

The Eternal State

After the scene at the Great White Throne, a scene that is outside of “*time*” and beyond human history, we are ushered into the last chapter of what has been the unfolding panorama of the ages. Our study of “*God's Plan for the Ages as Revealed in Scriptures,*” began with an introduction to *Elohim*, the Mighty Author, and Cause, of Life, and will end now on the last pinnacle peak of “*the Mystery of Godliness,*” and stand, spellbound, as we look out over the eternal vista of God's glorious tomorrow!

The concluding chapters of Revelation carry us out beyond finite understanding right to the very threshold of the infinite. The Great White Throne, the seat of the pure, blinding, whiteness of omnipotence, is spanned above by an emerald rainbow – as the heavenlies, and the elements, melt with fervent heat – and below the Earth is ablaze with the purging, purifying, fire. The eternal city, the New Jerusalem, comes down out of Heaven to bring release from pain and sorrow, death and tears, forever (Revelation 21:1-5 and 2 Peter 3:10-12).

While this seems to be the grand, and glorious, consummation of all the cherished hopes, and dreams, of the Redeemed of the ages, it is, in reality, not the end, but rather, the beginning. God lets the curtain fall upon “*time*” and all things past, and declares that, “*former things are passed away,*” as He throws open wide the portals of the Perfect, and Eternal, Age – and announces the soul-thrilling, declaration that the whole disturbed universe has been hoping, striving, living, dying, to hear, “*Behold I make all things new!*” (Revelation 21:5).

The Preparation for the Eternal Kingdom

- The destruction of Satan and the last living earth dwellers
- the judgment, and eternal doom of the resurrected wicked dead,
- the purging of every trace of sin, rebellion and discord in the universe,
- the refining and melting away of everything associated with the ruin and spoliation as a result of the curse
- the dreadful, end-time, fire burning up all the dross of the visible creation

... will be the momentous events which will mark the preparation for the eternal state of the Redeemed, the Eternal Kingdom, which is God's everlasting rest, His place of unchanging, and absolute, perfection, where only the Righteous can dwell.

At this moment in our study of what God has revealed in His Word concerning His dealing with mankind down through the age – Christ set up His Millennial Kingdom, sharing His blessed “*reign of righteousness*” on the earth with His ransomed, glorified, saints. Christ Kingdom has fulfilled its purpose and object – “*the exhibition of the restoration of Divine Sovereignty in the earth*” – triumphantly accomplishing the final overthrow of the kingdom of Satan. “*The cometh the end, when Christ will have delivered up the (Millennial) Kingdom to God, even the Father...that God may be all in all*” (1 Corinthians 15L24-28)

A New Heaven and a New Earth

2 Peter 3:10-13 states, “*The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives*

as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth the home of righteousness."

The "heavens," and the "earth," is speaking of the respective spheres of the "saved," those in heaven, and the earth's inhabitants, genuinely serving Christ during the Millennial Kingdom. In contrast to all previous dominions on the earth, the millennial Kingdom of Christ will be a thousand-year display of a righteous reign on earth, after which God will set up His Eternal Kingdom where righteousness will dwell forever in an abiding, eternal state – in perfect harmony with what God is, "All in All," – Righteousness, Holiness, Perfection, Light, and Love and Life!

In 2 Peter 3:10-13, as well as in other passages in the New Testament, whenever the phrase, "earth passing away" is used, it is translated from the Greek word, "parerchomai" that carries the meaning of "having fled" – "perishing" or – "being dissolved" – which means, that this world, in **no way** signifies *annihilation*, or cessation of being. The word refers to transition not extinction. The teaching of Bible revelation assures us that the "earth abideth forever." (See Ecclesiastes 1:14; Psalm 119:90 and Isaiah 66:22, just to mention a few verses.) Despite the fact that, to be sure, God will put the earth in the crucible to be purged – cleansed of old corruption and imperfections as He makes the earth "NEW," that is, as the present things of earth, "pass away," "is dissolved," to give place to a new and better abiding eternal state – The earth will continue to exist, and, even though Peter states that the world once before "perished," (King James Version) – the word "world" is translated from the Greek word, "kosmos" which actually means "order" – "arrangement" – "inhabitableness" – so, what Peter is really saying is that it is these characteristics of earth that will perish. However, the earth, as a planet, will continue to exist. In the same way that , when a man becomes "a new creature in Christ Jesus – "a new creation" – he is not annihilated, but rather, is said to be "regenerated" – because the word "regeneration" is translated from the same Greek word Peter uses here – "palingenesia," which means "recreation" – "making new." Rather than the earth being annihilated, it will be "regenerated," changed, and made "a new creation" as "old things pass away and all things become new."

