

The New Jerusalem Paradise

Conrad Baker

www.MaranathaMedia.com.au

New Heaven! New Earth! All Things New!
An Exposition Of Revelation 21 And 22

“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.” Revelation 21:1

What heaven is this that passes away and is replaced by another? In scripture three different heavens are brought to view.

1. The aerial or atmospheric heaven

“The fowls that fly in the midst of heaven.” Revelation 19:17

Birds fly only in the atmosphere of our earth. In the original account of creation, Moses under inspiration described the atmosphere under the term “firmament”

“And God called the firmament heaven” Genesis 1:6-8

The aerial heaven extends for several hundreds of miles from the surface of the earth. Moses likened it to a blanket, because without it, life would be unbearable on earth.

“When I made the cloud the garment thereof and thick darkness a swaddling band for it.” Job 38:4, 7-9

The atmospheric heaven keeps the earth warm. It is a protection from the killer rays of the sun and is a miracle of design. St. Paul speaks of a “third heaven”

“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago. Such a one caught up to the third heaven. How that he was caught up into Paradise” 2 Corinthians 12:2-4. If there is a third heaven - Paradise - then there are two other heavens. The first is the aerial.

2. The second is the starry heaven. This involves outer space.

“The heavens declare the glory of God. In them has he set a tabernacle [dwelling place] for the sun” Psalm 19:1-4

This heaven contains the innumerable solar systems, constellations, nebulae or island universes. With the multiplied millions of suns in space, most of which are giants compared with ours, there are also planetary systems, as there is with our sun.

Is it possible that the planets of these other solar systems could be inhabited? Many conservative astronomers are convinced that other planets are filled with life. (1) The scriptures for millenniums have taught that the universe is filled with life. David, Israel's king, sang under inspiration -

“When I consider the heavens ... the moon and the stars which You have ordained; What is man that You are mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visits him?” Psalm 8:3,4

In the light of the fact that there are millions of other worlds, David understandably was filled with wonder as to why the Creator could be so concerned with our little planet and to such a degree that in the person of His Son, He should even visit the human race for 33 years.

“The nations are as a drop [of water] in a bucket [of water] and are counted as the small dust of the balance [or scales]” Isaiah 40:15

If the nations of our planet are as one drop of a bucket of water, or as the small dust left over on the scales, after weighing the main materials, what is the remainder of the bucket of water or the main material that was weighed in the scales? The answer is that they represent the vast abundance of life throughout the rest of the universe of God.

“He spreads out the heavens, as a tent to dwell in” Isaiah 40:22

“God himself that created the earth, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.” Isaiah 45:18

If this were true of our tiny planet what, then, of planets that are hundreds, of times larger than ours? In our local solar system Jupiter is 1300 times larger than earth and Saturn is 734 times larger, with a magnificent lighting system. Why such remarkable and beautiful design for an empty, lifeless planet? (2)

Finally, John the Revelator clearly states that the heavens contain intelligent dwellers,

“Rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.” Revelation 12:12

This reveals that there is more than one heaven and that in each there are intelligent beings. What are these beings like?

“Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host-and the host of heaven worship thee” Nehemiah 9:6.

This is referring not only to the third heaven - Paradise but also to the second; and the host of these two heavens worship God. Only intelligent, moral creatures are capable of worship, which suggests that the hosts of the second heaven have been created “in the image of God” just as man was originally created. [Genesis 1:26, 27]

What is the state of the inhabitants of other worlds? Are they sinful as this world is? Scripture indicates that our world is the one lost world. All others are sinless. The parable of the one lost sheep of St. Luke tells of how the Good Shepherd left the ninety and nine and sought the one that was lost. (3) This most accurately applies to our lost world because

“All we like sheep have gone astray” Isaiah 53:6

“The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” Luke 19:10

Our world is the black sheep of the universe, however it excites more interest and attention than any other. God would not permit the cancer of sin to spread, so He limited sin to this planet and on this planet sin will run its course and burn itself out. This means that man in his contaminated condition will never be permitted by Heaven to reach other inhabited worlds because wherever man goes, whatever he touches, he contaminates.

3. The third heaven as shown above, is called Paradise. This is where the tree of life is located and the throne of God. (4) The third heaven is God’s dwelling place.

“Hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place!” 1Kings 8:30

God has a particular location where He dwells. Though the Deity is omnipresent, yet there is an actual place where the Creator resides. Jesus declared:

“Our Father which art in heaven.” Luke 11:2

“The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens and his kingdom rules over all” Psalm 103:19

We believe that in the vast illimitable universe of God, there is one great final centre around which all heavenly bodies revolve. Christian astronomers believe this centre is the dwelling place of God, the third heaven. Isabel Lewis of the United States Naval Observatory declared,

“All known objects in the heavens belong to one enormous unit.” (5)

Scripture declares that the third heaven is an actual country - a literal place.

Now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their Cod for he has prepared for them a city.” Hebrews 11:16.

Jesus said:

“In my Father’s house are many mansions. I go and prepare a place for you” John 14:2

Heaven is a place. “Heaven thy dwelling place” 1 Kings 8:30. If the rest of God’s universe is physically real, why should not the centre, the hub of the universe be physically real. The third heaven contains a great city.

