



¹ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. ² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

John has seen the defeat of the devil and his followers, witnessed Satan entering his eternal destiny, and then watched as *time* came to an end – *the earth and the heaven* vanished (Revelation 20:11). When God created the sun and moon, He made them to “be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night,” and, beyond that, they were also to be “for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and



years” (Genesis 1:14). John saw the earth and the heavens vanish, and with them is gone the means for counting days and years – time has ended and eternity has begun!

The lights for signs, seasons, days and years will vanish. After these things, John observed the dead coming before God at His white throne where the millennial saints will enter into glory because their names are in the Book of Life, and where the unrighteous will learn the reason that they are being condemned to the Lake of Fire (the books of their works are reviewed with the final test being whether their names are recorded in the Book of Life). Having failed on both accounts, the unrighteous are banished to the Lake of Fire, which is called the *second death* (Revelation 20:14). It is this *second death* (*deuteros thanatos*) that is the due recompense for sin (Romans 6:23); inasmuch as the unrighteous never dealt with the matter of their inherited sin nature, the just wage for their lives of sin is the *second death*. We must remember that some of the *unrighteous* might have appeared to be spiritually alive during their time on earth, but they have either failed to lay a foundation of faith in the Lord Jesus or they have forsaken their faith in Him (Matthew 7:21-23; Hebrews 10:26-29).

With these observations all behind him, John now sees a *new heaven* and a *new earth*, and in this new heaven and earth, he notes that there is *no more sea* – i.e., there are no longer any large bodies of water.¹ This *heaven* and *earth* are described

¹ Stephanus 1550 NT.

as being *new* (not refurbished); the former have vanished (*pheugo* – quickly disappear) and God has set in place a *new* heaven and a *new* earth.² When God created the first earth, on the third day He brought the dry land (*earth*) out of the waters (*seas*) (Genesis 1:9-10); it is not that the new earth is devoid of water, for we are told that a *river of water of life* flows out of the throne of God and the Lamb (Revelation 22:1). What John notices is that the vast bodies of water that are such a significant part of our present planet, are not there.

John now observes the *New Jerusalem* descending out of *heaven* from God. There is a common difficulty with languages identifying the heavens either as the atmosphere around the earth, as the universe, or as the dwelling place of God. “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly ... and fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament [sky] of heaven [*shamayim*]” (Genesis 1:20).³ *Heaven*, as it appears within this context, refers to the atmosphere around planet earth – the bird’s domain. “And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, *even* all the host of heaven [*shamayim*] ...” (Deuteronomy 4:19); in this case, *heaven* is referring to the universe, its myriads of *lights* and all other created celestial bodies.⁴ “The LORD he *is* God in heaven [*shamayim*] above [higher part] ...” (Deuteronomy 4:39); the Lord dwells in the highest heaven (an eternal heaven – not created).⁵ In essence, it is the context that determines the meaning of the Hebrew word *shamayim*; likewise, when dealing with the Greek word *ouranos* (heaven), we must look to the context to determine its meaning.⁶ For example, in Mark 4:4 the word *ouranos* means the bird’s domain; in Matthew 24:35 it refers to the universe, and in John 6:38 it identifies God’s abode.

Therefore, when John sees the *New Jerusalem* coming out of *heaven*, he is seeing this *holy city* coming from the dwelling place of God – the highest of the heavens. God is setting the stage for eternity: the new heaven and earth have taken the place of the old that has simply vanished, and a New Jerusalem descends from God’s heaven to the new earth.

² Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

³ BDB.

⁴ Strong’s Online.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Jerusalem⁷ was a city captured by King David, who then made it the capital of Israel, and the place where the tabernacle of God was located; it was this city of which God said: “I have chosen me to put my name there” (1 Kings 11:36). Nevertheless, because of the sins of Solomon, the land of Israel was divided (Israel left the royal line of David; Judah remained with David’s descendants), and, through the sins of the kings of Judah, the Lord declared: “I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house [Solomon’s temple] of which I said, My name shall be there” (2 Kings 23:27). Daniel, who was a prophet to Judah during their captivity, was given a vision, and its explanation outlined two things that would take place concerning Jerusalem (and Daniel’s people): 1) “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:25), from which we can readily understand that Jerusalem, which was lying in ruins, would be rebuilt; 2) “the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary [the holy place]” (Daniel 9:26), from which it is evident that the restored and rebuilt Jerusalem would later be destroyed, along with the temple.⁸ As Jesus went out of the temple in Jerusalem, He said to His disciples: “Seest thou these great buildings? [rebuilt according to Daniel’s prophecy] there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down [the destruction that Daniel also prophesied]” (Mark 13:2); as He spoke with His disciples of events that were coming, concerning Jerusalem He said: “When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed [surrounded] with armies, then know that the desolation [destruction] thereof is nigh” (Luke 21:20).⁹ Even though Jehovah had declared the earthly Jerusalem to be the place where He would put His name forever (1 Kings 9:3), that was conditional upon Israel remaining faithful to Him (1 Kings 9:6-7); when they departed from the Lord, He used foreign powers to capture the people and destroy the city and the temple, just as He had promised.

The New Jerusalem, coming from God, is described as having been *prepared* as a bride who has everything in order (*adorned*) for her husband; all of the preparations and adornments have been completed prior to the descent of the holy city (both words [*prepared* and *adorned*] are in the perfect tense, describing a completed action with ongoing effects).¹⁰ We must be careful to note that this *holy city* has been made

⁷ The meaning of *Jerusalem* is not clear: *teaching of peace* (Hebrews, Strong’s Online); *set ye double peace* (Greek, Strong’s Online); *possession of peace* (BDB); *foundation of peace* (<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/jerusalem>); still others say that it is *city of Shalem*, which was a Canaanite god (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/jerusalem/>).

⁸ BDB.

⁹ Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁰ Strong’s Online; https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm#AORIST.

ready as a bride is made ready for her husband. When a Jewish couple became betrothed, they were considered to be married; the bond of betrothal was the same as the bond of marriage – it could only be broken by divorce. During the time of betrothal, the bride and groom continued to live with their families as before, and they were occupied with preparations for coming together at some time in the future; this continued for about one year as each worked at what needed to be done in order to be ready for a life together.¹¹ For the husband, this meant preparing accommodations for his wife – building a place onto his father's house that would be suitable for their new home.¹² For the wife, this time of separation was filled with getting ready for married life and ensuring that her attire for the special day was appropriate and complete.

As John beholds the New Jerusalem descending from heaven, he likens it to a bride who has been fully prepared for the arrival of her husband. John will shortly launch into a much more detailed explanation of the *holy city*, but he is first given some instruction (rather than description) about this new heaven and earth.



³ And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. ⁴ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

John has seen the new heaven and earth, and the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven to the new earth; now he hears a great voice (*megas phone*) coming from heaven – the dwelling place of God. The speaker is not identified, but we need to give careful consideration to the message because it is from the dwelling place of God, and the first word uttered is *behold!*, which is a command to pay close attention.¹³

The first phrase is this: *Behold! The dwelling place [tabernacle] of God with men* (literal).¹⁴ The translators of the KJV have inserted *is*, but that tends to remove this declaration from the context in which we find it. John has just seen the *New*

¹¹ Ralph Gower, *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, p. 53.

¹² http://www.biblestudymanuals.net/jewish_marriage_customs.htm

¹³ Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁴ Stephanus 1550 NT.

Jerusalem descending from heaven when he hears a *great voice* from heaven identifying the New Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God with men in the new heaven and earth. If we peek ahead, we see that when John is given a closer look at the New Jerusalem, he “saw no temple [*naos* – the word that identified the holy inner sanctuaries within the Jewish temple structure] therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” (Revelation 21:22);¹⁵ there is no temple building in the New Jerusalem because God is dwelling among the people – this is the new heaven and earth, therefore, everyone is in their glorified bodies. The New Jerusalem, descending to the new earth, will be where the Lord God will *dwell with them*; He will take up residence (*dwell*) in this *holy city*, the redeemed will be His people, and He will be among (*with*) them – their God!¹⁶ There are three significant verbs used here: He will *dwell* with men, they shall *be* His people, and God will be *among* them; in each case, the tense of the verb is future (this is speaking of something that has not yet taken place) and in the indicative mood (it is a statement of fact).¹⁷ What is being announced from heaven is what will take place (it is a surety) in the New Jerusalem – the city which John has just noted as descending from heaven.

When the Lord spoke to Jeremiah, He said: “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33). He was referring to those who are a part of the *New Covenant* that He promised to make with Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 31:31) – a promise that was fulfilled by the Lord Jesus with His disciples: “This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20). The similarity between those who are in the New Covenant and those who will be in the New Jerusalem is striking – they will be the people of the Lord God, and He will be their God! These two statements are not redundant, rather, they present a mutuality of relationship: the people **belong** to the Lord, and He is **embraced** by them as being their God. We can see from the history of Judah that this was not always the case on this present earth. Jehovah spoke through Jeremiah concerning Judah: “For **my people** [the Lord still looked upon Judah as being His people for He was not finished with them yet – they still carried the lineage of promise for the Messiah] have committed two evils; **they have forsaken me** [Judah no longer acknowledged the Lord as being their God] the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold

¹⁵ Strong's Online.

¹⁶ Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁷ Strong's Online.

no water” (Jeremiah 2:13). Within the New Jerusalem, the redeemed will enjoy a fully restored relationship with the Lord their God and their Savior.

The voice from heaven then provides John with additional words of encouragement as to just how new this new life will be. It is noted, first of all, that God will wipe away every (*all*) tear (*tears*) from the eyes of those who are in this eternal relationship with Him.¹⁸ When John saw the great multitude standing before the throne of God and the Lamb, one of the elders explained to him that these had washed their garments and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and that *the God will wipe away every tear from the eyes of them* (a literal translation) – exactly the same Greek phrase is used (Revelation 7:14, 17).¹⁹ Although we may have tears of joy, and tears caused by irritants (like onions), the Scriptures only mention tears as a response to sorrow, regret, loss, etc. – in other words, they are in reaction to negative situations and emotions. If, when we are in our glorified bodies, we can recall earthly events, then the tears that might come would be those of regret that our faith in the Lord had not been more complete. God, in His kindness, will wipe away every tear that will form so that we may live in the full enjoyment of His presence.

John is told of several things that will absolutely have no place in the New Jerusalem: *death* (*thanatos* – the reward for sin [Romans 6:23]) is no more (we have learned that it was cast into the Lake of Fire – Revelation 20:14), *sorrow* (*penthos* – the outward expression of sorrow, mourning), *crying* (*krauge* – a loud outcry, possibly associated with weeping), and *pain* (*ponos* – possibly, but not necessarily physical; anguish).²⁰ Each of these is a common experience in this life, yet the assurance is that not one of these will have any place with us while we dwell for eternity in the presence of the Lord. Indeed, the *former things* (*the first*), of which these have all been a part, are gone (*passed away*); this is a new heaven, a new earth, and a New Jerusalem – every vestige of sin has been removed to the Lake of Fire forever (Revelation 20:10, 14-15).



5. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7. He that

¹⁸ Stephanus 1550 NT; both words are singular in the Greek, not plural.

¹⁹ Stephanus 1550 NT.

²⁰ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.⁸ But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

John now hears from the Lord God Himself – the One Who is sitting upon the throne of heaven! The Lord begins by summarizing what the *great voice from heaven* has just proclaimed to John: “I am making *all things new*.” *New (kainos)* can speak of freshness, as well as to that which is previously unknown; in this case, it is both.²¹ John has already noted that the *new* earth is not simply a replication of the old – it is both fresh and different (v.1). Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “Therefore if any man **be in Christ**, *he is* a new [*kainos*] creature [creation]: old things are passed away [perished]; behold, all things are become [perfect tense, a completed action with ongoing results] new [*kainos*]” (2 Corinthians 5:17).²² To the Ephesians, he explained: “ye **put off** concerning the former conversation the old man ... And that ye **put on** the new [*kainos*] man, which after God is **created** in righteousness and true holiness.” (Ephesians 4:22, 24).²³ For everyone who is in Christ (by faith and faithfulness), the old is gone and the new has come (Romans 6:11); in similar fashion, the Lord has removed the old heaven and earth, and has brought the new into being – for the *new creations* in Christ, God provides a fitting *new* place where He is able to dwell with them forever.

The Lord then addresses John specifically and tells him to write what He has just spoken and what is coming because *these words* are *true* and trustworthy (*faithful*).²⁴ *These* is a demonstrative pronoun in the Greek (*houtos*, which draws particular attention to the words that God is speaking).²⁵ God’s declaration that He is making all things new is true and steadfast (Psalm 119:89). This is followed by His statement: “It is done” (*ginomai*) or it *has been done*, since the verb is in the perfect tense (identifying a completed past action with continuing results).²⁶ With the emptying of the seventh vial upon the unrighteous on earth, the very same statement is heard coming from God’s throne (Revelation 16:17); the expression of God’s

²¹ Strong’s Online.

²² Strong’s Online; the perfect tense is significant because it describes an action that has been completed in the past but has continuing results; such an action does **not** need to be repeated, because its effects are ongoing – it is only done once!

²³ Strong’s Online.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Friberg Lexicon; Strong’s Online.

²⁶ Strong’s Online; https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm#AORIST.

wrath (*thumos*) has taken place (*ginomai*).²⁷ In this case, the old (*former*) things have been removed, and the new have come into being – *it has been done*; the new has been brought into existence.²⁸

The Lord then identifies Himself as being *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *beginning* and the *end*. This is precisely the same identification that Jesus used when He first spoke with John on Patmos (Revelation 1:8) and serves to remove any doubt that Jesus is the eternal God (1 John 5:7). *Alpha* and *omega* are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet and, therefore, the words *beginning* and *end* help to emphasize the eternal character of God. *Beginning* (*arche*) speaks of the Originator, *end* (*telos*) of the completion;²⁹ “in the **beginning** God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1), and in the **end**, God makes a new heaven and earth, and declares it to be.

The Scriptures include four instances of the Lord using *Alpha* and *Omega* to describe Himself, and all four are found in Revelation; two are followed by *the beginning and the end* (Revelation 1:8; 21:6), once it is followed by *the first* (*protos* – first in time) and *the last* (*eschatos* – last in time) (Revelation 1:11), and once both are used (Revelation 22:13).³⁰ God created *time* in the beginning and, with the vanishing of the old heaven and earth, He brings *time* to a close. All that **has** taken place, **is** taking place, and **will** take place within the parameters of time, is entirely under the oversight of the Lord. As we have noted with the unfolding of the many events described in Revelation, they will progress according to God’s timing and in keeping with His mercy toward the yet unrepentant. Today is still the day of salvation, but a time is coming when that door of salvation will be closed just as surely as when God closed the door of the ark upon Noah, his family, and the animals (Genesis 7:16). That day will come when Jesus returns in the clouds of the air to call His faithful saints away: “And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man” (Luke 17:26) – when the saints are gathered to be with the Lord, the opportunity for salvation will be closed for that generation. The Evangelical teaching of people being saved after the Lord has harvested the earth of His own is founded upon wishful thinking, and has produced many a strong delusion concerning the end times. Once again, the teachings of men are accepted without evaluating them in the light of God’s Word (we have been warned against being so gullible – 1 John 4:1); we must not forget that we are called upon to live in obedience to the Lord’s commands and not the musings of men – we are saved through the

²⁷ Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

²⁸ Friberg Lexicon.

