

Tomorrow In Prophecy

resurrection as “the resurrection of damnation.”

That motley host of the incorrigible come forth from their graves with the same sinful hearts and rebellious spirits that controlled them during this life. There are the same marks of sin, the same physical defects, the same fierce, hatreds, the same bitter, animosities. The arch rebel's enforced inactivity then terminates., and for “a little season” (verse 3) he will resume his activity of deception.

“When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to, gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.” Verses 7, 8.

As Satan views those unnumbered millions, his hopes revive. Among that host are mighty kings and conquering warriors who never lost a battle. In the mind of Satan a wild, ambitious scheme originates, and he artfully goes forth to mislead that vast multitude of unregenerate men and fallen angels with the mad project of capturing the Holy City, dethroning God, exterminating the saints, and possessing the earth.

Just how long the “little season” continues we are not told. Evidently there is time to construct munitions and engines of war, and to organize a mightier army than this world has ever seen. Preparations being completed, the command to advance is given; and legion upon legion; army upon army, surround the city, the numbers without being vastly greater than those within. The record states: “They went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.” Revelation 20:9.

The Great Controversy Ended. For the first and last time the entire family of Adam meet. What a scene! The redeemed inside the city are secure and confident. The host outside now see what they have lost. They perceive that further struggle is futile, that God is just, that although they had every opportunity, they slighted and despised the love of Christ, and are guilty of high treason against the government of heaven.

You and I will be there. All of our relatives, our friends, and our enemies will be there. No one will be absent, and none can escape. The great and solemn question is this, In which company shall we be found-shall I be found? All the wicked acknowledge their guilt, and none pleads an excuse. How they wish they had lived differently! But then it will be for ever too late. As seen by the apostle, “Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. This is the second death.” Revelation 20: 9

Satan, sin, and sinners will then be no more, while the fire that consumes them will purify the earth from every taint and vestige of evil. (Malachi 4:1; 2 Peter, 3:10-13).

With that event the age long controversy between Christ and Satan will terminate. “There shall be no more curse.” Revelation 22:3. “Affliction, shall not rise up the second time.” Nahum 1:9. Amid a glorious new earth arises in which the happy millions of the redeemed find an eternal inheritance. Let none be deceived by the false hope of a second probation. That unscriptural teaching is Satan's opiate to induce a fatal procrastination and sleep. The present is our opportunity to forsake sin, live wholly for Christ, and definitely arrange to be present at the grand millennial gathering soon to convene in the newly created homeland.

11. The Homeland of Promise

The subject of this chapter, beginning with verse 2, is the New Jerusalem, but before that is introduced, John tells how the present heaven and earth and sea are to be disposed of:

Verse 1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

New Heaven and New Earth. By the first heaven and first earth, John unquestionably means the present heaven and earth, "the heavens and the earth which are now." 2 Peter 3: 7. Some have supposed that when the Bible speaks of the third heaven, in which are Paradise and the tree of life (2 Corinthians 12: 2 and Revelation 2: 7), it refers to the heaven which is yet future, and does not prove that there is a Paradise and a tree of life literally in existence in heaven at the present time. They base their view on the fact that Peter speaks of three heavens and earths: those before the flood, the ones which now are, and the ones which are to come. But that theory is completely overturned by the first verse of Revelation 21: for John here reckons but two heavens and earths. The ones which now are he called the first, so that the future new heavens would, according to this count, be the second, and not the third, as Peter is supposed to reckon. Hence it is certain that Peter did not design to establish a numerical order, in accordance with

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which we should speak of one as the first, another as the second, and the last as the third. The object of his reasoning was simply to show that as a literal heaven and earth succeeded to the destruction of the earth by the flood, so a literal heaven and earth would result from the renovation of the present system by fire. There is no proof, therefore, that when Bible speaks of the third heaven, it refers simply to The third state of the present heavens and earth, for then all the Bible writers would uniformly have so reckoned it. Thus the arguments of those who endeavor to disprove a literal Paradise and tree of life in existence now, fall to the ground.

