Revelation — Chapters 21:9 to 22:21

The Bride in Millennial Glory and the Concluding Testimonies

An Outline of "The Revelation" — Walter Scott From The Faith and The Flock, 1910–1911

Section 11 — The Bride Displayed in Millennial Glory

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We have had the last gathering of the nations. Swayed by one deadly impulse they converge upon one common center—Jerusalem. They march to sudden and overwhelming judgment. Then their leader is consigned to the lake of fire. The dead are judged. Next follows a description of the eternal state—the grand ages of God's everlasting rest—when the universe will be brought into harmony with God's nature. The lake of fire will eternally witness to God who is light.

We cannot possibly get beyond this. Eternity bounds our sight.

Hence in this section we are recalled to the Kingdom. We had a passing allusion to it in Chap. 23:4-6. So the subject matter of our section is not described in historical sequence, but is retrospective. glory of God, and as the Lamb's bride and wife, is very fully unfolded from Rev. 21:9-22:5, in symbols borrowed from creation and Judaism. There is a correspondence between the terms used in setting forth Jerusalem on earth, and those to describe Jerusalem on high, with this marked difference, that in the latter case, they are figures merely, yet figures of real and substantial truths. The true union of Church and State also awaits the coming days of glory; exhibited in perfection in the close connection between the heavenly city and the earthly one.

The Bride

Rev. 21:9-22:5 describes not a literal city, but the bride, the Lamb's wife (v. 9). The harlot is spoken of as a city (17, 18), so also the bride. The literal Jerusalem on earth is the subject of Isa. 60; but that to which the Apocalyptic seer calls our attention is the Church of the New Testament in governmental splendor—in relation to the millennial earth—the true union of Church and State.

Features

Here are some of the many interesting features of the glorified bride: Her state is holy, her home is Heaven, and her source is God Himself (21:10). She is enriched with the glory of God—our present hope (v. 11; also Rom. 5:2).

Her Light

Her light (v. 11), or shining, is as jasper—symbol of the glory of God (Rev. 4:3). God covers the city with His glory. The wall is built of jasper (v. 18), and forms the first foundation (v. 19); that is, the glory of God is the light, security, and foundation of the heavenly city.

The Wall

"The wall, great and high" (v. 12), denotes strength and security; everything unsuited to the glory of God can find no admittance to that holy place. All within are safe and divinely guarded.

Gates and Angels

"Twelve gates and twelve angels" (v. 12). The gate was the place of judgment. The rule and administration of the world to come is not committed to angels, but to man (Heb. 2:5). We shall judge the world (1 Cor. 6:2), and the twelve apostles from their place on high will specially govern Israel (Matt. 19:28), hence the names of the twelve tribes are written on the gates. Angels never rise above the position of servants; we are children and sons. Angels wait at the gates to obey.

Foundations

The twelve foundations of the wall of the city had in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (v. 14). The apostles have a distinctive place in the Church (Eph. 2:20), besides being in special relation to Israel. The twelve foundation stones are unequalled for size, strength, and splendor (v. 19). Severally, they set forth some distinctive feature of the glory of God, while combined they present God Himself in the moral glory of His being and nature, the Church's one foundation of incomparable strength and grandeur.

Measured

The city, gates, and wall are divinely measured, and a perfect square is the result (v. 15). A line of flax to measure the earthly city (Ezek. 40); a golden reed—divine righteousness—is the only and adequate rule to measure the Church in glory. The result is "the stature of the fulness of the Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

The Wall Measured

The wall is specially measured, but by the same rule, and instead of the “equal” and amazing size of the city, the wall is but 144 cubits; the former measurement expresses the Church’s perfection in the glory according to God; the latter, the Church’'s perfection in glory according to men and angels (v. 17).

Building of the Wall

The building of the wall was of jasper, that is, the glory of God will be our defense and security, while the city itself was pure gold, like clear glass; as to the gold, we are made the righteousness of God in Him even now (2 Cor. 5:21); then, it will be displayed—the purity will be transparent (v. 18).

