

## Revelation 21-22 • Chapter Study

### INTRO

This is it: The last night in our 8 month long study in Revelation.

And this completes our **4<sup>th</sup> time** studying through the entire Bible here at CCO.

Since we started in Sept, '82, that means as we begin our 33<sup>rd</sup> year, we also begin our **5<sup>th</sup>** adventure, trek, voyage, expedition - studying through the Bible vs by vs, ch by ch, & book by book.

Someone did the math Sunday and figured if we've gone through the bible 4 times in 32 years, that means 8 yrs each time.

Didn't work out that way.

Some times we've gone faster; others times slower.

So – I've been considering **how** to go through it this 5<sup>th</sup> time.

I'll share how we're going to conduct our study this Sunday & next Wednesday as we begin in the Gospel of Matthew.

### Setting the Scene of Revelation 21

As we come to ch. 21, John has just had a vision of the final judgment of all mankind at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Now he's given visions of the glory that awaits the save.

It's important as we begin to bear in mind John is going to describe things that are inordinately difficult for us to conceptualize from his descriptions.

We've already seen how difficult it would be for someone from the 1<sup>st</sup> C to describe the modern world of cars, airplanes, TV, computers, & cell phones.

The lack of common reference points would cause that 1<sup>st</sup> C person to describe things in terms that would confuse us.

So, imagine John's dilemma as he tries to describe the mind-bending sights & sounds of a New Heaven & Earth.

What he says is accurate, of course, but it paints a picture that's difficult for us to sort out.

### Ch. 21

<sup>1</sup> Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

All of the mind-numbing grief of the previous 15 chs describing the Trib & Final Judgment is past.

John's eyes are now filled a vision of spectacular glory.

What he sees now is best described as NEW.

The Greek word **kainos** means "**new in kind; unprecedented** = having no precedent"

This New Heaven & Earth John sees **isn't a remodel** of what was before.

When Lynn & I bought our home on Geranium, it was a wreck.

**Structurally** it was fine but the paint, carpet, & cabinets were in bad shape.

So we took a couple of weeks and a bunch of friends came over to help us paint, tile, & repair before moving in.

While it was a bit of work, it was really all just cosmetic; no structural changes were made to the house.

It was a new house to us, but wasn't REALLY a NEW house; not like THIS word means.

Near our house in N Oxnard, is a Carls' Jr. It's old & always very busy.

So a couple weeks ago, they put up a fence around it and a sign saying they were going to remodel.

For a few days it looks like all they were going to do was a little minor construction.

Then one day there was a dozer knocking down entire walls!

They stripped that building down to just the slab & started over from the ground up.

THAT'S more the flavor of the this word "Kainos = New."

When the prophet Isaiah foretold what John sees here, he said God would **create** a new heaven & earth.

And the Hebrew word he used for "create" was *bara* which means to create out of nothing.

The New Heaven & Earth are just a freshening up of the Old.

They are something utterly new.

In 2 Pet 3, Peter tells us **this** creation will **dissolve**.

He says the heavens will roll up like a scroll & the elements will melt w/fervent heat, which is a great description of what would happen if the atomic forces that hold matter together were released.

Then God will make a **new place** for His people.

In this new heaven & earth, **there's no more sea**.

Life could not exist on our Planet without the oceans.

They provide water for the rains.

They are a vast reservoir & recycling center for refuse from the land.

They regulate temperature & a whole host of other essential functions that make life possible.

But when John says there's no sea in the New Earth, it means it's fundamentally & radically **different** from **this** Earth.

<sup>2</sup> Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.

In Heb 12, the faithful are said to find no home in this world.

They are strangers & aliens traveling to & looking for a better city than any on Earth.

The builder of that City is God & they will only find it in Heaven.

Here we see their faith realized in the New Jerusalem.

Don't confuse this w/that City in Israel we love to visit when we tour the Holy Land.

Remember, the old earth has passed away. This is something totally new.

It's the new & permanent home for all God's people.

While the theologian would say

It is our great & surpassing desire is to dwell in God's immediate, manifest presence,

A simple Oxnard homeboy like me says

More than anything I want to kick it forever hangin' w/my Divine Hommie.

The New Jerusalem is **where** that will be realized.