The Bible certainly recognizes three heavens in the present constitution of things, namely, the first, or atmospheric heaven, which the fowls of the air inhabit; the second, the planetary heaven, the region of the sun, moon, and stars; and the third, high above others, where Paradise and the tree of life are found (Revelation 2: 7), where God has His residence and His throne (Revelation 22: 1, 2), to which Paul was caught up in heavenly vision (2 Corinthians 12: 2), to which Christ ascended when He left the earth (Revelation 12: 5), where He now, as Priest-King, sits upon the throne with His Father (Zechariah 6: 13), and where the glorious city stands, awaiting the saints when they enter into life (Revelation 21: 2). Blessed be God that from that bright land intelligence has been brought to this far-off world of ours! Thanks be to His holy name that a way has been opened, which leads like a straight and shining path of light up to those blest abodes!

The Sea No More. Because John says, "There was no more sea," the question is sometimes asked, Is there, then, to be no sea in the new earth? It does not certainly follow from this text that there will be none; for John is speaking only of the present heaven and earth and sea. It might be translated thus: For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, an the sea also passed away; that is, the old sea no longer appeared, any more than the old heaven and the old earth. Yet there may be a new sea as there is a new earth.

Adam Clarke says on this passage: "The sea no more appeared than did the first heaven and earth. All was made new; and probably the new sea occupied a different position, and was differently distributed, from that of the old sea." [1]

The river of life, of which we read in the following chapter, proceeds from the throne of God, and flows through the broad street of the city. It must find some place into which to discharge its waters, and what could that be but the new-earth sea? That there will be a sea, or seas, in the new earth, may be inferred from the prophecy which speaks of Christ's future reign as follows: "His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." Zechariah 9: 10. But that three quarters of the globe will then, as now, be abandoned to as waste of waters, can hardly be expected. The new world, where God's faithful people are to dwell, will have everything which will contribute to proportion, utility, and beauty.

Verse 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven 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. 4 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.

The Father's House. In connection with the view which John has of the holy city coming down from God out of heaven, a voice is heard, saying, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them." The great God takes up His abode on this earth, but we do not suppose that God is confined to this, or any other one of the worlds of His creation. He here has a throne, and the earth enjoys so much of His presence that it may be said that He dwells among men and dwells there in a different sense from ever before. Why should this be thought a strange thing? God's only-begotten Son is here as ruler of His special kingdom. The holy city will be here. The heavenly hosts take an interest in this world probably above what they feel in any other; yea, reasoning from one of the Savior's parables, there will be more joy in heaven over one world redeemed than over ninety and nine which have needed no redemption.

No Cause for Tears. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." He does not literally wipe away tears from the eyes of His people, for there will be no tears in that kingdom to be wiped away. He wipes away tears by removing all causes of tears.

Verse 5 And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And He said unto me, It is done. 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

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freely.

The New Creation. He that sits upon the throne is the same being that is mentioned in verses 11, 12 of the preceding chapter. He says, "I make all things new;" not, I make all new things. The earth is not destroyed, annihilated, and a new one created, but all things are made over new. Let us rejoice that these words are true. When this is accomplished, all will be ready for the utterance of that sublime sentence, "It is done." The dark shadow of sin has then forever vanished. The wicked, root and branch (Malachi 4:1), are destroyed out of the land of the living, and the universal anthem of praise and thanksgiving (Revelation 5:13) goes up from a redeemed world and a clean universe to a covenant-keeping God.

Verse 7 He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The Great Inheritance. The overcomers are "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3: 29. The promise embraces the world (Romans 4:13); and the saints will go forth upon the earth, not as servants or aliens, but as lawful heirs to the heavenly estate and proprietors of the soil.

Fear That Hath Torment. But the fearful and unbelieving have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The word "fearful" has been a trouble to some conscientious ones, who have had fears more or less in all their Christian experience. It may be well, therefore, to inquire what kind of fear is here meant. It is not fear of our own weakness, or of the power of the tempter. It is not fear of sinning, or of falling out by the way, or of coming short at last. Such fear drives us to the Lord for help. But the fear mentioned here is connected with unbelief, a fear of the ridicule and opposition of the world, a fear to trust God and venture out upon His promises, a fear that He will not fulfill what He has declared, and that consequently one will be left to shame and loss for believing on Him. Cherishing such fear, one can be only half-hearted in His service. This is most dishonoring to God. This is the fear which we are commanded not to have. (Isaiah 51: 7.) This is the fear which brings into condemnation here, and will finally bring all who are controlled by it into the lake of fire, which is the second death.

