

BOOK OF REVELATION, WEEK 10
CHAPTERS 21 AND 22

Now that the battle God and the evil one has ended with all those who oppose God receiving the natural consequence of death, the ultimate desire of God is revealed. God comes to dwell with His people, that they may live freely with Him, without corruption. God's plan for creation, not just the inhabitants of the earth, that was present from the very beginning, becomes realized in the New Jerusalem, where heaven and earth are united as in a bond of marriage. We might say, no man may separate what God has joined.

CHAPTERS 21 AND 22

God comes to the Human race (this is unique among the major religions and is a fulfillment of the promises first made through the prophets, most directly through Daniel, Ezekiel and Isaiah).

Creation itself is transformed

The central Christian hope is the return of Christ. Hoping on his return is quite different from the hope of eternal life and going to heaven after death.

God, who He is and His ultimate desire for His people, is Revealed

Just as in the beginning there was nothing created that was not created through the Word, in the end, presented in Revelation, there is nothing in creation that is not in full union with Him. Often overlooked in the union of heaven and earth is that all the heavenly angels are also inhabitants of the New Jerusalem.

Everything that has happened, in Revelation and the history of the world, culminates in the Marriage of God and His people. If this is the image God uses to describe the desired destiny and His Will for His people, then we would consider that the Church is presently in an age, or period of betrothal, and all this may both signify and require of us as already promised to the Bridegroom, but not yet dwelling with him.

THE NEW JERUSALEM AND EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE

While it is clear that the arrival of the New Jerusalem and its description primarily reflects the Temple Vision of Ezekiel, (Ez 40-48) and echoes many verses from the Prophets Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah and Jeremiah, as we have already seen throughout the book of Revelation, when the vision and events connect to the Old Testament Prophets, Revelation doesn't simply recapitulate old prophecies, but brings what was incomplete into fulfillment.

“The description of the city is a symbolic way of depicting a variety of truths about our eternal future, above all, the intimacy of God with His people that will be ours when the Kingdom comes at Christ's return. The visions in Revelation depict symbols of real things, rather than the realities themselves. In order to understand the realities to which the symbols point, we reflect on the meaning of each aspect of the each symbol.” (Williamson, 355)

Ex. **there will be no night there** (Is 60:20): Night is a symbol of evil, temptation and death. Indicating that there will be no presence of evil. Even more, there will not even be temptation as the light of God will be every present and always present.

SYMBOLIC DIMENSIONS

“The city was square”: Instructions and descriptions of measurement are riddled throughout the Old Testament. However, in all of these instances, there is only one instance in which the measurements given describe a perfect square, this is the Holy of Holies, the inner most sacred sanctuary of the Temple with the Ark of the Covenant and

the Seraphim indicting the place of God's throne. This then, is a clear indication that the whole city is the place of God's presence and enthronement.

12 Gates: The tribes of Israel, as was seen in Ezekiel's vision (48:30-35)

12 Pearls as gates: These are pearls of wisdom (see Is 54:11). Also considered by Andrew of Caesarea as the "pearl of great price". One may consider an allusion that once one has found the way into the City of God, they should sell all of their possessions in order to enter (attain the pearl).

12 Foundations: These are the Apostles, which we are clearly told. The stones also correspond to the stones that were on the breast plate of the high priest who served in the temple. These are the foundation of the Church. Andrew of Caesarea also described significance of each, matching each stone with one of the Apostles:

Jaspar	Peter
Sapphire	Paul
Chalcedony	Andrew
Emerald	John the Evangelist
Onyx	James
Carnelian	Philip
Chrysolite	Bartholomew
Beryl	Thomas
Topaz	Matthew
Chrysoprase	Thaddeus
Hyacinth/Sapphire	Simon
Amethyst	Matthias

Measuring 12,000 stadia in all directions: Being a sign of fullness of the people of God (12 like the twelve tribes and 1,000 indicating a great number and fullness)

Wall 144 cubits high: Not only does this give us the symbol of 12 x 12, but reminds us also of the 144,000 saintly virgins. A wall also serves to protect and provide a defense for the city, suggesting that the wall is comprised of the heroic, pure saints who defend the Church.