It's where we'll finally & forever enter fully into what we were created for: Intimate fellowship w/God.

And because of that

<sup>4</sup> And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Since sin is no more, there's no pain nor sorrow. Every motive to weep is banished.

The New Jerusalem will be a place of uninterrupted joy.

<sup>5</sup> Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

John was told to write because what God said doesn't apply just to the future.

These words are faithful & true **right now**.

God didn't say, "Behold, I WILL make all things new."

It's in the **present tense**; "*I am always making everything new.*"

While the New Jerusalem will be utterly new, it's populated by people who were once lost, hell-bound sinners but who were saved & have become new creatures IN Christ.

2 Cor. 5:17 • If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Then, the Spirit works that newness **into** us every day as we walk in the Spirit & grow in grace.

2 Cor. 4:16 • [Paul says] Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

2 Cor 3:18 • We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

<sup>6</sup> And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

"It is done!" Those word's set the final seal on the flow of history as we know it.

God's eternal purpose in Jesus is now accomplished.

What Paul wrote about in Eph 1:10 has been fulfilled:

That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in Him.

<sup>6b</sup> I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

This is one of the great promises of the Bible that's largely lost on us because of modern technology.

But it's something the ancient world was totally keyed into; as are many 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries today.

It has to do with the ***Need for Water***.

Being an agriculturally-based economy without the convenience of modern plumbing, all life revolved around the acquisition of water.

They depended on rain, wells & springs.

Rain replenished the lakes that fed rivers & irrigation for their crops.

They had to dig wells that took them down to the water table.

That's what they used for drinking & cooking.

But wells were inordinately difficult to dig & maintain.

What was a dream come true was a ***spring***; or as it's translated here, a ***fountain***.

A spring was where groundwater came out into the open of its own accord.

Such water had been filtered through rock so it was pure, was packed w/healthy minerals, and was usually cold & refreshing.

Springs were so valuable, they were inevitably owned by some rich guy who guarded them lest just anybody have access to the water at it's source.

So this promise of a spring of water to anyone who wants to drink would have been precious to people in the ancient world.

For us living in California in 2015, maybe we can get the feel of the glory of this promise by saying in Heaven there'll be no drought; no water rationing.

You'll be able to water your lawn anytime.

And for us in VC, we'll be able to drink straight out of the tap w/o the need to filter.

<sup>7</sup> He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

1 John 5:5 says what allows us to prevail is our faith in Christ.

Those who overcome will inherit all things.

But when you realize God will give us Himself, everything else doesn't really excite, does it?

Now watch this ...

<sup>8</sup> But the cowardly, **[those who shrink from faith in Christ to carry on as they always have serving-self]** [the] unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns w/fire & brimstone, which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> death."

While the saved will enjoy the glory of Heaven, the lost, those who've rejected Christ & gone on in their sin will follow that sin where God sends it; hell.

<sup>9</sup> Then 1 of the 7 angels who had the 7 bowls filled w/the 7 last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, <sup>11</sup> having the glory of God. **[pause]**

At 1<sup>st</sup> reading we might assume the New Jerusalem IS the Bride.

But ch19 & several other passages make it clear the bride of Christ is the Church.

The angel invites John to see the Bride, then takes him to a vantage point to see the New Jerusalem ***because it's there*** the Bride is found.

It's like me saying; "Come on, I'm want to show you my wife."

We go to the top of the grade above Camarillo on the 101 & I point toward Oxnard saying – "There she is!"

The difference in the New Jerusalem, is that it's the glory of Christ & His Bride that decorates it

<sup>11b</sup> Her light *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> Also she had a great and high wall w/12 gates, and 12 angels at the gates, & names written on them, which are *the names* of the 12 tribes of the children of Israel: <sup>13</sup> 3 gates on the E, 3 gates on the N, 3 gates on the S, and 3 gates on the W.

<sup>14</sup> Now the wall of the city had 12 foundations, & on them were the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup> And he who talked w/me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. <sup>16</sup> The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: 12,000 furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. <sup>17</sup> Then he measured its wall: 144 cubits, *according* to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.

The New Jerusalem's dimensions are equal; so its shape is that of a ***cube***.

