

INTRODUCTION:

1. We saw Christ in His glory in chapter one and examined the seven letters to the angels of the Churches in Asia in chapters two and three.
2. Moving into the prophetic portions of John's Revelation, we saw the Church in heaven with Christ in chapters four and five. Then, in a very detailed look at the Tribulation that shall plague this world after the Rapture, we examined a variety of things: the seal judgments, the trumpet judgments, the vial judgments, the seven personalities, and the judgment of the two Babylons, religious Babylon, and then political Babylon, taking us from chapter six through chapter 18.
3. In chapter 19, we celebrated, in advance, the marriage of the Lamb to His bride and His glorious Second Coming to judge this wicked old world.
4. In our most recent study, we concluded an analysis of chapter 20, which mainly focused on things related to the millennial reign of Christ and the Great White Throne judgment by Jesus Christ of the unsaved dead.
5. This brings us to the final main section of Revelation, the entrance into eternity and a glimpse of eternity.
6. J. Vernon McGee's introductory remarks to Revelation chapter 21 in his commentary on Revelation are beneficial:

ENTRANCE INTO ETERNITY; ETERNITY UNVEILED

Eternity is unveiled in chapter 21—a new heaven, a new earth, a New Jerusalem, a new era, and the eternal abode of the Lamb's bride where we will be new creations in Christ Jesus without the old nature that manifests itself so much today. Adopting a popular aphorism of the day, it can truly be said that this chapter is "out of this world." This chapter hasn't anything to do with the earth (except for the first few verses). In it we see the eternal abode of the church. What really is heaven? There is a lot of sticky, sentimental stuff said about heaven, and we get quite weepy when we talk about heaven. However, heaven is a place, a very definite place. You will have an address there. Your name will be put on you so that in eternity, when you wander around into outer space and get lost, some angel will bring you home—and you will have a home.

As the long vista of eternity is before us in this chapter, we move not only from time to eternity, but to a new creation. A new heaven, a new earth, and a New Jerusalem greet us. The redeemed have previously received glorified bodies like Christ's. All things have become new. A new universe suggests new methods and approaches to life. New laws will regulate the new universe. The entire life-style will change. Here are some of the changes that are suggested by Revelation 21 and 22:

(1) There will be the total absence of sin and temptation and testing in the new creation. This in itself makes a radical difference.

(2) The New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, does not mean another satellite for the earth, but rather the earth and all of the new creation with all of the galactic systems will revolve about the New Jerusalem, because it is the dwelling place of God and of Christ.

(3) The law of gravity, as we know it, will be radically revised. There will be traffic between the New Jerusalem and the earth. The church will have already left the earth, and its dwelling

place is the New Jerusalem. I believe that we will have entirely different bodies, and the law of gravity will not affect us; that is, the law of gravity of this earth or of any other planet.

(4) There will be no sun to give light, for God Himself will supply it directly to the universe. There will be the absence, therefore, of night. There is no night there because we just do not need that time to rest because we will have new bodies. I am looking forward to that, by the way.

(5) There will no longer be any sea on the earth. The sea occupies most of the earth's surface today; approximately three-fourths of the total surface is water. This denotes a revolution in life upon the earth. Just think of the parking space we will be able to have! There will be no fish to eat. Apparently man will be a vegetarian during the millennium and throughout eternity, as he was in the Garden of Eden. Fruit is the only diet of eternal man (see Revelation 22:2).

(6) The presence of Christ and God, together with the throne of God made visible, ushers in a new day for man—the new creation.<sup>1</sup>

(21.1) 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.

1. Again, John writes the words “I saw,” reminding us that he was an eyewitness to the scenes he writes about and is not writing second-hand information. That John records what he sees rather than usually writing down what he is told is why John is precisely termed a seer and not a prophet.
2. “As the chapter opens, all the sinners of all ages, both demons and men, including Satan, the beast, and false prophet, are in the lake of fire forever. The whole universe has been destroyed, and God creates a new universe to be the eternal dwelling place of the redeemed.”<sup>2</sup>
3. As John deals with the “new heaven and the new earth,” we once again address a difference among Bible teachers regarding how God brings in His new heaven and new Earth. If you recall, in Revelation 20.11, this issue came up.
4. Some Bible teachers do not believe this present universe will be destroyed. To support their belief, they point out that #1, the previous judgment by Flood did not eradicate all things, and #2, the fire that will be related to this future judgment is seen to be used by God to cleanse and purge the universe of sin without actually destroying it.<sup>3</sup>
4. Other Bible teachers, on the other hand, point out that the universe must be annihilated.<sup>4</sup> Some reasons for this position include:

#1 Revelation 20.11 suggests the present universe disappears before the new universe comes into being. If this is so, and if the Great White Throne judgment occurs between these two events, then the annihilation of the physical universe does occur.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Reveling Through Revelation, Part II*, (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Books, 1979), pages 169-170.

