

### “All Things New”

I have actually heard Christians say they did not think they would enjoy heaven for ever and ever. This seems to be a common view, and it grows alongside the sympathy given to sin by Christians, and the general belief that God will save everybody, perhaps even giving them a second chance when they die. In this chapter we see the stark reality set amongst the splendour of heaven – the reality of predestination, which stands out like a beacon on every page of scripture.

Only those whose names are in the Lamb's book of life will enter heaven. And as those names were placed in the book before the world was made, only the predestined will know salvation. But, why should the predestined want to stay out of heaven? There can be only one of two answers: either the 'Christian' is not saved at all, or, he has received very poor teaching.

Added to the view that heaven will be somehow 'boring' for eternity, is the idea that if one does not enter heaven, he can just disappear and 'sleep'. Or, as some say, have their souls simply obliterated. This is all alien to scripture. Do you think heaven will be boring? Then you are making heaven equal to your daily life on earth!

Heaven will be unlike anything we have ever known. It will be where the Father and Christ are, both of Whom we will know face to face. Our lives will be free of every problem and sadness, there will be no illness or hatred, no poverty, no emotional set-backs... and no anti-wrinkle cream! No bad weather; no work to tie us to other things. God is spirit and there is no concept of time in the eternal, so time makes no difference and no-one will take notice of it. Obviously, there will be the passing of what we call 'time', but, as there will be constant day, time as a concept will have no meaning, so we will not relate to it.

Do you think God will take us to heaven if we could get 'bored'? Then you have no idea Who God is. His will is supreme and beyond our comprehension. If He says that heaven is unlike anything we have ever known and is a far better place, how can we dare to suggest that it will be 'boring'? Maybe our earthly lives are boring, and so we compare... but we cannot compare heaven and earth, for they are not alike in any way. Very often the only reason some prefer death and thus hate their lives on earth, is that they have a chronic illness that drains them of life. But, they should not allow this to colour their view of heaven, which is glorious!

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Written by K B Napier

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I would say that a Christian who says he is 'bored' is not living the Christian life at all, but is 'treading water'. To be 'bored' as a Believer is to admit to living without God. I find the study of scripture exciting. Do you? If not, why not? I find meditation on His word exciting. Do you? If not, why not? I find *true* prayer exciting. Do you? I find meeting with fellow Believers exciting. Do you? I find my whole life exciting. Do you? I do not mean I have no problems... I have known deep poverty, illness and attacks for a very long time; I have come to the brink of death; I have known great violence against me; I have lost almost everything. Yet, I consider my life exciting. This is because God is with me and I know He is active in my life. This life is but a stepping stone for Believers, to a place far better, so why should I want to stay here?

Few Christians understand that the trials they face on this earth are tests of their faith. They either crumble under the pressure, or they go through them with God, to a far stronger position. God tests those He loves, so count it a privilege when 'things go wrong'. He has chosen you to be tested, and He tells us that none of us is tested beyond our endurance.

The only ones who fail the test are those who wish to do so, of their own volition. Some of these will visit their doctor for medication to alleviate their 'mental' suffering. Some will cave in and be a quivering mess. They will succumb to the humanistic and sinful states known as 'neuroses'. Some will run away and be forever afraid of testing, avoiding tough situations in order to remain 'calm'... but their calm is illusory. One cannot know true calm unless he has known, and come through, testing; and some trials can last a very long time, even to the end of earthly life.

Next time you face a trial in your life, do not just cave in or run away from it. Face it squarely and 'slug it out' with God at your side. (Remember Genesis 32:24-30!). As you move forward in Him so He will give you strength, and the closer you get to Him the more strength He will give. Thus, the trial becomes your time of victory in Christ! But, view it as a bad deal, or a slap in your face, and you will go down into a pit of despair and not see God at all.

When the trial comes, take stock; take a deep breath and say to yourself, *"Well, this is certainly testing me! I need God to get me through this, and I will determine to do it His way, for in myself I have no strength"*

. It does not matter what the trial is – God is with you and you either reject His hand, or you go through it with Him, coming out the other side victorious, with a life far better than it was before.

