***The New Jerusalem – Heaven, No. 2

RV58-01***

We continue with Revelation 3:7-13 in our study of the letter to the church in the city of Philadelphia. The Christians in the city of Philadelphia, in Asia Minor were, we have seen, very positive to the truth which had been revealed to them by God. They lived according to the divine viewpoint principles of that truth. They were what we call today, biblical fundamentalists. The Lord Jesus Christ has highly commended their loyalty to Bible doctrine, and their lack of intimidation by the world's human viewpoint. They didn't mind what the world had to say. They didn't mind being branded with smart-alec, snotty labels. They were very pleased to be in favor with God rather than man. They were the super grace type of believers who served as God's effective witnesses.

**The New Jerusalem**

This local church symbolizes the church universal as the body of Christ. Christians who belong to the body of Christ are to be preserved, we've been told in this letter, from going through the tribulation era of divine judgments upon this earth. That is an era which is, in all likelihood, in the very near future. They are to be made pillars in God's heaven, which is God's temple. They are to be forever preserved from sinning in heaven, and thereby losing their places in glory again. They are to be marked with the name of God the Father, to show their divine kinship, and to identify the family to which they belong. They are to be marked with the name of the New Jerusalem to show their eternal residence (their eternal home). The New Jerusalem is what we've been looking at. This is the eternal dwelling place of the redeemed of all dispensations.

However, I remind you that it is the dwelling place of redeemed within their own groups. There is not one grand general mixture. When you get to the New Jerusalem, you will find that there are gentile born-again believers who have a certain role in a certain position in that New Jerusalem. You will find that they are Jewish believers who have a certain role and a certain position in the New Jerusalem. Then you also find that there is the church, the body of Christ, which is also a separate entity. It is also in the New Jerusalem. It is a separate group and a very unique group, and it has a separate role indeed within the context of the New Jerusalem heavenly city.

The New Jerusalem is a literal city which is prepared in heaven by Jesus Christ, and which is lowered to the earth after His millennial rule on this earth. It is a city of enormous size and breathtaking beauty, as we have seen. It is a city of absolute holiness from which all evil is forever excluded. It is a city with a street of transparent gold, and it is illuminated by the glory of God, so there is no darkness, and there is no night there ever. It is a city of unimaginable happiness and unlimited opportunities for personal development and for fulfilling, satisfying service to the Lord. It is a city where everyone realizes that in which he was created – the likeness and the image of God. Until we get to the New Jerusalem, we will not fully experience what it is to have been created in the image and likeness of God. This is going to be a city where divine viewpoint reigns supreme. There will be no liberals running around braying out their human viewpoint and ignorance and arrogance. That will be refreshing in itself – a world without the arrogance of human viewpoint.

We have been examining the New Jerusalem as it is described for us in Revelation 21-22. We have a little section that we want to look at now in Revelation 22:1-5, which concludes the description of this New Jerusalem. In this section, we have described the blessings that are to be found in the New Jerusalem. There are several things that we're going to find there.

**The River of Life**

First of all, verse 1 says, "And he showed me (the angel showing to John) a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. The New Jerusalem has a river flowing down the middle of the street of gold. The river is described as the water of life, and we are told that it flows from the throne of God and of Jesus Christ, who, of course, are the only source of eternal life. There are other substitutes for eternal life that the world comes up with, but the only river of eternal life that is genuine is the one that comes from God Himself on His throne.

This river is described as absolutely pure and clear because it is not polluted by human viewpoint. It is not contaminated with salvation-by-works systems. It is a pure, eternal-life river. Those who drink of this water possess that eternal life. It's a non-polluted river free of all evil. This water is essential to eternal life, just as water is essential for physical life. So, it's a fitting symbol. The river of life is real. It is actually there, just like all these other descriptions that we have are literal. It is a physical, literal city. It does have a single street of transparent gold, apparently rotating as it goes up through this 1,360-mile high structure. It is a city that has down the middle of this road, a river, the river of life, running through the middle of the city, and down the middle of the street of gold, indicating the absence of death in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The ancient terror of death in the human race is, at this point, totally neutralized. No matter what any of you may wish to say, down deep in the recesses of your innermost thoughts, there is always (when you're willing to bring it up to conscious level), the awareness that your life is bound to be terminated sooner or later. You are all facing death. The river of life in the New Jerusalem signals to us that that ancient enemy is forever removed, and it will never again concern human beings.

