

“It Just Doesn’t Get Any Better Than This!” (Revelation 21:1-22:5)

How many of you enjoying flying? How many of you struggle with anxiety or physical problems when you fly? My wife Lori grew up in a family that loved to fly. Her dad and grandpa both flew small airplanes. A favorite family outing would be to take the plane out. If Lori was especially privileged, her granddad would sometimes let her steer from the co-pilot’s seat. Because it had a special place in their family, Lori has always desired to get her pilot’s license like her grandfather and father before her. Unfortunately, since Lori was a very small girl she has always experienced excruciating inner ear pain. She compares it to having someone thrusting knives into her ears or eyes! This happens every time she is in an airplane, regardless of its type or size. It has gotten so bad that now Lori doesn’t like to fly. She almost refuses to fly at all. Whenever a circumstance is presented where she might have to board an aircraft, she has to weigh the destination with the pain she will encounter along the way. Sometimes the final destination is worth the pain.

Life is like Lori on a plane. Life can sometimes only be endured in light of the destination. Revelation 21:1-22:5 is our heavenly destination. This passage teaches us that the destination is worth the trip. In 21:1-8, John insists...

1. Prepare for your destination (21:1-8).¹ John writes, “**Then I saw² a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away.**”³ The expression “heaven and earth” is a biblical designation for the entire universe (cf. Gen 1:1). So John sees a transformation of the entire universe.⁴ The first heaven and earth will “**pass[ed] away**”⁵ (cf. Matt 24:35). This does not mean extinction or annihilation, but transformation.⁶ It will be a dramatic change in quality from one level to a higher form.⁷ In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul writes, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new (*kainos*) creature; the old things passed away (*parerchomai*); behold, new things have come.” This doesn’t mean that when we were converted to Christ, we ceased to be. I was not annihilated altogether, but transformed from the inside out. Likewise, the heavens and earth will be radically altered and gloriously reborn. This present universe will undergo a vast renovation—a rebirth or remaking (see Acts 3:21).⁸

The result of this renovation will be a “**new earth**” that will be our eternal home. What I am saying is: We are not going to live in heaven forever. No, this is not a misprint. The Bible teaches that we will be in heaven for an appointed time, we will then rule with Christ on earth, and finally we will experience the eighth-day of creation and live on a new earth (cf. 21:5). This teaching startles most people because many have wrongly assumed that believers will spend their lives in the sky. However, the Bible teaches that man’s ultimate destiny is an earthly one. Yes, we will one day return to God’s original plan as revealed in the garden of Eden.

Most Americans are familiar with ABC’s hit show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. It is remarkable how motivated people can remodel and restore a run-down house in seven days.⁹ It is also moving to see the sheer joy of the beneficiaries. Well, can you fathom what the God of this universe can do when He remodels and restores our eternal home? For the past 2,000 years, He has been preparing a place for you that will stagger your imagination (cf. 21:9-21). When you see the finished product you will shout and scream with joy inexpressible!

Another striking statement is made in 21:1b: “**and there is no longer any sea.**”¹⁰ Remember, at the time of this writing, John is exiled on Patmos, separated from his church by the Aegean Sea. For John, the sea was a painful barrier and wall of isolation from fellowship with his beloved flock.¹¹ To the ancient peoples, the sea was frightful and fearsome, an awesome monster, a watery grave.¹²

They had no compass to guide them in the open sea. On a cloudy day, their ships were absolutely lost without the stars or the sun to guide them. Their frail ships were at the mercy of the tempestuous ocean's fearsome, angry storms. The loss of human life was beyond calculation. So the sea represented a vast barrier for nations, continents, and people groups. The sea was a separator of mankind around the globe...a destroyer of human life.¹³ But no more! No more geographical barriers to separate us. No more violent sea storms to bury victims in watery graves.¹⁴ God will renovate the world, as we know it.¹⁵

In 21:2, John sees **“the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride¹⁶ adorned for her husband.”** **“The holy city, New Jerusalem”** is in contrast to the former Jerusalem.¹⁷ As the old Jerusalem was Jesus Christ's capital during the millennium, so the New Jerusalem will be His capital for eternity. This is the place that our Lord is preparing (John 14:1-3). The **“New Jerusalem”** describes both the saints (21:3-7, 24-27) and their eternal dwelling (21:2). The city is everything the bride is; the bride is everything the city is. In this simile, Christ is the husband (21:9-10; cf. 3:12). It is a glorious relationship.

The most glorious aspect of eternity is that God will be present. In 21:3, John writes, **“And I heard a loud voice¹⁸ from the throne,¹⁹ saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people,²⁰ and God Himself²¹ will be among them.’”** Two times in this verse, the Lord states that He will dwell among His people. The supreme blessing of the New Jerusalem is that God will dwell among His people, and they will experience intimate fellowship with Him (cf. Ezek 37:27; 48:35).²² Any previous intimacy with God will be blown away by what we experience in eternity.

In our technological age, we often do much of our communication via email. This can seem impersonal. An improvement to email can be a phone call. A phone call allows the receiver to hear tone of voice and even envision the person on the other end of the line. It seems more personal. However, due to the rise of cell phones, a phone call can lack value. A step up from email and a phone call is a hand-written note. These dinosaurs are a treasure in our day and age. Email, telephone, and written notes are wonderful mediums of expression and communication, but nothing compares with face-to-face fellowship to communicate love, sympathy and support, or encouragement.

This verse tells us that God is going to dwell with us. He's going to hang out with us! He's going to be ever-present. This is mind-boggling! Unfortunately, we are finite creatures. When we hear of this incredible blessing, we check our watch to see when church ends. Yet, what makes heaven heavenly is God's presence! He alone is the only One that can satisfy us. Therefore, we must pray that God helps us to realize our inner desire to know Him. Since He has placed this yearning within us, He will merely have to help us rediscover our neglected or untapped desire.

