

Living in God's Presence

Rev 21:9-10; 21:22 - 22:5

SS Lesson for 05/20/2007

Devotional Scripture: Isa 60:18-22

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Overview and Approach to Lesson

The concept of the major outline of the lesson came from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator. The lesson examines **Being in God's Presence**. The **study's aim** is to study about the sure hope of eternal blessings that will sustain Christians in their sometimes troublesome journey from earth to heaven. The **study's application** is to keep the goal of heaven alive within believers and to share it with others.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

We live in God's presence now, but we will live in God's presence in a much more profound way later. How does God expect us to do the former while we anticipate the latter? For the Christian, life here on earth is to be spent preparing for the ultimate trip, the journey to the celestial city, the new Jerusalem. Preparations are made daily as we live in the presence of God. Two extremes are to be avoided. One is to get so focused on Heaven that we fail to live the life God has for us while we are still here on earth. This is called "being so heavenly minded that we are of no earthly good." The other extreme is to live in the here and now as if this were the only reality. Today's lesson will give us a taste of God's eternal perspective. When we allow that perspective to sink in, we'll know how to live! In today's lesson John contrasts being inside with being outside the city to show us the security and abundance that will come when we enjoy the eternal presence of God in the new Jerusalem. We must always remember that Revelation was written to encourage first-century Christians who were being persecuted for their faith. Like all biblical prophecy, its primary value is in its original context. So our interpretation of Revelation must begin with the original readers. The figures of speech that John uses come from the world of the first century ad. They are strange to us, and so we often miss the real value of the imagery. In Revelation 21–22, we have John's description of Heaven as he experiences his revelation. Yet for John to describe the vision, he has to use images and terms from the then-current, physical world. He wrote Revelation so that his readers could appreciate the next world in such a way that it would make a difference in how they were living out their lives at the time. John's description of Heaven helps us appreciate its wonders. We should be cautious about taking the descriptions of our eternal home too literally, however. To make this mistake would be to limit Heaven to only the earthly things that we can imagine are valuable. For example, consider how John describes the foundations of the wall of the city (Revelation 21:19, 20). City walls were valuable things in the ancient world, because they were physical barriers against enemies—it is an impression of security. Today, however, very few cities depend on walls for safety. Instead, we may think of safety in terms of early-warning radar (both military and weather). John uses ideas from his first-century world to create the most meaningful impression he can. When we allow John's intended impression to shape our hearts, we will fall at the feet of Jesus in praise.

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

The seven wonders of the ancient world included the pyramids of Egypt, the Colossus of Rhodes, the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Lighthouse of Alexandria, and the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus. Some biblical characters may have stood in the shadow of some of these wonders. When Moses was a prince of Egypt, the Great Pyramid of Cheops had been there a thousand years. When Paul was in Ephesus, the Temple of Diana had been worshiped in for six hundred years. No matter how awed we are by the wonders of the world, none of them can compare with the wonders of heaven. How literally we should interpret John's vision is a matter of debate among respected saints and scholars. Nevertheless, what John saw causes us to stand in awe of what the Creator has prepared for His redeemed people. Christians look forward to spending eternity in heaven, which John described as a holy city coming down from God. Revelation 21:11-21 gives details regarding its construction. It will be about a 1,500-mile cube covering around 2,250,000 square miles (about the size of the United States) and large enough to contain a population of people and angels. Other details are found in this lesson's texts. Have you noticed how quick people are to speak well of the dead and to speak of them

going to heaven? This may be due in large part to the notion held by many that God weighs a person's good deeds against his bad deeds, gives him the benefit of any doubt, and allows him to enter through the pearly gates into eternal bliss. What they do not realize is that salvation and heaven are available only to those who are saved from their sins by faith in Christ and thus take on His righteousness. Only these are fit for heaven, and it is all by grace, not works.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

In God's Presence as a Bride (Rev 21:9-10)

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

The Bride is the Church

A bride that performs righteous acts (Rev 19:7-8)

7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

A bride that belongs to Jesus the bridegroom (John 3:29)

29 The bride belongs to the bridegroom . The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.

A bride who is under the leadership of Jesus (Eph 1:22-23)

22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church , 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

A bride that has been cleansed by God's Word (Eph 5:25-27)

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church , without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Commentary on Rev 21:9 by Tony Garland

one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls with the seven last plagues

The seven last plagues were called last because "in them the wrath of God is complete" (Rev. 15:1). This may be the same angel which showed John the Great Harlot (Rev. 17:1).

Come, I will show you

The angel, having one of the seven bowls, refers back to the seventh bowl itself which destroyed Babylon (Rev. 16:19) and invites a comparison between two great cities: Babylon, the Harlot and the New Jerusalem, the bride (Rev. 21:10).

the bride, the Lamb's wife

Bride is νύμφην [nymphēn] , used of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven (Rev. 21:2). Wife is γυναῖκα [gynaika] , used of the wife of the Lamb at His marriage (Rev. 19:7).