“He has prepared for them a city” Hebrews 11:16

“He [Abraham] looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Hebrews 11:10

“In my Father’s house are many mansions” John 14:2

This city described in Revelation 21 and 22 and it is formed of solid materials.

Which heaven is it that passes away? Which heaven is that God makes new? It is the first heaven. As saint Peter penned,

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now [in existence] are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men-the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the-earth also and the works therein shall be burned up.” 2 Peter 3:7, 10

“And a new earth”

This does not denote a new planet but a planet whose surface or crust is renewed. The word “new” in this chapter is used three times. In the Greek there are two words for new.

The word for “new” here denotes that which is fresh and renewed. There is to be a restoration of this planet to its original pristine condition.

“He shall send Jesus Christ whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things which God bath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:20, 21

At the time of the universal flood as recorded in Genesis 7 and 8, the earth’s surface was torn up and relayed by the action of water, down to a depth of at least twenty miles according to geological evidence.

We suggest that in the great restoration when the earth melts with fervent heat [2 Peter 3:10,12] that the crust of the earth will be purified and relayed as in the original Edenic state.

“The first heaven and the first earth were passed away”

When the consuming fire comes down “from God out of heaven¹ and envelopes our planet and turns it into a Lake of fire, then this atmospheric heaven and this present earth as we know it, will pass away. But out of the holocaust will emerge the planet, purified, renewed and restored.

“Wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.” 2 Peter 3:12,13

When the purifying fires of God have done their work we suggest that there could be a re-enactment of the original creation week. If so, what a fascinating series of events await the saints of God. What we have accepted in faith contrary to so-called scientific opinion, we may see enacted before our very eyes. Stupendous events of creation as God performed them 7000 years ago, we may actually witness.

We may see the re-making of earth’s atmosphere as it was in its Edenic state. Originally “there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.” Genesis 2:5, 6.

The watering system of the planet was completely different from the present, which began with the universal flood. [Genesis 7:4, 12; 8:2] We may witness the reforming of the earth’s surface, the emergence of the land masses. Instead of vast masses of water there will be smaller areas of seas and lakes perfectly located around the earth.

“Neither shall there be any more sea” Verse 1

No vast oceans will cover the globe. Currently 70% of the earth’s surface is water. In the renewed earth we believe it will be reversed.

Originally according to fossil evidence, there was a universal subtropical climate. There were no frozen polar regions nor hot equatorial areas.

This event will be the fulfillment of the Old Testament predictions, that God will create a new heavens and a new earth. Many Christians have applied these predictions to the coming millennium but, as Revelation 21 shows, their fulfillment will be after the millennium, [See Appendix 1]

“Behold I create a new heaven and a new earth and former shall not be remembered nor come into mind... and they shall build houses and inhabit them, they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them-and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands, the wolf and the lamb shall feed together and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain [or kingdom] said the Lord” Isaiah 65:17, 21, 22, 25.

“And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” Revelation 21:2

Because this sounds impossible from a human viewpoint, this verse has generally been given a symbolic application. But after the Second Advent, things have a literal application, according to one principle of prophetic interpretation. Therefore this must mean that the literal holy city - “the many mansions” which Christ says he “is preparing” for his people, will, after the millennium, descend by the power of God to this planet. Today in the light of man’s ability to overcome the force of gravity, it is easy to understand how such a vast city could be lowered from heaven to earth. Surely our great Creator who upholds the mighty objects of outer space, is able to transport a city through space.

According to Revelation 22:1, 2 the tree of life is in the midst of the holy city. Originally the tree of life was in Eden. Is this the same tree?

Undoubtedly. How, then, does it descend from heaven within the city, when originally it was upon the earth? The Garden of Eden remained on earth after Adam's fall, until the coming of the universal flood. At Eden's gate, the people of God of the pre-flood world, gathered to worship. There were the visible tokens of the presence of the Deity. [Genesis 3:24] Seeing at the time of the flood the entire surface of the Earth was turned up, it is believed that at that time the Garden of Eden - Paradise - was transported to heaven. It is where that Christ is building the many mansions.

At the close of the millennium when the earth has been purified, the Garden of Eden [now within the city] is restored to earth. Why is the city described as it coming down from God out of heaven when it had already descended to earth at the Third Advent before the final judgment? [Revelation 20:9] This leads to another query. What became of the holy city when the whole earth was consumed with eternal fire?

It is generally believed that what befell Noah's ark in the destruction of "the world that then was" will also befall the holy city in the final destruction. In the flood the ark containing God's people rode upon the waves of water. Likewise, the holy city, we suggest, will ride upon the waves of flame when the world is on fire.

Seeing the cleansing of the planet involves also the first heaven, or atmosphere, which extends for hundreds of miles from the earth's surface, the city riding the flames could be hundreds of miles above the earth. Thus, when the fire has accomplished its work, John could have seen the city descending out of heaven.

But there is also an important truth wrapped up in the above expression. The only way that the human race will ultimately find the ideal state - the golden age - is by it coming down from heaven. It will never evolve, it must come from above. And only those who first of all are spiritually "born from above" will finally share in earth's golden age which will never end.

"Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Does this suggest some kind of marriage? Not necessarily. The marriage of Christ to the holy city was consummated at the Close of Probation at the conclusion of the judgment of the saints. (6) The marriage supper was celebrated after the Second Advent when God's people had been translated to heaven. (7) We suggest that the above description denotes the glory and unsurpassed beauty of the New Jerusalem. It is "prepared as a bride" not as "the bride."

