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# Heavenly Minded

Vol 9 Iss 4



FIRE EYES

JOHN DICKEY

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Dear Friends,

When the Lord took our son Gabriel home eight years ago, we began this ministry. Some time later, He told me that I would publish 70 issues of Heavenly Minded and here it is – No. 70! I'd like to tell you that each one has been written by a man with a perfect walk, but as you know, that's far from the truth. However, each one has been a labor of love and comes from a heart-pen that's been broken over and over.

Genesis begins with paradise and ends with a grave. Heavenly Minded began with a grave and with this issue finishes with the promise of paradise restored.

It may be that God will continue to allow us to minister in this fashion and if so we will publish letters that we hope edify you and point your hearts to Him.

We encourage you to get a copy of our new book Fire Eyes, the complete commentary on the Book of Revelation. See [www.authorhouse.com/](http://www.authorhouse.com/) to purchase it at the best price.

You know, the last of the last days is upon us. I hope you are seeing through the lies permeating our world and are living in a way such that you have no shame at the appearing of our Lord. He chastens us because He loves us. If His discipline comes your way, embrace it – it comes from a loving Father. He won't let go of you. May God bless you

*In Christ's Love,*

*John and Darlene Dickey*

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# The Final Accounting

## Revelation 20

Yes, your life has a purpose. The course of it has eternal meaning. Fame or fortune in this doomed world is of no consequence, but in eternity, what you have used your life and gifting for will count more than you could ever imagine. In studying the Revelation, we have covered the entire age of the seven churches and the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel's extraordinary prophecy – the tribulation. All of that is behind us now, and before us are virtually indescribable events that will propel us into eternity.

Will you live your faith? Will you die for it? Does that matter?

*Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand*

*years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. It is not Jesus, nor is it even Michael the archangel who is sent to deal with Satan. It is a nameless angel.*

The point being that Satan is not some super angel. He is roughly chained and cast into the bottomless pit by this nameless agent.

What does sin do to us? It destroys. It rots away the very fabric of our being. The wages of it is death. Do you suppose it is different for Satan? He has been rotting and decaying for who knows how long under its influence. At one point he was "the anointed cherub who covers". He was "the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty" (Eze 28:14,12). But his end is pathetic and weak. He is known as the dragon, the serpent of old, the devil and Satan.

Consider this, the dragon is extinct. As a species, we see its creation in Genesis chapter one – the tanniyn, poorly translated as whale or sea creature but better understood as dragon or even dinosaur. The serpent of old is cursed. Old means original and this cursing is in Genesis 3:14. The devil is "the false accuser or slanderer" and Satan means to oppose or attack or accuse. This says it all doesn't it. Ultimately, Satan will be extinct; he is cursed;

his slandering, accusations and opposition will be gone forever. Here, he is shut up for 1000 years until his brief release after the millennium.

*And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them.* Here we have some non-descript people – they and them – sitting on thrones with the responsibility of judgment being committed to them. Who are they?

Because of what follows in the next verse, they are not likely those who came to faith in Jesus during the tribulation and as a consequence were beheaded. Therefore, it seems that they are those who were saved before the Tribulation.

Paul may have been referring to this when he wrote to the Corinthians, "*Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels?*" (1 Cor 6:2,3) for although we've seen the devil, the whore, the antichrist and the false prophet dealt with, there are yet many demons and the hard-hearted who must be judged. Perhaps they among those whose names are not written in the Book of Life.

*Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. And now, we see the tribulation saints. They too, are blessed to live and reign with Christ specifically during the millennium.*

*But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.* This verse tells us that there is a first resurrection and a second that comes after the thousand years and is for "the rest of the dead".

The first resurrection, however, is not a single event. It has three parts. In 1 Cor 15 we read:

*But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. (v20-23)* Bear in mind that this scripture is written

specifically to the church, thus “His coming” is not His second coming to the Hebrews.

Part one of the first resurrection is Jesus Himself. Part two is the resurrection of the dead just preceding the rapture when Jesus comes to the clouds to take us home. I Cor 15 continues, *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* (v 51,52) And 1 Thes 4 adds, *For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.* (v15-17)

It is the “dead in Christ” at the time of the rapture who are part two of the first resurrection. Part three would then apply to all those who come to saving faith in Jesus after the rapture during the tribulation.

*Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.* Here we learn of a second death. It is called perdition and is forever.

*Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.* Now, why will the Lord allow Satan to deceive the nations again?

The nations will have enjoyed 1000 years of peace, a near perfect environment, excellent health and a righteous government. These people are those who survived the tribulation and their descendants, so you already know their temperament. Under Satan’s rule, they refused to submit to God in spite of all the judgments which befell them. They are not saved by faith, only submitted by force. Their hearts are still as dark as ever and at the first opportunity, they yield to the persuasion of the devil.

There is no substitute for salvation. No amount of coddling in a perfect environment, no societal improvements, no

absence of outside evil forces will ever cause a darkened heart to love the light. This is exactly what the millennium will prove to all the cosmos. Its lessons apply to men and demons.

Don’t confuse the gathering of the nations here with the pre-millennial war of Gog/Magog. Though Gog/Magog will be in the lead, that war has very specific allied forces which come against Israel, and the defense which God will provide is also very specific including causing the enemy forces to turn on each other and sending huge earthquakes. This gathering after the millennium is of all nations, and there is actually no war for God simply devours them all with fire out of heaven.

This verse says the numbers of the enemies of Christ are as the “sands of the sea” which we learned earlier not only speaks of enormous quantities but is typical of the faithful seed of Abraham. With all the death and destruction during the tribulation, this indicates that the children of evil propagate quite well, but notice there’s no mention whatsoever of anyone getting saved. The number of the evil hearted becomes as the sands of the sea, but the condition of their souls will not. It will remain yet dark.

*They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.* In Ezekiel chapters 47 and 48, the boundaries of the camp of Israel during the millennium are given. The camp of the saints is possibly that of the remnant of Israel who “endured unto the end” of the tribulation, or it could be a camp given to the resurrected saints. This final rebellion though is centered around Jerusalem, the beloved city which will be called “The Lord is There”. The breadth of the earth means the wide part of Israel so it seems that they will attack from the east, crossing the Jordan as the host of Israel did under Joshua (but remember, they did it on dry land).

*The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.* Notice that there really is no battle. The armies gather against the Lord and He just BOOM annihilates them. Then the devil is finally finished; he is forever cast into perdition.

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. White here is really bright or brilliant so this is God's brilliant throne. Now, it time for a clean slate. The evil and hard-hearted entities have been dealt with but the creation, the heaven (the sky) and the earth are polluted in every way. Apparently, they simply disappear in an atomic fireball and are no more. Peter wrote of this:

*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.* (2 Pet 3:10-13)

*And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and*

*books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. Yes, there has always been a great accounting of everyone's deeds and words. Jesus, while speaking to the scribes and Pharisees said, A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.* (Mat 12:35-37)

Words and deeds are all most of these people have to be judged by – they either rejected or were ignorant of grace. Notice I said most. It's quite interesting that the Book of Life is brought out as well as the books of men's words and deeds. It is evident from this and the following passage that some of these people are in the Book of Life. Though I can't be adamant, I think it is possible that this is what was spoken to Daniel who was learning of the conclusion of the tribulation and the promises of God to his people was told:

*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,*

*some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt...But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."* (Dan 12:2:13)

Those who had sincere faith in God before the coming of Christ may be the reason the Book of Life is brought out here. It may also apply to those who never had a chance to hear and respond to the gospel. Whatever the case may be, we know that God is just and merciful. Paul wrote, *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His,"* (2 Tim 2:29)

*The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.* Here is another group of the dead – those in the sea and Death and Hades. The sea may again imply the dead of the gentile nations, or may indicate those who are unknown, or may be a literal reference to those lost at sea. Death is the word defined by the lexicon as follows,

"since the nether world, the abode of the dead, was conceived as being very dark, it is equivalent to the region of thickest darkness i.e. figuratively, a region enveloped in the darkness of ignorance and sin." Hades is another place. In Biblical Greek it is associated with Orcus, the infernal regions, a dark and dismal place in the very depths of the earth, the common receptacle of disembodied spirits. Usually Hades is just the abode of the wicked, Luk 16:23, Rev 20:13, 14; a very uncomfortable place.

Evidently, there is a separate judgment for these people. Perhaps because it is referring to the gentile nations whereas the first group of the dead who seemed to require the Book of Life to be opened may be the Hebrews. After this, Death and Hades themselves are cast into perdition which is called the second death. Recall, those who have had part in the first resurrection have nothing to fear from perdition, but those who are not found in the Book of Life do indeed. Thus, no one is left outside of perdition who is not found in this ultra important Book.

