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The Mission

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Revelation 21-22

So last time we made it through verse 21 of chapter 21. And there the Apostle John left us at the pearly gates looking into entering heaven. And remember what they were made out of?

They were each made from a single pearl. And though we're not told exactly how tall or how wide these gates were, we do know that the city itself, the New Jerusalem, which John saw come down out of heaven and our future heavenly home, was measured by an angel as being 1500 miles square and 1500 miles high. That's a building that would take up the better part of the entire eastern United States and also stand just as tall.

And so for these 12 gates to even appear right and not look out of place, they would at least have to be proportional to the building they were introducing. And so whatever their actual size, they're gigantic gates and gigantic pearls and much bigger and more beautiful than anything we've ever seen or could even imagine.

And then in the last part of verse 21 we're told what most everyone knows or has heard about heaven. We're told about the streets of gold. And though most of us have only seen gold which contains impurities and is the color we call gold, this gold and these streets are constructed of a gold that will be so pure that it will appear as glass. Its will literally be so pure that it will be clear like glass.

In other words, just like God, these streets and this entire city for that matter, will be without even one imperfection or impurity.

Revelation 21:21 says, 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.

And then John takes us inside these pearly gates for a tour of this great city. And the first thing he notices and the first thing he tells us, is that there's no temple. In verse 22 he says,

22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Up until this point there had been a temple in heaven and we have many scriptures that tell us that.

Revelation 7:13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"

14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know."

So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.

In Revelation 11:19, Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

And also another half a dozen or so scriptures in Revelation verify that that up until this point there was a temple in heaven. But here it's been done away with, because the glory of God and Jesus will fill the entire earth. And we won't have to go to a special place to worship Him.

Life will be worship and worship will be our life.

And then in verse 23 John tells us that

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 new heaven and the new earth will be different than the one we're familiar with today. It won't be dependent on the moon and the sun for its cycles of light and darkness or seasons or tides.

In fact, there won't be any seas or oceans in the new earth and so there won't be any tides either. And whether there will even be a sun and or moon is debatable. We're just told neither will be needed.

And then in verse 24

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.

In other words, there won't be any social classes on the new part and heaven. There will be former kings and queens and presidents and there will be former beggars and homeless people, and we won't know or care about their background or history.

In other words, those who enter this heavenly city will surrender their earthly glory. There'll be no pride in heaven.

And then in verse 25, he says

25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).

Back in ancient times, the gates of the city would be closed at night to keep out the enemies or intruders. But there won't be any enemies or intruders in heaven. No need for security cameras or security systems or police departments or jails or prisons.

It'll be a place of rest.

Revelation 14:13, Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”

And then verse 26 tells us that not only will the people surrender their glory in heaven, but also the nations. In other words, there won't be any division in heaven. No seas to divide the people physically and no nations to divide the people politically.

26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.

Verse 27,

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.

All of heaven will be clean spiritually. There won't be any sin in heaven. No lying in heaven. No murders, no jealousy, no covetous, no stealing or talking back to your parents or being apathetic about coming to church or serving others. All and people and all things will be the way God intended for them to be in the beginning in the garden of Eden and no Satan will be there to change the course of eternity.

And so that concludes chapter 21 and chapter 22 begins as a continuation of this tour of the new heaven and earth. And in verse 1, John sees a river.

Revelation 22:1, And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Now, this is not a river as we know it today. In fact, this is not water as we know it today. This is rather a symbol of eternal life. The river he says was clear as crystal which allows it to reflect the glory of God. And as God's glory flows from the throne, it appears as a unending stream of pure water.

2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The tree of life mentioned is heaven's version of the tree of life which was in the garden of Eden way back in Genesis. Only this tree provides for those who will be immortal. It will be a symbol if you will of the blessing of eternal life.

The fact that there will be 12 different fruits just points to the variety which will be available in heaven. There won't be any boredom or same old same old in heaven.

And every month, well, that doesn't refer to time, because there won't be any time in heaven. There won't be any day or night or day of the week or month or year. And no more birthdays to keep up with; thank the Lord.

And then in verse 3,

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.

As John toured this new heaven one thing stood out. The curse had been done away with. There was no more curse. There will be no more pain or sorrow or separation or death in heaven. Thank God.

And then like was mentioned before, there'll be no temple in heaven because we'll actually see the face of God. Verse 4 says,

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

In other words we'll be marked for eternity as to who we belong to. The redeemed of the Lord will have no doubt who they belong to and in verse 5 again we're told;

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.

And then beginning in verse 6 of Revelation chapter 22, we have God's final Words and blessing.

Now, as we all know, a person's final words if they're given a chance to speak them, are most times their most meaningful and inspiring. And the words of the Apostle John are of course no exception. In fact, not only are they inspiring; but as we all know, they're also divinely inspired.

And in **verse 6** we have a final blessing:

He said to me, **6 “These words are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.**

Now, the speaker here of course is an angel. And here he affirms that John's vision of what he has seen is real—and also that what he has seen concerning the future will come to pass.

And then in verse 7, he angel quotes Christ; saying,
7 “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

Now, if Jesus said that He was coming soon and that was over 2,000 years ago, then today no doubt is sooner than ever! Amen!

