

Revelation 22:1-5  
Our Home in Heaven  
HH1605

January 31, 2016 pm  
Heaven

### **“Paradise Regained”**

**INTRODUCTION:** When we study the Bible, we must remember two *principles* that many people forget...

1. These two principles are: *Continuity* and *Consummation (completion)*
  - a. Unless a person understands these two *hermeneutical principles*, they will not...
  - b. Be able to comprehend and fit together the various parts of the Bible
  - c. Grasp the connection between Old Testament and New Testament (Israel and Church)
  - d. Understand the Book of *Revelation*
2. It is here, precisely at this point, that **Dispensationalists** fail because of their neglect of or rejection of *Continuity* and *Consummation*...
  - a. **Continuity:** The New Testament flows out of and is integrally connected to the Old Testament. Israel gives birth to the Church (in fact, Israel **is** the Old Testament Church)
    - i. *The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.* (WCF 25-1)
    - ii. *The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.* (WCF 25-2)
    - iii. *The sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the new.* (WCF 27-5)
    - iv. New Testament Church = “*The Israel of God*”  
  
*And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.* (Gal. 6:16)
    - v. *Wife of God* (Israel) and *Bride of Christ* (Church)
    - vi. *Therefore something remains in place until God expressly and clearly abrogates (stops) His Old Testament ways.*
      - Dietary laws, sacrifices, priesthood, temple worship, Israel’s civil laws, etc. (*abrogated*)
      - Passover and circumcision became the Lord’s Supper and Baptism (*changed*)
      - Ten Commandments, prophecies, promises, justification by faith, etc. (*continue unabated*)

- vii. *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.* (Matthew 5:17-18)
- viii. **There is no radical break between Israel and the Church:** the Church began with a revived Judaism on Pentecost Sunday! (*continuity*)
- b. **Consummation:** God will *complete* whatever He has begun:
  - i. Fulfill every promise and every prophecy
  - ii. Complete His redemptive mission
  - iii. Bring His master plan (*decree*) to completion
  - iv. Restore all things to the way He intends
  - v. God will *finish* everything He has begun; His decree is as *immutable* as He is!
    - *God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.* (WCF 3-1)
    - *The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.* (WSC #7)
    - *Q. How doth God execute his decrees?*
    - A. *God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.* (WSC #8)
  - vi. *Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.* (Acts 3:19-21)
  - vii. *For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.* (Hebrews 9:24-26 NASB)
  - viii. **Mike Milton:** “*What God begins, He finishes!*”
  - ix. **Illustration:** The movie *Ghosts in the Darkness*: Val Kilmer and Michael Douglas – “...change of plans!”
  - x. God has no *plan B*; He never makes a “*change of plans*”
- 3. Here was God’s **Master Plan** for the world:
  - a. God created a world and placed in its primeval perfection all the elements necessary to develop the Kingdom of God.
    - i. All the elements of nature
    - ii. Angels, human beings, animals

- iii. Three spheres: heaven, earth, seas
  - b. *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.*
- These are the generations  
of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.*
- When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—*
- A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:1-6; 10-14)*
- c. Then God created His Vice Regent and put him in charge of developing the earth, with the help of his wife.
    - i. *Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Genesis 2:7-9)*
    - ii. *Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,*

*“This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman,  
because she was taken out of Man.” (Genesis 2:18-23)*

    - iii. Man: *The Head (Federal Head)*
    - iv. Woman: *The Helper (Ezer)*

- v. Parameters of life: good and evil; work and rest; ownership and management, etc....
- d. Then God said, “Divide this world into square gardens, giving” one to each of your offspring and develop the new creation into a glorious Kingdom.
  - i. *Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*  
*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*  
*And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”* And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. (Gen. 1:26-30)
  - ii. *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”* (Genesis 2:15-17)
  - iii. *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.* (Genesis 2:24-25)
  - iv. *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.” And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.* (Genesis 4:1-2)
- 4. This **Master Plan** of God remains intact, even if gardens have turned into home sites, kinsmen have been divided into peoples, and creation’s development has been twisted into nations, cultures, competition and war. The *Creation Mandate* remains intact.  
*And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”* And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.  
*(Genesis 1:28-29)*
- 5. The **proof** of this statement I am making lies in the revelation and organization of the *Bible* –

