

# The Soon Coming End – Part 17

2 Peter 3:9-13  
Revelation 21 - 22

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I 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 the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

Also, he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6 And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— 13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Revelation 21:1-14 (ESV))

What a wonderful and glorious sight to behold! Could anything be more perfect! Is this not what we all long for in the depths of our souls. A new heaven and a new earth, and the Lord Jesus dwelling with us and walking with us, we as His “bride” and Him as our “bridegroom”, and great joy filling everything we think and say and do!

You'll recall, in chapter 20, that as Jesus came, seated upon His "Great White Throne", it was said that "the old heavens and the old earth quickly "fled" from His presence, and no place was found for them".

Reading those words, and then these words here in front of us, I'm reminded of just how awesomely powerful God really is! How in the first beginning, Jesus took His deliberate time as He, over a span of six days, created all the minutely detailed parts of the heavens and the earth, and doing it that way deliberately so that we, His beloved children could have a glimpse of His creative power, and might, and wisdom, and glory. But then here, in only a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, He wiped everything that He had created completely out of existence.

Why does He need to do that, to wipe away everything, and especially, all of the "old ways" of life? It's because all those "old ways" truly are corrupt and self-seeking and hurtful. And He wants to give us a "whole new beginning", a beginning where

4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (Revelations 21:4-5)

Folks, corruptible things really do need to pass away from existence, because corruptible things just will not "fit" together in harmony with the abiding presence of the pure and holy Lord Jesus.

And again, that is especially so for people. Corrupt souls who have never been "washed in the cleansing Blood of the Lamb" just cannot bear to be in the same presence as the purity and holiness of God. And so, as sad as it is to imagine, those corrupt souls who want nothing to do with God now will be assigned to another place, a place that will better fit their character . . . the burning pit of hell. And God makes that very clear and plain for us here in Verse 8. He tells us,

8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."  
(Revelation 21:8 (ESV))

Everything that had to do with the old life, the old heavens and the old earth will all be gone forever, and everything will be made new.

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I 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 the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. (Revelation 21:1-3 (ESV)

Recall that in John 14:3, Jesus made a promise to all who would follow Him, that He would go and prepare a place for us. And that He would come again and take us to Himself, that where He is, we would be also. And this is it!

2 And I 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 the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. (Revelation 21:2-3 (ESV)

And then in verse 9, the angel said to John,

9 . . . “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. (Revelation 21:9-11 (ESV)

This is us folks, you and me, the “bride” of the Lord Jesus. And He will live and abide with us, for all eternity! And there can be nothing better because . . . Verse 4

4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” (Revelation 21:4-5 (ESV)

And notice as you read the words in verses 9 and following how God describes for us, in great detail, a glorious city, one in which those things that we now count as being so important, like gold and silver and jewels, are simply the “stuff” that walls and streets and the pavement are made from.

Read Revelation 21:9-21

I have pondered as to why God gives us such detail, even to the exact size of the great city. I’m convinced that it is because He wants you and me to know that our new home really is a very “real” place and not just some “spiritual manifestation”. It is a “real” place where you and I, in our glorified bodies, will actually live.

And yes, with all of the gold and silver and fine jewels, it does seem inordinately opulent. But not so! Remember that we are children of the “King”. And we are the “bride” of the “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” and it is only fitting that we should live in and enjoy luxury.

But folks, as we live there in all that magnificent luxury, it will be without pride, because the focus of our attention and our dedication and our adoration will not be on the luxury around us, but it will be upon our beloved “Bridegroom”, the Lord Jesus.

And I love to imagine these next words! Listen, beginning in verse 22

22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life. (Revelation 21:22-27 (ESV))

Observe again, the glory and the majesty of God. We’ll have no need for a temple or a church building, where we will go to worship Him. God Himself is our temple and He will be ever-present all around us and in us.

And we’ll have no need for the sun or the moon to give us light, because God the Father and the Lord Jesus, will be our light.

