



THE REVELATION OF JOHN

Bible Study 51

Text: Rev. 21:22-22:7

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1. What the text meant.

Historical Aspects:
 External History
 Internal History
 Literary Aspects:
 Genre
 Literary Setting
 Literary Structure

2. What the text means.

The New Jerusalem, pt. 2

Greek NT

21.22 Καὶ ναὸν οὐκ εἶδον ἐν αὐτῇ, ὁ γὰρ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ναὸς αὐτῆς ἐστὶν καὶ τὸ ἄρνιον. 23 καὶ ἡ πόλις οὐ χρειὰν ἔχει τοῦ ἡλίου οὐδὲ τῆς σελήνης ἵνα φαίνωσιν αὐτῇ, ἡ γὰρ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφώτισεν αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς τὸ ἄρνιον. 24 καὶ περιπατήσουσιν τὰ ἔθνη διὰ τοῦ φωτὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς φέρουσιν τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν εἰς αὐτήν, 25 καὶ οἱ πυλώνες αὐτῆς οὐ μὴ κλεισθῶσιν ἡμέρας, νῦξ γὰρ οὐκ ἔσται ἐκεῖ, 26 καὶ οἴσουσιν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν τῶν ἔθνων εἰς αὐτήν. 27 καὶ οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτήν πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ [ὁ] ποιῶν βδέλυγμα καὶ ψεῦδος εἰ μὴ οἱ γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἁρνίου.

22.1 Καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι ποταμὸν ὕδατος ζωῆς λαμπρὸν ὡς κρύσταλλον, ἐκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁρνίου. 2 ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ξύλον ζωῆς ποιοῦν καρποὺς δώδεκα, κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον ἀποδιδούν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ φύλλα τοῦ ξύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἔθνων. 3 καὶ πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι. καὶ ὁ θρόνος

Gute Nachricht Bibel

21.22 Einen Tempel sah ich nicht in der Stadt. Gott, der Herrscher der ganzen Welt, ist selbst ihr Tempel, und das Lamm mit ihm. 23 Die Stadt braucht weder Sonne noch Mond, damit es hell in ihr wird. Die Herrlichkeit Gottes strahlt in ihr und das Lamm ist ihre Leuchte. 24 In dem Licht, das von der Stadt ausgeht, werden die Völker leben. Die Könige der Erde werden ihren Reichtum in die Stadt tragen. 25 Ihre Tore werden den ganzen Tag offen stehen, mehr noch: Sie werden nie geschlossen, weil es dort keine Nacht gibt. 26 Pracht und Reichtum der Völker werden in diese Stadt gebracht. 27 Aber nichts Unreines wird Einlass finden. Wer Götzen anbetet und sich nicht an die Wahrheit hält, kann die Stadt nicht betreten. Nur wer im Lebensbuch des Lammes aufgeschrieben ist, wird in die Stadt eingelassen.

22.1 Der Engel zeigte mir auch den Strom mit dem Wasser des Lebens, der wie Kristall funkelt. Der Strom entspringt am Thron Gottes und des Lammes 2 und fließt entlang der Hauptstraße mitten durch die Stadt. An beiden Seiten des Flusses wachsen Bäume: der Baum des Lebens aus dem Paradies. Sie bringen zwölfmal im Jahr Frucht, jeden Monat einmal. Ihre Blätter dienen den Menschen aller Völker als Hei-

NRSV

21.22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates shall never be shut by day--and there shall be no night there; 26 they shall bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean shall enter it, nor any one who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

22.1 Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 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; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall see his face, and his name

NLT

21.22 No temple could be seen in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. 24 The nations of the earth will walk in its light, and the rulers of the world will come and bring their glory to it. 25 Its gates will never close at the end of day because there is no night. 26 And all the nations will bring their glory and honor into the city. 27 Nothing evil will be allowed to enter -- no one who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty -- but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

22.1 And the angel showed me a pure river with the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 coursing down the center of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations. 3 No longer will anything be cursed.

τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσται, καὶ οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ 4 καὶ ὄψονται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν. 5 καὶ νύξ οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν χρεῖαν φωτὸς λύχνου καὶ φωτὸς ἡλίου, ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεὸς φωτίσει ἐπ’ αὐτούς, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

6 Καὶ εἶπέν μοι· οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοί, καὶ ὁ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν προφητῶν ἀπέστειλεν τὸν ἄγγελον αὐτοῦ δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει. 7 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ταχύ. μακάριος ὁ τηρῶν τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου.

Imittel. 3 In der Stadt wird es nichts mehr geben, was unter dem Fluch Gottes steht. Der Thron Gottes und des Lammes wird in der Stadt stehen. Alle, die dort sind, werden Gott als Priester dienen, 4 sie werden ihn sehen, und sein Name wird auf ihrer Stirn stehen. 5 Es wird keine Nacht mehr geben und sie brauchen weder Lampen noch Sonnenlicht. Gott, der Herr, wird über ihnen leuchten, und sie werden in alle Ewigkeit als Könige herrschen.

6 Der Engel sagte zu mir: »Diese Worte sind wahr und zuverlässig. Gott, der Herr, der den Propheten seinen Geist gibt, hat seinen Engel* gesandt, um denen, die ihm dienen, zu zeigen, was sich in Kürze ereignen muss.« 7»Gebt Acht! Ich komme bald!« – sagt Jesus Christus – »Freuen darf sich, wer die prophetischen Worte dieses Buches beherzigt.«

shall be on their foreheads. 5 And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place. 7 And behold, I am coming soon.” Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him. 4 And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. 5 And there will be no night there -- no need for lamps or sun -- for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.

6 Then the angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true: ‘The Lord God, who tells his prophets what the future holds, has sent his angel to tell you what will happen soon.’” 7 “Look, I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the prophecy written in this scroll.”

INTRODUCTION

In this segment, the third (21:22-17) and fourth (22:1-5) subunits of text on the new Jerusalem surface. Then 22:6-7 both brings this discussion to a conclusion and sets the stage for a major literary shift in 22:8-21. Here John moves into a standard ancient Greek letter *Conclusio* format that is attached to this apocalypse.

