***The New Paradise, No. 1

RV247-02***

**Introduction**

Revelation 22. Our topic is The New Paradise. We begin with the first 5 verses. Revelation 22:1-5 actually is a continuation of the descriptions of the New Jerusalem that we had in considerable detail in the previous chapter, chapter 21. The account now shifts to an internal view of the New Jerusalem. This is a 1,500-mile cube, which is the eternal home of all the redeemed. It is difficult for us to grasp the magnificence of the interior of the New Jerusalem because of our lack of a frame of reference for such a scene. This is, however, the final picture that is given in the Bible of the eternal state of those in the heavenly New Jerusalem. A fuller understanding of this picture, of course, awaits our own entrance into it.

The features of verses 1-5 on the New Jerusalem Paradise connect it with the Paradise lost in Eden. The end of human history, thus, is tied back to its very beginnings.

We are, I remind you, reading of a literal place in which we born-again believers will spend a literal eternity of undiminished happiness in the presence and the fellowship of God, our Creator. We must never forget where we are going. We must never forget that what we are reading here in this great Book of the Revelation is all literally true. Certainly this part about where we shall live in the mansions that Christ has prepared for us. The unsaved, in contrast, of course, will be in the joyless suffering of the Lake of Fire. The unsaved natural man does not have any great concerns about his bleak dark eternity, so he is quite indifferent toward the person of Christ. His main relationship to the Lord Jesus is in a swear word; he does not concern himself of the great problems that he will someday face. But we, who are the elect of God, must not forget that this description of our eternal home as we face trials and temptations in carrying out our divine mission. Things are tough, but our end is a great victory and a great and marvelous place where we shall spend our eternity.

So, get your eyes off yourself. If you have meditated upon last Sunday morning's message, I hope that your heart has grasped the concept of Christ as the celebrity. You will never make a wrong move in life if you do not have your eyes on people, on circumstances, and on things. When you do make a wrong move, that's the reason. If your eyes are on the only celebrity of this universe, Jesus Christ, you will never act stupidly as a Christian. It's very important that we know where the real world lies.

**The River and the Tree of Life**

**The River of the Water of Life**

Verses 1 and 2 tell us about a river and a tree of life. First of all, the river of life. [Revelation 22:1] "And he," the angel who has been showing John the exterior of the New Jerusalem, now takes him inside. "And he showed me a river of the water of life." In the Bible, a river is used to symbolize pleasure. We read this, for example, in Psalm 36:8. Psalm 36:8 says "They drink their fill of the abundance of Thy house; and Thou dost give them to drink of the river of Thy delights." This river of life is a river of delights. In the Bible, the symbolism is that this river of life in the New Jerusalem is a source of great pleasure to us. Also, the Book of Psalms says that a river is a symbol for prosperity. In Psalm 1:3 "And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers." So that a river in the Bible basically is used to symbolize great personal pleasure and great personal prosperity. Satan, of course, offers his followers purpose and prosperity if they will reject Jesus Christ. But the end of what he gives them is poverty and death.

On earth today, there is nothing so precious as water, because without water there can be no life. Cities cannot function without a good water supply. The friction today between Jews and Arabs in part, is over water. They're fighting over the supply of water in the Middle East and who's going to control it. Interestingly enough, this desperate need for water to sustain life is also driving Arabs and Jews together in some agreements with some semblance of peace because they must have some agreement on the water supplies, which are so limited in that part of the world.

Water was in abundance in the original paradise of Eden. It had a main river, we're told, and then it branched out into four streams. You can read about that in Genesis 2:10-12, so that from the Garden of Eden, there was an ample supply of water for the watering of the garden and for human consumption. The river of life in the New Jerusalem actually symbolizes eternal life with God in His city. "He showed me a river of the water of life," and the river is described as clear as crystal. The river, the water of life is absolutely pure. It is so clear that it's like an expensive quality piece of crystal in its appearance.