- a. Not a *biblio*s (book) but a *library* of 66 compositions: historical books, narratives, poetry, wisdom literature, prophecy, selective biography (Gospels), letters and visionary passages.
- b. An introduction: *Genesis 1-11* (setting forth the theme of human history and the course of its flow)
- c. An Epilogue: *Revelation* (recapping in grand summary the flow of human history from beginning to end)
- d. In between: *Redemptive History* (Genesis 12 to Jude)

*Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”* (Revelation 11:15)

#### 6. You MUST notice THIS: *The Bible begins and ends with the Garden of Eden!*

- a. *And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

*A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.*

*The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden.* (Genesis 2:8-16)

- b. *Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.* (Revelation 22:1-5)
- c. **Continuity:** From Eden to the City of God
- d. **Consummation:** From primeval creation to the New Heaven and New Earth

#### 7. Paradise lost...Paradise promised...Paradise regained...

- a. *Therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Now the whole*

*earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. (Genesis 3:23-24; 4:16; 11:1-2)*

- b. *And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”<sup>43</sup> And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise. (Luke 23:42-43)*
- c. *I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— (2 Corinthians 12:2-3)*
- d. *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’ (Rev. 2:7)*
- e. *Eden...Paradise...The New Creation*

#### 8. That is both Continuity and Consummation!

#### 9. Tonight: “Paradise Regained”

### I. THE VISION OF PARADISE REGAINED (Revelation 22:1-5)

*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22:1-5)*

1. **Note:** seven parameters/features of the New World – final “7 things” in this Book of Sevens!
2. **First:** There will be *The River of Life*
  - a. *Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb<sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. (Revelation 22:1-2a)*
  - b. A stream symbolizing and reminding us of God’s provision of the fundamental resources for life.
  - c. Seen again and again in the Old Testament

*A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14)*

*There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High. (Psalm 46:4)*

*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
then shall the lame man leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.*

*For waters break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.*

*And a highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;  
the unclean shall not pass over it.*

*It shall belong to those who walk on the way;  
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.*

*No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there. (Isaiah 35:5-9)*

*On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter. (Zechariah 14:8)*

*Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side.*

*Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was waist-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?"*

*Then he led me back to the bank of the river. As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. And he said to me, "This water flows*

*toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt.* (Ezekiel 47:1-11)

3. **Second:** The *Tree of Life* shall reappear, but not a single tree but many such trees.
  - a. There shall be *12 varieties* of these trees, each with its healing fruit (or perhaps 12 crops; one each month)
  - b. *The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* (Revelation 22:2b)
  - c. **Note:** 12 is the symbolic number of the Church (12 patriarchs of the Old Testament; 12 apostles of the New Testament)
  - d. Fruit to eat, leaves for healing
  - e. *And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.*" (Ezekiel 47:12)
  - f. "*healing*"? From what? Probably means "*Health-giving*" – physically, spiritually, culturally and relationally.
  - g. Here is the picture of a holy, healthy and happy world.

4. **Third:** Paradise/The City of God/The New World will be absent anything that was "**accursed**" – i.e., under the judgment of sin...
  - a. *No longer will there be anything accursed.* (Revelation 22:3a)
  - b. Everything dangerous, defiled, diseased, discouraging, decaying, destructive, damaging, demeaning, decrepit, divisive, depressive or damned – will be *no more!*
  - c. Fear, sadness, sickness, war, crime, danger, heart-break, disability, anxiety or worry, sense of loss or sense of insecurity – all gone! No more! Not remembered!