Another glorious aspect of eternity is that evil and suffering will be absent. In 21:4, John promises us that **“He [God] will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away”** (cf. 7:17; Isa 25:8). Verse 3 describes the benefits of the New Jerusalem positively, and verse 4 does so, negatively. This reference to wiping away tears highlights God's compassion for His people. Sorrow, death, and pain will all end along with the tears, mourning, and crying that result from them. This is a final reversal of the curse (Gen 3). All these former experiences will be gone forever then. However, note that the removal of tears will take place after the judgments, including the judgment seat of Christ, when some Christians will suffer the loss of reward (1 Cor 3:15; cf. 1 John 2:28). The “first” things are the former things, the things associated with the old creation.

In 21:5, John says, “Out with the old and in with the new.” John records, **“And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ And He said, ‘Write, for these words are faithful and true.’”** John turned from describing the New Jerusalem briefly to describe some of God’s utterances (cf. 1:8; 20:11). **“Behold”** introduces a special pronouncement, namely that God will bring a new creation into existence (cf. 21:1). He assures us that His words are **“faithful and true.”** The Lord then said to John, **“It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost”** (21:6). The judgments of the tribulation (cf. 16:17) and of the whole, old creation stood accomplished (cf. 21:5). Jesus said, **“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”** Alpha, the first letter of the Greek alphabet, suggests that the Lord God Almighty is the initiator of creation, the source and origin of all things. Omega, the last letter of the Greek alphabet, points to the fact that He is the end of everything, that is, He is the goal or aim of all things (1:8; 22:13; cf. Isa 44:6).

His promise of abundant satisfaction for the thirsty is metaphorical, symbolizing His ability to meet the deepest needs of His people (7:17; cf. Isa 55:1; John 4:13-14; 7:37-39). This is an invitation to anyone, including believers, to come to God to receive freely from Him, what is truly satisfying. It is a beautiful Gospel invitation (cf. 22:17). Besides this promise being guaranteed by God’s faithfulness (21:5), it is also guaranteed by His power (21:6).

In 21:7, the Lord states, **“He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.”** The overcomer will inherit the blessings of the new creation.²³ The phrase **“I will be his God and he will be My son”**²⁴ is defined elsewhere as a statement of special honor, not of salvation. The Davidic covenant promised to David’s son, Solomon, “I will be a Father to him and he will be a son to Me” (2 Sam 7:14). The intent of this phrase was to signify a special, intimate relationship. It is a special honor associated with the Davidic covenant, including privileged intimacy and ruling authority. A person can be a son and not necessarily behave as a son. A true son reflects a life of obedience (Jer 7:23; 11:4). A willingness to yield to the leading of the Holy Spirit is characteristic of the sons of God (Rom 8:14).²⁵

During the terrible Chicago fire of 1871, D. L. Moody’s house burned down. As Moody surveyed the ruins, a friend said, “I hear you lost everything.” “Well,” said Moody, “you understand wrong. I have a good deal more left than I lost.” His friend asked, “What do you mean? You are not a rich man.” Mr. Moody then opened his Bible and read to him Revelation 21:7, “He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be His God.”²⁶

In contrast to the overcomer, the Lord utters these frightening words: **“But for the cowardly²⁷ and unbelieving²⁸ and abominable²⁹ and murderers³⁰ and immoral persons³¹ and sorcerers³² and idolaters³³ and all liars,³⁴ their part will be in the lake that burns³⁵ with fire and brimstone, which is the second death”** (21:8). This verse serves as a description of the individuals thrown into the lake of fire as a result of the great white throne (20:11-15). These eight particular evils especially characterize the unfaithful during the period of the great tribulation. These are also the very evils which are most tempting to the believer, during the intense persecution and evil of the last days. In this verse eternal sinfulness is in view. It is a mistake to think that this verse is describing the way the unsaved behave here and now. The verse says nothing about the current behavior of believers or unbelievers. Rather, it concerns the eternal sinfulness of unbelievers (cf. John 8:24). Unbelievers die in a state of sinfulness. Forever they remain sinners. Believers, however, do not remain in a state of sinfulness because they are justified by faith (Rom 4:1-8; 8:33-34). There will be no sinners and no sin in the new heavens and the new earth.³⁶ According to 1 John 3:2, “when He [Jesus] is revealed, we shall be like Him.”

The reason that you must “book your destination” is because the costs are high. Heaven or hell awaits every person; the choice is yours. Will you trust in the finished work of Christ to secure your destination? If so, you will spend eternity with God.

[John’s initial interest in the New Jerusalem was in its citizens. In 21:1-8, we are told who will inhabit the New Jerusalem, as well as those who will be excluded. When we come to 21:9-21, we find John taking a closer look, as it were, at the city itself].

2. Upgrade your destination (21:9-21). One of the blessings of our eternal destination is that everyone will experience an upgrade. What is the most beautiful place you have ever seen? Can you describe the physical features of the city? That’s what John does in 21:9-21. These verses make me wonder if John was an interior designer on the side. In 21:9-11, John likens our eternal home to a gem. He writes, **“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, ‘Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.’³⁷ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city,³⁸ Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven³⁹ from God⁴⁰ having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.”** The first and most important characteristic that John noted was its radiant glow. It shone with the splendor of God Himself because He was in it.⁴¹ John compared the glory of the city to that of a beautiful gem. Jasper stones were very beautiful but not always clear. As mentioned earlier (cf. 4:3), this is probably a crystal-clear gem with many facets of brilliance; probably what we call a diamond. This stone described God Himself earlier (4:3), so its brilliance is a further reflection of God’s presence in the city.

