

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #100
10/01/2008

The Eternal Heaven: Part 10
“The Lamb’s Bride, the New Jerusalem: Part 4”
Revelation 22:1-5

Having displayed the marvelous scene of the 1,500 mile **“holy city,”** with its magnificent walls and gates, God continued now to set before John some of the internal characteristics of the city. In the previous passage, God showed John what the **“holy city”** looked like when viewing its external features. It had:

1. **“... 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”** (21:12).
2. **“... the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb”** (21:14).
- 3 **“.... the building of the wall of it was of jasper and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones”** (21:18-19),
4. **“... the twelve gates were twelve pearls ... and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass”** (21:21).
5. **“And I saw no temple therein for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it”** (21:22).

Having shown John an external view of the city, along with showing him that the streets were of **“pure gold”** and that there was **“no temple”** inside the **“holy city,”** God then began to reveal certain basic features that are inside the **“holy city,”** and we find eleven of these features presented in verses 22:1-5, upon which our attention will be focused:

1. The **“pure river of water of life”** (22:1).
2. **“Proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb”** (22:1).
3. **“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life”** (22:2).
4. **“The tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month”** (22:2).
5. **“... And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations”** (22:2).
6. **“And there shall be no more curse but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it”** (22:3).
7. **“And his servants shall serve him”** (22:3).
8. **“And they shall see his face...”** (22:4).

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

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

Revelation 22:3 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:

Revelation 22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Revelation 22:5 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 forever and ever.

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9. **“And his name shall be in their foreheads”** (22:4).
- 10 **“And there shall be no night there”** (22:5).
11. **“For the Lord God giveth them light”** (22:5).
12. **“And they shall reign forever and ever”** (22:5).

Embedded in each of these statements are awesome and important truths which deserve our rapt attention. Therefore, as we seek to grasp what God is telling us about His **“holy city,”** His eternal heaven, we shall focus our attention upon each of them. These statements tell us some very important things about the internal aspects of heaven and answer some of the questions that many have. As we proceed, we remind ourselves once again that to communicate these eternal truths of His eternal heaven, God uses earthly words designed to describe earthly matters. The limitation is ours, not God’s. Since we are limited in our experience and understanding to this temporal-material-spatial world, we have very little ability to comprehend the truths of eternity, which are of a dimension beyond each and all of us. Therefore, while we proceed with the acceptance of each of these features as being literal, we recognize that each of them conveys symbolical and typological truths that can only be suggested by the literal picture. It is probably true, as several theologians have proposed, that a number of the features of the eternal heaven have a close relationship with the Garden of Eden. Prior to the introduction of sin into God’s creation, it was perfect and, perhaps, even eternal since none of effects of sin with its destructive nature were present. Thus, we can likely compare the features of the eternal heaven with those God put into His created Garden of Eden.

1. The **“pure river of water of life”** (22:1).

When He created Eden, God put **“a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads”** (Genesis 2:10). We know that **“the new heave and the new earth”** (21:1) with **“the holy city, new Jerusalem”** (21:2) is different from the one on which we live. It is not indicted that the **“new heaven and new earth”** has any need of a hydrological cycle such as is needed now to circulate water through evaporation and condensation, providing the moisture that is needed to sustain life on this planet. On this earth, water, H₂O, is an absolute necessity for all living things. Life, whether human, animal or plant, cannot be sustained without it. However, life in the eternal heaven is sustained by the Lord God Himself. While here in this life, Jesus suggested the truth of what we are reading here about heaven. Even here, Jesus used water as symbolic of something that sustains life and is required for it to exist. What we know on this earth is suggestive of greater truths.

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In the fourth chapter of John, when Jesus confronted the sinful woman in Samaria when she came to draw water from the well and compared the limitations of the earthly water available to her with the eternal water he offered: *“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water”* (John 4:10). Jesus then went on to explain: *“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life”* (John 4:13-14). The water available to the woman, like the water available to each of us, can only sustain physical, temporal life. While critical to life here, its benefits are limited. The water that Jesus was speaking of has no such limitations. It has eternal benefits.

In Revelation 21:6 we read **“... 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.”** This is a most unusual river we are reading about in Revelation 22.

2. “Proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (22:1).

This river flows **“out of the throne of God and of the Lamb”** down through **“the midst of the street of it,”** apparently, strangely, flowing down through the middle of the **“street of pure gold.”** It is not supplied by some hydrological cycle. It does not flow toward some sea. It is **“clear as crystal,”** absent of any impurities, symbolic of God’s purity and holiness, and imparts awesome, eternal, indescribable benefits. At least symbolical, it surely provides aesthetic beauty as well life sustaining features, if they are needed. From the words Jesus spoke to the woman in Samaria, it appears that we can conclude that it is like the presence of the Holy Spirit — always present as a source of eternal life. Again, as previously noted, the implied meanings go beyond our abilities to comprehend them.

Somewhat like an earthly artesian spring, its flow is never to be interrupted, for eternity. God’s throne, not some earthly underground reservoir, is the source of this mighty river. According to God’s description, there might be a relationship between this river and “the tree of life.”

3. “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life” (22:2).

In the Garden of Eden, among the trees God had placed there, He had placed one very important and symbolic tree: *“And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil”* (Genesis 2:9).

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While eating of the tree in the Garden of Eden could and would result in the introduction of sin and death into the creation of God, no such result is possible in relationship to this **“tree of life”** we are reading about in Revelation 22, as we shall see in a following statement. The horticulture of heaven is different from what man knows on this earth. Both the fruit and the leaves of this **“tree of life”** have eternal, sustaining benefits.

4. “The tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month” (22:2).

While earthly trees do bear various types of fruit, each type of tree is limited to bearing one kind of fruit, and they naturally do it once a year as they respond to the seasons. The **“tree of life”** is quite different.

Though the **“holy city, new Jerusalem, the eternal heaven”** is not affected by seasons such as is our earth, it does seem to observe the months of the year as we do in this creation. This **“tree of life”** bears **“twelve manner of fruits”** — twelve different types of fruit. Each month, not once a year, a **“fruit”** is produced by the tree, each one being uniquely different from the others! Surely the various **“fruits”** produced by this **“tree of life”** are as different from those known on earth as the other qualities of heaven are qualitatively different from things of this earth, but we are not told of their various characteristics. It is sufficient for us to know that God provides such marvelous and eternal **“fruit”** for our enjoyment.

5. “... And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (22:2).

Not only does the “tree of life” produce various **“fruit,”** but, also, the **“leaves”** have significant value and contribute to the well being and enjoyment of the residents of the **“holy city, new Jerusalem, the eternal heaven.”** However, the word **“healing”** in the KJV presents some difficult questions for us. Since we know that all illness is a result of something being wrong, i.e., sin, and we know that no sin is allowed into heaven, the commonly used translation of the Greek word **therapiah** (2322) poses some problems for us. However, this same word, though most commonly translated **“healing,”** is also translated otherwise in the N.T. such as **“household”** in Luke 12:42 and Matthew 24:45. Its basic meaning seems to be **“to serve,” “to attend to,” “to minister to.”** It would certainly make more sense to translate the phrase as follows: **“The leaves of the tree were for the service of the people.”** Such a translation poses no problems, is consistent with the basic meaning of the word, and makes sense to us. God has thought of everything and is providing everything in heaven that we could possibly ever need!