

Ps 23 (ESV) The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ⁽²⁾ He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ⁽³⁾ He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁽⁴⁾ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁽⁵⁾ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁽⁶⁾ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, *and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

1. We have been looking at what we could call the “Song of the contented sheep”

- A. It is a Psalm outlining the blessings that accompany the believer that follows the good shepherd
 - 1). It is a Psalm of contentment and rest – satisfaction and joy
 - a). Even when we must go through the shadows on our journey to better pastures

2. Now David closes this Psalm with the greatest blessing of all

Ps 23:6 (ESV) ...and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

- A. David looks out into eternity and says here is where this journey is leading
 - 1). This thought would bring great joy to this man who said
“As a deer pants after streams of water so my heart pants after you O God”
- B. This is that great encouragement when we are in the fight here – the fight is not forever
 - 1). It will end one day and it ends well!

Transition: I’m going to close up this series on Psalm 23 with a look at heaven

- A. You’re going to live there forever – so you want to know what it’s like
- B. We’re going to go to Revelation 21-22 to take our tour
 - 1). This is something to get excited about – this is something to look forward too

I. THE NEW CREATION

Turn: Re 21:1 (ESV) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...

1. Scripture teaches that this present order of creation will pass away

Mt 24:35 (ESV) Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

- A. Peter speaks about how this passing away will occur

2 Peter 3:10-11 (NLT) But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. ⁽¹¹⁾ *Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live,*

 - 1). Since the temporal is going to be destroyed – we’d better focus on living the eternal
- B. In this chapter that has already happened
 - 1). God has dwelt with sin in His universe and every trace of evil has been removed
 - a). The wicked have been judged and cast into the lake of fire along with Satan
 - 2). So John is now writing about what the redeemed will experience

Transition: In chapter 21-22 he describes the new creation – where we will be living

- A. This is impossible for us to fully comprehend – our words are inadequate to describe the glory
- B. Remember what Paul said – 2 Corinthians – He had a vision of heaven
 - 1). He said “It would be unlawful to try to describe what I saw there. I’m not going to try”
 - a). I think Paul was saying – It is so glorious my words would only ruin it
Our language or understanding can’t elevate up to how incredible the glory of heaven is
 - 2). So with that – we understand that this is only a foretaste – a hint at what it’s going to be like
 - a). Because there are so many verses here we’ll have to skim over the surface

The New Heaven and the New Earth

1. No sea

Re 21:1 (ESV) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

- A. Sorry surfers – but trust that heaven will be perfect – there will be no complaints
- B. We do know the new earth will have plenty of water

Re 22:1 (ESV) 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

- 1). You'll just have to settle for beautiful rivers with water as clear as crystal

2. We will live in a glorious new city

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

- A. This should interest you. You'll be living here for a long time.
 - 1). We could call the New Jerusalem the "capital of heaven"
- B. I think many think eternity - kind of floating around on clouds - everything white - monotone
 - 1). As we move on we will see it is glorious beyond anything we could imagine

NIV: "Prepared as a Bride beautifully dressed for her husband"

- A. Symbolic of the preparation of the bride for her day of marriage
 - 1). I've done a lot of marriages – the brides are always beautiful on that day
 - 2). Always a thrilling moment for the bridegroom when she enters the room adorned for him
- B. The picture here is this city is like that bride – so beautiful – breathtaking

Thought: God expresses His love by giving – He gave His Son – now He gives us this city

3. The holy city

Re 21:2 (ESV) And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God...

- A. The New Jerusalem is called the "holy city" in contrast with the earthly Jerusalem
 - 1). The earth Jerusalem was compared to Sodom in Rev. 11:8
 - 2). But this is the home of the righteous – 2 Peter 3:11

Point: The beauty of this city will never be tarnished by sin – no bad side of the tracks

No graffiti or razor wire to keep people out

4. The city where God Himself lives

Re 21:3 (ESV) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

- A. How thrilling! Living in this city that is glorious beyond description
And the greatest glory in it is God Himself – God lives in it with us – with me!
 - 1). Here we will enjoy intimate – unbroken – unhindered fellowship with Him!
 - 2). Here we will experience His love poured out without restraint for all of eternity

5. It will be a place of comfort and joy

Re 21:4 (ESV) 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."

- A. Everything that causes pain, misery and sorrow will be removed from heaven
 - 1). No more funerals, graves, hospitals, broken homes and broken hearts
- B. We will dwell in a continuous atmosphere of joy
 - 1). If all this is true - start practicing now – we get so upset about so many things
 - a). Yes, life can get rough – you didn't expect it to always be easy did you?
But your heading towards heaven!!!

John Newton: The road is not to be complained of, as it leads to such a home.

- 2). Being heavenly minded will help ease the pain we experience in this temporal world

Paul put it like this: Col 3:1–2 (ESV) If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ⁽²⁾ Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

- a). Learn to lift your eyes off this world and think more about the next

- 1a). That will make what you experience now seem lighter

This is temporal – live well – handle this faithfully – it will be worth it

6. It will be a place of newness

Re 21:5 (ESV) 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.”