In 21:12-21, John further explains the greatness of our eternal home. But this is a most challenging task. The great pastor and writer, Ray Stedman (now with the Lord) used to say, “For John to try to explain to finite humans what this new state is like is similar, said, to trying to explain the concepts of relativity and quantum physics to a two-year-old.” This is the truth! John writes, **“It had a great and high wall,⁴² with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west.⁴³ And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.⁴⁴ The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.⁴⁵ The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.⁴⁶ And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.⁴⁷ The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.⁴⁸ The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper [light green]; the second, sapphire [blue]; the third, chalcedony [gray or green]; the fourth, emerald [green];⁴⁹ the fifth, sardonyx [brown and white]; the sixth, sardius [red]; the seventh, chrysolite [yellow]; the eighth, beryl [blue-green]; the ninth, topaz [yellow-brown]; the tenth, chrysoprase [apple green]; the eleventh, jacinth [blue]; the twelfth, amethyst [purple].⁵⁰ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl.⁵¹ And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.”⁵²** Why would John spend so long with a description of the various precious gems out of which the city is built? The length of this section suggests that there is an important lesson to be learned here. I would like to suggest three areas of application that this section suggests: (1) For those saints whose lot is poverty, like the saints in Smyrna (2:9), John’s description of the splendor of the New Jerusalem is great encouragement.

Whatever material benefits have been forfeited for their faith, the eternal riches of the New Jerusalem will more than adequately make up for.⁵³ So if you feel like you're barely making ends meet, remember the eternal home that awaits you.

For his first sermon in an elementary preaching class, Lawrence, an African student, chose a text describing the joys we'll share when Christ returns and ushers us to our heavenly home. "I've been in the United States for several months now," he began. "I've seen the great wealth that is here—the fine homes and cars and clothes. I've listened to many sermons in churches here, too. But I've yet to hear one sermon about heaven. Because everyone has so much in this country, no one preaches about heaven. People here don't seem to need it. In my country most people have very little, so we preach on heaven all the time. We know how much we need it."⁵⁴

(2) For those who are anti-materialistic, and who feel that all that is beautiful and priceless is to be disdained, this section reminds us that there is nothing evil about what is beautiful or expensive, or else heaven would not be made of such precious and priceless material things. Some Christians give the impression that heaven will be made out of second-hand materials; that everything is from the Goodwill or Salvation Army, and painted that ugly greenish-brown. Beautiful and priceless materials are absolutely appropriate in heaven, for God is worthy of that which is most beautiful.⁵⁵ Don't disdain the beautiful things of this world. Celebrate them for what they are. Nothing is evil in and of itself.

(3) For those who are rich in this world's goods, or who are striving to become so, the splendor of heaven is a healthy antidote for materialism. The Laodicean saints thought that they were rich, but they were informed that they were poor (3:17-18). No matter how much wealth these saints could have accumulated, it would pale into insignificance in comparison to the wealth of heaven. And even if it were possible to "take it with you" to heaven, it would be of no value. After all, if the streets of the New Jerusalem are paved with such pure gold (21:21), the impure gold which we now possess would not even be suitable for road paving. Let those who would suppose that they are rich compare their wealth with that of the New Jerusalem.⁵⁶

A man who has a layover at an airport does not go into the bathroom, frown at its decor, and start redecorating! Why? Because he doesn't live there. He has a home in another place. While he is away he will get by with only what he absolutely needs, in order to have more money with which to furnish his permanent home. Why do we Christians work so hard at trying to make our life in this world more comfortable? This is just the airport and we are in transit. We should spend our energy on enhancing our eternal reward, and not worry so much about the bare walls in the airport restrooms.⁵⁷ Let us invest our lives in what will really last and matter for all of eternity.

[As we come to the concluding verses of Revelation 21, John is careful to describe for us what will not be in heaven. That may sound negative, but it is entirely positive. Heaven will be heaven as much for what will not be there as what is there. Having told us what and who will be there, John will now tell us what and who will be missing].

3. Appreciate your destination (21:22-22:5). In 21:22-27, John describes the character of the new city. It is known by what is not there. John writes, "**I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty⁵⁸ and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only**

those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." In 21:22-27, we discover the five blessed absences of heaven. (1) There will be no sanctuary or temple because God and Jesus are the temple (21:22). The whole city will, therefore, be a virtual temple. The Lamb will play the central role in this temple along with Almighty God.

(2) There will be no sun or moon because God is her light and the Lamb her lamp (21:23). The need for created light sources will end when the Creator Himself lives among His people. God illuminated the camp of Israel with His presence in the pillar of fire, and He lit the Holy of Holies with His presence between the cherubim. He will similarly dispel all darkness of all kinds in the new city. The Lamb is the radiance of the Father's glory (Heb 1:3), but the Father is also the light (22:5). No more flashlights. No more changing light bulbs (the one mechanical thing that I can do). The vast wattage of God will supply all the light that is needed. It will be the Jesus Christ Light and Power Company.

(3) There will be no self-glory. Nations and kings will **"bring the glory and the honor of the nations"** into the New Jerusalem. There will be no reveling in past success or greatness; the glory will all be given to God. The identity of these nations and kings is difficult to determine.⁵⁹ It is clear from the context that John is talking about a group of people who have access to the New Jerusalem but who don't live there. There is only one group of people left on earth to go into eternity in their physical bodies—believers that served Christ during His millennium kingdom. They go into eternity in their physical, glorified bodies, not spiritual, glorified bodies like we will have because they did not experience death and resurrection. These people will go into eternity with bodies like Adam and Eve had at their creation before they were flawed by sin.⁶⁰ Their physical bodies will be maintained through a special provision from God ("the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations," 22:2b). In the New Jerusalem the gates will never close; anyone can enter anytime (21:25-26). These nations and kings, therefore, may enter whenever they wish, pay homage to God, and seek out the leaves of the Tree of Life for their continued health and well-being.⁶¹

(4) There is no sin. Nothing unclean will enter the New Jerusalem (21:27a).

(5) There are no sinners—only glory and honor, nothing defiling (21:27b). Only the blood-bought have the ticket. Only believers will enter the city. The unsaved will in no way be able to do so.⁶² Evidently, any believer will be able to enter the city since the contrast is with those whose names are not in the Lamb's Book of Life (i.e., the lost). This verse warns the reader that the only way to gain entrance into this city is to have one's name recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life (cf. 20:15).

