

The Eternal Home

Key Verse: *“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.”*
—Revelation 21:3

Selected Scripture:
Revelation 21:1-8

JOHN THE REVELATOR

opens this chapter by stating what he had seen in vision, “a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev. 21:1), and that they were to take the place of the former heaven and earth. He was not speaking here of the literal heavens or earth, as Revelation is a book of symbols, but of the heavenly and earthly [religious and civil] order of things. The old order which, through the rulership of Satan (II Cor. 4:4), has led mankind into darkness, sin, death, and alienation from

God, is shown as “passed away” in John’s vision, replaced by God’s new order centered in the righteous government of Christ’s kingdom. His words echo those spoken by Apostle Peter, who said, “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—II Pet. 3:13

The righteous government of this future kingdom is spoken of in verse 2 of Revelation 21, as being “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Just as literal Jerusalem was the center of all the religious and civil affairs of Israel in the Old Testament types, so symbolically speaking, the new Jerusalem will

be the focus of this new kingdom arrangement. It will not be a literal city but, as John explains, will be Christ Jesus and his bride, the church, complete in heavenly glory and power as the rulers of the 'new heaven and new earth.' We also understand John's words 'coming down from God out of heaven' as symbolic, not that Christ and his church will literally come down to earth, for they will be Divine, immortal spirit beings, incapable of being seen by the human eye. Rather, they will 'come down' in the sense that the purpose of their rulership from heaven will be earth-directed, for the purpose of helping mankind back to perfection of human life enjoyed by Adam and Eve before they sinned, and back to sonship with God as his perfect human creation.

The Key Verse of our lesson states this ultimate purpose of God's plan, and the reason for Christ's kingdom, that God might once again dwell with man, and that man might again feel the favor and blessing of God, the ultimate blessing being the gift of eternal life. All those willing to learn, and who obey the righteous laws of Christ's kingdom, will be taught righteousness and, if proven faithful, will be brought back to a complete standing before God their maker in perfection of mind, body, character, and heart. During this time of teaching man, all the stumbling stones that have hindered him from learning righteousness will be removed, not the least of which will be Satan himself, who will be rendered powerless (see Rev. 20:1,2) during that kingdom.

God's ultimate goal of bringing man back into harmony with him, is shown beautifully in these words of our lesson, "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."—Rev. 21:4,5 ■