"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." Verse 3.

This promise is so tremendous, it is difficult to comprehend it. God is to dwell among us. He dwells among us spiritually now but then it will be literal. The Father himself, not only God the Son, will dwell among us.

"For the throne of God and of the Lamb" are there.

Whether this means that God the Father dwells continuously upon this planet is doubtful, but at least we suggest, at designated times He will visit His earthborn people. The human race was created for God's pleasure.

"For thy pleasure they are and were created" Revelation 4:11

God enjoys his children and we in turn will enjoy Him. What a prospect (8)

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" verse 4

Is this a literal description of the compassionate nature of our heavenly Father? He certainly is the great Comforter. On earth now we have the invisible Spiritual Comforter - God, the Holy Spirit. In the kingdom we will have the visible, literal Comforter - our Heavenly Father. Will there be tears after the final judgment, after sin and sinners are no more? It seems that this expression as usual is culled from the Old Testament.

“The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces” Isaiah 25:8

We suggest that it is a figurative expression denoting that sorrow will never again afflict the race. But is it not possible that some may grieve over the loss of loved ones? We need to recall that the saints will have spent one thousand years in heaven and surely in that period, all human ties with our unsaved loved ones will be severed?

Will the saints be able to recall events in this life after they reside in the kingdom of God? Some conclude that there will be no remembrance.

“Behold I create a new heaven and a new earth and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind” or “came upon the heart” [margin] Isaiah 65:17

The saints will not remember some things. That which would cause sorrow they will not recall. Their sins they may not recall [Hebrews 8:12] but without doubt we will recall the awful results of sin. We will recall God’s wondrous grace and how we were delivered from sin’s guilt and power. Otherwise, how will we sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb? That is a song of experience, a testimony of Christ’s saving power. The saints could not fully appreciate the kingdom if they did not recall the terrible contrast of this sin-cursed earth.

“And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying neither shall there be anymore pain, for the former things are passed away.” Verse 4

What a thrilling array of negatives. Four of them, denoting they are universally no more. What a different world awaits the saints. How much of man’s time is now involved with the above four conditions. This world is a vale of tears. But what a contrast! So many of the current occupations of men will never be engaged in again. Medical services will never be required. Hospitals, chemists, doctors, nurses, etc., will be no more. Undertakers, gravediggers, embalmers, crematoriums, cemeteries, etc., will not exist. All that is now involved in food production and distribution will not be needed. There will be no accidents, no stress, no pressure, no competition, no failures.

Imagine family life in such an existence. Will families be united there? Those of God’s people who have lost children before the age of responsibility will have them restored. They will “grow up” in the kingdom [Malachi 4:2]

Will children be born in the hereafter? According to Jesus’ instruction, the answer is no.

“The children of this world marry and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage.” Luke 20:27-36

There will be no marriage nor childbirth. The human race will have been fully made up. Originally when Adam and Eve were instructed to multiply they were “to fill the earth”. Undoubtedly multiplication would then have ceased. Before sin entered conception must have been much rarer than after sin’s entrance because God decreed of the woman,

“I will greatly multiply thy conception” Genesis 3:16

This was essential in order to preserve the race because with the entrance of sin, death came upon all men. “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new.” Verse 5

God will not make all new things, but all the things that man originally had, God will renew them. It will be Eden restored. So vastly

different is the prospect before us and so incredibly glorious that many retort, "It is too good to be true!" The Lord knew that men would

react that way, so he gave John a divine guarantee.

"And he said unto me, Write: [it down] for these words are faithful and true."

The kingdom of glory is not a fairy story, nor pie in the sky, it is restoring to the race what God originally gave it - Paradise. And to confirm God's guarantee, He declared,

"And he said unto me, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." verse 6

What an assurance! "It is done". God has decreed it, it cannot fail. "It is impossible for God to lie" Hebrews 6:18

"I am Alpha and Omega."

What God commences he concludes. What he promises, he fulfils. Once he declares it, it is counted as done.

"I will give him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

Millions thirst for the water of life but they do not realize it. How many are seeking spiritual satisfaction? The human race is deprived, and the only way of true and lasting contentment is in Jesus Christ. Christ offers every man the water of life now, in this life. It represents the Holy Spirit which is received by believing on Christ.

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me-out of his belly [from within him] shall flow rivers of living water. This spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7:37-39

If we receive the spiritual water of life now, we will receive of the literal water of life in the kingdom. But notice that we will be given "the fountain" or the spring of the water of life, meaning that we will have a permanent or everlasting supply.

"He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God and he shall be my son." Verse 7

While eternal life is a gift from God [Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8] nevertheless, the reward we receive after eternal life is bestowed, is based upon definite conditions. These conditions are summed up in the word "overcomer", which is mentioned eight times in Revelation . Eight often denotes regeneration and resurrection and it will be in the great resurrection that the saints will receive their full reward.

"All things"

All that God has promised his people will be fulfilled in the earth made new. However, the greatest reward will be when God the Father publicly and privately receives each one of us as his own son or daughter. Perhaps there is more involved in this than meets the eye. When the beloved Son ascended to heaven after his sojourn upon the earth, he was received by heaven with celebration and triumph. When the Son approached the Father it declares,

"The Father's arms encircle His Son and the word is given, Let all the angels of God worship Him." (9)

What a beautiful glimpse of the affectionate nature of the Godhead.

