

What follows represents the unedited lecture notes of Pastor Merritt's teaching of The Book of the Revelation. Please feel free to reproduce all or part for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The teachings of the Revelation represent a compilation of things learned from such men as Col. R. B. Thieme, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Charles Ryre, Arno C. Gabelein, John Walvoord, Hal Lindsay, Dwight Pentecost, along with an exegesis of the Greek and Hebrew texts.

Introduction

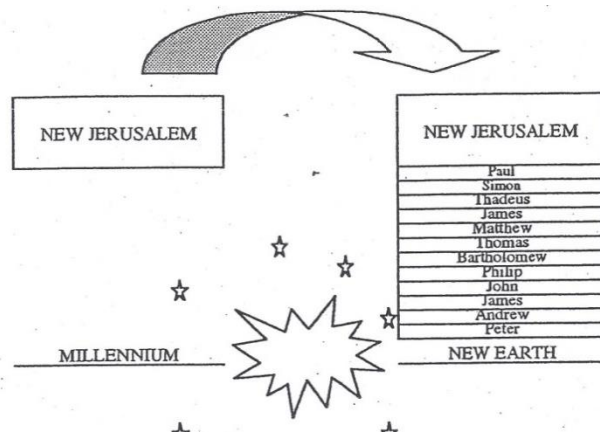
1. Many are convinced that chapters twenty-one and twenty-two described events in heaven. Then there are those who believe what is described in chapters twenty-one and twenty-two describe the Millennium. Others believe certain portions of these last two chapters describe the New Jerusalem and other parts describe the new heaven and the new earth.

2. Then there are also those who believe that John sees the new heaven and the new earth in verse one of chapter twenty-one while the rest of chapters twenty-one and twenty-two describe the New Jerusalem. This is the view of men like John Walvoord, Wycliffe, Col. R. B. Thieme, Lewis Chafer, Charles Ryrie and J. Vernon McGee. I too am convinced the new heaven and the new earth are described in verse one of chapter twenty-one while the rest of chapters twenty-one and twenty-two describe the New Jerusalem.

3. For example Lewis Sperry Chafer writes:

"In Revelation 21:1 ... John writes, 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.' The new heaven is not described at all, and all that is stated about the new earth is, 'There was no more sea.' ... The strange silence of Scripture on the appearance of both the new earth and the new heaven is nowhere explained. Instead our attention is directed immediately to the holy city of the New Jerusalem."

4. Tim LaHaye writes in his book *Revelation Unveiled*: "The last chapter of Revelation contains a final description of that heaven-like earth that God has prepared for those who love him." Earlier LaHaye makes clear chapter twenty-one with the exception of Rev 21:1 describes the New Jerusalem. I am convinced, along with many conservative scholars that the New Jerusalem described in these last two chapters of the book of the Revelation is also the same New Jerusalem in which church age saints will live during the Tribulation; even the same city located above planet earth during the Millennium. More will be taught later of the city and its inhabitants.



5. The earth and heaven of the Millennium recall "flees away" but not the New Jerusalem, it remains. The Bride has a permanent home not made with hands which does not fade away.

6. Ryrie writes in his book *Revelation Everymans Commentary*:

"In other words, the New Jerusalem is the eternal residence of the redeemed during both the Millennium and eternity. It is the place our Lord has gone to prepare for us (Joh 14:2) ... In other words, there seems to be two descents of the city ... being the one related to eternity and ... the one related to the Millennium."

7. There can be no question that this promised city is the New Jerusalem. While it may be the bride's city, it also has other permanent inhabitants: the saved of the house of Israel.

8. You will notice that the foundation stones of the city have the twelve apostles' names on them, while the twelve gates are named for the twelve tribes.

9. A third group of people will also have access to the city, though their principle place of residence will be the new earth. These are Old Testament believers who are not Jews.

10. They will be comprised of believers who did not happen to be among Israel in the Old Testament or the Church in the New Testament.

11. Noah would be one of these, since he was not an Israelite. Naaman the leper would also be in this group, since he was not a Jew either.

11.1 Many other Old Testament people knew God and believed in Him and found salvation, but were never part of Israel. Job was also one of these Gentiles.

12. All the Gentiles who are saved during the Tribulation will also be in this company of believers.

13. The most important thing about this new city and new earth is that the Lord Jesus Christ will be there in person, and we will see Him face-to-face. It is possible we will also see God the Father and God the Holy Spirit there.

14. In 1Co 13:12 it says, "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face-to-face."

1Co 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

14.1 John tells us that we will see Christ as He is and become like Him. (1Jo 3:2)

1Jo 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

15. Jesus' glorified human body is the "tabernacle of God" which John sees present among men. (Rev 21:3)

Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

16. Christ will have His glorified body for all eternity and we will have ours, so face-to-face fellowship will be no problem.