Those of you who are scuba divers know what it is to dive in some stream or some lake where you have low visibility and you can only see 3 or 4 feet ahead of you. But if you are diving in areas like the Caribbean and some of the sea areas that are clear, it is a totally amazing difference as you go down under the water, and you find yourself in something that is like a giant swimming pool with visibility for a couple of 300 feet in all directions. That is the refreshing quality that you have, how much more fun it is to be diving when you can see things than when you're reaching out for 3 or 4 feet ahead of you, and if you're diving with somebody, it’s very easy for you to lose the person you're supposed to be with.

Well, this river of the water of life doesn't lose anything. It is absolutely clear as crystal in its appearance, it has no pollution. Pollution, of course, would symbolize evil. The rivers on earth are not like this. They are polluted by sinful man. But the New Jerusalem River has no polluters.

Many years ago on one of our high school college camps that we used to take as a reward for those who worked in our Berean Youth Club Summer Camp Staff, we took a trip to the Grand Canyon, among other things. We went out to the start of the Colorado River Whitewater Tours, and we mounted our boats and headed down for 100 miles through the wildest water on the face of the earth, huge waves and dips and white water splashing in every direction. And one of the things that the boat guide said to us as we launched from Lee's Ferry, was "This river is absolutely pure. You don't have to worry about taking water with you. Just have a cup. When you're thirsty, dip over the side of the raft and you can drink it right out of the river." That's not true today of the Colorado River. It was, it was perfectly clear and it was perfectly safe.

So, this is no small thing. It's another one of the contaminations of sin in our world that God says, "I have a river in My New Jerusalem, absolutely unpolluted by sinful man, because it is a product entirely of God." For we also read that this river comes from "the throne of God and of the Lamb." The Lamb, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ and the word God here in the Greek language says, "The God," indicating God the Father. So, at the very top of the cube shape of the New Jerusalem is the throne of God Himself. From that throne, the throne of God and the throne that Christ shares with Him in this eternal state comes the sparkling, clear, pure river of the water of life. The New Jerusalem River flows from the top of the city then, and it descends level by level to the ground. At the ground level, the river may branch out over the whole New Earth for sustenance of the vegetation, which is growing in abundance at that time. The purity of the river of life portrays the holiness of God with whom this river originates. God continually creates this particular water supply. This will not be the result of the sun evaporating the seas and then dropping the water as rains because on the New Earth, there are no sea areas, there are no ocean areas. So, this is a river, this is water which God continually creates.

**This River Not the Millennial River**

This river in the New Jerusalem should not be confused with another river very similar in description, but which actually exists in the Millennium. Let me call your attention to the Book of Ezekiel, Ezekiel 47:11-12. This is describing a river in a very similar way, but this one belongs in the Millennial era. "But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. And by the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not whither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing." If you read the context here, just before these verses, you will find that this river flows from under the threshold of the Millennial kingdom and it flows eastwards past the altar of sacrifice and it flows into the Dead Sea. The result is that it says, in verse 8-9, "That these waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah; [That's the territory of the Dead Sea.] then they go down toward the sea, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters of the sea become fresh. And it will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there, and the others become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes."

The Dead Sea, as you know, has a high salt content, extremely high. It’s the only place in the world I've ever been able to lie on my back in water with my feet and my hands sticking straight up out of the water. Try that in fresh water. I floated like a cork, no problem whatsoever. One thing you better do is have goggles on or don't splash, because if the water gets in your eyes it’s like throwing salt water, and it burns. But the amazing thing is that it is very clear. But there is no life, no substantial marine life in the Dead Sea. But with this description of this marvelous river that's going to come from the Millennial temple is going to flow into the Dead Sea and is going to remove its salt content, a condition that prevents marine life from living in it. And immediately, God will stock it with all kinds of fish, and the marine life will reappear. This Millennial river with its blessings is simply in anticipation of the New Jerusalem River, with its blessings of eternal life and meeting the spiritual needs of the saints who are in residence.

**Waters of Life are Part of Eternal State**

The fountains of the waters of life are actually referred to as part of the eternal state. Several times in the Book of the Revelation we come across those. For example, in Revelation 7:17 we have read "for the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes." so that we are told that in the eternal state, this water of life will exist. Revelation 21:6 says, "And He said to me, 'It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost." And then in Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."