“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 burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death!” verse 8

God lists eight types of sinners -

1. The fearful: The cowardly. Those who are afraid of public opinion, who will not serve God because of criticism from their friends, etc.
2. The unbelieving: Those that lack faith - who cannot trust God. This is a basic sin, “without faith it is impossible to please him” Hebrews 11:6
3. The abominable: Those who are disgusting and detestable in their person and behavior. Also those who have drunk of Babylon’s cup of abominations. [Revelation 17:4, 5] and thereby have been debased in character.
4. Murderers: Those filled with hate as well as those who have no respect for life.
5. Whoremongers: Those who commit fornication or engage in any form of illicit sexual behavior.
6. Sorcerers: Those who are involved in the occult especially mediums, etc.
7. Idolaters: Deliberate transgressors of the second commandment whether their idols be literal or spiritual.
8. All liars, This includes those who knowingly teach false doctrines as well as those who engage in deliberate deceit.

“Shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone” verse 8

This alludes to the burning earth after the final judgment of Revelation 20:12-15. When fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours the unsaved, the same fire envelopes the globe and it becomes a lake of fire. This is the final fate of the unsaved. This is the “hell” [Greek “Gehenna”] of Mark 9:43-48. But it is not eternal torment, for John declares,

“Which is the second death” verse 8

Death is a state of lifelessness. It is the exact opposite of life. How, then, could the unsaved live on endlessly in torment when the final punishment is in the lake of fire which is death. If a man or the soul or spirit of a man, exists in torment, he is still alive, he is not dead.

But it is the second death. All men die the first death. That death is the result of Adam’s sin. The second death is the result of one’s own sins. Every person who rejects the death of Christ on his behalf - as his substitute, must pay the penalty for his own sins. But not only that. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. Not only does Christ save the sinner from the guilt of his sin, but also from the power of sin. “He shall save his people from their sins” [Matthew 1:21] In the gospel there is overcoming power. But if the professed believer does not overcome, his end will be with all other sinners in the lake of fire.

New Jerusalem Described. Revelation 21:9-27

Most scholars conclude that this is a symbolic portrayal of the Christian church. Undoubtedly there are valuable spiritual lessons to be derived from this description for God’s people, but is this scripture literal or symbolic? The key to this question is whether it applies before the Second Advent or after. Symbols cease at the Second Advent. After that the literal applies. On what grounds? In the kingdom of grace things are spiritual and symbolic. In the kingdom of glory things are natural and literal. The dividing line between the two kingdoms is the Second Advent. (10) Therefore, the description in Revelation 21, being after the Second Advent, must be a description of the ‘Literal New Jerusalem. But many Christians cannot accept the premise that the kingdom of glory is literal.

Heaven is held-to be totally of the realm of the spirit. But the scripture when taken as it reads is clear that the Hereafter is also literal and physical, as outlined under the third heaven above.

How is it then that the professedly Christian world generally believes that the Hereafter is immaterial and solely of the realm of the spirit? This is the result of pagan concepts being received into the church in the early Christian centuries. This philosophy came from Manicheanism or Gnosticism. They believed that matter was inherently evil and that harmony in the universe would only be achieved by the destruction of matter. (11)

This concept is still with us today as held by the cults of the east. The outcome of this pagan concept was that the eternal realm was considered to be purely spiritual. On this ground, biblical descriptions of a literal, physical Hereafter were interpreted as having a spiritual or symbolic application.

The detailed description of the kingdom as presented in Revelation 21, 22 demands a literal application.

“There came to me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues and talked with me, saying, come hither and I will show thee the bride, the lamb’s wife!” verse 9

Why is the same angel delegated to show the city, New Jerusalem, to John. This same angel showed to John:

“The judgment [or punishment] of the great whore that sits on many waters.” Revelation 17:1

It is apparent that angels are delegated particular tasks and responsibilities.

“The angel of the waters” Revelation 16:5

“The angel of the altar” Revelation 16:7

“The angel with power over fire!” Revelation 14:18

“The angels-of the winds” Revelation 7:1

“The angels of the vials!” Revelation 15:7

The same angel is employed no doubt in order to reveal the contrast between the bride and the harlot. One receives the plagues of judgment, the other the glory of God. Here it is plainly spelt out that the bride of Christ is the New Jerusalem. But other scriptures declare that the Church is the bride of Christ (12). There are two brides in scripture. The spiritual bride of the church and the literal bride of the New Jerusalem.

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.” Verse 10

John is drawing his imagery from the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, who also was taken to a high mountain and shown the promised city that God was to build for ancient Israel.

“In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south” Ezekiel 40:2

These predictions of the latter chapters of Ezekiel were not fulfilled to Israel. They were conditional prophecies [43:10, 11] based on an “if”. Israel failed to fulfill the conditions, therefore according to a law of prophetic interpretation, the Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel now apply to the Christian church - spiritual Israel. Revelation 21, 22 will be the fulfillment of the final predictions of Ezekiel. Altogether there are at least thirty parallels between Ezekiel 34-48 and Revelation. (13)

“Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” Verse 11.

This is the magnificent external appearance of the holy city.