<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), page 2036.

<sup>3</sup> Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God*, (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), pages 510-511.

<sup>4</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, page 2036.

#2 Second Peter 3.10 seems to show some nuclear holocaust occurring, possibly as a result of Christ, Who holds all things together according to Colossians 1.17, choosing to continue no longer doing this, but instead allowing the universe to self-destruct, making way for a new universe.

- a. Colossians 1.17: “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Let me read the footnote for Colossians 1.17 from Dr. Henry Morris’ *The Defender’s Study Bible*:

The Greek word translated “consist” is *sunistano*, from which we get “sustain.” The things created by Christ are now being sustained, or conserved, or held together by Him. He is “upholding all things by the word of His power” (Hebrews 1:3). “In Him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). The most basic of all scientific principles is implied in these two verses (Colossians 1:16, 17). The principle of conservation of mass-energy, or “all things.” According to this principle, nothing is now being either created or annihilated—only conserved, as far as quantity is concerned. One state of matter can be changed to another (liquid to solid); one type of energy can be converted to another (electrical energy to light energy); and under some conditions, matter and energy can be interchanged (nuclear fission); but the total quantity of mass-energy is always conserved. This law—also called the First Law of Thermodynamics—is the best-proved law of science, but science cannot tell us why it is true. The reason nothing is now being created is because Christ created all things in the past. The reason why nothing is now being annihilated is because all things are now being sustained by Him. If it were not so, the binding energy of the atom, which holds its structure together, would collapse, and the whole universe would disintegrate into chaos.<sup>5</sup>

- b. Second Peter 3.10: “But 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, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

Morris’ footnote for this verse is just as interesting:

The “day of the Lord” will be terminated at the end of the millennium with the long-awaited renovation of the old earth by fire. The earth will not be annihilated, any more than it was annihilated at the time of the Flood, but will be completely changed and purified, made new, as it were. All the elements themselves have been under God’s curse (Genesis 3:17-19), so they must be burned up, along with the vast evidences of decay and death now preserved as fossils in the earth’s crust. Possibly this will be a global atomic fission reaction (note the word “dissolved” in II Peter 3:11), or else simply a vast explosive disintegration involving transformation of the chemical energy of

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<sup>5</sup> See footnote for Revelation 21.1 from *The Defender’s Study Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: World Publishing, 1995), page 1323.

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the elements into heat, light and sound energy. What remains after the global fiery disintegration will be other forms of energy so that, although God's principle of conservation still holds, the solid earth will seem to have "fled away" (Revelation 20:11).<sup>6</sup>

4. I believe the two views that seek to explain the existence of a new heaven and Earth, and the passing away of the old heaven and the old Earth, can be reconciled. The dispute has to do with what is meant by the word annihilation.
5. If you are referring to the destruction of matter throughout the universe by annihilation, there can be no annihilation. However, if what is meant by that term is the destruction of the physical universe through a fiery, or perhaps a nuclear fission, cataclysm, then there can be annihilation.
6. Whatever the actual outcome, the new heaven will be different, and the new Earth will be so different from the present one that there will be no seas in the new one. Consider the implications of having no seas. Does this mean no water on the surface of the new Earth? That is unlikely.
7. This probably means Since our present climate is dramatically affected by the fact that about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Earth's surface is covered by water, the environment of the new Earth must undoubtedly become far different from what is experienced at present.