The late, great Bible teacher, Vance Havner once said, "There are a lot of questions the Bible doesn't answer about the Hereafter. But I think one reason is illustrated by the story of a boy sitting down to a bowl of spinach when there's a chocolate cake at the end of the table. He's going to have a rough time eating that spinach when his eyes are on the cake. And if the Lord had explained everything to us about what's ours to come, I think we'd have a rough time with our spinach down here."⁶³

In 22:1-5, John explains the restoration of Paradise (cf. 2:7; Gen 2; Luke 23:43; 2 Cor 12:2). Up to this chapter, the New Jerusalem seems to be all mineral and no vegetable. Its appearance is as the dazzling display of a fabulous jewelry store; we wonder if there is no soft grass to sit upon, no green trees to enjoy, and no water to drink or food to eat. However, here are introduced the elements which add a rich softness to this city of elaborate beauty. John writes, **"Then he showed me⁶⁴ a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations"** (22:1-2).

The pure river seems to be symbolic of the refreshment and sustenance that God provides,⁶⁵ though it, like the city itself, is probably also a literal river (cf. Gen 2:10, 14).⁶⁶ John described the river he saw as bright or clear as a crystal; it was a shimmering, sparkling stream of unpolluted water. This river proceeded from the throne that belongs to God and the Lamb.⁶⁷ This throne evidently stood at the head of the main street of the city so that looking down this street the throne appeared to be in its middle.⁶⁸ The point of the passage is to teach that, in the eternal state, God's people will live at the source of the life-giving stream, the very presence of God Himself.⁶⁹ This lone river signifies power, purity, and eternal life, in the eternal city that has its constant source of life in God.

In 22:2, John also saw the Tree of Life. When Adam and Eve fell, they lost their access to the Tree of Life in the garden of Eden (cf. Gen 2:9; 3:22-24). In the eternal city the residents will have access to the Tree of Life there.⁷⁰ This tree was perpetually, rather than seasonally, in fruit; it produced a new crop of fruit each month of the year. Evidently the new creation will not have a lunar calendar, since there will be no moon (21:23), but another type of calendar will define months. Most fruit trees in the old creation bear fruit only a few months each year at most. In contrast, God's blessing of fruitfulness will mark life in the new earth. The Tree of Life in the garden of Eden could perpetuate life forever (Gen 3:22, 24). Evidently that will be the function of this tree in the new earth as well, to sustain immortality.

In 22:3-4, John goes on to write, **“There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.”**⁷¹ John tells us there will no longer be a curse. The curse in view is probably the curse that God pronounced on the old creation at the fall (cf. Gen 3:14-19; Zech 14:11; Mal 4:6). God will have intimate fellowship with His people because this curse has now been lifted. In this perfect place, we will serve Him.⁷²

Last week I was talking with another area pastor. We were discussing the great challenge of enlisting people to serve (e.g., nursery, children's Sunday school, prayer ministry, etc.). Then it dawned on me that, like most pastors, I was guilty of not regularly challenging our people to serve outside of our church walls. I realized that I was likely guilty of not stretching our people by encouraging them to serve in an area in which they are particularly gifted. So if you ever hear me implying that ministry or service is primarily inside these church walls, please, slap me silly! I release you to serve with Child Evangelism Fellowship and Union Gospel Mission. I urge you to have a felt-needs neighborhood Bible study. God wants many of us to serve Him outside the walls of this building.

In 22:4, we also learn that God's bond-servants will see God's face; we will enjoy personal, intimate fellowship with Him. We will be able to do this because we will be pure in heart, righteous, and holy then (cf. Ps 11:7; 17:15; Matt 5:8; 1 Cor 13:12; Heb 12:14). Adam and Eve's sin broke their fellowship with God, and they hid from Him (Gen 3:8; cf. Exod 33:20, 23). Our ability to view God's glory is limited now (cf. Job 19:25-27; 2 Cor 3:18; Heb 9:7), but then it will be unhindered (1 John 3:2).

Our section closes in 22:5 with these words: **“And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.”** The final point John stressed was the great glory of God that will illuminate the whole new earth (21:23-25; cf. Zech 14:6-7). Previously he mentioned this to show how glorious the city will be, but now he did so to emphasize what delight this will result in for the city-dwellers (cf. Num 6:22-27). He added that His bond-servants will reign with Him forever, not just in the millennial kingdom (20:4, 6). This is the fulfillment of God's desire and command: that man should rule over His creation (Gen 1:26). Evidently, faithful believers will have more authority in the new creation than unfaithful believers, as will be true during the millennium (cf. Matt 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27).

Our faithfulness in life prepares us for higher service in heaven. Who knows but what He will give to each saint a world or a solar system or a galactic system to operate. Remember that Adam was given dominion over the old creation on this earth.⁷³ Thus the prophecy of things that shall take place after present things (1:19), which began in 4:1, closes with a picture of God's servants worshipping around His throne and ruling under His authority.⁷⁴

I'd like to introduce you to one of my best childhood friends [take out a VCR and remote]. Most of you know that I'm a sports fan. I'm sad to say that when I was growing up I wasn't just a sports fan, I was a sports addict. I would always videotape the games that I would miss when I was not at home. But I was different than many sports fans. I didn't rewind the tape to the beginning to view it. Instead, I rewound to the climax to discover who won and who lost. If my team lost, I wouldn't even watch the game. In fact, I would tape over the game. But if my team won, I'd rewind the game back to the beginning, get out some snacks, and watch the whole game. Some people think that this method can't be much fun. On the contrary, no matter how bad things look for my team, I don't have to worry because I know how the game ends.

Life is like that. If you have placed faith in Christ, you know the final score. God has given us a remote control (the Bible) that fast-forwards to the end of the age. The book of Revelation tells us that, in the end, we win! No matter how bad things look, if you have a VCR mentality you know you have a glorious destination and future.