“And had a wall great and high and had twelve gates and at the gates twelve angels and names written thereon which are of the tribes of the children of Israel.” Verse 12

It is an Israelite city indicating that only true Israelites enter it. An Israelite is one who is “God-ruled” “a prince of God,” an overcomer. Why walls and gates in the city? Undoubtedly for beauty. For design and order. Heaven is perfectly organized. There is no confusion. With the millions of spiritual Israelites who will belong to the city, there will need to be order and organization, but never will it impinge on the perfect freedom of any individual,

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” verse 14

Altogether there are twelve twelves in this portrayal. Twelve denotes divine organization. There is perfect order in God’s kingdom. The names of the apostles indicate that the city is a Christian city. What a reward for those twelve brave humble man who pioneered the gospel. It is a memorial that will speak its message throughout eternity.

“And he had a golden reed to measure the city.” Verse 15

Why measure it? To acquaint the saints with the reality of it all. To help us to believe.

“The city lies foursquare, twelve thousand furlongs!” [or stadia]

This means that its size would be approximately 350 miles square or about 550 kilometers each side.

“The length and breadth and height are equal”

The word “equal” may also be translated proportionate. This appears to be confirmed by the following verse,

“And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel” verse 17

Surely this could only refer to the height of the wall which means that it is 288 feet in height, if the cubit of Ezekiel is used. John’s description is based on Ezekiel’s vision [Ezekiel 40:5; 43:13]

“And the building of the wall of it was of jasper and the city was pure gold like unto clear glass.” verse 18

The jasper is a bright flashing translucent stone and the buildings of the city including the streets [verse 21] were of transparent gold. What beauty amidst the abundant greenery that would undoubtedly adorn the city. “The foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones” verse 19, 20.

John lists the twelve foundations with their distinctive stones and colors.

“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl” verse 21
What magnificent gates! Each one a solid pearl!

TEMPLE’S CHANGE OF LOCATION

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” verse 22

Does not mean that there will be no temple. It means that the location of the temple has been altered. Originally it was within the city. However, in Ezekiel’s vision the temple is shown as being outside the city. Apparently it is the same when the reign of sin ceases, because John reveals that the saints, represented by the number 144,000, “They are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple.” Revelation 7:15

Undoubtedly, the temple will serve a different function in the Hereafter because sin is no more, and priestly services are no more. Christ will be, not the priest-king, but King of kings.

“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” verse 23

In this present kingdom of grace Christ is the spiritual light of the world, the sun of righteousness. In the kingdom of glory, Christ is the literal light of the world as is also the Father. That vast city of approximately 350 miles square will have no need of artificial lighting. The light of God’s glory will diffuse throughout the whole city and in every dwelling.

“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 honor into it.” Verse 24

There will be no earthly nations saved as such, except the one “holy nation” of spiritual Israel which is comprised of saints from every nation. However, when one contemplates the number of the saved, he can understand why they are designated as nations.

“And I beheld and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations ...stood before the throne.” Revelation 7:9

Even today we may number the peoples alive on earth, but the number saved in the kingdom will be so vast that it will be humanly impossible to count them. Because God’s kingdom is a place of perfect order, undoubtedly the saved will be organized into appropriate groups - “the nations of the-saved”.

“And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.” Verse 24

What kings are these? This description is borrowed from Isaiah 60 where the prophet foretold how ancient Israel would have become the centre of the kingdom of God on earth, were she faithful. However, the prediction will be fulfilled to spiritual Israel in the last days in a spiritual sense. It will also have a literal fulfillment in the earth made new. Much of the imagery used by Isaiah is borrowed by the Revelator in Revelation 21 and 22.

PARALLELS BETWEEN

Isaiah 60

“Thy gates shall be open continually they shall not be shut day nor night” Verse 12.

“That men may bring to thee the forces [wealth margin] of the Gentiles” [or nations]

“That their kings may be brought” Verse 11.

“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting or destruction within thy borders” Verse 18

“The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for righteousness shall the moon give Light to thee.”

“The days of thy mourning shall be ended.” Verse 20

“Thy people shall be all righteous.” Verse 21

They shall inherit the land forever.” Verse 21

Revelation 21, 22.

“The gates of it shall not be shut at all by day for there shall be no night there.” Verse 25.

“They shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.” Verse 26.

“The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it” Verse 24

“And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying neither pain.” Verse 4.

“There shall be no more curse” verse 22:3

“The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it.” Verse 23

“The Lord shall be to thee an everlasting light, and thy God the glory.” Verse 19

“The glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof” verse 23; 22:5

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” verse 4

“There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles, neither abomination or makes a lie” verse 27

“They [the saints] shall reign forever and ever.” 22:5

While there may be kings in this world who will be saved in the kingdom, nevertheless they are not saved as kings, but as born again children of God. Earthly kings will not resume their kingly positions in the Hereafter. Who, then, are the kings that bring their glory and honor to the New Jerusalem in acknowledgment of the worthiness of the Lamb, etc.

The twelve apostles will be kings.

“Jesus said to them, you which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel!” Matthew 19:28

The twelve tribes of Israel we suggest, represent spiritual Israel. The twenty-four elders will be kings.

