

Revelation 21/22 (2011)

SLIDE 21-1

- Tonight we finish our study
 - It's time to move into the eternal order in chapter 21

[Rev. 21:1](#) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

[Rev. 21:2](#) And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

[Rev. 21:3](#) And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

[Rev. 21:4](#) and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

[Rev. 21:5](#) And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

[Rev. 21:6](#) Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.

[Rev. 21:7](#) "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

[Rev. 21:8](#) "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

- As we move through these next two chapters, we want to watch for a pattern that will draw us back to the first chapters of Genesis
 - In v.1 we learn that a new heavens and earth have been created
 - These statements come so causally in the text, much like Genesis 1:1, yet the magnitude of this creation is beyond our comprehension
 - While we do not have a clear description of what the new earth will look like, we do get a few tantalizing details
 - And each of the details will bring questions
 - The first detail we receive is that this new world will lack seas altogether

- Interestingly, when the Lord set out to create the original Heavens and Earth, He designed a different place

Gen. 1:9 Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so.

Gen. 1:10 God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good.

- Obviously, God viewed the inclusion of seas in the first earth to be a good thing, so is God changing His mind now?
 - We know God never changes His mind and He knows all possibilities from the beginning, so He must have a good reason for changing the design of earth
 - Before we try to answer why, we need to wait until we have all the details of this world
- Then a city appears from Heaven and descends to the new Earth
 - The city is called New Jerusalem
 - The appearance of this city is like that of a bride made ready for a husband
- In the original creation, the Lord made a city of sorts for mankind
 - It was called the Garden of Eden
- Then in vs.3-8 John hears a Jesus from the Throne in heaven declare the arrival of New Jerusalem means that all things have been restored to a perfect state
 - First, God may once again dwell among men
 - For the first time since the Fall, God the Father will dwell on Earth
 - Remember in the Garden that God walked with Adam
 - But following the fall, man had to hide from God and God could not appear before man lest man die immediately
 - But now the entire Triune God may once again tabernacle or dwell with men
 - Secondly, the creation has been cleansed of sin and all its consequences

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- The first things have passed away, meaning the corrupted creation and all sources of rebellion and sin
- So when sin ends, so will its consequences
 - No tears, no death, no mourning, no crying, no pain
 - We now see that these things are all consequences of sin
- Finally, the Christ declares that these words are faithful and true
 - Then Jesus reminds John that He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end
 - This title takes an entirely new sense here
 - In the beginning was the Word, and by the Word the heavens and earth were created
 - Jesus created all things
 - And now at the end, Jesus is again creating all things new again
 - Truly He is the Beginning of creation and the End of creation
 - With that, Jesus presents a reminder that any who thirst for the righteousness of God will receive eternal life for free
 - But there will be many who do not share in this future
 - Those who live apart from God will be excluded from this future
 - The list of their sins in v.8 are not sins unique to unbelievers, though they are representative of unbelievers lifestyles
 - The ultimate the criteria for exclusion is they were unbelieving and so they enter the Lake of Fire
- So does dwell in this city?
 - We find the answer in Hebrews

[Heb. 12:22](#) But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,
[Heb. 12:23](#) to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,
[Heb. 12:24](#) and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

- The heavenly Jerusalem will be home to:
 - The living Godhead
 - The entire host of angels
 - The church saints
 - The spirits of the righteous made perfect, which are all other believers
- Next John gets an in-depth vision of the city that will one day be our home town

[Rev. 21:9](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

[Rev. 21:10](#) And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

[Rev. 21:11](#) having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.

[Rev. 21:12](#) It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

[Rev. 21:13](#) There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west.

[Rev. 21:14](#) And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

[Rev. 21:15](#) The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.

[Rev. 21:16](#) The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.

[Rev. 21:17](#) And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.