The Lord Jesus actually spoke of such eternal life-giving water in John 4:10: "Jesus answered and said unto her (the woman at the well), 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, 'Give me to drink,' you would ask of Him, and He would have given you living water.'" Then, in verse 14, Jesus says, "But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst. But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up onto everlasting life." Water is essential to life. The water that God gives, that is represented by this river, is water that produces eternal life.

The way you drink this water unto eternal life is by means of believing in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. In John 7:37-39, we have that revealed to us: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out saying, 'If any man thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water." "He that believeth on Me" is the one who has drunk of the water of eternal life that Christ offers. Verse 39: "But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified."

So, the New Jerusalem is a place of eternal life. It is a place which is vibrating with life. Right down the middle of this city, in the middle of the street of gold, runs this fantastic river, pure and crystal clear – the river of life. It's symbolic. Whatever other uses it has is one of those things that gnaws at the edge of our curiosity of what we would like to know. When you start reading in the Bible about heaven, you come up with the startling fact that there is a very limited amount of information. You wonder why there isn't more in the Bible about heaven itself. You have these few verses here at the end of the book of Revelation. Here and there, you have a reference to heaven, but there is limited information about the actual conditions that we will experience in heaven itself.

Perhaps this is because in 2 Corinthians 12:4, the apostle Paul, who was caught up to the throne room of God in the third heaven at one time, says, "How he was caught up into paradise (speaking about himself), and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Then Paul goes on and describes how he had seen things and he had heard things in heaven that were so fantastic and that were so exhilarating, that he was given a reminder physically of an ailment of the flesh to remind him never to reveal what he saw in heaven. I don't know why. Maybe everybody would say, "What's the use of living?" It's one of the advantages of being a Christian soldier in combat. You know that you can't lose, even if you get killed. As Paul says, "Absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." But if people really knew what heaven was like, it would be very tempting for everybody to say, "Why should I stay here with inflation and with everything else that I'm living with. Let them hang it on their noses. I'm going to heaven." You'd be quite happy to get on your way. But it is just a little glimmer that we're given of it. You have to kind of fill in to realize that your fondest imaginations will never come out with what it's going to be like when you actually get there.

But this river of life characterizes this city as a place that is vibrant and alive with life totally free of death. Nobody even thinks about this. Nobody worries about it. Furthermore, it is life that is the kind of life that God has – that which is part of God's essence – eternal life.

**The Tree of Life**

Revelation 22:2 says, "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, there was the tree of life. So, another thing that is observed on each bank of the river of life is a certain type of tree called here the tree of life. Immediately, our minds leap back to Genesis 3:22, where we read, "And the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become as one of us to know good and evil. Now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever; therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from where he was taken." So, he drove out the man, and He placed at the East of Eden, Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way of the tree of life." Here in Genesis, we're told that after man had sinned, he now had a sin nature. He was now permanently and irrevocably separated from God. There was one problem that man faced that could compound this disaster even more. That is that if he were to eat of a certain tree, which is described as the tree of life, this would have enabled man to live forever.

Had he eaten of that tree, he would have lived forever, and apparently, would have genetically (under the principle of everything producing after its own kind) would have passed this feature on to his children, so that the posterity of man would have been constantly born with all the turmoils and tragedies and consequences of the evils of sin without being able to resolve it, because men would have lived forever. He never would have died. Therefore, he would have continued forever in that condition of evil.

So, immediately the Triune God said, "We must keep him from making the matter even worse. He has eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We must not let him eat of the tree of life. So, immediately he was cast out of the Garden of Eden and precluded from doing that. Now we get to the end of the Bible, and here in heaven (in the New Jerusalem), on both sides of the river of life is this tree of life. Now it is completely open and available to us.

We're told that this tree yields a different fruit every month: "And yielded her fruit every month." It's a different fruit. It had 12 kinds of fruit, and yielded a different fruit every month. Presumably, these can be eaten and enjoyed in heaven. I can't explain to you all the relationship as to why the tree of life is there, and what role it would play in our physical structure. We are told that the leaves of this tree are for the healing or for the therapeutic well-being of the nations (or better translated as the "gentiles"). The leaves have a health-giving quality. In some way, these leaves promote the enjoyment of life in heaven.