The Lion of Judah must first be the Lamb of God in order to purchase redemption and earn the right to go forth as a Lion in judgment. Here we see the character of God—grace and mercy preceding judgment. “In one brilliant stroke John portrays the central theme of NT revelation—victory through sacrifice.”³

Ἀρνίον [Arnion], originally meant little lamb⁴ or young sheep.⁵ “The imagery derives from the Passover, when Jewish families were required to keep the sacrificial lamb as a household pet for four days before sacrificing it (Ex. 12:3-6).”⁶ The only other occurrence of arnion in the entire NT is John’s gospel, where it is used of the Christian community (John 21:15).⁷ This is another indication that the same author wrote the book of John and the book of Revelation. See Authorship.⁸ “In Revelation the name ‘Lamb’ (arnion, literally, ‘little lamb’) is used more often than any other name or title of Christ. John called Him the Lamb twenty-eight times.”⁹

Twice in John’s gospel, John the Baptist refers to Jesus as “the Lamb of God,” referring to His impending sacrifice which will atone for the sins of the world (John 1:29, 36). Isaiah also described the Messiah as a sacrificial lamb, a passage which Philip explained to the Ethiopian eunuch (Isa. 53:7; Acts 8:32-35). Peter describes the precious, sinless blood of Christ “as of a lamb without blemish and spot,” an allusion to the Passover lamb whose blood “covered” the Israelites from the destroying angel in the plague which took the firstborn of Egypt (1Pe. 1:19 cf. Ex. 11:5-6; 12:3-13). In fulfillment of the requirement that no bones of the lamb may be broken (Ex. 12:46; Ps. 34:20), the Roman soldiers found Jesus already dead and did not break his legs as they did those of the thieves crucified beside him (John 19:33-36). Paul clearly understood Jesus to be the Passover lamb. “For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1Cor. 5:7). It is by “the blood of the Lamb” that believers overcome the diabolos who “throws-against” them accusations (Rev. 12:11), for it is the blood which cleanses them of sin and provides their white robes. It is the blood of Christ which provides for their eternal life as those who are written in the “Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).

The Lamb is to be contrasted with the beast throughout this book.¹⁰ The second beast who “had two horns like a lamb” may be mistaken as this lamb by those who are deceived, but he speaks “like a dragon” (Rev. 13:11).

Some expositors take the remainder of this chapter and the first part of the following chapter as a recapitulation which describes the participation of the New Jerusalem within the Millennial Kingdom hovering over the earth.¹ They interpret the nations on the earth (Rev. 21:24-26) as being millennial nations which access the New Jerusalem above. In particular, they point to the existence of the tree of life in the New Jerusalem as evidence that the millennial nations will receive healing from it.

There are significant problems with the recapitulation view:

- If the millennial nations have access to the tree of life, why then is there still death during the thousand years (Isa. 65:20)? Although, the millennial nations will have access to all kinds of trees (plural) which provide fruit for food and leaves for medicinal purposes, these are not the tree of life (Eze. 47:12). Nor do the location of these trees correspond with that of the tree of life in the eternal city (Rev. 22:2).
- Within this vision of the city, the curse is said to be no more (Rev. 22:3). Yet the curse continues during the Millennium (Isa. 65:20; Rev. 20:8-9).

This is not a recapitulation, but a further refinement of the overview which John saw in Revelation 21:1-8.²

Notes

1 [Walter Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation* (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.)], [Arno C. Gaebelin, *The Revelation* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1961)].

2 It is analogous to the way in which Genesis 2 expands upon the creation of man on day six of Genesis 1.

3 Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 144.

4 Although the diminutive sense may have no longer been the sense by NT times. [Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 108]

5 Alan F. Johnson, Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 72.

6 John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 167.

7 Arnion occurs in the Septuagint at Ps. 114:4, 6; Jer. 11:19; 50:45.

8 Jesus as the "Lamb" in Revelation: Rev. 5:6, 8, 12-13; 6:1, 16; 7:9-10, 14, 17; 12:11; 13:8, 11; 14:1, 4, 10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7, 9; 21:9, 14, 22-23, 27; 22:1, 3.

9 Harold D. Foos, "Christology in the Book of Revelation," in Mal Couch, ed., A Bible Handbook to Revelation (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 106.

10 "Another object of the form Greek, arnion, the Lamb, is put Him in the more marked contrast to Greek, therion, the Beast."—A. R. Fausset, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 5:6. The beast in Revelation: Rev. 11:7; 13:1-4, 11-12, 14-15, 17-18; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2, 10, 13; 17:3, 7-8, 11-13, 16-17; 19:19-20; 20:4, 10.

In God's Presence and Divine Glory (Rev 21:22-27)

22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).

26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.

27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Presence and Divine Glory of God's heavenly temple

A temple not made and served by human hands (Acts 17:24-25)

24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands . 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

A temple that is an eternal house in heaven (2 Cor 5:1)

5:1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands .

A temple that has many rooms and is being prepared for believers (John 14:1-4)

2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going."

A temple whose architect and builder is God (Heb 11:10)

10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

A temple that is greater and more perfect (Heb 9:11)

11 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.

A temple that is the real sanctuary versus the copy on earth (Heb 9:24)

24 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

Walking in the light of God's presence and Divine glory

The light of the world - Jesus (John 8:12)

12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

The light of trust in Jesus (John 12:35-36)

35 Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. 36 Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light."

The light of the fellowship with one another and God (1 John 1:7)

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

The light of the knowledge and glory of God (2 Cor 4:6)

6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Christians are sons of the light (1 Thess 5:5)

5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

Presence and Divine Glory that has no defilement

No defilement because God will keep us blameless (1 Cor 1:7-9)

7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. 8 He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

No defilement because God chose us before the creation to be holy in His sight (Eph 1:4-5)

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will

No defilement because God sanctifies us (1 Thess 5:23)

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

No defilement because the wicked will not be in the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10)

9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

No defilement because those who live and practice the lusts of the sinful nature will not be in the kingdom of God (Gal 5:19-21)

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

In God's Presence in the New Paradise (Rev 22:1-5)

1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

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.

4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

Commentary on Rev 22:1 by Tony Garland

In the previous chapter, John was shown a new order of things. An entirely new heaven and earth were created to replace the first heaven and earth which fled away at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11). In addition to the new heaven and new earth, John saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, descending from heaven as a bride for the Lamb (Rev. 21:2, 9). John's vision was given in two parts. The first part provided an overview of the eternal order (Rev. 21:1-8). In the second part, an angel accompanied John on a more detailed tour of the New Jerusalem, providing additional information and measurements of the city. In many ways, the chapter break at Revelation 21:27 is unfortunate because the first five verses of this chapter should really be considered as the conclusion of John's detailed tour of the New Jerusalem.

he showed me

This is the angel who first accompanied John "in the Spirit" to show him the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:10). This is one of the angels having the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues (Rev. 21:9). It may be the same angel which took him "in the Spirit" to see the great harlot, Babylon (Rev. 17:3). The tour contrasts the New Jerusalem, the city of God, with Babylon, the city of man.

a pure river of water of life

This is the fountain of the water of life which God promised to the thirsty in the previous chapter (Rev. 21:6). Its ultimate source is God Himself, for it proceeds from His throne (cf. Ps. 36:8-9; 46:4).

A similar river will flow from under the threshold of the Millennial Temple (Eze. 47:1-2; Zec. 14:8), but that river does not reach all regions, so sin remains in the Millennium (Eze. 47:11). Now, sin is no more and life abounds in all parts of the new creation.

clear as crystal

The purity and clarity of the water is remarkable to John. The clarity speaks of sinlessness and symbolizes the cleansing from sin of those who partake of the river. Although this is a literal river in the eternal state, it also typifies the Holy Spirit Who cleanses and gives life to those who trust Christ in this age (John 4:10; 7:37-38). In the eternal state, there is no more death because there is no more sin (Rev. 21:4).

When John first ascended to the throne room in heaven, he saw the sea of glass like crystal, in the midst of the throne (Rev. 4:6). The sea of glass probably symbolized this river which would be the basis of cleansing and eternal life in the new heaven and earth. Although the nations will partake of the tree of life, the tree itself draws from this river of life (cf. Ps. 1:3).

proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb

The river proceeds from the throne because the source of all life is ultimately God (Job 33:4; Eze. 37:9; John 1:4; 14:6; Acts 3:15; Rev. 11:11).

There is no sea from which waters are raised by the sun, as in the present hydrologic cycle (Rev. 21:1) and thus no rainfall to supply the river with its flow. Rather, it proceeds "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," high at the central pinnacle of the holy city. Evidently the mighty Creator is continually creating the waters, then sending them forth to give perpetual life and cleansing and beauty to the city and its inhabitants, and then on out into the uttermost parts of the new earth.¹

The throne is of God and of the Lamb. In the eternal state, there is no more distinction between the throne of the Father in heaven and that of the Son on earth (Matt. 25:31; Rev. 3:21). Jesus rules from the Davidic throne during the Millennial Kingdom until the last enemy, death, is destroyed (Rev. 20:14). Then, He delivers the kingdom to God the Father (1Cor. 15:24-26) and the throne of David merges with the heavenly throne of the Father (Rev. 22:3) and both the Father and the Son continue to rule forever.

Notes

1 Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 22:1.