This same Greek word, "palingenesia," is found in Titus 3:5, where it says, "He [God] saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy, He saved us through the washing of rebirth and **'renewal'** by the Holy Spirit." This Greek word is also found in Matthew 19:28, which speaks of re-creation of the existing order and the renewal of the earth.

"The word 'palingenesia' signifies a renovation of all visible things when the old is passed away, and heaven and earth are become new." – International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

When Scripture tells us that Jesus "loosed" Lazarus, the word "loosed" is translated from this same Greek word, "palingenesia," because this Greek word has the meaning of "deliverance," **not** destruction. Other Scripture verses, such as Matthew 21:2; Revelation 9:14 and 20:7, and 1 Corinthians 7:27, also use this same word to denote "loosing," or "setting free."

While it is true that the ablest of Bible scholars disagree as to the method, and extent, of the *physical* change in the universe implied in these dramatic passages, nonetheless, a world "wherein dwelleth righteousness" would be a new world even with out any physical change.

A New Jerusalem (Revelation 21)

John, the revelator says in Revelation 21:2, *“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.”*

In our study we have come to the consummation of the ages, *“the Church of the firstborn written in heaven,”* the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, in Her final completeness and eternal abode and, as She descends in Her purity and beauty, She will become the crowning gem to complete the blessedness of the *“re-Genesis”* of the world and the everlasting Joy of the Lord.

The New Jerusalem is the realization of that celestial city which Christ has bled to prepare for His glorified saints to be their eternal home. The faithful of all ages have been inspired by the promise of a dwelling place brought down from heaven, a place of heavenly blessedness, an enduring city built, and prepared, by *“the Author, and Finisher, or our faith.”*

Hebrews 11:10 states, *“For he (Abraham) looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”* Verse 13-14 continues, *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own.”* Verse 16, *“But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for **He hath prepared for them a city.**”*

In John 14:1-6, Jesus explains, *“In My Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you!”*

The City is called *“the Bride, the Lamb's Wife,”* because a city is a city only in the sense of those who inhabit it, because, in the same way that without residents, a city would be an empty sepulcher, the heavenly city is defined as the Lamb's Bride because of the ransomed, redeemed, and glorified ones who reside within its Jasper walls. It is the streets of transparent gold – the “many mansions” – the river, crystal and clear – the trees of everlasting fruitage – the beauty of accommodation and arrangement – together *with* the immortal occupants, which make it both “a city” and “a people,” thus, did the Angel describe it in Revelation 9:10 as, *“the bride, the Lamb's wife, the great city, the holy Jerusalem.”*

As John tell us, in Revelation 21, that he saw this heavenly city descending, from God, out of heaven, he goes on to describe this heavenly city, which was built by the almighty Architect Who built the universe, as shining *“with the glory of God”* (verse 11) which is the *“all and all”* of the city's transcendent splendor (Revelation 21:10-11).

“The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.” (Revelation 21:23)

The Holy Occupants

The glorified saints are the dwellers of the celestial city, the Tabernacle of God, yet John speaks of another company in verse 3, when he says, *“And I heard a loud voice from the throne*

saying, `Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.'"

This certainly seems to refer to the living, undying, people "*saved out of the nations,*" (the earth's subjects out of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ), will become the occupants of the New Earth and subjects of the Eternal Kingdom of God and they, evidently, will be everlasting, though distinct, and different, from the redeemed saints, the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will dwell on the New Earth in the same way as Adam and Eve dwelled in Paradise when they walked in Holy Communion with their Maker.

Revelation 21:24 states, "*And the nations [out of the Millennial Kingdom] shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.*"

The natural earthly nations who have lived from the tribulation period through the Millennium will multiply and replenish the earth and carry out the original program of God on earth as Adam and others would have done if man had not sinned (Genesis 1:26-28; 8:22; 9:12, 16; 17:1-9, 19). They are the sheep nations of Matthew 25:31-46.

"*Shall walk in the light*" - All people in the New Earth will be saved from sin and be righteous eternally. The rebels will be destroyed, but the camp of the saints will remain (Revelation 20:7-10).