It isn't that people are getting sick in heaven, and they go and they pluck these leaves, and they're able to use them for their healing. The New Jerusalem is a place of physical well-being, but there is apparently something about these leaves, at least symbolically, that connotes that there will be top physical condition. That is one thing that we can draw from this ‐ that for the gentiles, specifically, speaking here in terms of the various nations of the world, and probably we can even think of this more as just plain "peoples" – of different groups of people of the world who have entered the New Jerusalem in one group or another who will find these leaves beneficial to them on a physical level.

That's a good thing to know. There are not too many people who feel that they are physically all that they should be. There it is. Most people don't really know what it is to feel good. They probably have never felt good. A lot of people were born tired, and they never got rested up. So, they always feel tired. In heaven, they're going to have all that changed. You start off in life, and you get to age 18, and everything is improving and getting better. You hit 18, and you're over the hill, and it's downhill from then on. Some people go downhill faster than others, but it's all down from then on. There's that sense of physical well-being.

People are always selling you something. They sell vitamins; they sell machines; they sell diets; and, they sell everything to help you to feel physically better. Well, that is an important thing. One of the things to remember about the New Jerusalem is that there aren't going to be any doctors there because you're not going to need them. Everybody is going to feel and be in top physical condition. I don't know how that is entirely brought about. I don't know whether the Lord has a system of morning calisthenics, or what goes on there. But in any case, these leaves suggest that they have a therapeutic effect upon the peoples of the world.

This certainly is a welcome change from the grief and the pain that currently characterizes the human race with all of its various human ailments and lack of vitality. Just how bad these ailments are, we tend to forget, if we don't have them ourselves. You have to go to a hospital, and you have to see what people go through. You have to be in touch with that world of the physically ill to realize the suffering and the pain that have resulted from sin that entered the human race, and the effect that it had on that splendid human body that God created in the original man and woman.

**No More Sin**

And then verse 3 tells us an additional factor about the New Jerusalem: "There shall be no more curse." There'll be no more the curse of sin present. All the pain and the sorrow which is in the world today is the result of sin having been brought into the human race by Adam, and propagated, thereafter, by the sin nature which is in man. We're told in the Bible itself that nature itself lies under the curse of sin. This was indicated from the very first in Genesis 3:17-19: "And unto Adam, He (God) said, 'Because you have hearkened unto the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you saying, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground for your sake. In sorrow, you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread, till you return unto the ground, for out of it you were taken, for you are dust, and unto dust you shall return.'"

So, in the beginning, tending the Garden of Eden was fun. It was an enjoyable experience. It was something that man needed to fill in the activities of his day, and it was something that he just liked to do, and that he enjoyed doing. However, now, it became an arduous task. Now it became a thing that he hated to have to face. The book of Romans confirms this still further when Paul reminds us in Romans 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, for the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the Son of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity (to nothingness, and to evil), not willingly, but by reason of Him who had subjected the same in hope." God subjected creation to the consequences of sin: "Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now."

**Work**

So, Paul confirms what Genesis tells us: that the whole realm of nature and of the natural world is under the contaminating influences of sin. It has caused disastrous results. Adam's sin separated man from God. So, man, by nature, is a rebel against divine viewpoint, and against God's authority. The sovereignty of man has replaced the sovereignty of God. Human evil is man serving himself instead of glorifying God. We call that humanism. Now, the curse has been removed in the New Jerusalem because man is no longer separated from God. He is now reconciled to God. It was the curse that separated. In the New Jerusalem, the reconciled man no longer has the curse upon himself and upon his creation. This is evidenced by the presence of the throne of the Father and of the Son in the New Jerusalem. It's evidenced by the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem serving God instead of serving their own self-centered interests. The work in the New Jerusalem (and there is work there) is no longer arduous toil waiting for the whistle to blow or the closing bell to ring.

**We Will See God's Face**

There's another factor in verses 3-4: "There should be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him." Then verse 4 tells us another thing about the blessings of the New Jerusalem. That is the presence of God: "They shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads." The believers in the New Jerusalem will, wonder of wonders, see the face of God the Father in all His majestic beauty and all His majestic grandeur and glory. Since Eden, the sight of God has meant death. In Exodus 33:20, that was revealed to Moses: "And He (God) said, 'You cannot see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live." Once man had fallen into sin, he could not see the face of God and live.