Commentary on Rev 22:2 by Tony Garland

In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life

The Greek lacks the article: the tree. There are several trees, each of them a tree of life. "It was not one individual tree, but a particular tree as to its kind, as we speak of 'the apple' or 'the oak,' denoting a species of which there are many specimens."¹ There may have been exactly three trees, or John saw three groups of trees of the same kind in each of the three areas. What John sees is very similar to what Ezekiel saw during the Millennium, but Ezekiel's trees were not the tree of life, but other nourishing trees which provide long life during the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 65:20):

Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine. (Eze. 47:12)

Medicine (Eze. 47:12) is תְּרוּפָה [terûphāh] : either from the root רוּף [rûph] , to make small as in medical powder, or from רָפָא [rāphā`] , to heal.² Translated by ὑγίεια [hybieia] in the LXX: health, soundness of body. During the Millennium, the leaves of the trees near the river will provide for the physical healing of the peoples, but it is important to recognize that these trees cannot be the tree of life. Those who consume the leaves live to an advanced age, but do not avoid death (Isa. 65:20).³

Jesus said to the church at Ephesus that He would give the overcomer "to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7). He alluded to the original placement of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9) and indicated that the redeemed would once more have access to the tree in a future paradise—the eternal state which John now sees. Those who do His commandments (or wash their

robes , MT and NU texts) will have authority to access the tree of life (Rev. 22:14). Those who take away from the words of the book of this prophecy will have their part taken away from the tree of life (Rev. 22:19, MT and NU texts). Evidently, access to the tree of life is one and the same as salvation and indicates that all who inhabit the eternal state will have access to the tree on an equal basis.

When man rebelled in the Garden of Eden, he was cut off from the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24). Since then, death has reigned over all peoples, even the people of God—with few exceptions. We rejoice in the fact that in the redemptive counsels of God, history is to be brought full circle to affect a full return to a Paradise without death which was previously lost:

The harmonious unity of Scripture is herein exhibited. The Fathers compared it to a ring, an unbroken circle, returning into itself. Between the events of Genesis and those at the close of the Apocalypse, at least six thousand or seven thousand years intervene; and between Moses the first writer and John the last about one thousand five hundred years. How striking it is that, as in the beginning we found Adam and Eve, his bride, in innocence in Paradise, then tempted by the serpent, and driven from the tree of life, and from the pleasant waters of Eden, yet not without a promise of a Redeemer who should crush the serpent; so at the close, the old serpent cast out for ever by the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who appears with His Bride, the Church, in a better Paradise, and amidst better waters (Rev. 22:1): the tree of life also is there with all its healing properties, not guarded with a flaming sword, but open to all who overcome (Rev. 2:7), and there is no more curse.⁴

All worlds move in circles; and the grand march of God's providence with man moves in one immense round. It starts with Paradise, and thence moves out through strange and untried paths, until it has fulfilled its grand revolution by coming back to the point from which it started; not indeed to repeat itself, but thenceforward to rest forever in the results of that wonderful experiment. Genesis is the Book of beginnings; the Revelation is the Book of the endings of what was then begun; and the last laps back upon the first, and welds the two ends of the history into a golden ring of eternity.⁵

During this present age, where physical death has not yet been abolished, those who follow after God are likened to a fruitful tree typified by the tree of life near the river of living water which John sees in the eternal state:⁶

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. (Ps. 1:1-3)

Between the Fall in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22-24) and the creation of the new heavens and earth (Rev. 21:1), the cross of Jesus Christ is the tree of life for all who trust in His redeeming work (Acts 5:30; Gal. 3:13; 1Pe. 2:24).

which bore twelve fruits

Which bore is ποιοῦν [poioun] , present tense participle: continually making. The text implies fruit is continuously being produced from which we can conclude it is also being consumed on an ongoing basis.

each tree yielding

Yielding is ἀποδίδου [apodidou] , present tense participle: continually giving out.

every month

The tree produces fruit on a monthly basis. Its ongoing production implies an ongoing consumption of the fruit by the nations, although this is not explicitly said. In the Millennial Kingdom, the fruit of similar trees were used for food (Eze. 47:12), whereas their leaves were used for medicine. In the eternal state, John

sees the leaves used for healing, but nothing is said concerning the use of the fruit. We can probably assume the nations will eat of the fruit of the tree. This should not be surprising since Jesus, in His resurrected body, continued to eat food (John 21:12; Acts 10:41).⁷

*And whether they need it for the support of their undecaying immortality or not, [partaking of the Tree of Life] is everywhere presented as one of the most precious privileges of God's glorified saints. We cannot suppose that they ever hunger or thirst in that high realm, or that there is ever any waste in their immortal energies needing recuperation from physical digestion; but still the participation of these Life-fruits bespeaks a communion with Life, the joy of which exceeds all present comprehension.*⁸

The mention of months may imply that the sun and moon, although not needed for light in the vicinity of the New Jerusalem, continue to exist within the eternal state.⁹

*The fact that months are identified as such in [the] New Jerusalem indicates that the orbital and rotational motions of the earth will go on as God established in the very beginning and that the moon likewise will continue orbiting around the earth.*¹⁰

The productivity of the tree in eternity is a model of what the Christian life is to be now. Believers are to be continuously yielding spiritual fruit, much of which is also for the healing of the nations. God expects productivity from all who would serve Him (cf. Matt. 21:19; Mark 11:13).¹¹ In the same way the tree of life yields fruit because of its position next to the river of life, so must the productive Christian abide in Christ:

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:4-5)

The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations

Healing is *θεραπείαν* [therapeian] : which can also denote “serving, service, care.”¹² The leaves, in some way, provide “prosperity for the nations.”¹³

Jesus taught that all who exist in the eternal state with a glorified body are equal to the angels and cannot die (Luke 20:35-36). But here, John is shown the tree of life and told: “the leaves of the tree of life were for the healing of the nations.” Even if healing (*θεραπείαν* [therapeian]) is taken to mean service (Luke 12:42; Matt. 24:45), there is still the question as to why the nations would need ongoing access to the tree of life? And if the nations access the tree in relation to life, how does that square with Jesus’ teaching that those who have been glorified cannot die?

Similar questions confront us in the book of Genesis, before the Fall into sin. Adam and Eve are in the Garden of Eden, in a state of sinless perfection, and are given access to the tree of life (Gen. 2:9, 16). Later, when they disobey God, their access to the tree is cut off lest they eat of it and live forever (Gen. 3:22-24). Several things are implied by the Genesis account: (1) the tree of life served a purpose in the Garden of Eden prior to the entrance of sin and death; (2) Adam and Eve undoubtedly partook of the fruit of the tree before their fall into sin since it was permitted; (3) had Adam and Eve continued to eat from the tree after their fall into sin, then they would never have died. It seems that ongoing access to the tree provided eternal life. But how does this fit with the abundant Scriptural teaching that death is a result of sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12-15, 21; 6:16, 23; 7:5, 11-13; 8:2; Jas. 1:15)? In the absence of sin, both in the Garden of Eden before the Fall and in the eternal state, what purpose does the tree of life serve?

Why would healing be necessary in eternity? What is the meaning of the healing leaves? What is their purpose? Admittedly these questions are puzzling. However, the concept of healing leaves need not imply sickness. The tree of life existed in the Garden of Eden before sin and sickness (Gen. 2:9; 3:22), and it can also exist in the New Jerusalem without illness. After all, there will be no curse there (Rev. 22:3).¹⁴

Healing, however, does not necessarily indicate the presence of disease any more than the wiping away of tears (Rev. 21:4) implies that sorrow still exists in the new Jerusalem. The tears were those caused by the troubles of this creation, tears that will no longer exist in the new creation. Likewise, the disease for which this healing provides is that of the former creation which no longer exists in the new Jerusalem.¹⁵

With such an understanding, we can suggest a relationship between the tree of life, sin, and death. The tree of life serves as a source from which sinless men obtain life. They do not attain eternal life in any sort of independent manner, but are completely and forever dependent upon God, the ultimate source of life. This dependence is reflected in their need to access the fruit from the tree for its life-giving qualities. The moment sin enters into the picture, as it did in the Garden and which it can never do again in eternity, independence of God results.¹⁶ When sin entered in the Garden of Eden and independence from God with it, God saw fit to remove access to the tree of life—the very channel by which He had chosen to dispense eternal life. The result was death. To summarize: sin brought independence from God which was manifest in being cut off from the tree of life resulting in death. In the eternal state, man will be sinless and have eternal life, but the creation and the creature will always and forever remain dependent upon the Creator as the source of life. The ongoing need to access the tree of life for eternity reflects the continued dependence of the creatures upon the Creator—a reality which God has chosen to manifest via the tree.

Some attempt to avoid these questions by taking the tree of life as symbolic of salvation and spiritual life, and not as a real tree in a real eternal city. However, there are numerous reasons why the tree in the New Jerusalem should be taken as a literal tree:

Some interpreters view the tree as only symbolic. But a literal view of the tree is proper for two reasons. First, since there was a literal tree of life in the historical Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9; 3:22, 24), it is possible for this tree also to be literal. Second, if the city, walls, gates, street, river, and light are literal (and the most reasonable evidence shows that they are), then the tree of life is most likely literal also. However, viewing the tree as literal does not exclude its also having symbolic significance for those who see it and eat of it. Just as the literal walls and foundations of the New Jerusalem will be memorials to Israel and to the apostles (Rev. 21:12, 14), so the tree of life can have a memorial function also.¹⁷

Even those who take the tree literally struggle with the idea that healing should be found in the tree. Some propose that the healing relates to the maintenance of a population among the faithful who still reside in natural bodies in eternity. The “healing problem,” along with the possible differences between the nations and kings of the earth which reside outside the city versus the glorified saints within the city, have caused some to suggest that the nations in the eternal state may be made up of humans in their natural bodies living in conditions much like that of the original creation. This might answer some of the puzzles which are before us: why God created a new heaven and earth, why there are gates to the city which infers some are primarily occupied outside and others inside, and why the tree of life remains if only glorified saints remain? Several expositors suggest such a solution, as we discussed in our commentary on Revelation 21:24. For example:

There are two classes of people who will live eternally upon the earth: (1) the saints, who as co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17) are given glorified bodies (1Cor. 15:52), who possess the kingdom (Dan. 7:18) and rule over the kingdom (Rev. 20:4, 6) as its inheritors (Matt. 25:34); (2) natural people, described here [1Cor. 15:52] as “flesh and blood” who are the eternal subjects of the kingdom, who eternally perpetuate the natural race of earthly men in the flesh (Ps. 72:5; Isa. 59:21; Eze. 37:25; Luke 1:32-33. 2Pe. 3:13).¹⁸

Two classes of people are thus distinctly recognized in the new heaven and earth;—a class in glory who get the fruits of the Tree of Life, and a class in the estate of “nations” who get the leaves; but, whether fruits or leaves, a great and glorious blessing. . . . The meaning is not that the nations are full of sicknesses and ailments; for these remains of the curse are gone then, though it may be from the virtue of

these leaves. The meaning rather is the preservation of health and comfort, and not that maladies then exist to be removed. The Life-leaves are for the conservation and augmentation of the Life-blessedness of men on earth, as the Life-fruits are for the joy of the saints in heaven.¹⁹

One objection to such a view is found in Paul's statement: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. 15:50). Although Jesus referred to his resurrected body as "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39), it was clearly a different body than that which Adam and Eve had in their natural state. Jesus' resurrected body is the sort of incorruptible body which the saints will inherit when glorified. There is no corruption in the eternal state, for sin shall be no more. And so it was in the Garden of Eden before the fall of Adam and Eve. But the prohibition against flesh and blood in the ultimate kingdom of God—beyond the millennium—would seem to be at odds with a restoration of the conditions in the Garden of Eden. Some try to get around the plain meaning of Paul's statement by postulating two classes of peoples in the eternal state: those with glorified bodies who rule and reign and those in natural bodies who are their subjects.²⁰ But such a proposition seems without support in Scripture which knows of only one class among the redeemed in eternity: those who inherit the kingdom, obtain eternal life, are granted the right to enter the city, and partake of the tree of life. The promise to the overcomer at the church of Ephesus and the last blessing of all of Scripture, at the close of the book, imply that all the faithful are of a single class in regard to their access to the tree of life:

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. "To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (Rev. 2:7)

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (Rev. 21:14)

These are the redeemed, those who obtain eternal life by faith in Christ. The promises they obtain are described in terms which match that of the nations and kings of the earth in the eternal state who bring their glory and honor through the gates into the city (Rev. 21:24-26) and partake of the tree of life (Rev. 22:2). Dividing up access to the tree of life into two classes, some in glorified bodies who partake of the fruit and others in unglorified bodies which partake of the leaves is without Scriptural support.

The suggestion that partaking of the Tree of Life pertains to the citizens within the city and entrance through the city's gates relates to the nations, is also faulty. Both are relevant to all believers: authority over the Tree of Life and access to the way that leads to it.²¹

A better solution is to understand the mention of nations and kings of the earth, which come in through the gate to the New Jerusalem, as merely a description of the identity of the redeemed from among the nations and as emphasizing their right to access the holy city which has been their ultimate hope and destiny all along (John 14:2-3; Gal. 4:25-26; Heb. 11:10, 16; 12:22; 13:14; Rev. 3:12).

The proposal that human beings, in natural bodies, continue to populate the eternal state as separate peoples from the glorified saints seems to raise as many issues as it attempts to solve.²² Nor does it account for the ultimate unity among the redeemed of eternity in its proposal that flesh and blood can inherit the eternal kingdom of God. Neither does it provide additional insight into the purpose of the tree of life in the eternal state because it proposes conditions no different than those in the Garden of Eden for which the mystery of the need for a tree of life during conditions of sinless perfection remains. As intriguing as the view may be to some, it seems to go beyond Scripture and fails to provide significant benefit in an understanding of eternity.

Probably all that we can safely conclude is that the healing provided by the leaves of the tree provides some sort of service to the inhabitants of the eternal state. Exactly what that service is, we are not in a position to ascertain. Since the tree provides both fruit and leaves, the leaves may have a purpose unrelated to eating from the tree:

*The third and preferred explanation is that the healing leaves may represent spiritual service or care. The Greek word for healing is *θεραπεΐα* [therapeia] , “serving, service, care,” from the verb *θεραπεύω* [therapeuō] , “to serve, be a servant.” Liddell, Scott, and Jones list many examples where this term refers to serving and has no connection with illness or the need for healing. Only in the sense of care, treatment, or serving the sick did it come to be applied to “healing” or “curing,” as in “therapy” and “therapeutic.” True, the word is used in Revelation 13:3, 12 of a wound healed; but in Luke 12:42 it is used of “service” of a faithful and wise steward, and in Acts 17:25 for serving God. The leaves, then, are there to minister to or serve the redeemed as they serve God (Rev. 22:3).²³*

