

The Eternal Home of the Lord's Church and the saved

By Leon King

Few people pass through life without some thought of heaven and the life to come. The Bible gives us some beautiful insight concerning the eternal home of God's elect, redeemed people. A close reading of the Apostle John's description of the New Jerusalem on the New Earth will prove to be a rich blessing to those who truly know Jesus Christ and have been forgiven of their sins.

If we think only of the things we can see, touch, smell, and hear in this world, we can never gain an understanding of the eternal home of God's people. The word eternity, itself, is worthy of our most profound thoughts.

Verses nine through twenty-seven of the twenty-first chapter of Revelation contain a breathtaking description of what is in store for God's people. Bear with this preacher as he quotes the verses and makes some brief comments.

Rev 21:9 *And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.*

This section comes immediately after John saw the New Heaven and the New Earth which is described in verses one through eight. The angel bid him come so he could view the bride, the Lamb's wife. The word "bride" comes from a Greek word which is translated both as "bride" and "daughter in law." Each translation suggests marriage. The bride is said to be the Lamb's wife. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. He is said to be a lamb in many New Testament passages. Please note with me some verses in the New Testament which speak of the bride.

The New Testament (NT) teaches that Christ, the Bridegroom, has the bride.

John 3:29 (Words of John, the Baptist) *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.*

The NT teaches an espousal of the church to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2 *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

The term "espoused" is used only here in the new testament. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, espouse means "To contract or betroth to another." Usually this is said of the parents or those standing in loco parentis. To pledge, commit, or engage." Paul had espoused the church of God which was at Corinth to one husband – to Christ. This teaches us that those in the local church are to be considered the bride of Christ. Corinth was a local church.

The New Testament teaches Christ's love for the Church.

Christ's love for the church is clearly seen in Ephesians 5:22-32. The relationship between Christ and the Church is best seen in a good, sound marriage arrangement between a husband and wife. Christ is the bridegroom, the church the bride.

Ephesians 5:22-32 *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water*

by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

The NT teaches the marriage of the Lamb is yet future.

The bridegroom (Christ) has the bride, but the marriage supper of the Lamb (who is the bridegroom) will occur in the future. In Revelation 19, John is writing about "things which must shortly come to pass." The marriage has not yet taken place but will when the Lord's church is called to the marriage supper.

Revelation 19:7-9 *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*

Rev. 21:10 **And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,**

The angel showed the Apostle John the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God. New Jerusalem is said to be the bride, the Lamb's wife (Rev. 21:9) The Lord's true church is identified as a city in the same sense as the apostate church of the 18th chapter of this book, is called the great

city. Apostate Rome is the false church called "mystery Babylon the Great, mother of Harlots. Her protestant daughters are the Harlots. New Jerusalem is the home of the Lord's church just as the city on seven hills was said to be the woman who represented the false church. The following passages speak of the false church:

Revelation 14:8 *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

Revelation 17:1-5,18 *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. ...And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*

Rev. 21:11 **Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;**

The heavenly city has the glory of God – the majesty and splendor of the Almighty – the light of the city was like the light of a most precious stone – a jasper. The jasper was a gem among the ancients known for any bright colored chalcedony except the carnelian. It was most esteemed when it was of a green color. We already know from Revelation 4:2,3 that the

appearance of the one who sat on the throne was like a jasper. It is said to be clear as crystal – beautiful, flawless.

Rev. 21:12 *And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:*

The names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel written on the gates are probably the same names as those listed in Revelation 7:4-8 from whence twelve-thousand were sealed of each tribe. They are Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Nephthali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulon, Joseph, and Benjamin.

The Old Testament presents a shadowy picture of this with the arrangement of the camp around the Tabernacle. In Numbers, chapters two and three, we are told that three tribes were placed on each side of the tabernacle in the wilderness. These tribes were “afar off” from the tabernacle. Moses, Aaron, and Aaron’s sons along with the other Levites who had responsibility for the service of the tabernacle were near the tabernacle and stationed on all sides of it in the same way as the tribes in the outer circle. These were the elect within the elect nation – chosen of God to bear the “burden” of the tabernacle.

