

Finally Together!

Everything was wonderful. The bride and groom had been eagerly looking forward to their wedding day. They had waited almost two years to be married and after the wedding was finally over, the bride and groom felt like they were in heaven. Their love for one another was so deep and wonderful. To express their appreciation, the bride sent the minister a note which read, “Dear Reverend, I want to thank you for the beautiful way you brought my happiness to a conclusion.” We can laugh at the humorous ending, but she did not mean that her happiness had come to an end! She wanted to say that she was extremely happy. The long wait was finally over.

A wedding is such a great happening. It is an event to which a couple looks forward, plans for, and talks about. It is the first major event in their lives that they plan together. It is a test of personal character and a test of their readiness to marry. Marriage has been described in many different ways. But every bride and groom know that a wedding marks the occasion when they are finally together as “husband and wife.”

In Rev. 19-20 we saw that every Christian will be with Jesus Christ at the Battle of Armageddon. The bride joined the groom! They were finally together. The marriage finally occurred, and they entered the millennium or the 1,000 year kingdom. But the kingdom is not our final resting home. It is not heaven. Our final resting home is in heaven. In John 14:2-3 Jesus promised us a place to live in. That place is described in this study of Revelation 21-22. Would you like to see it?

NO MORE SIN. God told us that the old earth and heaven will be destroyed some day (2 Peter 3:10-13). It was actually a promise and a prophecy. The fulfillment is what Revelation 21 is all about.

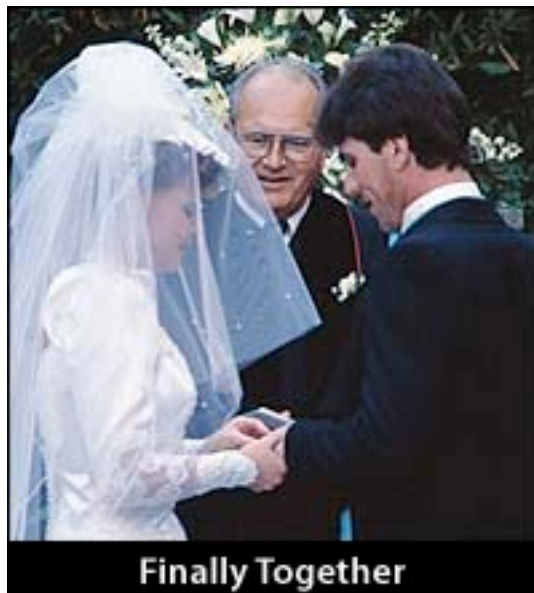
Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. (NASB) Rev. 21:1

Everything that used to exist will be destroyed according to His promise: sin, the memories of things damaged by sin, and the universe that was corrupted by sin!

