

REVELATION CHAPTER 21-22

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CHAPTER 21**Introduction**

a) The time:

- the millennium is now finished (Rev. 20:3, 5, 7)
- the final state now follows the millennium
- there seems to be no reason why these two chapters should be regarded as describing something during the millennium
- the paragraph beginning with 20:11 continues right on through 21:8
- this seems to be a picture of historical narrative with events taking place in order
- the millennium has come to a close, Satan is loosed and destroyed
- sinners are raised and judged and the New Heaven and New Earth are ushered in
- the historical references are marked by the use of the aorist tenses, "I saw," "passed" (1); "there is no more sea" (1)

b) The change:

- the order of things is now changed for eternity
- "the former things are passed away" (21:4)
- "First heaven and first earth were passed away" (21:1)
- the aorists are resultant or effective, marking the completion of a process
- in verse 5, Christ declares that, "I am making all things new."
- this was begun at the Revelation of Christ and is now consummated at the close of the millennium (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Ptr. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1)
- the doom of sinful man is fixed for eternity (20:10; 21:8)—this also includes Satan
- the portion of the saints is also fixed for eternity (22:5)
- though the saints are said to reign for a thousand years according to 20:4,6; this kingdom will be merged with eternity and the saints will continue on forever and ever (Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 18, 22, 27)

c) The purpose:

- one feature of our blessed Lord becomes prominent during this period
- while Christ was viewed as the Lord of the churches during the age; and the Judge and Ruler of the nations during the tribulation and millennium, He is unveiled as the Lamb of God during the eternal state
- seven times this fact is called to our attention during the course of these chapters (21:9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22:1, 3)
- this is the number of completeness and perfection and reminds us that throughout eternity the saints of earth and sky will remember one supreme event that made it possible to enjoy supreme and eternal bliss in fellowship with God
- this will be the complete realization of Eph. 1:5-6, 12, 14 and Jn. 17:24

1. The establishment of eternal blessedness—Rev. 21:1-8

a) the presence of the final order—v. 1-4

i) the passing of the old order—v. 1

- this does not mean that the earth will be annihilated
- if it were, there would be no place for beings who must occupy space

- but it does mean that the order and arrangements of things which are sinful will be completely rearranged and changed (cf. 2 Ptr. 3:5-7, 10-13)
- the sea will be gone, for there will no longer be any need for separating peoples and nations
- the earth will again be watered by a mist as it was in the beginning (Gen. 2:6)
- ii) the presence of the Bride—v. 2
 - the bride and the groom are going to make their home in the earth
 - the Holy City is that home
 - this bride, all prepared and completely adorned by His grace, is to be the object of the intimacies of the Son throughout eternity (Eph. 2:7) and the eternal display of the wisdom and glory of God to the nations (Eph. 3:10)
- iii) the presence of the Lord—v. 3
 - the age-long desire of men will finally be realized
 - God will dwell with men in the person of His Son
 - and with God going in and out among them they shall be satisfied
- iv) the passing of the effects of sin—v. 4
 - emotion and tears from sin will pass away
 - separation of body and soul will cease
 - deep grief at the loss of loved ones will depart
 - loud cries of pent up feelings will be gone
 - distress and toil will also be done away

2. **The provision for the final order**—Rev. 21:5-7

- a) the program of the new order—v. 5
 - He is now completing a process of making things new
 - throughout eternity He will be in the process of renewing
 - thus nothing will ever grow old
 - youth will never grow into old age
- b) the perfecting of the new order—v. 6a
 - that which was in process during the ages has now been completely finished
 - it is done
 - it has come to pass and it will be permanent
- c) the proffer of the new order—v. 6b
 - this is a parenthesis
 - the Lord Jesus cannot refrain from making his age-long offer again
 - perhaps the reader is now filled with desire for this eternal bliss
 - it is offered to anyone with a cause in himself
 - all he needs to do is accept by faith
- d) the possession of the new order—v. 7
 - for the one who does not accept the offer and drinks deeply at the fountain of the water of life, such a one is an overcomer in this life
 - he is a victor, which qualifies him to inherit everything someday, and especially to enjoy the intimate fellowship of God

3. **The prohibition from the new order**—Rev. 21:8

- there may be some doubt in the minds of men, so earth-bound as we are, about the presence of sinful men in this new order
- Satan has certainly tried to confuse the minds of men with his perversions of the truth
- just do the best you can and you will be saved
- just belong to this lodge, or give to the community chest, etc.

- a) the people prohibited from entering
 - “the fearful,” “the unbelieving,” “the abominable,” “the murderers”, “the fornicators,” “sorcerers”, “idolaters,” “all the liars.”
 - this describes their nature and their conduct
 - this does not point to the occasional slips, but to practice; and the practice points to character that is unchanged and in full control
- b) the portion promised to these sinners
 - “part” points to the proper and promised place and condition that such as these shall inherit
 - having shown their relationship, they are then entitled to enter in upon
- b) the condition promised to sinners—“Second death”
 - this is a state of death as opposed to a state of life
 - and they enter this condition by the second physical death
 - the body which they used as an instrument to express their sinful desires and appetites to enter in upon their inheritance
- c) the penalty which they will experience—“Burning”
 - “The lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.”
 - the appetites without expression will grow more intense as time passes, until the victim is burned up
 - in one sense of the word he is reaping precisely what he has sown
 - but it should never be forgotten that it is divine execution

