

## **The Book of Revelation**

By

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### **CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE**

#### **THE HOLY CITY**

**"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" (vs. 1).**

There is a real Heaven and a real earth; something that John could actually see and describe. Heaven is no cloudy, misty mixture of nothing. CHRIST went to **"prepare a place"** for His own (John 14).

The old Heaven and earth are gone. This "Heaven" is probably the Heaven of the atmosphere. Some, however, believe that the starry Heaven is to be destroyed at CHRIST's second coming. I sincerely hope that they are wrong, for often have I longed to roam about and visit each nebula; look into every comet; study the asteroids; watch the variable stars; study the sun spots; inquire into the mysterious rings on Saturn, and the canal on Mars; visit the great craters on the moon and explore the Apennines; take a trip to Arcturus and the Pleiades, and look into the "bands of Orion."

I never tire of astronomy and of hearing about the marvelous workings of the starry universe. Many are the times I have lain on the grass on a warm summer's evening, and gazed at the twinkling vault above and thought of the wonders of that vast immeasurable infinity, where great blazing suns, so great it staggers the human mind, go shooting through space beyond the speed of a bullet, and yet each swings around through its tremendous orb at the bidding of its Creator - and that Creator is my Redeemer.

As I thus contemplate the marvels of countless universes, and remember that they are mine own inheritance; varied and deep emotions surge through my soul, and from the depths of my heart there is wafted heavenward, a deep "Thank God."

I anticipate with joy the time when, in an immortal body, I can roam about at will throughout the starry Heaven - most certainly I do hope that all of this marvelous beauty will not be destroyed at CHRIST's Second Coming.

Peter, however, does tell us that **"the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat"** (II Peter 3:10). This verse may seem to indicate such a destruction, but in Hebrews

1:10-11 we read, "**The heavens are the works of thine hands... they all shall wax old as doth a garment,**" that is, they will just burn out into a great cinder which will take millions and multiplied millions of years.

The sea is a troublesome element, ever restless and on the move. It is a type of the ungodly for, "**the wicked are like the troubled sea**" (Isaiah 57:20). But in the new earth there will be no sea. There was a "**sea of glass like unto crystal**" before the throne in Revelation four, but this great paved work of a sapphire stone which is "**as it were the body of heaven in his clearness,**" is solid and at absolute rest (Exodus 24:10).

## **The Holy City**

**"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"** (vs. 2).

This is a "**holy**" city. The word 'holy' in Scripture usage means, "set apart for GOD." Earthly cities may have a corner here and there that is dedicated to the worship of GOD, but many are the districts that are set apart for sin, dance halls, streets lined with booze joints and pool halls. Dens of iniquity, set apart for adultery, gambling and riotous living. But think of a city where there is not one little avenue - not even a small bit of anything to suggest sin; a city wholly set apart for God and His redeemed ones.

This is a "**new**" city. New in construction; new in material and design. It is a Heaven built city, whose architect is Deity and whose builder and maker is GOD.

There is one time when a woman may be extravagant in her dress, and that is on her wedding day.

This city is ablaze with the glory of GOD and arrayed with all the beauty of a "**bride adorned for her husband.**"

**"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."**

Once GOD dwelled in the tabernacle in the wilderness and later in the temple. Later still, He became flesh and dwelt among men (John 1:14); during the present church age, He indwells the body of the believer (I Corinthians 6:19). In the future, the Mighty GOD will actually dwell "**with**" men and "**they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads**" (ch. 22:4).

## **No More Death**

**"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"** (vs. 4).

Human hands are poor at drying tears. Neighbors may help and friends may sympathize but only

GOD can quiet the heart and stop the fount of tears. And GOD will not trust this task to angelic wisdom for GOD Himself "**shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.**"

"**No more death.**" What words are these; what blessed anticipation. Death has had a fearful reign. Almost every home has its vacant chair; every city has its cemetery; every small newspaper carries its obituary list; while countless tons of earth's marble is chiseled into stone markers.

Death has blasted hopes and broken hearts; turned loving wives into weeping widows, and helpless children into homeless orphans. Death is harsh and cold and heartless. But death has met defeat; a tomb has been opened from the inside, and death itself has ceased to be. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. No more undertaker's signboards; no more embalming fluid. No funeral train in the sky. The sod of the new Jerusalem will never be cut for a grave - what a blessed anticipation for the child of GOD.

"**Neither sorrow, nor crying.**" The face may seem happy; the laugh may seem hearty, but every heart knows its own bitterness and every breeze is frightened with its own cry. There are many kinds of crying. There is the cry of fear and pain; the cry of sorrow and bereavement; the cry of shame and remorse; the cry of the broken hearted and the cry of betrayed love. But sorrow must give place to joy and all crying shall cease to be.

### **All Things New**

"**And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new**" (vs. 5).

Once He bowed in Gethsemane; once He hung upon a Cross. Now He sits upon a throne; a throne so great and so white, and Himself with a countenance so terrible that the old Heaven and old earth have passed away.

"**I make all things new.**" Once before He spoke, and worlds came into existence: again He spoke and the world teemed with life. But the old creation was marred by sin, and now He purposes to make all things new. The highest imagination of the human mind cannot approach the glories of the new creation.

The old creation is marvelous beyond description.

There is the rosy dawn; the glory of the noon day sun; and the gorgeous tracings of the sunset; there is the silver moonlight and the quiet twinkle of a billion stars; there are fleecy clouds, colored rainbows and countless lacy patterns for the snowflake. There are bubbling brooks and sparkling fountains, grassy meadows and shady trees; singing birds and chirping crickets; scampering lambs and playful kittens; cooing doves and laughing children.