Gates of Pearl

The gates were pearls; every gate was of one pearl (v. 21). The gates are set in a right worthy setting, even in the wall of glory—the pearl in the jasper. Israel, angels, and men will then learn, as they look upon the gates of pearl, that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it—the one pearl of priceless value to Him (Matt. 13:46).

Street of the City

The golden and transparent street of the city tells us that the walks of the wilderness are over. The sand of the desert exchanged for the golden street of the golden city. No more defilement; no more feet- washing. We shall walk on that which cannot possibly defile, or be defiled (compare with 2 Cor. 6:16). Street, not streets (v. 21).

No Temple

“No temple therein” (v. 22). There will be no “holy” and “most holy”; no curtains and veils; no temple confining the glory of God to a favored few. All shall see Him alike. The feeblest believer shall see Jesus equally with Paul. “We see Jesus” says the apostle (Heb. 2:9). “We see Jesus” is the language of “I saw no temple therein.” God and the Lamb make themselves known equally to all in the city of gold.

No Created Light

The city needs no created light as the “sun,” nor borrowed light as the “moon,”" nor artificial light as the “candle,” for the uncreated glory of God is its light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The city is one blaze of glorious light (v. 23).

The Nations

The nations shall walk in its light. What we ought to be now—the light of the world (Matt. 5:14-26)—that we shall be then. The Lamb shall light the city within; we shall reflect the light without (v. 24).

Homage

The kings and nations shall yield their homage, and pour their treasures at our feet (compare vv. 24-26 with Chap. 3:9). The seat, too, of universal government is the glorified city (v. 26).

Gates Ever Open

It is not “the gates ajar,” but they “shall not be shut at all by day.” Absolute security; the open gates tell the certainty of perfect rest and quiet; but will they not be closed as the shades of evening draw their curtains over the face of creation ? No, no; “for there shall be no night there.” Blessed and everlasting day that knows no evening! “No night there,” twice repeated. No night with its weird shadows— no night with its fears and terrors. No night with its troubled dreams. No night with its darkness and hidden dangers. All is light, all is day, all everlasting sunshine (v. 25).

No Defilement

“And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.” It is the home of the holy and glorified; no plea nor title of any sort will admit, save those washed in blood, and whose names were written in the Lamb’s book of life (v. 27).

The Throne

The throne of God and the throne of the Lamb—but it is one throne (22:1, 3)—majesty and meekness combined—maintain the blessing for ever; grace through righteousness then as now (Rom. 5).

River of Life

The river of life will flow uninterruptedly; now, the waters should flow freely from us (John 7:38). Alas! that its course should be so often checked and hindered by the working of flesh (v. 1).

Tree of Life

Not only does the river of life refresh and gladden, but the tree of life, with its varied and abundant supply of fruit, affords eternal nourishment, while its “leaves” will be the witness of grace to the millennial nations (v. 2).

No Curse

“No more curse.” What then? The throne of God and of the Lamb combined shall be in it, upholding the glory and sustaining the blessedness, while "His servants shall serve Him" unceasingly. We serve Him in weakness and imperfection now; then we shall serve Him in strength, perfectly, and for ever (v. 3.)

His Face

We “shall see His face” (v. 4); that is a blessing beyond harp, or crown, or robe, or glory. The best wine is here poured out. We shall see the face of Him who died, and His name shall be on our foreheads. Like Rebecca of old when she lifted up her eyes at the close of her wilderness travel, and beheld Isaac, she veiled her face that she might shine in his likeness; so in that day His name on our foreheads will be the public bearing of His likeness, morally (1 John 3:2) and corporeally (Phil. 3:21).

The Reign

They “shall reign for ever and ever.” The millennium and eternity are here embraced. Both our service and reign are eternal, and our joys as well. Thus closes this truly marvelous and magnificent description of the Church in the glory, with a statement that reaches far beyond the millennial age. In the eternity of God, the Church reigns in a glory that shall never sink-never go down (v. 5).

