***The New Paradise, No. 2

RV248-01***

The New Paradise, Segment Number Two. Revelation 22:1-5. We have learned thus far from the 22nd chapter of Revelation that the eternal home of all saved people, Gentiles, Jews and Christians, is the new Jerusalem. John has, in chapter 21, shown this holy city of God in its external appearance, and it is a thing of great beauty. John views this city with its magnificent various colors that make up the foundation stones, and he sees that this is a city which is a cube 1500 miles in each direction and is amply supplied with capacity and space to house all the redeemed of all the ages from Adam on down. John sees this in all of its colors in all of its magnificent beauty. This is identified as the new Jerusalem, which is the believer's Heaven. The angel now guiding the apostle in his vision in Revelation 22 shows him some of the internal features of the new Jerusalem. This grand 1,500-mile cube, I remind you, is a literal reality, and it contains the dwelling places prepared for us by Jesus Christ. In the gospel of John, in John 14:2, Jesus indicated to His disciples that that was His mission. Jesus says, "In my Father's house are many dwelling places: if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." This new Jerusalem cube structure is His Father's house and in it are innumerable number of dwelling places which He is preparing one by one for each believer.

**Inside the new Jerusalem**

Inside the new Jerusalem, John is shown a wide boulevard, which is the main street of the city, winding down from the throne of God at the top of the cube. Down the center of the grand boulevard flows a river which is called the river of the water of life. This, of course, is reminiscent of the river that flowed through the Garden of Eden and amply supplied the water for the surrounding territory of the earth. We read about this in Genesis 2:10-14: "Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx Stone are there. And the name of the second river is Gihon; it flows through the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates."

**The River of the Water of Life**

Two of those rivers, of course, are common place names to us: the Tigris and Euphrates. We know them today. These rivers are branches of the main water supply river that flows through the Garden of Eden, which tells us that the Garden of Eden was in that particular point and that particular geographic location in the Middle East originally. This river of the water of life represents the eternal life of God, which is enjoyed by the saints, who freely drink of it. Rivers in the Bible, we showed you, symbolize pleasure and prosperity. Certainly the river that flows down the main boulevard of the new Jerusalem represents that kind of pleasure and prosperity. The water in the river is crystal clear, signifying the total absence of any evil, any pollution of any kind from the sin nature of man. The river of the water of life originates at the throne of God the Father and of Jesus Christ the saving Lamb, which is located at the top of the city.

God continually creates the water for this river, whose purity symbolizes the holiness of God. Unbelievers, in contrast, suffer the agonizing thirst which is created by the heat of the Lake of Fire with no relief in sight. The river of the water of life is today also to us a symbol of Bible doctrine which quenches the spiritual thirst of believers. Any believer who is denied access to regular instruction in the doctrines of Scripture, is a person who lives in the heat of Hell. That's the way it works out. Without the refreshing water of doctrine regularly taken into your soul, you will find that you are living in a hell condition of one kind or another. The people in Hell have no relief and they have no hope of relief. It is a great tragedy for believers who have every hope of relief. Christ is the hope of glory, in fact, that we are going to reflect the glory of God, that we should never be thirsty spiritually. And yet, that which should be commonplace in Christendom, I'm sad to say, is not. It's rare and far between that people can find an assembly where they can walk in and know that they will be given great deep drinks of the river of the water of life in the form of instruction in the Word of God. So that, to us, is the symbol today of the doctrines of Scripture, which cleanses and refreshes the believer's soul. And the Holy Spirit now acts indeed as our cleansing river upon the confession of our known sins upon the principle of 1 John 1:9.

**The Tree of Life**

We're also told that on either side of the river of life, flowing through the new Jerusalem is the tree of life. The Tree of Life again is reminiscent of the tree which was in Eden, which could sustain the physical life of man forever as he ate of the Tree of Life. Again in Genesis 3:22-24 we read about this: "Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us." There you have one of the early indications of the Trinity. Man has sinned and now the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are carrying on a conversation among Themselves. "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'-therefore, the LORD God sent him out from the Garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken." It was possible for man in his sinful condition, with all the misery and all the horror and all the nightmare that that was to bring upon humanity, to live in that condition as long as he kept eating of this tree. So, God says, 'We must remove him from access to that tree so that we may carry out the plan of redemption and bring him back to the tree when he is once more in possession of absolute righteousness.' Verse 24 says "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, here, at the end of human history in the new Jerusalem, the tree of Life is once more fully accessible to the believers.