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

1. What a vision John sees. The old heaven and the old Earth have passed away, whatever that means. However, a new heaven and a new Earth now appear to take their place, with the central feature of this glorious vision being the holy city, New Jerusalem, so beautiful that it is likened to a bride adorned for her husband. What an impressive sight that will be.
2. I believe that this city of New Jerusalem is what the Lord Jesus was referring to the night before His crucifixion when He said in John 14.2, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." I think this is His Father's house, where places are being prepared for the saints, and by the time of this vision, the glorious city's construction will be complete.
3. Further, I believe that this was what Abraham was looking for, according to Hebrews 11.8-10, since this will be the eternal dwelling place of not only Christians but of all the saints throughout history:

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., page 1407.

- <sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.
- <sup>9</sup> By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:
- <sup>10</sup> For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.
4. Notice that John does not indicate that New Jerusalem is, at the time he refers, being created or has recently been completed. In this verse, he points out that it is “coming down from God out of heaven” to proximity with the new Earth.
  5. Though this is by no means directly taught in the Bible, some Bible teachers have ventured a sanctified guess and theorized the possibility of the following sequence of events:
    - a. First, soon after the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the New Jerusalem, that great city foursquare, comes down from God to proximity with the old Earth and hovers somewhere overhead throughout the millennium. This would then enable resurrected saints to dwell in our heavenly abode and still serve Christ on Earth without unduly interfering in the lives of those living out their natural lives.
    - b. Then, when Satan is loosed for a season 1,000 years later at the end of the millennium, and the final conflict occurs, New Jerusalem is moved away from the Earth for the destruction of the old universe, the Great White Throne judgment, and the creation of the new heaven and the new Earth. When this has all occurred, the New Jerusalem, replete with a full complement of eternally living citizens, comes close to the new Earth as recorded here.
  6. Speculation aside, we know that this city is so staggering in beauty that John compares her to a bride adorned for her husband. May I point out that the word “*as*,” ὡς, suggests a simile, meaning that New Jerusalem is not said to be the bride of Christ but is compared to a bride in her beauty? That point is sometimes lost on commentators.
  7. Why is it necessary to point this out? Because the bride of Christ will be composed of all Church Age believers, the saints of all ages will inhabit New Jerusalem, Church Age believers, and believers from other eras. Failure to make this distinction can create confusion when studying prophecy by failing to distinguish between the Church and Israel. Most people who make significant errors in prophecy make just these kinds of mistakes.

(21.3) 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.

1. In addition to this astonishing and overwhelming vision of the new heaven, Earth, and the beautiful city of New Jerusalem, John “heard a great voice out of heaven.”
2. “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.*” God has worked things out so that He can again dwell among men. It was His intent in the Garden of Eden, but sin prevented the dwelling together of God and man. Sin caused estrangement.
3. After Adam’s fall into sin and the judgment that came by the Flood, God established a covenant with Abraham and chose a people.<sup>7</sup> When those chosen people grew from a family to a nation in Egyptian bondage, God led them to freedom by His servant Moses in the Exodus.
4. At the foot of Mount Sinai, following their miraculous delivery from Egypt, God commanded Moses to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Notice what His reason for constructing that elaborate tent was. Mark Exodus 25.8 in your Bible. It reads, “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.”
5. But what happened to the Tabernacle? After serving its purpose for several centuries, it gave way to Solomon’s Temple. However, the Temple was repeatedly defiled, and eventually destroyed by the Babylonians. While the Temple lasted, it was an improvement over nothing but was always far short of the ultimate goal God had in mind.
6. Another means by which the Tabernacle of God was with men was when the Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.
  - a. For some thirty-three years, He dwelt among us, walking in our midst. Notice the word “tabernacle” in Revelation 21.3. It translates the Greek word σκηνή. That same word is also found in John 1.14, where we read, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” The word “dwelt” is the Greek word σκηνή.
  - b. Even so, dwelling in our midst in that fashion was not entirely satisfactory since He was the sinless Son of God in the midst of sinful men and was bound for the cross of Calvary. Therefore, when He was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead, He then ascended to His Father’s right hand on high, no longer dwelling with us in that way.
7. Shortly after Jesus ascended on high, He sent the Holy Spirit to be with us by living in us. Even in this present age in which we live, God’s goal of dwelling with His Own has not been fully realized. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God in the

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<sup>7</sup> The Abrahamic Covenant, Genesis 12.1-3.

believer's life is a quantum leap improvement over the Tabernacle and the Temple, but it is still lacking owing to our sinfulness on this side of our glorification.