17. In Rev 21:4 we are told that we will be free from all sorrow in the New Jerusalem. God will wipe every tear from our eyes. Death will be gone forever, and so will its painful shadow - mourning.

Rev 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

18. The greatest enemy of mankind, totally unconquered by science, is death. J. Vernon McGee has written: "We have cancer societies and heart funds, but have you ever heard of an anti-death research organization."

19. All sickness and pain will be forgotten in the wonder of our new surroundings. Even our old sin natures will be removed at last, so that we will never lose patience with one another again!

20. I want to read what J. Vernon McGee has written about Revelation chapters twenty-one and twenty-two.

"Eternity is unveiled in chapter 21: a new heaven, a new earth, a New Jerusalem, a new era, and the eternal abode of the Lamb's bride where we will be new creations in Christ Jesus without the old nature that manifests itself so much today. Adopting a popular aphorism of the day, it can truly be said that this chapter is "out of this world." This chapter hasn't anything to do with the earth (except for the first few verses). In it we see the eternal abode of the church. What really is heaven? There is a lot of sticky, sentimental stuff said about heaven, and we get quite weepy when we talk about heaven. However, heaven is a place, a very definite place. You will have an address there. Your name will be put on you so that in eternity, when you wander around into outer space and get lost, some angel will bring you home and you will have a home.

"As the long vista of eternity is before us in this chapter, we move not only from time to eternity, but to a new creation. A new heaven, a new earth, and a New Jerusalem greet us. The redeemed have previously received glorified bodies like Christ's. All things have become new. A new universe suggests new methods and approaches to life. New laws will regulate the new universe. The entire lifestyle will change. Here are some of the changes that are suggested in chapters 21 and 22. There will be a total absence of sin and temptation and testing in the new creation. This in itself makes a radical difference. The New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, does not mean another satellite for the earth, but rather the earth and all of the new creation with all of the galactic systems will revolve about the New Jerusalem, because it is the dwelling place of God and of Christ. The law of gravity, as we know it, will be radically revised. There will be traffic between the New Jerusalem and the earth. The church will have already left the earth, and its dwelling place is the New Jerusalem.

"I believe that we will have entirely different bodies, and the law of gravity will not affect us; that is, the law of gravity of this earth or of any other planet. There will be no sun to give light, for God Himself will supply it directly to the universe. There will be the absence, therefore, of night. There is no night there because we just do not need that time to rest since we will have new bodies. I am looking forward to that, by the way. There will no longer be any sea on the earth. The sea occupies most of the earth's surface today; approximately three-fourths of the total surface is water. This denotes a revolution in life upon the earth. Just think of the parking space we will be able to have! There will be no fish to eat. Apparently, man will be a vegetarian during the Millennium and throughout eternity, as he was in the Garden of Eden. Fruit is the only diet of eternal man. (see Rev 22:2) The presence of Christ and God, together with the throne of God made visible, ushers in a new day for man "the new creation."

21. Now let me close with an expanded translation of Revelation Chapter Twenty-One.

Expanded Translation

Rev 21:1 "Then I, John saw a new heaven and a new earth, the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and unlike that which had passed away there was no sea. *Thalassa*

Rev 21:2 I was then given a panoramic view of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, it came down out of heaven, a gift from God.

The city was beyond description, like a gorgeous bride prepared for her right man; adorned in the finest attire--the quintessence of pulchritude.

Rev 21:3 And I, John heard a loud voice. The voice came from the area around the throne, 'Now the dwelling of God is with mankind, and I will live with them forever. They will be My people, and I will be with them and I will be their God.

Rev 21:4 I will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, there will be no more mourning nor crying nor pain, for the old order of things have been hissed off the stage and are no more.'

Rev 21:5 Christ, who was seated on the throne said, 'I am now making all things new and different!' He then said to John, 'Write what I am about to say: My words are trustworthy, faithful and true.'

Rev 21:6 Christ then looked directly at me and said, 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To those who are thirsty I will freely give them water to drink from the spring of the water of life, they shall drink freely.' The water I was reminded represented the fulfillment of all the many promises of Christ which are now complete.

Rev 21:7 Christ again spoke, 'The person who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall inherit all things and I will in the future be his God and he shall be my son.

Rev 21:8 But in contrast the cowardly, those who are unconvinced of God's truths, those polluted with idolatrous practices, those who murder, those practicing fornication and adultery, those dabbling in the occult and those who lie, they shall receive their part in the lake of burning sulfur.'