# Heavenly Minded

## Revelation 21

There is just one last item on the Lord's agenda for man's reconciliation. The church age has demonstrated the benefits of grace. The righteous have been resurrected or raptured. The Tribulation is over. All evil has been purged from the cosmos having first been confined to planet Babylon then cast into the eternal torment of perdition. The old heaven and earth have vanished. And now...

*Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.* It's a brand new start – the word for “new” here not only means “fresh” but “of a new kind”. So if you ever gazed over Yosemite Valley and marveled at its beauty – you ain't seen nothin' yet! For one thing, there'll be no more sea. This may be literal, but I'm a bit more inclined to believe that the imagery of Revelation remains consistent and thus, since the sea has represented the gentile nations, this may mean that there will be no more

unbelievers, no more rebellious against or ignorant about God.

*Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.* I find it interesting that for the first time in his vision, John writes, “...I, John,...” as opposed to just “...I...”. By emphasizing the fact that John saw God's kingdom descending, this very well could be referring to the fulfillment of Christ's prophecy found in all three synoptic gospels -- *there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.* (Mat 16:28, Mk 9:1, Luk 9:27) And notice how the holy New Jerusalem is called the “tabernacle of God”. As we examine it in more detail, we'll see that the pattern of the earthly tabernacle did indeed align with the heavenly.

But most important is the amazing pronouncement that “God Himself will be with them and be their God.” With this,

we're finally ‘back to Eden’ and even better than Eden. For the Lord, it isn't just forgive and forget but also fellowship forever. Praise God!

*And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”* This is the blessed assurance of heaven. And it is the complete opposite of the damned. “no more pain” means “no more pain or great trouble”. Hallelujah!

*Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”* This is the Lord's last command to write. I picture John just in awe, thinking ‘This is too good! I never thought it would be so fantastic!’ And so, it's like Jesus is saying, “Hey John, write it down. It really is true and trustworthy.”

Next, Jesus will declare that the revelation pertaining to the events of the last days is done. Yet, as He has done before, He will then give us some background information that covers a wide expanse of ‘time’. And here, as heaven is coming

to earth, so to speak, it will help us to appreciate this marvelous conclusion. In the following, He will describe for us our eternal home. Are you ready?

*And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.* Since the church will be raptured before the tribulation, I believe that the majority of this book is intended for the Hebrew believers of the last days, else we would only have up to chapter four. That being said, the rest of the book of Revelation, though still focused upon the Hebrew saints, is intended as a blessing for all believers of the age of grace and tribulation.

The first thing Jesus wants us to know is that He is not only the Author but the Perfecter, the Creator and the Completer. And the first thing He wants to do as our glorified Lord is to give us freely the continual refreshment of new life. I submit that although this will be completed in heaven, it is begun even now, in this life

– it's all a matter of whether or not you thirst.

*He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.* “All things” means all things and so it seems that Jesus is saying that the overcomers will share with Him in His inheritance. What is this overcoming? I think it is sevenfold – we found that out in chapters two and three. Each church was admonished to overcome. Together, we are told to do this by:

- keeping our heart set on Christ and a deep love relationship with Him.
- holding on to our faith through all the circumstances of this life.
- searching out the truth of God's word, expecting Him to feed our souls, and serving.
- no compromising – no mixture but rather holding to “pure religion and undefiled.”
- stoking the fire of faith
- ‘keep on keeping on’
- choosing to obey the Father's will and trusting Him even in terrible trials.

Notice also, that He doesn't say that He will be our God and we will be His servants or

acquaintances or guests. We'll be His sons, His children!

*But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”* Now, this is one of the reasons John will later be told not to seal the book, meaning that it should be read and understood. The consequences of evil are eternally disastrous. Recall, the new heaven and new earth are completed at this point and these people are already in perdition. So this isn't spoken as we look forward but it's a warning to all people from the time of the recording of this revelation until the Great White Throne judgment.

*Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,*

As an encouragement and blessing for all of us as believers, John is now going to get a peak at perfection – the heavenly city as it continues its journey to the new earth.