The apostle Paul reveals this same fact about the unapproachableness of God the Father in 1 Timothy 6:15: "Which in His times, He shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who only has immortality dwelling in light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man has seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen." What Paul is talking about here to Timothy is again about the fact that God, who is supreme sovereign of all the universe, resides in the holiness of light which man cannot approach and live. So, here the Bible makes clear that we cannot come face-to-face with God.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in His incarnation, did bring a vision of God the Father to mankind, but He brought it in a veiled form. We have this taught us in John 14:7-9: "Jesus said, 'If you had known Me, you should have known My Father also. Henceforth, you know Him and have seen Him.' Philip said unto Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it will suffice us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been such a long time with you, and yet, you have not known Me, Philip? He that has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you then say, 'Show us the Father?''" To have seen Jesus Christ was indeed to see the Father, but indeed, in a veiled form.

In Matthew 17:1-2, you have the incident on the Mount of Transfiguration where that veil was momentarily lifted, and the glory that surrounds God suddenly burst forth through Jesus Christ: "After six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John, his brother, and brought them up into a high mountain privately. He was transfigured before them. And His face did shine like the sun, and His raiment was as white as the light."

Then in 2 Corinthians 4:6, we have this statement: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," describing this which took place on the amount of transfiguration. So, human beings have touched the glory of God only in a fringe way in Jesus Christ, when He removed the veil of His physical structure to enable that glory to come through.

Jesus Christ promised that believers who ultimately come to ultimate sanctification would see God the Father. This is one of the things He declared in the series of beatitudes in Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart (those who have received ultimate sanctification), for they shall see God." Ultimate sanctification comes when we enter the presence of God.

This seeing God was also the hope of Old Testament saints. This is indicated to us in Psalm 17:15, where the psalmist says, "As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness." The Old Testament saints realized that when they had the likeness of God, then they could see God directly, and they could look upon Him. This, of course, is exactly what we read in 1 John 3:1-2, which indicate that that is precisely what is ahead for us. John says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God. Therefore, the world doesn't know us because it didn't know Him. Beloved, now we are we the children of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." And how is He? He is in glory. He is in all the splendid demonstration of everything that He is as the holy and righteous God.

**God's Name on our Foreheads**

We are also told that the New Jerusalem Christians are to bear the name of God the Father on their foreheads: "We shall see His face, and His name will be in their foreheads." This, of course, is a mark of ownership. In Revelation 14:1, this name of God marks the 144,000 evangelists: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 having His Father's name written on their foreheads." So, these who go out in the antichrist's world, where people are marked with the name of the antichrist, go out with the name of God marked upon their foreheads. That's the same thing that we're told is going to be true of us. This is in contrast to the mark of ownership of the antichrist in Revelation 13:16: "And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and enslaved, to receive a mark in their right hand and in their foreheads."

The name of the Father indicates also that the Christian reflects the character of the Father in the New Jerusalem. To bear somebody's name is to bear his character. There's no question in the New Jerusalem of those who are the real people of God – those who really belong to the family of God. There's a lot of question down here. There are a lot of people running around claiming to bear the name of Jesus Christ who don't have it at all. This is the realm of hypocrisy. There are a lot of young people who grew up within a Christian home. They grew up in Christian surroundings. So, they go through all the motions, and they play all the games, and they do all the things that is expected of them. And a lot of people are foolish enough to think that they bear the name of Jesus Christ, but they do not. In heaven, in the New Jerusalem, there will be no question as to who belongs to the family of God. That name will be clearly imprinted upon us.

**There will be no Night**

Verse 5 completes this section of blessing in heaven. It says, "There shall be no night there." The New Jerusalem will be continually illuminated by the glory of God: "They need no lamp, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light, and they shall reign forever and ever." There is no night in the heavenly Jerusalem, in part, because there is no need for sleeping. This, of course, again, is reminiscent of the pillar of fire, which was used for the illumination of Israel in the guidance in the wilderness. We're told about this in Exodus 13:21 and in Exodus 14:19-20. Those passages describe how the pillar of fire illuminated the Israelites, while at the same time, on the other side, it created darkness toward the Egyptians.