So, several times in the Book of the Revelation we're told that there is going to be some kind of a special river of water in the New Jerusalem that is described as the water of life. This is the eternal state in which the Redeemed will live, and they will be at the source of the life giving stream, which flows from the presence of God for all to drink and for all to live. In some way, this river will contribute to our physical well-being. The unbelievers find the throne of God a source of great terror. But we believers find it's a source of eternal joy and actually of life itself. There's nothing more but the symbolism here of the river of life. It is to stress to us that God is the source of life and that God has provided that.

**River of Life also Provides Happiness**

This river of life is going to provide a great deal of happiness in one way or another in the New Jerusalem. One place this is indicated is in Psalm 46:4, "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God [That's the New Jerusalem.], the holy dwelling places of the Most High." This stream will be a source of great delight in a variety of ways to the believers who are gathered in the New Jerusalem. Also in Psalm 36:7-9, "How precious is Thy lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Thy wings. They drink their fill of the abundance of Thy house; And Thou dost give them to drink of the river of Thy delights. For with Thee is the fountain of life; In Thy light we see light." So that we are promised that this river is going to be a source of great, great blessing.

**River of Life Symbolic of Doctrinal Truth**

The river of life, of course, is also obviously symbolic of doctrinal truth, which the Christian may enter into today to quench his spiritual thirst. Jesus pointed this out in John 7:37-39, "Now on the last day, [this is the day of the Feast of the Tabernacles, not the last days,] the great day of the feast. Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. [Obviously He wasn't speaking about physical thirst, but spiritual thirst.] He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water"' [So that from the very believer himself, there comes a source of life, life giving water.] But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." All believers were not yet indwelt by the Holy Spirit, for once you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, then you may find great spiritual refreshment from Him. The way this is done is that the Christian may quench his spiritual thirst with the Word of God and doctrines becomes a source of spiritual refreshment to himself and cleansing to others. If you are a person who knows the Word of God, you have not only cleansed your own soul, but the people you deal with, the people you meet, become refreshed and cleansed by that Word of God that flows from you. You become an avenue, a conduit of the water of life. The indwelling Holy Spirit, you see, is what gives us understanding of the Word of God and application of doctrine in our daily experiences. In this way, the Word of God, you see, is that water of life to us.

As you know, when the soldier put the spear in the side of Jesus, one of the things that came out of that wound was water, we're told in John 19:34. That water that flowed from the side of Christ was again the symbol of the water of life, which had been promised, for example, to Nicodemus in John 3:5, to the woman at the well in John 4:10-14, and to the multitudes here at the feast of Tabernacles in John 7:37-39. So, as the water flowed from the side of the Lamb of God on the cross, so pure, clear river of life will flow from Him, and for all the saved in the New Jerusalem to drink freely forever as Revelation 22:17 pointed out. So, God the Holy Spirit acts as our river of life today. He is the one who provides cleansing for us of that river. He keeps it pure through the confession of our personal sins.

**"In the Middle of the Street"**

Back to Revelation 22, "he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb." And then in verse 2, the final phrase: "in the middle of its street;" this phrase refers to that river of life. It's in the middle of the street. This becomes a little bit of a technical problem to entirely envision how this is going to be operating. But first of all, there is apparently a wide main boulevard in the New Jerusalem, its main street. And down the middle of that street as the dividing line flows the river of life. That seems to be the best picture as we put the statements together.

So, we read that this river is "in the middle of its street." Of course, we wonder what the word "its" refers to, and it could refer to several things here. It could refer to the city back in Revelation 21:23, "And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon," that's referring to the New Jerusalem. It could refer to the river, it could refer to the throne. And here, the Greek language comes to our rescue, because in the Greek language the word "its" is in the feminine gender and that only matches up with the word "city." River and throne are masculine words, so they cannot be the antecedent of the word "its." So we're clear that "in the middle of its street" is referring to the New Jerusalem. This is the main thoroughfare of the New Jerusalem.

**The Tree of Life**

Furthermore then, we are told about the tree of life. "And either side of the river was the tree of life," literally, on this side and on that side. So, all along the banks of this river is the tree of life. This again, is a picture that we're not entirely clear about.