*...having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.* Some people think the jasper is a diamond, but whatever it is, it's a “most precious stone”. This speaks of beauty and purity while the glory of God speaks of brilliance. This is a shining, brilliant, transparent city.

*Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.* On the breastplate of the High Priest, the gemstones representing the tribes of Israel were arranged in four groups of three. Since there are gates on all sides, the picture is one of easy access. Yet there is a wall and not only a wall but a “great and high” wall which implies protection

and security. We'll see that access is all a matter of ‘family ties’.

*Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.* Hmm. Twelve tribes and twelve apostles, joined together and surrounding the “tabernacle of God”. Does that ring a bell? Of course. The earthly tabernacle was the place of God's presence and it was surrounded by two sets of curtains joined together by 50 gold clasps. We showed in previous letters that these represented exactly what we see here – the church and the believing tribes of Israel surrounding heaven's holy place and joined together in Christ.

*And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal.* Now, this length, breadth and height are about 1377 miles. That

makes it about one fifth the size of our moon if it's a cube. The phrase here "laid out as a square" implies a perspective from any vantage point, thus it seems to refer to a cube. If the twelve foundations are evenly spaced, that would represent over 22,750,000 square miles and each of the twelve layers would have its own sky over 100 miles high. It's a big, Big house. But why does God care that we know these dimensions? What's the point?

The city is already built. This isn't a plan or design. The original language specifies 12,000 "stadion", each of which is about 600 feet. However, of note, is that the word stadion also means "a race". Also, the fact that the angel used a gold reed implies that the standard he used to measure is of the highest quality and trustworthy.

Recall that the city is described above as having been *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*. In addition, in chapter 19, we read of the Lamb's Bride, *And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints*. The word "bright" here is specifically, "shining, brilliant and

transparent" and "arrayed" is literally to be surrounded with a covering and indeed, can apply to a city.

Now, remember that the apostle Paul likened his ministry unto a race. In 2 Tim 4:7,8 he said, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness (or righteous acts), which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing*. In Acts 20:24, he used the same word, "course" in the KJV, which is derived from the word meaning to run, specifically "of those who run in a race course". In Heb 12:1 we read, *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...* Clearly, each believer's life and ministry is a race with a prize going not to the winner but to the finisher.

So as this cube, New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb who is prepared by her adornment, descends out of heaven, a trustworthy

measurement reveals that her adornment or the measurement of what surrounds her is 12,000 "races" or 12,000 "lives of ministry unto the Lord". But wait, it's 12,000 on each edge and there are 12 edges on a cube. So there are 12 times 12,000 or 144,000 ministries which measure out her covering -- the "righteous acts of the saints".

This should ring a bell for in chapter 14 we rejoiced to see in heaven, standing with Christ all 144,000 Hebrew saints who gave their all for the Lord during the tribulation and evidently led a huge number of people to saving faith in Jesus as a result. I suggest that the measurements we're given here are a testimony to their races -- they finished them and like Paul, they finished them in faithfulness. As a result, their righteous acts are forever part of the shining, brilliant, transparent adornment of the Bride.

*Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.*

We can't be sure whether this measurement is the height or the thickness of the wall. Since this angel seems to be the same size as a man, that would make it about 216 feet. Gold, in the Bible, speaks of faith and royalty whereas "clear glass" would indicate purity. Unlike the city or throng of Babyon, this gathering is of those whose royal hearts are full of faith and purity.

*The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.* We can clearly link in the original languages eight of the twelve gems listed here with those on the breastplate of the Hebrew High Priest which represented the twelve tribes of Israel. Considering that the names of the twelve tribes are on the gates, I'm very much inclined to believe that the four remaining gems

are also a match with those in the breastplate.

The High Priest, who represented Jesus Christ, wore the breastplate as a symbol that the twelve tribes were always on the heart of the Lord. It was, however, called the breastplate of judgment. But in Isa 59:17 and Eph 6:14, the breastplate donned by the Lord and by believers is called the breastplate of righteousness. This is a fitting picture in two ways – first, the judgment upon Christ for our sins made the church righteous in Him. Next, in the tribulation, the judgments of God upon Israel will bring forth a turning to the Lord and thus His covering of righteousness as well. I think that is why these same gems adorn the wall. They will serve as a continual reminder that God's ways are always right, His judgments always just. Those who enter will consider that they do so because of God's faithfulness to His people.