Parallels in Genesis 1-3 and Revelation 20-22

Genesis

In the beginning (1:1)
God created the heavens and the earth (1:1)
Let there be light (1:3)
The darkness He called "night" (1:5)
The gathered waters He called "seas" (1:10)
God made the two great lights (1:16)
He also made the stars (1:16)
Subdue [the earth]. Rule over (1:28)
God blessed the 7th day (2:2-3)
[God] made it holy (2:3)
Tree of life (2:9)
He must not take from the tree of life (3:22-23)
A river watering the garden (2:10)

There is gold (the gold of that land is good) (2:11-12)

The bdellium stone (pearls) (2:12)
Onyx (2:12)
You will surely die (2:17)
Or you will die (3:3)
A man will. . . be united to his wife (2:23-25)
The serpent. . . was crafty (3:1)
Shown a garden into which sin entered (3:6-7)
The Lord God. . . was walking in the garden (3:8)
Walk of God with man interrupted (3:8-10)
I was ashamed [naked] (3:10)
Initial triumph of the serpent (3:13)
Cursed. . . cursed (3:14, 17)
Eve's offspring (3:15)
I will greatly multiply your pain (3:16-17)
The Lord God made garments of skins and clothed them (3:21)
God banished him (3:23)
He drove the man out of the garden (3:24)
Cherubim. . . to guard the way (3:24)
A flaming sword (3:24)

Revelation

I am. . . the beginning and the end (21:6)
I saw a new heaven and a new earth (21:1)
God gives it light (21:23)
There will be no night there (21:25)
There was no longer any sea (21:1)
Does not need the sun/moon (21:23)
The morning star (22:16)
And they will reign forever (22:5)
7 angels, 7 bowls, 7 last plagues (21:9)
The Holy City (21:2, 10; 22:19)
Tree of life (22:2)
God will take away His share in the tree of life (22:19)
River of the water of life (22:1)
The free gift of the water of life (22:17)
A measuring rod of gold (21:15)
The city was. . . pure gold (21:18)
The street. . . was pure gold (21:21)
Pearls, each gate made of a single pearl (21:21)
Sardonyx (21:20)
No more death (21:4)

The bride of the wife of the Lamb (21:9-10)
The devil, who deceived them (20:10)
Shown a city into which sin will never enter (21:27)
Nations will walk by His light (21:24)
Walk of God with man resumed (21:3)
Anyone who does what is shameful (21:27)
Ultimate triumph of the Lamb (20:10; 22:3)
No longer. . . any curse (22:3)
The offspring of David (22:16)
No more. . . pain (21:4)
Blessed are those who wash their robes (22:14)

They will see His face (22:4)
I saw the Holy City (21:2)
With 12 angels at the gates (21:12)
Fiery lake of burning sulfur (21:8)

The Significance of the Parallels in Genesis 1-3 and Revelation 20-22

1. Immutability: While we are prone to change, God does not change (Mal 3:6a). Even when we are faithless, He remains forever faithful (2 Tim 2:12). In His first dealings with mankind, He provided the sacrifice to meet the needs of the fallen Adam and Eve (i.e., animal skins, see Gen 3:21). In later events, He provided the sacrifice for the needs of His people (i.e., the Lamb, see 1 Pet 1:18-19).

2. Restoration: The world as we now know it is not what God intended. Rather, our world is a result of man's fall (Gen 3:1-24; Rom 5:12-21). Yet, Revelation 20-22 promises us that God's original plan for mankind will one day be fulfilled.

3. Progress: The new heavens and the new earth are actually an improvement over the Garden of Eden in that there is no sea, no night, no sun, or moon, etc. (Rev 21:1, 23-27).

4. Triumph: God's purposes are never thwarted by anyone or anything (Rom 9:6-29). Although things may have looked bleak in Genesis 3, Revelation 20-22 proves that God ultimately and forcefully triumphs over the Serpent. Eventually, the big three (sin, suffering, and death) will be forever dealt with. This is one of the reasons the book of Revelation is so crucial. Without it, we would be left hanging. But fortunately, God relieves our apprehension and shares with us His glorious future.

5. Beginning and End: In Revelation 21:6, God says, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." Any comparison of these two passages corroborates that He is the controller of all things from eternity to eternity. As Jesus said, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last" (Rev 1:17). We can relax in our great God's sovereignty.

6. Unity of God's Plan: Genesis 3:15 points out the plan that God has to defeat Satan through the offspring of the woman. Revelation points to the consummation of that plan in the finished work of the Lamb (5:6-14). Thus, if God has a plan from the beginning and is able to actually carry it out at the end of history, then He must be in control of human history. And He must be who He claims to be!

7. Unity of Scripture: By these extensive parallels (both similar and contrasting), we see that there is very close literary connection between two biblical books written centuries apart, by different human authors, who were recording the words of a greater, overseeing author, God. Only God Himself could have orchestrated this unity of the Scriptures.

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Notes

¹ For an excellent treatment of these verses, see David J. MacLeod, “The Seventh ‘Last Thing’: The New Heaven and the New Earth” (Rev. 21:1-8). *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157:628 (Oct 2000), 439-51.

² Forty-fives times in Revelation John notes, “I saw” (*eidon*) something. Thirty-two of these are preceded by the Greek word *kai* (“and” or then”), suggesting a chronological sequence.

³ See Gale Z. Heide, “What Is New about the New Heaven and the New Earth? A Theology of Creation from Revelation 21 and 2 Peter 3,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40:1 (March 1997): 37-56.

⁴ Is the new heaven and earth that John saw the same new heaven and earth that Isaiah predicted? (Isa 65:17; 66:22; cf. Ps 102:25-26; Isa 51:6). We would normally assume that the entities are the same since the terms that describe them are almost identical. However the descriptions of these places vary. Isaiah wrote that people will die in the new earth (Isa 65:17-20), but John said there will be no more death there (Rev 21:4). Isaiah predicted that the moon will shine in the new heavens (Isa 66:22-23), but John implied that there will be no moon there (Rev 21:23). Apparently, Isaiah spoke of both the millennium and the eternal state generally, as new heavens and a new earth (Isa 65:17-66:24), which is accurate since even in the millennium the world will experience renovation. John, in the progress of revelation, distinguished these two aspects and applied the name “new heaven and earth” only to the eternal state, which is appropriate since God will eventually destroy the present world and create a new world (cf. 2 Pet 3:10). Isaiah’s view of the future was more general while John’s was more specific.