But here in heaven, you need no artificial lights. There will be no lamps. The sun is not needed. What a blow that will be to all the sun-worshipers over the centuries, that God wipes out all the object of the phallic cults with one blow. He just makes the place so bright that you can't see the sun. That's the end of all the glory of the sun, in effect. This city is in one eternal day, and daylight, of course, connotes activity, just like it does for us. That's one reason that it is continually day, because it's a place of continual activity. You never run out of energy. You never run out of top physical capacities. You never run out of opportunities for service. You never run out of personal interests and activities to pursue. So, there is no need for darkness. Darkness would be a downright nuisance city. It will be an eternal day full of activity.

**God is Light**

This is an interesting comparison, because light, as a natural phenomenon, is a rather fitting symbol of God. The Bible declares that God is light. For example, we read that in John 8:12: "Then spoke Jesus again unto them saying, 'I am the light of the world. He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'" Then John adds to this in one of his letters, in 1 John 1:5, where he says, "This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you: that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." God is light. Exactly what does that mean? The character, interestingly enough, of the natural phenomena of light illustrates, on the one hand, the oneness of the essence of God.

As most of you know, if you take a prism, which is this a triangular piece of glass, and you shoot a ray of light into it, it goes through the prism; bends; and, comes out in distinct color. We call it the spectrum – sometimes, the spectrum of the rainbow. You'll find that the colors will swing from red to yellow to blue to orange to green to purple to indigo. So, suddenly, you realize that within this one ray of light coming down, there are all these different colors. ... This is very fascinating. We just love to do that here in the academy science classes – just get a prism, and the just kids are awed the first time they see what happens when you bend light, and it breaks up into all these colors. And you tell them that what you see out here is all in there. There is this multiplicity within this unity.

The way this works is, when a light ray hits an object, there are certain of these colors which are absorbed, and certain colors which are reflected. In other words, if you're sitting here dressed in red, that means that when the light rays hit you, all these other colors here are absorbed, and only the red is reflected. If you're wearing blue, everything else is reflected, and blue comes through. That's the nature of the colors. They're all there. Some are seen, and some are not seen. When all the colors are reflected (and that does happen), then we see white. When all the colors are absorbed, then we see black. So, while only one color may be manifest, yet all the other colors are there as well.

So, this is a very fitting analogy to the character and the nature of God. It is very fitting for God to be called light, because God, like light, has one essence. But when you take the prism of revelation, and you shoot God, as light, through the prism of revelation (or the Bible), you discover, lo, and behold, that it comes out in a variety of characteristics that gives us the essence of God.

**God is Sovereign**

For example, when you shoot God, as light, through the prism of revelation, you discover that God is sovereign. Ephesians 1:5 and Psalm 115:3 tell us that God is Absolute King. His will is not subject to anybody. The sovereignty of God is not the supreme characteristic in the essence of God. This is one of the mistakes that the reformed theologians made in the Reformation era. They put the sovereignty of God at the top. They didn't think it through to realize that the sovereignty of God is restricted also.

**God is Holy**

It is restricted, as you well know, by two other characteristics in God that compose his holiness: God's justice; and, God's absolute righteousness restrain what God's sovereignty can do. God is not sovereign to do evil. He is not free to do that which violates justice. He is not free to do that which violates absolute righteousness. But the sovereignty of God is certainly there, and it comes through out of the character of God. He is the supreme thing.

**God is Righteousness**

We also know that out of this prism (that God is light) comes the fact that God is righteousness. Romans 3:22 and 2 Corinthians 5:21 tell us that God is absolute righteousness. He is absolutely pure of any evil.

**God is Justice**

Furthermore, another essence that comes through is justice. Deuteronomy 32:4 and 2 Chronicles 19:7 tell us that God is absolutely fair. God is no respecter of persons. God is fair. He executes perfect justice.

**God is Love**

We also discover that another essence that comes through out of the light of God is His love. 1 John 4:7-16 tell us that God is love. What does that mean? That means that God does not have any mental attitude bitterness, which is what "agape" love is. He has no mental attitude bitterness toward anybody or anything. God acts in righteousness; God acts in justice; but, He does not act in bitterness. He is love.

**God is Eternal Life**

We also find out that out of this light of God comes eternal life. 1 Timothy 1:17, Revelation 1:8, and Psalm 90:2 all tell us that God's life is eternal. That means that there was never any beginning to the life of God, as well as no end. That is a concept that we cannot humanly grasp. That is because we have finite, limited minds, but we understand from Scripture. We understand from the prism of revelation that God has eternal life. This is the kind of life that you come into when you become a Christian. This is the kind of life that you have from the river of life, and from the tree of life.