*The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. This is one of the clearest and most*

powerful pictures in Revelation. How do you enter the heavenly city? You must pass through a pearl. This completes the picture of the surrounding wall of heaven – whereas the gemstones speak of the pressure and heat of judgment bringing forth righteousness in the Hebrew saints, the pearls speak of the righteousness obtained purely by grace. I'll explain. You see, to enter you won't pass through a wall, you'll pass through a gate. Even though righteousness came to the Jews by way of the shock treatment, the judgments of the tribulation, even they have to enter heaven by grace. Righteousness is a 'boundary' requirement but grace is the point of entry. The church was made righteous and enters heaven by the gracious blood of Christ which covers all our sins. It took the judgments of the tribulation to drive the Jews to seek righteousness. They too enter only by this precious blood.

But what is a pearl anyway? It is a piece of dirt, a piece of grit, that has been covered and covered and covered and so on with countless layers of beautiful nacre. That's exactly like those who accept Jesus' sacrifice on

Calvary. We are dirty, gritty, full of sin and our own ways, and we need a Savior. His grace covers and covers and covers our lives as often as needed and as a result, we are beautiful in His sight. Those who enter heaven by way of a pearly gate will be forever reminded of this wonderful truth.

*But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.* "Temple" here means the holy places of the temple so of course, with God Almighty and the Lamb present, they are the holy places. The word for "glory" can and usually does mean a shining, but it also means a judgment or opinion. As such, it is saying that not only does the shining brilliance of God illuminate heaven but the judgments (in the sense of teachings) of God bring wisdom to those in heaven as well.

*And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light,...* Though it is in the Greek, "walk" alludes to the Hebrew notion of how you conduct your life. And Who is

"its light"? The Lamb! The word "light" is actually "lamp" or "candle" – that which gives forth light having been set upon a lampstand, a prominent place. You see, *there is only one Name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved* – Jesus Christ. Ever since His resurrection, the gospel has been taken to the whole world and those "nations" or literally ethnic peoples who have turned to it have indeed conducted their lives, crafted their laws, by its light.

*...and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.* Again, this is background. Who are the spiritual leaders (kings) of Israel (the earth)? To answer that, we must note that the verb tense here for "bring" is in the present active. In other words, it was happening at the time the Revelation was given. The only leaders bringing people to heaven up until that time were the Apostles and disciples of Christ, the vast majority of whom were indeed Jewish.

Bringing people? Yes. Here's what "glory" can be translated as - *the glorious condition of blessedness unto*



which it is appointed and promised that true Christians shall enter. And honor? It is literally a valuing by which the price is fixed. Makes sense since Jesus paid that price for us with His life and receives the value of all the souls saved in return.

*Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).* Because of Calvary, the gates are always open. That's why Paul said, *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.* He knew that to die while saved only meant immediate entrance into Christ's presence. (2 Cor 5:8)

*And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.* The "nations" are the gentiles, and combined with the future tense in the verb, this seems to be saying that "they" – believers in general -- will first bring the gentiles to salvation. That has proven out historically. Nevertheless, we know from our studies in Revelation that God is definitely NOT done until all the redeemed remnant of Israel are gathered to Himself as well. Paul wrote of the Jews,

*Now if their fall is riches for the world and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!...For if their casting away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? (Rom 11:12,15)*

*But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.* Though God has provided salvation, entry into heaven, to those who accept Jesus and walk in His light, He does not permit anyone else access. If you are in the Book of Life, "Come in!" If not, don't you think it's time to give your heart to Him??

## Three Quickly's

### Revelation 22

The first five verses of this chapter probably belong with those in chapter 21. They continue the background information on the heavenly city that the Lord knew would be a blessing and encouragement to all believers throughout the church age and in the tribulation. After that, the Lord will wrap up the Revelation with some words on His coming and a stern warning concerning this book.

*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.* As beautiful as this river is, it's not just for looking at. It's not protected by heavenly environmentalists and there are no "No Trespassing" signs. I think this verse is literal, but it also speaks powerfully of the torrential outflow of the pure essence of life coming from the Father and the Son to all in heaven. And this is an important aspect of eternal life – it is not simply a one-time gift, but rather it is the result of a

continual outpouring from its source. God made us eternal beings, but the quality of eternal "life" is another matter. Many will spend eternity in perdition -- the torment of fire, eternal isolation and darkness. But God's gracious eternal supply to His children is a quality of existence that defies description for its beauty, joy, love and so on.