⁵ Gk. *aperchomai*, cf. Rev 9:12; 10:9; 11:14; 12:17; 16:2; 18:14; 21:1, 4.

⁶ There is a debate among scholars as to whether the present earth is destroyed or renovated. Some scholars argue that John described a renovation of the old creation. Five arguments are suggested. (1) The exegetical argument. They argue that a proper exegesis of verse 5 (as well as of Matt 19:28; Acts 3:21; Rom 8:19-22; and 2 Pet 3:10) suggests a renewal and refining of existing materials. In Matthew Jesus spoke of the “regeneration,” in Acts Peter spoke of “the restoration of all things,” and in Romans Paul wrote of the renewal of the old creation. (2) The theological argument. The view that the old universe is to be utterly destroyed and replaced suggests that the divine purposes will be frustrated by sin. (3) The christological argument. It is difficult to believe that the earth that was sanctified by the presence and works of the incarnate Son of God is to be destroyed. (4) The soteriological or anthropological argument. There is an analogy between redeemed man and the redeemed earth. Just as there is continuity between the earthly body and the resurrection body, so there is to be continuity between the old earth and the new earth. (5) The scientific argument. The intense heat of the final conflagration will not destroy matter but will only give it a new form. Other scholars believe God completely destroys this earth and recreates a new earth. The decisive factor, says Thomas, in favor of an entirely new creation is “the language of Rev 20:11 which depicts an entire dissolving of the old, a vanishing into nothingness, followed by a new creation in 21:1 without any sea.” Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 440. See also John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody, 1966), 311.

⁷ The Greek word for “new” (*kainos*) emphasizes qualitative newness, not temporal newness (*neos*). The main emphasis is its uniqueness; it is quite different from the old.

⁸ See Steven J. Lawson, *Heaven Help Us!* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1995), 104. I highly recommend this resource to study through Rev 4-5 and 21-22. Dr. Lawson is an extraordinary writer.

⁹ For more information see <http://abc.go.com/primetime/xtremehome/show.html>

¹⁰ The word “sea” (*thalassa*) refers to a lake, sea, or body of water. Most of the earth is covered with water which is vital to man’s survival, but in the new earth there will be no bodies of water except for the one river mentioned in 22:1-2. All life on earth is dependent upon water to survive. Human blood is 90% water and human flesh is 65% water. Life however, in the new heaven and earth, will not be based upon water. We will be in glorified bodies not in physical, fleshly bodies and, therefore, will not need to depend upon water for our existence.

¹¹ Some believe that the vast amount of water that covers 90% of our globe’s surface is the result of the flood. It is believed that the water that remains serves as a “scar” to remind us of God’s flood due to man’s sinfulness.

¹² In the book of Revelation, “the sea” is normally a negative image. Beale lists five negative images: (1) the origin of evil (12:18; 13:1); (2) the nations that persecute the saints (12:18; 13:1; 17:1-6), (3) the place of the dead (20:13); (4) the location of the world’s idolatrous trade activity (18:10-19); and (5) a body of water, part of this world (5:13; 7:1-4; 8:8-9; 10:8). See G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*: NIGNTC (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1999), 1042.

¹³ It is also worth noting that the sea represents the disorder, violence, and unrest that mark the present creation (Ps 107:25-28; Isa 57:20; Ezek 28:8).

¹⁴ Lawson, *Heaven Help Us!*, 108.

¹⁵ The new earth will have no seas, but oceans will exist in the millennium (Ps 72:8; Jer 11:9, 11; Ezek 47:8-20; 48:28; Zech 9:10; 14:8).

¹⁶ The use of the bride figure to describe the New Jerusalem should not lead us to conclude that the New Jerusalem is identical with the church. The bride figure elsewhere describes the church (e.g., Rev 19:7; 2 Cor 11:2), but here the city is the bride. The bride figure describes different entities in intimate relationship to Christ. The OT also used the bride as a figure to describe Israel's relationship to God (Isa 62:5; Jer 2:2; 3:20; Ezek 16:8; Hos 2:19-20). This does not mean that Israel, the church, and the New Jerusalem are three names of the same entity. However, this bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem, now evidently encompasses two previous brides of Christ, Israel and the church.

¹⁷ Cf. Rev 11:8; 17-18; Isa 52:1; Matt 4:5; 27:53.

¹⁸ For the last of 20 times in his vision, John heard a loud voice signifying the importance of the proclamation that followed.

¹⁹ This voice is probably one of the four living creatures mentioned in Rev 4:6.

²⁰ Lit., "peoples," not "people." In the old Jerusalem there was one elect nation, Israel. In the New Jerusalem, however, many different peoples, nations, and races will make up redeemed humanity and will dwell with God in glory (cf. 5:9). God promised Abraham that He would bless many peoples through the patriarch (Gen 12:3; cf. Gal 3:8, 16, 26-29). This is the ultimate fulfillment of that promise.

²¹ Gk. *autos* ("Himself") is emphatic in the Greek text.

²² This fellowship existed to some extent when God walked with Adam in the Garden of Eden and when He dwelt among the Israelites in the tabernacle and then in the temple, hence the reference to the tabernacle (cf. 13:6; 15:5). It also existed partially when Jesus Christ "tabernacled" ("dwelt") among people (John 1:14, 18; Col 2:9). It exists today in a spiritual sense as God inhabits the bodies of Christians individually (1 Cor 6:19-20) and the church corporately (Eph 2:21-22).