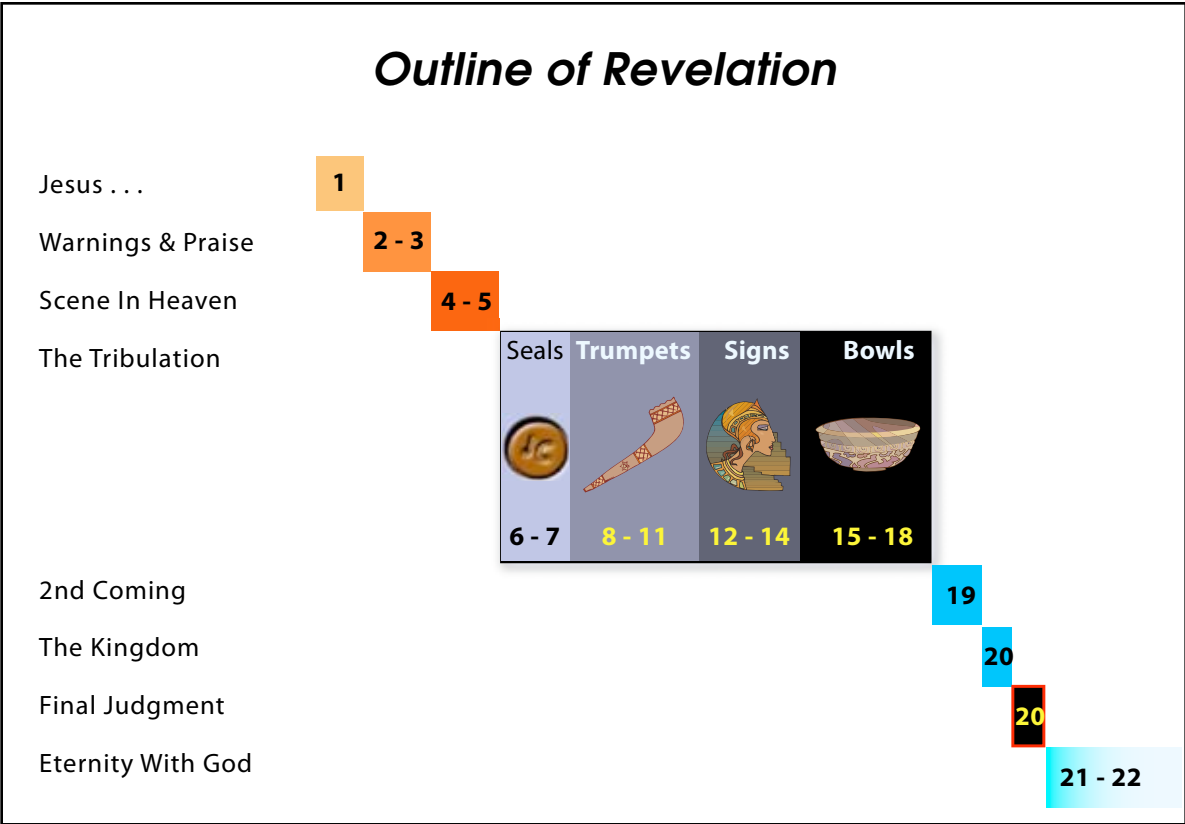
For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the

freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. (NASB) Rom. 8:20-22

God will finally set the creation free from sin. When Christians arrive in heaven, there will be no reminders of sin - people or the creation.



Just like a marriage, the Apostle John tells us that something wonderful will occur - a new heaven and a new earth without any sea. The new earth will not have any oceans or seas. We will discover later that there will be water in heaven, including rivers (Rev. 21:6; 22:1-2). But the new earth will not have any large bodies of water. Genesis 1:2 says the first creation was covered with water on the first day, but the new creation will be mainly “solid



ground.”

God has not waited until the end of the world to do something new and wonderful. He has not waited to change men and women who come to Him asking for help. He has already started changing men and women into something wonderful and new if they believe in Jesus.

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (NASB) 2 Cor. 5:17

He has given to Christians a new heart, a new song, and a new life. He has forgiven Christians of their sins; and He calls them saints, or His holy ones, even though they do not act like it. Yet they are new! God treats them as if they are holy people. He is also at work changing us through trials, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the ministry of the Word of God. Some day He will change the heaven and earth too! It will happen when the marriage of Jesus and His saints - His forgiven ones - finally occurs.

NEW JERUSALEM. God the Father will also create a new

city. It is called Jerusalem. It will be a holy city.

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. (NASB) Rev. 21:2

But it will be no ordinary city. It will not be built with hands, with wood, stone, concrete, steel, or brick. It will not be made by angels or the saints in heaven. It will be made by God and God alone. It will drop down out of heaven. It is an eternal city, and it will not look like anything from your past. The city will be beautiful and something awesome to look at. It will be like a bride on her wedding day. She will be radiant and incredibly beautiful “as a bride.” The bride and groom will have a great place to live.

BRIDE AND GROOM. We will discover next that the bride and groom will come together and live in the new heaven and new earth. The honeymoon of the 1,000 year kingdom will be over, and eternal life together in a new place will soon start.

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." (NASB) Rev. 21:3-4

The Greek word for "tabernacle" is SKENE, and it means "shelter," or "tent." The Holy Spirit is telling us that God will not be living in some ornate, lofty palace. He will not be living down at city hall waiting for everyone to come to Him. He will be living among the saints in heaven. This is the greatest, most incredible news that any human being can hear and experience. God will choose to live with us. This is a choice that God has already made. He has decided to live with us. He WANTS to live with us!