Its size is massive. 12,000 furlongs = 1,500 miles.

That's the distance from LA to Iowa! // The square footage is about the same as the Moon.

So, how much space does that translate into for those who live there?

We have no idea how many people will be in heaven.

But in Matt. 7, Jesus warned that while ***many*** travel the path to destruction, ***relatively few*** take the narrow path to eternal life.

Several years ago, a scientist named Henry Morris estimated if we're living in the Last Days & the Return of Christ is imminent, then there's been a total of about 100 billion people who've ever lived.

If 20% of them go to heaven, that means each person would have their own "cube" of about 75 acres on each face to call their own.

They wouldn't need to be that high, so if the height of every lot is reduced, we might be looking at ranch size homes.

John wants us to understand that he's describing something ***real*** so he speaks of a ***cubit***.

The angel's unit of measure was that of the standard cubit; 18 inches.

Now John describes the ***beauty*** of the New Jerusalem –

<sup>18</sup> The construction of its wall was *of* jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like clear glass. <sup>19</sup> The foundations of the wall of the city *were* adorned w/all kinds of precious stones: the 1<sup>st</sup> foundation *was* jasper, the 2<sup>nd</sup> sapphire, the 3<sup>rd</sup> chalcedony, the 4<sup>th</sup> emerald, <sup>20</sup> the 5<sup>th</sup> sardonyx, the 6<sup>th</sup> sardius, the 7<sup>th</sup> chrysolite, the 8<sup>th</sup> beryl, the 9<sup>th</sup> topaz, the 10<sup>th</sup> chrysoprase, the 11<sup>th</sup> jacinth, and the 12<sup>th</sup> amethyst. <sup>21</sup> The 12 gates *were* 12 pearls: each individual gate was of 1 pearl. And the street of the city *was* pure gold, like transparent glass.

John describes the glory of the New Haven & Earth using words w/reference to ***this*** Earth.

So he picks the most precious materials of his time to describe the most mundane things of the New Thing; its walls, foundations, gates, streets.

From his repeated use of the word "***clear***" we get the idea the New Jerusalem is open w/the light & glory of God radiating throughout.

<sup>22</sup> But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty & the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup> The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light.

Imagine coming back from a trip to London or Paris & telling your friends, "It's a fantastic city, but there are ***no stores*** there."

They'd think you were nuts.

In the ancient world, it was ***unthinkable*** a great city had no central temple housing its chief deity.

There's no need for a temple in the New Jerusalem because God's presence permeates everything.

Everyone will be in the immediate, manifest presence of God.

<sup>24</sup> And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, & the kings of the earth bring their glory & honor into it.

This v has been difficult for some commentators bcuz they're troubled by the words "nations" & "kings."

I don't understand their confusion.

Nations is *ethnos* & simple means "peoples."

John is simply saying God's saved people from every ethnic group.

Even their great men & women have known God's grace.

<sup>25</sup> Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). <sup>26</sup> And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. <sup>27</sup> But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

City gates were closed at night to keep enemies from staging a surprise attack.

Since there's no night in the new Heaven & Earth, there's no need to shut the gates.

Besides—since all evil has been banished, there's nothing to threaten it.

Ch. 22

<sup>1</sup> And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God & of the Lamb. <sup>2</sup> In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore 12 fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> 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.

These vs hearken back to the very beginning of the Bible.

There's an unmistakable reference here to the Garden of Eden which was crossed by rivers & held the Tree of Life.

Once again we see fruit & are told that there's no curse. So we come full-circle.

All that was lost in the Fall has now been recaptured by the victory of Christ.

It's all been restored; & then some!

Earlier we saw the spring of living water. Here John speaks of a river of it.

The river most likely starts at the spring which flows from God's very throne.

No little trickle this; it's gushes & flows, making a river of crystal clear refreshment.

John sees is the river flowing down the center of the main avenue of the New Jerusalem.

Picture it like Channel Islands Blvd West of Ventura Rd, going toward the beach.

You know how the culvert is in-between the E&W bound lanes? Like that.

Only I'm sure this river doesn't flow in a cement channel with a chain-link fence walling it in.

Along the banks of the river, is the Tree of Life; not just 1; many. They **line** the river.