In completing his picture of the new Jerusalem, John rejects the idealized image of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 40-48 with a large focus on a temple in the center of Jerusalem. John’s Christian perspective sees no need of a place for sacrificial offering in the eternal Jerusalem. The once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus on the cross has met that need forever. Instead the radiant glory of God and of the Lamb fills the city with all the light it will ever need. The throne of God is now the center of the city.

John finishes his depiction of the new Jerusalem with images from the Garden of Eden centering on a river of life flowing from the throne of God through the city. Interestingly, the OT image of the Garden of Eden, and the image here in 22:1-5, reflect the background influence of the famous ‘hanging gardens’ of Babylon that were known over the world of that time as the river flowed through the city giving life sustaining water to the city in a semi-desert region. With taunting irony, the new Jerusalem looks a little like ancient Babylon while her subsequent counter part, ancient Rome, lays in total ruin and destruction. The reminders in 21:27 especially carry this ironical contrast with stinging point-

edness.

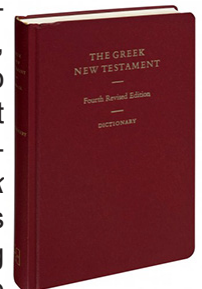
Again, John draws upon a wealth of images in his world to communicate very creatively a marvelous picture of God’s provision and care of His people for all eternity. When all four segments in the 22:9-22:5 unit are viewed together the reader can envision images of the most fantastic loving care of God for His people that is possible to express in human language. To a persecuted people of God across the ages who have been treated as nobodies and worthless criminals by an evil society this affirmation from God’s spokesman takes on even greater significance and meaning.

1. What did the text mean to the first readers?

Once again, the relevant background issues must be examined first as an important part of the interpretive process.

Historical Aspects:

External History. In the history of the hand copying of this passage, variations in the wording of the text do surface in the several hundred ancient manuscripts that are now known to exist. But the Text Apparatus of *The Greek New Testament* (UBS 4th rev ed) does not list any. This indicates that among the variations that do surface none are considered important enough to alter the translation of this passage of scripture.



The Text Apparatus of the *Novum Testamentum Graece* (N-A 28th rev. ed.), however, provides a more complete listing of all the variations no matter how insignificant the text source is for determination of the original reading of the text. Some 30 places are listed where variations surface.¹ Careful examination



of each of these places reveals no significant alternation of meaning and the majority of changes are either stylistic updates or due to careless copying.

We can exegete the adopted reading of the text in the full confidence of it being the most likely original reading of the passage.²

Internal History. The time and place markers here are limited to apocalyptic visionary depiction rather than history narrative. Thus they are best treated under the *Exegesis of the Text*, rather than as *Background Aspects*.

Literary Aspects:

Once more the literary aspects prove to be of greater significance to the interpretation of the text than are the Historical Aspects.

Genre: The broad genre of 21:9-22:7 continues to be apocalyptic vision. In this, John continues his depiction of the new Jerusalem that defines the heavenly existence of God's people for eternity.

Rev. 21:22-22:5 centers on the internal features of the new Jerusalem, while 21:9-21 mostly centered on the external features. In 21:22-27 the stress is upon the absence of a temple and the purity of the city. In 22:1-5 the stress is upon the abundant provisions of God via a river of life flowing through the city. In 22:6-7 John concludes this depiction and begins the transition to the epistolary style *Conclusio* in 22:8-20.

- ¹22
* ο A (ὁ is inserted before ναός)
- 23
* εν αυτη, η γαρ κ² 051^s. 2030. 2377 ar vg sy; Apr (αὐτῆ, ἡ γὰρ is replaced)
| , αυτη γαρ η 046. 1611. 1854 M^K
- 24
* (26) την δοξαν και την τιμην αυτων 2053 vg; Apr (τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν is replaced)
| αυτω δοξαν και τιμην των εθνων 046. 1611. 1854 M^K
- (bo)
- 26
* ινα εισελθωσιν 046. 1611. 1854. 2329 M^K (after εις αὐτήν is inserted ἵνα εισελθῶσιν)
- 27
* ποιων κ² A 1006. 1841. 2030. 2050. 2329. 2377 (ὁ ποιῶν is replaced)
| ποιουν P 046. 051s. 1611^s. 2053. 2062 M^A gig; Apr
| txt (κ*) 1854 M^K; Ambr
* του ουρανου κ (τοῦ ἀρνίου is replaced)
- 22,1
* καθαρων 051s. 2030. 2377 M^A (before ὕδατος is inserted κάθαρων)
* θρονου κ (τοῦ θρόνου is replaced)
| του στοματος 1611s. 2329 sy^{hmg}
- 2
* εντευθεν 051^s. 2030. 2050. 2377 M^A sy^{ph} (ἐκεῖθεν is replaced)
| εκει 2062
* ποιων A (ποιῶν is replaced)
*1 ενα εκαστον 051s M^A (ἕκαστον is replaced)
| εκαστος 1611s. 1854
| εκαστω 046
*2 αποδιδους κ 046. 051^s. 1611s. 1854. 2050 M^K (ἀποδιδοῦν is replaced)
* τους καρπους κ 2030. 2377 sy^{ph} (τὸν καρπὸν is replaced)
* των ξυλων κ (τοῦ ξύλου is replaced)
° κ 2053. 2062 (τῶν before ἐθνῶν is omitted)
- 3
* εκει 051s. 2329 M^A sy^{ph} (ἔτι is replaced)
| - κ*
* λατρευουσιν 046. 1611s. 1854. 2062 (λατρεύουσιν is replaced)
- 4
* και κ (καὶ is inserted before τὸ ὄνομα)
- 5
* εκει 051^s. 2377^{vl}. M^A sy^{ph} (ἔτι is replaced)
| - 046. 1611s. 1854 M^K
| txt κ A P 1006. 1841. 2030. 2050. 2053. 2062. 2329. 2377^{txt} latt sy^h co
* ουχ εξουσιν χρειαν A 1006. 1841. 2050. 2053. 2062. 2329 gig vg; Ambr Prim (οὐκ ἔχουσιν χρείαν is replaced)
| ου χρεια 046. 1611s. 1854 M^K
* φως 2030. 2050. 2053. 2062. 2329. 2377 (φωτὸς is replaced)