Rev. 21:13 *On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.*

Just as the tabernacle lay with definite directions, so does the New Jerusalem with three gates on each side of the city.

Rev. 21:14 *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

The wall, which is great and high, has twelve foundations – that is, twelve bases upon which the wall is built – and in these foundations are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The names of the twelve are: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James

(son of Alpheus), Simon Zelotes, Judas the brother of James, and Matthias (chosen to replace Judas Iscariot, the traitor).

Rev. 21:15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

Foursquare means four equal sides. So this city has equal length, breadth, and height. The measure is said to be twelve-thousand furlongs. A furlong is one-eighth of an imperial mile which is 660 feet. If we multiply 660 feet times twelve-thousand, we get 7,920,000 feet. If we divide this number by 5,280, the number of feet in a mile – we get 1500 miles. This is the size of the city. If the measurement quoted is in each direction – long, wide, and high, the city would be approximately 1,500 miles long, wide, and high. If the measurement is the circumference, then the city is 375 miles long, wide, and high. What an awesome, magnificent city! This preacher thinks the city could be either a cube or a pyramid. Either configuration could be the same in length, width, and height. Is this not the Father's house of many mansions? Undoubtedly, this is the place Jesus has prepared for his bride, the church. Consider His promise:

Joh 14:1-3 (KJV) *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

What food for thought! Many mansions? What are mansions? The Greek word "μονη mone" appears 2 times in the New Testament and is translated once as "mansions" and once as "abode." Here is the other place where this word is translated:

Joh 14:23 (KJV) *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

Beloved, these many mansions are our "long home – our eternal abiding place. Now to the meaning. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the noun "mansion" as: "The action of remaining, abiding, dwelling, or staying in a place. To dwell or abide. Also, permanence or continuance in a position or state." "A separate dwelling-place, lodging, or apartment in a large house or enclosure." "The chief residence of a lord." Beloved, we shall dwell there forever with the saints and shall see the face of the Lamb forever!

Rev. 21:17 ***And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.***

The wall appears to completely encircle the city, so the measure given is for the height of the wall which is one-hundred and forty-four cubits. A cubit can vary from about 18 inches to 21 inches. For the purpose of putting this in modern perspective, the writer will assume 18 inches. If we multiply 144 cubits times 18 inches, we have 2,592 inches. Divide that by 12 (the number of inches in a foot), and you have 216 feet. This is the height of the wall around the city. Astounding, isn't it?

Rev. 21:18 ***And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.***

The wall was made of jasper – perhaps, the green color as already mentioned. The city is made of the purest gold. It is difficult to imagine gold so pure that it like clear glass. Are these metaphors? Are they symbols? Nothing else here is symbolic, so why should this be? The preacher doesn't think so.

Rev. 21:19 ***And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation***

was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

The foundations or bases of the wall are garnished with twelve kinds of precious stones. The word garnish comes from the Greek word "kosmeo" and means to adorn, garnish, or trim. So, we see the "cosmetics" of the foundations are beautiful precious gems. It is amazing how wicked men kill one another over the possession of a few of these in this life! Are they beautiful? Indeed, they are!

Rev. 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Most people who venture written comments on this verse and the ones surrounding it want to make all of this metaphorical. The preacher does not. He believes it means precisely what it says. This is amazing! Every individual gate of the New Jerusalem is of one pearl. The street (not streets) of the city is pure gold; so pure it is like transparent glass. We've never seen anything like this on this earth! "But eye hath not seen, neither has entered into the heart of man the things God has prepared for them who love him" – it is only through his Spirit that we know these things.

One commentator said this of this verse: "...it is to let us know that the mansions of heaven will be most glorious places, giving the souls of those to whom God shall give to enter into them, an infinite satisfaction, beyond what the most rich and glorious things in the world can give our outward senses."

Rev. 21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

The immediate fulfillment of God shall there supply all; God shall be all in all.

