

THE JUDGMENTS OF CHRIST AND THE NEW JERUSALEM

Revelation 21:9-27, 22:1-5—And there came one of the seven angels which had had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, and spoke with me, saying, Come here, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in [the] Spirit, [and set me] on a great and high mountain, and shewed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her shining [was] like a most precious stone, as a crystal-like jasper stone; having a great and high wall; having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names inscribed, which are those of the twelve tribes of [the] sons of Israel. On [the] east three gates; and on [the] north three gates; and on [the] south three gates; and on [the] west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

And he that spoke with me had a golden reed [as] a measure, that he might measure the city, and its gates, and its wall. And the city lies four-square, and its length [is] as much as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed—twelve thousand stadia: the length and the breadth and height of it are equal. And he measured its wall, a hundred [and] forty-four cubits, [a] man's measure, that is, [the] angel's.

And the building of its wall [was] jasper; and the city pure gold, like pure glass: the foundations of the wall of the city [were] adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation, jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprasus; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates, twelve pearls; each one of the gates; respectively, was of one pearl; and the street of the city pure gold, as transparent glass. And I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lamb. And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon, that they should shine for it; for the glory of God has enlightened it, and the lamp thereof [is] the Lamb. And the nations shall walk by its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory to it. And its gates shall not be shut at all by day, for night shall not be there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations to it. And nothing common, nor that maketh an abomination and a lie, shall at all enter into it; but those only who [are] written in the book of life of the Lamb...And he shewed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, going out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of its street, and of the river, on this side and on that side, [the] tree of life, producing twelve fruits, in each month yielding its fruit; and the leaves of the tree for healing of the nations. And no curse shall be any more; and throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face; and his name [is] on their foreheads. And night shall not be any more, and no need of a lamp, and light of [the] sun; for [the] Lord God shall shine upon them, and they shall reign to the ages of ages.

Shall we pray:

Lord, as we are gathered in Thy presence, we do praise and thank Thee for giving us such an opportunity that together we may seek Thy face and be ready by Thee for Thy imminent return.

Lord, it is the cry of our hearts: How long? Will Thou not come today? We wait for Thee, Lord. We wonder whether You are waiting for us or we are waiting for Thee. But we pray that Thou wilt prepare our hearts in such a way that we may be those who hasten Your return. Our cry to Thee is: "Come, Lord Jesus, come." We ask in Thy Name. Amen.

I hope that through the last few days we have not only heard but God has touched our hearts to make us ready to hasten the return of our Lord Jesus. Should our Lord Jesus come today, what will happen to us? Can we answer this question? Can we honestly tell the Lord that by His grace we are ready? that because of us, He is hastening in His return? So I really pray that we are looking forward to His imminent return. There is nothing that stands in the way of His return except the readiness of His bride.

The Disappearance of Believers

If the Lord comes today, what will happen to His people? We have mentioned before that the first sign of His return is that suddenly throughout the whole world, some believers disappear. Two men are sleeping; one is taken, but unfortunately one is left. Two women are grinding at the mill in the morning; one is taken and the other is left. Two men are working in the field; one is taken and the other is left. The earth is round, and that is why when the Lord returns, all over the world some will be taken. They are the manchild as we find in Revelation 12.

When the manchild is born, he will be taken immediately to the throne, and will be the welcoming party for our Lord Jesus. After they arrive at the throne, there will be war in the heavens in which Michael and his angels will fight against Satan and his followers. Then Satan and his followers will be thrown down from heaven, which is his headquarters, to the earth. The air is cleared for the Lord to come from the throne to the air; it is invisible. He has come as a thief stealing the best. Hopefully, by the grace of God we may be among the rank.

The Great Tribulation Begins

After Satan is thrown to the earth the time of the three and half years of great tribulation begins, a tribulation that the world has never seen before. How can it be otherwise when Satan is upon this earth? God loves us so much that even those who are left behind are given another chance to be faithful to the Lord and be martyrs during the great tribulation. And these martyrs will be ranked among the overcomers of the ages.

