

Chapter 21

All Things Made New

21 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

John turns the attention away from the fighting and onto a new world. John, effectively, cleans house by saying that everything that had existed has now passed away and is no longer important. This is a direct response to the destruction of death we saw previously. With its destruction, the entire focal point of life on this earth needs to be completely redefined. We live our lives in a very timely fashion to be prepared for our death and to accomplish what we can while we are alive, but when that is no longer a factor, the entire dynamic of life must change. Psychologically, physically, in every way life will need to change because there is now no end to it. What a fantastic thing to look forward to but what a huge change. Everything that was there, tainted by the chaos of Satan, is now washed away and made new.

An interesting thing that John says is also passed away is that he mentions that "(a)lso there was no more sea." If we remember, the sea was the wide masses of people that moved as it was driven. Seas are subject to winds and tides, and the symbol of the sea in Revelation meant the mass of both saved and unsaved people from which powers arise. But in the new world there is no wide mass; there are only those who have put Christ first and those who have followed the Holy Spirit. Specifically, those who were written in the book of life. These have made deliberate, positive choices, knowingly or unknowingly, and are now reaping the benefits of that. You cannot be both at the mercy of wind and waves and make deliberate choices when it comes to Jesus.

John then draws on the relationship he has with his readers to try and make sure they understand he's putting his reputation on the line. He makes it clear that what he is about to say, compared to **EVERYTHING** that has come before it, is so dramatic that he wants the reader to know he's staking his name on. "² Then I, John, saw..." And when we look at what he saw, that makes sense.

He sees “the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” The wedding vows have been said, the supper has been eaten and the dancing has been done. Now the wedding must be consummated. The romantic/sexual metaphor here is a juxtaposition against the harlot of Babylon who plied her trade with whomever she could. There is a much deeper study to be done by someone wiser than I am about marriage and the intricacies of paying a bridal price to do with this language, but for now we see the New Jerusalem arriving prepared to make an eternal home.

The sexual metaphor here is an important one. We should, in no way, confuse what marriage is today with what it originally was designed in the Garden of Eden, but John must be referring to that original form of marriage when he draws the connection with Christ. Adam was the first to address marriage in Genesis Chapter 2, saying:

“²³ And Adam said:

“This is now bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man.”

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

The importance of a marriage being ‘consummated’ has always been seen as this uniting of the two individuals to being made “one flesh” and John is using that reference here to stipulate the eternal joining of Christ with those he has saved. The millennium has been spent in judgment, and now that that has been accomplished and the enemy defeated once and for all, Jesus and those he saved become inseparable. The voice from Heaven declares this to be an absolute truth.

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.” The word ‘tabernacle’, like the tabernacle in the wilderness, is better translated the ‘dwelling place’ of God is with men, and he will remain with them. “God Himself will be with them”. There will be no more separation and no need to attend a temple, but rather he is with his people. The need for temples and sin offerings was destroyed with Satan and the possibility for them was destroyed with Death. There is no longer any need for those things, and John goes so far as to make this a promise. “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” All those things that may have caused trouble have now “passed away.” That does not mean they are forgotten, they can be remembered, but they are no longer going to cause the same effect and affect as they do here. Those things that tear the heart now and

the decisions that were agonised over causing the heart to bleed will most certainly be remembered, but to live with God means there is no longer the same feeling of them. This is because we will understand their purpose.

This is another aspect of the Millennium that is often discussed. As mentioned in the last chapter, the Holy Spirit works within the hearts of men, even those who have never heard the name of Jesus. The idea that there would not be a mechanism for the salvation of indigenous peoples of the world that had no exposure to the word of God is an insult to the concept of mercy. However this does raise the question that has been somewhat danced around prior to this; when do they receive their reward?

Clearly it is not possible for one to make a decision about the Mark of the Beast without knowing what their choice means and what their choice entails, which is why the 1st Angel's Message from chapter 14 is that the gospel – the good word of Christ's sacrifice – should be spread to all the world. They cannot be included in the group of judges that sit on thrones for the millennium. However, as we discussed then, the question of if all those who are saved go to heaven at the start of the millennium is one that becomes highly relevant here.

