

Session 15 The Forerunner Message in Revelation 21-22

I. NEW JERUSALEM: THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS (REV. 21-22)

- A. Jesus will restore all that He originally intended when He put Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. He will reverse the tragedy that occurred in Eden because of Adam's sin when Jesus returns as King and the New Jerusalem comes to earth— then, in a literal way, “heaven will be on earth.”

²⁰He [the Father] may send Jesus...²¹whom heaven must receive [keep] until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by...all His holy prophets... (Acts 3:20-21)

- B. Revelation 21-22 describe the rest of the 5th chronological section (21:1-8) that started in 19:11 and the entire 5th parenthetical section (21:9-22:5) followed by concluding statements (22:6-21).

1. The remainder of the 5th chronological section (21:1-8) presents the New Jerusalem in *relational* terms, meaning the saints enjoying nearness to God.
2. The 5th parenthetical section/angelic explanation (21:9-22:5) highlights the New Jerusalem in *functional* terms as the holy of holies (21:9-27) and garden of Eden (22:1-5).

- C. One main theme in these sections is government or who sits on the thrones that rule the earth. After Jesus brings His throne to earth, He gives thrones to the saints (20:4) and drives Satan's throne off the earth (20:3). Then Jesus prepares the nations for the Father's throne to come to earth (21:3).

- D. **Outline of Revelation 21:** end of the 5th chronological and the start of the 5th parenthetical section

21:1-8 The city seen in relational terms—in nearness to God.

(The 5th chronological section continues from 19:11-20:15)

21:1-2 The New Jerusalem descends to the new earth

21:3-4 The Father's throne on the new earth

21:5-8 The Father's 7-fold message

21:9-27 The city seen in functional terms—the ultimate holy of holies

(The 5th parenthetical section is in 21:9-22:5)

21:9-11 The New Jerusalem descends to the millennial earth

21:12-21 The walls and the gates of the city

21:22-23 The Lord is the temple and light in the city

21:24-27 The kings of the earth enter the city

- E. **Outline of Revelation 22:** the 5th parenthetical section and concluding statements

22:1-5 The city seen in functional terms—the ultimate garden of Eden

(The 5th parenthetical section continues in 22:1-5)

22:1-2 The river of life and the tree of life

22:3-5 The throne of God and seeing the face of God

22:6-11 Exhortations about the prophecy

22:12-21 The final words of Jesus and an angel

II. THE CITY SEEN IN RELATIONAL TERMS: NEARNESS TO GOD (REV. 21:1-8)

- A. The 5th chronological section that began in 19:11-20:15 concludes in 21:1-8 describing the Father's throne coming to the new earth to live among His people, releasing blessing and removing sorrow.
- B. God promised that His people will live with Him in the New Jerusalem on the new earth (21:1-8). John described New Jerusalem in *relational terms*—in face-to-face relationship with God (21:4). One purpose of salvation is that the Father and Jesus live with Their people on earth (21:3; 22:3).
- C. After the Millennium, the New Jerusalem will come down to stay permanently on the new earth.
- ¹I 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. ²Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Rev. 21:1-2)***
1. ***A new heaven and new earth***: God's plans include a new earth with a new heaven or sky over it. The atmosphere and weather will be delightful. The terms, "new heavens and new earth," have some application in the Millennium *and* the eternal state as seen in 4 prophetic passages (21:1-2; cf. Isa. 65:17-25; 66:22-24; 2 Pet. 3:13).
 2. ***No sea***: There will no sea to separate people or give opportunity to hostile forces—politically, military, economic, weather, etc.
 3. ***Passed away***: The first heaven and first earth will pass away. "Passed away" is the same verb that is used in 2 Corinthians 5:17 when saying that the old creation "passed away." The Greek word *apelthan*, "passed away," is used 3x in the NT (21:1, 4; cf. 2 Cor. 5:17).
 - a. There is debate about whether the earth is *renovated* or *annihilated* (restored or destroyed) after the Millennium. Scripture indicates that this earth will continue forever (Ps. 37:29; 78:69; 104:5; 105:10-11; 125:1-2; cf. 1 Kgs. 9:3; 21:7; 1 Chr. 23:25; 28:8; 2 Chr. 7:16; 20:7; 30:8; 33:4-7; Isa. 60:21; Ezek. 37:25; 43:6-7; Joel 3: 20).