- A. God is going to create a new dimension for us that will be perfect

- 1). An environment that will be a constant source of joy, wonder, amazement at every point

- B. This will include getting new bodies designed for the environment

Can you relate: You can tell you are getting older when: You sit in a rocking chair and can't get it going. You burn the midnight oil after 8:00 P.M. You look forward to a dull evening. Your knees buckle and your belt won't. Your little black book contains only names of doctors. Your back goes out more than you do. You decide to procrastinate and never get around to it. Dialing long-distance wears you out. You sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there.

- 1). Soon I'm trading this model in for the new upgraded version – with the sports package

Transition: Now John turns his attention to

7. It will be the dwelling place of the Bride of Christ

Re 21:9–10 (ESV) Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, *“Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”* ⁽¹⁰⁾ 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,

- A. He is not saying the city is the bride of Christ. How can a city be a bride?

- 1). Revelation 19 tells us the church is the bride of Christ

- B. This is simply saying the inhabitants of this greater city are members of the bride

- 1). It's where we will be living – this is the new home our Savior has provided for us

- C. Ever see a movie where the husband takes his new bride to show her the house he bought for her

- 1). That is what is happening here – here is the new home I purchased for you with my blood

- 2). This is the fulfillment of Jesus promise to His followers

Jn 14:2–3 (ESV) In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ⁽³⁾ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Transition: John now gives us some details on the beauty of the city. Breathtaking

- A. Don't forget saints – you are going to live here

II. THE BEAUTY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

Re 21:10–11 (ESV) 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, ⁽¹¹⁾ *having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel*, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

Revelation 21:11 (AMP) Clothed in God's glory [in all its splendor and radiance]. The luster of it resembled a rare *and* most precious jewel, like jasper, shining clear as crystal.

1. Some have painted heaven in boring monotone colors

- A. White with specks of gold from the harps – No! It is multicolored and beautiful

1). Shining brilliantly with the glory of God

Your new home: Re 21:12–20 (ESV) It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—⁽¹³⁾ on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ⁽¹⁴⁾ And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ⁽¹⁵⁾ And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. ⁽¹⁶⁾ The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. ⁽¹⁷⁾ He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. ⁽¹⁸⁾ The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ⁽¹⁹⁾ The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ⁽²⁰⁾ the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

1. **Twelve gates - 3 on each side to allow people in and out**
2. **Twelve angels - We will be dwelling side by side with them**
3. **Twelve tribes of Israel written on gates - immortalized there**
4. **Twelve foundations - written with names of twelve apostles**

- A. **Jasper** - Gold in appearance but like clear glass in substance (like glass with a gold cast to it)
- B. **Sapphire** - Similar to a diamond in hardness and blue in color
- C. **Chalcedony** - an agate stone - sky blue with other colors running through it
- D. **Emerald** - a bright green in color
- E. **Sardonyx** - a red and white stone
- F. **Sardius** - Jewel of reddish color - also found in honey color
- G. **Chrysolite** - a transparent stone, golden in color
- H. **Beryl** - Sea green
- I. **Topaz** - Is yellow-green and transparent
- J. **Chrysoprase** (kris-uh-preyz) - Another shade of green
- K. **Jacinth** - A violet color
- L. **Amethyst** - a purple color

Point: Here is the picture – this city is stunning in its beauty - breathtaking

- A. Like I said - Some paint a picture of heaven in monotone colors – White – specks of gold from harps
 - 1). Here we see the beauty – multi-colored
These translucent stones shining with the pure light of God's glory
 - 2). The walls themselves made of pure jasper – translucent gold in appearance!!!
- B. This city is undoubtedly more beautiful than anything we could ever imagine
 - 1). It reflects the love of God and His grace to build it for us - a gift to His bride

Thought: What a place! City walls made of stones so expensive we can afford only little ones here

- A. Carri's diamond – you need the Hubble telescope to see it – it's all I could afford
 - 1). That's all I could give my bride – the city God is giving to us is made with this kind of stuff
- B. Saint you are going to live there – let me repeat a couple of quotes you heard a few weeks back
AGAIN John Calvin: We ought to apply our minds to meditation upon a future life, so that this world may become cheap to us.
 - 1). Like I've said the best of this world is a ghetto in comparison
Samuel Rutherford: I wonder, many times, that ever a child of God should have a sad heart, considering what his Lord is preparing for him.
 - 1). No wonder CHS said "I have a strong appetite for heaven" – I guess! So do I!

Transition: But wait! There's more!

Re 21:21 (ESV) And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

1. Twelve gates each made of single pearl - very symbolic

- A. A pearl is beauty born out of pain
 - 1). A tiny grain of sand gets inside oyster's shell & causes oyster to become irritated
 - 2). To deal with irritation it covers grain of sand with soft material that hardens into a pearl
- B. These gates are reminder of the pain Jesus suffered to make heaven possible for the Saints
 - 1). Throughout eternity these beautiful gates that allow us into the city
Will remind us of why we have that access – through the pain of the cross

2. The “Great street of the city” was of pure gold

- A. Here he is speaking of that main street that runs right to the throne of God
- B. Today we use asphalt for our streets - functional but not the greatest thing to look at
 - 1). We’re going to live in a city where we walk on what is considered most costly now
 - 2). I’m going to walk on streets of gold fellowshiping with God!