1 Thessalonians 4 would indicate that all who are on God's side – dead and alive – are accepted to heaven at the start of the millennium and, of necessity, this must include those who have never heard the name of Jesus. Conversely, as mentioned, during the Judgment of the Dead, the books are opened and they may be resurrected then, although that would require some review of 1 Thessalonians 4.

Irrespective, a period of 'education' (for lack of a better term) is necessary for those who have been saved without hearing the name of Jesus. Indeed, it will be necessary for all the saved; no member of the group of saved can say that they understood exactly how Jesus wanted them to be guided and that they accomplished that; nor can it be said that they taught everything exactly how God wanted it taught or believed everything exactly as it was originally designed by God. I have made many jokes to date about this analysis containing heresy, but this is the rub; I don't know what I don't know and therefore must recognise that I am wrong in some things. What and how important they are in what must be taught to me. This, in part, is the point of the millennium, to spend time getting to know Christ and how He has always been with us and worked with us. To demonstrate, clearly, that we started receiving the rewards of salvation long before we gave our hearts to him, but also to help us understand where he tried to save others.

In this way we are able to put a wider and more detailed context to the things that have consumed our lives here on this planet. Learning these things, coming to terms with these explanations and being able to learn how to work with Jesus will CLEARLY take some time and that is why the millennium is set aside as an opportunity to allow us to process how these things can be made to 'pass away'.

To reiterate, this requires all of those who are on Christ's side to be taken to heaven at the start of the millennium, invalidating the theory that there will be those who will be found written in book of life when it is opened at the Judgment of the Dead in the previous chapter. However, as stated, 1 Thessalonians 4 and other references would indicate that this is the case and that the judgement of the dead in Chapter 20 is both a formality and a demonstration. Judgment like this will be further expanded at a later time.

⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

Jesus himself now makes the declaration that his sacrifice has made all things new. He is responsible for it and he is taking the credit. Then he turns to John and instructs him to write. John has now become an active player in the declaration to be made at this time.

⁶ And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

John envelopes his book with a reference made in the beginning, again reenforcing that this is the same Jesus that he identified in Chapter 1. John is being addressed by the same authority that gave him the instruction to write this book to the 7 churches in vs 8 and 11 of Chapter 1, identifying himself as the absolute and absolution of all things; "the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End." When combined with the previous verse, with the instruction to write, and the earlier statement that John is putting his name and reputation to this book, we can deduce that, if this is not John the gospel writer, the 'disciple whom Jesus loved', then he is an extremely respected member of the 1st Century Church.

Jesus addresses John with a declaration that includes both a promise and a warning. He declares that "It is done!". This is taking a step out of the story; breaking the fourth wall, so to speak. Where John had previously been observing the story, he is

now directly involved. Jesus declares to John that all things are completed. Salvation is assured and the mechanisms for it are in place. Obviously he is not saying that John is stepping on to heaven immediately, but he's saying there is nothing stopping what you have seen. He says this on the same authority that he instructed John to start writing the book – the authority of being the creator. And Jesus promises that anyone who want to be a part of his world is welcome. "I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son." There is little qualification here; you want it, it's yours. Don't doubt, just come and take what is being offered. Anyone that takes a stand beside Christ will receive the benefits. You must be willing to stand beside him, but in the wider terms, that is a small ask. Just take it and drink from his living water.

On the other hand, if you don't stand with him, then you are making a choice the other way. Its interesting to note the first of the list is 'cowardly'. This is the same word, δειλός (deilos), that Jesus used in Matthew 8 when he calmed the storm for his disciples, asking them why they were 'afraid' (deilos). Fear is not a sin, and we should never consider it to be so, but it is able to be overcome with faith. In the Matthew 8 story, Jesus rebuked the disciples, not because of their fear, but because they let their fear consume them. They had the living God sleeping in their boat and yet they were afraid that he would let them drown. Jesus never calls his people to a passive belief but an active discipleship; a willingness to leave everything and follow him no matter the consequence, thinking only that God will provide and direct. This is an near impossibility in the modern world.