It may suggest that the physical bodies, the glorified redeemed bodies of the saints, would be sustained in the new Jerusalem by this tree of life. The tree of life certainly connotes happiness. It connotes godly living, it connotes fulfillment, and it connotes great comfort. Now, how it could be on both sides of the river is somewhat of a question. The tree of life could be on both sides of the river by having such an enormous root system, such as Banyan Trees do, that it literally straddles the river and then grows into a single tree from there. It may also be that the tree just grows in the middle of the river and that its branches are so enormous that they overhang both banks of the river and thus this fruit is accessible so that the tree is actually in the middle of the river and yet on both sides. Or maybe that this is a general word for tree, like orange trees, that's a specific generic idea, and that the tree of life is many individual trees which are growing on both banks of the streams as individual trees lining the river side. This was the picture given to the prophet in the Old Testament of a similar condition which would exist in the Millennium. In any case, the tree of life will bear an abundant crop of different fruit each month. The tree has a genetic structure created by God, so that each month it produces a different kind of fruit, a fruit that provides both pleasure and perhaps physical sustenance again.

The leaves of the tree are very definitively assigned the role of producing a sense of well-being. They are no longer for the healing of nations, as they were previously in the Millennium, which is a reference to God's use of herbs for healing. But rather now that there is no cause for illness because there is no sin and therefore no more curse upon the new Jerusalem, these leaves are for producing a sense of well-being. Even though you have a glorified body, you still have a soul: you still have a mind, you still have emotions, you still have will. Those need to be balanced in a way that you have a sense of well-being. The Word of God gives us that in a large degree today. When you do not have a personal sense of well-being, it's because you do not know the Word of God or you're not functioning on what you know; your eyes are off the celebrity Jesus Christ and they are on some person, or something, or some circumstance in your life. But the sense of well-being is going to be a constant experience of the believer: no tensions, all problems resolved, everything just perfect. So, the divine curse that was brought because of the sin in Eden is gone, but nevertheless, the leaves will still provide us with that sense of personal well-being.

The waters of the river of Life and the tree of Life will provide the saints of the new Jerusalem with a body, which in fact is at the prime of life forever. No sin is possible in the redeemed people so there will never be a possible curse upon nature again. No one will grow old. Everyone will thrive in full vigor of their manhood and their womanhood. God's throne in the new Jerusalem will exercise an imperial authority over His whole creation. No one will be rebelling against Him because no one will want to rebel against Him. They will all have His righteousness.

**Life With God**

The new Jerusalem saints will be the servants of God, serving Him in various assigned missions. This service of the saints will in fact be an act of worship. One of the highest expressions of worship is when you serve God in the production of divine good works. Worship is not going through rituals. Worship is not standing in a church service where you go through a liturgical: the pastor says something and you respond, the priest says something and you do something back and call that worship. The highest expression of worship is when you and God are arm in arm in an active Christian service activity. So, the fact that the saints of God, we're told, will be servants of God indicates to us that Heaven will be a place of fascinating and satisfying activities in the perfect will of God. It will be a place of executing your particular service mission assigned to you. But it's going to be a place with a lot of fun. Heaven is pure, unadulterated joy, and having fun is part of the will of God.

So, we come to Revelation 22:4, life with God, "and they shall see His face and His name shall be on their forehead." They shall see His face. The new Jerusalem saints will actually gaze upon the face of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, and perhaps they will then even be able to gaze upon the face of God the Father. We're not told that specifically. The glory light of God radiating from Christ will be the natural environment of the redeemed. This face to face fellowship with Jesus Christ will be commonplace in a new Jerusalem. The saints will, of course, be reporting to Christ to receive instruction and directions for their service duties. While Jesus Christ is King of the universe, He is accessible to the humblest believer in the new Jerusalem. And the truth of the matter is that for the believer who is in temporal fellowship, Christ is equally accessible to him today.