- | - P 046. 051s. 1611. 1854 M ar; Ambr
| txt κ A 1006. 1841 sy^h
- *1 φως A P 051s. 2030. 2050. 2053. 2062. 2329. 2377 (2nd φωτὸς is replaced)
| txt κ 046. 1006. 1611s. 1841. 1854 M sy^h
° 046. 1611s. 1854 M^K (ἡλίου is omitted)
°1 P 051^s M lat sy (ἐπ' before αὐτούς is omitted)
| txt κ A 1006. 1841. 2030. 2050. 2329. 2377 gig sy^{hmg}; Ambr Prim
- 6
* λεγει 046. 1611s. 1854 M^K (εἶπεν is replaced)
° P 046. 051s. 1006. 1854. 2030. 2050. 2344. 2377 M (ὁ before κύριος is omitted)
| txt κ A 1611s. 1841 vid. 2053. 2062. 2329
* αγιων 051s v.l. M^A (πνευμάτων τῶν is replaced)
| πνευματων και των 2030. 2377
* με κ* 1006. 1841 sy^{h**} sa (after ἀπέστειλεν is inserted με)
* 1854 (δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ is omitted)
- 7
° 051s. 2053. 2062 M^A t; Prim Bea (καὶ before ἰδοὺ is omitted)
[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 786–787.]

²Remember that such detailed analysis of existing manuscripts is due to the fact that no original copy of any of the documents of the NT exist today. We can only get back to a projected original wording by careful analysis of existing copies of manuscripts of mostly partial texts through following carefully developed methods of scientific based analysis of ancient texts.

Literary Setting: The literary context for 21:22-22:7 is rather easy to determine.

The section of 17:1-21:8 brings the downfall of evil to a climatic ending with 21:1-8 as both the conclusion of this unit and also as transitional into the next unit of 21:9-22:7. In this next unit, the central theme is on the new Jerusalem as the image of God's heavenly provision for His people.

This image of the new Jerusalem comes in four

text units with the first two (21:9-14, 15-21) centering on the external features of the city and the second two (21:22-27; 22:1-5) stressing internal aspects of the city. Then, following the same literary function of 21:1-8, 22:6-7 brings this larger unit to a close and also transitions into the epistolary style *Conclusio* of 22:8-21.

Literary Structure: The block diagram below highlights the internal organization of primary and secondary ideas within the text.

21.22 And
613 **a temple I did not see**
 in it,
 for
614 **the Lord God Almighty is its temple and the Lamb.**

21.23 and
615 **the city no need . . . has**
 of the sun |
 neither |
 of the moon |
 so that they would light it up,
 for
616 **the glory of God enlightens it,**
 and
617 **its lamp (is) the Lamb.**

21.24 and
618 **the nations will walk around**
 by its light,
 and
619 **the kings of the earth will bring their glory**
 into it,

21.25 and
620 **its gates will never be closed**
 by day,
 for
621 **night is not**
 there,

21.26 and
622 **they will bring the glory and honor of the nations**
 into it.

21.27 and
623 **never will enter . . . anything common**
 into it καὶ
 [the] doing abomination and lying
 except those having been written
 in the book of life
 of the Lamb.

22.1 And
624 **he showed me a river**
 of water
 of life
 bright as crystal,
 coming out
 of the throne of God

and
of the Lamb.

22.2 in the middle of its street
and
of the river
on this side and that side

625 a tree of life produces twelve fruits,
according to the month
626 each one gives back its fruit,
and
627 the leaves of the tree (are)
for healing of the nations.

22.3 and
628 anything cursed is no more.

and
629 the throne of God and of the Lamb...is, in it

and
630 His servants will see Him

22.4 and
631 they will see His face,
and

632 His name (will be)
upon their foreheads.

22.5 and
633 night will not be
any more

and
634 they have no need
| of light of the lamp
| and
| of light of the sun,
because the Lord God will give light
to them,

and
635 they will reign
forever and ever.

22.6 And
636 he said to me:

A "These words are faith and true,
and

B The Lord God sent His angel
of the spirit|of the prophets
to show His servants _
/-----|
the things necessary to happen
soon

22.7 And
behold
637 I come
quickly.

638 Blessed (is) the one obeying these words of prophecy from this book.

Summary of Rhetorical Structure:

The natural division of units in 21:22-22:7 is three-fold: #s 613-623, no temple in the city; #s 624-635, the river in the city; and #s 636-638, affirmation of the message. In the first unit of #s 613-623, the central emphasis is upon God's and the Lamb's presence in the city providing all the light and safety needed. God's throne replaces the temple in Ezekiel's depiction in chaps 40-48. In the second unit of #s 624-635, the first subunit of #s 624-627 stresses both the life giving river and the tree. The second subunit of #s 628-635 stresses the closeness of God to His people in the city.

The third unit of #636-638 contains a statement affirming the above message (#636); a promise to come quickly (#637); and a beatitude blessing upon those obeying the message of this book (#638). These three somewhat disconnected expressions return to the style and content of chapter one of Revelation in setting up the more formal *Conclusio* that follows.

Exegesis of the Text:

The exegesis of this passage will be structured around the above three natural divisions of the text.

A. No temple needed, 21:22-27.

22 Καὶ ναὸν οὐκ εἶδον ἐν αὐτῇ, ὁ γὰρ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ναὸς αὐτῆς ἐστὶν καὶ τὸ ἄρνιον. 23 καὶ ἡ πόλις οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχει τοῦ ἡλίου οὐδὲ τῆς σελήνης ἵνα φαίνωσιν αὐτῇ, ἡ γὰρ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφώτισεν αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς τὸ ἄρνιον. 24 καὶ περιπατήσουσιν τὰ ἔθνη διὰ τοῦ φωτὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς φέρουσιν τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν εἰς αὐτήν, 25 καὶ οἱ πυλῶνες αὐτῆς οὐ μὴ κλεισθῶσιν ἡμέρας, νύξ γὰρ οὐκ ἔσται ἐκεῖ, 26 καὶ οἴσουσιν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰς αὐτήν. 27 καὶ οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτήν πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ [ὁ] ποιῶν βδέλυγμα καὶ ψεῦδος εἰ μὴ οἱ γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἄρνιου.

