



The New Heavens and The New Earth



Gordon Lindsay

Vol. 16

REVELATION SERIES

Gordon Lindsay, Volume 16, The Book Of Revelation Made Easy Series, The New Heavens And The New Earth

This is the final volume of the Book of Revelation Made Easy Series. In these sixteen volumes, the whole range of the Book of Revelation is covered.

In this last volume, we consider the New Heavens and the New Earth. Many questions are asked these days regarding life in the ages to come. Will the earth cease to be? What will life be like in the Millenniums ahead? The Book of Revelation holds the only answer to such questions, and these are considered in this volume. These questions include,

1. Will the world come to an end?
2. Will the earth vanish into nothingness?
3. Have recent atomic discoveries thrown any light on the matter?
4. How great is the magnitude of the physical universe?
5. What is God's program for the ages of ages?
6. What will the New Jerusalem be like?

Finally, we take note of the seven great facts recorded in the last chapter of Revelation that concern human destiny — facts which show the marvelous harmony and completeness of Divine revelation.

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Chapter 55, The Great White Throne Judgment

329. The Great White Throne

Question: What is the Great White Throne?

Answer: It is a similar throne to that which John saw set, before the Millennium, during the Apocalyptic judgments. That throne was set in heaven. Where this one is set, we do not know, for heaven and earth have fled from the scene. The throne that John saw had a rainbow over it, indicative of promise. This one is naked, and without the rainbow. From the other throne proceeded thunderings and lightnings. But this one portrays only the greatness, the awful majesty, the immeasurable power of an omnipotent God. There are no more threatenings of coming judgment for the day of probation is now over. This judgment is purely retributive, there is nothing gracious or remedial about it. There is no singing, no praises, no rejoicing. no exultation: and it damns wherever it strikes. Its purpose is to consign the unsanctified to final perdition.

Question: Who sits upon the throne?

Answer: As is the case of the other throne of judgment, He who sits there is Deity, the Eternal Godhead. He sits in His awfulness, in His almightiness. John makes no attempt to describe Him, except that before His face, “the earth and the heaven fled away”.

Question: What is the first even! that takes place at this solemn scene?

Answer: The resurrection of the wicked dead. For thousands of years, more and less, the wicked have been in Hades, as was the rich man whom Christ described, with nothing to look forward to but this awful judgment. Suddenly now, the hour of resurrection comes. They receive their mortal bodies once more, but not to the hope of a new life. In an instant, they stand before the blazing light of Deity. They have no white robes, no spotless linen, no palms, but as "naked sinners they stand before the naked majesty of enthroned Almightiness, awaiting their eternal doom”.

Although the unnumbered millions have lived at various periods in the history of the world, not a single one is missing. The small and the great

stand before God. The rich, the poor, the noble and the base, the king and his subject, the educated and the unlearned, are all there. The sea is forced to give up its dead, the grave in the remote wilderness gives forth its mouldering occupant, Hades disgorges its multitude. They are all there to hear the final verdict of which their own conscience, long before, has given them full and terrible knowledge.

330. The Opening Of The Books

Question: What happens next?

Answer: The books are opened. Heaven keeps books of the deeds of men. Jesus once said,

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” (Matt. 12:36-37)

As Seiss adds,

“There is not an ill thought, a mean act, a scene of wrong in all your history, a dirty transaction, a filthiness of speech, or a base feeling that ever found entertainment in your heart, but is there described in bold hand, by its true name, and set down to your account, to be then brought forth in final settlement, if not clean blotted out through faith in Christ’s blood before this present life of yours is ended.”

As even science has proven that every memory is indelibly fixed in the mind even if it cannot be readily recalled, those memories and the book of one’s own conscience, will attest to every wicked deed and evil act ever committed.

Question: We are told that another book is opened, the book of life.

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the Lake of Fire.” (Rev. 20:15)

Answer:

It will be a terrible moment of suspense when the angel who has the book, looks down the list for the name of the

one who stands before the throne. But already the wicked and unredeemed soul knows the answer. He is judged by the things which are written in the books. He stands speechless before the God he has offended. He loved evil; now evil has become a part of his nature. He once found pleasure in following Satan; now he must share Satan's fate. What remorse! What vain regrets! What self-recriminations there will be on that day! Christ said, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

331. The Basis Of The Judgment

Question: We are told that this judgment will be on the basis of works — good or evil. Just what does this mean?

Answer: Here we see at once that the child, not come to the age of accountability, does not go into the Lake of Fire. One cannot commit evil until he knows that it is evil. Some say that the last judgment is based upon the person's faith in Christ. This, in its eventuality, is certainly true. But, only in its eventuality. Otherwise, none who lived in Old Testament days would then be saved. For the revelation of Christ as Saviour had not yet been given. We are clearly told that this judgment is based on works.