Verse 9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 12 And had 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. 13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The Bride the Lamb's Wife. This testimony is positive that the New Jerusalem is the bride, the Lamb's wife. The angel told John distinctly that he would show him the bride, the Lamb's wife. We may be sure that he did not deceive him, but fulfilled his promise to the very letter. All that he did show him was the New Jerusalem, which must therefore be the Lamb's wife. It would be unnecessary to offer a word of proof that this city is not the church, were it not that popular theology has so mystified the Scriptures as to give it this application. This city cannot be the church, because it would be absurd to talk of the church as lying foursquare, and having a north side, a south side, an east side, and a west side. It would be incongruous to speak of the church as having a wall great and high, and having twelve gates, three on each side toward the four points of the compass. Indeed, the whole description of the city which is given in this chapter would be more or less obscure if applied to the church.

In writing to the Galatians, Paul speaks of the same city and says that it is the mother of us all, referring to the church. The church, then, is not the city itself, but the children of the city. Verse 24 of the chapter under comment, speaks of the nations of the saved, who walk in the light of this city. These nations of the saved, who walk in the light of this city. These nations who are saved, and on earth constitute the church, are distinct from the city, in the light of which they walk. It follows that the city is a literal city built of all the precious materials here described.

But how can it then be the bride, the Lamb's wife? Inspiration has seen fit to speak of it under this figure, and with every believer in the Bible that should be sufficient. This figure is first introduced in Isaiah 54. The new-covenant city is there brought to view. It is represented as being desolate while the old covenant was in force, and the Jews and old Jerusalem were the special objects of God's care. It is said to

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here that "the children of the desolate" shall be many more than "the children of the married wife." It is further said to her, "Thy Maker is thine husband," and the closing promise of the Lord to this city contains a description similar to the one which we have here in Revelation, namely, "I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires; and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord." Isaiah 54: 11-13.

It is this very promise to which Paul refers, upon which he comments in his epistle to the Galatians, when he says, "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Galatians 4: 26), for he in the next verse quotes this very prophecy from the book of Isaiah to sustain his declaration. Here then Paul makes an inspired application of Isaiah's prophecy which cannot be mistaken, and in this verse he shows that under the figure of a "woman," a "wife" whose "children" were to be multiplied, the Lord by the prophet speaks of the New Jerusalem, the city above, as contrasted with the earthly Jerusalem in the land of Palestine. Of that city the Lord calls Himself the "husband." In addition to this, we have positive testimony to the same facts in Revelation 21.

With this view, all is harmony. Christ is called Father of His people (Isaiah 9: 6), the Jerusalem above is called our mother, and we are here children. Carrying out the figure of marriage, Christ is represented as the Bridegroom, the city as the bride, and we, the church, as the guests. There is not confusion of personalities here. But the popular view, is not confusion of personalities here. But the popular view, which makes the city the church, and the church the bride, makes the church at the same time both mother and children, both bride and guests.

The view that the marriage of the Lamb is the inauguration of Christ as King upon the throne of David, and that the parables of Matthew 22: 1-14; 25: 1-13; Luke 12: 35-37; 19: 12-27, apply to that event, is further confirmed by a well-known ancient custom. It is said that when a person took his position as ruler over the people, and was invested with that power, it was called a marriage, and the usually accompanying feast was called a marriage supper. Adam Clarke, in his note on Matthew 22: 2, thus speaks of it:

"A Marriage for His Son. A marriage feast, so the word [gamous] properly means. Or a feast of inauguration, when his son was put in possession of the government, and thus he and his new subjects became married together. (See 1 Kings 1: 5-9, 19, 25, etc., where such a feast is mentioned.)" [2] Many eminent critics understand this parable as indicating the Father's induction of His Son into His Messianic kingdom.