**Facing God With No Fear**

With the sin problem solved and terminated, none will fear to enter into the Lord's presence. They will all be able to happily execute the admonition of Psalm 100:4, that says, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving, And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name," so that we are invited to come face to face boldly in His presence. Matthew 5:8, one of the Beatitudes, says it's the pure in heart that shall see God. God hides His face from the sinful. God hides His face from unbelievers, and God hides His face from the carnal believer. When you're out of fellowship, God's face is hidden to you. In the ancient world, criminals were banished from the kingdom so that they could not gaze upon the face of their king.

When in the Book of Esther, we had the description of the judgment upon Haman, who is trying to get Mordecai killed, and in the process, Esther came in to save her kinsman; Esther 7:8 says to us, "Now when the king returned from the palace garden into the place where they were drinking wine, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, 'Will he even assault the queen with me in the house?' As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face." Haman was there pleading with Esther to save his worthless hide. He had built this enormous scaffold to hang Mordecai on. The king had discovered that Mordecai has saved the king's life. The word came back to the king what Esther's kinsman had done, and the king was infuriated. He walks in there and he sees this sprawling Haman at the feet of the queen and he misinterprets what's happening. But he is so infuriated as Haman is trying to plead with Esther to save him that the king puts out the word of condemnation upon him, which eventuated in his being hanged on the scaffold that he prepared for Mordecai. But the immediate action of the servants, once he was condemned, was that his face was covered. The purpose of that was that he would never see the king's face again. And in the ancient world that was understood.

We also had this indicated in 2 Samuel 14:24, in the case were Absalom had rebelled against his father, David, and had tried to take the kingdom away from his father: "However the king said, 'Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face.' So Absalom turned to his own house and did not see the king's face." The initial judgment of David was 'he's under house arrest. He is not to see my face. He is not to look upon me again.' That meant that he had no access to the king and here particularly the king, who is his father. So, it was a very severe judgment understood in the ancient world that when you were a sinner, when you were a criminal, when you were a wrongdoer, one of the most severe punishments was that you did not have access to the face of the sovereign.

The pure in heart, but the Scriptures tell us, will look upon the face of God. They will see God in the Lord Jesus Christ, and they will look upon Him without shame. You remember that Genesis 3:8 tells us that when Adam sinned, the first thing he did was to hide himself from the face of God; he did not want to face God. Sinners do not feel comfortable facing God because they face a powerful, wrathful judgment when they do. So seeing the face of Jesus Christ in the new Jerusalem shows that the viewers are glorified believers minus the old sin nature, and that's why they have no fear, [they're] totally transformed into the image of Christ.

King Solomon, when he was visited by the Queen of Sheba, was an example of the glory of being able to gaze upon the face of the king. In the book of 1 Kings 10:4-8, the Queen of Sheba has seen the wealth, the glory, the buildings, everything that Solomon has done. She has sat and had extensive conversations with him. The king shared that magnificent divine viewpoint wisdom that he had that he asked God for, and had in a greater way than any other man that ever lived before or since, and she was impressed with him. In fact, we have reason to believe that he ended up adding her to his multiple number of wives. And out of which, was born a son that then went back to Ethiopia and perhaps took the original ark of the Covenant with him, where that ark may be to this very day, as it is claimed to be in a very secluded, protected place. But the result of this was the Ethiopian Jews, these black people who were Jews and whom Israel recognized as Jews. And a few years ago, you may remember, the decision was made to remove all those people from Ethiopia and bring them to Israel. So, they had, I forget what they called it, operation something, where they sent in these huge transport planes and they just cleared out all those black Jews and brought them to Israel, probably descendants of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. In any case, this lady was impressed with Solomon. Verse 4 indicates how impressed she was at his principle, of being in the presence, and looking upon the face of the sovereign. [1 Kings 10:4] "When the Queen of Sheba perceived all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his servants, the attendance of his waiters and their attire, his cupbearers, and his stairway by which he went up to the House of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her." She was just overwhelmed. She was just completely wiped out of any emotion that she could further express of what she had seen.