"And the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works." (Verse 12).

True, none is saved by his works. No fallen man will ever be saved by his works. He must be saved by the redeeming power of Christ. But how can he be saved except he hears? And how can he hear until someone gives him the message?

Question: That brings us to a question that is asked over and over again. What about the heathen who died and never heard the gospel? There are over a billion souls in the world today who have never heard the name of Christ. What will happen to them when they die? Will they perish with never a chance to be saved? Will they too join those who go into everlasting darkness? Due to their misfortune of place of birth, over which they had no choice, and where the light of the gospel never came, must they be doomed forever?

Answer: Certainly not all have the same opportunity to be saved. Jesus, Himself, affirmed this was not so. He said that if the inhabitants of Sodom, Tyre and Sidon had witnessed the mighty works that had been done in Chorazin and Bethsaida, they would have repented.

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell (hades); for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day." (Matt. 11:21 -24)

The above statement of Jesus can mean nothing else but that if the people of Sodom had received the same opportunity to hear the gospel that those in Galilee had, they would have repented.

In the matter of the destiny of the human race, we must always bear in mind that God still sits on the throne. He, Whose eye never slumbers nor sleeps, is ever watching. He sees all, and knows all. Not a sparrow falls to the ground but what He takes note. One thing that some fail to realize is that God is sovereign, and death cannot overrule His purposes. We may understand (as we have noticed elsewhere) that the Blood of Christ covers those who have not come to the .age of accountability. The vast majority of the heathen children do not reach that age. Does God have a purpose in the cutting off of many children in their youth? Or does their death occur only by chance? 1 Kings 14 shows us that death does not happen by chance. In this passage of Scripture, we have the record of a wicked king, Jeroboam, who though chosen of God as king over Israel, yet sinned and caused Israel to sin by erecting golden calves at Bethel for people to worship. For this flagrant act, judgment came upon his house. But God was weighing in His balances, every member of that family! God's justice and mercy both were being measured out in a house of rebellion. In the heart of one of the children of this evil king, God saw something good. Therefore, instead of letting the lad, grow to maturity in that wicked house hold, he permitted

him to die. God explained all this to the wife of Jeroboam who came to inquire about the recovery of the child.

"Arise, thou therefore, get thee to thine own house; and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam." (1 Kings 14:12-13)

By allowing one person to die, and another to live, we see that God has His hand on the destinies of human souls.

332. Judgment By The Law Of Conscience

As we have seen, Hades, the abode of the dead, shall some day have an end. The wicked dead will be removed from Hades, to be resurrected, and shall stand before God. The books will then be opened and the dead will be judged out of those things that are written in the books, according to their works.

What is the basis of this Great White Throne Judgment? How shall those who never heard the word of God be judged? Paul tells us that those who had not the written Law shall be judged by the law that is written upon their conscience. Those who have sinned without law shall perish without law, and those which have not the law, but do by nature the things contained in the law, are a law unto themselves. Is not God here stating a principle of His justice? Let us quote the whole passage:

"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves." (Rom. 2:12-14)

When we consider the Great White Throne Judgment we enter 'into deep waters. It is not for us to speculate. We know that the Lord of the whole earth will do right. He will not permit a single soul that will serve Him, to

be lost, though it is clear that the Bible does not give hope, nor reason for hope for those who reject the gospel.

333. The Spirits In Prison

There are two important passages in I Peter, that we must mention at this time, that are believed by many to have a bearing on God's dealing with at least some of the unconverted dead:

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison: Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." (1 Peter 3:18-20)

The second passage is found in 1 Pet. 4:6:

"For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."

Apparently these Scriptures teach that Christ, after His death, went to Hades and preached to the spirits who had been disobedient in ante-diluvian days. It is pointed out that Noah was the only preacher of righteousness among perhaps millions of people who lived at that time, and consequently many ante-diluvians never received an opportunity to hear the truth. Many devout Bible students believe that this passage teaches that those who did not have a chance while on earth will be given at least one chance to hear and accept that gospel. "How else might the scriptures be interpreted?" they say.