The last time we saw the tree of life was in the Garden of Eden.

Only 2 trees are given specific names in Gen 2;

The tree of life & the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The later was forbidden.

Interesting that when Adam & Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, God banished them from Eden saying, "Lest he put out his hand & take of the tree of life & eat, & live forever." [Gen. 3:22]

Then in Gen. 3:24 we read -

So [God] drove out the man; & He placed cherubim at the E of the garden of Eden, & a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way TO [not from] the tree of life.

It was God's **original plan** that man live forever, but not in the state of sin & separation from God.

God **wanted** man to have access to the Tree of Life; but only under the **right conditions**; when sin had been done away w/& the curse was lifted thru the atoning work of Christ.

God **transplanted** the Tree of Life to the New Jerusalem where we'll have access to it.

This grove of the Tree of Life is well-watered as it stands along the bank of the river.

We'll have open access to it because it's in the middle of the main avenue.

The fruit of the tree of life has 12 flavors & bears a new crop every month.

Even the leaves of the tree are useful in bringing healing for the **nations**; that is, the **peoples**.

John doesn't elaborate on just what he means by that; but his use of the word **ethnos** makes me wonder if by **healing** he means that the division of the human race into different racial & ethnic groups will be overcome.

We know there's no sin in Heaven.

So there's no bigotry or prejudice. No racism.

Our identity as citizens of the New Jerusalem will trump all other possible distinctions.

So, there's **no drive-by's** in Heaven.

No graffiti marking turf.

No gang-signs & mad-dogging. // No colors.

No banners, flags; rivalries. // No cutting racial slurs.

John's mention of **months** in v2 is interesting.

He says the Tree of Life bears 12 kinds of fruit, 1 each month.

The implication is that covers a year.

So, is there time in heaven?

We already know there's no passage of day & night. So how is time reckoned?

We have no clue.

<sup>3</sup> And there shall be no more curse, . . .

The curse was part of the old Earth which has passed away.

In the new universe, there'll be no evidence of the curse.

That bears directly on the rest of this verse . . .

. . . but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.

In the original Eden, God & man **walked** together.

That's where man was **closest** to God. But their time together wasn't **continuous**.

When man fell, man was **banished** from Eden & his regular face to face fellowship w/God ended.

In the New Jerusalem, w/no more curse, fellowship between God & Man is fully realized in a state of continual communion.

Second, there'll be no stain of curse marring our service.

. . . and His servants shall serve Him.

When God created Adam & Eve, He told them to tend & keep the Garden.

The words convey the idea of **diligent stewardship** of the physical creation.

Because of the nature of plant growth this meant pruning & directing the growth of vines & trees.

Their labor was a thing of joy as they lived in perfect harmony w/Creation.

But after the Fall & the advent of the curse, their existence turned into a hard life of largely unfruitful labor as they dealt w/thorns & weeds & constant decay & death.

We see the result of the curse in *our* daily lives; it's called the *Law of Entropy*.

That's the tendency of things to move from a state of *order* to *disorder*.

To *maintain* order, there's the need for a constant input of *new energy*.

And so we have to do the yard every week or 2.

We have to pull weeds, water, rake, fertilize, prune, sweep; then do it all over again.

**Inside** the house we have to dust, vacuum, repair, clean, & take out the trash.

In other words, just to maintain our *daily living space* we have to put in a lot of ultimately inefficient work.

On top of that we have our jobs which demand a huge investment of our effort; & not always to what seems like good effect.

One of the great joys of eternity will be **totally efficient labor**.

Our service will be to God Himself w/no curse to hinder or limit it.

Our work will produce huge & glorious results.

Don't get the idea eternity is **unending indolence**.

Human beings were created by God **to be productive**.

That potentiality will be realized in the New Jerusalem.

**WHAT** we'll be doing as we serve God isn't stated.

That's Volume II - But trust me, whatever it is, it'll be a blast!

<sup>4</sup> They shall see His face, & His name *shall be* on their foreheads.

Imagine Bill Gates & Warren Buffet, a couple of the world's richest men, come to you & say,

"Listen: We've heard all about you & want to give you a gift.

"We've built you a 5000 sq. ft. house on a hill in Santa Barbara overlooking the ocean.