²⁵They shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. (Ezek. 37:25)
 - b. At the end of the Millennium, I think this earth will be purged or "rinsed" with fire (20:11; cf. 2 Pet. 3:10-13) to remove the residue resulting from the Millennial revolt.
 - c. The Lord declared that His work in creating this world was "very good" before Adam's sin (Gen. 1:31) and that He would restore "all things" after Jesus returns (Acts 3:20-21).
 4. ***New Jerusalem coming down***: The name "New Jerusalem" maintains a vital identification with old Jerusalem. This city is the place the saints will live with God (Heb. 11:10, 16; 12:22).
 5. ***Out of heaven***: The New Jerusalem will descend from the 3rd heavens to earth (2 Cor. 12:2).
 6. ***Prepared as bride***: The Father will adorn the New Jerusalem as a bride. He will spare no detail in His extravagance. The city is beautified as seen in 21:9-22:5. On the new earth or in the new Jerusalem, God removes 7 negatives: no sea (21:1), death, sorrow, crying, pain (21:4), curse (22:3), or night (21:25; 22:5). All that diminished life will be totally reversed.

- D. The Father's throne is coming to the new earth (21:3-4). The high point of all history is the Father dwelling on earth with His people (21:3). God's purpose has always been to live together with His people *face to face on this earth* (21:3). This is the ultimate reality that God accomplished through Christ. The Spirit gave a very important 7-fold message to His people (21:3-4).

³I 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. ⁴And 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." (Rev. 21:3-4)

1. ***Message #1 The tabernacle of God:*** John emphasized "God is with them" 3 times in 21:3. God will tabernacle with humans on earth, allowing them face-to-face fellowship (22:4).
⁴They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. (Rev. 22:4)
2. ***Message #2 They shall be His people:*** They shall respond to the Lord with deep, loyal love, gratitude, and humility along with strong faith that trusts His leadership.
3. ***Message #3 God Himself will be their God:*** The Father will openly and fully manifest His commitments and delight in giving the saints abundant provision, protection, and direction.
4. ***Message #4 God will wipe away every tear from their eyes*** (21:4a): There shall be no crying (21:4c). The Lord will tenderly wipe away tears of past suffering, losses, and failures.
5. ***Message #5 There shall be no more death:*** This will give courage and comfort to the martyrs. There will be no more death of people on the new earth—are animals and plants included?
6. ***Message #6 There shall be no sorrow:*** The sting of past rejection, shame, traumas, failure, etc. will be healed and removed. Mourning is the fate of the Harlot (18:7, 8, 11, 15, 19).
7. ***Message #7 No more pain:*** He will remove all physical, emotional, and relational pain.

III. THE FATHER'S 7-FOLD MESSAGE (REV. 21:5-8)

- A. The Father gave a 7-fold message (21:5-8) revealing His commitments to His people. He speaks in a direct way only twice (1:8; 21:5-8). God told John to write or communicate the message in 21:5-8.
- ⁵Then 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." ⁶He 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. ⁷He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire..." (Rev. 21:5-8)***
- B. ***Message #1 I make all things new*** (21:5): The Father will make new and fully restore all that was originally in His heart for the human race before Adam sinned (Gen. 3).
- C. ***Message #2 It is done*** (21:6): The Father's glorious plan is sure to fully unfold because the victory over sin and darkness is final and eternal. Jesus paid the price and the devil is defeated, so no power can hinder His plan from coming to pass. All of our struggles and failures will be over forever.

- D. **Message #3 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End:** (21:6; cf. 1:8; 22:13): The Father is the “A to Z” of wisdom and power. He is the total source of all we need; thus, His promises are ultimate. The Father has all power and all wisdom so Satan cannot surprise or prevail over Him. God is the first cause or source of all things, and He is the highest end or purpose of all.
- E. **Message #4 I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts** (21:6): The deepest longings that God put in the human spirit will be totally satisfied. The river of life that comes from the throne (22:1) is energized by the Spirit (Jn. 7:38). God gives on basis of our thirst.
- F. **Message #5 He who overcomes** (21:7): He shall inherit all things—all things in Revelation 21-22, including the 22 eternal rewards that Jesus promised to overcomers in 2:7, 10, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21.
- G. **Message #6 I will be his God and he shall be My son** (21:7): God will relate to us as our Father with tenderness, provision, direction, etc. We will relate to Him as His beloved children forever.
- H. **Message #7** All who refuse to relate to and obey God will be forbidden to enter the city—including the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars.