There is no greater news to my ears. Does your heart long for God? King David echoes my heart in Psalm 42.

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God? (NASB) Ps. 42:1-2

I want to know God - everything I can know about Him. I want to love God with all my heart. I want to live with Him and see Him. I want to touch Him and talk with Him face-to-face. I just want to be with Him.

Recently, a well known pastor said that early in his Christian life he told God that he did not want to just be saved. He did not want to just be forgiven. He wanted to know God. Those were strong words, but he sent God a message that he was longing for God. He had a spiritual heart beating after God. There is nothing greater than a passionate love for One who loves you deeply.

When the Holy Spirit tells us that there will be no more tears, death, mourning, crying, or pain, there is a greater message than the obvious facts. He is telling us that God cares about each one of us. Yes, there is no more sin, but He likes us. He loves us! He cares about us, and He will remove all our sorrow.

ALL IS NEW. Then the Holy Spirit reminds us that God will remove every reminder of sin and suffering.

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. . . . (NASB) Rev. 21:5-6

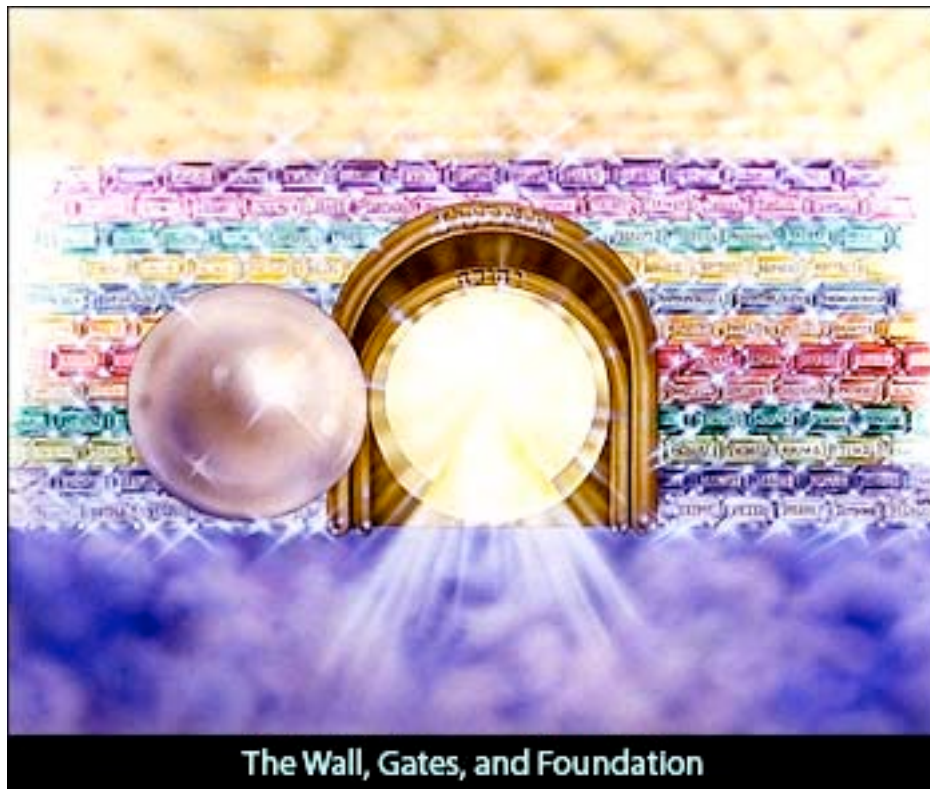


We will not need to take a bath, comb our hair, use the toilet, use deodorant, or shave. There will be no need to iron or wash our clothes, set our hair, or clip our nails. There will be no need to apologize for things you wish that you had never said. No one will ever get angry with you. We will not have trouble communicating. You will not need to clean the house, or go to work. Everything of the past world and life will be either destroyed, removed, or transformed.

All will be new!

THE INHERITORS. Most of us would like something for free. It is a rare thing in this life to be given something. Most of us know that stores are not really offering anything “free” when we buy another product, even when they claim they are. Only God offers something that is really valuable and free. Only God knows how to give great gifts beyond our hopes and dreams.

... 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. 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.” (NASB) Rev. 21:6-8



The Wall, Gates, and Foundation

What free gift do overcomers inherit? It is the water of life. It is eternal life with God. Who are these overcomers? The answer is found in 1 John 5:5.

Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (NASB) 1 John 5:5

The ones who overcome are those who believe in Jesus Christ. The new earth, heaven, and city will be only for those who

have been transformed into holy ones.

But those who have rejected Jesus will not inherit anything. They will not be with God. They will not see the new earth and heaven. They will have tears, sorrow, pain, and mourning. What great sorrow they will experience!

THE BRIDE. The Holy Spirit has finished the introduction about the new heaven, earth, and the holy city. Now we are going to be given some details. We will discover that we will not be sitting on clouds playing harps. There will not be any mist coming up out of the ground, and the Apostle Peter

will not be standing at a heavenly gate to check for your name on an approved list of those allowed to enter heaven. When you get to heaven, you will be home!

Next we are told that one of the seven angels who poured out one of the seven bowls of the fierce wrath of God (Rev. 16:1-21) calls the Apostle John. It is possible

that the angel is the same one mentioned in Rev. 17:1.

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.” 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. (NASB) Rev. 21:9-11

The angel said that the city is a bride because it contains the

saints of God. The city will be as beautiful as a bride with the glow of the glory of God.

THE WALL. The city will have a great wall with twelve gates.

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 . . . And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. The material of the wall was jasper . . . (NASB) Rev. 21:12, 17-18

The wall of the city will be about either 216 feet thick or 216 feet high. The Greek text does not tell us if the 216 feet (65 meters) refers to the height or width of the wall. It will be made of jasper, which is a diamond-like stone. In Rev. 4:3 we were told that God looks something like jasper. Just imagine a wall that looks something like God!

The wall will have twelve gates. The Greek word for “gate” is PULON and it refers to a “large impressive gateway at the entrance to temples and palaces.” In ancient times cities and temples had walls for protection. There will be an angel at each gate as a guard. Later we read in Rev. 21:25 that the gates are always open. The wall, the open gates, and the angels symbolize peace and safety. There will be no fear in heaven. There will be no thieves, murders, rapes, or armies in heaven. The gates and guards are unnecessary. They are for beauty and a reminder of God’s great protection.

THE GATES. Each of the gates will be named after one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Greek text says that the names have already been recorded on the gates. This means the city has already been designed (Hebrews 12:22-23), and will be built when the city arrives. The gates will be located in the wall - three on each side of the city.

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 twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl . . . (NASB) Rev. 21:13, 21

Each gate will be one giant, gleaming pearl!

THE FOUNDATION. Most English translations imply that there are twelve foundation stones under the wall.

And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb . . . 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. (NASB) Rev. 21:14, 19-20

But the Greek does not say that. The Greek word for foundation is THEMELIOS. The word refers to “one stone that constitutes a foundation.” This implies that there will be twelve foundations or twelve stones under the entire wall. The stones are either stacked on top of one another and support the entire wall or they are laid next to one another under the wall. This implies that the wall is very wide like the walls which surrounded ancient cities for protection. Walls used to be thick enough to prevent armies from easily knocking them down. This suggests that the walls were probably 65 meters wide.

The names of the twelve apostles will be written on the twelve foundations. God will honor the nation of Israel and the twelve apostles who established the New Testament church. Even though they are different, God will grant them both honor. The fact that the city has a foundation implies that the city rests on something. That foundation is the new earth. It appears this will be the only city in the entire earth and it will be big!

CITY DIMENSIONS. The angel has shown the Apostle John the wall surrounding the city. Now he focuses on the city.