Rev 21:9 The seventh angel who had dumped the seventh plague on planet earth came over to me and said, 'Come here John and I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb of God.'

Rev 21:10 And I was taken away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain where he pointed out the Holy City of Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven.

Rev 21:11 The city glowed with the glory of God, its brilliance was like that of a single giant precious jewel, bright and clear like a transcendent prism.

Rev 21:12 The New Jerusalem had a high wall more than 200 feet; it had twelve gates and an angel sat atop each gate. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel in the following pattern: from the northwest corner, going from west to east, Levi, Judah, and Reuben; from the northeast corner, going from north to south, Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan; from the southeast corner, going from east to west, Naphtali, Asher, and Gad; from the southwest corner, going from south to north, Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun.

Rev 21:13 There were three gates on the east side, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west side.

Rev 21:14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations stationed under each gate, and on each foundation were the names of the twelve original disciples minus Judas Iscariot plus Paul.

Rev 21:15 The seventh angel who took me away in the spirit had a measuring rod of gold with which he measured the city, its gates and its walls.

Rev 21:16 The city was cube shaped. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 1,342 miles on all sides.

Rev 21:17 He measured the wall of the city as being 216 feet high.

Rev 21:18 The walls were made of a clear jasper stone cut and polished to the grade of a perfect diamond, and the city itself was made of pure gold, so pure that it gave the appearance of glass.

Rev 21:19 The foundations of the city were made of various precious stones. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald,

Rev 21:20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

Rev 21:21 The twelve gates were each made of a giant single pearl. There was a special street which ran down the center of the city which was made of pure gold, giving the appearance of transparent glass.

Rev 21:22 I, John looked but did not see a temple in the city, it was made clear to me there was no need for a temple because the Father and the Son make redundant any need for a temple. The ritual had been replaced by the reality.

Rev 21:23 The eternal New Jerusalem does not need the light of the sun nor the moon for the glory of God, the Lord Jesus Christ gave it its light, the Lamb of God was its perpetual lamp.

Rev 21:24 The Gentiles will walk by His light, and those who had positions of prominence on planet earth, will bring their reputations and productions into the city.

Rev 21:25 The gates of the city will always stand wide open; they will never be shut, for there will be no night and no reason to seal the city from those outside.

Rev 21:26 Even the glory and honor of the Gentiles will enter with them; all Gentiles who glorified God will enter with their divine good.

Rev 21:27 However nothing impure or any impure person will enter the New Jerusalem, only those who are positionally perfect; those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

22. We are now ready to begin a study of Revelation Chapter Twenty-two.

Introduction

1. I want to review briefly what we will see in these first five verses. The verses in the NIV have been translated:

Rev 22:1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

Rev 22:2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. (*Ethnos*)

Rev 22:3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

Rev 22:4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

Rev 22:5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

1.1 It is strange that in chapter twenty-one we saw no descriptive details pertaining to natural phenomena like trees, rivers, etc.

2. In chapter twenty-two, however, we find details are now introduced.

Rev 22:1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

Rev 22:2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

3. In Genesis two the details of the Garden are many and in Ezekiel forty-seven the details of natural phenomena found in the Millennium are also described.

4. Notice in Eze 47:1-12 we have a description of water, rivers, trees etc. all of which abound in the Millennium and are described in ample detail.

The River From the Temple

Eze 47:1 The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar.

Eze 47:2 He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was flowing from the south side.

Eze 47:3 As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep.

Eze 47:4 He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist.

Eze 47:5 He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in-- a river that no one could cross.

Eze 47:6 He asked me, "Son of man, do you see this?" Then he led me back to the bank of the river.

Eze 47:7 When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river.

Eze 47:8 He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Sea. When it empties into the Sea, the water there becomes fresh.

Eze 47:9 Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so, where the river flows everything will live.

Eze 47:10 Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds-- like the fish of the Great Sea.
Eze 47:11 But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt.
Eze 47:12 Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing."

5. Wycliffe in his commentary writes: "Sin drove man from one garden. Grace brings man to an eternal Paradise."

6. In the New Jerusalem in eternity future we have beauty, life in full abundance, the sovereignty of God, health, the absence of any curse on either man, or on the earth, or where he lives, or in the city of his habitation, or on any relationships prevailing among men - Christ has removed the curse and all the consequences of that curse.