Towards the end of the great tribulation, there will be a shouting and the blowing of the trumpet. All those who have died in Christ Jesus will be raised from the dead. And those who live and remain behind will be changed and will be raptured not to the throne but to the air because the Lord has already come to the air. So in I Thessalonians 4, we find there is a great shout and the voice of the trumpet; God is calling all who are His to come. And the whole church at that time will be gathered together with the Lord in the air.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

Now what happens in the air? When the saints are gathered before Christ in the air, on the earth the Scriptures tell us of the seven vials, the wrath of God, which will be poured upon this earth. At the same time, the whole church throughout the centuries will be gathered together in the air with the Lord Jesus; that is the time of the judgment seat of Christ.

We who believe in the Lord Jesus will never appear before the great white throne that determines whether there will be eternal death or eternal life because Christ has already borne our sins on the cross and was condemned to death in our stead. We will not be at the judgment of the great white throne which is a judicial judgment; it is a judgment of eternal life or eternal death. By the grace of God we will not be at that throne of judgment. However, that does not mean God's people will not be judged, but it is a different judgment. It is called the judgment seat of Christ—bema.

The Bema

I think those who are from the Orient have the greater benefit of understanding the judgment seat. When I was a child, we still kept the old custom. Four generations lived under one roof. My grandfather took care of everybody—our daily food, all our education, marriage, everything. My uncles and their families, even the married aunts came back and lived together with us. So we were a large family and everyone had their own suite. At that time there were slaves and they would come and call us to the dining hall to eat, and after eating we went back to our apartments. My grandmother took care of everything. She rose up very early in the morning. Of course, because everything was taken care of, they had nothing to do, so the uncles would take opium, and the aunts would gossip. That is the way the family lived in the olden days, and I was brought up in such a family.

A bema is a raised place in a room. Once in a while, the head of the family would call a family meeting, and he would sit on the bema with all the members of the family standing before him. If you were not one of the family, you were not allowed to be there. Only members of the family would be there because it was a family meeting. During that time, those in the family who had done something that brought glory to the family would be praised and awarded; but those who had brought great disgrace to the family would be disciplined.

That is like the judgment seat of Christ. In other words, after the whole church is gathered in the air with the Lord there will be a family judgment. It is no longer a judgment of eternal life or death; it will be a judgment of reward or punishment.

The Faithful Shall Reign—the Unfaithful Shall be Disciplined

The Bible tells us both in Romans 14:10 and in II Corinthians 5:10 that we shall all appear, be present at the judgment seat of Christ. After we believe in the Lord everything in our lives, whether we are faithful or unfaithful, will be judged at that time. Again I say, it will not be a judgment of eternal death or eternal life. It is a judgment of reward or discipline. Those who are faithful to the Lord shall reign with Christ for a thousand years. Those who are unfaithful will be cast into outer darkness. We find that in Matthew 25 in the parable of the ten virgins. The five foolish virgins could not enter into the marriage feast of the Lamb, and they were cast outside in darkness where there will be gnashing of teeth. In other words, there will be repentance.

The Outer Darkness

Today, especially in this country, people despise discipline. Even in the schools, the teachers are not allowed to discipline the students. In the family we will say, "Let the children grow naturally; do not discipline them." But without discipline there will never be maturity. Discipline is absolutely necessary because in us there is an Adamic nature, and it is self-centered. It has to be disciplined in order for us to be delivered from ourselves and be filled with Christ Jesus. So if, today, you refuse to be disciplined—you think you are wise, you are clever, you can escape all discipline, you can do whatever you want because you are free—this is most dangerous. At the judgment seat of Christ, you will be disciplined and will be cast into outer darkness which is outside of the kingdom of Christ that is coming.

We do not know what the outer darkness is. You know, we are very curious. People want to know what the outer darkness is. Where is it? What happens there? So far as I have read, there is only one person who has tried to answer that question and that is Govett. He is literal in everything, and he tries to answer about the outer darkness. I will not tell you. We do not know where the outer darkness is. We only know that during the kingdom age, some Christians will be outside the kingdom, and there will be gnashing of teeth; that is, repenting. They will be disciplined, as it were, during that time.

All Who Are Saved Will Be Conformed to His Image

Thank God, it is not eternal. In other words, they will also grow up and be matured through discipline because this is the eternal will of God towards men. As you read Romans 8, we find these words: "Whom He has foreknown, He has called; whom He has called, He has justified; whom He has justified, He has glorified" (see vv. 29-30).

