



Sermon

The Heavenly City

Rev 21:10,22 – 22:5

1/5/16

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Last week, Tim preached on the earlier passage from Revelation and gave us a beautiful appreciation of this glorious future state for believers. In today's passage John, the writer, sees in his vision the New Jerusalem. This is the dwelling where God lives with his people in the future glory beyond death, judgement and resurrection. It is what we often wrongly call heaven. I say, wrongly, because he clearly says that there is a new heaven and a new earth and the New Jerusalem descends out of heaven to earth. So this dwelling place is not in heaven but on the new earth.

In this passage we are told something of conditions there. Now you may think that is all very well but it does not affect me much now. When we are born again we are given the hope of glory – it is important that we know what we can of that future state to which are looking.

What does John say about the Heavenly City? Its residents receive seven things from God:

1. **Access:** ²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.
 - They are dwelling in the presence of God; There is no temple because a temple is a building to house a god in a specific place. Here God is available through all the city so the city itself is the temple. That is another way of saying that the people of God are his temple which Paul taught.
 - The people in the new Jerusalem have access to God and can even see his face and not die! His name is on their foreheads – marking them as his. We have access to God as his children.
2. **Light:** ^{21:23} The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. ... ^{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.

A lamp holds a light source. There the lamp is the lamb; the light is the Glory of God. The glory of God shines forth from the lamb of God. When he was on earth, Jesus regularly called himself the Light of the World. In the New Jerusalem, Jesus is the only source of light with God the Father.

3. **Redeemed:** ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

When we come to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour our names are written in the Lamb's book of life. And Jesus says, no one can snatch us out of his hand. John 10:28

4. **Life:** ^{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 ² down the middle of the great street of the city.

What is this River of life? Listen to Jesus' words:

John 7:38-39 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

The River of Life is the Holy Spirit. So, this revelation is Trinitarian in nature with God the Father, Jesus the Lamb and the Holy Spirit all present.

5. **Provision:** 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.

The Tree gives fruit and healing – provision of our needs. The Tree of Life had to be denied to the Adam and Eve after they had sinned. But in glory, fully redeemed, we will be able to eat of the blessed tree which gives healing.

6. **Blessing:** ³ No longer will there be any curse.
Jesus dealt with all curses on the Cross. The curse on the earth because of man's sin is finished.

7. **Authority:** "And they will reign for ever and ever."
Our destiny is to reign with Christ. They will reign for ever and ever – over what? Jesus talks of rewarding people by giving them rulership over cities.

Finale

John tells us seven things about living in the New Jerusalem.

There are multiple descriptions of the blessed state – which we would expect to be more wonderful than anything we have experienced. John and the other prophets could only attempt to describe what they saw. Their descriptions will fall short of the reality because we cannot imagine things more wonderful than we have yet experienced.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"-- ¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

I wonder how you respond to them? Are they desirable or dreary?

C.S. Lewis said, "We are afraid that Heaven is a bribe, and that if we make it our goal we shall no longer be disinterested. It is not so. Heaven offers nothing that a mercenary soul can desire. It is safe to tell the pure in heart that they shall see God, for only the pure in heart want to." ¹

The wonderful thing is that not only do we have the hope of glory, but we are given a foretaste of that life now as the Spirit dwells in us. We have access to God, his light, we are redeemed, we receive life, provision, blessing and authority in this life and the fullness yet to come.

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¹ The Problem of Pain, *Christianity Today*, p. 46.