

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

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THE RESTORATION OF PARADISE (Rev. 22:1-5)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In the previous chapter John saw the exterior of the New Jerusalem but now he sees the interior. The New Jerusalem seemed to be all mineral and not vegetable. Its appearance is like the dazzling display of a fabulous jewelry but we wonder if there is soft grass to sit on or green trees to enjoy or water to drink or heavenly food. Here are presented the elements that add a rich softness to this city of elaborate beauty.

II. THE GARDEN OF EDEN

v.1 "And he showed me a [a]pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb."

- A. John is still shown new aspects of the city; he saw the river of life, pure and crystalline as a bright and sparkling, uncontaminated stream that quickens; which speaks of a literal river and the refreshment and sustenance that God provides through the water of eternal life (**Gen. 2:10, 13-14; Ps. 36:9; Zac. 14:8**) that springs from the throne of God and the Lamb. We should not confuse this river with the one that flows from the temple of Jerusalem during the Millennium (**Ez. 47:1, 9, 12; Zech. 14:8**).
- B. Both the light we see in this chapter and the river have no origin in nature but in God Himself who is the inexhaustible source of all life. This heavenly river of the New Jerusalem came "**from the throne**" that belongs to "**God**" and to the "**Lamb**" (**Rev. 3:21; Isa. 35:6-9; Heb. 1:3**). And evidently it was at the end and center of the main street of the city and on both sides of the river the tree of life grows...

v.2 "[The river that came out of the throne] It flowed down the center of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations."

- A. To understand the magnitude of what happens in this passage we have to go back to the beginning of creation. This "**tree of life**" is the same as it was in the Garden of Eden here on earth.

Gn. 2: 9 "And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

- B. This tree was there to preserve the life of Adam and Eve, but the fall caused the loss of this wonderful gift. The man was thrown out of the garden so that he would not eat it and live forever. That is why God restricted access to this tree.

Gn. 3:22 "Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever. "

- C. The tree was preserved in paradise so we know that in the New Jerusalem life will be prolonged forever. No created being can endure apart from the Creator. In the eternal city, residents will have access to the tree of life.
- D. A tree that grows by the river is the epitome of a fruitful tree (**Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:8; Ez. 19:10; 47:12**). This tree, more than by seasons, bears fruit perpetually, producing a new

harvest **"each month"** of the year. Most fruit trees in the current creation bear fruit only a few months each year at the most. In contrast, the blessing of the fruitfulness of God throughout the year will typify life on the new earth.

- E. **"The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations."** The word **"heal"** really means "health" (Gr. *Therapeuta*). Since there will be no death to be healed in the new land, the "leaves" of this tree will promote the permanent well-being of the inhabitants of this city. They will provide relief from the other negative conditions of the old creation, such as wiping away tears and removing pain (**Rev. 21:4; Ez. 47:12**). **The promise made to the overcomers that persevere in their first love is fulfilled here:**

Rev. 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

- F. Those who win are literal people and so are the fruits of this tree so that they eat them to prolong their life forever. On the other hand, **"nations"** are groups of people in the new creation seen according to their origin in the previous creation (**21:24**).

v.3 "No longer will there be a curse upon anything. For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him."

- A. **"There will no longer be (any) curse."** This is really good news because the statement is total, the same thing that happened in the old creation will never happen again. The **"curse"** was what God pronounced on the first creation by cause of sin (**Zech. 14:11; Mal. 4:6**) but now thanks to the redemptive work of Christ the people of God will have intimate communion with Him because the curse that separated us will have been permanently removed.

Zech. 14:11 "The people shall dwell in it; And no longer shall there be utter destruction, But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited."

- B. Evidently, **"His servants"** that is to say, we are going to serve the Father and the Son in the new creation; in fact it was for those of us who served him that God gave the revelation of Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation.

Rev.1:1 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place..."

- G. The Greek word for "serving" (gr: *latreuo*) suggests priestly service, in view of its other uses in this book (**Rev. 5:10; 20:6**).

Rev. 1:5b-6 "...To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen"

- H. How glorious to know that it is reserved for us to have communion and serve the Father and the Lamb forever; This is one of the greatest privileges; **God not only loves us to enjoy us but also to make us useful for Him.** The saints will not be lazy in the eternal state, but rather they will be administering government purposes with His authority over millions of galaxies forever..

v.4 "They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads."