²³ If we look closely at Rev 21:6-8, we will discover that three groups of people are in view: (1) all that have received the free gift of eternal life, (2) those who have received the free gift and who also overcame the world in their Christian experience, and (3) all who did not receive the free gift of eternal life. The text can be laid out as follows: All believers: "I will give...freely..." (21:6b); overcoming believers: "He who overcomes shall inherit..." (21:7); and all unbelievers: "But the cowardly...murderers...shall have their part in the lake which burns..." (21:8).

²⁴ Paul used the two Greek words *huioi*, "sons," and *tekna*, "children," synonymously, but John distinguished their two meanings whenever he used them: mature sons and simply children. See Joseph Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Hayesville, NC: Schoettle, 1992), 472.

²⁵ Earl Radmacher, Ronald B. Allen, H. Wayne House, *New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Nelson, 1999), 1765.

²⁶ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1989), 2:622.

²⁷ I.e., Those who gave in to the threats of the Beast and served him.

²⁸ I.e., Those who were unfaithful and lacked belief in Christ.

²⁹ I.e., Those who polluted themselves by worshipping the Beast.

³⁰ I.e., Those who killed the saints during the Beast's rule of terror.

³¹ I.e., Those who gave themselves over to great harlot (Rev 17-18).

³² I.e., Those who were involved in Satan's false religion (cf. Rev 9:21).

³³ I.e., Those who worshipped the Beast's image. This also refers to worshippers of any false god.

³⁴ These are earlier condemned in Rev 3:9; 14:5.

³⁵ The verbal form (*te kaiomene*, a present passive participle) indicates that the lake's fires will never be exhausted. It will be a most terrible form of agony.

³⁶ It is interesting to note that this basic message is found three times in Revelation 21-22 (21:8, 27; and 22:15), the section of the book dealing with the eternal kingdom. A comparison of these three passages, and particularly the first and last, supports the conclusion that the sinful state of those in hell is what is in view.

³⁷ This is the first of seven references to the Lamb in this section (Rev 21:9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22:1, 3). He becomes increasingly prominent as the book draws to a close.

³⁸ Cain built the first city apart from God (Gen 4:17); God builds the last city apart from man.

³⁹ One day we will go to heaven, yet one day God will also bring "heaven" down to us.

⁴⁰ Since Rev 21:9-10 is similar to 17:1-2, it seems that the Lamb's wife, the New Jerusalem, is being contrasted with Babylon, "the great harlot" (17:1, 5).

⁴¹ Cf. Exod 40:34; Num 9:15-23; 1 Kgs 8:11; 2 Chron 5:14; Isa 24:23; 60:1; Ezek 43:5; John 12:41; Acts 26:13.

⁴² The city's wall with 12 gate-towers was what caught John's attention next. The city evidently looked square (21:16). Its high walls suggest its security and inviolability. Certainly its inhabitants will need no defense from attacking enemies there. The 12 gate-towers (Gk. *pulon*, cf. Luke 16:20) stood three to a side (21:13). The gate-towers provided access into the city. In the case of this city, the many gate-towers also suggest great freedom of access. The angelic guards also present a picture of great security (cf. Gen 3:24; Isa 62:6). The names were apparently on the gates, not on the angels stationed beside them (cf. Ezek 48:31-34). Note: Ezekiel 48:31-34 describes Jerusalem in the millennium, not in the new earth. The fact that each gate tower bears a name of one of Israel's tribes probably indicates that Israel will have a distinctive identity and role in this city as it had through history (cf. 7:1-8). God will perpetuate the memory of Israel throughout eternity.

⁴³ Evidently directions will exist in the new creation as they do in the old, suggesting that space will exist throughout eternity as well as time (cf. 20:10). Which names will be on which gate-towers remains to be seen.

⁴⁴ Since there are foundations to the city (cf. Heb 11:10, 13-16), it will be a permanent abode for the righteous in contrast to temporary dwellings that lacked foundations. The foundations may be one on top of each other in layers, but probably each section of the wall, between the gate-towers, has its own foundation. As the walls and gates represent protection, so the foundations speak of permanence. Evidently the church, represented by the apostles (cf. Eph 2:20), will be in the New Jerusalem as will Israel (21:12). However, assigning the name of each apostle to a particular foundation stone is as impossible as matching the names of Israel's tribes with the gates. Note the distinction between Israel and the church even in the eternal state (cf. Matt 19:28; Luke 22:30). God had a role for each group and an identity separate from the other in the past as He does in the present. The combination of the twelve tribes in 21:12 and the twelve apostles is a way of saying that Israel of old and the Christian church are united in God's final scheme of things.

⁴⁵ The fact that the angel's measuring rod was gold reflects the dignity of the task of measuring this city's gate-towers and walls (cf. Ezek 40:3). The temple that Ezekiel described being measured in Ezek 40-43 is the millennial temple. Only the utensils used in the Holy of Holies were gold in the tabernacle and temple, but even this measuring rod is gold suggesting the high value of the city.

⁴⁶ John described the shape and then the size of the city. The dimensions of this city were 12,000 stadia (approximately 1,500 miles) on each of its four sides and 1,500 miles high (This is approximately half of the distance of the United States). This description could allow for either a cube or a pyramid shape. The fact that the Holy of Holies was a cube tempts one to conclude that the New Jerusalem will also be a cube in shape, but this is speculation. Probably we should interpret these dimensions literally.

⁴⁷ The city wall was evidently 144 cubits (about 216 feet or 72 yards) thick (cf. Ezek 40:5; 42:20). An American football field is 100 yards long. John explained that even though an angel was doing the measuring he was using human units of measure. Thus, these measurements meant the same to John as they would have meant if something else in his day was being measured. To grasp something of the enormity of the city, consider that this figure is 40 times the area of England, 20 times that of New Zealand, and 10 times the area of Germany or France. The ground floor alone would provide enough living space for far more people than have ever lived in the history of the world. And this is just the first floor. Never of course was there a city like this! If it were to be superimposed upon the United States, its area would cover all the way from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Atlantic Ocean to Colorado.