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 the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. (NASB) Rev. 21:15-16, 21

The city will be a cube whose sides are 1,500 miles long (2,414 Km). The street of the city will be made of transparent gold. I do not know of any substance like that in this world. This will be a very awesome material. Wow! Just imagine what it will look like.

THE TEMPLE. There was a temple in the Old Testament during the reign of King Solomon, after the Jews returned home to Israel from Babylon, during the time of Jesus, during the Tribulation, and during the 1,000 year kingdom or millennium. So, will there be a temple in heaven too?

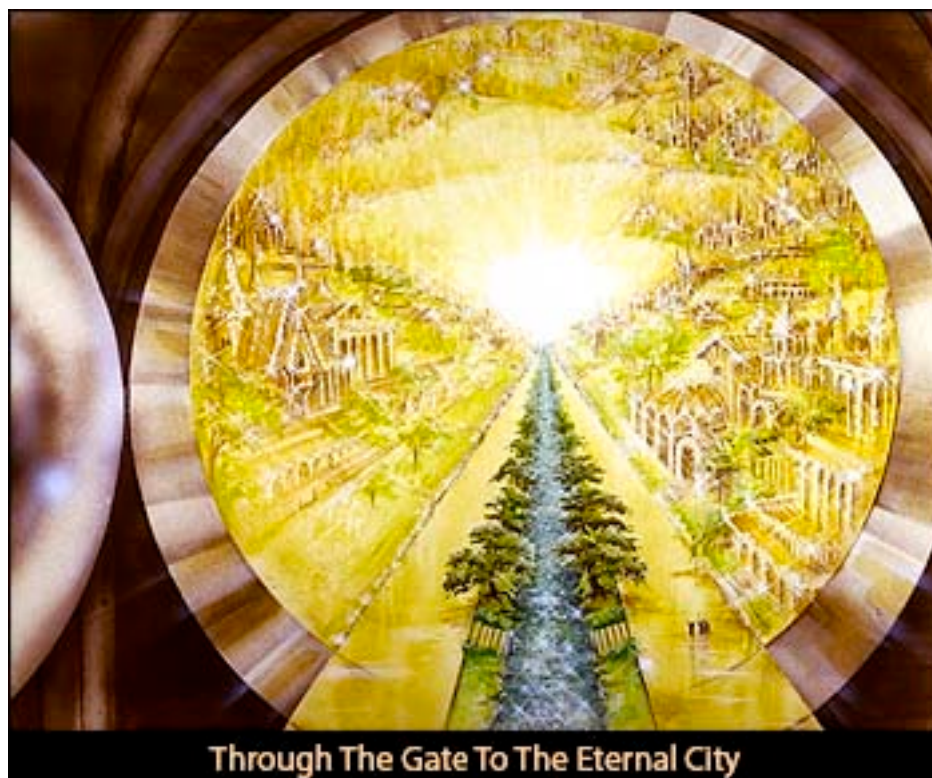
I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illuminated it, and its lamp is the Lamb. (NASB) Rev. 21:22-23

But this temple will be God Himself and the Lamb. Temples and churches in this life are not sacred places. They are only places where the saints meet together to honor, praise, and glorify God. But in heaven the temple will be sacred. It will be holy. The temple will be God Himself. Earthly temples are not to be honored and treated as holy. The Pharisees had it wrong. But the future temple in heaven will be worthy of honor. God deserves our honor and praise. He is the light the overcomers will see in heaven.

THE NATIONS. Every overcomer will walk in His light.

Every saint - those who were great in this life and those who were poor - will see God. God will not play favorites with those who were wealthy, or famous, or who held high positions in this life.

The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 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. (NASB) Rev. 21:24-27



The reference to “nothing unclean” is a reference to the Gentiles. The Jews considered the Gentile nations to be unclean. They would avoid touching them and being with them. God is simply saying that no one in the new heaven and new earth will be unclean. The citizens of this awesome place will be the

overcomers, those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

ETERNAL LIFE. Do you wonder what we will do in heaven? If so, remember that we will be able to eat and drink on the new earth. Have you ever wondered if there will be trees, grass, and water on the new earth? Part of the answer is found in the next two verses.

Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (NASB) Rev. 22:1-2

Here we discover that there will be trees and water in heaven. Gen. 2:10-15 says that the Garden of Eden had four rivers and that Adam and Eve could eat from any tree in the garden except for one (Gen. 2:16). Therefore, we should not be surprised that God provides a river and the Tree of Life bearing twelve different kinds of fruit from which we can eat. While scripture does not tell us, there will probably also be other vegetation for us to enjoy.

The new earth will not be just buildings and a barren earth. It is clear that the passage is focusing on a few “key” items. God does not tell us how many people will live there, or what the angels will do. We do not know what the rest of the earth will be like or if there will be stars in the heavens. Our eternal home will be full of surprises.

The Tree of Life first appears in scripture in Gen. 3:22-24. There we were told that Adam and Eve could have eaten from the tree, but God put an angel by the tree to prevent them. This same Tree of Life will exist in heaven, that is, the new earth. The following tells us that we will be able to eat from it too!

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God. (NASB) Rev. 2:7

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. (NASB) Rev. 22:14

Christians will be able to eat and drink (Rev. 21:6) on the new earth. Do you wonder what the twelve different flavors of fruit will taste like?

Did you notice that the tree bears twelve different kinds of fruit, a different kind each month? That implies that there

will be time in the new earth and new heaven, but it will last for eternity.

LEAVES FOR HEALING. But what does it mean that the leaves of the tree will be healing to the nations? The answer is found in the Greek word which is translated here as “healing.” The transliterated form of the Greek word is THE-PAPEIA. It actually has a wide range of meanings such as “attendance, healing, cure, family household, and to render service.” This implies “life giving service,” or “life-giving.” Therefore, the leaves of the Tree of Life “give life.” They are not healing in the sense of the nations needing to be healed of illness. The leaves of the Tree of Life will constantly give life!

OUR “MANSION.” Heaven will not be boring. We will be able to eat and drink on the new earth. There will be twelve different flavors of fruit; and according to Rev. 21:24-26, we will be able to walk around the new earth. What will we see? I do not know, but it is going to be great.

We will also have places in which to live. Jesus said this to His disciples.

In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. (NASB) John 14:2

The Greek word for “mansions” is MENA. This is not a large multi-million dollar home, but a room within a large oriental-like house. Only God has a big house. Scripture never teaches that Christians will live in small or large homes, but that we will live with Jesus in the Father’s house.

FINALLY TOGETHER. Our future home will be a holy place filled with joy and peace, without pain because the curse of sin will be gone. There will not be any danger from thieves, murderers, or politicians. We will not need to worry about going to work or someone becoming angry with us, because everyone will love one another.

There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. (NASB) Rev. 22:3-4

We will want to serve and praise God because of all that He has done for us. Heaven will be one great, awesome, glorious, exciting time.

CONCLUSION. The greatest and most unbelievable gift will be living with God the Father and God the Son - Jesus Christ - the Lamb, and seeing Him face-to-face!

And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. (NASB) Rev. 22:5

We will be able to see His face! His face! Do you want to see God? That opportunity is coming if you believe in Jesus. We will be His children for His name will be on us.

Carrie E. Beck wrote a wonderful song titled, "Face to Face," which is based on 1 Corinthians 13:12. It captures my heart and summarizes this study.

Face to face with Christ my Savior, Face to face - what will it be - when with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ who died for me? Face to face I shall behold Him, far beyond

the starry sky; face to face in all His glory, I shall see Him by and by.

Only faintly now I see Him, with the darkling veil between; but a blessed day is coming when His glory shall be seen. Face to face I shall behold Him, far beyond the starry sky; face to face in all His glory, I shall see Him by and by.

What rejoicing in His presence when are banished grief and pain; when the crooked ways are straightened and the dark things shall be plain. Face to face I shall behold Him, far beyond the starry sky; face to face in all His glory, I shall see Him by and by.

Face to face! O blissful moment! Face to face - to see and know; face to face with my Redeemer, Jesus Christ who loves me so. Face to face I shall behold Him, far beyond the starry sky; face to face in all His glory, I shall see Him by and by.