*In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* The wording here is somewhat mysterious; at least the translation is. I don't think it should read "street" because the Greek word really just means a "broad place" and since we've just learned of the river of water of life, it is probably better understood to be the breadth of this river or the breadth in which it flows. The fact that it is a broad place would indicate that God's not being 'stingy' in pouring out this essence of life.

It's not clear whether there are one or twelve trees, but perhaps in heaven that's not a

difficulty. The Godhead is three in one; the Holy Spirit appears in this book as seven in one; the Bride of Christ is called a great multitude that no man could number and is yet one; maybe the tree of life is twelve in one. Whatever the case is, we see that the yield is twelve separate types of 'life-fruit' each and every month. Now, we know of nine aspects to the fruit of the Spirit; perhaps there are twelve aspects to the life-fruit.

King David wrote prophetically of himself and of Christ:

*Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;*

*My flesh also will rest in hope.*

*For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, (the grave, hell)*

*Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*

*You will show me the path of life;*

*In Your presence is fullness of joy;*

*At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

(Psa 16:9-11)

"Life" in this passage also means a fresh flowing river – perhaps a reference to this river of the water of life providing fullness of joy and beautiful, pleasing things forever.

Now, it seems that the fruit is available to all in heaven (and those who are even now heavenly minded) whereas the leaves of the trees are for the service of or to the nations. Since the nations usually speaks of the gentiles, and since we learned in the previous chapter that in the new heaven and new earth there will be no more unbelievers, this must apply to us even now and perhaps throughout the millennium. If we consider the symbolism of the fig tree, we recall that Adam and Eve first vainly tried to cover themselves with fig leaves. The Lord graciously replaced them with the covering of animal skins (probably lambs'). We also recall that it was Jesus, Who coming to a fig tree (symbolic of Israel) and finding leaves but no fruit on it, cursed it and it withered. The fig tree has always been a type and symbol of the nation of Israel, its fruit representing those truly faithful to the Lord; as for its leaves, I suggest they are symbols of the law – a showy but ineffective covering for sinful man.

So as the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing (or more literally, the service) of the gentiles, it could be that this is a picture of the living Word of God

being the basis for law and moral conduct among the gentile nations. Of course, this has indeed been the case as the gospel spread for some 1900 years now since John received the Revelation. But Daniel 7:25 tells us of the antichrist, *And he shall speak [great] words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws*. So look out!

Also, you can't help but think of the beauty of ending the Revelation and thus the Bible with the promise of access to this awesome tree. At man's beginning, we lost this access because of sin. In fact cherubim and a flaming sword guarded the way to it. But because of the Savior's taking on Himself all of our sins, we who believe have access to it again. It is the perfect ending and at the same time an outstanding new beginning.

*And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. This is a wonderful promise, for not only will*

heaven be filled with all manner of life and joy and beauty but also a perfect sense of purpose. Do you suppose the activity of the cosmos, both seen and unseen, is limited to our tiny speck of a planet?? There will be countless blessings to bestow and meaningful things to be accomplished, and as we do them, we will become more and more like our Lord. Paul wrote, *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. (1 Cor 13:12)* And, *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image (likeness) from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor 3:18)*

*There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.* Beyond the millennial reign of Christ and on into eternity, God will use His children in a royal capacity – not for power because He doesn't need it; He's all powerful. Not for glory or fame; He doesn't need them

either; He doesn't need any of the things we in this life have come to expect of a king. His entire motive and character are as beautifully different from sinful man as...well, as these verses show:

*For My thoughts are not your thoughts,*

*Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.*

*"For as the heavens are higher than the earth,*

*So are My ways higher than your ways,*

*And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isa 55:8,9)*

*Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." The prophets have always been charged to speak the words that are faithful and true to the world. That's why John is told that it is the "Lord God of the holy prophets" Who has shown him these things.*

The vision begins with the letters to the seven churches representing the church age;

thus, the words "shortly take place" are obviously true.

The Greek word for "quickly" has no exact match in English and many have erred thinking it implies "soon". It is better understood to mean "suddenly" and "imminently". Indeed, Paul also wrote that His coming for the church would be "in the blink of an eye".