IV. THE NEW JERUSALEM WILL DESCEND TO THE EARTH—TWICE

- A. The New Jerusalem descending out of heaven is emphasized 3 times (3:12; 21:2, 10). The New Jerusalem will descend to the earth in 2 stages—at Jesus’ return (21:10) and after the Millennium (21:2). Stage one of its descent to the earth is a partial fulfillment, and stage two is ultimate.
- B. Promises about the new earth apply both to the Millennium and new earth (Isa. 65:17-25; 66:22-24; 2 Pet. 3:13). Prophetic Scriptures often point to more than one fulfillment, separated by many years. Many Scriptures have an initial substantial fulfillment, then a future ultimate fulfillment.
- C. The 5th parenthetical section describes the New Jerusalem’s relationship to the millennial earth (21:9-22:5). The events in 21:9-22 do not occur in chronological order *after* the new earth (21:1-8). Rather, they look back to how the New Jerusalem impacts the millennium earth (20:1-10). Thus, because 21:9-22:5 is a parenthetical section, it describes what occurs *before* the events in 21:1-8.
- D. The events in 21:9-22:5 refer to the Millennium because the nature of what is described includes the eternal and temporal realms functioning together. Some actions are out of character with the eternal state—we see kings living on the millennial earth (21:24-26) entering the New Jerusalem and taking healing leaves to their nation (22:2), and we see unbelievers being hindered from entering it (21:27).
- E. The same angel who took John to a mountain to show him the Bride (21:9-10) also took him to the wilderness to show him the Harlot (17:1). These are parallel visions that are *clearly parenthetical sections* in which an angel explains events that do not occur on earth in chronological order.

⁹*Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls...talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the Lamb’s wife.”* ¹⁰*He carried me...to a mountain.* (Rev. 21:9-10)

¹*Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls...talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you...the great harlot.”* ³*he carried me away...into the wilderness.* (Rev. 17:1-3)

V. JESUS' THRONE—ON THE MILLENNIAL EARTH AND IN THE NEW JERUSALEM

- A. Jesus' throne will be on the millennial earth and in the New Jerusalem simultaneously. At the time of Jesus' return, God will bring the heavenly and earthly realms together (Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:19-20).
¹⁰that in the...fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. (Eph. 1:10)
- B. Jesus is the King of both Jerusalems. He brings the fullness of heaven and earth together as the New Jerusalem descends to the millennial earth. The resurrected saints live in the New Jerusalem while reigning on the millennial earth (with government positions). The saints will easily travel from the New Jerusalem to any city on the millennial earth as angels travel from heaven to earth in this age.
- C. At the second coming, Jesus will establish His throne of glory in millennial Jerusalem (Jer. 3:17). Jesus' throne will be connected to the holy of holies in the millennial temple (Ezek. 43:4-7).
*³¹When the Son of Man comes in His glory...then He will sit on the throne of His glory.
³²All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them... (Mt. 25:31-32)*
¹⁷At that time [millennial] Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. (Jer. 3:17)
- D. Jesus' throne is in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:3).
³The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it [New Jerusalem]. (Rev. 22:3)
- E. Does Jesus have one throne or two? Is it on the millennial earth or in the New Jerusalem? Yes! His throne of glory is on earth and in heaven. ***It is one throne with two expressions.*** The government of heaven and of earth come together as both millennial and heavenly Jerusalems are connected.
- F. The New Jerusalem will descend to a place *above* the millennial temple in Jerusalem connecting the two Jerusalems. Some suggest that the New Jerusalem will be like a “satellite city” above the millennial Jerusalem. I think of Jesus' throne of glory (Mt. 19:28; 25:31) as a vast governmental complex with the “far north end” of it extending into the New Jerusalem and the “far south end” of it based in the millennial temple—with a dynamic convergence between the two places.
- G. There are **4 reasons** the New Jerusalem is close to millennial Jerusalem, yet not on the earth.
1. First, millennial Jerusalem is about 9 miles on each side or 4,500 rods x 4,500 rods (a rod is approx. 10.5 feet; Ezek. 48:30-35; 45:6; 48:15-19). The New Jerusalem is 1,380 miles on each side (21:16) which is much larger than millennial Jerusalem and thus could not actually be “on the earth” because there is not currently a 1,380-mile square tract of land for it.
 2. Second, the kings of the millennial earth come *into* the New Jerusalem (21:24-26).
 3. Third, the leaves in the New Jerusalem are for the healing of the millennial nations. Therefore, people on the millennial earth have access to these healing leaves (22:2).
 4. Fourth, angels guard the entry to the city to keep sinners out (21:12, 27; 22:14-15). Angels guarded the entrance to the garden of Eden after Adam sinned (Gen. 3:22-24).