²⁹ Strong’s Online.

³⁰ Friberg Lexicon.

Lord Jesus Christ, not Billy Graham, Rick Warren, Chuck Swindoll, or John MacArthur; therefore, it is only appropriate that we attend carefully to **His Word** and weigh everything that we hear against it. “Beware lest any man spoil [take captive] you through philosophy [human wisdom] and vain [devoid of truth] deceit, after the tradition [instruction] of men, after the rudiments of the world [paganism], and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8).³¹ Most modern theologies have a generous helping of human wisdom – we need to be sober and alert (1 Peter 5:8).

The next confirmed declaration (also *words* that are *true* and *faithful*) that the Lord makes is that He will give to those who are thirsting (*athirst*) of the *Source* (Jesus Christ) of the water of life without cost (*freely*).³² Jesus said: “I am the bread of life: he that cometh [*is coming*] to me shall never [two Greek words (*ou* and *me*) making a double negative: *ou* (an absolute not) and *me* (not)] hunger [*hunger* is in the subjunctive mood (which normally indicates possibility but not certainty); when combined with the double negative, the statement is strongly negative – i.e., the one coming to the Lord will absolutely never suffer hunger (a longing for something more)]; and he that believeth [*is believing*] on me shall never [double negative] thirst [subjunctive – the one who is believing absolutely will not suffer from thirst (a longing for something more)]” (John 6:35).³³ Jesus begins by identifying Himself as the Bread of Life, therefore we can know that He is applying the common elements of life (eating and drinking) to our spiritual life with Him. He says that the one who is coming to Him will never go hungry; in other words, everyone who comes to Him will receive spiritual nourishment. After the same manner, the one who is believing on Him will not thirst – the refreshing will be given to the believing one. This promised satisfaction of our spiritual hunger and thirst must be balanced with: “Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after [both are in the present tense and active voice – **we** must have an **ongoing** insatiable desire for *the*] righteousness: for they shall be filled [will be satisfied (indicative mood – a statement of fact)]” (Matthew 5:6).³⁴ Two things must be understood concerning the one who is *coming* and *believing* (John 6:35): 1) he is hungering and thirsting (has a strong desire) for the Lord’s righteousness, and 2) when the Lord provides for his hunger and thirst in this life, that does not remove his *ongoing hunger and thirst*, rather, it stimulates an ever increasing desire to know more. For the one who is *coming* and is *believing* (and who is *hungry* and *thirsty*) the Lord is the provider of all that he needs for

³¹ Friberg Lexicon, Strong’s Online.

³² Strong’s Online.

³³ Friberg Lexicon; Liddell-Scott Lexicon; https://www.ntgreek.org/pdf/subjunctive_uses.pdf.

³⁴ Strong’s Online.

spiritual health and growth; God has blessed us with *all spiritual blessings*, but they are only available *in Christ* (Ephesians 1:3). We need to remind ourselves of the parable of the soils; the Seed that fell on the rocky soil and among the weeds germinated and grew, yet, in both cases, it also died (Luke 8:13-14). Jesus said that the one who desires to remain in Him (to be His disciple) must make Him his highest priority (greater than family, friends, and his own life), and he must consider this cost of belonging to the Lord lest, after proclaiming allegiance to Him, he fails as the temptations and trials of life come to bear upon him (Luke 14:26-33). The life of the plants on the rocky soil and among the thorns was ended and could not be revived; they began well, but ended badly – so, too, for the one who does not continually hunger and thirst after the Lord. Without a *hunger and thirst after the righteousness*, we are not truly *coming or believing*, and it is certain that the Lord will not satisfy us against our desires.

There are so many who say that they *believe*, yet refuse to receive spiritual nourishment and refreshing from the Lord; they are far more content with the fables of their favorite teachers (2 Timothy 4:3-4) – the teachers of fables make no demands of them; they are okay just the way that they are. Peter exhorted the elders within the assemblies to *feed the flock of God* (1 Peter 5:2); they bear the responsibility of providing spiritual food that is Biblically accurate and nourishing for spiritual growth. On the other hand, the writer of Hebrews warns against being too easily satisfied in our spiritual nourishment: “Of whom [referring to Jesus as being a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec] we have many things to say [*much teaching have we*], and hard to be uttered [and speaking, it is difficult to make it understandable], seeing [since] ye are [have become] dull of hearing [too lazy to hear]. For when for the time [because of the time (that you have heard God’s truth)] ye ought [are indebted, obligated] to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles [basics of the beginning] of the oracles [sayings] of God; and are become such as have [having] need of milk, and not of strong meat [solid food]. For every one that useth [is partaking of] milk *is* unskilful in [unacquainted with] the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age [*solid food is for those of maturity*], *even* those who by reason of use [the mature] have [having] their senses exercised [trained; perfect tense – the entrance of the Spirit of God through faith] to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:11-14).³⁵ This is speaking of those who have been *in the Lord* for a sufficient time that they should be mature enough to handle the solid teachings

³⁵ Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

of Scripture, and really should be teaching others, yet they are spiritual infants who still long to be fed the milk of the Word. Peter commanded that we are to *grow* (an ever-present activity) in our understanding (*knowledge*) of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18) – this logically suggests that it is necessary for us to move beyond the milk of the Word to the teachings that require us to engage in mental *chewing* with the help of God’s Spirit (John 16:13). Paul exhorted Timothy to make every effort to present himself to God as one who has been tested and approved (2 Timothy 2:15) – clearly, this involves more than sipping on the milk of the Word. Today’s Evangelicals are content with a little milk of the Word mixed in with the teachings of men – little wonder that they are languishing spiritually.

In the new heaven and earth, we will have full access to the Source of the water of life (Jesus Christ) for our refreshing. We are told that out of the throne of God and the Lamb (in the New Jerusalem) the water of life flows as a river (Revelation 22:1); the source of this water of life is the Lord. Beyond that, the Lord says that He will give *to the thirsting* (present tense) from the source (*fountain*) of this water of life. Our text makes it evident that for the one who is thirsting for the refreshing of God’s Word now, He will provide him with the water of life that will quench that thirst, and it will be freely given. Jesus said: *Whenever anyone should be thirsting, he must be coming to Me and he must be drinking* (John 7:37, literal);³⁶ as the Source of the water of life, Jesus provides assurance that it is available to everyone who has such a spiritual thirst. Note, however, that Jesus will never force anyone to partake of His blessings (food and drink); John the Baptist proclaimed: *the one who is believing in the Son [of God] is having life everlasting, and the one who is disobeying the Son will not see life, but the wrath [orge] of God is remaining on him* (John 3:36, literal).³⁷ What must be clearly understood is this: you cannot be believing and disobeying at the same time – these are mutually exclusive; i.e., disobedience of the Lord is founded upon a disbelief of His Word. Moses spoke these words to Israel as they anticipated entering the Promised Land: “I call heaven and earth to record [witness] this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore **choose life**, that both thou and thy seed may live: [for this purpose:] That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, *and* that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for **he is thy life** ...” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20a).³⁸

³⁶ Stephanus 1550 NT.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Strong’s Online.

The Lord goes on to speak of the one who *is overcoming* (Revelation 21:7); clearly, this is an important matter, because Jesus, in His messages to the seven elders of the seven assemblies in Asia, always included a special word for the *one who is overcoming*. The Greek words that are used both here and to the seven assemblies are the same: each is in the present tense and active voice (*who* is carrying out the action on a continuous basis), thereby speaking of someone who is **resolutely** living a life of victory in the Lord – someone who is walking in accordance with the guidance of the Spirit of God (Romans 8:1).³⁹ Such a life can only be lived by means of a firm commitment, for no one will ever glide into becoming an *overcomer*. The promise made here is that for the *one who is overcoming*, he will *inherit all*, and, beyond that, the Lord declares: *I will be his God, and he will be to Me the son* [*huios* (*hwee-os*) – literally a male offspring; figuratively, a pupil, disciple or follower].⁴⁰ Paul likened the marriage relationship between a husband and his wife to that of the Lord Jesus and His *ekklesia*; “For we are members of his body ... they two [speaking of the husband and wife] shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church [*ekklesia*]” (Ephesians 5:30-32).⁴¹ There is a unique unity that exists between Christ and those who are members of His Body (His *ekklesia*); as the Lord God looks upon those who are faithfully in Christ, He sees the purity and righteousness of Jesus – that *new man* that has been put on even as God created it in *righteousness* and *true holiness* (Ephesians 4:24). In truth, we are called the *sons* (*huios*) of God if we are being led by His Spirit (Romans 8:14), yet, we are more frequently referred to as being the *children* [*teknon*] of God (Romans 8:16; 1 John 3:2 – the KJV shows *sons*, but it should be *children* [*teknon*]).⁴² As Paul wrote of the Spirit of God assuring us that we are the *children of God*, he went on: “And if children [*teknon*], then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs [fellow heirs] with Christ; if so be that [granted] we suffer with him [*sumpascho* – *are suffering together*], [so] that we may be also [have also been] glorified together” (Romans 8:17).⁴³ In our text, the Lord clarifies that the *overcoming one* is the heir to *all* – the new heaven and earth and God dwelling among His own (v.3); yet this is an inheritance that is **ONLY** available to us through Christ: “God ... Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things ...” (Hebrews 1:1-2). It is as we are *in Christ* (as *overcoming ones*) that this inheritance is ours – truly we are *joint-heirs* with Christ: HE is sharing His inheritance with us! Is it any wonder that

³⁹ Strong's Online.

⁴⁰ Stephanus 1550 NT; Strong's Online.

⁴¹ Strong's Online.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Strong's Online; Gingrich Lexicon.

Paul declared: “But what things were gain [advantageous] to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ... but *this one thing I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth [straining forward] unto those things which are before [becoming heir of *all*], I press toward [pursue] the mark [goal] for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:7, 13-14)?⁴⁴ Jesus knows the inheritance that could be ours with Him, which is why he also very carefully taught that we must live a life in faithfulness to Him (thereby being *overcomers*) in order for this inheritance to actually become ours (Matthew 24:13); it is not simply a prayer of faith, but a subsequent lifetime of faithfulness that will see us inherit what God has prepared for us.

Frequently, alongside of the promises of blessing, God will place the equally sure promise of what will take place for those who do not qualify for His blessings; this was demonstrated in God’s dealings with the children of Israel: His promise of blessing (Deuteronomy 28:1-14) and His assurance of curses (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). Likewise, in our passage the Lord identifies eight conditions that will ensure that the inheritance that He has prepared for us will not be ours; let’s consider them carefully, with an eye to examining our own lives to make sure that we are not among them (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Fearful – this is the first in the listing but I would suggest that the order is not all that critical. The Greek word is *deilos* (*di-los*’) and is used in only one other situation in Scripture: when the disciples and Jesus were caught in a storm on the Sea of Galilee, the disciples awakened the Lord in terror that they were about to drown, and Jesus’ words were: “Why are ye fearful [*deilos*], O ye of little faith [*oligopistos* – small faith (belief)]?” (Matthew 8:26).⁴⁵ What we understand from this is that the disciples’ fear was because of their small faith; the usual Greek word for *fear* is *phobos*, which means to be afraid and/or to show reverence, as in the *fear of the Lord*⁴⁶ – it seems evident that this is a healthy fear (*phobos*) that works to our benefit. *Deilos*, on the other hand, springs from a lack of trust, and carries the meaning of being cowardly – having a complete lack of courage. When the disciples were unable to bring healing to someone who was demon-possessed, Jesus said: “If ye have [*should be having*] faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matthew 17:20).⁴⁷ Jesus is not saying that if His disciples were to have

⁴⁴ Friberg Lexicon.

⁴⁵ Strong’s Online.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Stephanus 1550 NT.

faith that was the size of a mustard seed that they would then be able to move mountains; He is saying that if they should have a complete and living trust in their Creator just like that tiny mustard seed, then great things could be done. In other words, the disciples' faith is not to be the size of the seed, but is to be as complete and great as the seed's trust in its Creator. *Deilos* identifies a fear that exposes a lack of faith in the Lord – it is this *fear* that will work to steal the Lord's inheritance away from us. Jesus advised us that if we are not willing to place Him above everyone and everything in our lives, then we cannot be called His disciples (Luke 14:26-33) – if we are not His disciples, then, obviously, we have no inheritance with Him. We must guard against having a *fear* (*deilos*) of friends and family that prevails over our *fear* (*phobos*) of the Lord; it is only a proper *fear* (*phobos*) of the Lord that will result in our being faithful to Him.

Unbelieving is the next characteristic of those who will not have an inheritance with Christ. This is literally *not faithful* (*apistos*) and speaks of someone who is unfaithful, who cannot be trusted – clearly, this will give rise to the *fear* (*deilos*) that we just considered.⁴⁸ God has warned us: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief [*apistia* – a noun, an unbelieving (*unfaithful*) heart], in departing [to become apostate] from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12).⁴⁹ The net that the word *unbelieving* casts is much wider than most within the Evangelical community would like to understand; it not only incorporates those who have never had faith in the Lord, but goes beyond that to include everyone who has fallen away from their trust in the Lord: the one who is now apostate, and for whom there is no hope of restoring their former inheritance in the Lord (Ezekiel 18:24; Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-29; 2 Peter 2:18-21). Esau, the eldest son of Isaac, held the birthright, yet he traded it for a meal when he was hungry; even though he later begged for his birthright blessings, they were gone (Hebrews 12:16-17). Likewise, for the one who does not **remain faithful** to the Lord, his inheritance is gone – it is only the one who persists faithfully (*hupomeno*) in the Lord unto the end who will be saved (Mark 13:13).⁵⁰ The *unbelieving* are those who have never trusted the Lord **and** those who have permitted rationalization, compromise, or deliberate disobedience to destroy their faith in the Lord.

Abominable is actually a verb (rather than an adjective or noun) from the Greek word *bdelusso*, which comes from the root *bdeo* meaning to stink; the word describes

⁴⁸ Strong's Online.

⁴⁹ Strong's Online; Gingrich Lexicon.

⁵⁰ Strong's Online.

that which is detestable and abhorrent.⁵¹ In this case, it is in the perfect tense, describing a completed action with ongoing results;⁵² it is in the passive voice, meaning that the subject (the one destined for the Lake of Fire) is described as *being abominable*.⁵³ Solomon identified seven things that he called an *abomination* to the Lord (Proverbs 6:16-19) and he went on to summarize it this way: “The way of the wicked *is* an abomination unto the LORD ...” (Proverbs 15:9). Jesus said that even those who had proclaimed His Word, cast demons out, and performed miracles in His name would be described as being workers of iniquity (clearly an *abomination* to Him) because their hearts weren’t right with Him (Matthew 7:22-23); unless our activities flow out of our faith in the Lord, God sees them as wickedness despite any superficial spirituality. It is the Lord Who identifies those who are *being abominable*, hence the passive voice; they might well appear to be very spiritual and may even claim the name *Christian* for themselves, but they do not have the foundation of true faith upon which to build the Lord’s acceptable works. Those who are being *abominable* will fall into two camps: 1) the sinner who makes no attempt to hide his sin (sin is obviously a detestable thing to the Lord), and 2) the sinner who desires to appear as a saint. It is the latter who is particularly detestable to the Lord, for he uses the devil’s tactic in order to deceive (others and himself, but not God) – “Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). Solomon stated that “the sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD” (Proverbs 15:8a; e.g., Isaiah 1:10-15); this describes an unrepentant sinner offering the required Mosaic sacrifices – sacrifices that were meant to bring a restored relationship with God. The hypocrite depends upon his outward actions to hide his inner wickedness, which is why it is the Lord, Who sees the heart, Who will affirm the abomination of his ways (1 Samuel 16:7). The elder of Sardis was held in high regard in his assembly, yet he teetered on the brink of spiritual death (Revelation 3:1-3). That is the reason why Paul commands us to continually examine and prove our walk and our hearts in the light of Scripture: are we living as we think/say; are we genuine with the Word of God (2 Corinthians 13:5)?