**The Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden**

Obviously, the concept of the idea of the tree of life tied back to the Garden of Eden. One of the reasons that God removed Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden was that they should not eat of the tree of life because had they eaten of the tree of life, they could have maintained their physical bodies forever. They would never have died and they would be in a condition of perpetual sin. So, we read, for example, in Genesis 2:9 "And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." From this passage, it is clear that there was only one tree of life and there was only one tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was not a general word referring to a species of trees. This was one tree.

Furthermore, in Genesis 3:22: "Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." So, God decides they must take action. Verse 24: "So, He drove the man out; and at the east of the Garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life." So, the whole point was to prevent mankind from eating of this tree under their terrible, degenerate, broken down condition in sin. The tree of life had been denied to Adam and Eve so their eternal status would not be a sinful one. The tree of life in the New Jerusalem, now therefore, seems to have a similar quality on the physical bodies of the saints. In the New Jerusalem, the saints are given free access to this tree. This is one of the promises early on in the Book of the Revelation. Revelation 2:7, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes [which is a term for a saved person], I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God." So, if you are a born again person, you are an overcomer and you have the right to eat of the tree of life. The overcomer is described as the one who had part in the first resurrection and not part in the second death, which is unto Hell. Revelation 2:11, Revelation 20:6, and Revelation 20:14-15 indicate that an overcomer is a person who is saved from that second death.

**Other Significance in the Bible**

There is a variety of concepts for the significance of the tree of life in the Bible. One of them is that the tree of life Connotes Happiness. In Proverbs 3:18, "She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all those who hold her fast." This is a description of wisdom, which comes through the intake of doctrine that produces wisdom, that makes a person happy, and is compared to being a tree of life. So, the tree of life is something that brings great happiness. In Proverbs 11:30, the Tree of Life is something that connotes godly living and godly serving, including the work of evangelism, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls." Then it also connotes realizing the desires of your heart. Proverbs 13:12 says "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life." Your desire, when frustrated make you unhappy, but your desires fulfilled is like eating of a tree of life. One more comparison is in Proverbs 15:4 where the tree of life is connoted to comforting words that a person has. "A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but perversion in it crushes the spirit." So that there are several ideas that are connected with the tree of life in the Bible, happiness, godly living and service, realizing the desires of your heart and comforting words. That is the tree of life.

So, the tree of life is a symbol for the fulfillment of many personal desires. The prophet Ezekiel has a similar vision in reference to the millennial earthly Jerusalem when he also refers to this in Ezekiel 47:12: "And by the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing." This is in the millennium. Ezekiel is not talking about the New Jerusalem, but the comparison is significant. He had a similar vision, healing waters flowing from the millennial temple. The form of water, banks of the river, you see, are going to be lined with trees in a millennium, which will bear fruit each month for food, and the leaves of those trees will be used for healing.

Here is one of the places in the Bible where we have an indication of the medicinal importance of herbs. You can buy an herb that will thin your blood. When people have certain conditions, they need to have their blood thinned to avoid blood clots. You can take this herb and it will perform that. You may also go to the pharmaceutical companies and you may buy something extremely expensive [at that time] called Coumadin and it will thin your blood. Need I tell you where Coumadin comes from? It comes from the herb that you can also buy to do the same thing, but there's not much profit in selling people herb, so they sell it as a drug. But it has to come from the herb. More and more, people who are in the medical world are discovering that there is an enormous source of solving physical problems with proper use of herbs. There are a few places where there are people who are extremely qualified experts in the field who can give you amazing advice: problems that the medical world cannot solve but with a combination of herbs does the trick. This may be an indication that in the Millennium, these leaves of the trees are going to be actually used for healing. That's a type of herbal medication.

