

REVELATION 21

I. BACKGROUND:

1. The book of Revelation depicts the final showdown between good and evil which began in the Garden of Eden (Genesis). Sin entered the human race, a Deliverer promised. Jesus came in the "*fullness of time*" and paid the price of redemption on Calvary's Cross. He then ascended into Heaven after the Resurrection and is preparing a dwelling place for you and I (John 14:1-3) and allowing time for many to come to salvation.

2. We have now passed beyond the realm of time into eternity. The last marking of time was the 1,000-year reign of Christ upon the earth. After the millennial reign of Christ, we enter into eternity: timelessness; everything is now forever.

II. TEXT:

v. 1: "First earth had passed away" – (aorist active indicative)

In Isaiah God said, "*Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind*" (Isaiah 65:17). It is interesting that the word "**create**" in Isaiah is the Hebrew word *bara*, which is also used in Genesis 1:1. "*In the beginning God created -- bara -- the heavens and the earth.*" *Bara* in Hebrew means, "to make something out of nothing," which only God can do. God uses the same Hebrew word *bara* when He speaks of creating the new heavens and the new earth; not a "reforming" or "reassembling" (*asah*) of the existing material, but the total new creation of something out of nothing.

2 Pet. 3:10-13 "*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*"

Fission - splitting apart using U₂₃₈ [#92] or enriched plutonium [#94/239]. Coulomb's Law: opposite charges attract; like charges repels; so how do you get 92 or 94 positively-charged protons to stay together in the nucleus of each uranium or plutonium atom to stay together? An equivalent force holds them together! Men could not understand this verse until the advent of nuclear science! Protons and neutrons in nucleus, with orbiting electrons around it. Imagine all the atoms in the universe letting go at once!

Col. 1:16-17 "*For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*"

"And there was no longer any sea" -- 70% of the earth's surface is now covered by water, the oceans and seas. There will be no sea on the earth that God creates in the New Kingdom. One of the purposes of the oceans with its salts is to collect and neutralize the pollutants so that the earth is habitable for man. Where there are no pollutants, as in the new earth, seas are not necessary. And if you happen to love sailing, surfing or sunbathing at the beach, God will have something much better for you!

Inhabitants? Church certainly ("bride", v. 9). Abraham also: Heb. 11:10,16 "*For he was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God..., they were long for a better country - a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*"

So it'll be the Church and OT believers; foundations - 12 Apostles names (Paul? Matthias?; 12 gates, one for each of the 12 historic tribes of Israel; symbolizes the foundation/access. "**Nations**" - believers not a part of

Israel in OT or the Church in NT; eg. Noah, non-Israelite; Naaman, the leper. Many Old Testament persons believed in YHWH, but were not Jews. All Gentiles saved during Tribulation will also be included.

FACE-TO-FACE:

- Mt. 5:8 "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*"
- 1 Cor. 13:12 "*For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face-to-face.*"
- 1 John 3:2 "*Dear friends, now we are the children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*"

v. 2: "Bride" was used in Rev. 19:7 to describe the saints (Church is a first declension, "feminine" noun in the Greek: *ἐκκλησία* [ekklesia]). Eph. 5:23-32; 2 Cor. 11:2 uses the analogy of marriage to describe the relationship between Christ and the Church. Note the flexibility of prophecy: here the Bride is not the Church, but the dwelling place of the Bride, the New Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven!

IMPT!!! The word *ekklesia* (church or assembly) does not appear on earth after Rev. 3:22 nor does the word appear again until Rev. 22:16! In other words, THE CHURCH IS NOT ON EARTH DURING THE OUTPOURING OF THE WRATH OF GOD (aka, "The Great Tribulation")! Remember, "*He has not appointed us unto wrath*" (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9) – interestingly, the word "*wrath*" is not mentioned again in the Bible after Rev. 19:15; no more "*wrath*" – EVER!

v. 3 "*Immanuel*" is finally (and completely) fulfilled! "*God with us!*" (Isa. 7:14 – a prophecy! Isa. 8:8; Mt. 1:23). O, to be in your Presence, LORD! "Everyday" . . . is it possible? Yes . . . if you want it.

v. 4: "Wipe every tear" promised the Tribulation saints (7:17) and even the faithful in the Old Testament (Isa. 25:6-9). Man's greatest enemy: DEATH, totally unconquered by science... we have cancer and heart societies; ever hear of an anti-death society or research organization? All man can do is prolong the inevitable!

