

Session Twenty-two:

Revelation 21:1-27

“The Former Things Have Passed Away”

I) Introduction

- A) In **Revelation 19** Jesus threw the Antichrist and the False prophet into the lake of fire and He personally killed all those who had taken the mark of the beast. In **Revelation 20** Jesus has the devil locked up in prison for one thousand years while He restores this physical earth with the resurrected saints throughout history ruling and reigning with Him.
- B) But at the close of **Revelation 20** the devil is released from prison for a short season to deceive the nations once more. What follows the Devil’s last deception is his eternal destruction in the lake of fire. After the Devil and those who followed his last deception are destroyed, then all the unrighteous dead throughout world history are resurrected, judged and sentenced eternally to the lake of fire.
- C) And it’s here in **Revelation 21** that we see the start of a brand new order without Satan, sinister angels, sin or sinners along with the shout “The Former Things Have Passed Away.”

II) The Descent Of The New Jerusalem And God The Father (Revelation 21:1-4)

- A) **Revelation 21:1-2** *“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”*
 - 1) As the new order begins, it’s clear from **Revelation 20** that every person throughout world history has arrived at their eternal destination. The resurrection of the righteous which occurs first has happened followed by the resurrection of the unrighteous.
 - 2) Written into the Old Testament some 700 years before Christ is the story of the New Jerusalem.
 - 1. **Isaiah 63:17-19** *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.”*
 - 3) Biblical thought has also envisioned the saints dwelling on a redeemed physical earth in relationship with the Trinity. It’s Greek thought that has man’s soul traveling from earth to a spiritual place removed from an earth like state for eternity.
 - 4) In John’s day the sea was filled with unknown depths, unknown animals and great darkness. It wasn’t conquered by them like it has been in our day. The mystery that was hidden, has now been made known. The two orders are contrasted by John (**1st Cor. 13:9-12**).

- 5) Both John and Peter allude to the earth going through one more cleansing process before God the Father descends to dwell with the redeemed eternally.
 1. **2nd Peter 3:10-13** *"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. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the Day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."*
- 6) It seems that both Peter and John are speaking about the removal of the "First age" or the sinful order. And it seems to me that God is cleansing the earth by fire fully removing anything connected to life in this age (**2nd Cor. 5:17**).
- 7) God so loves Jerusalem that He has named our eternal dwelling place the "New Jerusalem." And if God loves Jerusalem then, He surely loves it now.
- 8) It's my opinion that Abraham will be shouting the loudest on this day as He sees this physical city with gates, walls, foundations and life descending from above.
 1. **Hebrews 11:9-10** *"By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*
- 9) God has promised and given us confidence that He will have a holy bride who's prepared for a holy city. The bride of Christ, the espoused wife of the Lamb will be made ready for the city in which she will inhabit.
 1. **Psalm 16:3** *"As for the saints who are the earth, the excellent (Mighty, Splendid, Noble, Famous, Majestic, Glorious) ones, in whom is all my delight."*
 2. **Ephesians 5:26-27,32** *"...that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish...This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*
 3. **Revelation 19:7** *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*
- B) **Revelation 21:3-4** *"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. 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."*
 - 1) Here we see Heaven and Earth kiss as God and man once again dwell together, but this time for eternity. Here we see the longing of God the Father finally fulfilled *"...and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people."*

- 2) This assures us that the days of looking up towards heaven and feeling distant from God are numbered.
- 3) And in this day the people of God will no longer pray *our Father in heaven*, because for the first time since **Genesis 3:8** God will be back on earth, dwelling with and among His creation.
- 4) The central theme of **Revelation 21** is our dwelling with God forever and that dwelling comes with great blessings connected to it. The past of sorrow, tragedy and evil are left behind in the Old order and we are now in a new order where nothing from the past touches us, eternally.

III) There Is Need To Overcome (Revelation 21:5-8)

A) **Revelation 21:5-8** *"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. And He said to me, It is done! I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murders, 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."*

- 1) In the midst of John's encounter, God the Father saw fit that a strong exhortation of warning be given to every Christian who would read this letter. John is so impacted by the glory and weight of God and this city that he has to be instructed to write.
- 2) The making of all things has already been done in principle through Christ on Calvary, but now the fullness of that victory is actually done in real time, forever (**John 19:30**).
- 3) The Christian's future isn't unclear, but crystal clear. The completion of all things has been told to us in advance to give us confidence in our journey, so that we live beyond this age and into the age which is yet to come.
- 4) It's critical that we keep this book in its proper context as it was written primarily to Christians and not non-believers. This exhortation is given to struggling Christians giving them incentive to overcome.
- 5) The need to overcome is great in our day, for all those that don't overcome and end up being overcome themselves, the second death is promised. This is a call to stay steady in the midst of hardship, pressure and crisis and to keep the prize before you.
- 6) The exhortation is concluded with a warning to not be cowardly regarding your allegiance to Jesus, this prophecy and your resolve to love Him more than life in this age. That word cowardly is Strong's Greek word #1169 and it simply means *fearful, timid or afraid*.