“The four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb saying You have made us kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” Revelation 5:8-10

“There shall be no night there” v.25

This is referring to the holy city. Does this mean that there will be no days as such and no weekly and monthly cycles: In the restored earth, while time is replaced by eternity, there will still be days and nights but no darkness. The day will still be divided. As Isaiah declared, speaking of the restoration of his people,

“Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord binds up the breach of his people and heals the stroke of their wound.” Isaiah 30:26

This does not mean that the sun will be seven times hotter but brighter. Thus, while there will be a difference in the renewed earth between day and night, so-called, there will be no darkness. Because man in his glorified body will experience no weariness or fatigue, there will be no need of sleep.

“They shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31

That weeks and months will be observed by the redeemed is revealed by Isaiah who declared of the new earth state:

“It shall come to pass that from one new moon to another [monthly] and from one Sabbath to another [weekly] shall all flesh come to worship before me said the Lord” Isaiah 66:22,23

This means that from around the renewed earth, the multitudes of the saints, each Sabbath and each month, will come to the holy city firstly for worship and secondly to partake of the tree of life.

“Which yielded her fruit every month!” [22:2]

“And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it” [the New Jerusalem] verse 26

What glory and honor? The redeemed will not exist in a state of inactivity in the better land. As the author of the Great Controversy has so beautifully described it,

“Immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of red love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s redeemed.” (14)

No doubt the honor and glory of the achievements of the redeemed, will be acknowledged and displayed before the hosts of the saved in the New Jerusalem; but instead of man being exalted, the credit and praise will rightly be rendered to God.

“And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination or makes a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” verse 27

This reveals why the Deity has gone to such pains to prepare a people for the kingdom of God. The well-being, happiness and security of the universe is based upon obedience to God’s eternal law. Originally it was disobedience to that law that brought disharmony and war in heaven. For 6,000 years God has permitted thee reign of evil in order to convince all, of the secret of real happiness; and now when the reign of sin is over, the standard of entrance is emphasized. But not only that, only those whose guilt has been atoned for by the Lamb of God and who have retained their names in the Book of Life by successfully overcoming evil by the power of the Lamb, [3:5] will abide in that better land.

REVELATION 22

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb” verse 1

This is a literal description of the throne of God that will be established in the New Jerusalem. It is the antitype of the healing waters of Ezekiel 47:1-9. Revelation 21 describes the New Jerusalem from the external view. Revelation 22 now describes the city from within. The first and central object is the throne. Secondly, the sparkling waters that emerge from beneath the throne. What an impressive demonstration of the creative power of God. Thirdly, the tree of life.

“In the midst of the street of it [the city] and on either side of the river was the tree of life which bare twelve manner [or kinds] of fruit and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing [or service] of the nations” verse 2

Every month [Isaiah 66:23] the redeemed come to the tree of life to eat of its fruit. When one considers the innumerable multitude of God’s people, what an abundance of fruit must be produced by this tree. Why is it essential for the redeemed to eat of this tree? According to the original conditions of Eden it appears that it was essential for Adam and Eve to continually eat of the tree. This was to perpetuate immortality.

“And now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever.” Genesis 3:22

But is not immortality bestowed upon the saints at the resurrection and translation at the Second Advent? Yes: “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [or die] but we shall all be changed, in a moment-at the last trump. This mortal must put on immortality. Death is swallowed up in victory.” 1 Corinthians 15:51-54

But man is not naturally immortal. Nor does he possess an immortal soul. Therefore it is necessary to perpetuate immortality. The chosen source is the tree of life. This is a continual reminder to the redeemed that even in their sinless, immortal state they are still dependent upon God for life.

“And there shall be no more curse!” verse 3

The curse that Heaven placed upon the world in the beginning was threefold.

1. The curse upon the ground as a result of Adam’s sin. This prevented the soil from giving forth of its fullness in regard to production. [Genesis 3:17]
2. The curse upon Cain because of the murder of his brother [Genesis 4:11] The Hebrew may read, “Thou art more cursed than the earth.”
3. The curse upon the earth at the Flood because of the moral corruption of the race by which “the world that then was” became “the heavens and the earth which are now.” [Genesis 8:11; 6:1-7; 2 Peter 3:6, 7]

“The curse did not cane all at once. Since the Flood, as the human family have forgotten God the curse has rested heavier and heavier upon men and upon the beasts. The trees and all vegetation also have felt the effects of the curse.” (15)

Little do we realize the sad effects of the curse upon the earth, but in the great restoration when the earth and all in it exhibit their pristine freshness and beauty, we will then comprehend.

“The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it and his servants shall serve hid.” verse 3

Does this mean that the Father takes up permanent residence in the renewed earth? Or could it mean that at various times the Father will visit this earth and enter into fellowship with his earthborn children? Originally in Eden, God visited his children and communed with them.

“And they [Adam and Eve] heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and God called unto them.” Genesis 3:8, 9

“And his servants shall serve him” v.3

What delight and satisfaction for the saints in being able to visibly serve God. What marvelous meaning to our existence could be involved in this simple statement.

“And they shall see his face” verse 4

Face exhibits character. Our heavenly Father is absolute perfection. What, then, must the Father’s face be like? Beautiful faces have a magnetic attraction. How then, will the saints be affected when they “see his face.” We suggest that “so awe-inspiring, so impressive, so moving, so overwhelming” is God’s face that the saints will be unable to contain themselves. They will burst forth into uninhibited praise. Maybe this is the basis for the unceasing praise of the cherubim as revealed in Revelation 4. (16)

“And his name shall be in their foreheads” verse 4

This reminds us of the 144,000.