It is the will and purpose of God for those who are saved to be conformed to the image of His beloved Son. He wants every one of us to be matured which means we have the stature of the fullness of Christ.

When we believe in the Lord Jesus, Christ comes to dwell in us. If we are willing to be under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, if we will grow up until we reach the full stature of Christ—that is to say the bride has grown up and has taken upon herself the image of the Bridegroom—at that time the marriage of the Lamb takes place.

There is a warning given to each and every one of us; but thank God, His eternal purpose is that we will all reign with Christ for eternity.

The Wrath of God Is Poured Upon the Earth

When the judgment seat of Christ is going on in the air, what will happen upon this earth? It is the time of the seven vials in which the wrath of God will be poured upon this earth. But thank God, towards the end of the seven years the Lord Jesus will come from the air to the Mount of Olives; that is visible. As the lightning goes from the east to the west, everyone will see it. Then He will come back for His people Israel. Zechariah, chapters 10-12, tell us what will

happen at that time. The whole world will be gathered together under Satan who will try to destroy Israel completely. But our Lord will come back, and when His feet touch the Mount of Olives, that mountain will cleave into two parts. Scientists have already discovered that there is a line there, and when there is an earthquake, that mountain will be cleaved into two. And those in Jerusalem who are left will flee through it and all Israel will repent and be saved.

Then Christ will shut up Satan in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. There will be the judgment of the nations—the goat nations and the sheep nations (see Matthew 25:31-46). The sheep nations will be removed to the kingdom of God on earth during the Millennium, but the goat nations will be destroyed.

The Heavenly Rule and the Earthly Rule

All that God has promised to Israel will be fulfilled at that time. God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has not been fulfilled even today. But whatever God promised, He will also keep it. During the millennium time, if my understanding is right, there will be two parts—the heavenly part and the earthly part. The heavenly part is the overcomers of the church reigning with Christ for a thousand years. What do you mean by that? You will remember what the Lord Jesus said to those faithful servants, that they would rule ten cities or five cities. So the overcomers will reign with Christ from the air over this earth, but their domain may be ten cities or five cities on this earth. They will reign with Christ and for Christ. But Israel will be the center of the nations on earth and will be used by God to go out and preach the gospel. At that time there will be such peace upon this earth.

Isaiah 11 says: "And there shall come forth a root out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall be fruitful; and the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah. And his delight will be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his reins, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatted beast together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the she-bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the adder, and the weaned child shall put forth its hand to the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, standing as a banner of the peoples; the nations shall seek it; and his resting-place shall be glory" (vv. 1-10).

The Lord Jesus Will Rule the Earth with Righteousness During the Millennium

During the Millennium time, this earth will be ruled by our Lord Jesus. The time of grace will be over, and the time of righteousness will be upon this earth. The Lord Jesus will rule this

earth with righteousness. This is the Utopia that people have been dreaming about, but it will be a reality when Christ rules over this earth.

After the Millennium

After the thousand years of Millennium, what will happen? Satan will be released and he will entice the nations once again. And strangely, many will still follow him. They will surround Jerusalem and “the camp of the saints.” What does “the camp of the saints” mean? I will try to use a picture to help us understand what it is. It is like the olden days in Europe when they had feudal states with an emperor and under him were the dukes and counts, etc. Every one of these men had their own dominion, but they would stay with the emperor. And from time to time the emperor would visit their dominion. So that is what the camp of the saints is. When Satan is released, he will try to surround Jerusalem and the camp of the saints, but thank God, the Lord will destroy him and put him in the lake of fire.

What will happen after the Millennium? We have eternity. We have already said it seems as if there are two marriages of the Lamb. One is in chapter 19 of Revelation and the other is in chapters 21 and 22. The one in chapter 19 is the beginning of Millennium and is composed of the overcomers who have on the wedding garment. But Revelation 21 and 22 tell us of the new heaven and the new earth, and we see the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven upon this earth, and this new Jerusalem is the bride of the Lamb.

The New Jerusalem

What is that new Jerusalem? It is the composition of all the work of God throughout the centuries—His work in the Old Testament and the New Testament time. Whatever God has done, nothing will be lost. Everything that God has done upon this earth, will be gathered up together in that new Jerusalem. This new Jerusalem will be the eternal bride of the Lamb. The apostle John was shown the new Jerusalem by the angel. In chapter 21:10b it says: “the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, having the glory of God.”

