

Musings on the Apocalypse

by J. G. Bellet

Revelation 20–22

However gloomy the way may be, this is the end of it, the end that we reach in this book.

The action was the judgment of the corruptors of the earth, and its result is the holy occupation of it by the Lord and his saints. The ways of our Joshua end in victory and the kingdom. The bow led to the crown, Revelation 20 verses 1-6.

I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them. But before I hasten thus to the result of all this action, I would further observe that in the progress of this action itself we see, I believe, the deliverance of Jewish remnants from amid both the corruption and the judgment. Some of them suffer for righteousness, even unto death, and then ascend to heaven to take their place on the sea of glass before the throne.

And some are hid, as in a city of refuge, through the sorrow, sealed or measured for final security, and a place on the earth, where the footstool of the royal Son of Man. But in both ways they are separated from the corruption and the judgments around them, and after the wars of our Joshua begin, like Rahab, are safe in the Lord, whom they own in the midst of the apostate nation. And I also see in the progress of this action the occasional joy of the family in heaven.

See chapters 5, 7, 11, 14, 15, and 19. Heaven is surely a place of continuous joy. There the saints hunger no more.

This, Revelation 7, 14-17, would seem rather to be an earthly scene and company.

Neither thirst any more. The Lamb feeds and refreshes them forever.

But still they may be sensible of seasons and occasions of rapture, and this appears to be intimated to us in these passages. The joys of the heavenly family and their songs are now every now and then awakened afresh, when some new display of grace or some new prospect of glory opens before them, just as with the heavenly hosts before. For when the foundations were laid, they sang together anew, and still louder than before, shouted for joy.

And here I may further observe that in the progress of this book the church appears to have taught the angels a still higher joy. In the epistle to the Ephesians, we learned that the church was teaching the heavenly powers a lesson of God's wisdom, Ephesians 3, 10. But here we see the angels practicing, as it were, the lessons they had previously learned.

The church leads the joy, and then the angels take it up, following the living creatures and crowned elders in their praise, Revelation 5. And again, when the redeemed celebrate salvation in Revelation 7, they, as having learned the lesson, say, Amen. Thus much I would observe on the action of these chapters, but particularly of their contents I could not speak with any certainty of judgment.

Editors note, this was written in 1846, but all ends in the kingdom, as I have noticed.

The binding of Satan in the bottomless pit, connected with the overthrow of the beast and the false prophet, may be called the morning judgment, the judgment of the quick, ushering in, as it will, the millennial day, or the kingdom. Then at the close of that day, Satan being let loose from the pit to raise the last mischief in the world, the great white throne is erected, before which proceeds the evening judgment, the judgment of the dead, closing, as it

will, the millennial day, or the kingdom. And the day of the Lord being then over, the kingdom will be delivered up, and the new heavens and the new earth will appear, the church exchanging the kingdom for God all in all, or their millennial for their eternal joy, and Satan the bottomless pit for the lake of fire, or his millennial for his eternal doom.

Note, as another has observed, the inheritor and the inheritance will then both have risen in character, the second man, or the glorified body, will exceed the first man, or the earthly body, and so the new heavens and the new earth will exceed in glory and joy the paradise of creation.

Of all this, the prophet has given a passing sight, and then he is called up to another vision. He had before seen the bride prepared in heaven, Revelation 19, and now he is called to see her descent out of heaven, Revelation 21, verses 2 through 8, and by and by he will be called in order to see herself as descended, Revelation 21, 9. But now while descending, and he so looking at her, a voice accompanies the descent, 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, 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.

And after this voice passed, he that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And when he had thus spoken, he addresses John, verifying all that John had heard, and giving him to know that when this came to pass, all would be done, adding, moreover, such warnings and encouragements as may be listened to by all, from that moment to the end, being delivered by the Lord in the consciousness of the solemn sanction which the end imparts to all things, as indeed it is written, O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end, Deuteronomy 32, 29. Thus the vision of the descending city and this audience of the voices from heaven and from the throne pass away, and our prophet is carried to a great and high mountain

that he might see this city herself, the bride, the Lamb's wife, Revelation 21.9, Revelation 22.6.

One of those angels who had before carried the last seven plagues is John's conductor now, and in his presence he measures the city, and that being the sign of security, Revelation 11.1-2, he thereby gives us a pledge that there is no agency of destruction against it, but that the very hand which may plague the earth will shelter the church.

