

AN EXEGETICAL EXAMINATION OF CHAPTER TWENTY ONE
IN REVELATION

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter 21 of the book of Revelation in the Bible can be considered the introductory chapter to the wonderful future that the church has in God. The following work is an exegetical one which has been written in order to help bring some clarity and thus some understanding to this 21st chapter. Before each of these verses is analyzed, a brief introduction will be necessary which will help the reader understand the context in which this chapter is located. Following this very brief introduction, the results of a detailed exegesis will be revealed and the work will conclude with a personal summary of this information and a conclusion. The results of the exegesis will be divided into two main subject areas as defined in the New American Standard Bible which include: 1) The New Heaven and Earth and 2) The New Jerusalem. Each of these is further subdivided into several sections according to their subject. Hopefully the reader will find this work to be informative and come to understand God's ultimate plan for His creation as it is revealed in the book of Revelation.

This chapter of Revelation is composed of 27 verses which all work together to help explain the ultimate eternity of God's church. This chapter is what is considered to be a turning point in this book. Cloete and Smit consider this chapter to be part of the "final vision of triumph, salvation, and liberation."¹ This is perhaps the best way to

¹G.D Cloete and D.J. Smit, D.J. "Exegesis and Proclamation." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. (1992): 55-65. Accessed at FirstSearch on July 20, 2006.

phrase what is revealed in this chapter. They later go on to state that there are two main themes in this chapter which include judgment and salvation. Let's dwell for a moment on those two themes since they appear to be the overall themes of the entire book of Revelation, but seem to come together in a splendid way here in this particular chapter.

A brief survey of the book of Revelation indicates one overall message. That no matter what is happening now, in the end God is victorious evil will fail. This is a very simple way to state the overall message of this book, but it's simplicity brings comfort.

God's ultimate victory is brought about by two things: judgment and salvation.

Following the passages written to the seven churches comes the first of these two themes. From Chapters 4 – 20, John records the divine judgments that take place both on the earth and in heaven. God mainly produces these judgments in the series of 3 separate instances including the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments. Following these judgments, Satan is bound for a thousand years and this ushers in the millennial reign of Christ, which some believe occurs in the New Jerusalem but does not seem to be a valid conclusion from the Scripture. Following this thousand year reign, Satan is released for a short period but ultimately is thrown into the lake of fire along with all of his evil consorts who include all of those who are not known by Christ. This event is called the final judgment and it concludes the period of judgment and ushers in chapter 21 which discloses the ultimate salvation for the church and our focus of study in this work.

One attribute of the context leading up to this chapter is the ultimate fact that God is in control of the events of the world. Although at times it seems as if Satan and his evil followers are controlling the future of the world, we are reminded that God has already assured His victory and His church can take heart and cheer because it has already won

the battle. In this chapter, specifically, though it is wonderfully written to show that both the judgment of God against evil and His salvation plan for the saints are both tightly interwoven to illustrate the glory of God so as to indicate that God's eternal punishment of the wicked is not an evil or impossible task performed by a heartless God, but one that brings justice and glory to Him thus illustrating His love for the righteous. Nowhere else in this book is this message clearer.

It is this overall message that will continually surface in the following paragraphs as the meanings of each of these verses is uncovered. So the reader will do well to remember this message and let it act as a guide in the interpretation of this Scripture.

CHAPTER 1

THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

The first section of this chapter is composed of the first nine verses. It is in these verses that God's plan for His creation is revealed. These verses have not existed peacefully amongst the others in the Bible. Like many other passages in the book of Revelation, this passage has been the subject of much debate. Before entering into the exegesis of these verses it is important that the crux of this debate is discussed and each side is determined. The subject of this debate lies primarily in the first verse which states: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea."² The debate is over what exactly is meant by the passing away of the first heaven and earth. Specifically, are they annihilated by God and the new heaven and earth created *ex nihilo* (from nothing) or are they regenerated by God rendering a purified version of the first heaven and earth? Before investigating these verses, the arguments from each side of the debate will be highlighted.