*He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."* (Revelation 21:4-5)

- d. **Joni Eareckson Tada** comments on how this world will affect her and her quadriplegia: (*Joniandfriends.com, "My Feet Walking; 1-21-2016*)
- Recently, when Ken and I were back in Maryland, my family showed 8mm home movies. There, larger-than-life on the living room wall, I saw me at the age of 16. I had the same basic hair style and hair color, but my head was attached to a walking body-my body! I watched my hands hold the reins of my horse and pat his neck. I watched how I put one foot in front of the other. It gave me goosebumps. Later on Ken asked me how I felt as it watched*

*myself walk. “There was a time I would have signed, ‘Aww, that’s the way it used to be. I wish I could go back to that,’” I said. “But now, forty-eight years later and almost as many years sinking my heart and head in the Word of God, I can say, ‘Oh, wow, this is the way it soon will be. I can look forward to having a body that works. And I’ll do so much more than walk!’” I am closer to this side of gaining my heavenly body than to the other side of losing my earthly body. The past is the past. The future is much more interesting to think about. Watching home movies doesn’t make me sad, it makes me happy to think of all I will gain back, and more!*

- e. It may take us a century to get used to living free of the curse!

#### 5. **Fourth:** Jesus will live in the City of God with us.

- a. “*...the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it. (22:3b)*
- b. Jesus will be in the City of God just as surely as Barak Obama is in the White House in Washington, D.C.
- c. “*...and His servants will worship Him.*”
- d. All of us will be like **priests:** in the Holy of Holies, the Presence of the Lamb, serving Him and rejoicing with Him.

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.<sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)*

*“Worthy are you to take the scroll  
and to open its seals,  
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God  
from every tribe and language and people and nation,  
<sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on the earth.” (Revelation 5:9-10)*

#### 6. **Fifth:** We will see God – Father, Son and Spirit – face to face!

- a. “*They will see His face...*” (22:4a)
- b. In this life that cannot be because of our sinful nations:
  - i. *Moses said, “Please show me your glory.” And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.” And the LORD said, “Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen.” (Exodus 33:18-23)*
  - ii. *...who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. (1 Tim. 6:16)*

- c. But in the City of God we will look straight into His face in an easy, familiar and comfortable intimacy.
- d. *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.* (1 John 3:1-3)
- e. We shall see God – and *that* is what makes Heaven heaven!

7. **Sixth:** God's Name will be on each of us.

- a. “*...and His name will be on their foreheads.*” (22:4b)
- b. i.e., the symbolism is of a marking or tattoo that “brands” us as belonging to God
  - i. a token of both ownership by and protection by God
  - ii. *Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.*

*Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.* (Revelation 13:16-14:1)

- c. **Comment:** I really do not like tattoos. I hate them, and I refuse to get one (even one labeled “Jane”). But this is one tattoo I'll wear with honor...
- d. *...marking me as belonging to God!*

8. **Seventh:** We shall reign with Jesus Christ and God!

- a. *And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.* (Revelation 22:5)
- b. Around God's Throne and Christ's Throne will be a **series of thrones**, for all God's vice-regents.
  - i. The patriarchs and the apostles...

*Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads.* (Revelation 4:4)

- ii. Then the martyrs of all ages...

*Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to*

*life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. (Revelation 20:4-5)*

- iii. Then the saints of all times.

*And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22:5)*

- c. **Know this:** The placement of our thrones and the type of crown we own is determined by the *service*, the *sacrifice*, the *suffering*, and the *sanctification* we embraced in this life for the sake of Christ.
- d. *Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first. (Matthew 19:27-30)*
- e. Our rewards will be commensurate with both our ministry for Christ and the **capacity** of our souls –
  - i. *According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)*
  - ii. Ministry, rewards, judged by fire
  - iii. Saved with rewards or saved without
- f. **What we do in life affects the**
  - i. Size of our soul’s capacity: *Gallon jug or thimble?*
  - ii. The preciousness of our rewards: *gold, silver, jewels or wood, hay and stubble?*
  - iii. The *crown* we wear; the *throne* and its location!
- g. There are **Four Crowns** Christians will wear.
  - i. The *Imperishable Wreath* for those Christians who discipline themselves for the holy marathon of life -
 

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.<sup>25</sup> Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. (1 Corinthians 9:24-25)*
  - ii. The **Crown of Life** for all *Christians who truly love God through tribulation and testing* –

*Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.*  
 (James 1:12)

*Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.* (Rev. 2:10)

iii. **The Crown or Righteousness** for faithful preachers –

*I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.*

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.* (2 Timothy 4:1-2, 7-8)

iv. **The Unfading Crown of Glory** for diligent pastors, elders and deacons –

*So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.* (1 Peter 5:1-4)

v. **Note:** It is possible for some to earn all four!

h. Crowns must be **guarded** because we can **lose** them!