God's plan would seem to include the provision that every man should have his chance. Christ is "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world". (John 1:8) There is hope for the man who accepts light however it comes, but there is no promise for him that rejects it. It is the love of darkness rather than light that condemns the sinner.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19)

It appears that it is on this basis that sin will be reckoned in the ultimate judgment — the soul's response to light when it comes. If his deeds are evil, he will reject light. If he accepts the light, his deeds will be good. At the Great White Throne Judgment, men will be judged by their works. We know that the whole human race is caught in the web of evil, and none born in this world is without sin. All who would be saved must be redeemed through the grace of God. Jesus gave three statements regarding God's reckoning of sin on the ignorant. These statements, well worth careful studying, surely have a bearing upon how God will judge men in the final reckoning:

"If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." (John 9:41)

"If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." (John 15:24)

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." (John 15:22)

God hath done all things well. As His works and creation are perfect, so we can trust God to determine justly the destinies of men on the Great Judgment Day. God has not called us to speculate on these matters, but has asked us to trust Him. It is enough to know that God is just. In the end, our consciences shall fully justify the righteous acts of the Lord. As Abraham of old said, "Shall not the judge of the whole world do right?" Abraham lived to see the mercy of God, though he also saw that God was not slack in executing judgment.

This Is Your Hour!

How then is it with you, my friend? Have you accepted Christ as your Saviour and daily are you following Him? If so, you may assured of His presence, when the time comes for you to leave this world. His angels will carry your departing spirit, joyously into the realms of paradise, there to meet and greet those who have gone on before. Of you it will be said,

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for their works do follow after them."

Christ promised that the “gates of Hades” would never prevail against those of His Church. Are you then a member of His invisible Church?

Oh, what a tragedy to die without Christ! There will be no holy angels to welcome the man who departs this world without hope of a Saviour. His spirit, like that of Dives, will surely descend into Hades. Once there, the gates will close behind him till the judgment day. For Hades is the land of darkness, the land without hope! In Hades there is only the anticipation of the resurrection of Judgment. To some day stand before a rejected God at the Great White Throne Judgment, and to hear those terrible fateful words, “depart from me . . .”

Such need never be. Friend, determine now that it shall never be! At this very moment, accept Christ as your personal Saviour. Do it now, while God’s spirit is striving with you. The moments are priceless. The hour of decision is at hand. Choose you this day whom you will serve. For this is your hour! Eternity will reveal the choice you make now!

Chapter 56, Will the Lake of Fire or the Gehenna Fire Have an End?

334. Is The Gehenna Fire Only Age-Lasting?

Question: Will this Lake of fire or Gehenna fire have an end?

Answer: Would, that we could answer this question in the affirmative. But the sad truth is that we have no Bible evidence that it will ever end. He who follows the devil must in the end become a devil himself, and must share his fate. So far as we know, there is no remedy for the lost soul, once it is cast into Gehenna fire. The words of Jesus indicate that this fire will never be quenched.

"And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:43-44)

As we have previously noticed, when the devil is cast into the Lake of Fire after the thousand years, the Beast and the False Prophet are still there.

Some say that "everlasting" is not "everlasting", but only "age-lasting". That "aionios" means "an indefinite period of time" instead of "forever". We could wish this true, but the facts are that the same word "aionios" is used for the eternal life of the saved, as it denotes the eternity of the lost. In other words "aionios" is used both for the duration of the punishment of the wicked and the bliss of the righteous.

And if this is not decisive, there is still a weightier reason for exercising caution in interpreting this use of the word "aionios" as implying the possibility of a reprieve from Gehenna. We are expressly told in these verses, that the wicked are to share the same fate as the devil and his angels. Terrible as is the thought of the reprobation of the wicked, it is essentially no worse than the thought of the reprobation of any intelligent being, even of Lucifer and his angels who once were righteous and holy creatures. Lucifer, like many human beings, allowed pride to enter into his heart and thereby corrupted himself, thus becoming the instrument of the downfall of

other angels. There is not a shred of evidence in the entire Bible to warrant hope of the redemption of Satan. His wicked and blasphemous career is now climaxing in the most desperate effort of all time to seduce the people of God, which if successful would frustrate the Divine plan. His diabolical hatred of the human race, and his relentless war against mankind is almost certain evidence that Satan, himself, believes that there is no escape from doom unless he can overthrow the government of God, and so he persists in an insane way to attempt to accomplish his evil ends. Moreover, his deeds are of such a malevolent and unholy nature that it would be difficult to conceive by what means of grace it would be possible or consistent with Divine justice to secure his restoration as a holy being. It would appear that the very existence of this malignant personality is in itself unanswerable proof of the possibility of everlasting incorrigibility.

335. Does “Aionios” Mean Everlasting?

But the final fact, and most convincing of all, is that “aionios” does in many cases, definitely mean everlasting! This is fully shown in a large number of Scriptures. Thus in Rom. 16:26 we read:

"But now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlastings (aionios) God, made known to all the nations for the obedience of faith."

Here we see the term “everlasting God”. From what word is “everlasting” translated? It is “aionios”! Is God only “age-lasting”? The answer of course is that God is everlasting. This shows beyond a doubt that “aionios” truly means “everlasting”, at least in this case.