The church as the candlestick may be shattered, but as the Lamb's wife she shall live. This golden city is the bride of the Lamb, the church of God now manifested in her perfectness. She has length and breadth and height equal, with twelve foundations and twelve gates, her wall great and high, and her street of pure gold. Various all this, but shining and costly, expressing her to be the one that is perfect in holy beauty, and she is not only thus perfect in herself, but she has her dignities as well as her beauties. She is the habitation of the glory of God, the place of the throne, a sanctuary too as well as a palace, having a presence within her which makes the whole scene a temple. Thus she is the suited dwelling-place of kings and priests, and being thus in herself the beautiful one, and bearing with her this honor of the royal priesthood, all that goes forth from her or enters her and dwells there is according to those things.

Light is shed from her that the nations may walk therein. Water from the river of life flows from her, bearing leaves with it, that the nations may be healed thereby, and all that goes in is purity, and all who dwell within are in joy and dignity, having no need of candles or even of light from the sun, and being in the conscious dignity of their everlasting kingdom. Such is the city of our God.

Nothing must touch such a habitation of holiness and gladness and glory but the very honor of the kings of the earth. They may bring up their glory and honor into it, but nothing less than that can approach it. All is thus pure and

shining within and around her, and she yields forth streams of light and life that all may be gladdened and bless her.

This is the manifestation of the church. In this present dispensation the church is but forming like Eve for Adam, but when the time of the kingdom comes and Adam awakes, then will his Eve be presented to him, the associate of his joy and kingdom. The saints will be shown all fitly framed together, the church presented to himself a glorious church, without spot as here, in the place of blessing and government.

Surely all this is beautiful, as is everything of our God in its season. The incarnation and ministry of the Lord had been the manifestation of the Father and the Son. The present age is the manifestation of the Holy Ghost, and the age to come, and into which this vision of the golden city introduces us, will be the manifestation of the church.

For all is perfection in the way of God's wisdom, as in the ways of his love. He tells out to us one secret after another, bringing each in due season out of his treasures. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! But this only as we pass on, beloved, but by and by, he himself will detain us forever.

I was tracing the character of that holy city which has now been disclosed to us, and observing that everything in it told us that it was the symbol of the church in her perfectness and manifestation in glory were the saints in their dominion and honor. And I would again, as connected with this, recur to the difference between the gospel and the revelation by Saint John. The gospel closes by taking the children to the Father's house, or hiding them in heaven.

The revelation, by leading them down from heaven into the place of dominion over the earth, or manifesting them as the church of God in the golden city. It is not the mansions in the Father's house which we have at the end of the

revelation to look into, but the place of the sanctuary and the palace, the residence of the kings and priests unto God. It is not the children in their home, but the saints in their glory whom we see.

And all this is in full character, for the gospel by Saint John had been, throughout, training the children for the Father. But this revelation by him had been getting the inheritance and glory ready for the saints. It is a further stage in the history of the heavenly family.

It is not that they have left the joy of the mansions for the Father's house, which the Lord has now gone to prepare for them, John 14, 2, but they are to receive the glory of the inheritance in addition, and that is what is here presented to us. And this day of the descent of the golden city is the promised day of power, the day of the shutting up of the influence of hell upon earth by the binding of Satan in the pit, and for the opening of the influence of heaven upon the earth by this descent of the city of God, the setting up of that mystic ladder on which the angels of God are to pass from heaven to earth and back to heaven again. And the throne of God seen in this city has a new attribute.

At the beginning it was the throne of God, and the Lamb only came up to it to take the sealed book from the hand of him who sat there. But now the Lamb has ascended it. It is now the throne of God and of the Lamb.

He has got up to the hill of the Lord, and is now standing in his holy place. For the whole action of the book has been preparing the throne for the Lamb as it had been preparing the golden city for the saints. Such are the results disclosed now, and thus the action, as I judge, interprets the result, and the result confirms the character of the action.

All is harmony in this wondrous book. The action was not that of the Son on high preparing the mansions in heaven for the children, nor the Holy Ghost here preparing the children for the mansions. But it was the Lord, or God in

the supreme place for him, coming forth in the power of one judgment after another to make his enemies his footstool, and then erect his kingdom and lead his saints into it.

I have observed in all its holy order and righteous authority, it is the church as a golden city we get, the symbol of righteousness and power united. The church, with the enthroned Lamb, descended out of heaven to take association with the earth, and ruling and yet blessing it, presiding over it in righteousness, and yet dispensing to it the water of life, and the light of the glory, of the very fountains of which she had now become the scene and dwelling-place.