*I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.* (Revelation 3:11)

i. All crowns will be **surrendered to Jesus** in worship!

*And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,*

*“Worthy are you, our Lord and God,  
 to receive glory and honor and power,  
 for you created all things,  
 and by your will they existed and were created.”* (Revelation 4:9-11)

1. **Eugene Peterson** writes about both the *continuity* of Paradise and our world, and the *consummation* Paradise brings to our world. (*Reversed Thunder*; p. 182.

*Heaven reasserts the beginning. It clarifies the conditions of our basic humanity by putting us in touch with the abundant, creative sources of strength and health, water of life and tree of life. We never graduate from life and what maintains life. Heaven is not an advance over the basic, but a deepening of it. And what is basic, water and fruit, is also abundant. Our lives flow in a river. Our lives ripen into fruit.*

*The dimensions of the city make our lives ample in holiness (for holiness is amplitude), the lights of the city make our lives beautiful (for truth is many-splendored), the food of the city makes our lives robust (for life is abundant).*

*For if heaven does not correspond to what is deeply real and passionate for completion in us, it is certainly false.*

2. The way John's *Revelation* proves that Paradise is the continuity of and completion of our present world is this: *The needs of the people of the 7 churches in Asia Minor (to whom this Revelation was written) are all met in the City of God, in Paradise, in the New Heaven and Earth.*
3. All God's promised rewards become theirs in Paradise!
4. For those in **Ephesus**, and churches and Christians who've lost their first love, there is the promise of the Tree of Life.
  - a. *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.* (Revelation 2:7)
  - b. The Tree of Life – Eden's fruit!
  - c. *Through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

*Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.*

*I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book,<sup>19</sup> and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.* (Revelation 22:2, 14, 18-19)

5. For those in **Smyrna** and all churches and Christians who suffer for Christ and bear up under persecution, there is the promise of Eternal Life...
  - a. *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'* (Revelation 2:11)
  - b. No more death in the world
  - c. No chance of going to the Lake of Fire
  - d. *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*

*But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:4, 8)*

- e. Resurrection life is theirs
6. For those in **Pergamum**, and all churches and Christians tempted to compromise in order to be safe, there is the promise of A New Name...
- a. *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’ (Revelation 2:17)*
  - b. Wearing the Name of God and Christ without shame or fear
  - c. Being owned by God, sealed in the Spirit, protected by Christ
  - d. *They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. (Revelation 22:4)*
7. For those in **Thyatira** and all churches and Christians who are so consumed with success that they fall away from Christ, there is the promise of The Morning Star –
- a. *And I will give him the morning star. (Revelation 2:28)*
  - b. The personal possessions of Christ Himself!
  - c. The brightest star of all, Jesus, belonging to you! The best thing success can own!
  - d. *“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.” (Rev. 22:16)*
8. For those in **Sardis** and all churches and Christians in need of spiritual renewal, reformation, restoration, there is the promise of Robes of White –
- a. *The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. (Revelation 3:5)*
  - b. A pure and holy life and a sinless soul
  - c. A life filled with the Holy Spirit so that His life and His holiness clothe you in glorious garments.
  - d. *But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev. 21:27)*
- Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. (Revelation 22:14-15)*
9. For those in **Philadelphia** and all churches and Christians who seek to be faithful to Christ’s Great Commission, even against overwhelming odds, there is the promise of a three-fold blessing: becoming a pillar in God’s Temple, giving Him the name of God, and the name of the City of God.

- a. *The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.*  
(Revelation 3:12)
- b. Meaning: the people will be both prominent and privileged people in the City of God; “leading citizens”
- c. “pillars” of the New Society in the New World
- d. *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.*  
(Revelation 21:2, 10, 22)

*They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.* (Revelation 22:4)

10. For those in **Laodicea** and all churches and Christians who struggle with lukewarm faith and unzealous lives, there is the promise of ruling with Christ on your own throne –

- a. *The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.* (Revelation 3:21)
- b. Meaning: their lukewarm faith, revived by inviting Christ into their lives and churches, will lead to both a glorious supper and a leading place in Paradise.