A Christian City. The names of the twelve apostles in the foundations of the city, show it to be a Christian and not a Jewish city. The names of the twelve tribes on the gates, show that all the saved from all ages, are reckoned as belonging to some one of the twelve tribes, for all must enter the city through some one of the twelve gates. This explains those instances in which Christians are called Israel, and are addressed as the twelve tribes, as in Romans 2: 28, 29; 9: 6-8; Galatians 3: 29; Ephesians 2: 12, 13; James 1: 1; Revelation 7: 4.

Verse 15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lies foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. 18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

The City's Dimensions. According to this testimony the city is laid out in a perfect square, measuring equally on all sides. The measure of the city, John declares, was twelve thousand furlongs. Twelve thousand furlongs, eight furlongs to the mile, equal fifteen hundred miles. It may be understood that this measure is the measure of the whole circumference of the city, not merely of one side. This appears, from Kitto, to have been the ancient method of measuring cities. The whole circumference was taken, and that was said to be the measure of the city. According to this rule, the New Jerusalem will be three hundred and seventy-five miles in length on each side. The length, breadth, and height of it are equal. From this language, the question has arisen whether the city shown to John was a high as it was long and broad. The word rendered "equal" is *isos*. From the definitions given by Liddell and Scott, we learn that it may be used to convey the idea of proportion: the height was proportionate to the length and breadth. Greenfield, in defining one of its cognate words, *isotes*, gives to it the sense of "equal proportion," and refers to 2 Corinthians 8: 13, 14, as an example where this definition is quite admissible. And this idea is

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strengthened by the fact that the wall was only a hundred and forty-four cubits high. Taking the cubit at about twenty-two inches, the length which is most commonly assigned to the ancient cubit, it would give only two hundred and sixty-four feet as the height of the wall. Now if the city is just as high as it is long and broad, that is, three hundred and seventy-five miles, this wall of less than three hundred feet would be in comparison a most insignificant affair. Probably therefore the height of the buildings of the city is to be judged by the height of the wall, which is distinctly given.

The building of the wall was of jasper. This precious stone is usually described as of "a beautiful bright green color, sometimes clouded with white or spotted with yellow." This we understand to be the material of the main body of the wall built upon the twelve foundations hereafter described. Let it be remembered that this jasper wall was "clear as crystal" (verse 11), revealing all the glories within.

Verse 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

A Literal City. If we consider this description exclusively metaphorical, as is done by many who profess to be Bible teachers, and spiritualize away this city into ethereal nothingness, how unmeaning to these minute descriptions appear! But if we take it in its natural and obvious signification, and look upon the city as the prophet evidently intended, as a literal and tangible abode, our glorious inheritance, the beauties of which we are to look upon with our own eyes, how the glory of the scene is enhanced! Though it is not for mortal man of himself to conceive of the grandeur of the things which God has prepared for those who love Him, yet viewed as a literality, men may delight to contemplate the glories of their future abode. We love to dwell upon those descriptions which convey to our minds an idea of the loveliness and beauty which will characterize our eternal home. As we become absorbed in the contemplation of an inheritance tangible and sure, courage springs up anew, hope revives, faith plumes her wings. With feeling of thanksgiving to God that He has placed it within our power to gain an entrance to the mansions of the redeemed, we resolve anew, despite the world and all its obstacles, that we will be among the sharers in the proffered joy. Let us, then, look at the precious foundation stones of that great city, through whose gates of pearl God's people may hope soon to enter. While many gemmologists assert that it is difficult to identify the precious stones of the Bible, the following interesting tabulation by Moses Stuart will give some idea of the beauty and variety of colors in the foundation.

The Glorious Foundation. "The word adorned [garnished], may raise a doubt here whether the writer means to say that into the various courses of the foundation ornamental precious stones were only here and there inserted. But taking the whole description together, I do not apprehend this to have been his meaning.

"Jasper, as we have seen above, is usually a stone of green, transparent color, with red veins. But there are many varieties.

"Sapphire is of a beautiful azure, or sky-blue, color, almost as transparent and glittering as a diamond.

"Chalcedony seems to be a species of agate, or more properly the onyx. The onyx of the ancients was probably of a bluish white, and semipellucid.