8. The local congregation, your Church body, is also described as the Temple of God, First Corinthians 3.16: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" However, this arrangement still falls far short of the ultimate divine intent.
  9. Remember, God is a tri-unity, and now, though we have communion with the Father and the Son, only the Spirit of God dwells with us. Jesus is not in the heart of the Christian, for He sits at the Father's right hand on high.<sup>8</sup>
  10. However, there is coming a day when God shall dwell with us more thoroughly and more entirely than since the days in the Garden of Eden. Oh, what glorious anticipation.
- (21.4) 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.
1. Some Bible teachers use this verse to teach that it is at this time that God will remove the regret and the tears that Christians will have because of personal failure and lack of service to Christ during the span of their physical lives before they died or were resurrected. This suggests, and some have maintained, that from the Judgment Seat of Christ until this time, at least 1,007 years later, glorified Christians in heaven will weep much and regret their failure for not giving Christ 100%.
  2. My response to such teaching is this: Properly understood, this verse deals with the removal of sin from the universe, not the removal of sin from resurrected Christians. Resurrected Christians will have been Raptured and judged over 1,007 years before the events described in this verse.
  3. Do you honestly think those who will comprise the Bride of Christ will weep and express sorrow throughout their marriage to the Lamb and during the great wedding feast, the marriage supper of the Lamb that will last 1,000 years? Are we to believe Christians will shed tears in heaven for 1,007 years? I do not think so. However, while Christians will be glorified and with our Savior, all those living in the flesh during the millennium will still have to contend with a principle called sin.
  4. This verse, however, has to do with the coming of eternity that follows closely the destruction of the old heaven and the old Earth, with its taint of sin. Nothing that smacks of sin will remain with the new heaven and Earth, and dwell with God in a new and better way than ever before. Therefore, none of the sorrows of sin will

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<sup>8</sup> Psalm 16.11; 110.1; Matthew 26.64; Mark 12.36; 14.62; 16.19; Luke 20.42; 22.69; John 3.13; 13.1; 14.2-4; Acts 1.9-11; 2.33, 34-35; 7.56; Romans 8.34; Ephesians 1.20; 6.9; Colossians 3.1; Second Thessalonians 1.7; Hebrews 1.3, 13; 8.1; 9.24; 10.12-13; 12.2; 1 Peter 3.22; Revelation 19.11

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remain. No tears or death. No sorrow, crying, or pain. The Father will send all that away.

5. It is my belief, then, that there will be no grief, remorse, or sorrow once we are Raptured. Also, when the new heaven and Earth are brought in, there will not be any of that anywhere, which is this verse's point.
6. Think of it. Someday, there will be no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, and no more pain. In every corner of the world, people imagine such a thing, anticipate such a time, and scheme to bring such conditions to pass.
  - a. Buddhists have their state of Nirvana. Communists have anticipated the arrival of a pure socialist state. Muslims look forward to their Paradise. However, we Christians look forward to heavenly bliss in the New Jerusalem.
  - b. Do you realize how much harm has resulted from people who, by various means, have tried to bring heaven down to Earth, or who have tried to create heaven on Earth?
  - c. Humanity needs to concern itself with worshiping and serving God, not attempting to do His work for Him. In His Own time, according to His Own schedule, in fulfillment of His Own plan, He will take away all death, sorrow, crying, and pain.

(21.5) 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.

1. Though John's attention was diverted to the vision of a new heaven and a new Earth, with the eye-catching New Jerusalem at the center of it all, his attention is quickly drawn back to the One, Who sat upon the throne.
2. Who is He that sat on the throne? We must understand Who He is before we continue. There are three considerations to evaluate when trying to surmise who this Person is:
  - a. First, He is sitting on a throne. Though I will not go over our proof again, it seems pretty clear from Revelation 4.2 and 9 that it is not the Lord Jesus Christ sitting on the throne in that chapter:
    - <sup>2</sup> And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.
    - <sup>9</sup> And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever



- b. Second, we see that the Person sitting on the throne makes all things new. What passage of Scripture written by Paul tells us Who this must be? Second Corinthians 5.17-21:

- 17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
- 18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;
- 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.
- 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.
- 21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

You are a new creature when you are “in Christ.” However, the One Who makes you new is God the Father.