⁴⁸ The walls appeared to be glistening (cf. 21:11; 4:3). The word "material" (*endomesis*) means "building in" and suggests that the material on the wall was jasper, not that the wall was solid jasper. Perhaps John meant that the walls were overlaid with this brilliant material, suggesting further the radiance of God's holy presence. The whole city appeared to shine as a mass of pure gold. Clear glass was the best quality glass in John's day, so when he compared the gold to clear glass he probably meant that there was no impurity in the city. John apparently described the New Jerusalem by using similes and metaphors to communicate its ineffable glory.

⁴⁹ The apostle further explained the foundation stones of the city (21:14). The foundation of a building is usually completely functional and not decorative, but these stones, which were at least partially visible above ground, were adorned with gems. These stones were of many different colors, suggesting the extreme beauty of the city. We cannot identify all of them exactly today, but they were obviously precious gems in John's day. Our God is a God of beauty, and He will lavish His beauty on the city He is preparing for His people. The Israelite high priest carried 12 gems representing each of the twelve tribes on his breastpiece (Exod 28:17-20). Perhaps there is some symbolic connection between these 12 jewels and those, though only eight of them appear in both lists. In the new order everyone will have the privilege of access to God that was the unique privilege of the high priest in Israel.

⁵⁰ The beautiful gems in verses 19–20 are mixtures of blue, yellow, and green, and many of them adorned the breastplate of the priest in the OT (Exod 39:8–14). It is as though the city is one vast place of worship; fulfilling Isaiah’s prophetic words that Jerusalem would be established in righteousness and built of jewels (Isa 54:11–14). How else could someone describe heaven pictorially, except in lavish terms of fabulous wealth, dazzling color, and indescribable beauty? God is the city’s light and the Lamb is its lamp (Rev 21:23), emphasizing the equality of Christ with the Father. This too fulfills Isaiah’s words (Isa 24:23; 60:19–20). Echoing Isaiah’s prophecies again, John describes the way in which the city’s splendor is acknowledged (Rev 21:24; see Isa 60:3, 5, 11, 20). Such divine splendor excludes anything that is unworthy (Rev 21:27; see comments on 21:8). The unworthy are those whose names are not in the Lamb’s Book of Life (Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15).

⁵¹ Who can imagine an oyster large enough to produce a pearl so magnificent as to house a city gate? The pearls are at least 200 feet in diameter. Again, our imaginations are stretched past the breaking point.

⁵² Evidently each gate-tower that John saw (21:12-13) had been carved out of one huge pearl. John further described the street or pavement of the city (probably referring to all the streets since all would be connected). These were pure gold (21:18), as pure as transparent glass. Old Testament priests who ministered in Solomon’s temple walked on a gold floor (1 Kgs 6:30).

⁵³ The encouragement given by the account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 is the same as that given by the description of the Holy City which will come down from heaven.

⁵⁴ Preaching Today Citation: Bryan Chapell, *The Wonder of It All* (Crossway, 1999); quoted in *Men of Integrity* (January/February 2001).

⁵⁵ The story of Mary’s anointing of the feet of Jesus with expensive perfume (John 12:1-8) is an excellent illustration of the utilitarian mindset of some saints. It was Judas Iscariot who protested that Mary foolishly wasted her expensive perfume. It is only natural that Judas would be the one to object, for he alone, of all the disciples, failed to appreciate the Lord Jesus for His worthiness. The riches of heaven remind us that there is nothing wrong with beautiful and expensive things, so long as they are utilized for noble purposes. There is no more noble use for that which is precious and beautiful than to beautify the bride of God.

⁵⁶ These three application ideas come from Bob Deffinbaugh’s unpublished notes.

⁵⁷ Michael P. Green, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), Electronic Ed.

⁵⁸ For the final time, John uses the threefold name “Lord God Almighty” (Rev 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7; 19:6).

⁵⁹ Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 476-78, summarized 10 suggested identifications.

⁶⁰ Paul makes it clear that God has created different kinds of bodies (1 Cor 15:38-41).

⁶¹ See also Tony Evans, *The Best is Yet to Come* (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 272-273.

⁶² Gk. *ou me eiselthe*; cf. Rev 22:15.

⁶³ Green, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, Electronic Ed.

⁶⁴ “Then he showed me,” signals new aspects of the city that John’s angel-guide proceeded to point out.

⁶⁵ Cf. Jer 2:13; 7:13; Ps 36:9; Prov 10:11; 13:14; 14:27; 16:22; Zech 14:8.

⁶⁶ We should not confuse this river with the one flowing from the Jerusalem temple during the millennium (Ezek 47:1, 9, 12; Zech 14:8).

⁶⁷ Cf. 21:3; 3:21; Ezek 47:1; Zech 14:8; Heb 1:3.

⁶⁸ Rev 22:1 and 2 make better sense if we take the clause “in the middle of its street” as describing the location of the throne. In this case it completes the thought begun in 22:1. The other option is to take it as describing the location of the tree. In this case it begins the thought that continues through 22:2.

⁶⁹ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 482.

⁷⁰ It seems possible therefore to understand participation in the Tree of Life as a regular experience of fellowshiping with God, i.e., eating of this monthly fruit. Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings*, 474.

⁷¹ Having God’s name on our foreheads means that we will be His and will reflect His divine glory in our persons. Having a name on one’s forehead appeared three times earlier in this book (Rev 3:12; 7:3; 14:1). In each case it was a great privilege indicating ownership and protection as well as identification.

⁷² The word for “serve” (*latreuo*) suggests priestly service in view of its other uses in this book (cf. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

⁷³ Thomas L. Constable, *Dr. Constable Notes on Revelation* 2003 edition (<http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/revelation.pdf>), 209.

⁷⁴ As seen in the book of Revelation, worship today should involve adoration of God’s being, declaration of the Lamb’s worthiness, a celebration of God’s presence, submission to His authority, and fearing and serving Him. See Mazie Nakhro, “The Meaning of Worship according to the book of Revelation,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158:629 (January-March 2001): 85.