Murderer describes someone who has committed intentional homicide.⁵⁴ Under the Mosaic Law, provision was made for cities of refuge as a place of safety into which a person could flee if he had unintentionally killed someone; as long as he remained in that city, he was safe from a revenge killing until his case could be heard

⁵¹ Strong’s Online.

⁵² http://www.biblestudymanuals.net/new_testament_greek.htm

⁵³ Strong’s Online.

⁵⁴ Strong’s Dictionary.

(Numbers 35:11-12). The key factor to being a murderer comes down to intent: inasmuch as Canadians abort almost 100,000 babies per year, it is not difficult to see that legalised murder (killing with intent) is taking place every day – there are *murderers* masquerading as health care practitioners all over the world.⁵⁵ Murderers will have their place in the Lake of Fire.

Whoremonger comes from the Greek *pornos*, which is a masculine noun but refers to anyone who is practicing sexual immorality.⁵⁶ Although a woman who is involved in the same activities is called a *whore* (*porne*), like the woman whom John sees sitting upon many waters and riding the beast (Revelation 17:1-3), the term is applicable to both men and women.⁵⁷ The clarity is this: anyone who is involved in sexual immorality or is a fornicator (*whoremonger*) is destined for the Lake of Fire.

The Greek word *pharmakeus* is what has been translated as *sorcerers*.⁵⁸ We can recognize the *pharma* portion of this word that corresponds to our modern *pharmacy*, or drug store; *pharmakeus* (a noun) refers to those who work with potions, poisons, and the casting and breaking of spells – they were frequently identified as being magicians, for no one could understand their ability to achieve results. Within ancient kingdoms, it was often the sorcerers and magicians who could sway the rulers through their impressive displays of power. For example, when Moses came to lead his people out of Egypt, the *sorcerers* and *magicians* replicated a few of the miracles that the Lord performed and set the stage for Pharaoh to harden his heart (Exodus 7:11, 22; 8:7); the Hebrew words that are so translated (as *sorcerers* and *magicians*) speak specifically of the use of witchcraft and the involvement of the spirit world and astrology.⁵⁹ Clearly, since these practices are outside of the Lord, this is a world under demonic influence at the very least; mind-altering drugs are commonplace today and are rapidly becoming an accepted part of society. *Pharmakeus* is a world of demonic involvement – it matters not whether it is the darkness of black magic or the more benign and acceptable practices of yoga. All that is not of God is of Satan (Matthew 12:30); whether someone merely dabbles in the mystical or seeks to master the powers of the devil, he is contacting and working with Satan and his demons, and will find himself in Satan's eternal destiny – the Lake of Fire.

⁵⁵ <http://www.arcc-cdac.ca/backgrounders/statistics-abortion-in-canada.pdf>

⁵⁶ Gingrich Lexicon.

⁵⁷ Strong's Online.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Strong's Online; BDB.

The Greek word translated as *idolaters* (*eidololatres*) comes from two words: 1) *eidolon* – an image, likeness, or a false god, and 2) *latreuo* – to serve.⁶⁰ Jesus made it very clear that it is impossible for us to *serve* both God and wealth (Matthew 6:24) and that everything in our lives must be secondary to Him (Luke 14:26) – if we are to live for the Lord, then He must be our sole authority (Exodus 20:3). An idolater, then, is someone who has placed something or someone in God’s rightful first place in his heart; whether we actually bow before an image (of Buddha, Mary, Jesus, or whatever), or simply permit our lives to be governed by our pursuit of wealth, prestige, or power, it matters not – the form that the *image* takes is irrelevant; the fact that something or someone other than God has first place in our lives makes us *idolaters*.

The final identifier of those who will have their place in the Lake of Fire is *all liars*. *Liars* (from the Greek *pseudes*, an adjective) means someone who is untrue; this is really not particularly complicated.⁶¹ However, it is obviously very important, for *all* liars will find themselves in the Lake of Fire – this is the only qualifier for the Lake of Fire that is shown with the word *all*. You will recall that Jesus identified the place of everlasting fire (the Lake of Fire) as the final destination that has been prepared for the devil and his hosts (Matthew 25:41). To the religious leaders of the Jews, Jesus said: “Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do [are purposing to be doing]. He was a murderer [a manslayer] from the beginning, and abode not [absolute] in the truth, because there is [absolutely] no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie [*pseudos*], he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar [*pseustes* (noun)], and the father of it” (John 8:44).⁶² Not surprisingly, this tells us that the devil is a liar and completely devoid of truth; however, that is not to say that the devil will not use some truth to market his lies – after all, he is disguising himself (*transformed*) as an *angel of light* (2 Corinthians 11:14).⁶³ Satan is the antithesis of the Lord (Jesus said that He is the truth – John 14:6; the devil is without truth), yet, as the devil works his wiles on the unsuspecting and naive, he will appear to bring light rather than darkness, and life instead of death. When Satan came to Eve, he used a three-pronged approach: 1) he began by casting doubt on what God had said – “Yea, hath God said ...”; 2) he inserted his lie, a contradiction of what God had said – “ye shall not surely die”; 3) he then buried that lie under a truth with negative consequences that he twisted in order to make it sound like a good thing – “your

⁶⁰ Strong’s Online.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

⁶³ Friberg Lexicon.

eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods” (Genesis 3:1,4-5). The Lord told Adam that eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil would bring death (Genesis 2:17), and, upon eating the fruit, death entered Adam and Eve: their spiritual death was immediate, for they tried to hide from the presence of God (Genesis 3:8), physical death followed – 930 years later for Adam (Genesis 5:5), and, for those who do not accept God’s provision of redemption, eternal separation from God is the ultimate death (the *second death* or the *Lake of Fire* – Revelation 21:18).

Peter’s warning that we must be *sober* and *vigilant* too often falls upon deaf ears; indeed, we must be clear-minded and alert or we will be consumed by the devil through his craftiness (1 Peter 5:8).⁶⁴ A liar, then, is someone who delves into the untruth that is inherently a part of the devil; such a person does not know the Lord Jesus Christ Who **is** the Truth (John 14:6). John provides us with an example of a liar: “He that saith [is saying], I know [have come to know (perfect tense)] him [God], and keepeth not [is not obeying] his commandments, **is a liar**, and the truth is not [an absolute] in him” (1 John 2:4).⁶⁵ So, a liar is anyone who says that he knows God even while he is not doing what the Lord has commanded – the *excuse* for not doing the Lord’s will is irrelevant, and the result is clear: the *truth is not in him* – just like the devil (John 8:44)! Let’s make this practical: anyone who is a participant in Ecumenism is a liar because he claims to know God and yet disobeys the Lord’s command to separate from that which is *unclean* – Ecumenism is **unclean** (2 Corinthians 6:17)!⁶⁶ We must understand that a lie is not just about the use of words to communicate an untruth – our actions (or the lack thereof) have the ability to make us liars (i.e., not obeying the Lord and yet claiming to be His). Yes, obedience to the Lord will lead to a very limited fellowship, but His command is that we are to separate – we are to consider ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God (Romans 6:11); we must turn away from those who teach alongside of the truth of Scripture (Romans 16:17-18). After all, since Jesus told us that the way to life eternal is narrow and that it will be found by only a few (Matthew 7:14), why could we think that we would participate in a broad fellowship?

The Lord has identified eight characteristics of those who will have a part in the lake of *fire and brimstone*. A quick review: 1) the one who fears man or circumstances more than God (*fearful*; cowardly), 2) the unfaithful to the Lord (*unbelieving*), 3) the hypocrite, trying to appear to be righteous (*abominable*), 4)

⁶⁴ Friberg Lexicon.

⁶⁵ Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

⁶⁶ In our study of Revelation 14:8 and fallen Babylon, we expanded on the reason that we are to look upon Ecumenism as being spiritual fornication.

those who intentionally take human life (*murderers*), 5) fornicators (*whoremongers*), 6) participants in witchcraft and magic (*sorcerers*), 7) those who do not give the Lord His rightful place in their lives (*idolaters*), and 8) those who nod to truth but live in error (*all liars*). As we consider these, we might recognize that several may easily be hidden from the view of others, and all would require us to repent before the Lord; we are to examine our hearts in the light of God's Word in order to ensure that we are right before Him (2 Corinthians 13:5) – if we discover something that is not in keeping with the Word of God, then we must repent so that our lives reflect His truths. *Repent* means to feel such regret for actions committed so as to produce a change in conduct;⁶⁷ unless there is a change in how we live and a determination to live differently, there has been no repentance. As Jesus dealt with the elders of the seven assemblies, He specifically charged four of them to *repent* of their ways (Revelation 2:5; 2:16; 3:3; 3:19). There is little wonder that so many of these eight identifiers are visible within the Evangelical community today; nevertheless, those whose lives are represented by any one of these will find their place in the eternal Lake of Fire, unless they bow before the Lord and turn away from their error.

What seems almost too obvious to mention is that those who have part in the *first resurrection* (the Lord's harvest of the righteous) will not be characterized by any of these eight things – these have no part in the life of the one who is faithful to the Lord. It is not that the faithful one is sinless, but transgressions are confessed and repented of quickly because his heart longs to be pleasing to the Lord – it is as we spend time in God's Word that we will become increasingly conscious of the times that we fail Him (2 Timothy 2:15), and repentance and restoration of fellowship with the Lord will follow (1 John 1:9).

The *lake of fire and brimstone* is specifically identified as *the second (deuteros) death (thanatos)*.⁶⁸ You will recall that *death* was promised to Adam if he should disobey the Lord (Genesis 2:17), and it is what Paul described as being the just reward (*wages*) for sin (Romans 6:23). Just as that *first death* impacted both the body and the soul (Adam and Eve died spiritually immediately and physically much later), so the *second death* will entail the eternal ruination of both the body and the soul. As noted earlier, the spiritual death of Adam did not mean that his soul ceased to exist but, rather, that it was now in a state of separation from (or rebellion against) God; likewise, the body does not cease to exist but simply changes form and returns to the ground from whence it came (Genesis 3:19). Therefore, we understand that

⁶⁷ https://www.etymonline.com/word/repent#etymonline_v_12825

⁶⁸ Strong's Online.

the *first death* does not eliminate either soul or body, so it would be our anticipation that the *second death* will not either. Furthermore, Jesus said: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy [*apollumi*] both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). He is saying that we are not to have a fear (*phobeo*, verb form of *phobos*) of those who are putting the body to death but are unable to do the same to the soul; rather, we are to have *fear* (*phobeo*) for God Who is able to utterly ruin (*apollumi* – *destroy*⁶⁹) *both soul and body in hell* (*Gehenna*, the Lake of Fire).⁷⁰

The Lord, from before creation itself, prepared a Way for Adam and his descendants to individually restore fellowship with Him, which required the death of an innocent – one that was free of sin dying for the sinner. Two things took place in the Garden of Eden after the fall that demonstrated God’s preparedness: 1) He promised Satan that He (the coming Seed of the woman) would destroy him (Genesis 3:15), and 2) the Lord made Adam and Eve coats of skins (Genesis 3:21) that involved the death of innocent animals, the shedding of blood, and Adam and Eve’s faith that it was through the death and shed blood that their fellowship with the Lord was restored. From the very beginning, God had a means in place for man to escape the *second death*. Within the OT, continual sacrifices were required to be made, as none of those sacrifices could bring lasting righteousness – they foreshadowed the work of the Seed of the woman Who would come to die for the sins of the world (Hebrews 10:1). Even the Mosaic Law, with its meticulous instructions regarding the activities of the priests and the sacrifices that they were to carry out for the people, could not instill an eternal righteousness, but all of the OT sacrifices were fulfilled in Christ’s one sacrifice (Hebrews 10:11-12) – He, and He only, is our Hope.



⁹ And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.

⁶⁹ It is on an incomplete understanding of the Greek word *apollumi* that the SDA base their doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked. However, consider Jesus’ parable of the new wine/old wineskins: “no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish [*apollumi*]” (Luke 5:37). Obviously, the old wineskins (*bottles*) are not annihilated, they are simply *utterly ruined* – so the unrighteous who enter the *second death* are not annihilated but are *utterly ruined* in both *soul and body*; Vine’s “destroy.”

⁷⁰ Strong’s Online.

One of the messengers (*angels*) of God who handled the vials of God's wrath, now comes to John for the purpose of providing him with more *revelation* (*shew – deiknuo*, to bring to light, to explain).⁷¹ The angel tells John to come to him (*hither*) and that he will then show him the Bride, the wife of the Lamb of God. John then writes many things as he tries to describe what he is seeing, and out of that we must see if we can discern who the Lamb's wife is.



10. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ^{11.} Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; ^{12.} And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ^{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 in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

This messenger takes John *in the spirit* to a *great and high mountain*, which tells us that the new earth will not be all of one elevation. This is now the fourth time in the Revelation that John is said to be *in the spirit* (*en pneuma* – in spirit): 1) Revelation 1:10 – on Patmos, just before Jesus first spoke to him, 2) Revelation 4:2 – when he was first taken up to heaven to see things that were to take place *hereafter*, 3) Revelation 17:3 – when he was taken into the wilderness to see Babylon the Great (the *woman*) riding the red beast, and 4) in our passage when he is taken to a mountain in order to see the Lamb's Bride. As John was taken to heaven, he would have been without an awareness of his physical life on earth; it's not that he was in a glorified body (as will be provided during the *first resurrection*), for when the Revelation was completed, he was still physically very much a part of this earth. However, *in the spirit*, he entered a place where his confinement to Patmos no longer hindered his communion with the Lord; it was also *in the spirit* that he was transported by the Lord to see and experience things *hereafter* – things that he could not have known otherwise (what we see from Revelation 4 to 22).

⁷¹ Strong's Online; Liddell-Scott Lexicon.

The messenger's words to John were that he would show him the Bride of the Lamb; as they arrive at the great mountain, John sees a *great city* called the *holy Jerusalem* descending from heaven. This is a reiteration of v. 2 where John describes the *city* as being *adorned* like a bride for her husband. Does this mean that *the city* is the Bride of Christ?

Paul used the illustration of a building to describe the work that the Lord Jesus is doing in building His *ekklesia*: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints [the Jew and the Gentile made one in Christ], and of the household [members of the family] of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles [New Covenant] and prophets [Old Covenant], Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*;⁷² In whom all the building fitly framed together [the construction materials (Jew and Gentile) being joined together] groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-22).⁷³ In this case, Paul used the metaphor to emphasize that it is through the Lord Jesus that the two walls of the *ekklesia* (the Jew and the Gentile) are bound together to form one edifice – the work of the *cornerstone*.⁷⁴ The central message is not that the Body of Christ is a building, but that Jesus is bringing the faithful of the OT and the NT together – He is that *Cornerstone* Who brings both together into one (John 10:16). There is nothing here that would indicate that the Bride of Christ is *the city*, the New Jerusalem, so let's continue with the text and see what unfolds.