"The emerald was of a vivid green, and next to the ruby in hardness.

"Sardonyx is a mixture of chalcedony and cornelian, which last is of a flesh-color.

"Sardius is probably the cornelian. Sometimes, however, the red is quite vivid.

"Chrysolithe, as its name imports, is of a yellow or gold color, and is pellucid. From this was probably taken the conception of the pellucid gold which constitutes the material of the city.

"Beryl is of a sea-green color.

"The topaz of the present day seems to be reckoned as yellow; but that of the ancients appears to have been

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pale green. . . .

"Chrysopras, of a pale yellow and greenish color, like a scallion; sometimes it is classed at the present day under topaz.

"Hyacinth [jacinth] of a deep red or violet color.

"Amethyst, a gem of great hardness and brilliancy, of a violet color, and usually found in India.

"In looking over these various classes, we find the first four to be of a green or bluish cast; the fifth and sixth, of a red or scarlet; the seventh, yellow; the eighth, ninth, and tenth, of different shades of the lighter green; the eleventh and twelfth of a scarlet or splendid red. There is a classification, therefore, in this arrangement; a mixture not dissimilar to the arrangement in the rainbow, with the exception that it is more complex." [3]

Verse 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Gates of Pearl. The beautiful city of God, built of materials most precious here on earth, is very appropriately described as having gates of pearl. But more than that, the scripture says that each gate is of a single pearl. Irridescent and glowing with the beautiful colors reflected from the foundations, these portals swing wide to welcome the redeemed to their eternal home.

Streets of Burnished Gold. In this verse, as also in verse 18, the city is spoken of as built of gold, pure, like clear glass, that is, transparent glass. Think for a moment what the appearance of a street so paved would be. The gorgeous palaces on either side would be reflected beneath, and the boundless expanse of the heavens above would also appear below; so that to the person walking those golden streets it would appear that both he himself and the city were suspended between the infinite heights above and the unfathomable depths below, while the mansions on either side of the street, having also powers of reflection, would marvelously multiply both palaces and people, and would render the whole scene novel, pleasing, beautiful, and grand beyond conception.

Verse 22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

The Living Temple. With a temple is naturally associated the idea of sacrifices and mediatorial work, but when the city is located upon the new work, there will be no such work to be performed. Sacrifices and offerings, and all mediatorial work based on them, will be forever past. Hence there will be no need of the outward symbol of such work. But the temple in old Jerusalem, besides being a place for sacrificial worship, was the beauty and glory of the place. As if to anticipate the question that might arise as to what would constitute the ornament and glory of the new city if there is to be no temple therein, the prophet answers, "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

Verse 23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. 24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. 25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. 26 And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

No Night There. It is in the city alone, probably, that there is no night. There will be course be days and nights in the new earth, but they will be days and nights of surpassing glory. In speaking of this time, the prophet says, "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord binds up the breach of His people, and heals the stroke of their wound." Isaiah 30: 26. But if the light of the moon in that state is as the light of the sun, how can there be said to be night there? The light of the sun will be sevenfold, so that although the night is to be as our day, the day will be sevenfold brighter, making the contrast between day and night there as marked, perhaps, as at the present time. Both will be surpassingly glorious.

Verse 24 speaks of nations and kings. The nations are the nations of the saved, and in the new-earth state we are all kings in a certain sense. We possess a "kingdom," and are to "reign" forever and ever.

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But it appears from some of our Savior's parables, as in Matthew 25:21,23, that some will occupy in a special sense the position of rulers, and may thus be spoken of as kings of the earth in connection with the nations of the saved. These bring their glory and honor into the city, when on the Sabbaths and new moons they there come up to worship before God. (Isaiah 66: 23.)

Reader, do you want a part in the eternal glories of this heavenly city? See to it, then, that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life; for those only whose names are on that heavenly "roll of honor" can enter there.

[1] Adam Clarke, Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. II, p. 1058, note on Revelation 21: 1.

[2] Adam Clarke, Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. I, p. 209, note on Matthew 22: 2.

[3] Moses Stuart, A Commentary on the Apocalypse, Vol. II, pp. 383, 384.