Of course, what you see as 'better' depends on how you see God and the Christian life. I have known Christians who have gone through utter despair because their wives or husbands have

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left them, sometimes for adulterous partners. Or, some have had everything taken away. Or, they have been hit with a pernicious disease. They have been totally bereft.

To them, any mention of a better life after the trial is a farce. But, look at Job: his life was stripped to the very bone, yet what he received from God was of far greater value at the end of the trial. If you do not believe that God will give you something better, then your faith is deficient. All of us are liable to feel dejected and forlorn for a short while, but if we allow that feeling to dominate as a lifestyle, we are outside of God's will and need to repent, no matter how justified we think we are to be depressed and despairing. (2013 note: Oh how I recognise this need today!).

I am not in the habit of quoting the secular in support of the spiritual, but perhaps I can allow myself to quote from the lines of a popular old song: *"Pick yourself up, dust yourself down, and start all over again!"* When we do this in the knowledge that God will reward those who trust in Him, then we have learned a lesson of faith that will stand us in good stead for all of life. We have been made soldiers of Christ, and soldiers do not lay down and wait for the enemy to cut off their heads! They fight on, because their general says so, regardless of the cost.

Think very carefully about these matters and apply them to your own life.

### Verses 1-5

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.

2.

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

3.

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.

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4.

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.

5.

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.”

John saw a new heaven and a new earth. The old heaven (that is, space and all it contains) and old earth (where we now live) will be removed, as is mentioned in other texts. Then, a new area of space will be formed with a new earth. New in this text means fresh and superior to what existed previously, of a new kind and unprecedented. See what I mean when I say heaven (and even the new earth) will be nothing like anything we now know? And the sea will cease to be. There will only be land-mass, without borders.

The earth referred to in this text is actual earth. It will be solid and not spiritual. Yet, not ‘solid’ and ‘not spiritual’ in the sense we now know it. We should note that our bodies will be like the body Christ had after He arose. It could be touched yet it could appear and disappear. It had a mouth and obviously familiar parts, but nothing like what we now know!

John then saw the city of Jerusalem come down from heaven (where God’s throne is). It was not the old Jerusalem, but a new one, formed by God in His abode, and made ready for His Son. A voice from heaven said, ‘Look! This is God’s habitation, His temple. It is now amongst men, and He will live with them. They will belong to Him, and He will actually be with them in person, their God.’

The voice continued: God shall stop all causes of tears; no-one will die anymore. There will be nothing to ruin joy and true happiness. There will be nothing to cause pain of any kind. All the things that prevented real happiness would be removed, because everything that we know of as this life will be taken away, and replaced by something superior.

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God then spoke and said, 'Look! I create something brand new! John, write what I now say, because I can be trusted. What I say is true.' Do YOU trust Him?

### Verses 6-8

1.

"And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

2.

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

3.

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

God then said to John 'It is finished. Everything I have planned is fulfilled!' 'I am the Beginning and the End.' God was thus telling us that everything consists in Him and only in Him. He is the creator and sustainer of life, and it is He Who can bring everything to come into being and to cease.

He then promised to give unlimited waters of life to all who came to Him in thirst. Who are these? They are people who have been predestined to realise their need before God. They have come to the point in their lives where they are painfully aware of their sin and need for salvation, and so are eager to obey the Lord in seeking that salvation. And, once saved, they continue to require the life only He can give. He is the 'fountain' or source of eternal life, and He gives it abundantly, freely (it is all of grace) and without any prior reason or cause, except for His grace and mercy.

He who holds fast to his trust in God (have true faith), will prove himself before God. He will be given everything promised by His God, for he will show himself to be God's child and God will show him His approval. Remember that holding fast to faith is itself a gift of God, given to those

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who obey.

We are then given a sample list (by no means a full or complete one) of those who will not enter heaven; the fearful. That is, 'the timid'. Those who dread a life of faith, because they do not wish to lose the favours of men, or because they assume this present life is all there is. By definition these cannot be the saved, yet how many of them do we see filling our churches!