"It's all paid for & we've pre-paid all the utilities, insurance for the next Century.

"It's fully furnished & stocked.

"You have an open account at the grocery store for whatever food you want.

"It has a 4 car garage, with Bentley, a Mini Cooper, a motorcycle, & Ford f-350.

"Don't worry about gas; you have an open account at Chevron.

"Now: Just in case you get bored, you also can take a month's vacation every year, anywhere you want. All expenses will be taken care of."

If it was anyone else, you'd laugh at the joke. But this is Bill Gates & Warren Buffet.

It's easily within their means to do all that & as you look at them you realize **they're serious**.

Would you be stoked? Would you be stunned & ecstatic?

Okay: Now look at v4 & realize **this is the Bible**; the Word of God that cannot lie.

"They shall see His face."

For everyone who's been born again, those 5 words ought to **mean** more to us, **do** more **TO** us than anything

Gates & Buffet **could** do for us.

To commune w/God is **the reason** for our existence; it's what we were created FOR!

SEEING God's Face – actually being able to **see** the One we've believed in & followed for years is our goal of goals.

Think of Moses.

He heard God's voice. He saw manifestations of God's presence;

Burning bush, pillar of fire & cloud, the Fire & Lightning on Mt. Sinai.

Then, when God asked Mo what he wanted, what did Moses say? [Exo. 33]

“Show me your glory! Let me see Your face!”

But God said, “You can't see it. It's too much for your mortal frailty. No one can survive beholding my unmasked glory.”

So God stuck him in a cleft in the rock and put his hand over it so Moses couldn't see, then when He passed by, removed His hand and Moses saw just the afterglow; like the light of the sun after it's dipped below the horizon.

That's all Moses could endure!

The main reason why we need to put off these mortal bodies is because they aren't capable of entering in to the fullness of what we were created for – to see God's face!

These are caterpillar-bodies that await their metamorphosis so they can climb out of the decay of this dying garden to fly through the air of a new dawn.

In 1 John 3:2, John says –

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Our eternal bodies will be like the Lord's glorified body.

Paul says it this way in 1 Cor. 13:12

No we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

Not only will we have new bodies capable of enduring the glory of God, we'll have intellects capable of grasping the reality & the significance of that glory.

<sup>4b</sup> His name *shall be* on their foreheads.

We'll be identified w/God.

<sup>5</sup> There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

That helps clarify what it meant earlier when it said we'll serve God. It's royal service.

In Rev. 1:6, John said Jesus made us kings & priests to God.

Man's lost dominion, reclaimed by Christ, has been restored.

Moving to Wrap It Up

As John moves to wrap things up, several different people speak.

It's not always easy sorting out who's talking.

<sup>6</sup> Then he

The closest “he” is from 21:9 – one of the angels that had poured out the bowls of God's wrath. said to me, “These words *are* faithful and true.”

Then John says

And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

We touched on this word “shortly” Sunday.

It means **rapidly**, not soon. It's unfortunate the NIV translates it that way.

We need to do a little study on this because of the error of preterism that's made inroads in the Church over the last couple decades.

Preterists claim **all of Revelation** except that last couple chs. was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans under Titus in 70 AD.

And they hinge their entire position on what we read here – that these things must shortly take place.

This repeats the ver 1<sup>st</sup> v of Rev. –

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John ...

It ought to be clear that John uses this saying as bookends for Revelation.

Yet the Preterists only want to make it applicable up thru the 1<sup>st</sup> half of ch. 20.

If we were meant to take the phrase as they say, that it means things had to happen SOON after John wrote, so in the 1<sup>st</sup> C. then what we find here in 22:6 ought to have been moved to v10 of ch20.

Because they say that's when the prophecy shifts out into the distant future.

But John puts it here deep in ch22 because he DIDN'T mean "soon."

He meant the Return of Christ would be quick, rapid; not spread over a long time.

Preterists are forced into making some very strange interpretations for Revelation to make it all fit the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Think of some of the things we've examined over the last months that are foretold will take place during the Trib & ponder how they could **possibly** have been fulfilled in the 1<sup>st</sup> C by the Romans.