The chemical ingredients of the rich foliage of the trees might be available for innumerable uses in the economy of the nations which is to be kept healthy by the leaves of the tree.²⁴

Notes

- 1 J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 505.
- 2 Wilhelm Gesenius, and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2003, 1810-1812), 874.
- 3 “The trees in both cases line the river; but in the earthly order they are outside the city; and though bread trees, they are not the Tree of Life. The heavenly River issues not from the sanctuary but from the throne. It does not flow into the sea, but through the avenues and streets of the city.”—Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 506.
- 4 A. R. Fausset, “The Revelation of St. John the Divine,” in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 22:2.
- 5 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 503.
- 6 “The tree of life is mentioned four times in Proverbs (Pr. 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4), metaphorically depicting wisdom, fruitful works, hope, and the benefits of the wise use of the tongue.”—Daniel K. Wong, “The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7,” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 155 no. 618 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, April-June 1998), 211.
- 7 “The Saviour after his glorious resurrection did eat, even of the course food of mortals. The angels did eat of Sarah’s cakes and of Abraham’s dressed calf (Gen. 18:6-8).”—Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 506.
- 8 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 507.
- 9 Fruchtenbaum believes a monthly calendar will continue, but without the benefit of the moon: “It should be noted that the word month is used, so some kind of dating system will be present in the Eternal Order. Since there will be no sun, moon, or night, it will be a radically different dating system than the one in which we presently live.”—Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 539.
- 10 Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 22:2.
- 11 We speak here of productivity as measured by God , not the constant activity which so often characterizes Christian work, which has more in common with Martha than Mary (Luke 10:38-42).
- 12 Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 358.
- 13 Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 196.
- 14 Wong, “The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7,” 219.
- 15 Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 22:2.
- 16 A viable definition of sin is simply independence from God.
- 17 Wong, “The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7,” 213.
- 18 Jerome Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), 1Cor. 15:50.
- 19 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 507.

20 “Those who argue that ‘flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom’ (1Cor. 15:50) forget that these natural generations are subjects of the kingdom, not inheritors, for only the resurrected saints in glorified bodies are co-heirs with Christ in His eternal kingdom (Rom. 8:17).”—Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, 2Pe. 3:13.

21 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 22:14.

22 “There is no indication whatever in Scripture that resurrected and translated beings have the quality of human sex, much less the capacity to produce offspring.”—John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), Rev. 21:24.

23 Wong, “The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7,” 220-221.

24 Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 22:2.

Commentary on Rev 22:4 by Tony Garland

They shall see His face

They shall see is ὄψονται [opsontai] , middle tense: they themselves will see. The saints will see His face firsthand!

The full glory of God has never been available to sinful man, for God’s fire consumes sin (Ex. 24:17; Num. 16:35; Deu. 4:24; Heb. 12:29). Therefore, God has never been seen fully by men in the flesh (1Jn. 4:12). When God met with the children of Israel “face to face” on Mount Sinai, His presence was so terrifying that the children of Israel requested that Moses mediate between them and God (Deu. 5:4-5). Even Moses, whom God later said He spoke with “face to face” (Ex. 33:11; Num. 12:8; Deu. 34:10), was afraid to look upon God:

Moreover He said, “I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. (Ex. 3:6)

When Moses asked to see the glory of the Lord, God only permitted him a passing glimpse in order that he might not be consumed:

But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” And the Lord said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.” (Ex. 33:20-23)

Many times, God was represented in the first person by the Angel of the Lord, the preincarnate Jesus Christ (John 1:18). Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Lord and called the place Peniel (face of God) because he had seen God face to face, but lived (Gen. 32:30). But this was not God’s unveiled glory. When Elijah fled from Jezebel to Mount Horeb, when he sensed God’s presence, he took care to wrap his face in his mantle lest he see God’s glory directly (1K. 19:13). When Isaiah saw God in the heavenly Temple, he realized he would be consumed because of his sinful state. But a seraph flew to him with a coal and cleansed his sin (Isa. 6:5-7).

As early as the book of Job, it has been the hope and dream of the redeemed to see God firsthand:

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! (Job 19:25-27)

The psalmist also understood that one day, in a righteous state, he would see God’s face:

As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness. (Ps. 17:15)

In the scene before John, the many promises of Jesus that the righteous would have intimacy with God, now find their fulfillment:

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Matt. 5:8)

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:3)

Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:24)

Paul and John also looked forward to this day:

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. (1Cor. 13:12)

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1Jn. 3:2-3)

His name shall be on their foreheads.

Jesus told the church at Philadelphia that the overcomer would have three names written upon him: (1) the name of God; (2) the name of the New Jerusalem; and (3) Jesus' new name (Rev. 3:12). His name was written on the forehead of the 144,000 Jews of the Tribulation (Rev. 7:3; 14:1). In a similar way to which the Beast worshipers received the mark of the Beast as an indication of their identity with the Beast (Rev. 13:16), the servants of God will be dedicated to Him. This name upon their foreheads recalls the dedication of the high priest who wore a plate of gold upon his headdress which was engraved: "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" (Ex. 28:36).