The *city* displays the *glory of God*; this is not altogether unexpected for it is descending out of heaven, God's dwelling place. The radiance (*light*) of the city is likened to a *jasper stone* that is as *clear as crystal*. As John, in the spirit, entered into the presence of God in heaven, he describes Him in terms of *a jasper and a sardine stone* (Revelation 4:3); as we looked into this, it became apparent that John likened God to hues of green (*jasper*) and red (*sardine*), but not the stones. The *city* is radiating a brilliant green hue as *clear as crystal*; however, the jasper stone was not *clear* – the ancient stones were quite translucent, but could not be described as being clear.⁷⁵ This phrase (*clear as crystal*) comes from one Greek word that describes this

⁷² Jesus is the One Who has drawn the Jew and the Gentile together; the *cornerstone* was the first stone laid that determined the direction of the associated walls, as well as being the means of connecting the two walls – in this case, it figuratively represents the joining of the Jews and the Gentiles (the two walls) by the Lord Jesus (the Cornerstone). The word *chief* does not appear in the Greek – there is only one cornerstone (Cornerstone); Stephanus 1550 NT.

⁷³ Friberg Lexicon.

⁷⁴ Vine's "cornerstone."

⁷⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jasper>

green radiance as shining brightly (as a crystal is known to do);⁷⁶ the jasper stone was one that polished easily and brilliantly and, in ancient times, was highly valued because of this.⁷⁷ The *city*, as it descends, is diffusing a green radiance – a reflection of the glory of God, perhaps more in keeping with the halo around God’s throne (Revelation 4:3).

John now begins to describe the *city* that is resplendent with God’s glory as it is descending. He sees that it has walls that are massive (*great*) and tall (*high*) and it has *twelve gates* with an angel at each one. The *city* is square (v.16 confirms this), for John uses our familiar four directions to indicate that there are three *gates* per wall, and upon each of them has been written the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

John then describes the walls of the city as having *twelve foundations*, and within them are the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lord Jesus. The foundation is that part of the building that makes contact with the ground and supports the building. Therefore, this city has a foundation that is made up of twelve layers – twelve foundations, and within each of these is found the name of one of the Apostles.

We must notice that the twelve tribes of Israel are not the access (*gates*) into this *holy city* – their names are simply inscribed upon the *gates*; likewise, the Apostles are not the *foundations* of it, but their names appear within them. It is the foundation of a building that bears the entire weight of the structure and will determine its stability; the house built with sand as its foundation will collapse in the storm because sand is easily eroded and washed away (Matthew 7:26-27). The solid foundation upon which the New Jerusalem is built is the Gospel message of the New Covenant – the mystery that was hidden during the times of the OT prophets but revealed to the Apostles and proclaimed openly to all people as “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). We’ll look into this a little more later.



15. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17.

⁷⁶ Friberg Lexicon.

⁷⁷ <https://www.gemrockauctions.com/learn/additional-gemstone-information/jasper-gemstones;>
https://www.minerals.net/gemstone/jasper_gemstone.aspx

And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

The *angel* who is showing John this descending city, now has a *golden reed* with which he should measure the city, and specifically its *gates* and *wall*. What follows is a description of the measurements of the city (the size of the *gates* is not revealed).

The city is described as being *foursquare* (*tetragonos* – literally, four corners), which establishes that it is some form of rectangle or square, and then we are told that the length and width are the same – the city is square. The *angel* uses the golden reed to measure, and it is found to be *twelve thousand furlongs* (*stadium* – 600 feet per *furlong*), which makes the length of one wall almost 1,400 miles.⁷⁸ Beyond that, we are told that the city is as high as it is long; in other words, it is a cube. The *angel* then measures the thickness of the wall, which is found to be 144 cubits, or about 215 feet; for perspective, the average two-lane highway is 30 feet wide.



¹⁸. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. ¹⁹. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; ²⁰. The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. ²¹. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

John provides us with some specific information about the New Jerusalem. *Building* (*endomesis*) speaks of that which is used to construct the wall, which is noted as being *jasper*.⁷⁹ Earlier we learned that ancient *jasper* was primarily a green translucent stone; it was highly valued as a gemstone for its ability to be easily polished. The city inside of the walls is made of *pure gold, like unto clear glass*. *Pure* and *clear* are the same word in Greek (*katharos* – meaning without any impurity); *glass* (or crystal) refers to a transparent stone.⁸⁰ The gold of our world is a malleable metal that is resistant to chemical reactions, an excellent conductor of

⁷⁸ Strong's Online.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

electricity, and is rare enough to have been the monetary standard for millennia (abandoned in 1971 in favor of a government backed currency model).⁸¹ Our gold is typically not transparent – it is a solid metal; however, because it is so malleable, technics have been devised to press it so thinly that it is used on the visors of spacesuits to provide protection from harmful sun rays.⁸² Nonetheless, this city is made of pure, new-earthly gold that is fully transparent.

We are now told that each of the twelve foundations of the city is adorned with a precious stone; each foundation not only contains the name of one of the twelve Apostles, but each one has also been decorated (*garnished*) with a unique gem (*precious stones* – singular).⁸³ John identifies each of the gems, beginning with the *first foundation* (the lowest one, the first that would be laid): *jasper* (already identified as being green), *sapphire* (primarily a blue precious gem), *chalcedony* (type of agate, possibly having a waxy, whitish color when polished), *emerald* (a vivid green), *sardonyx* (a red [sard] and white [onyx] banded stone, relatively inexpensive), *sardius* (also known as carnelian, a red stone), *chrysolite* (a yellow stone, today called topaz), *beryl* (aquamarine was the popular color of this stone at this time), *topaz* (a yellow-green stone, today known as chrysolite or peridot), *chrysoprasus* (a translucent green stone), *jacinth* (either a red or blue stone – some uncertainty reigns, but the greatest likelihood is a reddish color), and *amethyst* (a violet-purple stone).⁸⁴ There is great uncertainty as to the precise coloring of the stones indicated since many of them include many variations and even varieties of a color; this is only exacerbated by the fact that it is often not known what stones were being referred to at the time of the writing. Therefore, because of a general uncertainty as to the precision of the coloring or multi-coloring of the stones, I will not try to instill greater significance to this than to say that each foundation of the New Jerusalem will bear its own unique gemstone decoration.

The translators have used the word *gates* for the Greek *pulon*; however, this would be more correctly understood to be the *gateway* to a city (*gate* is the Greek *pule*).⁸⁵ A gateway is the larger construction of an access through a wall into a home or city, understanding that this gateway could be closed by means of a gate.⁸⁶ The New Jerusalem has twelve *gateways* – twelve means of gaining access, and each

⁸¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gold>

⁸² https://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/spacesuits/home/clickable_suit_nf.html

⁸³ Friberg Lexicon; Stephanus 1550 NT.

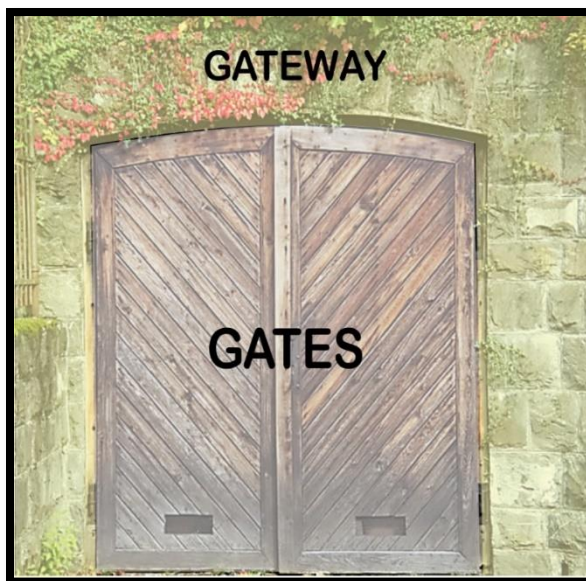
⁸⁴ <https://preciousstonesofthebible.com/stonegallery.html>

⁸⁵ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

⁸⁶ <https://wikidiff.com/gate/gateway>

(every several; every single one) of the gateways is one *pearl* (*margarites*, a reference to the name of the oyster in the Red Sea that made them).⁸⁷ In early English, they were known as *margarites*; Wycliffe's 1395 translation shows this as: "And twelue yatis ben twelue margaritis [pearls]"⁸⁸

The street (singular) of the city is of pure (*katharos*) gold, like unto *transparent* (*diaphanes*, to see through) *glass*.⁸⁹ What soon becomes apparent is that the materials that are used to construct this *holy city* are not necessarily anything with which we might be familiar; this is a *new earth* city and clearly constructed of new earthly resources. Once again, we must understand that John is attempting to describe out-of-this-world visions in words that are of this world. Within our standards, 24-karat gold is considered to be pure, yet it is noted that even this is only 99% gold content; even a *pure* gold bar weighing 1000 grams is marked with a 999.9 fine gold, which means that that last .1 gram is a contaminant of some sort.⁹⁰



The difference between a Gateway and Gate



22. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. 23. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Prominent within the earthly Jerusalem before its destruction in AD 70, was the Jewish temple – the dwelling place of God; John would have recalled the central role of the temple within Jerusalem. However, as he sees the New Jerusalem, he recognizes that there is no temple (*naos*) within it, and, more importantly, why it isn't there.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Friberg Lexicon; Strong's Online; <https://preciousstonesofthebible.com/stonegallery.html>.

⁸⁸ https://www.studydrive.org/desk/?t1=en_wyc&q1=re%2021

⁸⁹ Liddell-Scott Lexicon.

⁹⁰ <https://oureverydaylife.com/what-are-the-differences-among-24k-22k-999-gold-12497750.html>

⁹¹ Strong's Online.

Within the New Covenant, we understand that we come to abide *in Christ* through faith – that all-important position that sets us free from condemnation (Romans 8:1). At the same time, we are told that the Spirit of God comes to dwell within us (Romans 8:9) and that we are now the temple (*naos*) of the living God (1 Corinthians 6:19).⁹² It is by faith alone that we become a temple of God: the we-in-God-and-God-in-us relationship is dependent entirely upon God’s mercy and grace – we bring nothing into this relationship but a sinful heart that is willing to pay the price of remaining faithful to Him. For this reason (the sinful heart), we are warned: “And grieve not [do not be annoying, distressing, or vexing] the holy Spirit of God, whereby [*in Whom*] ye are sealed [marked] unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).⁹³ Earlier (Ephesians 1:14) Paul reveals that we have been given the Spirit of God as a down payment (*earnest*) toward that final day of redemption; the Holy Spirit abides within us as a deposit toward what we may inherit *in Christ* one day, and it is His abiding presence that marks us. We enter this relationship (Christ in us/we in Christ) by faith, and it is through an **enduring faithfulness** (obedience) that we remain in Him (Matthew 24:13; Romans 8:1). “Take heed, **brethren**, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief [*apistia* – not faithful; faithlessness], in departing [becoming apostate] from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12);⁹⁴ this warning, given to *brethren*, is to guard against becoming unfaithful, i.e., becoming apostate – separated from God with no hope of reconciliation (Hebrews 6:4-6). Annoying, distressing, or vexing the Spirit of God is a result of not living according to His leading, which means that we are no longer abiding in that shelter from the condemnation of God (Romans 8:1); in other words, we have turned away from the faith by which we entered into Christ, and He into us. The mark of the Holy Spirit is ours by faith; if we no longer have the faith, then we no longer have the Spirit, we are no longer abiding in Christ, and we have become apostate.

Recall Jesus’ parable of the Seed that fell on the rocks: “They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive [accept] the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation [testing] fall away [die; become apostate]” (Luke 8:13).⁹⁵ Then there was the Seed that fell among thorns: “And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth [to pursue the journey that one has entered], and are choked [cause to die] with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection [do not mature]”

⁹² Strong’s Online.

⁹³ Liddell-Scott Lexicon; Stephanus 1550 NT.

⁹⁴ Liddell-Scott Lexicon; Gingrich Lexicon.

⁹⁵ Friberg Lexicon.

(Luke 8:14).⁹⁶ In both cases, faith is present (there is life and growth), but each dies (one very quickly, the other more slowly); “Wherefore let him that thinketh [be of the opinion] he standeth [perfect tense – a one-time completed action] take heed lest he [should, *fall* is in the subjunctive mood – a real possibility] fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12).⁹⁷ We are called to holiness (2 Timothy 1:9), and we must resolve to pursue it with the assistance of the Spirit of God (Romans 8:1-4) and the intercession of the Lord Jesus (Romans 8:34) lest we, too, become a spiritual casualty. Our faithfulness to the leading of the Spirit of God is essential if we would be saved one day: “... he that shall endure [*hupomeno* – to remain faithful through trials] unto the end, the same shall [an emphatic Greek pronoun meaning: *this is the one who will*] be saved [future tense]” (Matthew 24:13).⁹⁸ Jesus made it very clear as to what is required of us in order to abide with Him forever.

In the New Earth and the New Jerusalem, we will come to know the full extent of abiding in Christ and He in us. The full presence of God will be there and we will live in Him. Jesus, the Lamb of God, is the light (*luchnos* – lamp, the source of light) of the New Jerusalem, and the glory of God will lighten (*photizo* – to illuminate) the whole city.⁹⁹ Once again, it is clearly evident that Jesus is God – He is the lamp, and it will be His glory that will shine throughout the whole city.



24. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. 26. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

This is a passage that is difficult to understand because we do not have a full understanding of the new heaven and earth, and, even with the description of the New Jerusalem, we cannot fathom this new life.

We have noted before that the Greek plural phrase *ta ethnos* (often shown as *the nations* or *the Gentiles*) generally signals a reference to those who are not believers

⁹⁶ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

⁹⁷ Strong's Online.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

(e.g., *the Gentiles* as compared to the Jews).¹⁰⁰ *Ethnos* speaks firstly of a multitude (generally of people) and then of those who are *of the same habit* (there is a similarity of customs – a nation or a people group).¹⁰¹ However, in this case, it is followed by the phrase *which are saved*, and this serves to define *ta ethnos*. *Saved* is a participle (a verb that, in this instance, is an adjective describing the noun *ethnos*), which is in the present tense and passive voice: *those who are being saved*.¹⁰² However, this does not mean that there will be those in the new earth who *are being saved*; the judgment of all mankind has taken place and everyone whose name was not in the Book of Life has been banished to the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15) – it is only those whose names are in the Book of Life who are a part of the multitudes in the new earth.

The Scriptures make it clear that even as God closed the door of Noah's ark, so the door of salvation will be closed to those who are on the earth at the coming of the Lord in the clouds to harvest His saints (Matthew 24:37-39). Therefore, this multitude (*ta ethnos*) is made up of those whom the Lord is saving now (it is a future perspective of what is taking place within *time*) – those who will remain faithful to Him (Matthew 24:13). We are called to be *kings* and *priests* unto the Lord (Revelation 1:6), and, as those who have part in the *first resurrection*, we will fill the dual role of reigning with the Lord and being priests for Him during the Millennium (Revelation 20:6). A priest is a mediator between man and God and, therefore, we will have the task of spreading the New Covenant truth to the people born during the Millennium. For those who are on earth when the Lord establishes His millennial rule, their day of salvation closed when the Lord came in the clouds for His own; however, for those who will be born during the Millennium, they have the opportunity to place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and, as priests, we will show them the Lord of glory. Everyone who places their faith in the Lord and remains faithful to Him during His millennial rule will also be among the multitudes (*ta ethnos*) in the new earth. The *nations* are made up of the *saved* from all ages (OT, NT and Millennium) and they are the ones who will live (*walk*) in the light of the New Jerusalem. The source of the light has already been identified as the Lamb of God (Jesus Christ) and that the light is the glory of God (v.23).¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁰¹ Strong's Online; Strong's Dictionary; there is a link to *etho* – by habit or custom.