The 'unbelieving' will not enter heaven. These are the people who openly reject God and all that He commands. They have no time for God and declare their hostility or unbelief. Added to these are the 'abominable'... those who are foul and detestable because of their lives and beliefs, a 'stench' in God's nostrils. We see plenty of these on the earth today... think of those who skulk around our housing estates and cities bent only on trouble and mayhem. Think of those who hide away with pornography and lies, subterfuge and anti-social behaviour; and those whose sexual habits cause them to sink in a pit of filth, such as homosexuality. These are abominable.

Then there are the murderers, those who kill without remorse, who kill deliberately with forethought. Not soldiers who defend their fellows, but individuals who kill for their own reasons. These include terrorists of whatever hue and all who have eyes filled with hate or scorn for life.

Whoremongers will never enter heaven. A number of people are included in this description: fornicators (those who sleep with someone they are not married to, as a way of life. It does not matter if this is with one, or with many; and also includes adulterers); those who have sexual relations with prostitutes, male or female, and those who are prostitutes. Let those who think they may live sexually with a person they are not married to, beware. Love is not the issue. The issue is to live in a way that is against God's commands. This is always punishable. Those who live habitually in these ways will not enter heaven.

Even Christians live this way today, and they are in grave danger of earthly punishment. They will certainly enter heaven, but they will know great judgement whilst on this earth and will lose many crowns of reward for their disobedience. One must ask the question "Why?" Why live together outside of marriage? The *only* reason must be that there is no intention, deep down, to remain together. That is, there is the underlying 'let-out'... if things do not go according to plan, the partner simply walks out. Thus, there is no real love in the relationship, only a getting-together for sexual reasons.

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Friends who are Christian – ***this is fornication***, and God hates fornication! When you commit this act of sin you open yourself to God's wrath; you defile the name of Christ and shame His Church; you defame Christian witness and attract to your life more sins, for Satan will take you. Satan sees someone who is of Christ, yet rejects Him in his way of life. Therefore, Satan will come to you and offer you many more sins to commit, removing your true joy and replacing it with lust and human desires. These will take you down a slope into a pit of your own making, so that, eventually, you will lose any sense of the divine and know only human misery, for misery is your only reward for defying Almighty God.

It is the duty of all Believers not to allow fellow Christians to fornicate openly, with our knowledge. Once we know one is living this way, we must act and counsel. We must speak against the sin and warn the sinner. And if that sinner does not listen, we have no option but to shun him or her. We must do this because though our human response might be one of misplaced sympathy, God sees it in a different way. To Him this way of life is abominable, and so we may not accept what God says is offensive to Him.

Sadly, many we know who live this way are otherwise 'nice' people – but niceness is not the criterion. Do they obey the Lord? No, they do not. Their sin is open and public, and so they must be shunned if they do not comply with the word of their Saviour. Also, sadly, many parents refuse to shun their offspring who live this way, and so partake in their sin (baby-sitting, staying in the house on visits, etc.), compromising their own spiritual lives and thus defying the Lord, attracting wrath and a diminished earthly life, possibly with many woes.

They do not shun their offspring because they fear never seeing them again. This, however, is not the main issue. The main issue is that we obey God. We may indeed be courteous and loving, but we cannot in good conscience visit the homes of offspring who live sinfully, or look after babies born outside marriage (or in a house where the parents fornicate), or in any way encourage them to continue in their sin. This includes offspring who enter the hideously foul world of homosexuality. If all this means the offspring refuse to meet their parents, then so be it. It shows that their aim is to live sinfully and not to honour the Lord. Saved parents CANNOT follow their sinning children like lap-dogs!

Of course, there can be another reason why a 'Christian' flies in the face of decency and God's law. That is, if they are unsaved and if their 'Christianity' is not real. That is another matter. It will still be wrong, but at least they do not defame the Saviour. If such is not actually saved, then there is no real reason to be their friend anyway, for we must not walk the path of the ungodly.