“An hundred and forty-four thousand having his Father’s name written in their foreheads” Revelation 14:1

Does this mean that all the redeemed will have God’s name in their foreheads? Name denotes character so undoubtedly it does, for no one enters heaven who is lacking in character.

“Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God” Matthew 5:8

Will God’s name be in their foreheads in a spiritual sense, as with the 144,000 or will it be a visible sign of identification. We suggest the latter. Among the multiplied millions of sinless beings of other worlds as well as the millions of the angels of God, the redeemed will possess the visible name of God, indicating their special experience in having been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Verse 5 See under Revelation 21:25

“And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.” Verse 6

Once more through his angel spokesman [21:9] God confirms the certainty of the kingdom. This promise is repeated three times [19:9; 21:5; 22:6] “In the mouth of two or three witnesses a thing is established.” How our Father helps us to believe! He longs for the salvation of his lost children.

“Behold I come quickly: blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book!” verse 7

Six times in Revelation the expression “I come quickly” is used. The first three it seems refer to Christ coming to three of the seven churches in judgment, but the three in chapter 22 all refer to his Second Coming. Number three, recall, denotes the certainty of the promise. [Matthew 18:16]. In this verse it is emphasized to show the importance of keeping the sayings in Revelation. Special instruction and special preparation are essential for the Second Advent.

“And I John saw these things and heard then. And I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then said he to me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren the prophets and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.” Verses 8, 9.

It appears that as in 19:10, John again was so overwhelmed at the marvelous Revelation from the angel, that he involuntarily fell at the feet of the heavenly being. Once again the angel gently reminds John that angels are fellow creatures, and that God alone is to be worshipped.

“And he said unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.” Verse 10

The fulfilling of the prophecies of Revelation commenced in John’s day. Therefore nothing in Revelation is to be sealed or kept secret as far as God’s people are concerned.

“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he which is holy let him be holy still.” Verse 11.

Some Greek scholars prefer,

“Let him that is unjust, do injustice still; and let the foul pollute himself still; and let the righteous do righteousness still; and let the holy sanctify himself still.”

These represent all classes of the godly and ungodly. It seems that the significance of this verse is in the word “still”.

“The word seems to denote development and crystallization of character immediately preceding the caning of the great Judge of all.” Verse 12 (17)

This verse is a declaration or decree concerning the destiny of all, prior to the Second Advent. Jesus in the parable of the wheat and tares explained that in the period of the end of the world, there will be a separation of the just and unjust. [Matthew 13:37-41] This means that at a particular time, a decision must be made as to where every individual stands. This is one of the purposes of the pre-advent judgment.

It determines, after investigation, who has overcome and who has failed. The above decree announces the close of human probation and soon afterwards,

“Behold, a came quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Verse 12

What is the reward? Not eternal life. That is repeatedly declared to be a gift. (18). The reward of the saints is what they receive after they reach the kingdom - after they receive the gift of eternal life. This reveals that the Lord takes note of the works of the saints. Though we cannot earn our way to heaven, nevertheless God will reward us for every effort put forth for his cause. The reward of the unsaved will also be according to their works. The degrees of punishment will be according to his wicked works.

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” Verse 13

This is a repetition of Revelation 1:8, 17. The term “Alpha and Omega” represents Christ as the great Revelator. He knows and reveals all. The term “the first and the last” represents Jesus as the complete victor over all His enemies and the enemies of his people. (19)

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Verse 14

The antinomians dislike this verse and press for the translations from the Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus manuscripts, but these manuscripts are notorious for their many corruptions. (20)

The entrance of the saints into the city and to the tree of life is after the Second Advent. Eternal life is given at the Resurrection and Translation of the saints. We suggest that the privilege of entry into the city and eating of the tree of life, is part of the saints’ reward and therefore the word ‘commandments’ would be more fitting, for the reward according to works.

The word ‘commandments’ also agrees with verse 7 and “Blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” verse 7

“And them that keep the sayings of this book.” Verse 9

What are the saints instructed to keep in the book of Revelation? Without dispute, the commandments of God.

“The dragon was wroth with the woman [church] and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17

“Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12

The following verse confirms that verse 14 refers to commandment keeping because it shows that those outside the city are commandment breakers.

“For without [the city] are dogs and sorcerers and whore mongers and murderers and idolaters and who so ever loves and makes a lie.” Verse 15

The dogs represent humans who are backbiters and hateful toward others -

“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers” Philippians 3:2

“If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” Galatians 5:15

This verse repeats what was stated in 21:27, thus emphasizing the high standard of heaven. No one has a hope of heaven who rebels against its standards.

“I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David and the bright and morning star.” verse 16

The messages of Revelation are the messages of Christ. This makes the book of great importance. The neglect of it creates difficulties for the believer.

“The root [origin] and offspring of David”

This alludes to the deity and the humanity of Jesus. He is the God-man, connected with the Godhead and connected with man. (21)

“The bright and morning star”

Jesus is the one who heralds the end of the night of sin and the coming of the everlasting day.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is [spiritually] athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” verse 17

This is God’s final appeal to man to respond to the gospel and be fitted for the kingdom. How sadly shortsighted is the man who rejects or neglects it.

“For I testify to every one that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of life [margin “tree of life”] and out of the holy city and from the things which are written in this book.” Verse 18, 19.