IV) Specific Dimensions And Features Of The New Jerusalem(Revelation 21:9-21)

A) **Revelation 21:9-10** *"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. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."*

- 1) When John sees this glorious city descending, the word that's used to describe it, is that of a "bride." He sees this city as something beautiful, glorious and majestic like a bride on her wedding day.
- 2) In the Old Testament the nation of Israel was considered the bride of God and their city Jerusalem was never disconnected from them as a people. The people and their city were considered one and the same, as it is here with this eternal city.
- 3) The gentile has no continuing city here on earth, therefore I am called to seek a homeland (heaven). The Jews on the other hand have a continuing city here on earth, Jerusalem. But the New Jerusalem is the joining of Jew and Gentile together forever in one location.
- 4) In John's Holy Spirit led encounter He is now able to see the New Jerusalem, the Holy City which is contrasted to Babylon, the filthy city he was shown in **Revelation 17:1**.
 1. **Revelation 17:1** *"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters."*
 2. **Revelation 21:9** *"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."*
- 5) John is now carried away to a high place for a better vantage point of the Holy City. From here John is able to see and hear the dimensions of the Holy City which will descend out of God from heaven.
- 6) What's so glorious about this city, is that the city itself has the glory of God built into her. The glory of God that was present in **Revelation 4** is same glory that this entire city possesses.
- 7) John also rightly mentions that this entire city is a mountain. Beloved, this entire city, which we are going to see the dimensions of in a moment, actually is a mountain throne city.
- B) **Revelation 21:12-14** *"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; three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."*
 - 1) The New Jerusalem is the joining of both the Old and New covenant in one city. The twelve tribes labored for the birthing of the Lamb which we the gentiles have received. And now through the twelve Apostles and the gentiles we labor now for the rebirthing of the nation of Israel into the Kingdom.
 - 2) Oh to see John's expression as he read his name on the eternal foundation of the New Jerusalem.
 - 3) John also seen that this eternal city houses both Jacobs sons and Jesus' disciples. We labor today for the restoration of the Nation of Israel based on God's prophetic promise for tomorrow. These verse's give us enough reason to contend for their restoration.

- C) **Revelation 21:15-16** *“And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. 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.”*
- 1) This reed isn't to be confused with the reed from **Revelation 11:1** when John was instructed to measure the temple and those who worshiped there. This reed here is solely given to measure this city's grandeur.
 - 2) This city is laid out like a square just like Solomon's temple was (**1st Kings 6:20**). A furlong is a Greek measurement that was approximately 600 feet or about one-eighth of a mile.
 1. The squared city is 12,000 furlong's (1 furlong = 600 ft) and 12,000 x 600 ft = 7,200,000 ft or 1,580 miles in height, width and length.
 2. The world's tallest mountain is Mt. Everest and it's 29,000 ft tall or 5.5 miles high. This throne city, the New Jerusalem, this mountain throne is 1,580 miles high.
 - 3) The symmetry of this city speaks to its completeness and it's given to cause our hearts to soar in worship and joy as we daydream about our future.
- D) **Revelation 21:17-18** *“Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.”*
- 1) The walls are 144 cubits. A cubit was a Greek measurement for about 18 inches. This means that the walls are 216 feet thick (72 yards). And again we see that the walls are built with the glory of God in her.
- E) **Revelation 21:19-21** *“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, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls; each individual gate was one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.”*
- 1) Again we see that the city itself is has the glory of God built into her in a way that no other city in history has ever imagined. Beloved, this is glory on levels we can only peer into from this age.
 - 2) And if each side of the squared city is 1,500 miles long, and there are 12 gates this means that there is about 500 miles between each gate.

V) The Glory Of The Lamb In The Midst Of The City (Revelation 21:22-27)

- A) **Revelation 21:22-23** *“But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 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.”*

- 1) Throughout history God dwelled within the Holy of Hollies, and in the New Testament era, the early Church moved away from temple life and created a theology of community where God dwelt.
 - 2) And here in the age to come God is dwelling with man in unmediated fellowship and communion so there's no need for a temple or a mediation process for which to encounter God.
 - 3) The separation is over and the age of proximity to the Lamb and His Father has come and it's here forever.
 - 4) This future coming day of unbroken fellowship with God must become the anchor of our souls, the hope of our lives and the foundation of our families. Though tragedy touches us in this age, our hope isn't here, it's there.
 - 5) The glory of God's light as seen in the New Jerusalem is something that we can touch in part now through fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit who indwells the believer. No light for eternity because the Lamb is bright enough should cause us to worship, not wonder in doubt.
- B) **Revelation 21:24-26** *"And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in it's light, and the Kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. It's gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall be 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."*
- 1) Much of what Isaiah wrote in **Isaiah 60** is seen here in John's encounter. In the eternal city, every tongue, tribe, nation and language will be present. National identity won't be stripped while everyone is forced to stand in a uniform row. The God of glory will have all of His creation joined together.
 - 2) The gates of this city are never shut because of its safety and the safety of those who dwell in it. Though it has walls there is nothing to protect the people of God from. This is security that we have never seen in this age or even dreamed of.
 - 3) The power of verbal plenary inspiration is that it's not the author, or the process that's inspired by divinity, but the very words. John is using earthly idioms to describe his experience.
 - 4) It's clear that the only way into this city is through the Lamb and that's eternally established.