DIFFERENCES IN THE VISIONS

River flowing from the Temple

Ez 47:1 : The river begins as a trickle, while in Revelation it flows down the streets from the throne. This gives us a sense that in Ezekiel's time, the Graces that came into the world from the temple were likewise a trickle because God's true residence remained distant. In Revelation, however, the water flows fully and without restraint or limitation

Trees on either side of the river

Ezekiel describes fruit trees that are watered from the stream coming from the Temple. They produce a great abundance, and even an unnatural abundance and frequency of fruit. In Revelation, these have become the Tree of Life itself.

Revelation of the Prophecies

Daniel is instructed to keep what he saw secret (12:4), but John is instructed, in very clear and forceful ways, to "not seal up the prophetic words." (22:10-11).

SUMMARY POINTS OF REVELATION

- ✘ Revelation places the Prophets of Israel into the context of Jesus Christ, bringing their visions to completion and fulfillment through the Revelation of the Lamb of God and Marriage between God and His People.
- ✘ Describes the relationship between: God, Jesus Christ, the people of God, those who oppose Him and Satan. The Church battles Satan by living righteously and opposing his temptations and work, while the Lamb and the angels of heaven cast him and his servants into eternal punishment.
- ✘ Intends to give assurance that despite suffering and the ongoing presence of evil in the world, there is a plan of Salvation which God has authored for the world. This salvation, and each step along the way, is the work of God in His invitation for mankind to participate with Him.
- ✘ Gives assurance also that Jesus is the Messiah, still lives and is the instrument of salvation for the world.
- ✘ Places the events on earth in a cosmic context in relationship to events in heaven such that what happens on earth is intended to be a reflection of the reality in heaven. It is in becoming more like the heavenly reality that life comes to the earth.
- ✘ Revelation details the battle between God and evil which not only takes place in heaven, but also plays out in the history of the world.
- ✘ Reveals God's ultimate plan, which is the union (marriage) of heaven and earth in a divine reality. This does not come through political activity on an earth that merely follows and reflects only the goodness of heaven, free of influence by Satan, but in a real union.
- ✘ Through the Book of Revelation, we encounter several spiritual realities:
 - From the Seals: (see week 4 notes)
 - Kinds of sin
 - Progression of sin
 - Natural consequences of sin for the sinner
 - Sin has natural effects on all creation
 - The Trumpets demonstrate a call to repentance:
 - The Bowls reveal the punishment exacted on those who refuse to repent:
 - Evil, that which opposes God, cannot withstand the presence of good.

 - The Dragon, Beasts and the Dead:
 - Demonstrate the relationship between the one who opposes God, those who follow another, and those who have been misled, also explaining 3 levels of sinners.

 - There is a progression in teaching on the spiritual life (see week 5 notes).
- ✘ Revelation gives messages intended to help encourage and lead the Church and the Faithful
See notes on Week 5

✘ The book answers many basic questions:

Who is the Church fighting against?

What are the enemy's weapons and tactics against God and His people?

How does a faithful witness prevail?

How does the Church and the people of God prevail?

Why do we and the Church suffer?

Why hasn't Christ returned?

What is Christian Hope?

What keeps salvation from being fulfilled?

What is God's final plan and desire for His people and how does it come into fruition?

How is the Church supposed to respond to a world that seems to deny Christ and at times embraces evil? The closing verses of Revelation give a two-fold answer:

“Let the wicked still act wickedly, and the filthy still be filthy. The righteous must still do right, and the holy still be holy” (22:11) AND the last words “Come. Let the one who thirsts come forward, and the one who wants to receive the gift of life-giving water.”