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The only difference, then, is that one requires Christian discipline and the other must be left alone to face God in their sin. I have made much of this issue, because so many Christians (?) enact this particular sin. If they say they love the Lord, yet are unwilling to obey, then they do not love Him at all, and show it very publicly. Another modern sin is to couple with an unsaved partner, with the excuse that the saved one 'may' lead the other to salvation. This is just an excuse for forming a sinful relationship.

Sorcerers will not enter heaven. Interestingly, we get our word 'pharmacist' from this word, **pharmakeus**

, meaning a spell-giving potion! I think pharmacists have moved on since those days! A sorcerer is one who practises the 'black arts', makes potions for magic charms, and so on. Another word for them is 'witches'. Christians are often confused by what is acceptable in matters of medicine, etc. They see no harm in taking potions that have no medical or scientific basis, and so they open themselves up to further incursions by Satanic influences. They also allow occult practitioners to touch them or 'heal' them... 'faith' healers, and those who use Reiki, Fen Shui, 'healing hands' that do not touch ('therapeutic touch'), acupuncture, and so on. Some even attend spiritualists. They may be 'Christians' but they are also practising witchcraft – an impossibility! To knowingly allow someone to practice their occultism on you is to take part in the same sin. To take part is to reject the presence of the Holy Spirit and to embrace further, more subtle, sins offered by Satan.

Bear in mind that sorcery includes all manner of the occult, even horoscopes in newspapers. If you read them, 'for fun' as most folk say, then you are open to Satan because you show sympathy toward this occult practice and an interest in the demonic. If you let someone read your tea-leaves, you take part in the occult. I know a local church, claiming to be evangelistic, where the elders use a pendulum to detect illnesses and demonic presences! Be assured, they are practising the occult! They are acting as spiritualists! This does not surprise me for they were prime movers of the Toronto Blessing, which is itself demonic and spiritistic. If in doubt – leave it!

Idolaters will not enter heaven. These worship false gods and so automatically reject and abuse God. It includes 'Christians' who enter into any form of heathenism, whether as an observer or as a participant. In this category are those who are 'true' charismatics, those who take part in Romish feasts, mass, etc., and all who think it alright to enter into heathen places of worship as a gesture of goodwill – mosques, Buddhist temples, and so on. Also, an 'idolater' is one who has an undue regard for money and its trappings of power, fame, etc. Many Christians have this love for money and what it can get them, all earthly gains. Such folk cannot see the danger they are in, or the sin they commit. They also do not see that their regard for money stops them showing acts of compassion and help, thus negating the will of Christ.

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And 'all liars' are barred from heaven. These are deceitful people, false to themselves and to others. From this word, *pseudes*, we get our word 'pseudo' a prefix used to describe something that is pretend. We also have pseudo-Christians, who are the majority in the churches today. They pretend to be Believers by using the same words and talk, and living in a similar way. Their holiness is only skin-deep and their hearts remain black with sin.

Many folk live habitually as liars, always trying to obtain what is not theirs, or deceiving people as to their true motives. These can be Christians, also, to their shame. Many do not lie in the usual sense, but their hearts are not right before God, for they do not really believe what they claim to believe. The proof of this can be tested very easily – do they obey God in every way? If not, then they are liars and deceive themselves as well as others. A Christian who sins and refuses to repent and change, is a liar, a *pseudes*. Christ says that the proof that a Christian is true, is that he immediately repents of sin and obeys His word. Those who do *not* do this, do not love Him. It is all very, very simple.

All the unsaved who are listed (and all who are similar) will not enter heaven, but will be cast with Satan into the lake of fire, hell. They will know the 'second death' which will never be repealed or altered. For Christians who display the same traits I send out a sincere and urgent call – repent whilst you can! God will not be mocked, and He must act against you, at some time. Do not think that your present security or peace will remain, for God is already moving against you and He *will* act against you, soon. There is no maybe about it, friends.

### Verses 9-14

1.

"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.

2.

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.

3.

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Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

4.

And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

5.

On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

6.

And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the lamb.”

After this, John was visited on earth by one of the angels that carried one of the seven plagues. He asked John to go with him to see the Bride of the Lamb. John was then taken away ‘in the spirit’ to a very high mountain. He travelled, then, as did the evangelist, Phillip, when he was taken to meet the eunuch at the river. This is of God and is very, very rare. Do not believe charismatics who claim to be taken somewhere ‘in the spirit’, for their transportation is either a psychological dupe, or satanic and occultic.

