

Revelation #55

September 10, 2023

Series Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Behold I Am Coming Soon

Today's Message: The Glory of the New Jerusalem!; Revelation 21:9-22:5

Heaven is a real place! Heaven consists of new heavens and a new earth and a new Jerusalem. The citizens of heaven have received a new birth and live forever in the newness of life, without sin and without anything that would tempt us to sin or cause us to sin!

But heaven would be meaningless without God. The whole of heaven, the life and enjoyment of heaven and everything in it derives its meaning and value from the holiness and the life and the goodness and the love and the peace and the beauty and the majesty and the glory and the presence of God.

There is nothing which can be compared to heaven. There is no equivalent to be found on earth or in the heavens that is likened unto anything in God's heaven, our eternal dwelling. The earth is in bondage to decay due to sin and the devastation and the corruption it brings upon the earth (Rom. 8:21). In this life—on this earth—everything belonging to creation is subject to frustration and death. The earth, and life on earth cannot bring full and lasting happiness or satisfaction to the inhabitants of this place because of sin. Not to mention, everything in this world, along with its desires pass away (1 John 2:17a).

We find ourselves caught up in the world. We often pursue the things of the world. It's true, the things of the world are temporal and can only satisfy momentarily. Like a vapor they come and go. Like a flash fire they burn hot for only a moment. A theme throughout Scripture concerns the temporal nature of everything we put our hands on. Nothing we can earn, nothing we can build, nothing we can buy, nothing we can steal or borrow, nothing we can inherit, nothing we can inhabit—there is nothing that we can store up for ourselves on earth that is transferable to heaven. Jesus stated plainly in Matthew 6:19, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and thieves break in and steal." But, He did say, "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**"

So, where is your treasure? Tell me, where is your heart? Where is your head most of the time? How hard, how diligent are you working to store up treasures on earth? What could you stop doing now, and what could you start doing now in order to obey Jesus' teaching to store up treasure in heaven?

Having things on earth is not in itself sinful. So, that is not what I'm suggesting. How we use what we have is, however, an indicator of where our heart is. For example, while going through my mother's earthly belongings my wife pointed out something that exemplified her servant lifestyle. In her guest bathroom there were neatly folded the most fluffy cotton towels and washcloths. In her bathroom there were towels that I know were very old. In fact, all through her apartment, most of her belongings left behind a testimony of service and benefit to her guests. Many of the items in her apartment brought back memories of her love and service to my dad and to us, not only when we were children growing up under

her care, but even into our adulthood. She ate like a spartan, but used her pots and pans and cookware to cook and bake good things as a blessing to others. But, there is not one thing that she possessed on earth that she will need in heaven. She misses nothing! Why? Because everything will be new and glorious in heaven!

I point all that out in order to stir up longings for the new heaven and the new earth and to set our minds on things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God (see Col. 3:1-2)! "Our citizenship is in heaven. (Phil. 3:20)" We should be thinking about heaven and our hearts should be set on heaven.

Heaven is an actual real place where believers go when they pass from this life (2 Cor. 5:8). At the rapture believers will be taken up into heaven immediately (1 Cor. 15:51-55; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). And as we have read in Revelation 21:1-7, it consists of new heavens and a new earth with the new Jerusalem as the habitation of God and His people (Rev. 21:3).

Today we will look at John's more detailed revelation of the new Jerusalem. First, a general description of the new Jerusalem (21:9-11). Second, a description of the new Jerusalem from the outside (21:12-21a). Third a description of the new Jerusalem from the inside (21:21b- 22:2). And, fourth, the new Jerusalem as the dwelling of God and His people who dwell with Him (22:3-5).

I. (21:9-11) A General Description of the new Jerusalem.

A. The Angel

1. (21:9) Described as "one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues"
 - a) Once occupied with dispensing God's wrath
 - b) Now occupied with displaying the Bride of the Lamb!
 - (1) The Bride is the wife of the Lamb
 - (a) Originally was just The Church (see Rev. 19:7)
 - (b) Now, the Bride must include everyone who has been redeemed through all ages, and who live in heaven forever!
2. (21:10a) Carried John away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain
 - a) And showed him the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

B. 21:10b-11) The Holy City, the new Jerusalem

1. (21:10b) MacArthur sees this Holy City "coming down out of heaven" as something having already existed and now taking center stage in the new heavens and the new earth.
2. (21:11) The Glory of God: "It shone with the glory of God"
 - a) Radiating from the center of the city is the full manifestation of the Glory of God
 - (1) The Source:
 - (a) (21:22) Radiating NOT from a physical temple because The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple!

- (i) In OT the Glory radiated from the Tabernacle and the Temple, but yet veiled by the structure
- (b) (21:23) NOT the sun or moon because “the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.”
- (c) The Source IS the full manifestation of the Shekinah glory of God.
 - (i) Wherever you see the glory of God, there you find the presence of God. So, here we have in the center of the new Jerusalem the fullness of the presence of God.

(2) Its Brilliance

- (a) Like that of a very, or most precious jewel
 - (i) “Like a jasper, clear as crystal”
 - (a) Perhaps clear as a diamond with perfect clarity!
- (b) John describes the new Jerusalem as a perfectly pure *diamond* perfectly radiating the Shekinah Glory of God.
 - (i) Radiating, and perhaps even refracting the fullness of the presence of God: His nature and character unclothed (so to speak!)