- c. Finally, the Person occupying the throne refers to what He is about to say that He wants John to record as being “faithful and true.” However, is not God faithful? First Corinthians 10.13 says, “God is faithful.” What about “true”? Romans 3.4, “God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.” Revelation 3.14 shows the Lord Jesus Christ identifying Himself as the “faithful and true witness.”

3. We have God, the Father, or the Lord Jesus Christ, sitting on this throne. I suggest we keep our opinion about this Person's identity undecided until we obtain some more information.

(21.6) 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.

1. Beginning with verse 6 and running through verse 8, we find six declarations of tremendous importance that would be very hard to imagine anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ making. Therefore, I believe the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking from the throne. The first three declarations are in this sixth verse:
2. First, He says, “It is done.” This statement, spoken against the background of eternity, reveals a future time when Christ has finished and accomplished every task He set out to do from the dawn of creation. Since the beginning of time and before, He has anticipated both His sacrificial death on the cross and the subsequent purging and re-creation of all things. “It is done” will be the words He speaks when all that has finally been accomplished.

3. Next, He says, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” Here, we come to why the identity of the speaker sitting on the throne in verse 5 is so significant. In Isaiah 48.12-15, we find one of the most decisive proofs of the deity of Christ found in the Bible:

<sup>12</sup> Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I *am* he; I *am* the first, I also *am* the last.

<sup>13</sup> Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: *when* I call unto them, they stand up together.

<sup>14</sup> All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these *things*? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm *shall be on* the Chaldeans.

<sup>15</sup> I, *even* I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.

Only Jehovah could describe Himself as the first and the last or use the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which is the Greek way of saying the same thing. Jesus Christ is Jehovah!

4. The last statement of verse 6 is a beautiful promise of total and complete fulfillment for those who have come to the living water of Jesus Christ to satisfy their spiritual thirst: “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Those who have gone elsewhere to find fulfillment will not be satisfied but will have to endure the cravings of unmet needs for all eternity.

(21.7) He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

1. This verse, too, has a promise for the child of God. What great things are in store for him that overcomes. However, what does it mean to overcome? First John 5.4-5 provides the answer:

<sup>4</sup> For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

<sup>5</sup> Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

2. These two verses flatly declare the child of God, the believer in Jesus Christ, to be an overcomer. If you are not an overcomer, it is because you are not saved. Saved people are overcomers.

3. Furthermore, overcomers know that Jesus Christ is God!

(21.8) 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.

1. J. Vernon McGee made some interesting observations about this verse:

There are several amazing features about this verse. First of all, the creation of the new heavens and a new earth did not affect the status of the lake of fire and of the lost. They are going into eternity just that way.

In the second place, there is no possibility of sin, which made man become fearful, unbelieving, liars, murderers, and all the rest, ever breaking over the barriers into the new heavens and the new earth. Sin and its potential are forever shut out of the new creation.

Finally, the lake of fire is eternal, for it is the second death, and there is no third resurrection. It is eternal separation from God, and there is nothing as fearful and frightful as that.<sup>9</sup>

2. In a brief glimpse into the eternal state, the Lord Jesus Christ has taken the time to make two promises. The first promise, given in verse 7 and addressed to John's readers, promises glory to the child of God who has become an overcomer of the world through faith in Jesus Christ.
3. This verse, on the other hand, contains the contents of a second promise. This is the promise of wrath for those who die without Christ. Let us study John's inspired record of the Savior's description of those who are not overcomers, of those who are not saved:

**FEARFUL** Translating the Greek word δειλοῖς, this person will not forsake the world and its cares to submit to the lordship of Christ. This person is afraid of the consequences of being a Christian, fearful of the ridicule and the scorn, and maybe even the persecution he might receive for the cause of Christ. How different is the child of God from one called "fearful" by the Lord Jesus Christ. When the Christian thinks about being fearful of confessing Christ and witnessing to others, he is encouraged by the truth of Romans 10:11: "For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Then there is Second Timothy 1:7-8: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." Are Christians afraid at times and shy? Of course. We all are. However, the Christian gains the victory over fear, more so as he grows, matures, and understands that next to his Master's approval, nothing else matters. The unsaved, not having the Spirit of God, are captivated by fear. They are fearful. They fear men but do not fear God, being fools.

