

Sent: Wednesday, May 4, 2022 4:36 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Revelation 21

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death will be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away!'" (Revelation 21:3-4)

Remember last week's lesson on Revelation 21 and the Millennial reign of Christ upon the earth? After John, in Revelation 19, had seen the heavens opened and Christ seated on a white horse, with eyes as a "flame of fire," and many crowns on His head, coming in righteousness (at His second coming) to judge the world, as "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords," striking down the "enemies" with nothing more than a "word" then seizing the beast (Antichrist) and the false prophet who deceived those who received the "mark of the beast,, and throwing them into the lake of fire"!

Then, in Revelation 20, John saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand to bind Satan for a thousand years "so he could no longer deceive the nations"! Then seeing "thrones and saints from all the ages coming to life" (being resurrected!) to serve as priests and reign with Christ for the thousand-year millennium. "Blessed are those who have a part in the "first resurrection"! Then, at the end of the millennium, Satan is released to deceive the nations one last time (perhaps as a final test for believers and last opportunity for the "lost"), but with fire soon coming down from heaven to devour those who join with Satan to make war against the saints; and Satan then thrown into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet are, and where they will be forever! Then John sees "a great white throne and the dead standing (resurrected!) before the throne, and the books were opened, and those whose names were not found written in the book of life throne into the lake of fire, experiencing the "second death"!

And so, the "finish line" is in view! The rapture of the saints has occurred; the 7-year tribulation is history; the second coming of Christ has been realized; the battle of Armageddon has been won; the great white throne judgment has been executed; sinners of all ages, demons and evil men, including the Antichrist and false prophet, and Satan himself, are now in the eternal lake of fire and "out of the picture," gone from the presence of God, the saints, and the angels of God forever! It is over! Well, almost! And that sets the scene for our study of Revelation 21, and God's final revelation to John (in a vision) about things to come!

It is the beginning of the "eternal state"!

Revelation 21:1 says, then John saw "a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there was no longer any sea"! And he must have reflected back to the words of Jesus (in Matthew 24:35-36) that "heaven and earth would pass away...but of the day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone!" Peter, wrote (in 2 Peter 3:10) that "the day of the Lord would come like a thief in the night in

which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up!"

The Old Testament prophets saw this coming! Isaiah wrote (in Isaiah 34:4) how "the sky would be rolled back as a scroll..." and then (in Isaiah 65:17) how God would "create a new heaven and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind!"

But then, John saw (again, in a vision) something truly amazing! The "holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband...and a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will be no longer any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away!"

And then John heard the words from "He who sits on the throne (God the Father!) giving the "bottom line"! "I am making all things new! Write about it, John! These words are faithful and true! It's done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the springs of the water of life without cost! He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death!"

Hear the words of God! What more can we say!

But the revelation to John is not over! "One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls..." told John to "Come!" and that he would show him (first-hand) the bride and wife of the Lamb...and the holy city," the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, and "having the glory of God"! And what a tour John was given, which he endeavors to describe it in the remaining verses of Revelation 21!

It must have taken John back again, and added new clarity to the words Jesus gave to His disciples (John, of course, being one of them!), just before the cross, when He revealed to them (recorded by John himself, in John 14:1-3): "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me! In My Father's house are many dwelling places (mansions); if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also! (Can you imagine John's "flabbergast" when he actually saw what Jesus had prepared!)

F.F. Bruce, in his commentary on Revelation, perhaps describes John's response best: "John ransacks the resource of language and metaphor – jewels, gold, and pearls – to describe the indescribable glory which the holy city reflects!" (You'll have to read it for yourself!)

Isn't it amazing that God actually wants to "dwell with His people"! Going back to the Garden of Eden, before the "fall," when God would walk with Adam and Eve in the cool of the evening (and you can only imagine what they talked about)! Then with His presence in the tabernacle in the wilderness, in Exodus, and the "shekinah" glory that emanated from it! God shared His

desire with Moses, in Exodus 29:45-46, when He said: "I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God! They shall know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them. I am the Lord their God!" And, in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit which (according to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20) He has sent to indwell the believer, during this life, with the notice that "our bodies are actually the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in us, whom we have from God, and that we are no longer our own but have been bought with a price...!"

But nothing will compare to the reality of heaven someday and being forever with the Lord and having access not only to Him but to the indescribable New Jerusalem, and the vastness of (and surprises awaiting at) the new heaven and the new earth (where there are no more tears, or death, or pain)!

The apostle Paul expressed it well in Romans 8:22-23: "For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now! And not only this, but also, we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of the body!"

And so, we look forward to the end of the Christian "pilgrimage" and the beginning of the eternal state. Like Abraham (as portrayed in Hebrews 11:8-10), living by faith "in an alien land...looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God!" Should be awesome!

May God's presence be with you all!

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