Mankind will no longer be under the curse that God placed on them because of sin, for all sin will have been purged and mankind redeemed.

“but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him” – The curse of sin separated God from man but in the New Jerusalem God’s throne will be among His people and they will be able to serve Him with no separation. When God dwelt among His people Israel He was separated within a tabernacle/temple behind a veil with restricted access to His presence. After the cross of Christ the veil has been torn open and we can “come boldly unto the throne of grace” (Heb. 4:16) into the presence of God. This access will become fully realized in the New Jerusalem.

“And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads” – This statement expresses the full fellowship between God and His people as we will have unrestricted access to His presence. God had told Moses “thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Ex. 33:20) but in the New Jerusalem the people of God will be able to see His face. The name of God in our foreheads speaks of His ownership of us and that He will never reject us.

⁵ And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

“And there shall be no night there...” - There will be no possibility of night coming to the New Jerusalem because it will be illuminated by the glory of God (Rev. 21:23 “*And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*”). There will be no need for the sun or an artificial light to produce light after dark.

“and they shall reign for ever and ever” – The residents of the city will be given authority. Authority over what? That will be for God to decide. Perhaps over the earth, or as one commentator suggested, over other celestial parts of God’s creation (galaxies, solar systems?).