The messenger here says that he who "attends to carefully" (keeps) what has been said in the Revelation will be blessed. Unfortunately, throughout the last 1900 years comparatively few have. In fact, it has been considered by many to be uninspired or too mysterious to understand, and the wildest theories possible have emerged from confused minds who did not let the Bible interpret itself. But the largest portion of the book, chapters 6 – 20, apply mostly to the Hebrew believers, and thus they will yet have opportunity for this blessing as the days of the tribulation and millennium approach.

*Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, "See that you do*

*not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."* Oh John, there you go again. However, I'm sure I'd have done the same thing.

Again, probably because of the extreme likeness of the angelic messenger to Jesus, John mistakenly begins to worship him. In clarifying his identity to the apostle, he explains that he is of his brethren (possibly a former Hebrew) the prophets (perhaps an OT prophet or even a NT believer like Stephen who spoke the truth) "and of those who attend carefully to the words of this book". This latter phrase indicates to me that indeed, he is a former Hebrew, for they are the ones who, unlike the church, will pay very careful attention to the Revelation during the tribulation.

*And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be*

*holy still."* As you can see, this is not really a sealed or mysterious book if you look to other scripture to understand it. It has always been open. Chapters two and three needed to be heard and received by the believers immediately; thus, the statement "the time is at hand". But this "time" also speaks of a period or measure of time – probably, the church age and the tribulation. At the conclusion of this period, we've seen in our studies, all who can be saved will have been. The wicked, at that point, cannot and will not change. And so, it is quite apparent that the finality of the last part -- "he who is unjust, let him be unjust still" and so on -- speaks of the time of God's bowls of wrath and that which follows, for the word "still" in the Greek means, "of a thing which went on formerly, whereas now a different state of things exists or has begun to exist".

*"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the*

*First and the Last.*” When the Lord repeats something, it is for emphasis. Clearly, He wants us to truly understand that His appearing will be a sudden event. I think this will be the case with both the rapture and for His subsequent coming to earth to finally deal with the devil and his horde. That’s because this word “reward” has a positive sense and a negative one in the form of punishment.

Also, the word “give” means “to pay off, discharge what is due such as a debt or wages”. Thus, it also has a positive and negative sense when you consider the spiritual implications.

An exhaustive study of the Greek would likely reveal some unique qualities between the three Self descriptions which are given, but I’m inclined to see them all as pointing to the unity of the trinity itself. That’s because all that Christ has communicated with us, all that He rewards, both positive and negative, comes from all three persons of the Godhead. They are in perfect agreement.

*Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life,*

*and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.* Here is Christ’s final descriptive comment concerning heaven and it is applicable to the time up until the point where this ‘background’ was presented to us -- the new heaven and the new earth. After the Great White Throne judgment, we know that all the vile creatures listed as being outside the city are cast into perdition, forever gone.

Thus our background is complete. His blessing stated here is to those who DO His commandments, not just hear or even study but put them into practice. He makes it clear that they who do so can enter but only through the gates – the pearls. It’s only by grace. The walls are beautiful to be sure. They represent the righteous acts of the saints. But no one will enter heaven by the walls, only the gates. Jesus said, *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.* (John 10:1)

And no one, no matter how ‘good’ or wise or mighty they may appear, will ever enter apart from the salvation that is found solely by sincere faith in the shed blood of Christ and His resurrection to the right hand of God Almighty.

*“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”*

Notice that He says “the churches”. Clearly, He’s addressing all seven of the gentile congregations throughout the church age. However, the word for church, as many of you know, is ekklesia which can mean “the assembly of the Israelites” as well as “an assembly of Christians gathered for worship”, so I’m convinced this book is intended for both groups. His title as the “Root and the Offspring of David” is powerful reminder to the Hebrews from scripture that He is the fulfillment of the “Root” in Isa 11:10:

*And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse,  
Who shall stand as a banner to the people;  
For the Gentiles shall seek*

*Him,*

*And His resting place shall be glorious.*

And the fulfillment of the “Offspring of David” in 2 Sam 7:12-14:

*When your days are fulfilled and you (David) rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son.*

As for the Bright and Morning Star, it was the enigmatic prophet Balaam, overruled and overpowered by the Spirit of God, who foretold the truth about the Messiah when the children of Israel were about to enter the earthly Promised Land:

*I see Him, but not now;  
I behold Him, but not near;  
A Star (the bright and morning Star) shall come out of Jacob;  
A Scepter (the King of kings) shall rise out of Israel,  
And batter the brow of Moab,  
And destroy all the sons of tumult (the forces of antichrist).  
(Num24:17)*

*And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" There's a beautiful invitation and response here. "The Spirit and the Bride" is the church on earth. Together, they say, "Come!" in two 'directions'. They speak to the world to come to the kingdom of God by putting faith in Jesus Christ, and they speak to the Lord Himself that He would return for His Bride.*

The response they get is from two directions as well. Those on earth who respond to the gospel join in and as a part of the Bride say, "Come!" In addition, the Lord, calling from the clouds of heaven, will one day soon say, "Come up here!"

*And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. That word "let" means that the choice is yours. It's not mandated nor is it forbidden. Will you choose life? Do you thirst for it? Moses said to the children of Israel, I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you*

*may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; (Deut 30:19)*

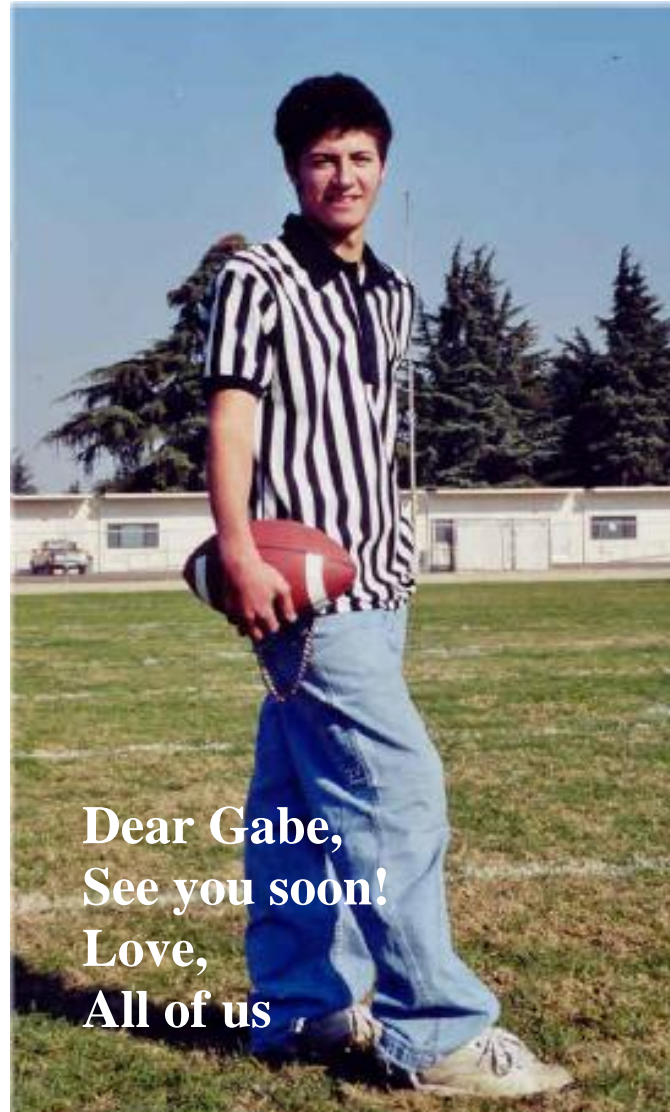
*For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. There is perhaps no greater warning to those who will study and teach the Word of God and specifically, this book of Revelation. The words of this prophecy stand. No one is to add more prophecy to it or omit any words from it. It stands as is. Those who would comment on it or teach from it must be clear with the readers/hearers that the prophecy alone is God's Word – commentary may make it more understandable in the contemporary language and times, but it in no way should ever add or subtract from it. Am I clear?!*

*He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming*

*quickly."*  
*Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*  
For the third and final time, the Lord tells us that His coming will be with suddenness. He even

amplifies it by prefacing with "Surely" which the lexicon says is a "strong affirmation". What more can He say to cause us to 'get it' – that we must be ready. There will be no alarm or early warning system in place. You



**Dear Gabe,  
See you soon!  
Love,  
All of us**

won't have five minutes to 'make things right'. You won't be able to repent and get saved before 'the blink of an eye' is done. Humble your stubborn heart now even if it means going against the grain; even if it means humiliation, persecution or death. Life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.