**God is Omniscient**

Then we find that God is omniscient. 1 John 3:20 and Proverbs 15:3 tell us that God knows everything. He has omniscience. He is all-knowing.

**God is Omnipresent**

We are also told that God is omnipresent. Jeremiah 23:24, Psalm 139:8, and Acts 17:27 tell us that God is everywhere. You cannot go anywhere and escape God. Part of His essence; the unity of God; and, the light of God, as a single ray, breaks off into, in part, His omnipresence.

**God is Omnipotent**

Then the third omni is His omnipotence. Matthew 19:26, Luke 1:37, and Revelation 19:6 tell us that God is all-powerful. God is not frustrated by anything that anybody does. God is absolutely all-powerful. Sometimes we like to describe that by saying God is still on the throne, and that's a great thing to say. But what we mean by that is that he is omnipotent. Nobody outmaneuvers the living God.

**God is Immutable**

Then, another ray that comes through is the facet of immutability. Malachi 3:6 and James 1:17 tell us that God does not change. That's so important. What God tells you now, he's not going to change tomorrow. What God promises you now, He's not going to renege upon someplace down the line. The devil will. The devil does not have immutability. That's why you can't trust the bird. He's always going to double-cross you. He's always going to outmaneuver you. He's always going to change what he says to you. He's always going to con you. He is the con-artist par excellence.

**God is Veracity**

Then there is veracity. In John 3:33 and Titus 1:2, we're told that God is absolutely truthful. There is no lie in God. Satan is the father of lies. He is deceit itself epitomized, but God is absolutely true.

**God's Glory**

So, the Bible says that God is light. He is put through the prism of revelation, and that light consists of His divine essence. There are various facets, yet a single unity. That is why the Bible says that God is one. He is one in essence, and it is the essence of God, which is the glory of God, which is illuminating the New Jerusalem. This is where the glory comes from. This is what illuminates the New Jerusalem.

**The Trinity**

But there is something else that is true about God, which is a fitting symbol, again, with light. That is that, as you know, that while God is one in essence, He is three in persons – the Trinity of the godhead. But this also is illustrated very fantastically by the quality of natural light. The single essence of God finds expression in three divine personalities, but light also finds expression in three different ways. The Godhead, we are told, consists of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Genesis 1:26 indicates that in the Old Testament; and, Matthew 3:16-17 indicates that in the New Testament.

When you take a single ray of light, there are three qualities that that ray of light will have. The first quality we call actinic. Actinic means that light produces the effect of chemical changes. Actinic is light producing chemical changes. This cannot be seen and it cannot be felt in this respect. Therefore, that is comparable to God the Father. There is a second quality that light has, and that is that we describe it as being luminiferous. Luminiferous means that it produces the effect of illumination. In this respect, it can't be seen. That is comparable to the visible member of the Godhead, which is God the Son. God is light in terms of the fact that the Son can be seen. God is light in terms of the fact that the Father cannot be seen. And then there is a third effect of natural light. We call that calorific. Calorific means that it produces the effect of heat. Light produces heat. This cannot be seen, but it can be felt. The effects can be seen, and the effects can be felt. That is comparable to God the Holy Spirit. You don't see the calorific effect, but you see the consequences.

So, here again, very interestingly, you have the Trinity of the Godhead reflected indeed in natural light. So, that is part of the significance of saying that there is no night in heaven, but it's all light, and that light comes from God. That is the God who is the Triune God, and who has the single essence with all these qualities. The thing that the Triune God has produced is salvation. It is this Trinity which was the means for human salvation, which is to the glory of God, which is reflected in the light that He is. The Father formulated the plan of salvation; the Son executed the plan of salvation; and, the Holy Spirit reveals and applies the plan of salvation.

God is light. There is no need for artificial light because of the essence of God reflecting His glory.