But this is not all. There are other passages in both the Old and New Testaments in which “aionios” clearly means “everlasting.”

"Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting (aionios) God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding." (Isaiah 40:28)

" . . . His dominion is an everlasting (aionios) dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Daniel 7:15)

In these verses, typical of many others, it is seen that "aionios"

does mean “everlasting”. Consequently, the argument that its use proves that Gehenna is less than everlasting, fails.

That the wicked are to share the doom of Satan and his angels militates strongly against any possibility that there is a reprieve from Gehenna fire. In view of this terrible but unavoidable conclusion, we therefore dare not give men hope of another chance, if in this life they turn down the offer of grace. If there is such a thing as a so-called “second chance” for those who reject Christ, the Bible has not made it known. And where the Bible is silent we should be silent.

May we also add that the history of universalism which champions the theory of final redemption of all wicked creatures in the universe, fails to show God's blessing upon it. Universalists, in fact, have had fellowship with some of the very worst offenders against God, such as, for example, Robert G. Ingersol, the famous agnostic. Universalism today is a dying religion that has vainly sought to find a way of escape for the sinner, other than by repentance.

The whole tenor of the Scriptures indicates that the nature of sin is such that if not checked, finally reaches a momentum where there is no stopping place. There is a point of no return. The soul of man either receives purification through the blood of Jesus, or it descends lower and lower on the moral scale until it reaches a condition beyond repentance, a state of utter incorrigibility.

All this is a most solemn warning to those who live upon this earth, that during their probation, they use the time allotted them to the best possible advantage, first in turning from self-will which caused Lucifer's downfall and then in pursuing a life of righteousness. Perhaps to some, the years of this earthly life may seem long enough to outweigh serious consideration of eternity. But the fact is that time, measured against eternity is pitifully short. Surely every man owes it to his soul that he make the right decision in this, for time is irreversible, and cannot be recalled.

It is supposed by some that those who forfeit heaven will really not miss it much, as they probably will not realize what they have lost. But this is not true. The rich man in Hades, realized his lost opportunity. His greatest desire was that his five brothers should not come there. Jesus said to those who were indifferent to His claims, that the hour would come when they

would seek Him and not find Him. In Luke 13, He speaks of the bitter remorse of those who will be turned away from the kingdom. Yea, there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Luke 13:26-28)

Chapter 57, The New Heavens and the New Earth

336. The End Of The World

Question: In respect to man's fall and his subsequent redemption by Christ, what is the significance and the meaning of the new heavens and the new earth spoken of in Revelation 21:1?

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”

Answer: Originally, God created man in His own image. He commissioned him to multiply, to replenish the earth, to subdue it and have dominion over it. Satan has sought to dispossess him of his habitation, to deprive him of his mastery, and to despoil the earth itself. If redemption is to completely nullify the effects of the enemy's subversion, then man must be restored to a new earth.

There is an idea that has come down from the Middle Ages and has even influenced the translators of our English Bible, and which still lingers in the popular mind, that the earth will disappear, the solar system will collapse, and the entire physical universe will vanish into nothingness. This notion, however, is not in harmony with the revealed word.

The King James Version refers to “the end of the world”. The word “world” however, is translated from “aion” which means “age”. This age is indeed to end, but not the earth, although eventually it is to be a new earth. Certainly, annihilation is not indicated.

337. Will The Earth Vanish Into Nothingness?

Question: But does not Peter declare that the heaven and the earth shall be dissolved and pass away?

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned

up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2 Peter 3:10-12)

Answer: Yes, but the very next verse declares that after this purging by fire, we are to look for new heavens and new earth.

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter 3:13)

Peter tells us that the antediluvian world "perished", but nevertheless the earth was not annihilated.

"For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." (2 Peter 3:5-6)

(The above Scripture may also have reference to the judgment that came on the earth in pre-Adamite days. Just as man must be born again, so the earth must have a baptism of fire, be renewed, regenerated and "born again" for the ages of ages which are to come.

338. Will The Earth Be Dissolved By Fire?

Question: What does the expression "and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat" mean'?

Answer: In these days of increased knowledge, we are in a position to understand the words that Peter spoke in a clearer way than those of past generations. Peter had witnessed perhaps in vision, the dissolving of the elements by fire, and from it the coming forth of a new earth. Even a half century ago, the individual elements were thought to be the ultimate in matter and impervious to further divisions. The first atomic bomb explosion was grim proof that the atom can be split. We know that the atom is made up of many infinitesimally fine particles which are held together by powerful cosmic forces; by using the proper method, however, it can be

split, and part of its mass turned to energy, according to the Einstein formula, $E=MC^2$ Not all of its mass can be turned into energy, however — only one-tenth of one percent.