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The remainder of the inditements Jesus lay out are those we should recognise from what we would call 'classic' sins. Those who are "unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars" are, by definition, not following God's word and his commands. Jesus promises that they "shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." In saying this, Jesus also makes clear that the "in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone" is **NOT** a literal lake of fire. The classical, version of 'Hell' finds its roots in the 14th Century in Alighieri's epic poem 'The Divine Comedy' which is heavily based on Dante's reading of the book of Revelation mixed with his use Hashish, recently imported from the Islamic world. The fire and brimstone mentioned in these texts inspired Dante to describe the 'Inferno' that he described Hell to be, although it is somewhat noteworthy that the centre of his Hell is the large frozen lake Cocytus, based on one of the 5 Greek rivers that surround 'Hades'. Jesus here, however, stipulates that "the second death" is "the lake which burns with fire and brimstone" indicating, despite Roman doctrine, that the lake is a metaphor and not a literal lake.

As we said in the previous chapter, if death itself is thrown into the lake, how can death die for eternity.

John is being taken out of the story here, as the story is concluded, and being given a message that is the very core of his book. This is the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ; the Revelation that, not only is He alive, but that His death gives Him the authority to claim this world and is extending to all those who would choose to accept it, the free gift of eternal life. All you need to do is accept it and stand at his side.

The New Jerusalem

⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

Again, one of the seven comes to John to explain another measure. This time it was the city descending from heaven; the bride for the lamb. The city is not just the physical buildings and walls, but the people who exist in it; those who were taken to heaven at the start of the millennium, again reinforcing the idea that the dead on earth were all outside of salvation. John is taken to a high mountain and sees the city descending toward the earth.

The city is described as being bathed in "[the glory of God](#)" indicating that it shines with a beautiful light. John goes on to say that it is lit up "[like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal](#)". The light that pours forth from the city is a clear light; not opaque but visible and see through. Jasper, as we have seen, is generally a red colour but also can be a brilliant green, especially seen in Egyptian jewellery.

The use of these 2 colours is important but its difficult to determine which is being referred to. If we draw the connection here with Chapter 4, we can use the deduction that the green colour reflects God himself being present in the city. The people living here are affirmed as 'pure' by the presence of God himself living amongst them. Again, in contrast to the harlot, this blushing bride is pure and holy.

Before we get into the city's description, its noteworthy to stipulate that it is described as similar to most ancient cities that John would be well acquainted with; with high walls and a firm foundation. However, as we will see, the language of the

city relates to its inhabitants rather than to the physical city itself, but that is not to say that these qualities don't also apply to the physical city itself.

¹² Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³ three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

The high wall is a feature of important, protected cities. It demonstrates both protection and power as well as dominion and authority. Walled cities were difficult to conquer and sieges often lasted years before the inhabitants were starved out. Jericho is, arguably, the most famous walled city and demonstrates the importance of the wall through the extensive intervention that the Almighty had to make to give the city to the Hebrews.

This city has 12 gates; an unusually large number indicating the size of the city. By contrast, London's wall had 7 main gates, Jerusalem 8 and Rome 18. Each of the New Jerusalem's gates are said to be evenly spaced, three on each of the 4 sides and this should start to give the impression that this is allegory rather than a detailed blueprint. For the sake of this discussion, it is assumed that it is both and we will analyse the allegory, leaving the blueprints for architects to interrogate.

Each of the gates are protected by guardian angels and the names of the 12 Tribes of Israel are written on the gates, which clearly links this city back to the saved of Chapter 7. In that chapter, those who were sealed with God's seal took up their place as the rejuvenated 12 tribes of Israel and here that is reenforced. Again, the connection between the 144,000 and the first fruits of salvation being the bride of Christ is clear.

¹⁴ Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ¹⁵ And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶ The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. ¹⁷ Then he measured its wall: one hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according* to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. ¹⁸ The construction of its wall was *of* jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city *were* adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation *was* jasper, the second sapphire, the third

chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

The foundations of any city are its established grounding and here we see that the grounding of the city are the 12 apostles. Their teaching and the churches they established now have their fruits living in the Holy City. One question that is often asked is if Judas has his name on one of those foundation or if another – most likely Paul – has replaced him. There is no information here to many any judgment on that question and it cannot be answered from the text.