And then down in verse 10, the angel reemphasizes that fact, when he says, “The time is near.” And so we can say with certainty that today is nearer than ever for the return of Christ!

And the truth is, we ought to be living our lives like we believe that! We ought to be living light of that day and anticipating our future in heaven! Prophecies about the future are not given to us just to satisfy our curiosity. They're given to us to develop our character and our confidence as we live out our lives in the present.

And then in verses 8 & 9, John is so overwhelmed by all of what the angel has shown him, that he literally falls down before the angel and begins to worship him. And if you remember, this also happened back in chapter 19; and just like before, the angel reminds John that he's just another fellow servant—and that God, not he deserves to be worshipped.

And then next, John receives some final instructions. In verse **10 he's told, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. 11 He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."**

In other words, "Don't keep this to yourself. Tell it to the church, and then tell it to the world."

And friend, these prophetic words like no other, need to be studied and shared with others.

Now, I know a lot of people see Revelation as hard to understand and so they just avoid it. I know of pastors who would admit they've never even attempted to teach it. But friend, this is God's Word. So why would God make something so difficult that we couldn't understand it, if He wanted us to know it.

It's really not that difficult, it just takes time to study it and to think about it and meditate on it. I mean just think about what we've learned together over the last several months. Without it, we wouldn't know the full story about God's future plans for mankind. And we also wouldn't have the knowledge to warn our loved ones and our friends about God's wrath to come.

Now, different people, no doubt, are going to respond differently to the truths found in this book.

In fact, verse 11 says, **“Let the evildoer still do evil . . . and the holy still be holy.”**

The truth is, how people respond to this book, and how people respond to the Word of God as a whole, that will determine their destiny for eternity.

In verse 14: Jesus says,

14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

You see this book and the truths found within it, they tell us how you get into heaven. They tell us that it's only by trusting in the Lord Jesus and the fact that He gave His life's blood on Calvary to pay for our sins; that's the only way, He's the only way a person can be saved and inherit heaven and eternal life.

And then the Lord continues in verse 15:

15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

That term "Dogs" here refers to people of low character. It's a term used in Scripture to refer to unbelievers. Dogs, in the days of Christ, were wild and untamed. And so, this term describes people who refuse to humble themselves and be tamed by the Lord Jesus.

Now, obviously, we're all guilty of lust and lying and hatred. The question is whether we've asked the Lord Jesus to forgive us.

And so beginning in verse 13, Jesus lays claim to several titles that confirm His deity. He says He is **"the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."**

In other words, He's declaring that He is eternally preexistent and eternally without end. He spoke the first words, and He will have the last word! And these titles can apply only to a non-created, eternally existing God. And so Jesus is the eternal Son of God.

And then in verse 16, Jesus calls Himself “**the root and the descendant of David.**” In other words, while He is God, He is also man. He entered the human race as a newborn baby and became a man and of course He entered into the royal family through the line of King David.

And so again, this affirms that Jesus is the Son of God who is also the Son of Man.

Next, in verse 16, Jesus claims to be “**the bright morning star.**”

And by the use of this title, He’s announcing the dawn of a new and eternal day.

And then in verse 17, we have a final invitation:

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

In other words, we as believers are saying, “**Come on back. We’re ready!**”

But at the same time we’re saying to the world, “**Come to the Lord Jesus.**” **If you are thirsty, come to Him for salvation.**

If you're hungry and thirsty for meaning and purpose in your life, and for peace in your heart, then come to Jesus. He's inviting you to come and to **"take the water of life freely."**

It won't cost you a penny because Jesus has paid it all.

Amen?

And then we're given some final warnings in verses 18-19:

18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

You know there are many religions and false teachers in our world today who try and either add to the Scriptures or take away from the Scriptures or from the meaning of the Scriptures.

And so this is not just some casual warning, and it applies not only to the book of Revelation, but in fact, to all of Scripture. God gave no one an eraser with which to edit out things they don't like, or change parts that don't line up with their wants and wishes. And there's nothing missing in the Bible whereas something needs to be added. And so to add to or subtract from God's Word is a heaven-or-hell issue. It's a very serious issue.

And it does not end with a comma; it ends with a period.

And then there's a final promise in verse 20.

Jesus says, **“Surely I am coming quickly”**.

These are the last recorded words of Jesus: “I’m coming quickly, that means “soon.” And we need to remember this promise, and we need to live our lives in light of it. Because one day, when people least expect it, it will come to pass.

And then to Jesus last words, the Apostle John adds this final prayer in the closing. It begins with an “Amen,” and then it ends with an “Amen.” And what does “amen” mean?

It means to “Let it be” or “So be it; or it is true; and I agree!” So, John prays, “Amen [it is true]. “Come, Lord Jesus Come! And may the grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen”

What a great way to end the Bible—with the word amen! Let it be! It’s all true. The Word of God and the grace of God are true.

And may the grace of God which saved us, keeps us, and enables us. And may His grace one day soon deliver us to our final home, where we will all see Him face to face and all experience the delights of this beautiful home—your home and mine—where we will live forever.

Amen!