So it will be when the earth is cleansed by fire. The elements will melt. but they will not be annihilated. We do not presume to explain how God will do all this. It is enough to know that in the place of the old earth which has been despoiled and defiled by Satan, its resources depleted by man, there will come forth a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

As Ecclesiastes declares, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever." (Ecclesiastes 1:4) Many other Scriptures speak of the perpetuity of the earth. A certain portion of the earth was given to Israel for "an everlasting possession. (Gen. 48:4)

Seiss describes the glories of this new earth.

"And Earth new. The earth now is full of ailments and disorders, and in deep captivity to corruption, yet it has much attractiveness. Most men would prefer to stay in it forever, if they could. Ah, this homestead of our fathers for so many generations, carpeted with green and flowers, waving with pleasant harvests and shady trees, girded with glorious mountains, gushing with water-springs, gladdened with laughing brooks, ribboned with rivers that wind in beauty about the rocky promontories, varied with endless hills and valleys, and girthed about with the crystal girdle of the ruffled seas — these numerous zones, and continents, and islands — these youthful springtimes bursting out with myriad life under ail their dewy steps — these blazing summer glories — these gorgeous mellow autumns ■— these winters, with their snowy investments, and glazed streams, and glowing firesides — and living Nature in its ten thousand forms, singing, and dancing, and shouting, and frisking, and rejoicing all around us — what pictures, and memories, and histories, and legends, and experiences have we here, to warm our hearts, and stir our souls, and wake our tongues, and put fire and enthusiasm into our thoughts, and words, and deed! But this is only the old earth in its soiled and work-day garb,

where the miseries of a deep, dark, and universal apostasy from God holds sway.. Think, then, what its regeneration must bring! — an earth which no longer smarts and smokes under the curse of sin — an earth which needs no more to be torn with hooks and irons to make it yield its fruits — an earth where thorns and thistles no longer infest the ground, nor serpents hiss among the flowers, nor savage beasts lay in ambush to devour — an earth whose sod is never cut with graves, whose soil is never moistened with tears or saturated with human blood, whose fields are never blasted with unpropitious seasons, whose atmosphere never gives wings to the seeds of plague and death, whose ways are never lined with funeral processions, or blocked up with armed men on their way to war — an earth whose hills ever flow with salvation, and whose valleys know only the sweetness of Jehovah's smiles

— an earth from end to end, and from centre to utmost verge, clothed with the eternal blessedness of Paradise Restored!"

The New Heavens —The Magnitude of The Universe

In the vision of the new heavens and the new earth, we are reminded of the first verses of the Bible in which we are told that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. It was created in the beginning, and that allows for ages of ages that are already past. Some people have dated God's beginning to have occurred about 6,000 years ago! That such an idea could have gained such wide credence is astounding. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." God is as eternal as time and space. His creative works no doubt reckon into the billions of years. When we consider how brief man's day is, in comparison to eternity, one trembles at the carelessness of those who would trade this glorious inheritance prepared by God during the past eternity with all its wonderful possibilities and potentialities, for the miserable mess of pottage that this dying age has to offer. Eternity was created in the heart of man. Nothing can truly satisfy him short of the assurance that he will live, enjoy, and be a part of God's great program of the eternal ages. ~

Astronomers are able to give us some idea of the vastness of the universe. Modern tools of exploration have greatly extended man's knowledge of the

starry heavens. Earth-dwellers may think of the solar system as being grand in size. Indeed, our planet which is the third member of the solar system, revolves around a sun which is nearly a million times the volume of the earth. The sun as well as all the stars draw their tremendous energy from nuclear processes that operate deep in their interior. Within the solar system revolve nine planets — the last and outer one, Pluto, being discovered only a few decades ago. The whole solar system is about live billion miles in diameter, a respectable figure compared to distances on earth, but scarcely out of our backyard, as compared to inter-stellar distances. The nearest star is about 26 trillion miles distant. Light traveling 186,000 miles per second requires over four years to traverse this distance. Rockets traveling through space at better than orbital speed would require thousands of years to reach the nearest star! Little chance then that ephemeral humans could ever navigate the immense distances of space. Here is another gulf that unregenerate man can never cross. But redeemed man in the ages to come will visit the stars! We will inherit all things!

Recent astronomical discoveries have made it necessary to expand our conception of the universe a million fold. Our own galaxy, the Milky Way, is composed of a 100 billion stars, some much larger than the sun, and the distance across the system is some hundred thousand light years. Each light year being the distance light can travel in one year, speeding as it does across space at 186,000 miles per second. But the universe is populated with millions of such galaxies and some of them are hundreds of millions and even billions of light years away. Surely, God has a grand purpose for such a great and amazing universe.

340. God's Program Of The Ages

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (Rev. 21 :7)

One of the most persistent errors of the church is its limited conception of God's plan for eternity. True, the Christian's vision is above that of the heathen. The Buddhist believes in Nirvana as the supreme ultimate goal of mankind. Nirvana is the supposed gradual descent of the soul into oblivion, a complete disassociation from physical embodiment. In other words, it is practically a reversion to nothingness. This pitiful theory is a good example of the best that the human mind, unaided by inspiration, can conceive. The

Christian has a better hope. He has divine revelation. Nevertheless, few have any adequate conception of life as it will be in the ages to come. As suggested in many of our Christian hymns, life in the future world is dim and shadowy. The song, "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere", for example, gives an impression that heaven will be located on some remote and mystic island in the universe. Poets have a tendency to picture a future habitation, of insubstantial or ghostly beings flitting about on clouds with little to do except to play on harps. This, as can be seen, finds little response in the minds of practical people. If in the next world they are only spirits floating around in space, they would prefer to get all they can out of this world. The truth is, that much of that with which we are now familiar, we shall find in the new heaven and the new earth. Only there all will be perfect.

In the new heaven and new earth there will be two main orders of human beings: those who have been found worthy to dwell in the New Jerusalem — these will reign with Christ throughout the ages of eternity. Distinct from this order will be the nations of the earth that will walk in the light of the New Jerusalem.

Of God's plans for the infinite future, we can only conjecture. We are told that God did not create the earth in vain, but that it should be inhabited. It seems incredible that He should create such a vast universe without any purpose in view. We are almost compelled to believe the galaxies of space were created for habitation. Today men talk about emigrating in space and populating other worlds. All this is of course a wild dream — one more fantastic, many times over, than the mad dream of the builders of the Tower of Babel. Dying men attempting to populate other worlds! There are things that only God can do, and this is one of them. He will unfold His plans for these things in due time.

Chapter 58, The New Jerusalem

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful . . . 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. 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, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” (Rev. 21 :2-5; 9-11)

341. The New Jerusalem

This great city, the New Jerusalem, the believer's eternal home, commands our most earnest attention. The city is indeed unique. The most notable metropolitan centers of earth that have evoked the admiration of men, are by comparison miserable imitations.

Christ is the King of this great celestial habitation, a city extending in three dimensions— 1500 miles each way. (Rev. 21:16. Note 8 furlongs equal a mile.) The size gives some indication of the number of its citizens. Literally hundreds of millions of the redeemed might find place in its spacious quarters. Obviously, more people will inhabit heaven than some are inclined to think. The new earth, illuminated by its glory, will be a perfect civilization where holiness and righteousness will dwell. Instead of competition and rivalries which are the motivating impetus of the present

human society, love will be the prevailing law. The citizens of that meat heavenly community will be knit together as members of one body, each fitted for a particular task, each contributing his part in the great economy of God.

Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." For over 1900 years the Architect and Builder of the New Jerusalem has been busy. This magnificent creation that will lighten the world with its glory, is no doubt nearing completion if it is not already finished. For each true member of the Church, there is a place prepared. Yet, some who claim to be disciples of Christ, loiter in the race. They should remember the words of Jesus when speaking to the Philadelphia church, "Beware that no man take thy crown." (Rev. 3:1 1) This warning indicates that the reward intended for us, could, if we allow ourselves to falter in the race, be lost forever.

Let us not forget the lesson of the parable of the Great Supper. Many were called to that feast, but when the invitation was ignored or taken lightly, the Lord commanded that his servants "go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled". (Luke 14:23) We may be sure that whether we accept, or whether we decline the invitation, God's house will be filled.

Some modern expositors spiritualize all this picture and tell us it is not to be taken literally. Seiss depicts an old saint of the Apostolic age coming to earth and listening to the carnal philosophies of present day critics, trying to make the fancied progress of the modern church, its vaunted wealth, its educational facilities, its material gain, its great buildings, its superficial veneer of religion, as the fulfillment of this glorious prophecy. He pictures the modern philosopher, trying to set the old saint right on what the Coming of the Kingdom of God is:

"Sir, you are labouring under a delusion - the kingdom was set up 1,800 years ago—the speedy coming again of Christ in person to reign on earth is a carnal idea. long since exploded, and held only by a few eccentric people who cannot rise to a conception of the true spirituality of the Bible — and as to the heavenly Jerusalem, why that is only a gorgeous oriental symbol of the beautiful church state which you see all around you. The glory of Christianity is to keep abreast with the times, to press popular education,

to create machinery to reach and elevate the masses, to follow up the conquests of arms with Bibles and missionaries, schools and civilization, to purify and influence legislation, to improve society by gradual reforms and general enlightenment, to win for the Church the patronage of the rich and great, and so to progress till the whole earth shall rest in the embrace of a worldwide 'spiritual' kingdom (located here in Satan's lap!) to last for indefinite ages!" With a groan over his inability to rise to such a philosophy, I can fancy the ancient saint gladly returning to his grave, to sleep in honest earth till that resurrection on which his hopes were fixed, rather than hear any further about a 'spirituality' so carnal, and a Christianity so doubtful and earthly."