[continuing in 1 Kings 10:6] "Then she said to the king, 'It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. Nevertheless I did not believe the reports until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. You exceed in wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard. How blessed are your men, how blessed are these your servants who stand before you continually and hear your wisdom.'" So that in the ancient world it was understood that to be in the presence of the king, and particularly if he was an honorable and magnificent king, to hear his wisdom to be associated with him, that was a great honor.

But if you are disloyal to the king, if you are a criminal type, if you are under the king's judgment, what happened to you was that you were blocked off from access to the king, and you did not see his face. You did not hear the great things that he had to say.

Now, that was true of Solomon. But what an infinitely greater and incomparable blessing it is for us to serve in the presence of the King of kings and to do that forever in the new Jerusalem. We do it in a small degree now with our ups and downs, but in a new Jerusalem, we will always be in the presence of King Jesus. We'll always see His face. We will never be excluded from Him, and we will be constantly in access to the wisdom that He has. He will be a Solomon beyond our capacity to multiply to infinity. Such joy in the service of God is enjoyed to a lesser degree by every super grace Christian who remains in temporal fellowship today. So, I would remind you that no matter how humble, routine, or unspectacular your divine good works of service to God may be, they are noble acts done in the presence of the indwelling Jesus Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit. And the Bible tells us that God does not forget your service of love. I don't care what you do in behalf of the ministries of Berean Church, whether it's giving money, or using your teaching talents, or using your skills with your hands in various ways, God is not unmindful of your service; and you serve Him in His very presence. So, when you go about that particular service, just be aware of the fact that you could look over your shoulder and there is the face of Christ watching, because He indwells you. You can look over your shoulder and there's God the Holy Spirit observing with great pleasure what you are doing in your divine good service. The finest and the deepest expression of worship of God is serving in His will, instead of serving ourselves and serving Satan, you see. We will then, in the new Jerusalem, serve God to our great personal honor. The climax of history is total submission to the authority of God and the holiness of the redeemed. Then all ugliness of sin will be replaced by the beauty of Godliness.

You see, when you understand that, that the whole ultimate purpose of history is total submission to the authority of God, as that authority for example is expressed in the Word of God, then you will see the grossness of our society today, the evilness, the ugliness, as people resist the whole concept of authority of God and people will be so stupid. The leader of our nation says, "The Bible does not speak about the question of abortion. Therefore, we cannot pass any judgment upon it. One of these days, I'm going to take you step by step and I'll show you what the Bible says about abortion. That's as stupid of a remark as you saying the Bible does not refer to the Trinity and therefore we cannot pass any judgment upon that. Yes, it does not use the word trinity. That's a word to describe something the Bible teaches. The Bible does not use the word abortion, but it's a word that we use to describe something that the Bible teaches, and therefore it is exactly what the mind of God has for us.

So, understand that submitting to the authority of God in all aspects of your life, that's what your ultimate goal is going to be. It's easy to say that, but wait until you get some problems, wait till you get some grief. Wait until you get into the hard times. Wait until you stand on the brink of life and death. Wait until you see the passing of loved ones. Wait until you begin to suffer the debilitations of age and all the other things that you thought would never come upon you. Then you'll find that indeed there's nothing greater than submission to the authority and the will of God. That is the place of maximum happiness.

**The Mark of God**

Then in Revelation 22:4, we also have the mark of God. We see His face in the new Jerusalem. We have full access to Him. We are never restrained from Him. Furthermore, John tells us His name shall be on our foreheads. The name of Jesus Christ will in some way be imprinted on the forehead of the new Jerusalem saints to mark them as belonging to Christ.

We have had this referred to several places in the Bible previously: God's name on His saints to mark them as belonging to Him. You have this in Revelation 7:3, Revelation 14:1, and Revelation 3:12, the honor of bearing the name of Christ. In some way, that name will be upon our foreheads in the new Jerusalem. We redeemed one's will bear that name proudly because we will not then ever be able to disgrace Him again as we do now while we bear His name here on this earth.