- 8:8-9 = A 3<sup>rd</sup> of the sea becomes blood, a 3<sup>rd</sup> of the living creatures in the sea die, & a 3<sup>rd</sup> of the ships are destroyed.
- 8:11 = A 3<sup>rd</sup> of freshwater become poisonous.
- 16:3 = All seas creatures die.
- 8:12 = A 3<sup>rd</sup> of the light is diminished.
- 16:8 = The sun scorches men w/great heat.
- 16:10 = The kingdom of the antichrist is plunged into darkness.
- 6:8 = A 4<sup>th</sup> of mankind is killed.
- 9:15,18 = A 3<sup>rd</sup> of mankind was killed.
- Ch. 13 = The career of the Antichrist & False Prophet is described
- 13:16-17 = The mark of the beast & the world is compelled to buy & sell by it; or people are killed for not taking it.

Their interpretations of how all that gets jammed into the siege of Jerusalem by the armies of Rome is a tortured & tangled mess!

It's way, way outside the range of a simple Christians to grasp.

And I'm sorry, but that just doesn't line up w/any of the rest of how we read or study the Bible.

If preterist are going to be consistent, then they can't draw a line in the middle of ch. 20 and say everything before was fulfilled in the 1<sup>st</sup> C, but everything after is still future.

The placement of 22:6 means at least everything **up to this point** has **ALSO** been fulfilled.

And that means we're already living in the New Heaven & Earth and evil is no more.

See? It doesn't work. Preterism needs to be cut loose.

But the death knell for Preterism is the fact that John wrote Revelation AFTER 70 AD!

History tells us it was the **Roman Emperor Domitian** who banished him to the island of Patmos where he had the visions that comprise Revelation.

Google it: He was emperor from 81 to 96.

Now Jesus speaks –

<sup>7</sup> Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

Jesus's coming is not going to be some epic spanning slow immersion into the affairs of Earth.

When He comes, it will be like lightning!

Jesus speaks a blessing on those who "keep" that is observe & apply what they've learned as they read Rev.

<sup>8</sup> Now I, John, saw & heard these things. And when I heard & saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "See *that you do not do that*. For I am your fellow servant, & of your brethren the prophets, & of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

The word for **angel** means messenger.

The way this messenger identifies himself, it's best to understand him not as an angel but as a glorified



believer.

Twice now, here & in ch19, John has be moved to fall & worship before the saved in heaven.

This is a clue as to the glory we'll enjoy.

It's so awesome if 1 of us were to see it now we'd be tempted to worship.

<sup>10</sup> And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.

When we were in chs2&3 we saw the 7 ltrs to the 7 churches of AM.

We noted that the order they're given in parallels the basic outline of Church History.

When John wrote Rev. in the 90's, the Church was just entering the Ephesian phase of church history.

So **truly**, the things of the Book had begun.

For that reason, Rev. was not to be sealed & put away.

Unlike **Daniel's** prophecy which was to be shut & left sealed until the time of the end when knowledge would increase & people would be able to interpret it.

As we study Daniel today, in light of history & the additional light of the NT, it's *no longer* a sealed book.

Revelation helps unseal it.

So John is told **NOT** to seal up Rev.

Sad then that so few churches read & study it.

<sup>11</sup> He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

The idea here is that since Jesus will come *suddenly*, there won't be time to clean up your act.

There'll be no time for last minute repentance once He comes.

When the trumpet blows & the Church rockets to heaven, it take's place in the twinkling of an eye.

No 1 will be able to mumble a quick prayer & catch the last plane out!

So the time to repent is NOW!

Again Jesus says

<sup>12</sup> "And behold, I am coming quickly, & My reward *is* with Me, to give to every 1 according to his work.

This is a judgment for rewards.

It's based on what we've done for God by faith.

Paul tells us about this in 1 Cor. 3 & 2 Cor. 5.

<sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last."

Alpha & Omega are the first & last letters of the Greek Alphabet.

Jesus is saying He's the **inception** & the **culmination**.

In 1:8 & 21:6 this is attributed directly to God Himself.

Here it's Jesus. The conclusion is obvious: Jesus is God.

<sup>14</sup> Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, & may enter through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup> But outside *are* dogs & sorcerers & sexually immoral & murderers & idolaters, & whoever loves & practices a lie.