From their vantage point, John and the angel saw the new Jerusalem descending from heaven to earth. Will there really be an *actual* new Jerusalem as an earthly place? Possibly. At any rate, this new city depicts the total rule of God after He wraps up the old order of things. I see no logical reason why there should *not* be a new Jerusalem on a brand new earth. Indeed, the inclusion of actual measurements appears to suggest that this will be so, but we cannot really tell finally or with authority.

The city is described as ‘having the glory of God’. That is, everything about the city bore the mark of God. It was iridescent with the kind of light one sees in a precious stone. The example is given of a jasper, which can be purple, blue, green, yellow. In this text the jasper is ‘clear as

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crystal' This is a Crystallizusa or 'white' jasper, usually found in India, which is indeed clear as crystal and also known as a crystallo propinquans.

The city was filled with light and shone brightly. Its walls were/will be very high; some might think that this would make it dark, but the walls were clear, too. The 'great and high' wall had 12 gates, representing the 12 tribes of Israel, with the name of a tribe per gate. And each gate was attended by an angel. It is tempting to refer to them as guards, but in the new state there will not be a need for guards. So they are possibly a symbol of God's presence.

This shows us without doubt that God protects His own chosen people, and that the Jews will again be in favour, and certainly in the new creation. This does not mean we must become as Jews, only that we must recognise that Jews will (as told in the book of Hebrews) soon be awoken by God and many will be saved, just as gentiles are saved. After the end of the world, the 12 tribes, all represented by many saved Jewish people, will be found in heaven, alongside all gentiles who have been saved. However, God chose the Jews to be His special people, long before the gentiles were given salvation on a large scale. Thus, when God creates His new world and heavens, the Jews will once again be given prominence, in that they will be forever remembered in the walls of the new city.

There will be three gates in each wall, and each of the four walls will be built upon foundations – three for each wall - that remember the 12 Apostles (not including Judas who betrayed Christ, but including the replacement for him), with the name of each apostle on each foundation. I can hazard a guess that the Apostolic foundations hold up the Jewish walls, because the foundation is Christ ('apostles of the Lamb').

### Verses 15-21

1.

"And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wallthereof.

2.

And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and breadth and the height of it are equal.

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3.

And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

4.

And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

5.

And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire, the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

6.

The fifth sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite, the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

7.

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.”

The angel who talked with John was holding a golden measurement-rod to measure the city. The city was perfectly square (‘foursquare’) and its height was equal to each length. Thus, the whole edifice is cube-shaped. The overall length (circumference) of the city was 12,000 furlongs. Each furlong was almost 607 feet, or just under one fifth of a kilometre. So, if each wall was one fourth of the total (3,000 furlongs) that would make each wall about 550 kilometres in length). That is massive!

The height of the wall was the same, but was clear and shining. The depth of the wall was 144 cubits, or 216 feet thick. The wall was made of crystal jasper, so it would be almost see-through and sparkling. The city buildings were made of pure gold, which was also transparent, symbolising purity. Each foundation was decorated with precious stones, showing the honour

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given to each of the Apostles.

One was decorated with jasper (we are not told which colour). The second with sapphire. The third with 'a chalcedony'. This was a misty grey colour with clouds of blue, purple or yellow, looking much like agate – and so it is rendered in, say, Isaiah 54:12.

The fourth foundation had emeralds set into it, clear and greenish. The fifth was decorated with sardonyx, which was red (sard) and white (onyx). The sixth foundation was set with sardius. There are two types, but the type is not mentioned here. It was either flesh coloured (carnelian) or red (sard). The seventh had chrysolite, thought to be topaz, usually found in Bohemia, dusky green with yellow or goldish tint.