[Rev. 21:18](#) The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

[Rev. 21:19](#) The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;

[Rev. 21:20](#) the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoptase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

[Rev. 21:21](#) And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

- The term “Bride of Christ” is a term associated with the Church saints, but now it transfers to the city itself
 - This makes sense when we remember that the term refers to the dwelling of place of Christ’s Spirit
 - The Bride of Christ is also the Body of Christ, His Temple
 - But in the eternal age, Christ dwells with the Father in the Temple of the City
 - And so the city itself becomes the Bride of Christ, His dwelling place
 - And we dwell there with Him
- The description of the city is remarkable, to say the least
 - It’s a perfect cube
 - Each side has three gates, for a total of twelve gates
 - And there are angels at each gate with the names of the gates are the tribes of Israel
 - And the city has twelve foundations named after the apostles
 - I suspect the lowest most foundation is Cephas
 - The existence of these names tells us that this city continues to remember the distinctions established in this age
 - My English version says its measurements are 1,500 miles in each direction with a wall 72 yards high
 - But the original Greek measurements are in cubits and stadion

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- The city is 12,000 stadion, and a stadion is about 600 feet so the total is slightly less than 1,500 miles
- And the wall is 144 cubits or about 72 yards
- The original measurements are important because they tell us something
 - The city is built on 12s and multiples of 12
 - Twelve is the number of God's perfect rule through men
 - So this city is a memorial to God's perfect plan that accomplished it's work ruling through men
 - And now it has arrived at this perfect outcome, exactly as God intended
- Finally, the city is a testimony to the beauty of God's creation in all its extravagance
 - Precious jewels everywhere and gold for streets
 - The thing we value so much today and spend so much money for will be the paving under our feet in that day

[Rev. 21:22](#) I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

[Rev. 21:23](#) And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

[Rev. 21:24](#) The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

[Rev. 21:25](#) In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;

[Rev. 21:26](#) and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;

[Rev. 21:27](#) and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

- In the city we find no temple because the entire city is God's temple
 - The reason a temple existed in the old Jerusalem was to separate man from God because sinful man could not be in the presence of God
 - Now we dwell with God
 - Notice both the Father and the Son reside together and their glory is a source of light for the city

- And therefore the city has no sun or moon
 - And there is no night since the light of God is always present
 - Here we have other differences from the present earth
- Notice there are still nations and kings over them
 - This suggests that our opportunity for faithful servants of God to serve and rule carries into the eternal order as it was in the Kingdom
- The gates are never closed meaning there is no threat or harm that came come into the city
 - In fact, only those in the book of life will ever enter the city
 - For those who suggest that the unbeliever will have a future opportunity to receive mercy and join the saved, this verse among others says that's not true
- The next chapter continues the description of the city

[Rev. 22:1](#) Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

[Rev. 22:2](#) in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

[Rev. 22:3](#) There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;

[Rev. 22:4](#) they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.

[Rev. 22:5](#) And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

- In the city is a broad street, and in the middle of the street is the throne of God
 - And from out of the throne comes a crystal clear river that flows through the city
 - The river flows around either side of the tree of life
 - This one tree produces twelve different kinds of fruit

SLIDE 22-1

- This tree is the same one originally made available to Adam and Woman in the garden
 - They were barred from access to the tree after the fall, for if they continued to eat from it, they would continue to live forever
 - So the tree continues to have the effect of sustaining physical life indefinitely
 - And the leaves are for healing the nations
- All these references leaves us wondering why such things are necessary when we are no longer dying
 - That's exactly the point
 - This will be the first time since the Garden that mankind has no exposure to death, sickness or pain
 - Life will seem effortless and yet we own our life to God entirely
 - When death is ever present and health is fragile, we are constantly reminded of our mortality and our dependence on God
 - But when those worries are gone, what will cause us to remember God's goodness and His life sustaining power?
 - So God institutes these reminders of His life giving power
 - God doesn't need the tree and the water to produce life and heal us
 - But He chooses to connect our continued life and health to this tree so that all mankind is forever reminded of God's provision of life
- And notice that the tree produces fruit on a monthly schedule
 - So time continues to pass and to be measured
 - But instead of the sun and moon measuring time, the tree of life is our clock
- Before we finish the chapter, let's conduct that review of all the differences between the first creation and this new creation to understand why God changes the blueprint