1 Corinthians 15:26-28 *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

The saints there shall want nothing and, therefore, shall not need a house of prayer; they shall know perfectly and will not need any to teach them; they shall always see Christ and will need no ordinances whereby to remember him. But, until that day, his bride, the church shall continue to preach, baptize, and keep the ordinances as they were delivered.

Rev. 21.23 *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

Indeed, no need of the sun or moon, yet it is evident that the moon shall be on the new earth in eternity. If there is no sun (and it is not mentioned, then the moon cannot be a reflection of the sun, but is an entity in itself). Remember, before the sun, moon, or stars appeared in the heavens in the beginning of creation, God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." "God is light and in him is no darkness at all." If the apostle Paul saw at noonday a light "above the brightness of the sun," and the voice of him who spake was Jesus, then we have some shadowy idea of the brightness of our Lord Jesus Christ. A certain man argues that there is no such thing as light, per se, but light is the absence of darkness. In this heavenly place, no darkness will ever dim the light of God.

Regarding the moon:

Isaiah 66:22-24 *"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. 23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh*

come to worship before me, saith the LORD. 24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

Rev. 21:24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

The word "nations" comes from the Greek word "ethnos" and is translated in other passages as "gentiles, heathen, and people. This undoubtedly does not refer to political nations as we know nations today; but they are the different kindred of those who have been redeemed and are of God's elect whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world. These are the nations of them which are saved. This refers to those of every kindred, people, tongue, and nation which has ever been on the earth. In the church, however, there are no such distinctions, for we are neither male nor female, Greek nor Barbarian, Jew nor Gentile, but one in Christ – this is the bride. Those distinctions, which are surely true now, shall be a reality in that day. How marvelous to think – yet, our minds are stretched in trying to comprehend. But – we shall have to wait and see.

These nations of the saved shall walk in the light of the city which suggests they are outside the city – the New Jerusalem, yet on the new earth dwelling in the light of the city. There are kings on the earth. Those, who are the redeemed, in the Lord's churches have been made both kings and priests. This all suggests that they are the ruling element on the new earth. This ruling element, the kings, shall bring their glory and honour into the city.

As to the identity of the nations who will be on the new earth, yet are not part of the bride, we can only guess. It is our opinion that these will be the sheep nations who shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the

foundation of the world. The same ones who shall live through the one-thousand-years reign then taken into the eternal age in their natural bodies.

Rev. 21:25 *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.*

No bars and no locks – no works of darkness – no darkness – forever light! No fear of the criminal element – no thieves, murderers, rapists, seducers, wizards or witches! There is absolute safety and freedom from the dark hand of criminals. They, of course, except they repent and believe the gospel shall never enter the gates of that celestial city.

Rev. 21:26 *And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.*

The pronoun “they” has its antecedent as the “kings” in verse 24. This speaks of the kings of the nations in verse 24, who shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into the city. We dare not speculate about the beauty, health, and prosperity that shall be on the New Earth among the nations of them which are saved! Beloved, if it did happen somehow that we were not in the bride of Christ, what an unspeakable joy it would be to live on the new earth in the light of New Jerusalem and experience the eternal life which is in Christ Jesus. What rejoicing! What thankfulness! What joy! What a “hallelujah time, indeed!”

Rev. 21:27 *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.*

This verse does not suggest that there are people on the new earth who are defilers, who work abominations, or liars—for they all shall have their part in the lake of fire which burns with brimstone – and shall be cast there at the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20:11-15. At the great white throne judgment described in the 20th chapter of Revelation, all those whose names were not found written in the Lamb’s book of life were cast into the lake of fire. We are told this is the second death.

For those of us who are God's dear children, rejoicing is in order because our names are written in heaven. Our names were written there from before the foundation of the world. God's beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, came into the world to die and save his people from their sins! It is his purpose that we should be with him where he is – and we shall forever be with the LORD ages without end! We shall rejoice evermore in the New Jerusalem and on the New Earth! Amen!