¹⁰² Strong's Online.

¹⁰³ Strong's Dictionary.

Now we are told that the *kings (basileus) of the earth* are bringing their *glory and honor* into the New Jerusalem.¹⁰⁴ As John introduced the book of Revelation, he described Jesus as the One Who loved us and cleansed us from our sins in His blood (Revelation 1:5), and then he states that Jesus has made us to be *kings (basileus)* and priests to God (Revelation 1:6).¹⁰⁵ When the Lamb of God is found to be worthy to open the book with the seven seals, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sing a new song to Him in which they declare that He has made them to be *kings (basileus)* who will reign on the earth (Revelation 5:10).¹⁰⁶ In each case, the application of this term (*kings*) is made to those who are saved by faith in the Lord *before* He comes in the clouds to harvest His saints; at that moment, the day of salvation is closed to those who are on the earth (those left behind). We understand that we, who have been redeemed from among mankind by the blood of the Lamb and caught up to be with Him in the clouds, are those *kings*; the word (*kings*) speaks of those who possess royal authority.¹⁰⁷ During the Millennium, we will reign with Jesus as those who have been given *royal authority* – as *kings*. Clearly, this is not something with which we are born, but, rather, something into which we are *re-born* – it is bestowed upon us by the King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 19:16); in ourselves, we have no royalty (our heritage is that we are sinners) and we have no authority (we are in bondage to the devil, and subject to death). We (the redeemed of the Lord) are *kings* (royalty) because, in this life, we have placed our faith in the King of all kings and have remained faithful to Him throughout our lives on this earth (Mark 13:13) – our *royalty* is entirely because of our steadfast relationship with the God of the universe through Christ. Therefore, any *glory and honor* that these *kings (we)* might bring into the New Jerusalem will be due entirely to the One Who bestowed the royal authority.

If we take a step back in order to consider who will be on the new earth, we begin to recognize that even though all who have been saved are one in the Lord Jesus (since we are all saved by exactly the same faith), the experience of that saving faith comes in three very different ways. We have already considered the OT saints who, through faith established upon the promises of God, are numbered among the saved; they looked forward in anticipation of the One Who would come to bear the sins of the world. The NT saints now look back to the One Who paid the price for their sins and established the New Covenant whereby all of God's children are made one

¹⁰⁴ Strong's Online.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Friberg Lexicon.

(Ephesians 2). Finally, there are those who will come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ during the Millennium. Let's consider this for a moment.

Those born during the millennial reign of the Lord will have a sin nature just like all of the other descendants of Adam. However, they will know the Lord (for He is on the earth) and His shepherding (*rule* – Revelation 12:5), and we (the saints harvested during the *first resurrection* – Revelation 20:6) will be priests of the Lord who are seeking to draw the penitent to their Shepherd. Remember that we, who have come through the *first resurrection* (the rapture), now abide in glorified bodies (1 Corinthians 15:51-53) and, through our roles as *kings* and *priests* for the Lord, will seek to lead and guide the millennial sinners to the Savior. Those who place their faith in Him will be required to live faithfully for Him (Matthew 24:13) even as they bear about with them the body of sin that they must account as being dead with Christ (Romans 6:6). Their faith in the Lord will write their names into the Lamb's Book of Life; however, they will not get to experience the *first resurrection*, i.e., the Lord changing them in the twinkling of an eye – that is past. As they come to the end of the Millennium (still bearing their sin nature while remaining faithful to the Lord, their Shepherd), they will be gathered to Jerusalem, where the Lord is ruling over the earth, either to escape the activities of the released Satan or to simply remain close to their Shepherd. With the vanishing of the old heaven and earth, these saints of the Lord will die physically and then find themselves standing before God at the great white throne. The books, containing the record of the works of all who are now standing before God, will be opened, and nothing within them will be found to provide justification for anyone. However, we are told that part of this judgment includes checking the Book of Life, and these saints have had their names recorded there; it is those whose names are not in that Book who will be condemned to the Lake of Fire, or the second death (Revelation 20:12-15). The millennial saints will look back on the finished work of the Lord Jesus, they will be saved through faith in that finished work, they will be drawn to the Lord (like His disciples during His earthly ministry) and, after their "judgment," will receive their glorified bodies and enter into the new earth as part of the Lord's one flock (John 10:16).

The OT saints were raised from the dead after the Lord's resurrection (Matthew 27:52-53) and received their glorified bodies as they were taken by the Lord into heaven with His ascension (Ephesians 4:8) – they are identified as being the 144,000 of Revelation 7 and 14. When the Lord comes in the clouds to gather His own from the earth, the bodies of the NT saints will be glorified in an instant, and we will now be like Him (1 Corinthians 15:52-53; 1 John 3:2) – these will be *kings* and *priests*

for the Lord during His millennial reign. As the names of the millennial saints are found in the Book of Life, they, too, will be glorified and join the saints of all ages in the new earth. Jesus is the lamp providing the light of the New Jerusalem; since we are like unto Him (1 John 3:2), then it would follow that our immortal bodies will also bear a glory – a glory that is only a result of our relationship with the Lord. It seems evident then, that when the *kings* (the NT glorified saints whose role as *priests* ended with the close of the Millennium) bring their *glory* into the city, it will be very similar to the twenty-four elders falling down before God and casting their golden crowns before Him (Revelation 4:10) – the glory that we will bear is what the Lord has given to us; it is ours because He has given it, and we, like the elders, will present it as an offering to the Lord.

The *kings* will also bring *honor* into the city. *Honor* (*time* [tee-may']) speaks first of all to the price that has been paid for something or someone (in this case, the *kings*);¹⁰⁸ the *kings'* *honor* is the death and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ – that is the price that was paid for them. The *glory* of the kings is from the Lord, and, likewise, the *honor* that they bring is a reflection of His grace and mercy. As we, the Lord's purchased faithful ones (*kings*) who have been His kings and priests throughout His millennial reign, enjoy the magnificence of the new heaven and earth, we will carry about with us (*bring*) the evidence of what the Lord has done for us.¹⁰⁹ In similar fashion, the Lord Jesus will bear about with Him the marks of the price that He paid for us (Revelation 5:6).

When the messenger came to John, he said: "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Revelation 21:9), and then John sees the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven. From this we might erroneously conclude (as some have) that the city is the Bride of Christ. Paul does use the metaphor of a building to describe the work that Jesus is doing to build His *ekklesia*: "In whom all the building fitly framed together [*sunarmologeo*] groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21-22).¹¹⁰ However, Paul also taught that, as Jesus builds His *ekklesia*, we are being carefully fitted together [*fitly joined together* – *sunarmologeo*] to form His Body; the same Greek word is used in both cases to describe the *fitting together*, and so we cannot say that Jesus is building us into the *New Jerusalem* – clearly, we have a much more intimate relationship with Him, for we are each provided with all

¹⁰⁸ Strong's Online.

¹⁰⁹ Friberg Lexicon.

¹¹⁰ Strong's Online.

that we need for a victorious life in Him through our individual bond (*joint*) to Him (Ephesians 4:15-16).¹¹¹

Moreover, as Jesus spoke of leaving the earth, He comforted His disciples with these words: “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also” (John 14:2-3). Jesus is saying that after He has left the earth, He will be preparing a place for those who are His and, when it is ready, He will return for His own so that they may be with Him. We, as those who are in Christ, are individually the temple of the Lord now (1 Corinthians 6:19), and we, together with all who are in Him, are being fashioned into one entity; as we see in Ephesians 2 and 4, the metaphors of a building and a body are both used to describe how He is carefully building His *ekklesia*. Jesus declared that He would be the Shepherd of **one flock** (John 10:16); this is not a city, but a living, dynamic body of believers (Romans 12:5). During the time of betrothal, a Jewish husband spent his time building an accommodation that would be suitable for his bride; Jesus (the Bridegroom), having gone away, said that He would be building a dwelling place for His saints (His Bride) – the New Jerusalem is that dwelling place (*tabernacle*) of God and a place where God will dwell among (*with*) His people (Revelation 21:3). Those who have been provided with royal authority (the *kings*) will shine forth the glory and honor of their Redeemer as they enjoy the place that God has prepared for them.

The next phrases are interesting and might seem to be somewhat incongruous to us. We are told that the gateways (*gates*) of the city will absolutely not be closed (*shut*) during the day under any circumstances (the two Greek negatives (*ou* and *me*) with *shut* being in aorist tense and subjunctive mood, makes this the strongest negative possible), and the explanation for this (*for*) is that there will be no night.¹¹² From this we can conclude that the gateways to the New Jerusalem will never be closed; in fact, when we understand that the City’s accesses are gateways and not gates, in all likelihood there will be no gates at all. There will be unlimited access to the city that the Lord has built for His own. The fact that there will be no night is completely understandable: the sun and moon are not a part of this new heaven and earth, the Lamb is the light source for the New Jerusalem and everyone will live in the light of God’s glory (v. 23-24).

Then we are told that *they* (the *kings*) will *bring the glory and honour of the nations (ta ethnos)* into the New Jerusalem. We cannot fathom what the new heaven

¹¹¹ Strong’s Online.

¹¹² https://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-detail-frame.htm; it is called the *subjunctive of emphatic negation*.

and earth will be like, but it seems that those who have been *kings* with the Lord Jesus during His millennial reign will continue to bear His royal authority in the new earth. We've already noted that the multitudes (*ta ethnos*) in the new earth will only be those whose names are in the Book of Life – those who have been redeemed from among mankind by faith in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. The *kings* will bring those who did not reign with the Lord during the Millennium into the New Jerusalem. The glory and honor that the Lord bestows upon His own is held by each one individually, and, therefore, in order to bring the *glory and honour of the nations* (the multitudes) into the New Jerusalem requires that they be brought into the city. When the Lord created Adam and Eve, he made them *a little lower than the angels* and *crowned* them *with glory and honour* (Psalm 8:5). What seems evident is that even in the new heaven and earth, the Lord has prepared roles for everyone, and the glory and honor of God's sinless creation is restored.

We then read: *and there shall in no wise enter into it...*, which is followed by three negative things. *Enter*, in this case, is in the subjunctive mood and aorist tense in the Greek and is used in combination with a double negative (*ou* and *me*) making this the most strongly formed negative possible – one that excludes even the remotest possibility of this ever occurring.¹¹³ Therefore, we can know with great certainty that the three things that follow will **never** be a part of the New Jerusalem. What are those three things?

The first is identified as anything that is polluting (*defileth*; present tense); the Greek word *koinoo* means to make common – not as in being made ordinary, but as becoming *unhallowed* or unholy.¹¹⁴ This was clearly delineated within the Mosaic ordinances, and the religious Jews were very careful about with whom they came into contact and maintained meticulous cleanliness lest they should become unclean. For this reason, the Jews were critical of Jesus for permitting His disciples to eat without first washing their hands (Matthew 15:2) – their focus was on the outward cleansing (or contamination). Jesus' instruction to them was this: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth [*koinoo*] a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth [*koinoo*] a man ... those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart" (Matthew 15:11, 18).¹¹⁵ To the Thessalonians, Paul clarified that "God hath not called us unto uncleanness [*akatharsia* – not pure; impurity], but unto holiness" (1 Thessalonians 4:7); *uncleanness* (*akatharsia*) is a

¹¹³ https://ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-detail-frame.htm; it is called the *subjunctive of emphatic negation*.

¹¹⁴ Strong's Online.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

noun that describes the state of being impure, *koinoo* is a verb that describes the action of defilement or becoming unclean.¹¹⁶ Paul's exhortation is that we must not lose sight of the fact that God has called us unto holiness, or a state of being separated (sanctified) unto Him. The correlation between these two concepts should be evident (*koinoo* [becoming unholy] being the act that leads to *akatharsia* [being unclean or impure]), and it is equally obvious that such defiling actions can only lead to unholiness – that which is contrary to the calling of God. Therefore, Paul's instructions on the need for separation from what is *unclean* becomes relevant to our discussion on this matter: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? ... for ye are the temple of the living God ... Wherefore come out [a command] from among them, and be ye separate [a result of obedience to the command to *come out*], saith the Lord, and touch not [a command: *do not cling to*] the unclean [*akathartos*] thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). We have received a holy calling from the Lord (2 Timothy 1:9) and it is affirmed that we are not under the condemnation of God if we are *in Christ* **and** living according to the leading of the Spirit of God (Romans 8:1). What should be unmistakeable is that we must remain ***in Christ*** and **live in obedience** to Him (by the leading of the Spirit) in order to fulfill God's holy calling on our lives; as we noted earlier, any act of disobedience to the Lord is an expression of our unbelief in Him at that point, and, therefore, it is impossible to ignore the Lord's commands and remain *in Him* – such an action (disobedience) is an act of defilement (*koinoo*), the disobedient abide under the *wrath of God* (John 3:36), and there will be no place for them within the new heaven, new earth, or the New Jerusalem.

The second thing that will **never** enter the New Jerusalem is anything that *worketh abomination*. "The way of the wicked *is* an abomination unto the LORD ..." (Proverbs 15:9); therefore, anything that is not pleasing to the Lord is an abomination – there will be nothing in the New Jerusalem that is not pleasing to the Lord. With this in mind, Paul's exhortation to Timothy takes on a much greater significance: make every effort (*study*) to come (*to shew*) before God as having been tested and approved (*approved*) (2 Timothy 2:15).¹¹⁷ Even the impressive spiritual works of many will be regarded as *iniquity*, which is an abomination before God (Matthew 7:22-23). You will recall that the woman who was riding the beast (the

¹¹⁶ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

¹¹⁷ Friberg Lexicon.

religious system of the False Prophet) was called the *mother of ... abominations*; being Satan's religion with many faces, everything about her is detestable before God – her cup is filled with the *abominations* of her spiritual fornication (i.e., her departure from the Truth; Revelation 17:4-5). When Jesus described the way to life as being narrow, He spoke a truth that is supported by all of Scripture; that which is detestable before God will have its place in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 21:8) – it has no place on the narrow pathway and will certainly not be found in the New Jerusalem.

Lastly, no one will enter the New Jerusalem who is making *a lie*. This is one thing that characterizes those who are destined for the Lake of Fire (Revelation 21:8), for it is the essence of the devil (John 8:44). As the one who deceived Eve, Satan has always made extensive use of his skills as a deceiver and liar – any truth that he might use will only serve to make his lies more believable and acceptable to the unsuspecting. There will be no liars in the New Jerusalem; the children of Satan will be in the Lake of Fire.