In Isa. 65:17-20 the prophet describes no more memories; no more death as still evident even in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, even though life-spans are increased dramatically. The surviving Tribulation saints in their un-glorified bodies will re-populate the earth; our bodies will be glorified.

vv. 6-7: Different word than Jesus used on the Cross; there it was *tetelestai*; here it is *ginomai*. Cf. Jesus with woman at the well: "*If you knew the Gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and He would have given you living water*" (verse 10). Cf. also John 4:13-14.

Re: v. 8 see Paul's exclusions in 1 Cor. 6:9f "*Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*"

v. 8 "Unbelieving" (lit., "those without faith," *a-pistos*). "**Sexually immoral**" (*pornos*); "**those who practice magic arts**" (*pharmakeus*; from *pharmakon* (a drug, i.e. spell-giving potion), i.e. (by extens.) a magician:--sorcerer). Satan has historically used drugs as a gateway to the occult...

Heed Paul's instruction re: the use of wine: (Eph. 5:18 "*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.*" Anything that alters the state of consciousness; like when God killed Aaron's sons when they apparently came in "bombed" [Lev. 10:1, 9]).

vv. 12-14: LIVING IN GOD'S PRESENCE! Hallelujah!

"**Twelve tribes**"? Rueben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin. (What of Manasseh and Ephraim? Both are the sons of the patriarch Joseph, thus included in him).

v. 14: "Twelve apostles?" Judas Iscariot? (NO!) Matthias? (doubtful) Paul? (probably).

v. 16: "12,000 stadia" (plural of "stadium," a standard Roman unit of measure and equaled 607') – JUST UNDER 1400 miles (1379.54 mi.) CUBED; just under 3 billion cubic miles! Volume slightly smaller than the moon! 1400 miles = 1400 x 5280' = 7.4 million feet! In each dimension! That is, the city walls are 739,200 stories tall!!! If 20 billion people are there, we each get about 75 acres (if 25% is devoted to parks, apts.). Note: the city is in the shape of a CUBE (like the Holy of Holies in both the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple), not a PYRAMID! Cf. John 14:1-3!

v.17: "144 cubits thick" (12 x 12; the number of the tribes of Israel times the number of Jesus' 12 disciples) – walls are about 216' thick (cubit~18").

v. 19: "Jasper" - clear: no one has anything to hide! Jasper is a type of quartz (though some say this is diamond), usually red in color but also yellow, green, and grayish blue; used as a gemstone.

vv. 19-20 cf. Ex. 28:15-21. Priest's breastplate contains most if not all of these gemstones!

v. 21: The "Pearly Gates"! God shows the vanity of our value system....gold = asphalt in Heaven!

- St. Peter the gatekeeper? No - angels are the gatekeepers (see v. 12), but there are pearly gates! Pearl: symbolizes what Jesus did for us!
- Mt. 13:45f "*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.*"
- **2 interpretations:** eternal life is the pearl we sell all to obtain; OR, we are the pearl Jesus gave all He had to obtain! A natural pearl is formed when a small, irritating piece of sand is covered by layer after layer of mother of pearl - wrapped in Jesus' righteousness! Makes us beautiful and precious in God's sight!

v. 22: Will we be able to see all 3 members of the Triune Godhead? Here, 2 present: Father & Son. "River of the Water of Life" (22:1) flows from the throne of God AND the Lamb. Relationships like Father and Brother/friend (John 15). **Possibility:** River = the continual outpouring of the Holy Spirit? In Rev. 22 Tree of Life draws water to produce fruit, so believers draw deeply from the indwelling Holy Spirit to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22ff).

v. 26 "Nations"?

v. 27 "Book of life" is mentioned 8 x's in Scripture (8 is the number of new beginnings): Ps. 69:28; Philippians 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27. Make sure your name is in it by surrendering your life to Christ TODAY!

III. SUMMARY / APPLICATION / RESPONSE

A. The "**Holy City**" combines elements of Jerusalem, the Temple and the Garden of Eden!

B. The wedding/bride concept to express the intimate relationship between God and His people has its roots in Old Testament prophecy (Isa. 54:5-7; Hosea 2:19). In the New Testament we see it reflected in such passages as Mt. 22:2-14; Eph. 5:22-32; Rev. 19:7.

C. Building materials in Heaven reveal the vanity of what man will kill and die for on earth!

D. Cf. 2 Peter 3:3-14 - "*First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, 'Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.' But they deliberately forget that long ago by*

God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him."

The transitory nature of the material universe ought to make a difference in one's value system and priorities. The result should be holiness (separated from sin, to God) and godliness (devoted to the worship and service of God). Next: what we'll be doing (Rev. 22) and how to prepare now!