22 I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 25 Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

This segment represents the third unit in the depiction of the new Jerusalem in 21:9-22:5. The emphasis here is upon the presence of God in the city apart from a temple. This is a surprising contrast to the Jewish apocalypses which center in a restored temple as central to the eschatological Jerusalem.³ Is this a reflection

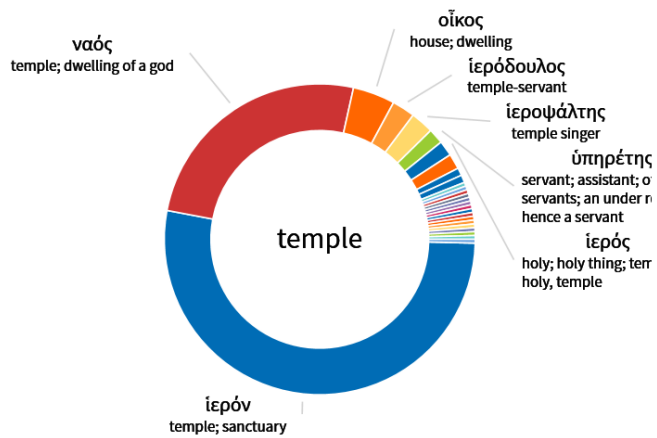
³“This explicit and surprising denial of the presence of a temple

of an anti-temple stance found both in early Christianity and in a few streams of Judaism? Some commentators adopt this understanding.⁴ But alternative ways of understanding this text are clearly possible, and perhaps preferable.⁵ Evidently John reached back to Jeremiah

within the New Jerusalem suggests that the traditions with which John was familiar expected to have an eschatological temple as the center of the eschatological Jerusalem, for οὐκ εἶδον, ‘I did not see,’ implies ‘I expected to see but did not.’ One important issue is whether this extremely unusual view is possible only within early Christianity, or is it a view compatible with the apocalyptic outlook of segments of early Judaism? It is possible to regard the absence of the eschatological temple in this vision as part of an anti-temple and anti-priestly polemic that existed in various segments of early Judaism, though certainly the expectation of an eschatological temple would be the normal expectation of Jewish eschatology.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1166.]

⁴“In Judaism, the eschatological expectation of a new Jerusalem generally implied a new temple. The explicit denial of a temple in the New Jerusalem in Rev 21:22 is, therefore, surprising and has been frequently understood to reflect an anti-temple stance of strands of early Christianity, perhaps in dependence on anti-temple sentiment in both Judaism and the Greco-Roman world. Some early Christians developed a polemic emphasizing that the temple in Jerusalem was either a temporary expedient or was never really necessary (Acts 7:47–51; John 4:21, 23–24; Heb 9:1–14; Barn. 16:1–2; Justin Dial. 22.1). One of the central reasons for the lynching of Stephen was apparently his anti-temple stance (Acts 6:13). The traditions of Jesus’ ‘cleansing’ of the temple and predictions of the destruction of the temple are frequently thought to reflect an anti-temple stance. Yet Jesus’ act of ‘cleansing’ the temple makes more sense if it is understood as a symbolic action anticipating its destruction (though not impugning its purity and legitimacy), as well as implying its eschatological restoration (Mark 11:15–19 = Matt 21:12–13 = Luke 19:45–48; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985] 61–76). It is striking that sayings of Jesus predicting the destruction of the existing temple and its replacement by an eschatological temple are widespread in the tradition (Mark 13:2 = Matt 24:2 = Luke 21:6; Mark 14:58 = Matt 26:61; Mark 15:29 = Matt 27:40; John 2:18–22; Acts 6:14). The Qumran community rejected the temple but paradoxically maintained a priestly structure and regarded their community itself as a metaphorical ‘temple.’ The opposition to the temple in Qumran was not absolute; rather it was based on the conviction that the present temple had been polluted and, therefore, required cleansing or replacement. Paul, too, regarded the Christian community as the ‘temple of God’ (1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 5:1–2; 6:16). It is probable that Rev 21:22a and 22b are both redactional since they contain the only indications in Revelation of the absence of a temple in the holy city (Wilcox, “Tradition,” 213; Bergmeier, ZNW 75 [1984] 89; the latter argues that v 21 should be removed and replaced with 22:1–2 to restore a meaningful sense to the passage.)” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1166–1167.]

⁵“A very different view of Rev 21:22 is proposed by David Flusser, “No Temple in the City,” *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988) 454–65, who argues that Rev 21:22–23 is based not on opposition to the temple but on the combination of two midrashic units, the second based on Ps 132:17, in which the phrase ‘I have prepared a lamp for my Mes-



who saw no temple in a restored Jerusalem (Jer. 3:14-18). Additionally in the Greek NT two separate words are primarily used for 'temple': ναός and ἱερόν. The second word ἱερόν is broader and inclusive the all of the temple complex. And it is never used in Revelation. But ναός is more narrow and specifies the inner sanctuary or holy places of the temple where God is present. It is used 13 times in reference to heaven as God's temple. But John's defining of ναός in v. 22b underscores that ναός is not primary a place or a building, but instead is God's presence: ὁ γὰρ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ναός αὐτῆς ἐστὶν καὶ τὸ ἄρνιον, for the Lord God Almighty is the city's ναός, and also the Lamb. This is indeed a unique declaration of John even in early Christian literature, much less the Jewish. Very few parallels to this statement surface in the Christian or Jewish writings of this period.⁶

Since God's presence constitutes the sacredness of the new Jerusalem rather than a temple, what implies ignores the existence of the rest of the land of Israel within which the temple-city was to be located. The texts from Qumran (particularly 2Q24 = 2QNJar and 11Q18 = 11QNJar; see Comment on 11:2) describing the New Jerusalem follow the description of the city with a description of a temple within it (García Martínez, "New Jerusalem," 199-200)."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1167-1168.]

"ὁ γὰρ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ὁ ναός αὐτῆς ἐστὶν καὶ τὸ ἄρνιον, 'for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.' . . . The really striking feature of this passage is the affirmation that God (and the Lamb) is/are the temple of the New Jerusalem. While the Johannine Jesus speaks of his physical body figuratively as a ναός, 'temple' (John 2:19, 21), there are few parallels to the conception of God as temple. One such passage, however, appears in 4Q511 = 4QShirb 35:3 (Baillet, Qumran, 237-38), וטהרה בנבר'י למקדש עולמי 'lwhym lw lmqdš 'wlmym wthrh bnbrym, 'God himself [is] an eternal sanctuary so that there will be purity among the chosen ones.' A problematic passage is found in Isa 8:14, where it is said that 'he [the Lord of hosts] will become a sanctuary [MT מקדש miqdāš; LXX ἁγίασμα].' A relatively close eschatological scenario is found in T. Dan 5:9, 12-13 (tr. Hollander-de Jonge, Testaments, 286):

And so when you return to the Lord you will obtain mercy, and he will bring you into his sanctuary [τὸ ἁγίασμα] proclaiming peace to you . . . and the saints will rest in Eden and the righteous will rejoice in the new Jerusalem [ἐπὶ τῆς νέας Ἱερουσαλήμ], which will be to the glory of God for ever. And no longer will Jerusalem endure desolation nor Israel be led captive, because the Lord will be in the midst of it [ὅτι κύριος ἔσται ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς] living together with men, and the Holy One of Israel, reigning over them in humility and poverty.

"This text combines the motif of the presence of the saints in the temple (absent from Revelation) with the motif of the immediate presence of God among his people (a notion frequently expressed in the OT: Ps 46:6; Zeph 3:5, 15; Zech 2:10; 8:3), though the phrases 'New Jerusalem' and 'living together with men' (i.e., Jesus Christ) betray the presence of a mini-apocalypse of Christian origin (Ulrichsen, Grundschrift, 104-5)."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1168.

siah' occurs, and the first on Isa 60:19, which refers to the Lord as the everlasting light of Jerusalem. Flusser argues that these two midrashic units are fused in a midrash on Exod 27:20, Tanhuma to Exod., Tšawwēh 6 (as they also are in Rev 21:22-23): "The Holy One said to Israel: 'In this world you needed the light of the Temple, but in the world to come because of the merit of the above mentioned lamp (Ex. 27:20) I will bring you the King Messiah, who is compared to a lamp, as it is written: "There I will make a horn to sprout for David, I have prepared a lamp for my Messiah" (Ps. 132:17).'"

"Temples sometimes played no role in Hellenistic utopias because of a general opposition to all social institutions, including the temple and its priesthood (see Excursus 21B: Ancient Utopias and the Paradise Myth). In Zeno's lost Politeia, the founder of Stoicism advocated a community of wives and prohibited the building of temples, law courts, and gymnasiums (μήθ' ἱερὰ μήτε δικαστήρια μήτε γυμνάσια) in his world state (Clement Alex. Strom. 5.12.76; Plutarch De Stoic. rep. 1034b; Diogenes Laertius 7.33; SVF 1:61-62; frags. 264-67). Temples should not be built, not only because he thought that the products of craftsmen were neither holy nor worthy of the gods, but also because men should have the divine in their mind (νοῦς) because it is immortal. Further, cities should be embellished not by offerings to the gods but by virtue (SVF 1:62; frag. 266).

"In ancient Israel, Jeremiah was unusual in that he apparently expected no future restoration of the temple and explicitly indicated that the ark was no longer necessary; he envisioned all Jerusalem as the throne of Yahweh (Jer 3:14-18). Ezekiel and Zechariah, however, do refer to an eschatological temple (Ezek 40-48; Zech 1:16; 6:12-15). Zech 2:4-5 (= LXX 2:8-9) speaks of the eschatological Jerusalem: 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited like a city without walls [תִּירָזֶרֶת pērāzōt; translated κατακάρπῳς in the LXX, i.e., 'Jerusalem will be densely populated'; see Muraoka, Septuagint, 125 . . .] or the Lord himself would be a wall of fire around it.' Perhaps John used this passage from Zechariah as the basis for his assertion that the New Jerusalem has no temple within it because the temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.

"While the notion of a heavenly or an eschatological Jerusalem was widespread in early Judaism (as we have observed above), John is unique in claiming that there will be no temple within it. It is important to ask why he emphasizes this fact when he has used apocalyptic traditions that connect the temple of God with the New Jerusalem (3:12; see 7:15), refers often to the temple in heaven (11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17), and uses temple imagery, particularly in descriptions of the heavenly throne room. The sanctity of Jerusalem was based largely on the presence of the temple within it. The Temple Scroll (11QTemple) uses the expression ער המקדש 'ir hammiqdāš, 'temple-city' (45:7-18), and largely

cations are to be seen from this?

First in v. 23, καὶ ἡ πόλις οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχει τοῦ ἡλίου οὐδὲ τῆς σελήνης ἵνα φαίνωσιν αὐτῇ, ἡ γὰρ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφώτισεν αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς τὸ ἄρνιον. **And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.**

The divine presence, ἡ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφώτισεν αὐτήν, provides the needed light. In the background here clearly stands Isa. 60:19,⁷ καὶ οὐκ ἔσται σοι ὁ ἥλιος εἰς φῶς ἡμέρας, οὐδὲ ἀνατολὴ σελήνης φωτιεῖ σοι τὴν νύκτα, ἀλλ' ἔσται σοι κύριος φῶς αἰώνιον καὶ ὁ θεὸς δόξα σου. **The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.**⁸ Also the idea is repeated again in 22:5, καὶ νύξ οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν χρεῖαν φωτὸς λύχνου καὶ φωτὸς ἡλίου, ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεὸς φωτίσει ἐπ' αὐτούς, **And**

⁷“The first phrase alludes to Isa 60:19–20, which predicts that the everlasting light of the Lord will replace the sun and the moon (Pesiq. Rab Kah. 21.5; Justin Dial. 113.5; Origen Contra Cels. 6.51). Isa 60:19–20 has perhaps influenced one of the blessings in the Jewish order of morning prayer, ‘O cause a new light to shine upon Zion,’ and Rev 21:23 may reflect an early Jewish-Christian adaptation of such a synagogue ritual (see Dölger, Sol Salutis, 121; Simon, Verus Israel, 501 n. 83). The equation of the glory of God with light is also found in Isa 60:1, ‘Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.’ The tradition of the presence of the glory and the light of God in the eschatological Jerusalem is a motif that occurs in early Jewish literature in probable dependence on Isa 60 (Bar 5:1–4; Sib. Or. 3.787; 5.420–27; T. Dan 5:12–13; see Volz, Eschatologie, 371–72). In answer to the question regarding when light first appeared in the world, R. Samuel b. Nahman reportedly replied, ‘The Holy One, blessed be He, cloaked himself in it as in a white garment and illuminated the entire world from the splendor of his glory’ (ed. Neusner, Pesiqta de Rab Kahana 2:75). According to 2 Enoch 31:2 (tr. F. I. Andersen, OTP 1:154), God created an open heaven for Adam so that he could look upon the angels and ‘the light which is never darkened was perpetually in paradise.’ There is a pagan parallel in the Pantheon, a temple for all the gods, which was rebuilt by Hadrian and had an enormous vault representing the cosmos (Dio Cassius 53.27). The dome had a single source of illumination, the so-called oculus, ‘eye,’ at the top. Since the ancient Romans regarded the sun as the eye of Jupiter, the supreme God was illuminating the room and therefore was present like the cult statue in an ordinary temple (see Hannestad, Roman Art, 87–88).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1169–1170.]

⁸“This is an allusion to Isa 60:19, and Charles argued that it was based on the Hebrew text (1:lxxvi), though the phrase οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχει, ‘it has no need’ (see the parallel phrase καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν χρεῖαν, ‘they have no need,’ in 22:5), is in fact found neither in the LXX nor in the MT but rather corresponds to a phrase in Tg. Isa. 60:19 (Chilton, Isaiah Targum), ‘You shall no longer need [שֶׁכְּרִיבָה לֹא לְ תִשְׁרָכְיָנָה] the sun for light by day nor even the moon for brightness by night.’ Wilcox proposes that Rev 21:23 is derived from an interpretive tradition similar to that found in Tg. Isa. 60:19 (“Tradition,” 207–8).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1168–1169.]

there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light,

The reference to the lamp of Christ has an important chiasmic arrangement that are arranged in synonymous parallelism:

- a ἡ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ
- b ἐφώτισεν αὐτήν,
- b' καὶ ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς
- a' τὸ ἄρνιον.

Behind this most likely stands Psa. 132:17b, ἐκεῖ ἐξανατελῶ κέρασ τῷ Δαυιδ, **ἡτοιμάσα λύχνον τῷ χριστῷ μου.** There I will cause a horn to sprout up for David; **I have prepared a lamp for my anointed one.**⁹ This beautiful picture in v. 23b underscores that the divine presence of God flows through the Lamb and lights up the entire city.

Second in v. 24, καὶ περιπατήσουσιν τὰ ἔθνη διὰ τοῦ φωτὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς φέρουσιν τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν εἰς αὐτήν, **The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.** Vv. 24–26 is something of a paraphrase of Isa. 6:3–5, 11 with some modifications.¹⁰ One should note that in Isa-

⁹“The second phrase, ‘its lamp is the Lamb,’ is a possible allusion to Ps 132:17b (NRSV): ‘I have prepared a lamp for my anointed one,’ in which ‘Lamb’ has been substituted for ‘anointed one,’ one of the clearest indicators of the basic messianic significance of the figure of the Lamb in Revelation. This passage was understood to refer to ‘the lamp of the Messiah’ (Lev. Rab. 24:2; Tanhuma to Exod., Tērûmâ 61 [Exod 25:1]; see Flusser, “No Temple,” 457–58). Flusser has shown that midrashic interpretations of Ps 132:17 and Isa 60:19 have been combined in Tanhuma to Exod., Tēsawwēh 6 (Exod 27:20) (“No Temple,” 458–59):

The Holy One said to Israel: “In this world you needed the light of the Temple, but in the world to come, because of the merit of the above mentioned lamp (Ex. 27:20), I will bring you the King Messiah, who is compared to a lamp, as it is written ‘There I will make a horn to sprout for David, I have prepared a lamp for my Messiah’ (Ps. 132:17). And not only this: I will make light for you, because this is what Isaiah said: ‘The Lord will be your [i.e., Jerusalem’s] everlasting light, and your God will be your glory’ (Is. 60:19).”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1170.]

¹⁰**Isa. 60:3–5, 11.** 3 καὶ πορεύσονται βασιλεῖς τῷ φωτί σου καὶ ἔθνη τῇ λαμπρότητί σου. † 4 ἄρον κύκλω τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου καὶ ἴδε συνηγμένα τὰ τέκνα σου· ἰδοὺ ἤκασιν πάντες οἱ υἱοὶ σου μακρόθεν, καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες σου ἐπ' ὤμων ἀρθήσονται. † 5 τότε ὄψη καὶ φοβηθήσῃ καὶ ἐκστήσῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι μεταβαλεῖ εἰς σὲ πλοῦτος θαλάσσης καὶ ἐθνῶν καὶ λαῶν. καὶ ἤξουσιν σοι†...

11 καὶ ἀνοιχθήσονται αἱ πύλαι σου διὰ παντός, ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς οὐ κλεισθήσονται, εἰσαγαγεῖν πρὸς σὲ δύναμιν ἐθνῶν καὶ βασιλεῖς ἀγομένους. †

3 Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. 4 Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. 5 Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the

iah the kings are led as captives into Jerusalem, while in Revelation they come by choice.¹¹

In contrast to Isaiah's depiction of a restored Jerusalem, John sees the nations walking in God's light that lights up the city. Although in the Jewish tradition, God's light is normally a reference to the Torah, John views the light as reflecting God's presence.¹² Interestingly, both the reference to nations and the kings of the earth here have been used repeated by John up to this point as references to the evil people of the world, who were killed in the final battle in 19:11-21. Some commentators are puzzled over this supposed 'contradiction' between these two texts.¹³ But a contradiction arises only if one forgets the apocalyptic vision nature of both texts. John in no way is describing historical narrative here. He is repeatedly pointing his readers back to God and His greatness. Clearly he has excluded from the city all but God's own people as v. 27 makes unquestionably clear. John's point here centers on the universal presence of God which is ultimately acknowledged by all humanity at final judgment (20:11-15). Clearly the ambiance of powerful kings when entering a city in their kingdom carried a certain kind of 'presence' which John

wealth of the nations shall come to you. . . .