**UNBELIEVING** This is the Greek word ἀπίστοις. How many people, when witnessed to, say, "I just can't buy that stuff." However, as pointed out, the word should not be "can't" but "won't." People only

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<sup>9</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Revelation, Volume III*, (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Books, 1979), page 181.

remain in unbelief because, as sinners, it is their natural inclination to do so. Christians, moved by the Spirit of God and trusting in Christ by faith, are those who believe. Since it is through faith that people are saved, are forgiven their sins, and are justified, the unbelieving person is clearly and, without doubt, condemned to suffer God's wrath for all eternity.

**ABOMINABLE** This word comes from a Greek word, which means “absolutely disgusting, detestable, and abominable.” It is the Greek word βδελύσσομαι.<sup>10</sup> As used here, it describes someone who has practiced the most disgusting and putrid of sins. It also describes the attitude of God toward a man who has died yet in his sins. No longer long-suffering, God is now looking upon the one who has used up his natural life by rejecting the love of God in Christ as “absolutely disgusting.”

**MURDERS & WHOREMONGERS** Little additional comment is needed here about those who take human life or who are sexually promiscuous, except to note that from the Gospel of John and First John, we know that these sins committed in one's thoughts are just as serious to God as are the physical acts associated with them. Why? Because unless one's thoughts are cleansed they will become one's actions. Do you remember God's judgment of Noah's world fell on them because their imaginations were continually evil?<sup>11</sup> God sent the Flood because of men's thought lives!

**SORCERERS** This word comes from the word φαρμάκις, from which we get the words “pharmaceutical” and “pharmacy.” Because I have a severe issue with anything related to narcotics and drugs, even the inappropriate use of prescription medication, I will provide Lehman Strauss' comments on the word “sorcerers”:

Witchcraft, spiritism, magic, and demon worship were the stock in trade of the ancient world. The Christians in the early Church were confronted with this evil constantly. It thrived in cities like Ephesus (Acts 19:19-24). Under the Mosaic law such practices were punishable by death (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). In our modern twentieth century the number of adherents to spiritism in its various forms is increasing rapidly. But the lake of fire is the divinely appointed doom for all who traffic in this evil. Idolatry and witchcraft are listed among “the

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<sup>10</sup> Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), pages 859-860.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 6.5

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works of the flesh,” and of all persons who practice such it is written that “they shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:20-21).<sup>12</sup>

**IDOLATERS** Εἰδωλολάτραις applies to anyone who does not have Christ sitting on the throne of his life. The idol can be a wafer, it can be money, it can be a statue, it can be booze, it can be a career, it can be fun, it can be security, and it can even be a child. Idolaters violate the second command of God as a way of life because they forget or choose to ignore the words of Jesus, “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”<sup>13</sup>

**LIARS** First John 2.22 shows us what a ψευδέσι is: “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.” A believer can tell a lie, but the fact that they say the truth about Christ makes it impossible for a genuine Christian to be a categorical liar. Categorical liars, folks whose lifestyles are punctuated by lie after lie after lie, even if the only lie is the lie that denies Who Jesus Christ is, is a soul-damning sin.

4. Each of those described by any or all of these words “shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

(21.9) 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.

1. We have looked at Christ’s Great White Throne judgment seat, and now move on to the eternal state.
2. One of the angels John had seen earlier now comes and ushers him on a sightseeing tour of the eternal state, which includes a good look at the bride, the Lamb’s wife.
3. This creates a bit of a difficulty for us because the angel offered to show John the bride, the Lamb’s wife. Still, we see him in subsequent verses showing John a physical object, a geographical location, the New Jerusalem.
4. John Walvoord proposes a resolution of this difficulty: “Since a city is not a bride or a wife, the truth here represented is that the city, the residence of the saints of eternity future, is to be compared to a bride for beauty and is intimately related to Jesus Christ the Lamb.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Lehman Strauss, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1963), pages 357-358.

<sup>13</sup> Luke 16.13

<sup>14</sup> John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), page 317.

(21.10-14) <sup>10</sup> 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,  
<sup>11</sup> Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;  
<sup>12</sup> And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:  
<sup>13</sup> On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.  
<sup>14</sup> And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

1. In this passage, John is mainly concerned with communicating the truth about the glory of the great city that will be the site of our eternal home. Remember, it was this city of New Jerusalem our Lord Jesus Christ was alluding to in John 14.1-3:

- <sup>1</sup> Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.
  - <sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
  - <sup>3</sup> 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.

