

O one, O only mansion!

*O Paradise of joy,
When tears are ever banished,
And smiles have no alloy!
The cross is all thy splendor,
The crucified thy praise;
His laud and benediction
Thy ransomed people raise.*

*O sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country
That eager hearts expect!
Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest,
Who art, with God the Father
And Spirit, ever blest.*

Bernard of Cluny--12th century.

*Lo! what a glorious sight appears
To our admiring eyes!
The former seas have passed away,
The former earth and skies.*

*The God of glory down to men
Removes His blest abode;
He dwells with men; His people they,
And He His people's God!*

Isaac Watts--1674-1748.

*Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me,
When shall my labours have an end
In joy and peace, and thee?*

*When shall these eyes thy heaven-built walls
And pearly gates behold,
Thy bulwarks with salvation strong,
And streets of shining gold!*

Joseph Bromehead--1748-1826.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"Jerusalem the Golden"

Revelation 22:1-5

Introduction

1. The millennium is now over. God has brought in the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:1). The heavenly scene is detailed (vv. 2-27). The picture staggers human imagination. Glory to God.

2. Because the church is intimately related to the new Jerusalem, it is called by the name of the bride (21:2, 9). There are, however, relationships with the earth and therefore with Old Testament, tribulation, and millennial saints (21:12, 25). The whole event of gathering together the redeemed of all ages at this time is absolutely fascinating (Eph. 3:15; Heb. 12:22-24).

3. While the previous chapter provides items which in the main relate to the externalities of the city, the present section provides some of the items inside the city. There is a general relationship between the early chapters of Genesis and this section: beginnings and endings. What is here is a continuance of the previous chapter as the angel continues his message to John (cf. 21:9 with 22:1). Thus, on with the events of eternity:

1. The RIVER v. 1.

All sorts of explanations have been given for this. One thing is certain: if the city is literal, then all that relates to it must be also. Hence, here is a river within the city. It corresponds to all that is expected in the eternal city (cf. Psa. 36:7-9; 46:4). Heaven is not a place of drought or dust. Since it is the river of "water of life," it is expected that here is water with certain animation from the very throne of God. As the Father and the Son are associated with the city (21:3; 22:1), it is possible that this is a reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in eternity. Whatever, there must be a comparison here with the factors of the millennial city (cf. Ezek. 47). The intimate relationship of the Godhead is noted by the mention of the throne "of God and of the Lamb."

2. The TREE v. 2.

Only one street is mentioned in the text (cf. 21:21).

That street and the river apparently are surrounded with the tree of life which is bearing fruit, one sort each month. The word "month" in eternity is hardly to be seen in terms of eternity, but to explain to men "in time" that there will be variants to the fruit throughout eternity. God's sovereign ability for variety is no problem now nor then! This brings joy, beauty, and blessedness to eternity. It is not directly stated in the Bible what food will be required in heaven. It is known, however, that immortality does not need it. There is nothing of thirst or hunger in a perfect state. It may speak of the communion and joy to be enjoyed forever. On the other hand, we know our Lord ate after His resurrection (Luke 24:41-43). Angels have eaten with men (Gen. 18:6-8). Apparently the redeemed will eat in their glorified bodies (Rev. 19:7-10). While we do not have all the facts relating to the "life-water" and the "life-fruits," we know that an infinite God is not to be hindered in His purpose for the finest for His own in heaven (cf. Rev. 2:7; 22:14). The "leaves" of the tree are specifically stated to be used for the "healing of the nations." This does not mean nations will be healed, but preserved from ill. It is a matter of preservation for what God has already gained.

3. The THRONE v. 3, 5.

There are different thrones in the Bible. At the present, the Savior sits at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 1:3). There is the throne which concerns the triune God in total glory (Rev. 4, 5). While God sits in the heavens, He brings judgment from His throne (Rev. 6-19). God has His great white throne (20:11-15) for those who reject the Gospel. What is here is the eternal throne of God. It is the unending expression of grace and goodness from the Lord. With this, there is no more curse. Back in Genesis, the curse came (3), but now no more darkness, spoil, and death. Here is eternal relief from bondage. Like unfallen angels, there is no more fall. God has made all things new (21:5). This is another reason that again the Scripture reminds the child of God that darkness is gone forever (cf. 21:11, 23). The whole focus of events is on the Lord God. What a scene to view!

4. The ACTIVITIES vv. 3-5.

Some of the activities to be enjoyed in heaven are listed:

a. Service

This is a picture of universal obedience to God. What a thrill to be called His "servants." It is a high honor and full of dignity. There is no idleness in heaven. No weariness nor flagging of energy.

b. Sight

Heaven will give the unending joy of seeing His face. This was withheld from Moses (Ex. 33:20, 23), but promised by our Lord (Matt. 5:8), and here to be enjoyed (cf. 1 John 3:2). That face once marred by horrible hatred will be the adoring view of saints eternally!

c. Sway

The eternal set-up is contrasted here with the millennial. There is perpetuity here and not limited rule. Apparently, nations will exist on earth so that rule will be provided. The redeemed reign with the Lord.

Conclusion All that is now read in the Bible will ultimately be resolved into fact. It will be our happy experience to enter into the joy of our Lord. Oh, may God give us grace to walk worthy until these prophetic truths and glories become our realization. Amen.

"THE JERUSALEM THAT IS ABOVE"

*Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed:
I know not, O I know not
What social joys are there;
What radiance of glory,
What light beyond compare!*

*For thee, O dear, dear country,
Mine eyes their vigils keep;
For very love, beholding
Thy happy name, they weep:
The mention of thy glory
Is unction to the breast,
And medicine in sickness,
And love, and life, and rest.*