The antichrist, being the great imitator, will during the Tribulation imitate God by marking his people with his name on their forehead. In Revelation 13:16 we read about that, "And he [the antichrist causes through the false prophet,] causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead." This is a very serious mark. It has very serious eternal consequences as Revelation 14:9-11 tell us. "And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hands, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the lamb.'" Once you take upon yourself willingly, the mark of the beast, the mark of the antichrist upon your forehead. There's no return. Your destiny is the Lake of Fire. There is no forgiveness. You can never turn around again. Verse 11 says "'And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the marks of his name.'"

So, that the mark of ownership upon the individual is a practice which is clearly understood in Scripture. You can either be marked as belonging to God or you'll be marked as belonging to Satan in some way or another. We are living in an age when marking people is becoming a refined science. I won't go into details this morning, but it is now frightening what they are capable of doing scientifically in marking individuals: putting a little chip under the skin, maybe even when you don't know it, but one that they're able to program and one which they're able to read, one which all you have to do is walk in the line at the grocery store and they have an instrument which will pick up all kinds of information about you that's on that chip, and they can constantly add to it. Yes, the antichrist will have no problem in controlling all the buying and selling in a seven-year Tribulation period. The technology to do it is here today.

**God is Transforming Us Now Into the Glory of God**

The name of Christ of course represents, as names always do, all that He is and that we have become in Him.

Someone gave Mrs. Danish and me a little plaque and it's nice to find out what your name means. And on this plaque, it says, "John," and under it, it says, "The gift of God." I can understand that. That seems very suitable. And Lenora means the "bright one." I guess that's all right too. But in some cultures, "Little deer that runs fast through the forest" is something that they saw about this child and in many cultures, they gave him a name that described him. Sure enough, when he gets big, he's like a little deer that runs fast through the forest. It's terrible signing your name in school every time, but it's a descriptive name. So, names have from time immemorial represented what you are. Though our parents give us names without that in mind, all these names, if you can search them out, do have some particular meaning?

The name of God represents all that He is and all that we have become in Him. His mind will be our normal thought pattern. This process is now developing in us, of course, through the Grace System of Perception where our minds are being transformed into the mind of Christ. I remind you again that that transformation is happening every time you listen to a tape, every time you sit in the church service here, every time you open your Bible and proceed to study the Word of God. 2 Corinthians 3:18 reminds us "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory just as from the Lord, the Spirit." God the Holy Spirit is transforming us now into the glory of God.

As you have grown older, some of you look a lot better than you did when you were younger, in terms of your spiritual life. As human beings, you are infinitely more beautiful, though externally you may be somewhat more decrepit than you were in your younger days, because as you walked with the Lord, he has gradually transformed your spirit into the reflecting glory of Jesus Christ. In the new Jerusalem, the process will be completed.

Israel's high priests, interestingly enough, wore a band of gold around his forehead as he ministered in the temple. And on that band of gold was inscribed the sacred name "Yahweh," the most sacred name of the God whom he served, the creator God. The new Jerusalem saints, likewise, will wear God's name on their foreheads to identify them as belonging to Him and as being the representatives of God. Saints, as the princes and princesses of the heavenly realm, represent Christ their Lord. Believers in a new Jerusalem are trophies of God's grace. So, they bear His name on their foreheads as a sign of His authority over them.

God's name represents who and what He is, and on the believer it shows what our destiny is to be. 1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, [when Christ appears in the rapture,] we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is [face to face]."

**The Glory land of Heaven**

**No Night in Heaven**

Revelation 22:5 speaks of the glory land of Heaven. It tells us there should be no night there. The word no is the emphatic Greek word for the negative. There'll be no night, and the word night is first in the phrase. When the Greek Bible does that in a sentence it is to emphasize that particular idea of night. One thing you will not have in a new Jerusalem is any darkness at all. There will never be darkness in that holy city. Night is a time, as you know, when evil activity takes place. There will be no evil in the new Jerusalem and holiness will prevail. This will be signified by the fact it will be constant daytime.