11 Your gates shall always be open; day and night they shall not be shut, so that nations shall bring you their wealth, with their kings led in procession.

¹¹“Rev 21:24–26 paraphrases Isa 60:3–5, 11, though in Isaiah kings have been taken captive and are led in a victory procession, while in Rev 21:24–26 kings and nations enter freely. Jerusalem and the temple are mentioned as gathering places for Israel and all nations in T. Benj. 9:2; Sib. Or. 3.772–73; Pss. Sol. 17:32–35; b. ‘Abod. Zar. 3b. Other examples of universalism include T. Levi 2:11; 4:4; 8:14; 14:4; 18:9; T. Jud. 25:5; T. Naph. 8:3; T. Ash. 7:3; Tob 13:8, 11; Ep. Arist. 702–31; 1 Enoch 90:30, 37–38; Sib. Or. 3:16ff.; 5.492–502.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1170.]

¹²“Further, rather than having the nations ‘come to your [i.e., ‘God’s’] light,’ they are said to ‘walk by its [i.e., ‘the city’s’] light.’ The term ‘light’ was frequently used in the OT and early Judaism as a metaphor for the ‘law of the Lord’ or ‘Torah’ (Ps 119[MT 118]:105; Prov 6:23; Wis 18:4; Sir 32:16; 45:17; 2 Apoc. Bar. 17:4; 59:2; Bib. Ant. 15:6; 19:4; 33:3; 4 Ezra 14:20–21; T. Lev. 14:4; 19:1; see Aalen, *Begriffe*, 183–95, who finds no evidence for this metaphor in rabbinic Judaism.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1171.]

¹³“The pilgrimage of the kings of the earth to the New Jerusalem presupposes the existence of the nations of the world and their rulers as well as the location of the eschatological Jerusalem on the earth (Strathmann, TDNT 6:532). There is, then, an apparently striking inconsistency in the eschatological scenario of Revelation introduced by this verse (and v 26) since 19:17–21 and 20:7–9 narrate the destruction of the kings of the earth and their armies and 21:1 records the destruction of the first heaven and the first earth, and yet here in vv 24–27, nations and kings of the earth still exist.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1171.]

suggests reflects the glorious presence of God in the new Jerusalem. The reference to the nations highlights the universal appeal of the Gospel to peoples well beyond just Jews. Given the empire wide appeal across cultural and ethnic boundaries of many of the Roman religions including some of those in Ephesus, John underscores the wide appeal of the Gospel across these same boundaries in the first century Roman empire.

Third in v. 25, καὶ οἱ πυλῶνες αὐτῆς οὐ μὴ κλεισθῶσιν ἡμέρας, νύξ γὰρ οὐκ ἔσται ἐκεῖ, *Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.*

The idea of city gates remaining open all through the day was universal in John's world. The only time they would be closed in the daytime would be when the city was under siege by an enemy. And they would be closed typically at night as well. This statement of John seems to be playing off Isa. 60:11a, καὶ ἀνοιχθήσονται αἱ πύλαι σου διὰ παντός, ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς οὐ κλεισθήσονται, *Your gates shall always be open; day and night they shall not be shut.* But John does modify it considerably, and for obvious reason. Dropping the reference ἡμέρας, by day, would make the statement far easier to understand: *And its gates will never be closed for night does not exist there.* But absolutely no text variations surface indicating that even later copyists make such ‘corrections.’ It is very likely that John was influenced by the language of Zechariah 14:7, ἔσται μίαν ἡμέραν, καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη γνωστὴ τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ οὐχ ἡμέρα καὶ οὐ νύξ, καὶ πρὸς ἑσπέραν ἔσται φῶς. *And there shall be continuous day (it is known to the Lord), not day and not night, for at evening time there shall be light.* Thus John's point remains essentially the same either with ἡμέρας or without it: perfect safety characterizes the new Jerusalem. No one in the city has reason to fear harm.

Fourth in v. 26, καὶ οἴσουσιν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν τῶν ἔθνῶν εἰς αὐτήν. *People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.*¹⁴ The multicultural appeal of

¹⁴“The place of the Gentiles in Jewish eschatological expectation was understood in at least four ways, though with regard to the status of these Gentiles (i.e., whether full proselytism is involved or not) many passages are admittedly ambiguous (Donaldson, JSP 7 [1990] 7–11; see also E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 212–18): (1) Some strands of Jewish apocalyptic clearly expected the annihilation of the Gentiles, as in Rev 19:17–21 (Jub. 15:26; 4 Ezra 12:33; 13:38; 2 Apoc. Bar. 40:1; T. Abr. 31:2; 1QM). (2) A second strand focused on the eschatological restoration of Israel to the apparent exclusion or expense of other nations (Isa 11:10–16; Philo Praem. 164–72). (3) A third strand saw the Gentiles as subservient to Israel and as making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to pay tribute (Isa 18:7; 49:22–26; 55:5; 60:1–22; 61:5–6; 66:18–21; Jer 3:17–18; Zeph 3:9–10; Hag 2:7–9; Zech 2:11–12; 8:20–23; 14:16–19; Ps 72:8–11; Pss. Sol. 17:30–31; Jub. 32:19; Sir 36:11–17; Sib. Or. 3.772–74; 1QM 12:14; 1QpPs frag. 9; Tg. Isa. 16:1; 25:6–10; Gen. Rab. 78.12). (4) A fourth strand of tradition expected the Gentiles to participate completely in the worship of Yahweh and in eschatological salvation, though it is rarely clear whether full

the Gospel to different ethnic groups across the empire adds to the appeal of the new Jerusalem. It is not a “Jews only” place with everyone else excluded, even though some strands of apocalyptic Judaism envisioned people from all nations coming to Torah obedience at the end.¹⁵

Note the earlier references to the redeemed ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς καὶ γλώσσης καὶ λαοῦ καὶ ἔθνους, *out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation* (5:9) and ὄχλος πολὺς, ὃν ἀριθμῆσαι αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο, ἐκ παντὸς ἔθνους καὶ φυλῶν καὶ λαῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν ἐστῶτες ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου περιβεβλημένους στολὰς λευκάς καὶ φοίνικες ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτῶν, *a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands*. (7:9). The Christians in the seven churches of Asia were already reflecting such cultural and ethnic diversity and John affirms this by his declaration of the inclusiveness of the new Jerusalem.