The angel then tells John to measure the city and he finds that it is a perfect cube. Evidence seems to indicate that ancient Babylon was also laid out as a perfect square. The Holy City is an entire dimension more impressive and more powerful than ancient Babylon.

The city is massive. John is not using the modern unit of measure but the Roman system, in which there were 625 feet to the stadium and eight stadia to the mile. 12,000 furlongs divided by 8 makes a 1,500 miles on each side on the city or 2,414km. For context, that is almost exactly the distance from Broken Hill to Perth or roughly from Jerusalem to Rome. The city is larger than most countries. By comparison again, ancient Babylon was built on a plane supposedly 120 furlongs by 120 furlongs, so this claim is that the Holy City is 100 times the size of all of Babylon's holdings. John then measures the wall and finds it 144 cubits or roughly 65 metres thick, formidable bastions to protect its inhabitants as if they needed it.

The 12 semi-precious stones mentioned here are most likely intended to relate themselves to the garments of the ancient High Priest, but it is noteworthy that they do not match the Breastplate of Judgement of Exodus 28. Stones are out of order and some, like Onyx and Diamond, have no comparable in the list of foundation stones. It makes sense for this to be the symbol Jesus wants to be related as, while he has taken up the role of High Priest of Melchizedek, there is no longer any need for Judgement and therefore no need for a Judgement Breastplate. The implications are clear, this is the reinvention of the High Priesthood as we are the priests that stand with Jesus for all eternity. Much has been made of the different colours here, but what is important is the fact that the foundations bear the names of the apostles and that they are each completely other-worldly. No amount of stone could make this city on this world.

John's description of the streets being made of glass reflects the wealth of the universe is now invested in this city; and that wealth as we know it has no value. The things we prize here on this earth, like Gold and Silver, are trodden under muddy foot in Heaven for we will be with God and that will be all the wealth we need.

John then turns his attention to the "[twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl](#)". Pearls are made by oysters forming layers of mucus over an impurity that harden into the magnificent shapes we see. In the ancient world, they were considered a delicacy when dissolved in wine or vinegar, and Cleopatra was famous for her expensive banquet when she drank a large pearl from her earring dissolved in wine to impress Marc Antony.

These gates stand as the entrance and exit of the city to remind all who journey there, for all time, of the beautiful creation that can come from the constant irritation. The people inside, like pearls themselves, had been formed from the constant waves of God's love poured out on them that made them better and productive people.

The Glory of the New Jerusalem

[²² But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.](#)

Contrasting Chapters 4 and 5, John looks and sees no temple in Heaven. The reason why is very simple; there is no need for it. The temple was a working machine, there to encourage communication between Earth and Heaven and as a place where Jesus could complete the mechanisms for Salvation. These mechanisms will be examined after the review of this book, but the importance is that there is no longer any need for a temple, because, as the text itself says; "[the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple](#)". Furthermore, there is no longer any need for a memory of the temple and its services for that is the entire purpose of the people living in the city. The pearl gates alone would serve this purpose if it was needed.

[²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. ²⁴ And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. ²⁵ Its gates shall not be shut at all by day \(there shall be no night there\). ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.](#)

As we have seen from Chapter 4 and 5, as well as other places, God shines for God is light. "The Lamb is its light." There is no concept of night in this place for it is always lighted. This does not mean there is no time, but there would be little need for rest. Rest is the result of stress and strain that are the effects of sin on this planet. Rest is not necessary in Heaven, and so there is no need for a time for rest, as has been extensively discussed in the previous chapter.

Furthermore, the gates are never shut. Why would they need to be? There is no enemy to shut the gates against. All those things "that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie," have been destroyed. They no longer exist. Only the Glory of God remains and those that have taken part in his victory.

Interestingly, both "kings of the earth" and "the nations" are mentioned here as having an existence and doing business with the city. It is clear from this that, while the plant is remade, its institutions; albeit much holier, have been retained and reinvented. There will be kings and leaders, nations and people, but what form they will take is yet to be understood. John may simply be using this as an allegory for a wide populace of the saved, or it may indeed be that the 12 tribes will be organised in some associative state. Regardless, there is no fear of conflict between them for "only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" are permitted to live. After all, they're all that's left.