II. (21:12-21a) A Description of the new Jerusalem from the Outside.

- A. Great High walls, gates and foundations
 - 1. This was not a floating city, but a real, well anchored and situated city.
- B. 12 gates
 - 1. An angel was stationed at each gate
 - a) MacArthur thinks the angels were there “to attend God’s glory, and serve His people (Heb.1:14).”
 - 2. On each gate was the name of one of each of the 12 tribes of Israel.
 - a) God eternally remembers His covenant with Israel.
 - (1) “Theirs is the promises, the covenants, the Scriptures, and the Messiah.” (MacArthur)
 - b) 3 gates in each side of the four sided city
 - (1) The tribes were arranged in the same way around the tabernacle in the wilderness (see Numbers 2).
 - (2) And they were arranged in the same manner around the Millennial temple, also (see Ezekiel 48).
- C. 12 Foundations
 - 1. Under the walls and therefore, also under the 12 gates
 - a) On them were written the names of the 12 apostles.
 - (1) God eternally remembers His covenant relationship with the Church.

- (a) Remember Ephesians 2:20? Reminding us that the Church is “built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone.”

D. The Dimensions

1. A city that is 12,000 stadia wide, long and high
 - a) That would be 1,380 miles wide, long and high
 - (1) Would the gates be that tall?
2. The walls were 144 cubits thick, according to a man’s cubit.
 - a) Approximately 72 yards, or 216 feet.

E. The Materials

1. Walls, foundations and gates: of precious, transparent stones. Each kind would refract the glory of God in indescribable glory!
2. (21:18b) The city of pure gold: so pure that it was as pure glass.

III. (21:21b-22:2) A Description of the new Jerusalem from the Inside.

A. (21:21b) The great street was pure gold, like transparent glass.

1. Again, the transparency allows the glory of God to brilliantly illuminate not only the new Jerusalem, but the new heavens and the entirety of everything, eternally!

B. (21:22) No Temple

1. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
 - a) The glory (Presence) of God and the Lamb radiates through all eternity.
 - b) His people are in His presence eternally; eternally worshiping before Him.
 - (1) “Life will be worship, and worship will be life!” (MacArthur)

C. (21:23-27) No Sun or Moon

1. The glory of God is its light and the Lamb is its lamp.
 - a) This is to say that the Father and the Son are coequal in radiant glory.
 - (1) That is, the Father radiates the fullness of Glory
 - (2) And, the Son radiates the fullness of Glory, and in bodily form.
 - (a) Colossians 2:9: “For in Christ all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form.”
 - (b) See also John 1:2; 1:14; 1:18; 17:5; Phil.2:6
2. The nations walk by its light and the kings...bring their splendor into [new Jerusalem].
 - a) I think this means at least one very important truth: We are all equal sharers in the glory of God.:
 - (1) That every citizen of heaven reflects the glory of God
 - (2) That every “king,” whoever they are, shares equally in the reflected glory of God. God gets all the glory through everyone.
3. (21:27) Nothing impure will ever enter [the new Jerusalem], etc.

- a) Literally meaning, that with the full manifest glory of God radiating eternally that nothing impure could in any way, secrete into heaven.
- (1) The only ones that can stand before the full manifestation of the glory of God are all who have been written in the Lamb's book of life.

(a) The Redeemed!

D. (22:1-2) A River and eternally Fruitful Trees

- 1. A River as clear as crystal flows down from the throne of God and the Lamb
 - a) It is Life: Zoe life. The Life of God, from God nourishing everything!
- 2. It flows down the middle of the great street of the city.
- 3. It nourishes the fruit trees that bear crops every month all the "time".
 - a) The fruit is for the *healing* of the nations
 - (1) Not literally for healing. But for "life-giving" and continual renewal and refreshment.

IV. (22:3-5) A Description of the new Jerusalem as the Dwelling of God and His People.

A. Life! Life! Life! Eternal Life!

- 1. The curse is gone!
 - a) No more sorrow, sickness, corruption, derangement, or death!
 - (1) Not even one hair of corruption!
 - (2) Only Life! The Zoe life! Abundant and Full!
- 2. His servants will serve Him
 - a) With joy
 - b) With productivity: whatever the tasks in heaven will be!
 - c) Did I mention, with joy?
 - d) And Jesus indicated that He would serve His servants!
 - (1) Luke 12:35-40: **v37 reads**, "It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them."
- 3. His servants will see Him!
 - a) His Name will be emblazoned on their foreheads!
- 4. His servants will enjoy the Light of the Lord God forever! An endless, beautiful eternal day!
 - a) The servants of God won't be beaten down and discouraged like often happens when laboring in the sunshine of earth, but will, instead, be invigorated and refreshed by the Light of the glory (Presence) of God!
- 5. And, His servants will happily reign with Him forever.
 - a) I think that He will make us competent to reign with Him
 - (1) No more feelings of uselessness, and no more loathing ourselves.
 - (2) We will lack no good thing!

- (a) I'm reminded of Psalm 34:10: "The lions may grow hungry and weary, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing."