

THE GRACE OF WRATH

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Text

Revelation 21:24 - 22:5

Topic

Nations and kings who inhabit New Earth
give glory and honor to Jesus

Title

"Make Earth Great Again"

"I sometimes think we really shouldn't have even done it. There was a lot of pressure on us at that time to do one big last show, but big is always bad in comedy."

The show was *Seinfeld*, and Jerry Seinfeld shared that regret in an interview.

Series-ending episodes are more often than not panned by critics and fans alike.

You'll find *The X-Files*, *Star Trek Enterprise*, *Lost*, and *Roseanne* on that dubious list.

Who can forget the last episode of beloved *Little House on the Prairie*? Spoiler alert: The little house was reduced to smithereens, along with the rest of Walnut Grove. In the TV special, *The Last Farewell*, the residents destroy their property to stop it from falling into the hands of a sinister development tycoon. Fans hated it.

The Revelation has come to its last episode.

There is more to chapter twenty-two, sixteen verses, and one more Bible study, to be exact. Nevertheless, in verse five, John says, "and they shall reign forever and ever." It brings to a conclusion the future Revelation he has received. The rest is encouragement, application, and exhortation for the church through the ages.

The final episode has us checking out activity on New Earth and strolling around New Jerusalem. All is good.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 You Will Have A View Of The Perfect Earth**, and **#2 You Will Have A Vista Of The Pure River**.

#1 - You Will Have A View Of The Perfect Earth (21:24-27)

Luxury hotels often offer you a view for a premium. If you can afford a room at Disney's Grand Californian, you may as well shell out the extra dough for a view of California Adventure.

Think of yourself in your mansion in New Jerusalem, enjoying a perfect #PastorsPour, looking out over the renewed planet orbiting below.

Rev 21:24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

The "it" is the fantastic New Jerusalem described earlier in the chapter. The city comes down from Heaven to hover over New Earth.

John told us a couple of times that there is no sun because the Lord is the light for the new heavens and New Earth.

The citizens and governments of New Earth "shall walk in its light," and that light is the radiant glory of God.

There are "kings" over "nations" on New Earth.

John Walvoord wrote,

If Abraham is to remain Abraham throughout eternity and David is to remain David... So also will it be with those who are saved among the Gentiles. There is no indication that nationality of individuals will be stressed, but the fact that they belong to a nation is revealed in the description of New Jerusalem.

Jesus will return to Earth to end the seven-year Great Tribulation. We call His return the Second Coming. The Lord described one of His first acts upon returning. Matthew quotes Him in his Gospel:

When the Son of Man comes in His glory... then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left... Then the King will say to those on His right hand, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world..." Then He will also say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

"Sheep" and "goats" are designations for humans who survive the Great Tribulation. Jesus separates believers, the "sheep," from nonbelievers, the "goats." Nonbelievers are removed from Earth to await their final judgment.

Believers who survive the Great Tribulation will be the initial citizens of the Kingdom of God on Earth. We call His kingdom the Millennial Kingdom, or the Millennium, because it will last one thousand years.

**Human beings who live during this thousand years are the true
Millennials.**

These surviving believers from all over Earth will retain their ethnicity. They will return to their nations. "Kings" will govern them under our supervision. They will engage in commerce. It will be Earth on spiritual steroids.

Millennials will start having children. They and their offspring repopulate Earth. Conditions on Earth during the Kingdom Age will be pretty near perfect. Resources will be abundant. The ensuing population explosion won't need Thanos to correct it.

It is impossible to calculate the final population of the Millennium. There are too many variables. I did find one interesting article. The author postulated how quickly Earth might be repopulated after a disaster nearly wipes out the population. He said,

Humanity could bounce back surprisingly fast. At the turn of the 20th Century, the Hutterite community of North America achieved the highest levels of population growth ever recorded, doubling every 17 years. It's a tough ask, but if each woman had eight children, we'd be back to seven billion people in just 556 years.

The Millennium is one thousand years. The potential population of the Kingdom is staggering.

Millennials will be born in unredeemed human bodies, dead in trespasses and sins, and will need to be born again to have eternal life.

Fast forward to the end of the thousand years. Multitudes of Millennials will reject Jesus, refusing His salvation. Worse, they will be led in a rebellion against Jesus by the devil.

For the sake of argument, let's say that the majority of the people born in the Millennium reject the Lord and perish eternally. I think I've given you enough information to conclude that there will still be billions of believers organized into nations with leaders over them. Billions is a conservative estimate. It could be trillions or more.

We know one more thing about these people. Their human bodies must at some point be transformed into glorified bodies. The apostle Paul said, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption" (First Corinthians 15:50).

"The kingdom of God" Paul in this verse is not the Millennial Kingdom. It is eternity. Millennial believers cannot be anywhere in eternity without a glorified body.

These surviving Millennial saints will be transformed and will be at least some of the people that are inhabiting New Earth in their various "nations," ruled by "kings."

Rev 21:25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).

No ancient city's "gates" were open 24/7. Too dangerous. It would be like having no border crossings, having a completely open border. In eternity, however, there are no threats. Folks come and go as they please.

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

The "glory" of the "nations" is mentioned for the second time. It reminds me of scenes in movies when emissaries from foreign lands bring gifts to the monarch. If my memory serves, there is a scene like that before Moses appears before Pharaoh in *The Ten Commandments*. Representatives from the nations on New Earth will bring their gifts to the Lord.

Rev 21:27 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.

Read this verse as if you are in the first century. It is a reminder, a warning even, that people who defile, cause abominations, or lie, will be excluded from Heaven. There won't be anyone like this; no sinners at all. It is, therefore, an evangelistic call. Get saved before it is too late.

The Book of Life is mentioned for the sixth time in the Revelation. It initially contains a list of the names of all those Jesus died for. Who are they?

God so loved the world that He gave Jesus, Who is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe.

- The “world” encompasses everyone ever conceived.
- “All men” is the human race. God loves them all, and Jesus died to save them all.

Not all will be saved.

God removes the names of human beings who die in nonbelief, having rejected the gift of salvation. Their names will be, the Bible says elsewhere, “blotted out.”

This is the first time the book is called “the Lamb’s Book of Life.” This last mention seems like it is a presentation. The final draft of the Book of Life is in the hands of the Lamb, Who alone made it possible for anyone to be saved. It’s the conclusive record of the result of His work.

Your name is in the Lamb’s Book of Life. It is there right now. It will only remain in the Book of Life if Jesus is **your** Lamb.

Someone must die for you to have a relationship with God. That Someone was Jesus. Until He came from Heaven to Earth, lambs and other animals were acceptable, but temporary, sacrifices. Jesus died in your place as the final sacrifice, the one that all the lambs anticipated.

The wages of sin is death. The gift of God is eternal life. Believe God that Jesus was the God-man Who died for you, then rose from the dead.

#2 - You Will Have A Vista Of The Pure River (22:1-5)

You’ve been out on your porch looking over the hustle and bustle of activity between the nations of New Earth and New Jerusalem. Time to take a stroll to see what is happening in the city.

Rev 22:1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Bottled water is classified as either *still* or *sparkling*. Heavenly water is something beyond those descriptions. It is "clear as crystal."

I see no reason to think of this as a metaphor. This is water, in a river, from which you will be able to drink. Robert Thomas writes, "Unlimited access to this life-giving water will assure residents of New Jerusalem of an everlasting enjoyment of life."

The source of this river is "the Throne of God." At the very least, this tells you it can never run dry. It will never be diverted, never dammed up, never be corrupted.

More than that, it will satisfy you. The prophet Jeremiah said of Israel, "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, *And* hewn themselves cisterns - broken cisterns that can hold no water" (2:13).

A cistern was an earthen reservoir to hold run-off and rain. Think of the ponding basins that are on properties. Would you rather drink from the stagnant waters of a ponding basin or from the river of water God offers?

Israel consistently chose the stagnant water. Religion, philosophy, psychology, politics, education - all offer to satisfy your thirst. F.B. Meyer wrote, "God has set eternity in our heart, and man's infinite capacity cannot be filled or satisfied with the things of time and sense."

Captain Barbosa said, "The drink would not satisfy, food turned to ash in our mouths, nor the company in the world would harm or slake our lust. We are cursed men, Miss Turner."

The human race is under a curse. Jesus reverses the curse. Only Jesus can satisfy our thirst.

Rev 22:2 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.

There are two main views on the description of the tree in relation to the river:

1. Charles Spurgeon wrote, "The picture presented to the mind's eye would appear to be that of a wide street, with a river flowing down the center, like some of the broader canals of Holland, with trees growing on either side, all of them of the same kind, all called the tree of life."
2. John Walvoord wrote, "The visual picture presented is that the river of life flows down through the middle of the city, and the tree is large enough to span the river, so that the river is in the midst of the street, and the tree is on both sides of the river."

We remember the Tree of Life from the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve lost access to it by being exiled from Eden when they disobeyed God by eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

From the account in Genesis, it would seem that there is only *one* Tree of Life. It was initially in Eden. God has it in His heavenly nursery, waiting for its transplanting in New Jerusalem.

I can envision a Tree of Life replanting ceremony. Maybe Adam and Eve can throw in the first handfuls of dirt.

I always think of eternity as timeless, but it isn't. There won't be a lunar calendar because there is no luna, but there will be a twelve-month calendar in eternity. No night, always day, yet we will somehow understand and track the passage of time.

In every survival show, the people keep track of the days until their experience comes to a welcomed end. In New Jerusalem, "when we've been there ten thousand years... We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun." We will keep track of time looking forward.

I don't know if you realize it or not but in eternity, we will be fruitarians.

There will be no death, so no butchering animals. No roadkill. Housekeeping will stock a lifetime supply of *Cool Whip* in every mansion.

The citizens of New Earth will especially desire the "leaves." The "leaves" are, literally, *health-giving*. No illness at all in eternity, so I'm not sure how the leaves impart health. I remember the *Star Trek* episode in which the crew was influenced by plants that shot spores on them. They became euphoric. Of course, in a world with Captain Kirk, you need your pain, so he found a way to break the effect and ruin it for everyone.

The following three verses ought to bring tears of joy.

Rev 22:3 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.

If not yourself, you know someone who has had cancer. If it is a tumor, a surgeon cuts it out. You want to hear him say, "I got it all; you are cancer-free."

New Earth, New Jerusalem, the universe, will be curse-free.

You will "serve Him." Think about Jesus before you think about yourself. On Earth, He was the servant of all. He said of Himself that He came to serve, not be served.

Jesus didn't become a servant when He became human; He was already a servant.

He voluntarily submitted to the plan to become human, to become the God-man, and die on the Cross for a lost and perishing people who would initially reject Him.

Jesus didn't quit serving when He ascended into Heaven. He serves us, works *on* us, and *in* us to change us from glory to glory into His image.

In the Book of Ephesians, we are told that Jesus washes us by the water of His Word. In westerns, the hero will come into town, check-in to the hotel, and take a bath. He sits in the tub, and every once in a while, someone brings in a fresh bucket of hot water and pours it in.

Jesus is the one bringing buckets of the water of the Word. The creator of all things serves joyfully as a water boy.

However we serve, it will be a joy to be like our Lord.

Rev 22:4 They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads.

You can see anyone's face in pictures. Not possible when John wrote the Revelation. This is a declaration we will be face-to-face.

Forehead tattoo? Maybe. Here is another suggestion. The Message Version of the Bible reads, "they'll look on His face, **their foreheads mirroring God.**"

In the Old Testament, Moses met with God. Afterward, his face would "mirror God." It would glow for a while with the glory of God. Moses would wear a veil so the Israelites wouldn't see the glow fade and become saddened.

The apostle Paul used Moses as an example. He wrote to the church in Corinth, saying, "Moses... put a veil over his face... Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away... we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (Second Corinthians 3:13-18).

As we grow, we glow!

Supernaturals can probably see the glow. You don't want to look to them like a flashlight needing batteries.

There are times your countenance might reveal to human onlookers the Lord at work in you.

This glow might be what John described. His “name” on your “forehead” could be His glory in your countenance being mirrored.

Rev 22:5 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.

John wrote in his Gospel: “[Jesus] was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world” (1:9).

Jesus came to offer salvation to the the whole human race, “every man coming into the world.” In the end, those who believe God walk the streets of New Jerusalem, the nations of New Earth, and who can say where else in the universe.

The *Lord of the Rings* trilogy is among the greatest works of literature. Tolkien never lets us down. The ending is no exception. Sam returns home and says humbly, “Well, I’m back.”

The words in verse five, “And they shall reign forever and ever,” are an “I’m back” ending. We will be back to where we began, face-to-face with our Creator. What was lost in Eden is restored in eternity.

You are writing your story as you walk with the Lord. If you were to die today, or be raptured, what would the last line of your life be?