- A. There is no doubt that one of the most glorious verses of the book of Revelation is this one. It is the end of God's glorious love story with His beloved people, experiencing personal and intimate communion and marked by the eternal identity of the Father and

the Son upon us. If the beast marked the front (or identity) of the rebels (**Rev. 13:16**); the Father marks His own with His name forever. We can contemplate Him because we will be pure in heart, righteous and holy (**Mt. 5:8; Heb. 12:14**)

Ps. 11: 7 ***"For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright."***

- B. Adam and Eve's sin broke their communion with God and they hid from Him (**Gen. 3:8; Ex. 33:20, 23**) but in the restoration of all things (**Acts 3:21**) we will see His face. Our ability to see the glory of God is now limited (**Job 19:25-27; 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 9:7**), but then it will no longer have impediments (**1 John 3: 2**).

Ex. 33:18-20 ***"And he [Moses] said, "Please, show me Your glory." 19 Then He [The Lord] said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." 20 But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."***

1 Cor. 13:12 ***"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."***

- C. Having His name on our foreheads means that we will be His servants, children and heirs, and reflect His divine glory in ourselves. Having the **"name"** (seal or logo) of God on one's body appears three times before in this book (**3:12; 7:3; 14: 1**). In each case it is a great privilege, which indicates ownership and protection, not just identification (**Ex. 28:36-38**). **Also here is the fulfillment of this other promise made to the overcomers who remain faithful until the end**

Rev. 3:12 ***"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name"***

- D. This is where everything that happens in the book of Revelation is directed and is the eternal purpose of our lives; the reason why we will fight to the end against sin because our reward is too glorious to be lost for the temporary delight of sin (**Heb. 11:25**).

v.5 ***"There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever"***

- E. The final point that John emphasized was the great glory of God intensely bright that will illuminate the whole new earth (**21:23-25; Zech. 14: 6-7, 9**). He mentioned this earlier to show how glorious the city will be, but now he emphasizes what a wonderful blessing it will be for the inhabitants of the city (**Num. 6:22-27**). He added that his servants **"will reign"** with Him **"forever"**, not only during the millennial kingdom (**20:4, 6**) but even beyond "forever and ever."
- F. This is the fulfillment of God's desire and command that man must rule over His creation (**Gen. 1:26**). Obviously, faithful believers will have more authority in the new creation than unfaithful believers, as will also be true during the Millennium (**Mt. 25:14-30; Luke 19: 11-27**). However, we should not think of a type of reign in which some people become objects of oppression. **Our faithfulness in this life prepares us for a superior service in heaven.**

- G. The term **"forever and ever"** (20:10; 21:5) also implies the continuation of time, without end. In addition, the reference to months (v.2) implies the sequence of events. The references to distances speak of a creation in which there is not only time, but also physical space (21:2, 3, 8, 10, 13-17, 24-27; 22:1-2).

III. REVELATION NOW

- A. God's restoration plan is unmatched, He will fulfill what has been proposed: to have a communion with His own forever. God does not give up despite the evil of man and the difficulty of the task.
- B. Commentator Newell says: **'We do well to return again and again to Revelation 21 and 22, because it is the end of the pilgrim's journey. The clearer the vision for the pilgrim of the beauty and glory of the city to which he travels, the less the immediate surroundings of his trip attract him.'**
- C. **The purpose of studying the end times is not simply information but worship.** This final vision of the book is also the climax and expression of the main point of the Revelation. This vision is placed at the end of the book to underline in writing the basis of the final goal: **to exhort the people of God to remain faithful until the end to inherit the final salvation (1 Pe. 1:5).**
- D. The Bible begins with the description of man in Eden, the garden of the Lord and everything that was broken by the sin of man and by the entrance of the ancient serpent but it is not until it is thrown into the lake of fire that this privilege is renovated and restored for man. God visited man in the Garden of Eden revealing Himself and His wonderful works and will do it again in the new creation because Jesus regained access to the lost paradise:

Lk. 23:43 "And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

2 Cor. 12:2 y 4 "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.... 4 ...into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How does the promise to eat of the tree of life keep you in your first love for Christ?
2. How do you motivate yourself to continue fighting against sin and be faithful until the end because of the mark that God will put on those who overcome?
3. What surprises you most about this week's teaching and why? Share it with a member of your family or a person close to you.