The new Jerusalem inhabitants will, of course, not need a sleep cycle to restore their glorified body so they don't need any nighttime. The whole lifestyle in the new Jerusalem will simply be one of restfulness. The Book of Hebrews points that out to us. Hebrews 4:9-10, "There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. [That's the new Jerusalem.] For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His." As God completed His creation work and rested, so we will have that eternal Sabbath in the new Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem is a no night place, and yet it is a place of total rest; in contrast to unbelievers in the Lake of Fire who have no rest at all as they agonize in their unforgiving sins. You remember that Revelation 14:11 pointed this agony and lack of rest to us. Revelation 14:11, "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night."

So, the new Jerusalem, our glory land, first of all, will no longer be faced with any night, and therefore [continuing in Revelation 22:5] "they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun." There will be no need for the natural light of the sun though the sun will exist. They'll have no need for artificial sources of light because the place will be constantly illuminated. While the cycles of earth relative to the sun continue, there'll be no night time in the new Jerusalem. Revelation 21:25 specifically pointed that out. "And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed." So, we know there'll be no storm clouds ever to darken the new Jerusalem and the illumination that will be there will not be from the sun. It will not be from some artificial source of lamps. It will be the glory of God. That's what the next phrase tells us, [back to Revelation22:5] "because the Lord God shall illumine them." The glory of God will be the source of this illumination during the night cycles on the earth. Of course, this is reminiscent of the glory of God, which illuminated the Holy of Holies in the temple. The new Jerusalem saints themselves will glow with the reflected glory of God, Daniel 12:3 tells us. And Isaiah 60:19-20 predicted this eternal divine glory light condition for believers in Heaven. Since God will be eternally present in the new Jerusalem, there'll be no need for any other source of light.

**Living in the Light**

So, they'll be living in the light. Jesus in John 14:2, which we looked at a little while ago, John 14:2 promised to be preparing a place for us, a dwelling place. "In My Father's house are many dwelling places." The Greek word looks like this, "mone" m o n e. This word is only used one other time in the Greek Bible and it's in John 14:23, in the same chapter. [John 14:23] "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.'" So, you have it translated one time dwelling places, another time abode. And from this word "mone" we get the English word manor, which is a very luxurious kind of palatial structure. The King James Version translates John 14:2 by the word "mansions" therefore. It gets it from this word "mone," which is a manor which is a mansion type. So, it's not wrong to translate it as "mansion."

John 14:3 promises that Jesus is going to return to take us to these mansions. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." He's preparing those places in the new Jerusalem. The Rapture of the Church is the time that He takes us up there. The purpose of Christ's return is that the believers would be with Him in that new Jerusalem glory land Life. This suggests the very presence of God the Father, and of each of the saints in the new Jerusalem within your very dwelling place. He says, I want to take you so I can be with you and the Father will be with you. So, what you are suggesting is the awesome thought of an intimacy with God the Father and the Son as your guests in your dwelling place in Heaven in their omnipresence.

Today, the Super Grace believer, in some degree, senses the divine presence living with him. Christians who have matured and gone on with the Lord, you have a deep sense, a very, very refined awareness of His presence with you, the indwelling Christ, the indwelling Holy Spirit, the overriding of God the Father. And when you become sensitive, you pick up what He says. He brings you information, He tells you something. So, often we are prone not to be sensitive.

Mrs. Danish went swimming the other day at North Lake College. She came back and said they have a sign up that says there'll be 'no public swimming Saturday' for some reason, because of a meet. At first, here was a message from God; at first, my inclination was wait a minute. Then I thought, 'oh, that's because we're going to be there swimming,' which was dumb. They're going to keep this whole big pool just for us? And you see, here was a subtle message. And I should have picked up on it and said, 'wait a minute, something is wrong because we're supposed to be there.' We'll, finally they called us and said, 'we're sorry we scheduled you, but we have a swimming competition. So, you can't come.' When you begin walking with the Lord and try to be sensitive to His leading, He's going to pop those intuitions into your mind left and right. I find that when I don't stop and pay attention to what He has said, I regret it. It's information that God is truly speaking to you, though I don't like to put it that way. He is indeed guiding you. He's always listening. He's always watching. He's always knowing. He's always loving. And He's always blessing us in our righteous conduct. So the Super Grace believers can have this kind of sensitive leading. But in the new Jerusalem, in our particular dwelling place, there we will be with Father and Son as our guests.