And notice here also that God reveals some of the actual occurrences of daily life that will take place. Verse 24,

24 By (His) light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, (the new Jerusalem) 25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life. (Revelation 21:24-27 (ESV))

These words reveal that in the new heavens and the new earth, there will be “nations” of people and “kings” over them. Who will those “nations” be? They will be the people who, in this life, received Jesus as their Savior and Lord and their names were written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

And who will those “kings” be? Most likely, it will be those people who are spoken about in such places as the “Parable of the Minas”, where God rewards His faithful servants, saying, “well done, my good and faithful servant, take charge of ten cities”.

Those “faithful servants” will be “Kings” in the heavenly kingdoms. And as we are told here, they will bring to the King of Kings in the New Jerusalem “glorious things”. What those “glorious things” are, we are not told, but these words give us the understanding that there will be a whole new world of living and commerce and other things that we can’t begin to imagine. And thankfully, it will be without any of the corruption that is so common now within our daily commerce. Verse 26,

26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life. (Revelation 21:26-27 (ESV))

And listen also, from chapter 22, these precious words describing some of the daily living we will experience.

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22:1-5 (ESV))

Isn’t this precious! From other similar references in these scriptures, we understand the “river of the water of life” is speaking specifically of the ongoing presence and work of the Holy Spirit. And from these words, we see that we will dwell in the very presence of all three in the “Trinity” of God, with God the Father, and with His Son, the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, and with the Holy Spirit. Verse 1 again,

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. (Revelation 22:1 (ESV))

All three here together!

And notice these next words that tell us about the blessed “tree of life”.

2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:2 (ESV))

It seems strange to me that once we are in heaven, we will need to eat. But that is the purpose of the “fruit” that will come from the “tree of life”. It is to be eaten. Can you imagine, eating fruit daily from the “Tree of Life”.

And we are told here that the leaves are intended to “heal” us. But a question arises here. Why will we need healing? All our sins will have been washed away, the pain and suffering of our old life, emotionally, physically and spiritually, will all be gone. And we will be in our new glorified minds and bodies. Why then will we need healing? I don’t really know! But may I suggest a possible answer? I believe that it might have to do with all those things that we will have experienced while still in this life. And this is a way of God revealing the grace and mercy that He showed to us while bearing through our sinful behaviors of our flesh. Recall that we are told that everything we will have ever done, whether good or evil, will be brought to us. Perhaps this is one way God will do it as He “heals” us from all those experiences.

The last few words of this Book are in the form of both an “invitation” and of a “warning”, much on the order of the words in Deuteronomy 30, where God sets before us “life and death, blessings and curses”, and exhorts us to “choose life”.

Here God tells us in verse 7

7 “And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” (Revelation 22:7)

And in verse 10 and following

10 And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.” (Revelation 22:10-11)

Here, God is saying to us, “you have choices to make, and every one of those choices will have eternal consequences.” Listen! Verse 12,

12 “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” 14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. (Revelation 22:12-14)

How may we wash our robes? What will cleanse them? Only the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus!

Verse 15 is a warning for us today

15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.  
(Revelation 22:15 (ESV))

This is a stern warning! no sinful person or thing will ever be permitted to enter the gates of heaven.

And then in verse 16, Jesus gives us His final invitation,

16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." 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 desires take the water of life without price. (Revelation 22:7-17 (ESV))

And then a final warning, one that speaks specifically about our receiving of and our regard for these scriptures. Listen!

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. (Revelation 22:18-19 (ESV))

This warning is for this Book of Revelations and for all the other many Books of the Bible. Too often, even the most devout of believers would like these words to say something that they don't really say, and we are tempted to insert some of our own words and thoughts and beliefs. But we must not! We must accept God as He really is, and only as these infallible words describe Him to be, nothing more and nothing less. And as we are warned here, we must never "add to" or "take away" even one of the meanings of these precious words. If we do, we will be dealt with "ever so severely". And that is a promise from God.

And so then, God closes the pages of our bible with these simple words. Verse 20,  
20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. (Revelation 22:20-21 (ESV))