This is a dire warning from God that if man tampers with Revelation, no matter who or what he is, he will suffer eternal consequences. How important, then, must Revelation be in God’s sight.

“He which testifies these things said, Surely I come quickly. Amen.”

This is the final word of Christ to his people. He is returning to our world. He will keep his promise made on earth that he “will come again.” The blessed hope one day soon, will be realized.

“Even so come Lord Jesus!”

This prayer of John’s should also be the prayer of every true believer to. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” Verse 21

APPENDIX I

Parallels Between Ezekiel 40-48 And Revelation 21, 22

Shown city from a high mountain. Ezekiel 40:2
Shown city from high mountain. Revelation 21:10

City measured with a reed measuring stick. Ezekiel 40:3-5
City measured with a reed measuring stick. Revelation 21:15

The temple was separate from the city. Ezekiel 42:1, 20
No temple in city - situated elsewhere. Revelation 21:22; 7:14, 15

Names of 12 tribes on gates. Ezekiel 48:31
Names of 12 tribes on gates. Revelation 21:16

Three gates on each side of city. Ezekiel 48:30-34
Three gates on each side of city. Revelation 21:13

The city was four-square. Ezekiel 48:30-34
The city was four-square Revelation 21:16

God's glory came from the east. Ezekiel 43:2, 4
God's glory also comes from the east. Matthew 24:2?

God's throne in midst of city. Ezekiel 43:5, 7
God throne in midst of city. Revelation 22:3

Waters issue from the throne forming a river of life. Ezekiel 47:1-3
The river of the water of life issues from the throne. Revelation 22:1

Trees on both sides of the river. Ezekiel 47:12
Tree of life on both sides of the river. Revelation 22:2

New fruit produced every month.
New fruit every month.

Leaves of tree for medicine.
Leaves of tree for healing.

Name of city- "The Lord is there" Ezekiel 48:35
"He shall dwell with them and God himself shall be with them" Revelation 21:3

The land divided by lot according to the tribes 47:21, 22
The saints shall stand in their lot (Daniel 12:13) or inheritance in the renewed earth. Isaiah 65:17, 21-25

No stranger or uncircumcised in heart or flesh shall enter. Ezekiel 44:9 i.e. only purified people.
No one who "defiles or works abomination or makes a lie" shall enter, Revelation 21:27, i.e., only purified people.

Saints assemble for worship on Sabbath. Ezekiel 46:1, 3
Saints assemble for worship every Sabbath. Isaiah 66:22, 23

APPENDIX II

Revelation 21 and 22 is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises to ancient Israel that God would finally restore them to a kingdom of glory upon the earth. Altogether there are ten passages in the writings of Isaiah that embrace the above promise. These are Isaiah 11:5-9; 24; 23; 25:7, 8; 33:20-24; 35:1-10; 40:31; 55:12, 13; 60:18, 19; 65:17-25; 66:22, 23. Some have mistakenly applied these to the millennium but Revelation 21, 22 show that they will be literally fulfilled in the renewed earth after the millennium.

REFERENCES

1. Some of the astronomers who believe there is life on other planets are:
 O. M. Mitchel, W. W. Campbell,
 R. T. Crawford, G. P. Serviss,
 E. L. Larkins, Spenser Jones,
 James Jeans, Thomas Paine.
2. We do not infer that at this stage the planets of our local solar system are inhabited.
3. Luke 15:3-7
4. Revelation 2:7; 22:1, 2
5. Isabel Lewis "Splendors of the Sky" page 30
6. Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14, 21, 22, 26, 27
7. See the Author's "2 Armies! 2 Suppers! 2 Destinies Await Our Generation"
8. See the Author's "A Glimpse of God on the Throne"
9. Ellen G. White "The Desire of Ages" page 834
10. See the Author's "A Glimpse of God on the Throne"
11. Dr. L. E. Froom "Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers" Volume I, pages 222-225
12. See the Author's "2 Armies! 2 Suppers! 2 Destinies"
13. See the Author's "Gog and Magog! Must Russia Invade Palestine to Fulfill Ezekiel 38, 39?"
14. Ellen G. White "The Great Controversy" page 677
15. Ellen G. White "Spiritual Gifts" Volume 4, page 192
15. See the Author's "A Glimpse of God on the Throne"
17. Dr. R. D. Weymouth "The New Testament in Modern Speech" Footnote to Revelation 22:11
18. Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8
19. See the Author's "Jesus Christ! The Alpha and Omega"
20. The Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus manuscripts render Revelation 22:14
 "Blessed are they that wash their robes"
21. See the Author's "The Sealed Scroll and the Scarred Lamb"

Bible Resources

www.vop.com
www.SignsTimes.com
www.WhiteEstate.org
www.Written.org
www.AmazingFacts.org
www.TruthLeftBehind.com
www.ProphecyMadeEasy.com
www.Adventist.org
www.McDonald.Southern.edu
www.RevelationOfHope.org
www.DiscoverOnline.org
www.BibleInfo.com
www.ExploringTheWord.com
www.BibleUniverse.com

Bible Literature

www.rhpa.org
www.PacificPress.com
www.AdventistBookCenter.com
www.RemnantPublications.com

Creationism

www.ChristianAnswers.net
www.ICR.org
www.AnswersInGenesis.org