*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.* (Revelation 3:20)

*Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,*

“Hallelujah!

*For the Lord our God*

*the Almighty reigns.*

*Let us rejoice and exult*

*and give him the glory,*

*for the marriage of the Lamb has come,*

*and his Bride has made herself ready;*

*it was granted her to clothe herself*

*with fine linen, bright and pure”—*

*for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*

*And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”* (Revelation 19:6-9)

*Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.* (Revelation 20:4)

*No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.* (Revelation 22:3)

11. These stunning **parallels** between our *aspirations*, struggling faith, and messy churches in this life...
12. And the glorious *fulfillment* of all God's promises, all our dreams, and every person's need...
13. ...are **neither** a mistake, **nor** a mere literary device for effect.
14. John **is** telling us what **Jesus** revealed to him: there is both *continuity* with our lives now and *consummation* for our faith in the future that meet together in the City of God.
15. **Charles R. Eerdman:** *Revelation*; p. 175.

*Some rays of its glory already can be seen. God grants us even now some understanding of "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." The glowing symbols of the prophet enable us to discern the faint outlines of the City of God, but the full manifestation of its glory awaits an age yet to dawn. It will appear only when the Kingdom for which we pray has been perfected. It can come only with the coming of the King.*

16. All our soul's *yearnings* and our spirit's *struggles* serve as the inner witness that Heaven, Paradise, the City of God, and the New Heaven and the New Earth are **real** and **inevitable!**
17. Solomon was right! God has programmed us for *Paradise*...

- a. There is a time to live and a time to die
- b. A time for the grave and a time for resurrection
- c. There is a time for the old world and a time for a New World
- d. Everything has its time...even Paradise

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:  
 a time to be born, and a time to die;  
 a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
 a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
 a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
 a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
 a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
 a time to seek, and a time to lose;  
 a time to keep, and a time to cast away;*

*a time to tear, and a time to sew;  
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
a time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace.*

*What gain has the worker from his toil? I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-11)*

*I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him. That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been; and God seeks what has been driven away. (Ecclesiastes 3:14-15)*

### **CONCLUSION:** Did you hear that last thing Solomon wrote?

1. *I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him. That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been; and God seeks what has been driven away. (Ecclesiastes 3:14-15)*
2. God has programmed His Universe – heaven and earth - for **Consummation**
  - a. He will finish His work and it will last forever!
 

*I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him. (Ecc. 3:14)*
  - b. We cannot *diminish* it or *augment* it. We can only do our part to bring it to God's intended end.
3. God has programmed His creation with **Continuity**.
  - a. What we consider *past, present and future* are all one continuous stream of divine order –
 

*That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been; and God seeks what has been driven away. (Ecc. 3:15)*
  - b. “...and God seeks what has been driven away”
  - c. i.e., **Eden...Paradise...Paradise Regained**
4. When God drove us out of Eden it was only to protect and preserve that one small *patch of paradise* which sin could not deface. And only so as to bring it back to us New and Improved.
  - a. *A New heaven and new earth*
  - b. *The City of God*
  - c. *Paradise Regained*
  - d. *Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—”*

*therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.* (Genesis 3:22-23)

*And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”* (Revelation 21:5)

*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* (Revelation 22:1-2)

5. **Eugene Peterson:** *Reversed Thunder*; p. 182.

*The elements necessary to our vitality are water and fruit. These images restore us to the conditions that quietly nourish our God-created beingness, and distance us from the feverish promotion of our sin-incited role playing. When our basic needs are met, God doesn’t then give us something we don’t need, he gives us more of the same, for life is so profound that we never come to the end of it and never cease needing what fuels the energetic work of becoming ever more abundantly ourselves. The human body and soul are God’s creation, which he proclaimed good. As such they cannot be improved upon. God’s “good” cannot be improved to “better” or “best.”*

*And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.* (Genesis 1:31)

6. We must all thank God for His work of **continuity** and **consummation** –

- a. The *continuity of His grace* – connection
- b. The *consummation of His good plan* – completion
- c. ...and for including us in this grand design!