VI. THE CITY SEEN IN FUNCTIONAL TERMS—THE ULTIMATE HOLY OF HOLIES (21:9-27)

- A. The 5th parenthetical section continues from 21:9 to 22:5. An angel described the New Jerusalem as the holy of holies (21:9-27) and garden of Eden (22:1-5)—two places God dwelt with people.
- B. The New Jerusalem described in *functional terms*—as the ultimate holy of holies (21:9-27).

⁹Then 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.” ¹⁰And 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... (Rev. 21:9-10)

1. ***The Lamb’s wife***: The New Jerusalem is called the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, speaking of a city in deep relationship with the redeemed who are also called “the Lamb’s wife” (19:7).
 2. The very components of the city—its air, food, water, color, smells, fragrances, music, etc.—will inspire love in the Bride of Christ as they partake of them. God prepared the environment (21:2) there to inspire love for Jesus parallel to the Harlot who inspired fornication (17:1).
- C. ***A city having the glory of God*** (21:11): The Father is extravagant in adorning this city (21:2, 11). It is filled with glory and light compared to the brightness of an ancient jasper (21:11, 23; 22:5). The Lord’s “wedding gift” to the Bride of Christ includes the New Jerusalem—“a diamond city.”

¹⁰...The holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. (Rev. 21:10-11)

VII. THE WALLS AND THE GATES OF THE CITY (REV. 21:12-21)

- A. John was given insight into the beauty of the city (21:9-11), its size (21:16), gates (21:12b-13, 21), walls (21:12a, 14-18), foundations (21:14, 19-20), streets (21:21), rivers, and trees (22:1-2).
- B. ***The 12 gates*** (21:12b-13, 21): The gates made of pearl are guarded by angels and have the names of the 12 tribes of Israel written on them. The 12 gates would be about 500 miles apart from each other (if evenly separated over 1,380 miles on each side (totaling 5,520 miles of walls).

¹²Also 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: ¹³three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west...

²¹The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. (Rev. 21:12-13, 21)

- C. ***The walls*** (21:12b, 14-18): The great and high walls are 1,380 miles in length, height, and width (21:16). The city is described as a cube (21:16) like the holy of holies in Solomon’s temple where the inner sanctuary was 20 cubits long, wide, and high (1 Kgs. 6:19-20). The walls are 216 feet or 72 yards thick (21:15-17). A furlong (NIV *stadia*) is a Greek measurement that is about 600 feet.

¹²She had a great and high wall... ¹⁴The wall...had twelve foundations... ¹⁶The 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 [1,380 miles]. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. ¹⁷Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits [72 yards thick] ... ¹⁸The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. (Rev. 21:12-18)

- D. **The foundations** (21:14, 19-20): The walls have 12 foundations, and on them are written the names of 12 apostles of the Lamb (21:14). The precious stones that adorn the foundations of the city also adorned the breastplate of the high priest, thus pointing to importance of fellowship with God.

¹⁴The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb...¹⁹The 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, ²⁰the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. (Rev. 21:14, 19-20)

- E. The street is made of transparent gold with the tree of life growing alongside of it (21:21; 22:2).

²¹...And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. (Rev. 21:21)

²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life... (Rev. 22:2)

- F. The Lord is the temple and light in the city (21:22-23). John described the beautiful light source of the city as the glory of the Lamb (21:23). The New Jerusalem does not have daylight and nighttime.