Rev 22:3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

7. Here also is a picture of service, the perfect vision, which is to behold the face of our Lord, and to have his name stamped upon our foreheads. (v. 4)

Rev 22:4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

8. Here are two more cancellations or final eliminations of things that have troubled and burdened man: the removal of the curse, and the elimination of night forever. (v. 4)

9. Here the blessedness that God has desired through the ages and is brought to a climax of perfection: in eternity future we shall be serving the Lord; we shall see his face; his name will be on our foreheads; we shall reign with him forever and ever. (v. 5)

Rev 22:5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

10. Here we find the ultimate fulfillment of such promises as those found in Mat 5:8, 1Jo 3:2, 1Co 15:49, etc.

Mat 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

1Jo 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1Co 15:49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

11. In other words, we shall bear the character of the Lord, we shall serve the Lord, reign with the Lord, and forever rejoice and forever be satisfied as we look upon his glorious face.

12. All the glorious purposes of God, ordained from the foundation of the world, have now been attained.

13. The rebellion of angels and mankind is finally subdued, as the King of kings assumes his rightful sovereignty.

14. Absolute and unchangeable holiness characterizes all within the universal Kingdom of God.

15. The redeemed, made so by the blood of the Lamb, are in resurrection and eternal glory.

16. Life is everywhere - and death will never intrude again. The earth and the heavens both are renewed.

17. Light, beauty, holiness, joy, the presence of God, the worship of God, service to Christ, likeness to Christ - all are now abiding realities.

18. Our vocabulary today is incapable of truly and adequately depicting what God has prepared for those who love Him.

19. Now for verse one of chapter twenty-two.

KJV - New Sentence

The River of Life

Rev 22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

NIV

The River of Life

Rev 22:1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

1. The whole of the things described in the remaining portion of the book are subsequent to judgment, and descriptive of the consummation of the triumph and bliss of Christ's people.

2. As a provision for the saints and in keeping with the complete holiness and purity of the heavenly city John sees a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming out the throne of God and of the Lamb.

3. This is not to be confused with the river issuing from the millennial throne room as we just noted in our introduction (Eze 47:1, 12) nor with the living waters going forth from the millennial Jerusalem (Zec 14:8-9).

Eze 47:1 The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar.

Eze 47:12 Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing."

Zec 14:8 On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter.

Zec 14:9 The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.

4. These millennial streams only anticipate, the future river which is in the new Jerusalem.

5. The river of our verse one speaks of the power, purity, and eternal life manifest in the heavenly city—the New Jerusalem.

6. Seated on the throne is both God and the Lamb; this confirms that Christ is still on the throne in eternity future though His rule is of a different character than His mediatorial rule today.

7. Before we move to verse two and a description of the tree of life, I want to give you an expanded translation of Rev 22:1.

Expanded Translation

Rev 22:1 Then the seventh angel showed me the river of the water of life, its waters were as clear as crystal flowing from the Throne of God where both the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ reside.

KJV

Rev 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

NIV

Rev 22:2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

1. Rev 22:2 has caused some difficulty to several expositors. The verse declares that the tree of life straddles the river of the waters of life.

2. The street mentioned is clearly the main street of the city; given the syntax, i.e., the feminine gender (Greek **Autes**) translated "it" in the KJV; we have a reference to the city mentioned in Rev 21:23.

Rev 21:23 The eternal New Jerusalem does not need the light of the sun or the moon for the glory of God, the Lord Jesus Christ gave it its light; the Lamb of God was its perpetual lamp.

3. The visual picture presented is of the river of life flowing through the middle of the city, and the tree is large enough to span the river, so that the river is in the midst of the street and the tree spans both sides of the river.

4. It would appear that the pure river of the water of life is not a broad body but a clear stream narrow enough to allow for what is described.

5. Swete writes in his book *The Apocalypse of St. John* "The picture presented is that of a river of the water of life flowing through the broad street which intersects the city, a row of trees on each side."

6. Swete interprets the word tree as a collective reference and finds a millennial parallel in Eze 47:12.

Eze 47:12 And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for food, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for food, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

7. The tree of life has several characteristics similar to the tree of life found in the Garden of Eden. (Gen 3:22-24)

Gen 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:

Gen 3:23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

Gen 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

8. Walvoord writes concerning Gen 3:22 and our passage.

"Its character is revealed in Gen 3:22 as being such that if Adam and Eve had eaten of the tree of life, physical death would have been an impossibility. The tree in the New Jerusalem seems to have a similar quality and a similar intent ..."

9. Many have asked the natural question, "Why should healing be necessary in eternity to come?"

10. The word for "healing" is a translation from the Greek word **Therapeuo**, from which the English word therapeutic is derived, it is almost a direct transliteration from the Greek.

11. Rather than specifically meaning "healing," it should be understood as "health-giving," as the word in its root meaning has the idea of serving or ministering.

12. The leaves of the tree promote the enjoyment of life in the New Jerusalem, and are not for correcting ills which do not exist.

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