3. The size of the city

Re 21:15–17 (ESV) And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. ⁽¹⁶⁾ The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. ⁽¹⁷⁾ He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel’s measurement.

- A. Cube 1500 miles high, wide, long - 2.25 million square miles
 - 1). By comparison California is only 163,267 square miles
- B. It's Huge – going to be a place of beauty and majesty

4. No need of a temple in this city

Re 21:22 (ESV) And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

- A. On earth the temple was an enclosure for the Shekinah glory of God
 - 1). That glory was contained in a room called the “Holy of holies”
 - a). It was designed to keep man away from God’s holiness
 - b). If sinful man wandered into God’s presence it would annihilate them
- Ex 33:20 (ESV)** But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”
- B. In the new Jerusalem sin is no longer a problem
 - 1). The blood of Christ has completely washed it away from the redeemed
The old flesh that was corrupted by sin has been left behind – we now have new bodies
 - 2). Everything is designed for intimacy with God all the time!
 - a). So we won’t need to go to a temple to meet with Him – we will be living with Him
 - b). We won’t need a special room to keep us away any longer – sin is taken care of

Thought: The physical temple was a poor substitute for the presence of God

- A. But the new Jerusalem possesses the genuine article – God Himself

5. The light of the city

Re 21:23 (ESV) And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Already saw this in v. 11

- A. This is the light of the glory of God bathing this new creation
 - 1). Everywhere you go you will be bathed in His presence continuously!!!
- B. Also shows us the consistency of the atmosphere and weather
 - 1). Today we are dependent upon the sun for light and heat

- a). But one day it may be cold front – the next a warm front – all over the place
- 2). But here God Himself will be that consistent source of light and heat
- a). Providing a perfect climate always in heaven

6. The river in the city

Re 22:1 (ESV) 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

A. We'll have abundant supply of water - pure, clear as crystal

- 1). "Water of life" flowing from throne - symbolizing continual flow of eternal life from God Himself

Transition: Here we see God's throne will be in the city

7. The throne in the city

A. Not sure what this is going to look like

We do have a description of God's throne before it is located here – might help

Re 4:2–3 (ESV) At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. ⁽³⁾ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

A. It is obviously majestic – beautiful – multicolored reds, gold, greens – emerald rainbow!

B. Again – where did we get the idea of a monotone heaven – all white

- 1). You have God's glory shining out from Him through these beautiful gems
 - a). Beautiful reds, blues, greens, golds, violets, purples
 - b). Reflecting off these beautiful gates made of one pearl each
- 2). You have all that and now we see the throne and it is breathtaking
 - a). The colors of heaven will be amazing

8. The trees in the city

Re 22:2 (ESV) 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.

I love this picture (how it is in my own mind) - I'm going to experience this

A. The glorious throne of God - with it's awe inspiring majesty

B. Flowing from it is this beautiful river - pure as crystal

C. On the banks of this river these beautiful trees - lush and green

D. This is all running down the middle of the great street of the city - that is pure gold

- 1). Throne – rivers – green belt with lush trees then the street of gold on each side
- 2). On this beautiful street strolling are the saints in their glorified bodies – angels

Thought: The atmosphere is one of unadulterated joy, peace and love

THE FRUIT ON THE TREES

Re 22:2 (ESV) 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.*

A. Genesis 3. When Adam and Eve sinned God forbade them to eat from the tree of life

- 1). Because if they ate from it they'd live forever in that sinful state
- 2). Could you imagine living forever in a state of sin with no hope of glory!

B. In Heaven the tree of life will once again yield it's wonderful fruit and we'll be able to enjoy it

- 1). Good fruit is so refreshing – I wonder what perfect fruit tastes like!

Thought: These thoughts bring warmth into the description of what it is going to be like

A. Up to now it's been beautiful - a dazzling display of glorious colors etc.

B. Here we see there'll be lush vegetation, beautiful river, wonderful food to eat!

- 1). A wonderful consistent atmosphere – love – joy

Thought: It goes on to say something that has caused much speculation

Re 22:2 (ESV) ... *The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

- A. But there's no sickness or death in heaven so what does this mean?
- B. I believe it is a figurative way of saying that all will enjoy perpetual health

9. The great attraction in this city – God Himself

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

- A. This is our glorious future - we will actually see God
 - 1). That is not possible now - because of our unredeemed flesh and sin
 - 2). Residents of heaven have no sin & have a glorified body designed to withstand glory of God

2. His name on our forehead

- A. Indicates we're a blood bought child of God through faith in Christ - His for all of eternity

THE CALL

1. What a place - God's supreme creation

- A. We marvel at the beauty of the world we see now corrupted by sin - wait to you experience this
- B. Perfect visually – emotionally – mentally – in every way MAXED OUT

2. You'll experience this because of what Christ has done!

- A. Heaven is waiting for all who have embraced Him by faith
 - 1). Trusting in His work for them alone to get them into glory

Thought: Don't miss this – there is only one other alternative

PRAYER

1. As soon as we end the sermon we will have a couple men come up if you need prayer