SLIDE 22-2

- When we put the differences between two creations side by side, we notice a pattern
 - Some of the missing elements are all used in Scripture as pictures of the similar things
 - For example, the sea is always a picture of the abyss, the holding place for sinful angels
 - And the night is always a picture for the darkness of sin
 - These elements are pictures of the effect of sin in the world
 - But in a new world without sin, we don't need the pictures any longer
 - Sea and night were created to provide metaphors that could be used to explain the nature of sin the penalty or sin
 - Similarly, the sun and moon were given to count time and to provide signs
 - Counting time was need to allow men to mark the coming of prophecy concerning the coming of Christ and the end of the age
 - And they are used by God as signs of the approach end of the age and the coming judgment against sin
 - But again, in the New Order, there is no sin or judgment, so there is no need for these elements
- So what does it mean that God choose to include these elements in the original creation?
 - Clearly, it meant that God knew sin was coming and He designed a world appropriately
 - But now that sin will never come again, He designs a different world, one suited for a new purpose
 - While the first world was to be a home for a fallen man, the new world is a home designed for glorified sinless man
 - God's plan for creation necessitated a beginning that included sin

- From that sin came the plan of redemption and the arc of human history that eventually leads to Christ bringing all rebellion to God's authority to an end
- Without begin an author of sin, God's plan anticipated sin because it maximized God's glory
 - Only a creation that had known sin and the judgment that sin required could fully appreciate the true nature of God
 - Only then could we appreciate God's full nature and character, as a God of both mercy and justice, recompense and grace, love and wrath
- Now the new world reflects and memorializes those traits forever
 - Finally John ends his revelation

[Rev. 22:6](#) And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place.

[Rev. 22:7](#) "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

[Rev. 22:8](#) I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

[Rev. 22:9](#) But he said to me, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God."

[Rev. 22:10](#) And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

[Rev. 22:11](#) "Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy."

[Rev. 22:12](#) "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

[Rev. 22:13](#) "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

[Rev. 22:14](#) Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

[Rev. 22:15](#) Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

- Christ finishes the vision personally for John

- He says these words are faithful and true
 - We can trust the story of this book and view it with complete confidence that this is our future
 - And the same Spirit who gave the prophets their words has given John these words
 - These things will soon take place, because in the context of eternity, a few thousand years is not long
- Jesus Himself reiterates that He is coming quickly, which is a reference for the Rapture
 - Live with an expectation that Christ's return is imminent and let that influence your life
- John then relates a moment when he fell to worship the angel that relayed all this information
 - But John is rebuked by the angel and reminded that we do not worship fellow servants of God
 - Let that be a reminder not to elevate any servant of God, whether man or spirit, to a point beyond what's appropriate
 - Unlike John's predecessor Daniel, John isn't commanded to seal up the prophecy...he's told to leave it unsealed
 - Daniel was told to seal his vision because it wouldn't be revealed until John's day, which we studied in chapter 11
 - Now the time is short, so the world is to hear and know the meaning of Revelation
 - As we approach the end of the age, the meaning of this book is increasingly clear to us
 - But in v.11 John is reminded that the mere fact that the truth of this book is becoming clearer for the believers doesn't mean that unbelievers will profit from it
 - They will continue to go about their sinful ways until and unless the Spirit interrupts that course and brings them saving faith
- In vs.12-15 Jesus Himself gives the reader the last Gospel call in the entire Bible

- Consider this the altar call of the Bible, a chance for a reader to reflect on all the Bible testifies and make a decision
 - But notice something interesting in v.15
 - The unbelievers will be found “outside” the city
- Remember we said that the unbelievers must exist eternally in the Lake of Fire
 - But since the original Heavens and Earth have gone, they must have been allotted a place on the new Heavens and Earth
 - That new place is outside the city
 - This leaves open the possibility that the location could be visible from the city or least somewhere on earth
- Finally, the benediction

[Rev. 22:16](#) “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

[Rev. 22:17](#) The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

[Rev. 22:18](#) I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book;

[Rev. 22:19](#) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

[Rev. 22:20](#) He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

[Rev. 22:21](#) The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

- The book ends with a warning that should anyone make changes to this book, they will experience all its plagues, which culminate with the Lake of Fire
 - And therefore they will not enter into the holy city
 - The warnings make clear that such behaviors will be evidence of unbelief and that they are not found in the book of life
 - And since the Spirit is the author of the entire Bible as a single work, then by logical extension these warnings are true for anyone who maliciously changes any book of the Bible

- The entire work of Scripture was inspired, including the specific number of books included in the canon of scripture
- Any attempt to alter God's word is a sure sign that the person has no relationship with the Spirit Who authored the work
- Jesus assures us He is coming quickly
 - To which John adds, Amen, come Lord Jesus.
 - And all God's people said Amen

The Grace of the Lord Jesus be with all of us...until He comes.

SLIDE 22-3