Let's first discuss the claims made by those who support a new heaven and earth *ex nihilo*. This is an argument made from a straight forward literal interpretation of the Scripture. Macleod states: "When John said "new" (*καινος*), he probably meant a completely new universe made of new materials and not merely the renovation of the

²*The Holy Bible. New American Standard* . 1995 . Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA. All scripture passages are taken from this version unless documented otherwise.

present heavens and earth,”³ He continues to indicate the idea of an entirely new earth by pointing out that even the sea is destroyed.⁴ The sea is commonly the source of evil throughout the Old and New Testaments. The beast comes out of the sea in Rev. 13, Jesus rebukes the sea in Matt. 8, and Jonah is thrown to the sea in judgment in Jonah 1. In fact, the sea is mentioned along with six other evils that will be eradicated from the earth which include death, mourning, weeping, pain (21:4), the curse (22:3) and night (21:25).⁵ So here it is evident that supporters of the annihilation of the old heaven and earth rely on two important words in the first verse: 1) an annihilation translation of *παρηλθεν* and 2) a translation of *καινην* that means something completely new. Whether this is a correct interpretation of this word remains to be seen.

The opposite side of this debate includes those who believe that God will not annihilate the existing heaven and earth, but regenerate it into the new heaven and earth. Heide perhaps states this position best by stating: “...he is simply indicating to his audience that the judgment has ended and God is beginning again. God is not making all things anew. He is making all things as new.”⁶ She goes on to state that John’s report that the sea is no longer is just a symbolic description of the complete termination of the

³David J. MacLeod, “The Seventh “Last Thing”: The New Heaven and the New Earth (Rev. 21:1-8).” *Bibliotheca Sacra* (2000):439-451. Accessed at FirstSearch on July 20, 2006.

⁴Ibid, p. 442.

⁵Ibid, p. 442.

⁶Gale Z. Heide, “What is New about the New Heaven and the New Earth? A Theology of Creation from Revelation 21 and 2 Peter 3.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (1997): 37-56. Accessed at FirstSearch on July 20, 2006.

“old order system and the power of evil.”⁷ Heide supports her claims with passages from 1 Cor. 7:29-31 and 1 John 2:15-17.

Now that the debate surrounding the verses has been identified and the reader has an initial understanding of the arguments surrounding the first eight verses it is time to investigate them and attempt to uncover their true meaning.

Passing of Heaven and Earth (:1)

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.”

As it was stated before, this verse is often times the subject of much debate among Bible scholars. Critical commentaries of the day are in disagreement over this issue. Walvoord et al. believe that the combination of “a new heaven and new earth” and “the first heaven and the first earth passed away” indicates a completely new heaven and earth and also that this verse is supported by Isaiah 65:17 and 2 Peter 3:10-13.⁸ This view is also supported by Carson who claims that creation’s response to God’s coming would indicate that the world would be annihilated and a new world made.⁹ The key to understanding this verse is in three things. First, the word *καινός* (new) which is translated as “a wholly different and miraculous thing.”¹⁰ This provides somewhat

⁷Ibid. p. 45.

⁸J. F. Walvoord, R. B. Zuck, & Dallas Theological Seminary. 1983-c1985. *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures*. Victor Books: Wheaton, IL.

⁹D. A. Carson, 1994. *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition*. Rev. ed. of: *The new Bible commentary*. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) . Inter-Varsity Press: Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA.

¹⁰*Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) . Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI.

inconclusive evidence either way. Second, the word *παρηλθεν* (passed) which is translated as “pass away”¹¹ seems to indicate a regenerative action on God’s part. Third, *καινάς* is used many times throughout the Scripture (Mt. 9:17, Mk. 2:21, Lk. 5:36, and Jn. 19:41) and each of these seems to indicate a sort of new home for a new object. The inhabitants of the new earth and new heaven will be regenerated and perfect in God. This means it would be inappropriate for them to live in the old world. This does not indicate, however, how this new world will be made. One point can be understood, however, and that is the ultimate message of Revelation. Is it not for the glory of God? Wouldn’t it be consistent for Him to regenerate the old world into a new world? In the creation event, He created everything and said that it was very good. So why would He destroy something that was very good? Would it not be a testament to His glory to totally regenerate what has been marred by sin? What type of existence will we be in in our final state? Is it not a regenerated state? This being said, it must be concluded that in all probability, He will regenerate what has already been created.

Entrance of the Holy City Jerusalem (:2)

“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.”

There are two important subjects of study in this verse. The first is the new Jerusalem. No matter what the conclusion is from the previous verse, everyone must agree that this “new” city is coming. The word used by John here is the Hebrew

¹¹J. Strong, 1996. *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the test of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.) . Woodside Bible Fellowship.: Ontario.

hierousaleem which he distinguishes from the Greek *Hierosoluma*.¹² This is to make a distinction from the common Greek word for Jerusalem and the new heavenly Jerusalem. Secondly, we find the city being called “bride” in this verse. When the bride-bridegroom symbology is traditionally used in the NT it is often times between Christ and the church. This is not the case, however. Here, “bride” is referring to the perfectly crafted new city and not the church.¹³ So the important points to remember here are that God has a wonderful place prepared for His children and that place will be a part of the new earth.

God and His People (:3-:4)

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

These two verses promise some spectacular changes in the existence of the saints. First, it is said that God will be among men. Specifically, God will tabernacle among men. According to Jamieson et. al. this means the very existence of God will live amongst the saints.¹⁴ This is similar to the tabernacle that God’s presence was in amongst the Israelites in the OT only God Himself will exist with the saints, in one place. Remember that this must only be possible because of their regenerated state since the presence of God would be too much for a human person to handle. Finally, we see the affects of existing in the New Jerusalem with God. All of the negative aspects or

¹²R. Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, D. 1997. *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA.

¹³Walvoord. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

¹⁴ Jamieson. *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory*.

consequences of the fall that plagued the old world are not present because the “first” or former things have passed away.

In the past, some have hypothesized that Christ’s millennial reign will occur within the New Jerusalem. It is stated in these verses, however, that “there will no longer be any death”, so that does not seem possible. What seems more likely is that the millennial reign occurs on the old earth and following the last judgment, the New earth is created and the New Jerusalem is brought down from heaven. Jamieson et. al. support this conclusion as well.

God’s Promises to the Saints (:5-:7)

“And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” Then He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. “He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.”

It is in these verses that God makes several promises to His saints. First, He summarizes His previous actions by stating that He is “making all things new.” We can be assured of His promises for our future based on His claim that what He says is true. Stating: “it is done”, God has accomplished what He has set out to do. All that has been prophesied has come to pass. Notice the differences in the word used by Christ at his crucifixion and what God says here. In John 19:30 Christ states: “It is finished” and “finished” is τελέω¹⁵ which means to do exactly as commanded. Here God claims “it is done” and “done” is γίνομαι¹⁶ which signifies something made has come into completion. So we see first, that upon dying, Christ finished what God had sent Him to do and

¹⁵ Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon. “finished”.

¹⁶ Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon. “done”.

second, God has completed His grand creation. The work is done. Lastly, notice that whoever spiritually thirsts will be filled by God. With no more sin or the affects of sin, there are no more barrier between man and God. There is no way we can understand what it feels like to be spiritually filled by God in our fallen state but in our final state we will thirst no more.

God's Promises to the Wicked (:8)

“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

This verse stands in dark contrast to the beautiful picture John creates of the New Jerusalem and the new heaven and earth. Like so many other times in the NT, we find a warning given from God to the unsaved. Jamieson et. al. make an important point in showing that the unsaved here are referred to as cowards which is almost in direct opposition to those who overcome in the previous verse.¹⁷ This is especially relevant in two periods of time. First, at the time when this book was written the church was undergoing intense persecution and so those who loved Christ had to overcome their fears of persecution. Second, the times described before the final judgment in this book (tribulation) would definitely be seen as a time when believers overcame severe persecution and opposition to their faith in Christ. One other point of value is the term brimstone (*θει̅ον*) which when burned was often times regarded as having power to purify and ward off disease.¹⁸ The fact that he chose to place this word here helps us understand the realities of hell and God's purpose in creating it for the wicked.

¹⁷Jamieson. *A Commentary, Critical and Expanatory*.

¹⁸Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. “brimstone”

Angel's Invitation (:9)

“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

Isn't it fitting that the angel who participated in pouring out the wrath of God in judgment on the world is also the one who gives John insight as to the eternal destination of the saints? This is important to remember because it shows us how God's blessing of His children is entirely and inseparably joined with His judgment of the wicked. They are not two different actions performed by an unstable God, but one complete action performed by God to bring all things into justice and love. Thus the same angel who participates in the judgment of the wicked also participates in the blessing of the saints. This verse is also the invitation of the angel to John to travel with him to see the New Jerusalem, the final place of existence for God's church.

CHAPTER 2

THE NEW JERUSALEM

Here in the remaining verses of chapter 21 John is able to receive a very detailed description of the New Jerusalem city. As with many other passages in Revelation, there is great debate as to whether these passages actually give a literal interpretation of the city or are metaphorical descriptions that paint a representation of what it will truly be. Utilizing our knowledge that metaphysical objects are very much beyond our understanding right now it could probably be safely assumed that John had to observe this amazing place and then attempt to describe it in words that the reader can understand. The ultimate question is how can an object that is indescribable be described? Ultimately, it can't, but representations of it can be, so the majority of the remaining passage is in all likelihood a representation of what is to come.

New Jerusalem Enters (:10-:11)

“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.

Here John begins his detailed description of the New Jerusalem that he touched on in verse 2. Carson points out that John must have had Ezekiel 40:2 in mind when he wrote this description down.¹⁹ Doesn't it make complete sense since they both had the same source for their descriptions? Also important is the source for this new city. It has

¹⁹Carson. *New Bible Commentary*.

come down from heaven from God. So it is the perfect place for the newly regenerated saints. It must have been difficult for John to even assign words to describe this place. The only description that does it justice is that it resembles God Himself. This makes complete sense since God is present in the city.

Description of the City Perimeter (:12-:14)

“It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

These verses are filled with some very important symbolism. First is that the city is surrounded by a great wall. Whether or not there will really be a wall is not important, what is important is the fact that this place will be secure and safe, which is a consequence of a wall. Second notice that 12 is a symbolic number used here. Every numbered object or dimension of the city is 12 or a factor of 12. Of primary importance here are the 12 tribes of Israel mentioned and the 12 apostles. Walvoord states that if Ezekiel 48:31-34 is used as a reference to this then the names on the north gates would be Levi, Judah, and Reuben, on the west would be Naphtali, Asher, and Gad, on the south would be Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun, and on the east would be Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan.²⁰ What about the 12 apostles? There is some debate as to whose names would be on these stones since there were more than 12 apostles. The names, however, are not of primary importance. The importance of these two groups of names is to show that Israel and the church are in one eternal state with God, but still distinct in their

²⁰Walvoord, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

identities.²¹ Each of those named, whoever it may be was used by God in an integral way to form the foundation of either the Israel nation or the church.

Measuring the City (:15-:17)

“The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.”

It is here that the John describes the measurements of the city itself. First we come to find that the city is a square. Some interpretations report that each side of this square city is 12,000 stadia which correspond to roughly 1,400 miles. So upon an initial reading of this passage it would appear that this city is a giant cube. Walvoord points out that there is some debate as to whether it is a cube or pyramid shaped city.²² Further evidence, however, would tend to support the cube shape. Carson reports that one cube shaped item in the OT is the Most Holy place in the temple (1 Kings 6:20).²³ Pairing this fact with that fact that there is no temple in the city because God is the temple (v22) would mean that the city is probably a cube which is the Most Holy place because this is the place where God is. Again we find the presence of a wall, which turns out to be 144 cubits thick. Again, this provides a sense of security for it’s inhabitants. Surely there is no need for a wall with no presence of evil, but this provides a reassurance that this city is eternally fortified.

The Building Materials (:18-:21)

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Carson, *New Bible Commentary*.

“The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone 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; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.”

In these verses John gives a description of a brilliant collection of jewels that are said to compose the city. First, we learn that the wall is composed of jasper. What a sight this sparkling wall must have been for John to see! Second, John describes the city as “pure gold, like clear glass.” This seems to be an error in John’s description. After all, gold is itself a description of a color. Jamieson quells this assumption by stating that John is describing the ideal gold, which is so pure that it is colorless and reminds us that there will be many things possible in the New Jerusalem that are impossible now.²⁴ Third, is the description of the foundations of the city wall. Twelve precious stones are listed which seem to resemble the twelve tribes on the high priest’s breastplate in Ex. 28:15-21.²⁵ Philo and Josephus both point out that these jewels also represent the twelve signs of the zodiac.²⁶ This is not alarming since even the pagan religions attempt to rob God of His proper glory by observing His creation and worshiping it instead of Him. So while the jewels themselves may or may not have any particular significance, what is important to remember is that God is preparing a place for His saints which is far better in every aspect of the word than anything we can even imagine here on earth.

The Lord’s Provisions (:22-:24)

²⁴Jamieson. *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory.*

²⁵Carson. *New Bible Commentary.*

²⁶Ibid.

“I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.”

The fact that God will exist in the city with His people is a fascinating idea.

Because God is there, there is no need to have a temple. Temples existed as places where the Israelites could go to worship God. The temple was considered God’s house. Since God is present in the city, the city is His “abode” thus, no need for a temple. Currently, in this age, God dwells inside of each of His saints, so he indwells His church. In this future time, the church will indwell in God.²⁷ As we read that all will live by the light of God, we come to understand that our complete dependence is on Him and this is not impeded by the sin and darkness that clouds our vision now. Referring to Is. 60:19-20, Carson indicates that the sun and moon may continue to exist, but will be surpassed by the glory of God.²⁸ Finally, in v24 we see that all things will forever be done for the glory of God. Every possible good thing that has existed since the beginning will help to enhance this kingdom and bring glory to God. This also provides a clear reminder that all things are for God’s glory.

The Secure City (:25-:27)

“In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

This culminates John’s vision for the future place of existence for all of God’s children. There are several important points in these verses. First, notice that it is never night. We have learned previously that the sun and moon are no longer the source of

²⁷Jamieson. *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory.*

light, so there will no longer necessarily be a day/night cycle. Also remember that evil things have traditionally occurred in the night (thieves and robbers come in the night: 1 Thess. 5:2) and darkness is the opposite of light as evil is the opposite of good (Jn 3:19). So one aspect of no night is the complete absence of evil. So because of this the gates never need to be closed. If there is no evil, there is no reason to shut to gates to keep evil out. Second, only those who are in the Lamb's book of life will be allowed into the city. Mankind is inherently evil so one would think that if mankind were in this place that evil would also be in this place. This would be true except the people who are in the city have been regenerated by God through Christ. So they carry with them no evil or remnants of their evil deeds. That is why only those that have found salvation and cleansing in Christ will be allowed into the city. Because all others will still suffer from the remnants of their evil deeds and desires and so cannot come into this perfect place. This should act as a reassurance to believers everywhere that God has a perfect place for us and that place will have no evil only the goodness of God inside of it.

²⁸Carson. *New Bible Commentary*.

CONCLUSION

Within the context of Revelation, this chapter should be one that uplifts and encourages the believer. Remember that during the writing of this book, Christians everywhere were being martyred for their faith. This writing, particularly this chapter was meant to disclose to God's saints His plans for the future. More importantly for the persecuted it represented their hope. That in the midst of their persecution, they could have hope that their God had not forgotten them but has already made plans to include them in an amazing future. All twenty seven verses in this chapter carry with them great importance for the kingdom of God in the future but also for right now. Here in this conclusion, three main applications will be briefly highlighted.

First to be discussed is the way in which we live out our daily lives as God's saints. Notice in v2 how ornately and carefully God has decorated His new city. According to v1, He is going to create a whole new heaven and earth for this city. John can only use the most amazing jewels to describe this new city. How amazing it must be. This is God's blessing to us, His children. This should help us further understand that what kinds of lives we lead right now is all that we are going to have to offer our God. He is going to bless us with His presence and this perfect city to live in. We will approach Him one day with our life and what we have done in our life. Won't that day be great for the person who has faithfully lived for Him and has a wonderful life to offer

Him? To know that God is building an amazing city for His children should be all the more reason for His children to be well prepared for His coming.

Another main application from this Scripture is the overall message to the church to persevere through its persecution. Although most Christians in America cannot really understand persecution, Christianity has not always been accepted throughout the ages. This chapter also exists to proclaim God's victory over evil and the ultimate salvation for all of His children. Amidst the disputes about the interpretation of this particular book of the Bible, sometimes the important part of the message can be lost. This book does not exist to bring despair and fear to the saint but to the unsaved. God is telling His children that although they will go through many very difficult times "he who overcomes will inherit these things" (v7). So the book of Revelation, this chapter especially, should be used as a tool to exhort the church. For some that means repentance and a new found faith in Christ. For others it means that the persecution will end and the ultimate destination will be without pain and death. For all people, saved or unsaved it is a message that God will one day eradicate evil from the earth and judge all for what they have done leaving only those who have found a relationship with Jesus Christ in his presence for eternity.

The third and final application for this chapter is its evangelistic value. The events leading up to this chapter should be a very good catalyst to encourage someone to evaluate their standing with God. This specific chapter, however has both aspects of eternity in it. To the unbeliever, it describes a place that is perfect, without the pains and sadness of this world. There is no death, mourning, crying, or pain (v4). This place is so beautiful that only the most precious jewels can even begin to describe it. This place

must sound very attractive to the unbeliever. This picture, however, quickly changes for the unbeliever. When he finds out that he is not welcome here, because he is not invited. He must have a relationship with Christ to go here. If he doesn't, he will go to a place that "burns with fire and brimstone". This serves as a warning to that unbeliever, but also as a reminder to the believer that those who do not know Christ will not pass into this kingdom. This is the call to spread the gospel; to present to whoever it is possible the message of Christ, first, so that they will be able to come into the New Jerusalem with God and Christ and second, so that they will not endure the eternal conscious judgment of God in the lake of fire also known as hell. This is the church's calling. Until Christ comes back for us, we must press on and as Paul said finish the race.

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