This is the old creation as it dances and frolics about, and yet it is a creation that withers and smokes under the curse and blight of sin. If this old creation is so wonderful that we would fain live here for ever, what will the new creation be like, when He who occupies that throne sets His hand again the second time in creative power and purposes to make all things new.

"**And he said unto me, It is done**" (vs. 6). Once before, a similar sentence escaped those lips. Then, He hung upon a Cross and cried, "**It is finished.**" Now, He sits upon a throne of glory and decrees "**It is done.**" That cry announced a fountain for cleansing from sin and iniquity; this cry proclaims every vestige of sin removed and the curse gone forever.

### **Another Blessed Invitation**

"**I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely**" (vs. 6).

Here, as so often in this great book, the flow of words is interrupted to give encouragement to those who might respond. Might any reader of this book realize the fearful issues at stake and thirst for a part in the new Jerusalem. If so, let him come and drink of the "**water of life freely.**"

What a blessed book is this. Is there any wonder that a special blessing is promised to him who reads and keep these things that are written therein (ch. 1:3)? Should not a book so full of warnings, and admonitions; encouragements and invitations find a key of response in the heart of every earnest soul?

And might there be those who would reach forth a hand and seek to drink from that crystal fountain without first being cleansed in the fountain that flows from Calvary?

If there is such an one that would seek to drink unworthily, let him take warning, for "**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**" (vs. 8).

"**He that overcometh shall inherit all things**" (vs. 7).

"**And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.**"

Let no one be deceived, this is a "**holy**" city. Believe on the Lord JESUS CHRIST and thou shalt be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned. Let anyone fail to believe on CHRIST (trust Him; count on Him; commit himself to Him; depend on Him; accept Him as Saviour), and their doom is sealed, he must sometime sink beneath the liquid flames of the lake of fire, to rise no more. May the reader of these lines beware. Either the fountain of life or the lake of fire will be his lot throughout the endless ages of eternity.

"**And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God**" (vs. 10).

This is indeed a "**great**" city; a perfect cube, fifteen hundred miles long, and fifteen hundred miles wide, and fifteen hundred miles high - "**twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal**" (vs. 16).

This great city would reach from New York to Denver, Colorado and from Canada to Florida. Earth has no place to lay such foundations and no material out of which to build it.

This city is surrounded by a wall great and high, and this mighty wall rests upon **"twelve foundations and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb"** (vs. 14).

### **The Foundations**

**"And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald"** (vs. 19) and so on, each foundation a mighty gem of priceless worth.

Precious stones are so out of my line that I cannot appreciate the rare beauty of the foundations. The foundations of earthly buildings may be rough and cheap, as long as they are solid. But not so with this fair city. I have entered the gem room of a great museum and there, with New Testament in hand, have endeavored to picture the glorious beauty of the new Jerusalem; but alas, my imagination breaks down at every point, and my soul can only rejoice in the assurance that some day I will be able to appreciate that which my Lord has gone on to prepare for my enjoyment - Thank God.

### **The Light**

**"And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass."**

See the glint of light from the ring on yon lady's finger? A little diamond has gathered those tiny beams and thrown them back into our eyes. Imagine if we can, what it will mean to see a great city, fifteen hundred miles each way, coming earthward and the whole city ablaze with the glory of a diamond in the sunlight and radiant with inherent light - the uncreated glory of GOD Himself.

CHRIST dwells **"in the light which no man can approach unto"** (I Timothy 6:16). And here is a city which **"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"** (vs. 23).

Our present mortal body cannot **"approach unto"** the uncreated light of GOD; but the new birth will give us a spiritual body; a body capable of expression in a realm of spirits and in that spiritual Glory, **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again"** (John 3). Verily, only **"they which are written in the Lamb's book of life"** shall enter in through the portals that pierce the walls of that bright city (vs. 27).

And what rare beauty will those portals display, for the city that John saw had **"a wall great and high, and had twelve gates... And the twelve gates were twelve pearls"** (vs. 12, 21). Twelve glorious openings; and twelve massive pearls to swing upon those massive hinges. Verily, what beauty will greet the eye of those counted worthy to enter those rare portals. The whole ablaze with the glory of GOD as it flashes through countless gems, and this light blazing out through twelve great openings, and every one reflecting this glory in the marvelous beauty of the pearly gates.

But shift the eye from the beauty of those gates and lo, there stretches far out in the distance, another wonder, for "**the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass**" (vs. 21). Again we gasp and hold our breath; a great broad avenue stretching fifteen hundred miles - no, not paved with gold; not a mere surface of gold, but pure gold clear through, and the gold with a purity no earthly process can refine for it is "**pure gold, as it were transparent glass.**"

But those pearly gates swing not upon those massive hinges, for "**the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there**" (vs. 25). The gates of this city "Swing outward never," this is a city whose brightness never fades, and a city where night shades never gather. Mortal men, who loved darkness rather than light have passed into "**the blackness of darkness forever**" (Jude 13).

**"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie"** (vs. 27).

Never again will the child of GOD be harassed by sinful men; never will hearts bleed from betrayed confidence; never will discord be sown among brethren. Ungodly men once stoned Stephen; beheaded John the Baptist; and sawed Isaiah in two; but no such men will enter here, for at the twelve gates stand twelve angel guards, and none can scale those jasper walls (vs. 12).

Once, GOD dwelt in temples made by human hands, but John "**saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it**" (vs. 22). Once, men dared not approach a holy GOD; but now, "**the tabernacle of God is with men,**" "**and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.**"

~ end of chapter 21 ~

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