There's a certain relationship, as we've indicated here, between the tree of life and the river of life. We're told that on either side of the river was the tree of life. Now, how can you get a tree on either side of a river? Well, here again, we're going to have to speculate of the possibilities. The tree of life may actually be growing right here in the middle of the river. As such, the river may be flowing around it with its branches hanging over on both sides of the river. That way you would have the tree of life on both sides of the river and its fruit would be available. Or, the tree of life might have such an enormous root system. Have you ever seen a Banyan tree? They have them all around the palace in Oahu, around the former king's residence, which is that picture on Hawaii-50 as the headquarters of the police. They have these huge Banyan trees with these monstrous roots that grow and they are all outstretched in all directions. Then comes the tall trees out of these roots. So, it could be like a Banyan tree with roots that have stretched themselves across this comparatively narrow stream, the river, and straddles the river, and then grows into a single trunk of a giant tree that produces fruit. In that way you see, it would be similar to our giant redwood trees in one of the national parks out west in California. I don't think it exists anymore. You have to see it in pictures. But there was actually a tree one time, a giant redwood tree that before the environmental characters got on the scene, they wouldn't do such a thing today, but they actually cut an arch in the tree. They cut an arch in the bottom of the tree, and then they built the road through it. As you drove down this road, you come straight at this huge redwood tree; you drive right under it through this archway that they had cut in this enormously wide tree. There you had a condition where you had the redwood tree on both sides of the road. You actually were able to drive through it. The banyan tree would be the kind of a thing where you could possibly do that.

But the word tree could also be used maybe in a collective sense, referring to species so that there was a number of trees on both sides of the bank. That's the picture in Ezekiel for the Millennium, and these would line the bank on each side. The problem is that when you go back to realizing that this is a reflection back on Eden, we have a new paradise here replacing that old paradise lost in Eden, that we are strongly inclined to think that this was one magnificent tree of life, not many trees, and that in some way of this nature, it is actually there on both sides of this river.

**The Fruit of the Tree of Life**

We are further told that this magnificent tree, whatever its structure is, is the fact that it will bear fruit and it will bear 12 different kinds of fruit, indicating that it will bear a different fruit every month. And bearing 12 kinds of fruit, the fruit every month, every single month, this tree bears a crop of fruit. The implication is that each month it’s going to be a different fruit. The point of the tree of life was that the different fruit sustained life. Here we're back to nutrition again. Nothing is so magnificent for sustaining life at a high, healthy level, than a variety of certain fruits that if eaten daily, will keep that immune system functioning at a maximum level. So, this tree is going to produce because of its genetic structure from God, it is the genetic structure that it produces a crop each month, and each month it's a different fruit.

The reference, incidentally, to every month tells us something too. When it says "every month," that means that the orbital and rotational motions of the earth will continue in eternity, and the moon is going to orbit the earth, and both the moon and the earth appears to be orbiting the sun again. That condition will exist apparently in the eternal state.

This tree will have an abundance of fruit. It will never run out. It'll be like Jesus serving food to the 5,000. As soon as you pluck off a fruit, another one pops into its place so that it is constantly there to supply those who may wish to eat of it. But the abundance and the consistency, month after month, is a symbol of the provision of God for believers. It's ever new, it's always adequate. God never fails to come through for us.

**For the Healing of the Nations**

One other thing about this tree that is amazing is its leaves. In the Ezekiel tree of the millennial temple, those leaves we're told were for healing. Here again, we're told that the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nation.

This is a little bit of a problem. Who needs to be healed in the New Jerusalem? It is sin that causes disease, it is sin that causes physical breakdown, it is sin that causes death; and there's none of that type of thing there. Well, the word healing, first of all, I should show you what that looks like. The word healing looks like this in the Greek Bible, the Greek word "therapeia," t h e r a p e i a, from which we get the English word "therapeutic." And the English word "therapeutic" means "to heal;" it means "to provide something which is healthy." Therefore, we have now a clue that this word in the Greek is telling us that this tree does something that is physically healthy, physically good for you. The actual Greek word here means to serve or to minister. It is the very same word which is used in Luke 12:42. Let me show you how it's used there: "And the Lord said, 'Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, [and there is the same word, "therapeia," this therapeutic word, you've got to put him in charge of the servants,] to give them their rations at the proper time? So, the background of this word is serving.

It is also used in Matthew 24:45. Here it is said "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household [The word household there is the same word "therapeia" again.] to give them their food at the proper time." So, it is used for servants, it is used for household. The implication here is it is a staff of servants, which are in view here.

