

## **Lesson Twenty Five**

### **The New Heaven and New Earth (21:1-22:5)**

The final step in the consummation is the creation of a new heaven and new earth.

#### **The New Heaven and New Earth (21:1-4)**

21:1. The old heaven and old earth pass away. Throughout the history of mankind there was a separation between heaven and earth. This old order must pass away for the new order where the two will come together. The sea was known as a place of evil. There will be no evil ever again.

21:2. A new heavenly city comes from heaven. She is perfect and pure as a bride.

21:3. At this time there is no separation of earth and heaven. The use of the term tabernacle underscores the literal nature of God's dwelling with His people.

21:4. Earlier Revelation records the promise of God wiping away tears from the eyes of the great tribulation martyrs (7:17). Now this promise comes to fruition. There will never again be sorrow. This promise is supported by the removal of death, mourning, crying, and pain. God wipes away the tears.

## **Inheritors of Life and Inheritors of Death (21:5-8)**

21:5. John leaves no doubt that he hears God speaking. God states His goal of redemption to be the making of all things new (cp. II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:21). This includes people and the earth. God offers assurance with the statement, “these words are faithful and true.”

21:6. God speak to John again and says, “It is done.” This Greek word is plural and literally means, “They are done.” All that is to come has occurred. This assurance is provided by the Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. God satisfies the longing in man by quenching his thirst or the inner longing of man.

21:7. God’s gifts are given to those who overcome. Overcomers will be inheritors, God’s people, and God’s sons.

21:8. John hears a list of people who inherit death. They do not have access to the God who gives life. These people inherit the lake of fire. This the second death (20:6, 14).

## **The Holy City Jerusalem (21:9-27)**

John now offers a detailed description of the new city Jerusalem that comes down from heaven (21:2).

21:9. John is summonsed by one of the angels who had the seven bowls of God's judgment. The summons is to see New Jerusalem, the Holy City of God.

21:10. In a spiritual state of ecstasy, John is taken to a mountain for clear viewing of the new city (cp. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3).

21:11. John immediately notices the glory of the city. The term "like" means John used human words that are comparable; the new city is not made with earthly materials. The appearance was like the costly stone of jasper. Jasper is transparent or crystal clear in appearance. A diamond is similar in appearance.

21:12-14. The city had a high wall with gates. There are 12 gates in total with three gates on each side of the wall. An angel guards each gate to denote that no uninvited guests can enter. Each gate bore the name of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. The wall contains 12 foundation stones. Each stone bore the name of one of the 12 apostles (cp. Ephesians 2:20). The OT tribes and NT apostles are represented in the walls and gates. The full number of God's people inhabits the city of God.

21:15. Measuring the city represents the full number of God's people within the city (11:1-3). Only a golden rod is worthy to measure this glorious city.

21:16. The city is measured as a perfect cube. Each side is 12,000 stadia which is 1500 miles. The foursquare city represents wholeness.

21:17. The walls are measured to be 144 cubits, which is 72 yards or 216 feet. It appears John is giving the thickness of the wall. The number 144 represents wholeness.

21:18. The use of jasper as material for the wall was previously discussed (v.11). The city itself was constructed of pure gold, as clear as glass. Gold is not clear. Yet the city and its walls are transparent so as to reflect the glory of God. Gold is the color befitting the grandeur of God.

21:19-20. The foundation of the city was previously referenced as having stones with the names of the apostles (v.14). The foundation consists of 12 precious stones. Most likely the use of different precious stones reflects the grandeur and glory of the city.

21:21. Each of the 12 gates is a single pearl. It is difficult to image a gate being a pearl. The construction of the eternal city is not limited to the physical limitations of earthy construction. The word street is in the singular. The street is made of pure gold, transparent as glass (v.18). What must be pictured is the glory and grandeur of the city of God.

21:22. John finds it noteworthy to identify what he does not see. There is no temple in the new city. In New Jerusalem the city itself is the dwelling place of God.

21:23. John also notes that there is no sun or moon in the city of God. The glory of God and the Lamb provide the light.

21:24. As in the millennium (20:3, 8), modern readers are once more left wondering about the identity of the nations. In the millennium the nations appear to be deceived sinful nations. Here the nations appear to suggest the grouping of God's people that may enter the City of God at will. Earlier John saw the people of God as having come from every tribe and nation (7:9). Perhaps the people of God continue their national identity or group themselves into nations. Kings appear to lead these nations. Perhaps ruling or reigning is a part of the eternal reward given the saints. It is clear that the nations live by the glorious light in New Jerusalem.

21:25. The gates will be eternally open. This suggests safety and accessibility. There is complete open accessibility for the nations to come into the city of God. There is no sin or darkness. Satan and evildoers are in the lake of fire and the glory of God overcomes the eternal city with His holiness.

21:26-27. The nations are filled with godly citizens (see v.24). Only the people of God dwell with God. Citizens of the lake of fire have no access to this city.

### **Life in the New Order (22:1-5)**

22:1. A river is a common image of life in scriptures (Ps.46:4; Zech.14:8; John 4:14). The river in the new created order flows with an unlimited supply of life. The river's waters sparkles in purity and brilliance. There is a single throne where God and Jesus sit. God and Jesus is the singles source of the river's water of life.

22:2. The strange imagery of a river flowing threw the middle of a street suggests the symbolic nature of this vision (cp.21:21). The imagery suggests that life is central to the new created order. The tree of life was originally referenced to be located in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9; 3:23). When man sinned it was imperative that he be removed from the tree of life. The tree of life produces fruit each month. Its fruit is continually available for sustenance (Ezekiel 47:12). There is no season of death or diminishing of life. The leaves from the tree of life are for the healing of the nations. This imagery is to contrast the new created order and the old created order. The old created order had much suffering and pain, but no suffering or pain is found in the new created order. There is perfect and complete healing.

22:3. Since there is no sin there will be no curse. The effects of sin are removed. Since the throne of God and Jesus abide in the new created order, there will never be any sin or curse. Life in the new created order will consist of serving God. The citizens are bond-servants of God.

22:4. The promise of seeing the face of God is reserved for the new order (cp. Exodus 33:20). No longer will saints live by faith but they will see Him as He is (Matthew 5:8; I John 3:2).

22:5. John restates that God is the source of light (21:23). He also repeats the promise that those who reign with Christ will do so forever.