**We Will Reign with Christ**

We're told one thing more in verse five: "They (you Christians) shall reign forever and ever." Christians will reign in the New Jerusalem. Do you know what "reign" means? The word "reign" means "royalty." It means that you are royal personages. It is kings and queens and lords and ladies that are royalty, and who reign. In the New Jerusalem, you, as members of the body of Christ, will be the bride of Christ. There you will reign with this Savior. In Romans 5:17, the apostle Paul says, "For if by one man's offense, death reigned by one (reigned as king), much more they, who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." You are going to be a ruler in heaven (in the New Jerusalem) because of Jesus Christ. Christians are described in 1 Peter 2:9 as being a chosen generation, and a royal priesthood. The word "royalty" is attached to us.

So, those of us who are gathered in this study are part of the royal family of God. This Tuesday, all the world is going to be interested in seeing a royal wedding in England. Everybody is looking forward to it, and they're all agog over it because royalty is going to be married. But when you watch that, and if you're a hardy enough soul to get up that early in the morning, to make up that five hours' difference between here and London, to watch the thing live, just remember that you're part of that family. They don't know it, but you're part of the royal family. As a matter of fact, you may well be more royal than the people who are getting married. I don't know whether they're born-again believers or not. You may even be more royal than they are, but you are part of the royal family of God. In heaven, I don't know what Prince Charles and Lady Di are going to be doing, but I know what we're going to be doing. We're going to be running things. We're going to be ruling. We're going to be related to our consort, Jesus Christ, as the rulers of heaven. Those are words. Who can enter into them?

You have to think about that. Let that sink in a little bit, to get hold of the fact that you're the royal family of God. That's a good term to use, and you should remind yourself of it. You should get up in the morning, and when you stand looking into the mirror to shave, you should say, "Good morning, Lord Bernard;" "Good morning, King Bill;" or, whatever it is: "Good morning, Queen Sharon, and Queen Joyce." Just get up there and recognize that you're royalty, and you can just go around the house and call each other "Lord" and "Ladies," because that's what you are. Maybe it will begin to sink in what you're destined to be. So, those of you who have some actions where you like to act crummy and beneath your status of royalty, you might straighten up, just by that fact alone.

This reign, furthermore, is over the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. I remind you that those inhabitants include the angels. That's where the angels get underneath us. Right now, we're beneath them. But this is why the Bible says, in the order of creation, we're going to be put above the angels. You're going to be telling angels what to do: "Gabriel, come her. Michael, I want to get this." You're going to have to get used to that? In the military service, when you go to Officer Candidate School, one of the hardest things is getting used to telling people what to do. You have to get used to it. They put you through training to learn how to command; how to do things; and, how to tell people what to do. You tell them to come and to go. It's kind of unnatural for us to do that. You have to get used to that. It's more natural for some people than others, but it's just something you have to learn – to accept the position of command responsibility. This will be so in heaven. This blows the mind to think that we are to be in that kind of superior position. But we did not make this up. These are not "cunningly devised fables," as the Bible says. This is the reality of the revelation of Scripture. And now you know it, and you should act accordingly.

This reign is eternal because Jesus Christ is going to reign on this throne forever. He will wear the crown of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords far beyond the 1,000-year period when He reigns on this earth, and when we will be reigning with Him. Our 1,000-year period on earth will sort of be our apprenticeship in rulership. We'll learn the ropes of how to reign there. Then it will continue forever in the New Jerusalem.

So, what a grand accomplishment this is through the grace of God. Can you trust the grace of God? Absolutely. All this nonsense of everything else that is substituted for the working of doctrine in the soul, and the turning loose of the grace of God in your soul through doctrine – that is just a bunch of baloney sliced thick. You can muddle around, and someday get up into heaven and find yourself with a little less position of authority. You have a whole universe to reign over. And those who have not learned how to reign through the doctrine in the soul functioning, and God's viewpoint there, you're going to be in trouble.

This is a perfect state, as you look at these first five verses of the closing of the Bible. We have the water of life, which is a perfect reconciliation. We have the tree of Life, which speaks of a perfect existence. We have the leaves of health, which means a perfect environment. We have no more curse of sin, which means perfect restoration. We have the throne of God and of the Lamb, which means perfect administration. We serve God, which means perfect subordination. We see God's face, which means perfect transformation. We bear God's name, which means perfect identification. There is no darkness, which means perfect illumination. We reign forever, which means perfect exaltation.

It is no wonder that John, in a moment of excited inspiration and awe, writes in Revelation 7:9-12: "After this, I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice saying, 'Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.' And all the angels stood round about the throne and about the elders and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, 'Amen. Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen.'"

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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