So, this tells us that the leaves of the tree of life are health giving in the sense that they produce well-being, a sense of well-being. Servants provide you a sense of well-being. Care provides you a sense of well-being. So, these leaves in some way provide a sense of well-being. There's no sin, so there's no curse of illness to be cured. It seems that what these leaves will do for us is to provide our glorified bodies with a sense of physical fitness and well-being to enjoy life in Heaven at a maximum level. You will always have that sense of physical well-being, fitness at a maximum level. Healing leaves may simply furthermore remind us of the illnesses which we once faced here as a result of sin, but which are no longer possible in the New Jerusalem. But again, we're dealing with leaves and we're back to herbal therapies. And that is indeed a powerful area for maintaining good health, and we wish that people would learn a great deal more about it.

**Of the Nations**

It [Revelation 22:2] says that this is "for the healing of the nations." This refers to the Gentile world as in Revelation 21:24, we read, "And the nations shall walk by its light." That means these Gentiles. But this word "nations" is used in a generic way, it means "peoples." It will be for the healing of all the peoples, meaning the saints in the New Jerusalem. The saints of the New Jerusalem will drink of the river of life, they'll eat of the tree of life. This will be forever a reminder to them that we are all sustained by the provision of Jesus Christ from salvation to rewards for service. So, while we are dealing with realities here, we have a lot of symbolism of how all this is going to work and why God is providing. A great deal of this will be explained to us further.

**Eternal Life With God**

Then in Revelation 22:3 we begin the section, verses 3-5, that speaks about eternal life with God. Here is something very special.

**The Presence of God**

First of all, "There shall no longer be any curse." The word no is the Greek word "ou," o u, which is the strongest negative. Absolutely there will no longer be any curse.

The word curse here is a word that means destruction. It refers to the consequences of Adam's sin and the divine curse, which was put on creation because of that sin. We read about that in Genesis 3:17-19, "Then to Adam He [God] said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat from it"; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'" So that at that point in time, all of creation was cursed by a divine judgment. From then on, things didn't grow right. It was very difficult to grow things. It took a lot of effort and the physical structure began breaking down. And people lived for hundreds of years, but after the flood, once the water canopy that surrounded the earth came crashing down in the flood, the ultraviolet rays were now considerably less filtered out by the atmosphere. Suddenly, from living hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years, people dropped down gradually to a 70 level that God has allotted. All of this because of sin. Sin entered the human experience, and it has precipitated the curse which has been on the earth now for 6,000 years to this day. The severe divine curse on a creation that God originally said was "very good" testifies to the greatness and the seriousness of that human rebellion that caused Almighty God to take such a severe action. Man, when he decided to serve himself, destroyed God's good creation that he had been given.

This disaster has been reversed by Jesus Christ on the cross, where God's justice concerning sin was satisfied. Now eventually, the curse can be taken off, and that's exactly what Jesus will do. Revelation 21:1: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea." Verse 5 furthermore said that, "He who sits on the throne said, 'Behold I am making all things new.'" So, Christ is going to, and is able now because of the cross, to remove that curse. That curse will ultimately be fulfilled in the New Jerusalem. Romans 8:9-23 gives you extended details of how that curse is going to be removed.

There was a partial release during the Millennium. Please don't be confused. But in the Millennium you could still die for sin. In the millennium, sin was there and it had its effect upon you; it wasn't fully released from the curse, though it was considerably improved.

**Sin Totally Removed**

In the new heaven and earth, the curse of Adam's sin is totally removed. Since there's no possibility for regenerated glorified believers to sin, there is no danger of a divine curse being placed upon creation again. In the New Jerusalem, there will be no rebellion against God's authority and His laws, and His righteousness will prevail, so no curse will be possible. With the curse removed, all saints will be physically at the prime of life, all their defects removed, no death; and that's where they will remain in that state. All will thrive in full vigor. All will work and be productive, satisfying and enduring work that God will give them. Nothing will grow old. Nothing will deteriorate. In the eternal state, Satan and the demons, all the world system, and the sin nature are all gone forever. They are neutralized so they are no longer a factor to precipitate another curse from God.

[Continuing in Revelation 22:3] "There shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it." Another thing that will be true will be that God and Christ, who share the throne now in the eternal state, will be in the New Jerusalem. This throne signifies the sovereign authority of God in that New Jerusalem. That throne is the source of the river of life that nourishes the tree of life. God's imperial authority in the New Jerusalem will not permit any bondage to sin again.