²²I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³The 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. ²⁴And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light... (Rev. 21:22-24)

- G. The kings of the earth will enter the city (21:24-27). There will be important interaction between the kings of the millennial nations and the New Jerusalem, even receiving leaves to heal nations (22:2).

²⁴...the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. ²⁵Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). ²⁶And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷But 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. (Rev. 21:24-27)

1. ***Kings will bring their glory and honor into the city*** (21:24, 26): The nations will offer some of their most valued treasures to Jesus. There will be many nations in the Millennium (Isa. 2:2; 60:3, 5, 11, 20; Dan. 7:14; Mic. 4:2; Zech. 2:11; 8:23). Kings with natural bodies will live in the nations on the millennial earth (Ps. 72:10-11; Isa. 60:3, 11; 66:12).

2. Only those who obey the Lord are allowed to enter the New Jerusalem (21:27, 8; 22:14-15):

¹⁴...those who do His commandments...[they] may enter through the gates into the city.

¹⁵But outside are...sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters... (Rev. 22:14-15)

VIII. THE CITY SEEN IN FUNCTIONAL TERMS—THE ULTIMATE GARDEN OF EDEN (22:1-5)

- A. The New Jerusalem is described in *functional terms*—as the ultimate garden of Eden (22:1-5). He described its life with face-to-face communion with God sitting on His throne (22:3-4). The river of life and the tree of life in the New Jerusalem clearly point to Eden (22:1-2).

¹And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Rev. 22:1-2)

- B. It is a city with the privilege of the throne of God and seeing the face of God (22:3-5).
³...*the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴They shall see His face...*⁵*There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. (Rev. 22:3-5)*
- C. *They shall see His face*: The saints shall serve God in a face-to-face relationship (22:3-4).
- D. *God gives them light*: God's light will impart power, wisdom, and holiness to those serving Him.
- E. *They shall reign forever* (22:5): The saints will not be idle in the New Jerusalem but will be actively serving and administrating His government with authority over the earth and perhaps more. The saints ruling on earth is emphasized (5:9; 7:9; 12:5; 15:3; 19:16).

IX. CONCLUDING STATEMENTS TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION (REV. 22:6-11)

- A. Exhortations about the prophecy (22:6-11): All are called to keep the prophecy (22:7, 9; cf. 1:3). The Church "keeps the prophecy" by acting on it in various ways:
⁷*I... am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book...*
⁹*I am your fellow servant and...of those who keep the words of this book. (Rev. 22:7-9)*
1. *By obeying it*: The commands of Jesus as we persevere in walking in love and holiness.
 2. *By saying it*: The message of Jesus as set forth in "the prophecy" is to be proclaimed.
 3. *By praying it*: By praying for the release of power as described in "the prophecy."
- B. The final words of Jesus and an angel (22:12-21): Jesus described the eternal implications of our deeds and choices (22:12-15). Jesus will give rewards according to our deeds. Jesus declared 4 things about Himself (22:16) that are vital to the church functioning in her bridal identity (22:17).
¹²*I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work...*
¹⁶*I, Jesus... I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."*
¹⁷*And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" (Rev. 22:16-17)*
1. *Root and the Offspring of David*: These two titles emphasize His Messianic heritage as both the "Root" and "Offspring" of King David. They point to Jesus' dual nature in being fully God (the Root of David) and fully man (the Offspring of David).
 2. *The Bright and Morning Star*: These two titles give insight into how Jesus will help His people in the end times: the Bright Star, the Morning Star, will bring them to victory.
- C. John prophesied the Spirit's work in the end-time Church (22:17): It is one of the most informative and significant prophecies describing what truths and activities the Spirit will powerfully emphasize in a new way in the generation the Lord returns. In 22:17, John described the Church saying and doing what the Spirit is saying and doing.
1. *What is the Spirit saying?* He is *revealing* the Bridegroom and the redeemed as His Bride.
 2. *What is the Spirit doing?* He is *praying* for Jesus to come in power as the Bridegroom, and He is *calling* people to come to Jesus as the Bridegroom and to see themselves as His Bride. Thus, He is *praying* and *calling* the nations to Jesus through the lips of His people.