In summary, it will be those whose names are *written* in the Book of Life who will enter the New Jerusalem; we already know that “whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15). We are told of two things that will result in one's name being removed from the Book of Life: 1) not living faithfully (*overcoming*) for the Lord (Revelation 3:5), and 2) taking away from, or diminishing in any way, the message of the Revelation (Revelation 22:19; we'll look more into this later in our study).¹¹⁸ The former is an affirmation of Jesus' words: “And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that shall endure [*hupomeno* – to remain faithful through tribulation] unto the end, the same [this is the one who] shall be saved” (Mark 13:13).¹¹⁹ As John began writing this book, he identified a blessing for the one who would read and understand (*hear*) the words of this prophecy (Revelation 1:3); as he comes to the end of the book, the Spirit of God guides him to write of the eternal consequences for anyone who weakens or omits any part of its message – their name will be removed from the Book of Life! The new heaven, the new earth, and the New Jerusalem will be occupied by those who have remained faithful to the Lord (have been *overcomers*) during their lifetimes on earth.

¹¹⁸ The pagan does not have his name in the Book of Life, therefore it cannot be removed; this is dealing specifically with those who, through faith, have had their names entered into the Lamb's Book of Life.

¹¹⁹ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.



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. 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. ³. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: ⁴. And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. ⁵. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

He refers back to Revelation 21:9 where we are told that *one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues* came to John to show him *the Lamb's wife*. This messenger provided John with a close look into the New Jerusalem, that place where God will be dwelling among men; there is no break in the *angel's* guided tour – it carries right on from the previous chapter. John is still describing the New Jerusalem for us, and it is important that we keep this in mind as we move on.

John now tells us of a river that flows out of the *throne of God and of the Lamb*; the Source (*fountain*) of this water is the Lord Who is available to everyone who is thirsty (Revelation 21:6; John 7:37). The *water of life* is described as being *pure* (clean) and as brilliant (*clear*; *lampros* – bright) as *crystal*, and it is coming from the *throne* (singular) that is shared by God, the Father and Jesus, the Son of God.¹²⁰ Jesus made a promise to the one who is overcoming: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Revelation 3:21). The word of the angel to Mary was that Jesus would be given the *throne of David his father* (Luke 1:32); during the Millennium, Jesus will sit upon His throne in Jerusalem (like David) and will govern the people of the world, at which time the *overcomers* of the first resurrection will be *kings* with Him – participating with Him in His royal authority (Revelation 20:6). He will permit us *to sit with* Him on His throne (singular), even as He, as an Overcomer, is sitting with His Father upon the throne of God.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Strong's Online; Stephanus 1550 NT.

¹²¹ Stephanus 1550 NT.

Street is a somewhat restrictive translation of the Greek word *plateia* (*plat-i'-ah*), which simply means broad or wide.¹²² In the middle of this *wide* area, through which the river is flowing, stands the *tree of life*. The *tree of life* and the *river* both harken back to the Garden of Eden – a Garden that God made specifically for man: the tree of life was in it and a river flowed out from it (Genesis 2:9-10). In it the Lord placed every tree that was beautiful and *good for food*, and in the middle of the Garden He placed two trees: the *tree of life* and [also] *the tree of knowledge of good and evil*.¹²³ Satan deceived Eve into eating of the second tree (which was forbidden, Genesis 2:17), and the Lord expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden lest they should eat of the tree of life and live forever in their sinful state (Genesis 3:22-24). As John provides us with a view of the New Jerusalem, we find the *tree of life* in the middle of a broad place within the city, growing on both sides of the *river* that flows out from God's throne.

It is difficult to sort out the next descriptions of this tree; I will use the most literal approach. The tree of life is producing twelve fruits every month, each one (month) yielding its fruit.¹²⁴ The picture is of the tree producing twelve different kinds of fruit on a continual basis – it is never without ripened fruit; there is never a season of rest for it – its fruit is continually available. It's interesting that *month* appears here since time ended with the dissolving of the old heavens and earth; perhaps it is used to underscore the continual production of fruit, and the use of *month* tells us that the fruit will be ready much more rapidly than what we might consider to be normal at this time. Moreover, the leaves of the tree of life are for the service (*healing*) of the multitudes. *Healing* is only one aspect to the Greek word *therapeia* – it primarily speaks of service from one to another.¹²⁵ We understand that there will be no need for *healing* in the New Jerusalem for the *former things are passed away* (Revelation 21:4) and there is no more curse (Revelation 22:3); the leaves will serve some purpose for everyone there but we are not told what that might be.

Within the new heaven, earth, and Jerusalem, every cursed thing will be no longer.¹²⁶ This is the *new* that God brought in to replace the old, which has been removed (Revelation 20:11; 21:1). When sin entered the old world through Adam, the curse extended to all aspects of living: the ground was cursed so that it would not produce as it once had, noxious weeds sprang up to increase the labor needed to

¹²² Strong's Online.

¹²³ BDB.

¹²⁴ Stephanus 1550 NT; Gingrich Lexicon.

¹²⁵ Strong's Online.

¹²⁶ Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

produce food, children would now be born through pain and sorrow, and the woman was placed under the authority of her husband (Genesis 3:16-19). This will all be removed with the vanishing of the old heaven and earth, and no children will be born in the new heaven and earth (Matthew 22:30).

As we noted earlier, the throne of God and the Lamb will be in the New Jerusalem and His slaves (*doulos*; *servants*) will *serve* or worship Him; *latreuo* (*serve*) can mean to serve for hire, but within the NT it speaks only of veneration or worship of God without the concept of bowing before Him (*proskuneo* carries the thought of bowing and is translated as *worship*).¹²⁷ The translators have diplomatically translated the Greek word *doulos* as *servant* – by definition, that is incorrect: a servant is hired for a task, while a slave is owned by the lord.¹²⁸ Paul, Timothy, James, Peter, Jude, and John all identified themselves as being slaves (*doulos*) to the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1; Revelation 1:1); the term is used to express unquestioning obedience to the Lord Who bought us out of slavery to sin (Philippians 2:14; Romans 6:17-18). “Ye are bought with a price [the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ]; be not ye the servants [*doulos*; slaves] of men” (1 Corinthians 7:23); “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20).¹²⁹ We are *bought*, therefore we must recognize that we are first of all, slaves (*doulos*), not servants of the Lord.

It is in the new heaven, new earth, and the New Jerusalem that the *slaves* of God will see His face. When Moses asked to see the glory of the Lord, he was told: “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Exodus 33:20). However, those who are now dwelling in the new world are there in their glorified bodies – bodies that no longer bear the stain of sin and have been made new through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The glorified slaves of God will be able to look upon Him and see His name in their foreheads (v. 4). There is only one active verb in this verse and it is *see*; *shall be* has been supplied by the translators and it sorely skews the wonder of this verse. Paul taught that we are marked (*sealed*) by the Spirit of God in this life (Ephesians 1:13); when we reach that new world, that mark will be evident for us to see.

Then we have a summary of what we have already been told about this *new* place: there will be no night there (and so no need of either lamp (*candle*) or the sun) for

¹²⁷ Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

¹²⁸ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/servant>; .../slave.

¹²⁹ Strong’s Online.

the Lord God will lighten the new world, and the slaves of God (*they*) will *reign for ever and ever*. If we think back to when the Lord first created the earth, He gave man dominion over all that He had made (Genesis 1:28), and the sinless Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden *to dress* [work] *it and to keep* [have charge of] *it* (Genesis 2:15).¹³⁰ Therefore, it is very possible that we (the redeemed slaves of God) will be given charge of the new earth to tend and care for it to the glory of God; our royal authority (*reign*) will be over all that the new earth will contain. It is unclear how this fits with the *kings* whom we just looked at; perhaps, when everyone has entered into the New Jerusalem, the royal authority will be passed along to everyone.



⁶ And he said unto me, These sayings *are faithful and true*: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

Here the *angel* says almost the same thing that the Lord stated in Revelation 21:5: the words (*sayings*) that John has just received are *faithful* and *true*.¹³¹ The Lord sent His messenger (*angel*) so that His *slaves* (*servants*) might be shown what *must* begin to come into being (*done*) without delay (*shortly*).¹³² It's less about the events described in the Revelation taking place within a short time-frame from when John penned what he had seen, and more about the world events that will begin to be orchestrated in preparation for the unfolding of what he was shown. Probably the most evident example of what this means is the development of the power and corruption of the false religious system that is exposed in John's writings – namely the *woman* riding the beast (Revelation 17:3, 18), i.e., the Roman Catholic Church that began to take shape with a merging of the political power of Rome with the willing compromise of influential bishops. Within two centuries of John's visions, the *woman* was gaining considerable control over many unsuspecting Christians of that day; within that relatively short period of time, Christians went from being most cruelly persecuted to holding the favor of the emperor – the relief was welcomed, and the bishops ingratiated themselves to the emperor with a view to having a greater control of their destiny (i.e., they sought to avoid further persecution by cultivating the favor of the emperor through compromise) – the *woman* was settling in for a long ride. Truly, the groundwork for the events that are outlined in the Revelation began

¹³⁰ BDB.

¹³¹ Strong's Online.

¹³² Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

within a very short time after John wrote the book; sufficient detail has been given of John's visions to enable us to view world events (past and present) in light of them. As we do so, it must be with an eye to ensuring that we are ready for the Lord's coming – understanding all of the minute, metaphorical details of Revelation will amount to nothing if our hearts are not right with the Lord.

As I have sought to illuminate the mysteries of the Revelation, I have always endeavored to include the challenge to examine how we are living so that we may be spiritually prepared for what is coming. The unfolding of the events that John witnessed is sure, and today, more than ever, we can see the world changing in preparation for those days; however, it is imperative that we not become so far-sighted that we overlook the necessity of being *overcomers* for the Lord right now! The surety of the events described in this book is without question – the words (*sayings*) that have been written are *faithful and true*. Whether or not we will live to witness what John has described, we must be ready at all times to meet the Lord; the question is not: “where are we on the time-clock of Revelation,” but, rather: “where am I as an *overcomer* for the Lord?”



7. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

These words are ascribed to Jesus. *Behold* is a command to pay attention, and is a call to see (or, in this case, to listen) with understanding.¹³³ Jesus states that He is coming without delay (*quickly*); *come* is in the indicative mood, which means that this is a statement of fact from Jesus' perspective.¹³⁴ We consider this statement (*I come quickly*) and the almost 2,000 years that have passed since Jesus made it, and might wonder; however, when there is no time comparison (as in this case), the Greek word *tachu* (*takh-oo'*; *quickly*) is better understood as meaning *without delay*.¹³⁵ We can be very sure that Jesus *is coming*, and that He will come without delay; the Lord is not procrastinating nor is He tarrying (as is so commonly said) – He is coming at the appointed time. “But of that day [the day when Jesus will come in the clouds to harvest His saints from the earth] and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark 13:32). As it has just been noted, the orchestration of events leading to the return of the Lord

¹³³ Strong's Online.

¹³⁴ https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm

¹³⁵ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

were well under way before the ink was dry on John's writing of this book; nothing will hinder the Lord's coming at the scheduled time – the world is coming together in readiness, and, in the Lord's mercy, the day of salvation is still open.

A *prophecy*, in its strictest sense, is something that comes from a *prophet* (whether spoken or written), and a *prophet* (Greek *prophetes* – literally, *foreteller*) is someone who declares God's message and often more particularly future events as they relate to the kingdom of God and the salvation of men.¹³⁶ As we can readily understand, the book of Revelation is filled with declarations of what will transpire in the years ahead – it is truly a book of *prophecy*. Jesus pronounces a special blessing upon the one who gives careful attention to (*keepeth*; *tereo* – to attend carefully to) the words that John was given for us.¹³⁷ As the book was being introduced, John wrote: “Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep [*tereo*] those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand” (Revelation 1:3).¹³⁸ All of the prophecies of this book come between two promises that there is a blessing for the one who attends carefully to the words that Jesus has given to John. As we permit the Spirit of God to open this book in the light of all of the Scriptures, we will begin to know the blessing that the Lord promises; it is not nearly as important that we understand every nuance of the imagery of the book as it is that we come to realize, in a greater way, our need to be the Lord's *overcomer*. It is as we are *overcoming*, living victoriously in the Lord, that we are then *keeping* the words of this book and, indeed, all of the instructions from the Lord.



8. And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. 9. Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. 10. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

¹³⁶ Strong's Dictionary; Strong's Online.

¹³⁷ Strong's Online.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

After seeing the marvelous wonders of the new heaven, new earth, and the New Jerusalem, and hearing of God dwelling with us, John falls down in worship before the *angel* who has been his guide. This is not the first time that John has done this. When an *angel* showed him the judgment of the false religious system (*whore*), John's response was to *fall at his feet to worship him* (Revelation 19:10). The two situations are very similar. In both, the *angel* is one of those to whom the Lord gave the vials of His wrath (Revelation 17:1; 21:9), and, when John falls before them, the responses of the *angels* are also very similar. In the first, the *angel* said: "See *thou do it* not [*horao me*; Don't do that!]: I am thy fellowservant [*sundoulos* – a slave together], and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10).¹³⁹ This *angel* says: "See *thou do it* not [*horao me*; Don't do that!]: for I am thy fellowservant [*sundoulos* – a slave together], and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep [*tereo*] the sayings of this book: worship God."¹⁴⁰ The *angels*, in both cases, identify themselves as being *slaves with* John of the same Master, and are from among those whom the Lord has cleansed from sin (his *brethren*); these *angels* are redeemed and glorified men, and are not from among the heavenly angelic beings. Both times, their instruction to John is that he must direct his worship to God (*worship* [*proskuneo*] is in the imperative mood).¹⁴¹ As John sees the mighty working of God, first in His judgment of the false religion and now in the wonder of all that is made new, he seems to be overwhelmed by it all and falls down in worship before the messenger who is his guide.

This *angel* then proceeds with some further instructions for John specifically related to the book of the Revelation. John is told that he should not seal the words of the prophecy of **this** (a Greek demonstrative pronoun that identifies Revelation) book; *seal*, in this case, speaks of securing something so as to keep it secret.¹⁴² The reason for not keeping these prophecies hidden is because *the time is at hand*. *Time* is from the Greek word *kairos*, which points to the features of a period of time more than to the amount of time that passes.¹⁴³ Essentially, the reason for not wanting the prophecies to be hidden is because those things that are identified in the Revelation will begin to unfold very soon (*at hand*). Within two centuries, the groundwork was laid for the *woman* who rides upon the scarlet beast – the embryonic form of the

¹³⁹ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Strong's Online.

¹⁴² Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁴³ Vine's "season."

Roman Catholic Church had risen at tremendous cost to the truth of God's Word and the souls of men.

Verse 11 is sandwiched between John being told not to hide the message of this book of Revelation and Jesus declaring that He is coming without delay (in His own perfect timing). *The one who is sinning, let him sin still; the one who is doing evil, let him do evil still; [major shift] the righteous, let him be justified still; the holy, let him be sanctified still.*¹⁴⁴ The major shift that takes place in this verse is this: the first identifies that the one who is performing an action (active voice) continuously (present tense) is to continue as such; in the second, righteous and holy are adjectives used as nouns followed by verbs calling for God's action to retain these characteristics (the passive voice identifies the Source as being outside of the righteous and holy). If we consider the context for this verse, it seems that the message of Revelation will not change those who are living under the authority of Satan (unjust and filthy), but will be an encouragement for those who are in Christ to continue overcoming in Him so as to be ready for His coming. In other words, humanity will continue as they are – God will not override the choices that man will make; the access to the Narrow Way to life (the Lord Jesus Christ) is still open, but there are only a few who will find it (Matthew 7:13-14). The foundation for this is the reality that it is what is done in this life that will determine the everlasting dwelling-place of the soul; "... it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). The Greek word *krisis* (*judgment*) speaks primarily of a separating;¹⁴⁵ it is at the moment of death that a separation takes place. Within the OT, the determination was made for the soul to go to either Paradise or Hades; as Jesus related the experiences of the rich man and Lazarus, we learned that the former is a place of rest, and the latter a place of torment (Luke 16:19-31). The destiny of the soul of the departed was determined by the faith and actions of that individual while he was alive on earth. Under the New Covenant, the soul of the one who dies will either go to be with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8) or will depart for Hades – once again, there is a separation that takes place. At the moment of death, a separation is made by the Lord between the righteous and the unrighteous, and that judgment is eternal. The eternal state of everyone is in keeping with how they have lived their lives: if they lived in sin, then they will continue in sin in the Lake of Fire; if they have lived faithfully for the Lord, then they will continue in that state of holiness with the Lord in the new heaven and earth.