Some translations render v14 very differently; as "Blessed *are* those who washed their robes."

They do so because of a single word of 22 ltrs.

In some manuscripts, 3 of the ltrs are smudged.

So it changes the meaning of the word from "do His commandments" to "washed their robes."

The best reading is as the NKJV has it; do His commandments.

Works don't earn us eternal life, but obedience is **evidence** we **have** eternal life.

Jesus spoke earlier of rewards for the faithful.

Here He blesses those who obey God. They'll enjoy the bounty of heaven.

The rest are locked out; eternally.

Look at the list of the excluded in v15

But outside *are* dogs & sorcerers & sexually immoral & murderers & idolaters, & whoever loves & practices a lie.

By "outside" don't get the idea **outside** the walls of the New Jerusalem is some kind of poor, ramshackle ghetto.

This simply means these people won't be in Heaven.

We've already seen where they'll be; the lake of fire = Hell.

Also, by “dogs” Jesus doesn’t mean Fido & Lassie.

He means people driven by their mere animal urges, people who morally live like animals.

That last phrase is important; “And whoever loves & practices a lie.”

Those who practice deceit, habitual liars, people who regularly play fast & loose w/the truth, those given to exaggeration & boasting that spin yarns about great accomplishments – all these are indicative of someone lining up under the Father of Lies, not the Spirit of Truth.

<sup>16</sup> “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches.

Jesus puts his official stamp of approval on this book.

Note that He gives the **audience** the book is **directed** to – “the churches.”

Rev. is not some esoteric & secretive tome, knowable only by an elite.

It’s for **all believers**.

Also – take careful note this is the 1<sup>st</sup> time we’ve encountered the word “church” since chs2&3!

Not once, from ch6 which begins the Trib right up thru the final judgment do we see the Church.

Because it was raptured **BEFORE** the Trib began!

<sup>16b</sup> I am the Root & the Offspring of David, the Bright & Morning Star.”

Jesus attaches even more majestic titles to Himself.

He is the “Root & Offspring of David.”

He is both **BEFORE** & **AFTER** David.

Finally – Jesus is the “Bright & Morning Star.”

That’s a Messianic title from Numbers 24:17, which speaks of His role as the bringer of a New Day.

Now we have **John** speaking as he moves to wrap up the book with some final comments.

<sup>17</sup> And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

[Sunday]

<sup>18</sup> For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; <sup>19</sup> & if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, & *from* the things which are written in this book.

This applies *specifically* to the Book of Revelation.

As Jesus has stamped it with an official seal of inspiration & authority in v16, John now adds the remark that to add to or subtract from these words is to incur judgment.

There’s no clearer way to identify Rev. as sacred scripture.

<sup>20</sup> He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> time Jesus says, “I am coming quickly!” There’s a sense of **urgency** here.

And John responds to it with a kind of “Yes, Bring it on!” when he writes, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord J!”

While John wrote Rev. in Greek, he ends here with a popular greeting used by Christians in that time.

It was “**The Lord Comes**.” In Aramaic, which is what most spoke, it’s “**Maranatha**.”

Literally it’s a compound word meaning, “**Come Lord!**”

We find this word in some of the earliest manuscripts & on the walls of Christian tombs.

It’s the Gospel in a word.

The Lord comes.

Our God is not some far-off, disinterested deity.

He comes all the way **TO** us by becoming one **OF** us.

Then He comes to a Cross to atone for sin.

He comes from the tomb, victorious over death.

He comes in the HS to indwell believers.

Then He comes again as King of kings & Lord of lords.

Because our God is a Lord who comes to & for His own, we can say with all confidence, “Maranatha = Come Lord!”

<sup>21</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Don’t miss this: The Bible ends with GRACE.

The more you learn the Bible's story, the more you realize it reveals a God of Grace who longs to shower favor on people if they'll only look to Him.

The last verse & words of the OT are Malachi 4:6

Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

The OT ends with a curse, but New ends with grace.

Grace is possible because Jesus ***bore the curse*** on the Cross.

The stroke of God fell on Jesus; & now the floodgates of grace stand ready to be turned loose on those who come in simple faith to Him.