**We Shall Serve Him**

But we are told that the throne of God will be there, and of the Lamb, "and His bond servants [we who are redeemed,] shall serve Him." We shall provide sacred service to God. The saints, as God's children, will serve their Father in some appointed capacity. If you have a picture of eternity as floating around on a cloud being part of a great harp orchestra, you're wrong. I cannot describe for you the details. I don't have that available. But I can tell you, that you are not going to be sitting around trying to figure out what to do with yourself in Heaven. There will be an enormous eternal plan of activities by God. The saints, as God's children, will serve Him in some appointed capacity. So, Heaven, while it is indeed a perfect place, is not a place of perpetual, useless idleness.

I heard Ted Turner, the latest husband of that actress you know, what's her name, Hanoi Jane. Ted Turner of CNN spoke contemptuously about the religious right and his views of Hell and Heaven. He said "Most of us don't believe that sort of thing, I suppose," he said, "because we are capable of knowing better. But," he said, "You know, Heaven is supposed to be a perfect place. Everything is just right. Nothing has to be changed and fixed. Heaven is just perfect." He said, "Well, that sounds to me like a place which is boring.[strong emphasis on 'boring']" Well, Mr. Ted Turner, and he will in turn in time, is going to end up in the Lake of Fire if he continues on that course; and he is going to learn what boring really is, because nothing improves in hell. There is no activity of significance in Hell. How much do you want to do when you don't feel well? How much do you want to do when you're aching and sore, miserable and sick and you're in the midst of that suffering and burning that you would be in Hell? Who wants to do anything? You just want to sit there and lick your wounds. In Hell, he is going to find what it is to be boring. That was a blasphemous remark on his part. He will in time learn better unless the grace of God changes his mind.

The picture of saints in eternal bliss, in divine service is what is true. I must remind you that along with this serving God is that recreation is part of the picture. Recreation is part of the will of God. Arduous, continuous, unrelenting toil without fun is not the will of God. The will of God is tempered balance in all things as the apostle Paul lays it out. You may count on the fact that fun is part of godliness and it is part of the will of God for man, both now and in eternity. So, lighten up folks, and have a little fun. If you're nothing but grim and nose to the grindstone, this is not God's pattern for us.

Eternity will be a marvelous time of speaking about the grace of God, His grace to we who were helpless, hopeless sinners, we who are trophies of His elective grace. We will have meeting and fellowship with people in history past that have made a big impact on mankind, people that we would like to meet. They fly through your mind as you sit and think about them. These people, you'll be able to go up and talk with, and ask questions about things that were in their experience. The whole universe will be laid out for us to explore. Space travel will be as common an experience for us as it is for the angels. There will be no more restraint of gravitational and electromagnetic forces upon us. Our glorified bodies will have free access anywhere in this universe. That in itself, I think is going to be a lot of fun. Talk about running Trip Camps out of the New Jerusalem, the places we'll be able to go to then.

But after all is said and done, home will always be the New Jerusalem whence our hearts will ever turn. John 14:2 says to us, Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places [or mansions]; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." That is where our hearts will always turn to, back to that New Jerusalem that the Lord has prepared for us. God's will is always ultimately the happy will for His servants, so that life in the New Jerusalem is going to be a marvelous, great experience.

And then we come to Revelation 22:4. What a thrilling privilege now comes unbelievable to a human being that he can experience, and the consequences of that in verse 5. And we shall look at that next time.

**Benediction**

God, our Father, we thank Thee for this revelation to us of our life in eternity. We have only a faint glimmer Father. There's a great deal more. We can hardly grasp the little bit of picture that Thou has given us, but we do know that it's going to be the greatest experience of our lives. We thank Thee for what is before us, and we appreciate the fact that Thou has made it possible and that there's no question about the fact that this is where we are going. So, please help us to live in the light of our destiny and in the grand and glorious future that we have. Yes, we have sorrows, we have disappointments, and we have the problems we have to live with now. But someday it's all going to be behind us. If we perform as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, faithful to serving Thee as well as ourselves, we will be pleased all the more with our eternity of bliss, joy, and being in Thy presence. May we live in the light of that future. We pray in Christ's name, Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1989

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