¹⁴⁴ Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁴⁵ Liddell-Scott Lexicon.



¹². And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. ¹³. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Once again, these are words that are attributed to Jesus. The first phrase is exactly the same as that in verse 7; clearly, it is important that we understand that He *is coming* (present tense) and that there will be no delay (Hebrews 10:37). As noted earlier, since we do not know either the day or hour of His return, we are inclined to view the intervening years as an indication of delay – it is not; He is preparing for the events of the Revelation, and they are unfolding according to His perfect timing.

Jesus says that when He comes, He will give according to the work of each one (*every man*); *reward* speaks only of that which is rightly due – it does not indicate whether that is punishment or blessing.¹⁴⁶ As a *negative* reward, when Jesus comes for His own, those who are disobedient (do not know Him) will be left on earth to face the coming wrath of God (Revelation 16). As a *positive* reward, every child of God has a work that he is to be doing: “For we are his workmanship [made new by faith in the Lord], created in Christ Jesus unto [for the purpose of] good works, which God hath before ordained [prepared beforehand] that we should walk in them [*that in them we do walk*]” (Ephesians 2:10)¹⁴⁷ – it is only through obedience to the Lord that we will fulfill God’s purpose for how we are to live! Jesus said: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15), and: “And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure [*hupomeno* – to remain faithful through trials] unto the end [death or the Lord’s return], the same [a Greek demonstrative pronoun that identifies this faithful one as the one who] shall [will (future tense)] be saved” (Mark 13:13).¹⁴⁸ Anyone who tells you that all that you need to do to gain heaven is to accept Jesus as your Savior has not read the Scriptures carefully; there is a work of obedience that must characterize how we live. “*There is* therefore now no condemnation [punishment] to them which are **in Christ Jesus**, who walk not [*are not living* (present tense)] after [according to] the flesh, but after [according to] the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).¹⁴⁹ The state of a present freedom from God’s punishment is based upon two conditions: 1) being presently *in Christ (now)*, and 2) continually living in accordance with the leading of the Spirit of God. When Jesus comes in the

¹⁴⁶ Strong’s Online.

¹⁴⁷ Friberg Lexicon; Stephanus 1550 NT; https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm.

¹⁴⁸ Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁴⁹ Friberg Lexicon.

clouds of the air, it will be those who are *in Him* and who are living as *overcomers* who will be caught up to be with Him. Those who do not qualify will be left behind and will be without hope. Our faithfulness to the Lord must remain intact and continuous until He comes or we die – only then will His *reward* be a time for rejoicing.

We have here a three-fold statement of the Lord's eternality: He is *Alpha and Omega* (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet), the *beginning and the end* (*arche*, Originator and *telos*, the Completer), and the *first and the last* (the *protos* and *eschatos*, the first and last in time).¹⁵⁰ Genesis tells us of God as the Alpha, the beginning and the first; Revelation provides a glimpse of God as the Omega, the end and the last in time; it is God Who made *time* to be a part of this world, and He will determine when *time* will come to an end.



14. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. 15. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

As we come toward the end of the book that tells us so much about what is yet to come, the Lord provides us with another reminder: happy (*blessed*) are those who are doing (*do*) His *commandments*.¹⁵¹ Jesus said that it was the one who was doing the will of God who would enter heaven (Matthew 7:21), and the one who is doing what He has commanded thereby shows his love for Him (John 14:15). Obedience to the Lord is clearly central to being saved, and is an active demonstration of our living faith in Him (James 2:17). It is the one who is *in Christ* **and** living according to the leading of the Spirit of God who does not abide under God's condemnation (Romans 8:1). In this life, there may well be great cost to doing what the Lord has commanded, but the assurance given is that those who do so will be *blessed* – the key is to have our focus on the Lord Jesus Christ and not on the things of this world (Hebrews 12:2).

However, beyond that, it is the obedient (the *overcomer*) who will have the freedom to choose (*right*) to eat of the tree of life, and they will enter through the

¹⁵⁰ Strong's Online.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

gateways into the New Jerusalem.¹⁵² Earlier, the Lord declared that the *overcomer* would *inherit all things* (Revelation 21:7), which we understood to be the new heaven and earth, the New Jerusalem, and God dwelling among them. This affirms that the *blessed* (the *overcomer*, and the one whose name is in the Book of Life) will have free access to the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:27) where the tree of life is flourishing (Revelation 22:2).

Once again, the *blessing* of the Lord is placed in contrast to the lack of His blessing. Of the six characteristics listed here that are contrary to the Lord's blessed ones, five of them are also in the list given in Revelation 21:8, which speaks of those who will find their place in the Lake of Fire. Let's look at the one new identity: *dogs*; this has led some people to declare that God hates dogs (the four-legged, furry creatures that are also called man's best friend).¹⁵³ Let's take a moment to understand this correctly. Deuteronomy 23:18 states: "Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price [*m^cchiyr* – price or hire] of a dog [*keleb* – used figuratively of a male temple-prostitute], into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God."¹⁵⁴ The activities of both a harlot and a male prostitute are abominable before the Lord (both contravene God's design for marriage [Genesis 2:24], which is a picture of the relationship between Christ and His *ekklesia* [Ephesians 5:31-32]), and this is a prohibition against bringing any money gained through either of these activities into the tabernacle of the Lord. When the Lord was reducing the army of Gideon, He told Gideon to test the men; those who lapped water, *as a dog lappeth*, were to be the Lord's chosen men (Judges 7:5). Therefore, when we read of *dogs*, *and sorcerers*, etc. being banned from access to the tree of life and the New Jerusalem, clearly this is speaking of those who are contemptible before God – the tree of life was never intended to be food for animals; it was placed into the Garden of Eden for the sinless Adam (Genesis 2:8-9).

Without (*exo*) stands in contrast to that which is *within* (*eso*, as used in Acts 5:23). At first glance, we might imagine that this is referring to those who are on the outside of the New Jerusalem, but we know that these characteristics do not apply to those who will be in the new heaven and earth, therefore we must look a little more carefully. We have just learned more about the blessings that will be the lot of the *overcomer* – those who are obedient to the Lord's commands; now we are reminded of those who are foreigners to such a life – those who are *without*, i.e., those who are

¹⁵² https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm.

¹⁵³ <https://www.thesimpleanswers.com/articles/2012/07/28/god-hates-dogs/>

¹⁵⁴ BDB; Strong's Online.

not *in Christ*. It is those who are not abiding in that life of obedience to the Lord and who are remaining under the wrath of God (John 3:36) who have their part in the lake that is eternally burning with fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:10; 21:8). For all of eternity, the faithful overcomers will abide in the presence of God (they will remain *in Christ*), and those who are *without* (the unfaithful) will be separated from God (in the presence of Satan) in the Lake of Fire.



16. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Jesus clarifies that He has sent His messenger (*angel*, singular) to bear witness (*testify*) of these (a reference to all that is in Revelation) to you (plural) who are in the assemblies of God's called-out ones (*churches*). The *angel*, in this case, is none other than John – he has been commissioned to send the text that he has written to the seven assemblies in Asia, and, from thence, it has come to us so that we, too, might learn of what the Lord has prepared for the days yet ahead. As John began his writing, he stated that he “bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw” (Revelation 1:2); as the writing comes to an end, Jesus confirms that He has appointed John to bring the message of this book to us, His called-out ones.

Jesus then presents us with two more of His identifiers; during His earthly ministry He made numerous statements that began with “I am ...,” and now He says: *I am the root and the offspring of David*. Contained within this simple statement is a declaration of Jesus as the eternal Creator and His affirmation that He became a man. The Greek word translated as *root* speaks either of the source or of a sprout; however, since the word *offspring* (*genos* – a descendant) is also included here, it would be more fitting to view the *root* as the source.¹⁵⁵ For a plant, the root is its source for life, and, therefore, Jesus identifies Himself as being the *Source* or the One Who brought David into being. Along the same vein, Jesus told the religious Jews: “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58); in other words, Jesus placed Himself before the beginning of the family of Israel and claimed the phrase (*I am*) that Jehovah used to identify Himself to Moses (Exodus 3:14). The religious Jews knew exactly what Jesus meant and, as a result, set out to kill Him (John 8:59).

¹⁵⁵ Friberg Lexicon; Strong's Online.

After identifying Himself as being the Source (*root*) of David (the *I am*), Jesus also says that He is of the family of David (*offspring*) – He is both the Originator and the Descendant of the same man! Jesus was born of the lineage of King David and Abraham (Matthew 1:1), which was a fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham, the father of all Jews (Genesis 12:3), and yet, as eternal God, Jesus preceded Abraham – He is the Sacrifice for sins (the blessing promised for all of the families of the earth) Who was in place before the world was created (1 Peter 1:18-20).

Isaiah prophesied of Jesus as being the *Root* of Jesse (the father of David). He wrote of the Millennium when a wolf, lamb, leopard, young goat, young lion, and a well-fattened animal (often used for sacrifice) will be together, and a young child will lead them (Isaiah 11:6), and he went on to say that “in that day there shall be a root [that which signifies familial permanence] of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign [a sign or standard; a rallying point] of the people; to it [Him] shall the Gentiles seek [make inquiry]: and his rest shall be glorious” (Isaiah 11:10).¹⁵⁶ Isaiah speaks of Someone of the family of Jesse Who would establish the family line forever, and He would be the One to Whom the peoples of the world would gather. Christ is declared to be the *firstfruit* of those who have died (1 Corinthians 15:20), “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he **ever liveth** to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25) – this is the permanence (*the root*) that Jesus brought to the family line of Jesse (and David).

Finally, Jesus says: “I am ... the bright [*lampros* – brilliant] and morning [*orthrinos* – early] star.”¹⁵⁷ To the elder of Thyatira, Jesus said that He would give the *morning star* to the *overcomer* (Revelation 2:28); *morning*, in this instance, is from the Greek *proinos*, which also means early, but whose root (*proi*) can also include the fourth watch of the night (3:00 to 6:00AM).¹⁵⁸ The *morning star* is commonly identified as being the planet Venus, which is at its brightest in the east just before sunrise.¹⁵⁹ However, Jesus is not the planet Venus but, rather, is the forerunner of a bright new day when God will dwell with His saints in the new heaven and earth and the New Jerusalem. Jesus is declared to be the *light* of that new city (Revelation 21:23); it is as we place our living faith in the Lord Jesus that He will be that Morning Star to us, heralding a brilliant, eternal home in glory with Him.

¹⁵⁶ BDB; Strong’s Online.

¹⁵⁷ Strong’s Online.

¹⁵⁸ Mark tells us: “And in the morning [*proi*], rising up a great while before day [it being yet night], he [Jesus] went out ...”; this places the *early* as being prior to daylight; Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁵⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morning_Star



¹⁷. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. ¹⁸. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: ¹⁹. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

We come now to a series of invitations. In the first, the *Spirit* and the *Bride* are saying: “Come!” *Come* is in the imperative mood (it is a command).¹⁶⁰ After all that has been revealed concerning eternity with the Lord, the Spirit of God and the Bride of Christ are imploring everyone to come. The Spirit and the Bride are inextricably linked: “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:9). Jesus described the pathway to life as being narrow (Matthew 7:14), but now He has revealed that remaining on that pathway will lead to a glorious day! *Looking unto Jesus* (Hebrews 12:2) – we must have a singular focus upon the Lord, what He has done for us, and the eternity that we can have with Him; it is only then that we can face the trials and hardships of this life with assurance, as we live according to the leading of the Spirit of God (Romans 8:1). The *come* is open to everyone, but how to come continues to be limited to the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6) – indeed, it is a narrow access that few will find (Matthew 7:14).

*And the one who is hearing says, “Come thou!”*¹⁶¹ Although the Greek word *akouo* (*heareth*) speaks, first of all, about hearing something, it actually goes beyond that to include understanding; it is the same word that John used when he introduced the book and pronounced a blessing upon those who were hearing and understanding (Revelation 1:3).¹⁶² Modern Evangelicals *hear* the Word of God but, for the most part, struggle with the Narrow Access to life (John 14:6) – they love their Ecumenical fellowship, which is an abomination to God (2 Corinthians 6:14-17).

¹⁶⁰ Strong’s Online.

¹⁶¹ Stephanus 1550 NT.

¹⁶² Strong’s Online.

The one who is hearing and understanding the message of Revelation calls out: “*Come thou!*”

*And the one who is thirsting, come!*¹⁶³ “Blessed are they which do hunger and **thirst** after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6). As we considered this earlier, we noted that our *hunger* and *thirst* for the Lord, our Righteousness, must always be there; even as He assuages our hunger and thirst, we must continually desire more – it is not that we become satisfied and settle into our ease; we are to be ever growing in our understanding of the Lord Jesus and what He has done for us (2 Peter 3:18). It is to the one who has a thirst, or a longing, for the Lord’s righteousness who is told to come.

For the one who is desiring (*whosoever will*), *be freely taking* (*take*, active voice – the *whosoever* must do the taking) of the Water of Life.¹⁶⁴ While the day of salvation is open, the invitation is extended to everyone who desires to be renewed by the Water of Life. As Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, He told her that “whosoever drinketh [may drink] of the water that I shall [will – future tense] give him shall never thirst [*absolutely never thirst forever* (the Greek includes the phrase *unto the age*, which was either not translated or deemed to be included in *never*); this has a Greek double negative and *thirst* is in the aorist tense and subjunctive mood, making it a very strong negative] ...” (John 4:14).¹⁶⁵ Jesus made it clear to the woman that He was not speaking of the physical water that could be drawn from the well; He used the image of water and thirst to show that for the one who may choose to drink of the spiritual water that He will provide (in the New Jerusalem), that person will never thirst for all of eternity. Out of the throne of God and the Lamb, which is in the New Jerusalem, is flowing a river of the *water of life* (Revelation 22:1); the invitation to drink of this water is open to whoever has a desire for it. However, that *desire* must be in accordance with God’s requirements: there must be a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (i.e., an *overcoming one*), for “He that **overcometh** shall inherit all things [including access to the *water of life*]...” (Revelation 21:7a). It is as we learn to drink of the Lord’s spiritual sustenance in this life that we will live as His overcomer and be prepared to drink fully of the water of life in the New Jerusalem one day. Jesus identified Himself as being the source of this water of life (John 4:10), and that as we faithfully abide in Him now, we will

¹⁶³ Stephanus 1550 NT.

¹⁶⁴ Stephanus 1550 NT; Strong’s Online.

¹⁶⁵ Strong’s Online; Stephanus 1550 NT; https://www.ntgreek.org/pdf/subjunctive_uses.pdf

have access to the Living Water (Jesus) – a mere foretaste of what is ahead for the overcoming one.