Chapter 59, The Epilogue of the Revelation — Seven Pacts About Human Destiny

And now as the Book of Revelation draws to its close, it sets forth in a few final paragraphs, seven great truths which relate to man's eternal destiny. In closing these studies of the Revelation, we shall take brief note of them.

1. That the Book of Revelation is God's revelation of the future.

"And he said unto me. These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me. See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. And he saith unto me. Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." (Rev. 22:6-10)

The Book of Revelation, coordinating all other Bible prophecies with its own, thus claims to be the final authority on the destiny of the human race, and, events which pertain thereto. It excludes all other revelations purporting to read the future by its warning, that any addition or subtraction from its words will incur the severest penalty — exclusion from the Book of Life. (Verses 18-19)

While the entire Bible deals with the subject of man's destiny, it is the Book of Revelation which unveils, unseals, unfolds, and coordinates into a grand chronological scheme the prophecies of both the Old and New Testament. In previous ages, these prophecies had been sealed, but now the Lord God of the Holy prophets "has shown his servants the things which must be shortly done".

Observe the emphasis on this unsealing. The Book opens by promising a blessing to those who read and keep its sayings. (Rev. 1:3) Now, as it comes to a close, the statement is repeated that its prophecies are not to be sealed, for the time of their fulfillment is at hand. The Book of Revelation, while admittedly unintelligible to unbelief and to the earthly minded, was never intended to remain hidden nor obscure to God's people. Though its message requires prayerful and earnest searching, yet that is required in the study of any of the books of the Bible. As Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39) (The Book of Revelation then, is meant to be understood by all who will devoutly and earnestly search its pages?)

It is, with the rest of the Scriptures, the one and only authoritative source of information by which men may look through the veil and understand the things which are to come to pass in the future. And, may we add, this great revelation has been given to us not to satisfy mere curiosity, but to provide knowledge and incentive so that we may prepare ourselves for the ages which are to come.

2. That the State of the Impenitent Becomes Fixed Eternally.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." (Rev. 22:11)

The second great truth noted in this final chapter is a solemn one. Here is repeated once more the truth which is stated or alluded to so many times throughout the Holy Writ, that the condition of the human soul, whether for good or for ill, eventually becomes fixed forever. That as Jesus showed in the account of the rich man and Lazarus, the passing of the soul from this world to the next, works no change in its nature. Nowhere, is there a hint that a purgatory of some kind will purify the wicked in the time to come. Instead, the words are, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still." In this life God has provided a means by which all men may experience regenerating salvation from sin and its evil effects. After death, the state of the wicked becomes fixed and irreversible. There is therefore for him who willfully continues in sin, a point of no return. Once the soul crosses that point it becomes forever, incorrigibly wicked. Truly, this is a solemn thing to contemplate. Yet, is not that terrible truth apparent even in this life? When a man refuses to repent, gradually loses the capacity to do so, and thus reaches a permanent state of antagonism against God. Where this happens,

the soul becomes essentially evil and is totally indisposed to all that is good and holy. That soul is indeed, and in fact, no longer human, but devil. As Verse 15 reveals, "there outside the pale of God forever, are "dogs and idolaters and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie". These words then are God's final statement on the eternal state of the wicked, and are worthy of the most solemn consideration.

3. The Reward of the Righteous and Their Glorious Destiny.

The state of the righteous in eternity is also fixed. Of these happy people the word is, "And he that is holy, let him be holy still." They shall "have right to the tree of life", and they shall "enter in through the gates into the city". (Verse 14)

In contrast to the forlorn and irremediably wretched state of the wicked, is the glorious prospect of the righteous. It is their privilege to partake of the tree of life, a right forfeited by our first parents because of disobedience. Paradise lost is at last Paradise fully regained. The redeemed now enjoy the full reward promised by God to the faithful. They inherit all things. Their home is in the New Jerusalem, the capital of the universe, the very city where God, Himself, dwells.