2. In verse 10, we see the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven before John's very eyes. Either this is a restatement of what he saw in Revelation 21.2, or he is now seeing something continue, which he only began to see happening in verse 2. What was that? The great city is coming down from God out of heaven. However, do not assume that the city settled down onto the new Earth. We are not specifically told that.
3. The word jasper is a "transliteration, not a translation, of the Gr. word. Rather than the modern opaque jasper, the term refers to a completely clear diamond, a perfect gem with the brilliant light of God's glory shining out of it and streaming over the new heaven and the new earth."<sup>15</sup>
4. The mention of both the twelve tribes, in verse 12, and the twelve apostles, in verse 14, supports the belief that the Church and the redeemed nation of Israel will dwell together in New Jerusalem in the eternal state. It also supports the notion that although some saved Jewish people from our dispensation will be members of both the Church in glory and the nation of Israel, the two are distinct in God's plan and economy. Israel is not the Church, and the Church is not Israel.

(21.15-17) <sup>15</sup> And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.  
<sup>16</sup> And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

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<sup>15</sup> See footnote for Revelation 21.11 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 2023.

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<sup>17</sup> And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according* to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

1. Here, John is bent on describing the city's greatness. It is enormous. Foursquare means that the city is a perfect cube and is approximately 1400 miles along its height, width, and length.
2. The wall is 216 feet high. When you try to figure out how a city in outer space, or the upper atmosphere, will have a wall around it, you are pressed. Unless, of course, you adopt J. Vernon McGee's interpretation, which I do.<sup>16</sup>
3. McGee envisions the eternal state as being God-centered, with New Jerusalem at the center of the universe, and the brightness of God's glory radiating through the walls of the city, a spherical shell 216 feet thick. Imagine how glorious it will be.

(21.18-20) <sup>18</sup> And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

<sup>19</sup> 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;

<sup>20</sup> The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

1. Imagine the magnificent colors that would stream through a wall of these colors—blue, gold, red, various shades of green, etc.
2. Also, imagine a city surrounded by a diamond wall that is 216 feet thick, with buildings of pure gold set on foundations that include diamonds and other brilliant stones.

(21.21) And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

1. Of all the precious stones mentioned by John, only the pearl, so far, is the product of living matter. Pearls, of course, come from oysters. As the oyster must suffer a wound and pain to create a pearl, Christ needed to suffer to bring all this that we read about to pass.
2. Another observation: Only the pearl is a substance mentioned here from the sea. Perhaps this is an allusion to the masses of saved Gentiles who comprise the bride of Christ since the seas are frequent in the prophetic imagery of Gentiles.

(21.22-23) <sup>22</sup> And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.  
<sup>23</sup> 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.

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<sup>16</sup> McGee, *Revelation, Volume III*, pages 186-190.

1. For the first time since the Garden of Eden, there will be no temple in heaven or on Earth, for God will dwell with us, and we will dwell with Him.
2. In verse 22, dealing with the radiant brilliance and the Lamb, further credence is lent to McGee's feelings of a scheme that has the city of New Jerusalem at the center of the universe and the light of the universe no longer coming from stars, but from God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and everything about the city is conducive to transmitting that light, not blocking it.
3. But wait! Is not light-bearing what we are supposed to be doing now? Sure. Figuratively speaking, the essence of the Christian life is to transmit the radiance of Christ instead of blocking it. In eternity, the ideal will be realized.

(21.24-26) <sup>24</sup> 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.

<sup>25</sup> And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

<sup>26</sup> And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

1. Can those who side against Satan and choose to stand with Christ in that final conflict at the end of the millennium will enter eternity in natural bodies, entering the gates of New Jerusalem and worshipping the Lamb of God? Such a thing seems to at least be suggested here.
2. That the gates will not be shut is a reminder of the absolute peace and security that will reign over the universe and the city in which the very presence of God dwells.

(21.27) 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.

1. This verse is a warning to those of us back in time who are reading these things yet to come. Nothing will be allowed into that city which defiles or which is abominable.
2. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be free to enter that city. It is just another reminder to be sure. Be sure that you are saved. Be sure that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life.
3. Why? Because this city is the eternal heaven of the saved. If you cannot get into this city, it can only mean you will be in the lake of fire.