4. The exhibition of the eternal blessedness—Rev. 21:9-27

- the descending of the Holy Jerusalem—v. 9-10
 - a) the submissiveness of the Bride—v. 9
 - “Bride”, “the Lamb’s wife”
 - certainly that wife is not completely submissive to the husband today
 - that explains the difficulties in the church
 - the true bride is more submissive than the spurious bride, the professing church
 - b) the sinlessness of the Bride—v. 10
 - “That great city, the Holy Jerusalem”
 - the Lamb has finally presented it to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. 5:25)
 - surely that ought to be inducement for God’s people to be now engaged in the most important of all tasks, getting ready to meet the bridegroom

5. The description of the Holy Jerusalem—v. 11-23

- this is the city for which Abraham looked, a city which has a foundation whose builder and maker is God
- this is a real city, the home where the heavenly Bridegroom and His bride will dwell throughout eternity
- this city is going to come down upon the earth
- the earth is the proper sphere and abode of man, and there is the place where this city will finally be placed
- but this is God’s building and so far as I can see, everything I can see, everything about this city is literal
- when it says gold it means gold
- a sevenfold description follows:
 - a) the effulgence of the city—v. 11, 23
 - “the glory of God”
 - this is holiness and it streams from the Son of God, the Lamb

- b) the entrance of the city—v. 12, 13, 21
 - angels are at the gates and the names of the 12 tribes of Israel are upon them
 - that is to remind us that “Salvation is of the Jews”
 - the pearl is to remind us that the only way into the city is through the risen side of a crucified Saviour
- c) the foundation of the city—v. 14, 19-20
 - these 12 foundations are adorned with all manner of precious stones, and each foundation is made of a particular precious stone
 - on each foundation is a name of one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb
 - this is to remind the saints that the apostles are the foundation of the church, being so placed by the Son
- d) the magnitude of the city—v. 15-16
 - 1500 miles cube or a pyramid with a square base of 1500 miles and with a height of 1500 miles
 - at the top of the pyramid the capstone will appear, the chief cornerstone, the light of the city and the temple
- e) the enclosure for the city—v. 17-18
 - the wall about the city is for the purpose of reminding all that this is the private home of the bride
 - this wall reminds one that the Lord provides protection for his people
 - the character of the protection is indicated by the material of which the wall is made, namely, jasper, which is clear as crystal, like diamond, and is the glory of God, his holiness
- f) the material of the city—v. 18, 21
 - within the city limits the buildings are all made of pure gold (v. 18), so pure that it is like glass
 - even the streets are made of pure gold, so pure that it is transparent
 - with all this gold about, it reminds the saints of the absolute righteousness of Christ that was made available at the Cross and upon which we must stand and with which we must be clothed throughout eternity
- g) the worship of the city—v. 22
 - there was no temple within this city, for God was there in the person of the Lamb
 - the saints can look upon his face directly and adore his wonderful person
 - symbols and signs and sacraments and systems of worship will be done away forever

6. The delights of the Holy Jerusalem—v. 24-27

- this city will have a direct blessing upon the nations in the earth
- salvation will be one of the delights, for all nations will be saved—v. 24a
- sanctification will be another delight, for the nations will walk in the holy light of the city—v. 24b
- satisfaction will be another delight from this city for the gates will never be shut
 - ready and easy access all the time
 - come and go at will—v. 25
- separation from all wicked creatures and things will be another delight—v. 27
 - this means that those who occupy the city as the bride and the kings and nations of earth which have access will all be saved
 - sin and sinners will be banished from the earth
- salutations to God will for another delight
 - the nations and kings will bring their glory and honour to the Lamb—v. 24c, 26

CHAPTER 22

1. The experience of eternal blessedness—Rev. 22:1-5

- here again the imagery is actual
- there is a real river, tree, throne, face and light in the celestial city now among men
- but each one of these things is a constant reminder of the grace of God experienced by them
- a) the river of the water of life—v. 1
 - this is a constant reminder of regeneration, God in them by the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and from the Son
- b) the tree of life and the twelve fruits—v. 2
 - this is a constant reminder of preservation, God for them, providing the needed sustenance and protection from harm
- c) the throne of God and the removal of the curse—v. 3
 - this is a constant reminder of divine presence
 - God is among them and over them as Lord and sovereign
 - where He is, there is no curse and His servants willingly submit to His dominion
- d) the face of the Lamb and the name He gives—v. 4
 - this is a constant revelation of the glory of God
 - God is before them in the Lamb and we shall behold His glory with its transforming power throughout eternity
- e) the light of the city is the Lord God—v. 5
 - this is a constant illumination that continues and increases
 - He is the physical light, the mental light, the moral light, the spiritual light
 - God is light
 - everyday the light will grow and our wonder shall increase

2. The conclusion of the book—Rev. 22:6-21

- the grand story has come to an end
- the vision is over
- the record now stands
- only one thing remains, and that is a responsibility to impress men with the importance and the insistence of this message
- a) the importance of these things recorded in this book—v. 6-11
 - they are faithful, that is, they are sure to happen—v. 6-7
 - they are fearful, that is, they are soon to happen—v. 8-9
 - they are final, that is, they will seal the facts—v. 10-11
- b) the invitation to these things recorded in this book—v. 12-17
 - the invitation is given with the incentive of prominence—v. 12-13
 - rewards will be given to the energetic servant
 - the invitation is given with the incentive of privilege—v. 14-15
 - the right will be given to the saved to partake of the tree of life and enter the city
 - the invitation is given with the incentive of price—v. 16-17
 - the water of life will be given without price (freely) to any who desire to partake
- c) the inviolability of these things recorded in this book—v. 18-21
 - the preservation of the message is guaranteed by the sentence upon the destroyer—v. 18-19
 - the attestation of the message is guaranteed by the person who gave the message—v. 20
 - the benediction of the message is the assurance that it will be realized—“Grace”—v. 21