As we have already noted, when John began writing this book of prophecy, he declared that there is a *blessing* for those who *hear* (*akouo*) its words (Revelation 1:3), and that the Greek word used includes understanding what is heard.¹⁶⁶ As John now comes to the end of the Revelation, he has a message that he wants to confirm with (*testify* – *summartureo*, to bear witness with) those who are hearing and understanding (*akouo*) what he has written; in other words, what he is about to write is not something new, but he is affirming that which has already been proclaimed. His affirmation is this: it is perilous to *add to* or to *take away from* God's Word, and, more specifically, he identifies the dangers of doing so to the *prophecy of this book*. The Lord warned of the perils of adding to or diminishing from His Word when He gave Moses the Pentateuch: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, [so] that ye may keep [*shamar*] the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2);¹⁶⁷ in other words, don't add to or take away from God's Words so that you may be able to do what He has commanded – if you tamper with His Words, then you won't know what He has commanded. A little farther on we read: "What thing soever I command you, observe [*shamar*] to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deuteronomy 12:32);¹⁶⁸ here the emphasis is on doing what the Lord has commanded and, in our doing, not adding to or taking away from what He requires. In both cases, it is declared very plainly that we must not change the Word of God as it has been given to us – a significant warning to us in a day when the variations to God's Word are as numerous as the musings of men who seek to justify themselves before God. Solomon coined a proverb in keeping with the command given to Moses: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove [convict] thee, and thou be found [proven] a liar" (Proverbs 30:6).¹⁶⁹ This follows Solomon's observation that "every word of God *is* pure [refined; tested and proven to be true; free of all dross]" (Proverbs 30:5)¹⁷⁰ and, therefore, there can be no question that he is warning not to *add* anything to the tried and proven Word of God.

John identifies specific penalties for adding to or taking away from what is included within the Revelation, and the consequences vary for each. *Add* is from the

¹⁶⁶ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁶⁷ Strong's Online.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ BDB.

¹⁷⁰ Strong's Online.

Greek word *epitithemi*, which means to lay or to place on – in other words, to add to what is already existing.¹⁷¹ If anyone may be adding to (*add*, subjunctive mood) what is given in the Revelation, then God will lay upon (*add*, indicative mood, a fact!) him the *plagues* (*plege* – literally a blow; a calamity, in this case, inflicted by God) that have been written in this book.¹⁷² Many of the plagues identified within this book fall upon the general population of the world during the time that the Lord's salvation is still available (e.g., the two witnesses are able to inflict such blows as they see fit – Revelation 11:6); however, the plagues of the vials are the expression of God's wrath (*orge*) and fall only upon the unrighteous (Revelation 16:1; cp., 1 Thessalonians 1:10). What we can conclude from this is that the one who chooses to add to the Revelation will be numbered among those who will experience the expression of God's wrath: the unrighteous who are destined for the Lake of Fire.

For the one who may be removing (*take away*, subjunctive mood) words from the Revelation, God will remove (indicative mood) his part from the Book of Life, the holy city (New Jerusalem) and from all of the splendors of the new heaven and earth.¹⁷³ We have already learned that the one who does not have his name in the Book of Life will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15).

What becomes very evident is that the one who chooses to *add to* or *take away from* what God has revealed in the Revelation, does so to his own eternal peril. Although, in this day of numerous versions of the Bible, this definitely refers to the literal adding and removing of words; we must understand that there is a broader application as well (in keeping with the warning given in Deuteronomy 12:32). Frequently, such action against the text of the Revelation is a result of imposing preconceived ideas or theologies upon it. Let's consider two examples.

Some dispensationalists,¹⁷⁴ because of their central teaching that *the Church* and *Israel* must be kept separated,¹⁷⁵ have come to view the Millennium as the time when Israel will be saved and will thrive under the rule of the Lord.¹⁷⁶ David



David Cloud

¹⁷¹ Strong's Online.

¹⁷² Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁷³ Strong's Online.

¹⁷⁴ I say *some* because there are too many variations of dispensationalism to make any all-encompassing statements.

¹⁷⁵ I deal with this error in *The Role of Israel Today* (<https://www.thenarrowtruth.com/the-role-of-israel-today.html>)

¹⁷⁶ https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/a_refutation_of_replacement_theology.php

Cloud, an avid dispensationalist, claims that the New Covenant is God's promise that He will "convert Israel and forgive her sin and give her a new heart of obedience."¹⁷⁷ There are two glaring problems with Cloud's position; let's briefly consider them.

First of all, Cloud states that God will *convert Israel*; such a conversion involves a change from unrighteousness to righteousness. To the Philippian jailor Paul declared: "Believe [active voice, second person singular] on the Lord [Master] Jesus [Savior (Matthew 1:21)] Christ [*Anointed* – our High Priest], and thou [second person singular] shalt [*will*; future tense] be saved [second person singular; passive voice – God does the saving] ..." (Acts 16:31).¹⁷⁸ The significance of the *second person singular* is that salvation/conversion takes place on an individual basis; everyone must exercise their choice to *believe* in order to be saved. This is the Biblical pattern for conversion – individually being persuaded of the truth of God's narrow means of salvation (*believe* is in the active voice), which establishes a personal relationship with the Lord along with the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, and God may then bring salvation at a future date (passive voice; Matthew 24:13 makes the future salvation conditional). However, we must personally *believe* in order for God to *save*. The nation of Israel was born of a man (Abraham) who "believed God, and it [his belief (faith); active voice] was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3; cp. Hebrews 11:8). Of necessity therefore, a conversion of heart must begin with a personal choice (believing); it is totally contrary to Scripture to say that God will *convert Israel*. God has made a way of salvation (it was in place before man was created – Revelation 13:8) and there can be no variations from it (Galatians 1:8; John 14:6 – *no one* [singular] *is coming to the Father except through Me*). As Moses came to the end of his life, he placed a challenge before the people of Israel: "I have set before you life and death ... therefore choose [second person singular, active voice, perfect tense (the context identifies this as a *definite action*)] life ..." (Deuteronomy 30:19).¹⁷⁹ Salvation has always come to the **one** who is believing, yet Cloud claims that God will bring a national conversion to Israel for the Millennium when He didn't do it at the time that

¹⁷⁷ Ibid; this is further attested to by Dwight J. Pentecost: "The nation Israel is to experience conversion, which will prepare them to meet the Messiah" (*Things to Come*, p. 505.) – the same Messiah Whom they rejected 2,000 years ago and continue to reject to this day! Such statements seem to come out of the blue without any Biblical support.

¹⁷⁸ Stephanus 1550 NT.

¹⁷⁹ Leningrad Hebrew OT; <https://holylway.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/introduction-to-hebrew-verbs.pdf#:~:text=Introduction%20to%20Hebrew%20Verbs%20The%20imperfect%20%28yiqtol%29%20verb,this%20is%20usually%20a%20volitional%20verb%20%28Jussive%2C%20Cohortative%29>.

He brought them out of Egypt; “For I *am* the Lord, I change not ...” (Malachi 3:6). The words of Scripture are being ignored (by Cloud) in favor of a theology of man’s design.

Secondly, Cloud chooses to ignore these words of Jesus: “This cup *is* the new testament [New Covenant] in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20).¹⁸⁰ Was Jesus’ blood shed only for Israel? Clearly not: “... Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom **for all** ...” (1 Timothy 2:5-6); “And he is the propitiation [means of forgiveness] for our sins: and not for ours only, but **also for the sins of the whole world**” (1 John 2:2).¹⁸¹ Cloud bases his aberrant view of the New Covenant upon the premise that “the New Testament church has **no part** in the chronology of events foretold by the Old Testament prophets” (a solidly dispensational observation that finds no foundation in Scripture; within such thinking, when the Lord spoke of the New Covenant to Jeremiah [31:31-33], it is immediately deflected to Israel only); “between Christ’s first and second coming, there is a **time gap that was not seen** by the Old Testament prophets. This gap is the **church age** [a parenthetical dispensation that is **not** Israel, and they ignore Ephesians 2]. The prophets did not see that Israel would be set aside temporarily while God called out a special body of people from among all nations. After He has accomplished this purpose and the fullness of the Gentiles is come in, God will restart Israel’s prophetic clock ...” (emphasis added).¹⁸² Within this rigid dispensational view of the Revelation, it is no longer a matter of understanding the text but, rather, a question of how John’s visions can be interpreted (or molded) in order to make them fit into the grid of dispensational theology. Although Cloud (and other dispensationalists) may not *add* specific words to the text of Revelation, I would contend that, by imposing his dispensational grid, he has laid much upon (*epitithemi*) this book that it was never intended to bear and, consequently, he has distorted the witness that John brought from the Lord Jesus – he has *added to* what God has proclaimed.

Amillennialists are generally defined as those who do not believe in a Millennium (literally: *a* (no) – *millennium*), but that is quite simplistic and not particularly accurate. More commonly preferred terms are *Gospel Age Millennialism* or *Realized Millennialism*, by which it is understood that the *thousand years* (the *Millennium*) of Revelation speaks figuratively of Jesus’ spiritual rule during the present age.¹⁸³ They view Jesus’ second coming, the “rapture” of the saints, and the resurrection of

¹⁸⁰ Strong’s Online.

¹⁸¹ Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁸² https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/the_pre_tribulation_rapture.html

¹⁸³ <http://www.ukapologetics.net/realized.html>.

everyone occurring simultaneously, followed immediately by a time of judgment and then the new heaven and earth; they contend that Satan will be *loosed* just before Jesus comes (in their understanding, Satan is bound at this time).¹⁸⁴ However, Revelation 20:6 speaks of a *thousand years* (*chilia eth*), and it is in the accusative form, which is significant!¹⁸⁵ When this occurs, the time that is referenced describes a specific period of time, and is not to be taken figuratively and stretched or shrunk to be anything other than what is specified (in this case, one thousand years).¹⁸⁶ Therefore, the saints must be reigning with Christ for **one thousand years** (literally); the *Realized Millennialists*, on the other hand, have some saints being with Christ for the whole period of time (they died almost 2,000 years ago), while others will join Him for varying periods of time depending upon when they die before Christ returns (clearly NOT one thousand years). In essence, what they have done is spiritualize away the reality of what John has written – once again, it is deemed to be more important to have the interpretation of Revelation fit their theology than to take the time to understand what is truly being said. This view was first expounded and promoted by Augustine (although it did not originate with him) and quickly became the prevailing view of the Roman Catholic Church; during the Reformation, the reformers took this doctrine with them and it still holds prevalence within many Reformed denominations.¹⁸⁷ Even though they may not *add to* or *take away from* the text of Revelation, they have discredited the text in an attempt to favor support for their particular brand of theology.

We must be very cautious as we approach God's Word, and this is emphasized for Revelation, lest we be guilty of tampering with the message that God has for us. As has been noted, we can *add to* or *take away from* God's Word by adding to or removing words from the text of Scripture, but we can also do so by subjecting His Word to a grid of man's design – either way, God's message becomes skewed in order to fit with **our** understanding, rather than our understanding being transformed in keeping with God's Word (Romans 12:2). Paul's caution to Timothy is so relevant: "Study [be zealous, make every effort] to shew [prove] thyself approved [tested and approved] unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing [teaching accurately] the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).¹⁸⁸ Not only are we to be sure that we teach that which is true to the Scriptures, but we are also

¹⁸⁴ <http://www.ukapologetics.net/realized.html>.

¹⁸⁵ Stephanus 1550 NT.

¹⁸⁶ <https://thecripplegate.com/amillennialism-revelation-20-and-the-importance-of-grammatical-precision/>

¹⁸⁷ <https://bible.org/seriespage/millennial-series-part-4-amillennialism-augustine-modern-times>

¹⁸⁸ Friberg Lexicon; Liddell-Scott Lexicon.

charged to test all that we hear against the same Standard: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try [test, examine; present tense] the spirits [that part of man that is not visible; way of thinking] whether they are of God: because many false prophets [who will be revealed by testing their spirits] are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).¹⁸⁹ This is something that we are to be doing all of the time; the teachers of falsehood will be judged by the Lord, but so will the gullible who swallow what they say without examination.

“Now I beseech [exhort] you, brethren, mark [notice carefully, watch out for] them which cause [practice] divisions [standing apart; disunity] and offences [literally a trap; enticement to sin] contrary to [*para*, alongside of] the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid [turn away from] them” (Romans 16:17).¹⁹⁰ The thrust of Paul’s exhortation is this: turn away from everyone who practices a separation from God’s Word and proclaims an enticing message that is not Biblically accurate – it is *alongside of* Biblical truth (i.e., it may sound quite spiritual but it is not **the** Biblical truth). Paul’s warning is against those whose practices are not in keeping with the Scriptures – those who live and teach that which is not Biblically accurate. Often they will not be diametrically opposed to the Bible but will simply overlook or skew passages that would contradict their activities, and emphasize others that seem to provide them with a sense of justification for their *alongside of* teachings. The *disunity* (*divisions*) to which Paul referred is a lack of unity with the true message of God’s Word; the *division* is not between *brethren* but a separation from the Truth of the Scriptures. Nevertheless, this verse is frequently abused to discredit those who are adhering to the commands of God, and is used to denounce their separation from that which is unclean (in obedience to 2 Corinthians 6:17). Ecumenists take great pride in their *unity of the brethren* (they rejoice in their skewed understanding of Psalm 133:1) and scorn those who refuse to be a part of their inclusive movement; yet they fail to recognize that Paul was teaching against those who depart from the narrow message of the Bible (Matthew 7:14; John 14:6) and seek to broaden their fellowship to include every professing “Christian” without any regard for the exclusive truths of God’s Word. To the Ephesians, Paul stated: “... walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called [we are called in holiness – 2 Timothy 1:9] ... with longsuffering ... endeavouring to keep [*tereo* – to attend carefully to] the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3). The charge is not to keep the *unity of the brethren*, but the *unity of the Spirit* – the Spirit

¹⁸⁹ Friberg Lexicon.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

of God is to be our Leader (Romans 8:1) and our Guide into all Truth (John 16:13). Today's *unity of the brethren* is Ecumenism, which is an abomination before God!

If we would only heed the many exhortations that God has given to us, then we would remain as one of His *overcomers* and have no fear of the judgment that God will inflict upon those who *add unto* or *take away from* the words of Revelation (and the rest of His Word, as well). Clearly, the Lake of Fire is the destiny of those who take such liberties with God's Word (cp. Revelation 20:15).



²⁰. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. ²¹. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

As John began to write this book, he referred to it as the *testimony* (*marturia*) of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:2); now at the close, he quotes from the One Who is *testifying* (*martureo*) to *these things* – i.e., what John has recorded. Jesus says: *truly I am coming without delay*.¹⁹¹ The response that echoes is *let it be so; truly, come, Lord Jesus*.¹⁹²

The closing benediction that John uses is very common within Paul's epistles, but this is the only time that John makes use of it. Undoubtedly, the *grace* (*favor*) that John has in mind is that which will motivate us into becoming (and remaining) the Lord's *overcomers* so that we may be among those who will *inherit all things* (Revelation 21:7). We've seen very vividly what eternity will hold, and, if we have eyes to see, also what it takes to be among those who will walk the street of the New Jerusalem. Lord, instill in us the passion to hold You as the only God in our lives; then we, too, will joyously echo: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

¹⁹¹ Stephanus 1550 NT; Gingrich Lexicon.

¹⁹² Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.