

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #102
10/15/2008

The Eternal Heaven: Part 12
"The Lamb's Bride, the New Jerusalem: Part 6"
Revelation 22:4

Viewing the "holy city" from the outside, John saw that 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).

After God showed John a view from the outside, He then began to reveal certain basic features that are inside the "holy city." We find twelve 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).
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).

We have considered the first seven of these characteristics:

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).

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.

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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).

In this lesson we move on to study the embedded truths which are contained in the next one of these characteristics, number eight.

8. **“And they shall see his face...”** (22:4).

To **“see the Lord’s face”** is a way of saying **“to have close, uninhibited fellowship with the Lord.”** It is a natural desire that God’s children have. Many places in the Scripture speak of this longing. Many share the desire of Philip: **“... Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us”** (John 14:8), not understanding that this has already been done by Jesus as the Lord told Philip: **“... He that hath seen me hath seen the Father”** (John 14:9). In John 1:18 our Lord told us: **“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”** In our sinful state, as long as we live in this temporal-material-spatial sin-tainted world, we do not now, nor ever will, have the ability to **“see God.”** Yet, the desire persists and Paul wrote of both the desire and our limitations several times.

“... God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Paul also wrote about what must happen to us before our desire can be fully realized.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18). Then John wrote: **“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is”** (1 John 3:2).

God has predetermined that **“Each and every thing will be used to work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren”** (Romans 8:28-29).

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Sin has limited us in who we are and what we are able to do, specifically in regard to our relationship and fellowship with our Lord. Those limitations must be stripped away. God uses some of our earthly situations to remove those limitations and mold us into the image of our Lord. However, as the Psalmist realized, God’s work in us will not be finished as long as we live in this world and so he said: *“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness”* (Psalm 17:15).

The background and context of this statement needs to be considered to more fully appreciate the richness of what God is telling us.

Prior to his sin, Adam could **“see the face of God.”** He had unrestricted fellowship with God. There was nothing to inhibit or interfere with that fellowship. However, once Adam sinned, his sin separated him from God, and no more could he, or any man following him, **“see the face of God.”** Sin was now a barrier that separated man from God. Man’s sin not only separated him from God, but the impurity of his sin made it dangerous and impossible for him to enter God’s presence or **“see His face.”**

Moses had a very special relationship with God. When Moses’ sister Miriam rebelled against Moses, God intervened and clarified just how special His relationship with Moses was:

“And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” (Numbers 12:6-8).

Even though Moses had this very special relationship with God, when he asked to see God’s glory, which was like asking **“to see His face,”** God told him:

“And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen” (Exodus 33:20-23).

Not only was Moses, and all other men, separated from God by sin, but his sin nature made it dangerous for him as a sinner to come into the presence of God. God is holy and will not allow an unforgiven sinner into His presence. When the sinner tries to enter the presence of God without his sin

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being covered, propitiated and forgiven, then both the sin and the sinner are confronted by the holy righteousness of God which then annihilates both the sin and the sinner. This was demonstrated in the case involving two of Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu who thought they could ignore God’s commands and enter His presence in their own way. Leviticus 10:2 tells us what happened: **“And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.”** The holy righteousness of God is not only pure, it also incorporates and expresses the omnipotence of God. His righteousness guards His holy presence and allows no sin or impurities into His presence.

Even though Moses was very special to God, he was still a sinner and could not enter God’s presence until he had been cleansed from his sin by having it covered, propitiated and forgiven. Otherwise, God’s holy righteousness would have annihilated Moses just as it had Nadab and Abihu.

God provided a way for Moses and other sinners to be able to enter His presence. God sacrificed the life of an animal, shed its blood, so that He might cover Adam and Eve’s sin. He required that Cain and Abel (Genesis four) approach Him only after shedding the blood of a sacrificial animal. From the beginning of man’s separation from Him by sin God has required the sacrifice of a life, the shedding of blood to cover sin, before one could enter His presence. Later, God said that **“... without shedding of blood is no remission”** of sins (Hebrews 9:22). Therefore, so that each sinner could have his sin atoned for, have propitiation made for him with blood, God designed the Tabernacle so that it could be a place where He could meet with man after the blood from a sacrificial animal, picturing the future sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, was offered to cover man’s sin.

In the Tabernacle a special space which was called the **“holy of holies”** was separated from the remainder of the Tabernacle by a very heavy curtain. In the **“holy of holies”** were two pieces of furniture: (1) A box made of shittim wood and gold. The box was called **“the ark of the covenant”** and contained the following three items: **“... the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant”** (Hebrews 9:4). (2) A **“covering made of pure gold”** which was also called **“the mercy seat,”** **hilasterion** (2435). The name for **“the mercy seat,”** **hilasterion** is also the Greek word for propitiation which has two meanings: (1) To atone, and (2) To cover, appease, or expiate the wrath of God toward sin. There were **“two cherubims of gold,”** one positioned at each end of **“the mercy seat”** with their wings extending over it.

Only the high priest could go into the **“holy of holies,”** only once a year, on the day of atonement. When he entered the **“holy of holies”** he did only one thing. He sprinkled blood on **“the mercy seat”** seven times.

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When this was done, God told Moses: **“And THERE I WILL MEET WITH THEE, AND I WILL COMMUNE WITH THEE FROM ABOVE THE MERCY SEAT, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel”** (Exodus 25:22).

This particular ritual was the focal point of all of the sacrificial system of the worship in the Tabernacle, and then in the Temple. Of all of the sacrifices offered by the Jews, it was still ***“... not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins”*** (Hebrews 10:4). Therefore, Jesus had to come and ***“... by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us”*** (Hebrews 9:12).

God waited in the ***“holy of holies”*** for the high priest to come in once a year and offer the blood of animals, picturing the worshipper’s faith in His future provision of a sacrifice that could take away sin. With great expectation, God also waited for Jesus to die on the cross, offering His life and His holy, heavenly blood to wash away our sins, propitiating God the Father. Even as the high priest could then meet God because the sins of the people had been placed under the blood, we can fellowship with God, ***“see His face”*** in His eternal heaven because there is ***“no more curse.”*** Both the curse and the earthly picture of the Tabernacle, picturing God’s dwelling place, are replaced by ***“the throne of God and of the Lamb,”*** God’s eternal, all-sufficient lamb ***“who takes away the sins of the world,”*** (John 1:29 for all of eternity.

Indeed, to enable us to ***“see His face”*** is a marvelous privilege, a momentous achievement which must not be under-appreciated by those of us who are blessed by the propitiation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Truly, the entire Old Testament is needed to properly set the stage for what our Lord has done for us!

Revelation 22:4 “... and his name shall be in their foreheads.”

God’s ownership of and responsibility for His children is summed up in this brief statement. Several times in the Book of Revelation, a similar phrase is used to indicate this same truth (Rev. 7:3; 9:4; 14:1). The phrase was first used in Exodus 28:36-38 where Aaron, the first high priest, was commanded to wear a signet on his forehead inscribed with the following: ***“... HOLINESS TO THE LORD.”*** God was to be known as the holy God, distinguishing Him from all other objects of the worship of men. Since God’s children have been ***“... bought with a price”*** (1 Corinthians 6:20) which is the ***“... precious blood of Christ”*** (1 Peter 1:19), God writes His name on the foreheads of all who belong to Him. Therefore, He claims all who enter His eternal heaven as His own and, as such, marks each one as belonging to Him and being under His authority, protection and provision.