Section 12 — Concluding Testimonies and Warnings

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It will be observed that the first five verses of the Chapter are introduced with the formula “And He shewed me,” thus intimating a new Vision. God and the Lamb together constitute the strength and glory of the redeemed in Millennial and Eternal ages. How fitting, therefore, that the prophecy proper should close with the revelation of God and the Lamb and their one throne. What a combination of majesty, tenderness, and strength! What a fitting conclusion to these sublime prophecies!

The voice of prophecy is no more heard. For two thousand years, God has been silent. The last word has been spoken, the last vision has been seen, the last Divine Communication has been addressed to the Church. The sure word of prophecy is about to be translated into fact and blessed realization. What wait we for?—the gathering shout of the Lord. We dare not allow any intervening event or circumstance, be it prophetic, political, social, or personal. We are on the tip-toe of expectation. His Shout and Voice may fall upon our waiting souls at any moment. Are our loins girt? Are lamps trimmed? Are lights burning?

Comment on the concluding verses of the book seem needless. A few suggestive remarks will suffice. In vv. 6 and 7 we have the prophecy authenticated by the Lord God of the prophets through His intermediary "His Angel." Thus the prophecies contained in "The Revelation" with those embodied in the books of the Old Testament form one harmonious whole. The unity of the prophetic word, from Gen. 3:15 to Rev. 22:20, evidently manifests a Divine plan—the product of the Divine mind.

Three times the Lord Himself announces His speedy return (vv. 7, 12, 20). The first announcement connects itself with our responsibility to keep the prophetic word (v. 7). The second as to our stewardship (v. 12) and righteous reward. The third—the last word from heaven—is consolatory (v. 20).

Verse 11 unfolds and enforces a principle of profound importance.

By Death or Christ's Coming, the character and state of all are eternally fixed. Progression or change of condition is impossible.

The immutability of character in eternity should rouse to instant and continuous holy action now. Habits form character and character fixes destiny. On the other side of death, all is fixed and irrevocable.

In verse 13 we hear, as in the beginning of the book (vv. 1, 8, 17), the divine speaker announcing certain Divine titles, and just those suitable for ruined circumstances, and hence for faith to build and rest upon.

The generally accepted reading of verse 14 clears up certain difficulties and removes well-founded objections to the legalism in the text, as it appears in our English Bibles: "Blessed are they that wash their robes that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city." (R.V.). Thus grace—not law—is the above title to blessing, and this is the testimony of Scripture throughout. Those outside the Holy City are summarized under various characters or classes (v. 15). By their sin they exclude

themselves. “I Jesus” (v. 16). We greatly love the quiet calm and dignity in this assertion of the precious and personal name—Jesus. Our salvation and happiness are wrapped up in this Name of names—none so sweet to a believer’s ear. “I am the root and the offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star.” The former title connects Him as God (the root) and Man (the offspring), with the permanent establishment of royalty in the house of David—David’s Lord and David’s Son. The second title is the one which most appeals to us. Before the day breaks for Israel, ere as the Sun of righteousness He lightens the Holy Land of Palestine and throws the skirts of His glory over the people and land he loves so well, He first of all appears to His Church as the Bright and Morning Star. The watchers cannot fail to see the Star—it is “bright”—O so bright. It is Christ’s Personal Coming for us before He chases away darkness, and every enemy from Israel and the world. What is the response to the voice of the Bridegroom? Love instantly responds, “And the Spirit and the Bride say Come.” The cry is addressed to Him. It is not the call of the evangelist to the world, but the cry of the Bride to her heavenly and Divine Bridegroom. Every hearer is next invited to take part in the call of love in which the Spirit too unites. Then the next two invitations address sinners who thirst, and whosoever will, to come ere the door of grace and hope is for ever closed. (v. 17).

Verses 18 and 19 solemnly warn all against unholy tampering with the words of this prophetic book. This may be done either by adding to them (v. 18), or taking from them (v. 19). To do either is to incur the guilt which merits the severest judgments contained in the book.

The Lord’s final message to His Church is found in v. 20, “Surely I come quickly.” Triumphantly we answer, “Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus.” His last challenge to our hearts. Our last word of bridal affection to Him and of Him. The Old Testament closes with a threatened curse. The New Testament is finished with a benediction of grace—grace in its fulness to all saints.