This whole city, the new Jerusalem, is full of the glory of God. Glory is a word often used in the Scriptures, but it is very difficult to describe. The best we know is that glory is the manifestation of God. Whenever God manifests Himself, we see glory. Whenever we manifest ourselves, we see shame. So this new Jerusalem is full of the glory of God.

The New Jerusalem Is Full of the Glory of Christ

In Colossians it says, “Christ in you the hope of glory.” That is a promise, but here you find it is the answer or the result of that promise because that whole city is full of Christ; it is full of glory.

Revelation 21:11: “Her shining [was] like a most precious stone, as a crystal-like jasper stone.”

In chapter 4 of Revelation a vision of God upon His throne was revealed to John. “And he [that was] sitting like in appearance in a stone [of] jasper and a sardius, and a rainbow round

the throne like in appearance to an emerald” (v. 3). This whole city shines like a most precious stone as a crystallite jasper stone. It is full of Christ.

The Wall Is the Full Measure of Christ

Then you have a great and high wall. The problem with man is that there is no wall. When God created man and put him in the garden of Eden, it was a beautiful garden. It was a good garden, but unfortunately there was no wall because God wanted man to be that wall. Adam and Eve were not only to till the ground but to guard the city. Outside the city was God’s enemy, Satan. He was trying to get into the garden to tempt man. So man was given the commandment to guard the city, that they might be the wall of the city. Unfortunately, they did not do that, and Satan entered in and tempted Eve, and man fell into his hand.

We know that during the return of the remnant to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple the wall was broken down, and they were under the attack of the enemy. So Nehemiah went back to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.

Here in Revelation we find a high wall. It is so high that it has the full measure of Christ. With that full measure of Christ, it not only protects those who are inside the wall, but it will prevent the enemy from coming into that city.

The wall is built of jasper. Again, it is the life of God, the life of Christ is the wall that we build by the Holy Spirit.

Twelve Gates

It also has twelve gates, and the gates bear the name of the twelve tribes of Israel. Salvation came through the Jews; so the twelve gates represent the twelve tribes of Israel. All that God has done during the Old Testament time with His people will be there in that new Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb for eternity.

Twelve Foundations

The twelve foundations bear the twelve names of the apostles of the Lamb. It is the gathering together of all the work of God throughout the centuries from the Old Testament and New Testament times. Whatever God has done will never be lost; it will all be gathered there in that new Jerusalem.

Pure Gold

The city is pure gold. There is nothing else but gold. God is everything; Christ is all and in all. And it is like pure glass. We have never seen gold like pure glass. God Himself, the glory of God, enlightens the city and the lamp is the Lamb of God.

The River of Life and the Tree of Life

In the new Jerusalem there is a river and it is a river of life. There is the tree of life that covers the whole city. Those who are His servants, including the saints in the Old Testament time and the New Testament time, will serve the Lamb forever.

This is eternity. Thank God, we are really not looking for the reward, but we are looking for our Lord, for the bride will not eye her garment but she will look at the Bridegroom.

This is the revelation that has been given to us. How glorious will that be! It should be a help to us in our pressing on towards Christ. In the world we have tribulation, but we are not afraid knowing that He is with us and He is encouraging us to press on towards the goal. May the Lord help us!

The Lord is coming. He said, "Behold, I come quickly." What should be our response? We will respond like John the apostle: "Amen, come Lord Jesus."

Shall we pray:

Dear Lord, how we praise and thank Thee for Thy glorious plan of redemption. How we thank Thee that Thy thought toward us is so marvelous, so good! Lord, who are we? We are but dust, nothing; but Thou dost love us in such a way as to give Thy only begotten Son to us. We thank Thee for saving us. We thank Thee for encouraging us that we will allow Thy Holy Spirit to work in our lives until Christ is fully formed in each and every one of us. Oh dear Lord, we want to give ourselves to Thee wholly and completely, asking Thee that through Thy indwelling Holy Spirit Thou wilt transform us, change us from glory to glory as by the Lord, the Spirit. So we just worship Thee. In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.