The eighth foundation had beryl, which was pale green, and the ninth had a topaz, so this stone was similar to the chrysolite. It is possible that the two were slightly different in those days, hence the two names. The tenth foundation was set with chrysoprasus, of green hinting toward a gold colour. It is an agate found on the high priest's breastplate ('Naphtali's stone'). The eleventh foundation was set with jacinth, which was the colour of the flower, hyacinth. The twelfth was set with amethyst, which was violet and purple.

Each of the 12 gates was one huge pearl, indicating the great value God placed upon each tribe. The streets of the city were also of transparent, pure gold.

### Verses 22-27

1.

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

2.

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

3.

And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth

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do bring their glory and honour into it.

4.

And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

5.

And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

6.

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

We now have a very interesting description, for John says he could see no temple in the new Jerusalem. Those who believe a new temple will be built by God for the supposed 'millennium' must reckon with this text, and the earlier part of this chapter, which tell us that the new Jerusalem will not appear until the old world has been destroyed by God (i.e. it will appear at the beginning of our heavenly life), and even when it does, it will *not* contain a temple!

John says he 'saw no temple therein', because Jesus and the Father *are* the Temple. This reinforces the claim by those Bible teachers (of whom I am one) who say that the Church is spiritual and not physical. Though the Body consists of human beings and matter during their lifetimes, it has a spiritual head, Christ.

For similar reasons there was no sun or moon, because the glory of God the father and Christ was brighter than both. I have said, when studying Genesis One, that the light that existed *before* the sun was created was the glory of God, and is therefore self-existing, not created. This text lends proof and credibility to that claim. Light, then, is self-existing and needs no physical source.

The whole new creation and those who are saved (the only previously-human beings to inhabit

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the new world) will enjoy this self-existing light. They shall 'walk' in it. That is, they will live their lives in holy fashion, as God is holy. And those who are earthly kings will bow the knee to God, giving Him all their own glory, as it rightly belongs to God. Thus, all will be equal.

Gates of cities were normally closed at night for security, but in this new creation there will be no night and no thieves or enemies. So, the gates will be perpetually open and people will constantly enter and bring glory to God, from wherever they are. Does this suggest that saved people will live outside the great city (if, that is, the city is actual) and travel there on occasions, as pilgrims do today, to worship God? Possibly.

Nothing and nobody defiled or sinful or tainted, will enter the city. Only those who are saved will enter that place. This statement is merely figurative, for it will be impossible for the unsaved to enter anyway... they will already be sent to hell forever, and will know nothing of the joys and pleasures of heaven.

As we come toward the end of this great Prophecy given to John, let us reflect on its contents and promises, which are magnificent in their breadth and application.

### Notes

**V1.** New heaven and earth. The adjective, *Kainos*, in this context, means something freshly made, of a new kind and unprecedented. Therefore no man can envisage what Heaven will be like (which incorporates God's abode, and newly-made cosmos and earth. The "first heaven" refers not to God's abode but to the original cosmos. The old, original heaven and earth will "pass away", *parerchomai*. That is, they will perish (by fire: see for example 2 Peter 3:12); there is also the idea of coming nearer (to the new heaven and earth) and so reaching a desired goal.

**V2.** Remarkably, the new Jerusalem came down from Heaven to the new earth... a figure showing that God will join with His people (for this vision only applies to the chosen few) on the new earth. (This does NOT refer to a supposed millennium reign; verse 4 underlines this fact). By stark contrast all who hated God and died in their sin, will enter hell.

**New Jerusalem.** What we have in this chapter is a description given in such a way that John

## The Revelation 21

Written by K B Napier

Tuesday, 20 October 2015 20:25

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could understand it. He would pass on what he was told in similar manner, to other human beings. This is because the true nature and sight of Heaven will be beyond anything human beings can imagine. What we have, then, is the 'next best thing' (because jewels and their riches could be understood readily, whereas no-one has ever seen actual Heaven and come back to describe it), showing us that the new creation (Heaven plus the new earth and cosmos) is priceless, beautiful, clear, honest, holy, and worthy of a people chosen by God to live with Him, made worthy because of Jesus Christ. It also tells us that most people who have ever lived will not enter Heaven; some of the reasons are given, with categories of sinners. (We are told we should not categorise people – but this is exactly what God does!).

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