4. The Distinguishing Difference Between the Righteous and the Wicked.

"And, behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega the beginning and the end. the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. 22:12-14)

Consider carefully these words that appear in this last chapter of the Bible, and their significance. The majority of people profess to believe the Bible, and give it their respect. But when they talk of heaven, one would suppose that the solemn words of the Scripture have little bearing on destiny at death. Whether good, bad, or indifferent, when their departed loved ones die, they want a funeral sermon that takes them safely into heaven. And, apparently, they are confident that such a lot will be theirs, quite regardless of the life they live here. People are wont to tell themselves that everything will turn out all right in the end, notwithstanding what the Scriptures may say to the contrary.

But let us ask one thing: have they obeyed the commandments of Jesus, that they may have a right to the tree of life? This is the only way one can prove the sincerity of faith.. Did not Jesus say,

“Not every one that saith Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of God, but he that doeth the will of my Father in heaven”? (Matt.7:21)

To make His meaning the more unmistakable, the Lord told the story of two men, one of whom built his house upon the rock, and the other that built upon the sand. The house on the rock stood the storm, but the house on the sand fell. (Matt. 7:24-28) is not the issue clear? Not those who profess to be followers of Christ, or profess to be Christians will enter the kingdom of God, but only those who “heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them”. And so in this final chapter, Christ's words stand out with solemn significance. “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.”

5. The Dual Humanity and Divinity of the Author of the Book of Revelation.

“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” (Rev. 22:16)

Who is this One who has assumed the responsibility of opening the veil of the future and revealing to man the eternal verities? Who is this Jesus of Nazareth? Is He a man, or God, or both? Christ is human in that He is the son of David, being born of Mary, His mother. Through this mysterious incarnation, He took on Himself human nature that He might redeem man from his fallen nature. But He is more than man. He is more than the offspring of David. He is also the root of David!

That great question which is a major theme of the Bible, is considered a final time in this last chapter of the Word of God. Its answer is seen in the remarkable words "the root and offspring of David". Here we see revealed the dual nature of Christ — that He is both human and divine!

Christ, being born of virgin birth by the Holy Spirit, is the One begotten of the Father, and therefore is the Son of God indeed. His humanity descended from David through His mother Mary, but not His identity nor His personality. This Jesus clearly showed, when questioned by the Pharisees.

(Matt. 22:41-45), Jesus is the root of David, because He created the race from which David came. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3).

Thus in the mysterious providence of God, Christ was both the Maker of man and the Son of man. He was the servant of man, but also the Lord sent down from heaven. Though He had an earthly mother, He also was; the only begotten of the Father. He had a human birth as history records, but He also was of the heavenly, as the words "I am the bright and morning star", clearly show.

It is because Christ was and is Divine that the great plan of redemption was possible. This glorious truth is indeed the cornerstone of the Gospel. Outside that Name, there is no salvation, neither in heaven nor under heaven.

6. The Unlimited Offer of Salvation to All Men.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17)

The Bible has taught and retaught this great truth throughout its pages. It is the grandest theme of the ages from the days of Adam's fall. Now God will not close His Holy canon without one more time repeating the invitation, in words of majestic beauty and simplicity, "And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely".

How many times did Jesus declare this message when He was on earth: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37). "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28).

None will be lost, save those who choose to be lost. None will "be damned, save those who are determined to follow the way of self-will. None will be turned into darkness, save those who love darkness rather than light.

The above verses indicate that God never planned that any man should be lost. His atonement was unlimited. It was for all men, and it was universal. As Peter said, the Lord is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”. (2 Peter 3:9) God plainly intended that all men should have their part in the Book of Life. It is not a matter of a man getting his name written in the Book. Apparently, it has already been written there! Only sin and unbelief in God's promise makes it necessary to remove it. This is seen in what God said unto Moses, "Whosoever sinneth against me, him will I blot out of my book". (Exodus 32:32-33). And so those who would deny the words of the Book of Revelation, the way of salvation that it provides, must know that God shall take away his part out of the book of life". (Verse 19)

Accept the invitation now. If you, the reader of these pages, have not done so, do it now. Listen to the invitation once more.

"And the Spirit and the Bride say. Come. And let him that heareth say. Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17)

7. The Second Coming — The Event Which Brings to Consummation God's Plan of Redemption.

"He which testifieth these things saith. Surely I come quickly. Amen, Even so, come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." (Rev. 22:20-21)

The last words of the Holy Scriptures speak of the return of Christ to this world, the event which consummates the fulfillment of Divine redemption.

True, we have the earnest of our inheritance even now, in the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

"Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." (Ephesians 1:13-14)

The redemption here spoken of will take place at the return of Christ. It is an event to which the Lord specifically told His people to look forward.

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to

come to pass, then look up. and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21 :27-28)

Thus, does the Book of Revelation close with God's final word on the eternal truths which concern the destiny of the human race.

THE END

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