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

If you ever take a class in ethics at a secular university, you may discover that the teaching is absorbed with the so-called gray areas. These are areas where right and wrong are determined by the individuals in the situation under consideration—and almost all situations are thought to be gray areas in some way! Make no mistake: there will be no gray areas when it comes to determining who will live in God's presence and who won't. God knows those who are his and those who aren't. The choice to stay within the love of Christ or reject him confronts us daily. What does your choice today say about where you intend to spend eternity?

Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

What a blessed joy it is to know that God will never leave us! The writer of Hebrews says, "For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (13:5). It is comforting to know that this promise to His people is for eternity. He will forever be in our midst. There are numerous promise statements that the Lord has made to assure us of His presence with and faithfulness to us. One such promise is often referred to in missionaries' messages. Jesus said in what is described as the Great Commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:19-20). The heavenly home that God has prepared for those of us who are His children will be one of joy and everlasting peace. He who is the source of joy and peace will be in our midst for eternity. Our text refers to this wonderful truth. Darkness usually portrays that which is evil. The physician Luke noted that Jesus was sending Paul to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18). Luke also wrote of Zacharias's prophecy about Jesus. This newborn Son of God would grow up "to give knowledge of

salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1 -77-73). There cannot be any darkness when God is in our midst. As mentioned, God is our light, and His presence is the total opposite of darkness. In writing of darkness, the Apostle Paul penned, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom. 13:12). Paul wrote again, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:8-11). The Apostle John also wrote about the subject of darkness by recording what Jesus said: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). The Bible tells us that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. For the believer, that step means no more darkness will be experienced. From the moment God saved us, we were destined, as children of light, to be in His presence. As previously mentioned, He will be our light throughout eternity. Writer after writer has referred to our future with God as being our light and shielding us from any darkness. Walking in that light while here on earth is very important to believers. He is in our midst both during our life here on earth and in eternity.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. As believers, we always have direct access to God (Rev. 21:9-10, 22; cf. Heb. 4:15-16)
2. The Lamb of God will meet every need in eternity, and we should look to Him to meet our every need now (Rev. 21:23-24)
3. The only barrier to access to God is a person's sin (vs. 25-27)
4. Variety and abundance characterize God's provision for His people (22:1-2)
5. We cannot sincerely come into God's presence without being moved to serve Him (vs. 3)
6. We who humbly follow the King of kings will gloriously reign with Him forever (vs. 4-5)

Heart of the Lesson from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

The most fascinating thing about what God has prepared for us as a church is that He will be dwelling among His people. He will relate to His people in an intimate manner, going in and out among them. The church will be filled with His presence. Everything we do together will be permeated with God and His holiness. All the action will take place in the New Jerusalem.

God's people (Rev. 21:9-10)

The angel who had the power to destroy the earth with the seven plagues spoke to John in his vision. He was eager to show John where the saints of God would reside. Notice that he called the church the bride of the Lamb. This is important as we see the intimacy of God with His people. The bride had been in preparation for many years, and now it was time to celebrate. John described the New Jerusalem as the city that comes down from heaven from God. It was a city that was prepared with a chosen people in mind, the church. Paul was right when he said that we cannot conceive what God has prepared for those who love Him (I Cor. 2:9). John was looking at his heavenly Father's latest handiwork made for His very own people.

God in our midst (Rev. 21:22-27)

In the days of the height of the Jewish religion, the temple at Jerusalem was the center of activity. It was where all the sacrifices were made. In the New Jerusalem there will be no temple, for there will be no need of sacrifices. The Lord God and the Lamb (Jesus) had replaced these as the center. There will be no sun and moon, for the Lord will be the light that will light up the city. His glory will be brighter than anything anyone had previously known. Those who give their allegiance to Jesus will walk there in the brightness of His glory, and the kings and the nations of the world will add their honor there as well. It will be fit for royalty. Since there is no night, there will be no need to close any city gates as in the old Jerusalem. There

will be no evil there, and no dishonesty or idolatry will have a place in the new city of holiness. Only those who have their names written in the Lamb's book of life will be allowed to enter there.

God's face (Rev. 22:1-5)

Have you ever thought about what God looks like? We now know in part because we can see Jesus through the pages of the Bible. He shows us what God is like. In New Jerusalem, we will stand by the pure river of the crystal clear water of life. This flows from the throne of God and from the Lamb. Its source is purity and holiness. The tree of life will be there, bearing a new crop of fruit each month. This is hard for us to understand on this side of heaven. John does tell us that it will be used for healing the nations. The curse of sin will be gone, for curses have no effect when the Lamb is present. The people of God will worship the Lamb with His name on their foreheads. God will be King forever in perpetual daylight, for where the Lamb is, there will always be light. But most of all, as a body of believers in Jesus, we will see God's face. This was not possible in the Old Testament. Here we see how our God seeks to manifest Himself to us. We are to respond.