It is not likely that in the new Jerusalem you will be with your earthly family units. On earth, children move off and they form their own families, so you can't be with your parents. Marriage on earth is often broken up in various ways and new ones made, so that complicates trying to live as a family in the new Jerusalem. Perhaps husband and wives under certain conditions might share a mansion or reside as neighbors; that's all speculation. Marriage as an institution, in Matthew 22:30 we're told, does not exist in Heaven. This is a false Mormon doctrine that you can get married in a Mormon temple and therefore your family will live with you in Heaven forever. I don't know how they how they work that out, what constitutes a family. Certainly you will know your loved ones, and you will see them, but there will not be a marital relationship. Because the marital relationship on earth, while it's necessary for people to care for one another, is also for the procreation of the human race, and that will not be taking place in eternity. So, all will dwell in the new Jerusalem, really as the family of Adam, who will be the grand patriarch and who himself will have a dwelling place.

**The Eternal Kings**

And the last phrase of Revelation 22:5 concerning our eternal place closes the description now of eternity, closes John's vision. After this, the vision is over and the rest of the book simply closes up and shuts down and summarizes. But the final phrase is one that is of terrific significance, "and they shall reign forever and ever." They shall reign forever and ever. They shall reign unto the ages of the ages. The new Jerusalem saints are going to bear royal authority with God forever; that is your destiny. This is especially true of you as members of the Church. You are uniquely joined to Christ as His Bride. And there is no earthly position of honor, or fame, or authority, even to be a Dallas Cowboy football star, that is going to compare to your reigning as an immortal king in the radiant, glorious new Jerusalem. You're not just going to be an inhabitant, you're going to be reigning as a royal member of the family of God. The believer kings will serve Jesus Christ the King of kings, who will rule the new heavens and a new earth.

The realm of the believers reign is not specified, but it is forever. What is he saying? Do you see what that last phrase says? It means that you people are going to live like kings forever. That's what it means. You're going to live like kings forever. So, why not start acting like it now? You're going to be kings and queens for all eternity. Stop groveling around as commoners and walk with that dignity, recognize that your life is in Christ. He is the celebrity and therefore happiness which the Bible commands us to have as our normative life style. We don't ever have to be down in the dregs. Christians today, I remind you again, are the aristocratic family of God. And all we are doing believers is awaiting our coronation. We're awaiting our coronation to begin our eternal reign in our new Jerusalem Heaven. Such divine grace to we who are once the enemies of God. Such an eternal prospect is, of course, beyond our most magnificent comprehension.

The vision of John ends thus, on the high note of reigning with Jesus Christ forever in a new Jerusalem. The degree of kingly authority however, I remind you, will probably be governed by the degree of your faithful divine good service on earth. We must never forget that our reward picture comes in at this point; and here's where it kicks into gear in positions of authority that will constitute part of our reign. Matthew 25:21 says in the parable of the talents and the faithful servant, his master said to him when he produced well and he served well, "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I'll put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.'"

What God sees you do here on this earth is going to determine what He will trust you with and the extent of your royal reign for all eternity. Every work of the Holy Spirit done for Christ will enrich our eternal position with Him, our position in the new Jerusalem.

Let me close with a little poem by A.T. Pearson, as recorded in "A Revelation of Jesus Christ' by J.B. Smith [pp. 295-6], summarizing these verses that close the vision of Revelation 22:3-5:

"And there shall be no more curse, perfect restoration.
But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, perfect administration.
His servants shall serve Him, perfect subordination.
And they shall see His face, perfect transformation.
And His name shall be in their foreheads, perfect identification.
And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun,
for the Lord God giveth them light, perfect illumination.
And they shall reign forever and ever, perfect exaltation."

Heaven is a perfect place for a perfected people through the grace of God.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1989

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