Fifth in v. 27, καὶ οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτὴν πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ [ὁ] ποιῶν βδέλυγμα καὶ ψεῦδος εἰ μὴ οἱ γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου. *But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.*

proselytism is expected (Isa 2:2–4; 56:6–8; LXX Isa 54:15; LXX Amos 9:12; Mic 4:1–4; Pss 22:27–28; 86:9; 138:4–6; Tob 13:11; 14:6–7; 1 Enoch 10:21; 90:30–33; 91:14; 2 Apoc. Bar. 72:1–6; Sib. Or. 3.564–70, 715–23, 757–75; Philo Mos. 2.43–44 [H. A. Wolfson, Philo (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1947) 2:415–17]; T. Levi 18:3, 9; T. Jud. 24:6; 25:5; T. Naph. 8:3–4; T. Zeb. 9:8; T. Benj. 10:3–11). It is important to note that the LXX translator of Isaiah exhibits a theological agenda that included the inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God; cf. Isa 23:14–24:1; 62:4 (Roetzel, “Oikoumene,” 163–82). In Rev 21:24–26, full participation in eschatological salvation is presupposed. This eschatological expectation was based in part on historical experience (Ps 68:29; 1 Kgs 10:23–25; Jos. Ant. 15.402; J.W. 5.187; 2 Macc 5:16).

“Some particularly famous cults in the ancient world had an international appeal and attracted offerings from a great many different regions and peoples. In Ps.-Lucian De Syria dea 10, 32, the temple Atargatis at Heliopolis-Mabug, for example, in the Roman province of Syria had a widespread reputation and reportedly attracted offerings from “Arabia,” the Phoenicians, Babylonians, Cappadocians, Cilicians, “Assyrioi,” Egyptians, Medes, Armenians, and Babylonians.”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1172.]

¹⁵“The bringing of glory and honor to the eschatological city of God is surely a sign of the conversion of the nations and the kings of the earth, reflecting the Jewish hope for the eschatological conversion of the heathen (Isa 45:20, 22, 24; Zech 2:11; 8:23; Dan 7:14; Tob 13:11; 14:6; 1 Enoch 10:21; T. Jude 25:5; T. Ash. 7:3). See 4Q504 = 4QDibHama 4:9–11 (tr. García Martínez, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 415), ‘And to your great Name they [Gentiles] will carry their offerings: silver, gold, precious stones, with all the treasures of their country.’” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1173.]

The final implication of God’s throne replacing the temple in the new Jerusalem (v. 22) underscores the holiness of God’s presence that does totally exclude any and all who are impure, i.e., haven’t been washed clean by the blood of the Lamb (cf. 5:9–10).

Idea of εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτὴν, enter into it, stresses the new Jerusalem as a metaphor of salvation, consistent with the Kingdom Entrance Sayings of Jesus: Mt. 5:20; 7:21; 18:3; 19:23–24; 23:13; Mk. 9:47; Jhn. 3:5; cf. Acts 14:22. The double negative οὐ μὴ sits up the strongest denial possible in ancient Greek. Thus absolutely nothing πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ [ὁ] ποιῶν βδέλυγμα καὶ ψεῦδος can enter the city. This completely negates the heretical idea of some kind of universalism being taken from v. 27.¹⁶ πᾶν κοινὸν, every common thing, is synonymous to ἀκάθαρτος, impure, as used in 16:13; 17:4; 18:2. Note the use of both adjectives in Acts 10:14 as synonyms. The next phrase [ὁ] ποιῶν βδέλυγμα καὶ ψεῦδος, *the one making an abomination and a lie*, comes back to define πᾶν κοινὸν via the exegetical use of καὶ with roughly the English equivalent of i.e., that is. Thus evil people are excluded from entering the city.¹⁷

Clearly (as signaled by εἰ μὴ), the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem exclusively are οἱ γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ

¹⁶“Similar to Rissi, Vogelgesang understands that those in the lake of fire will still have opportunity to repent and respond to the invitation of 22:14, so that there is ‘a constant flow’ of such people coming out of the lake of fire and entering the new Jerusalem.¹⁷⁰ But, in addition to the problems inherent in Rissi’s view, 21:7–8 contrasts the ‘overcomers’ with false confessors in the Christian community, and such a contrast is likely to be seen as well in 22:14–15. This is supported by 22:11, which also contrasts ungodly people with godly people and views both as essentially permanently set in their respective ways (see on 22:11). Furthermore, the directly following 22:18–19 speaks of the judgment of the impious in definitive and absolute terms. This ‘universal salvation’ view is less than clear from the verses appealed to by its supporters. Consequently, the burden of proof rests on them to demonstrate the position with more explicit evidence.” [G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 1098.]

¹⁷“καὶ ποιῶν βδέλυγμα καὶ ψεῦδος εἰ μὴ οἱ γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου, ‘that is, anyone who does what is abhorrent or false, / except those inscribed in the Lamb’s book of life.’ If the conjunction καὶ functions here in an exegetical or explanatory way (i.e., ‘that is’), the author is not using the phrase πᾶν κοινόν, ‘anything unclean,’ in a literal cultic sense but rather is interpreting it metaphorically in a moral sense of people who are immoral. Here the phrase ποιεῖν βδέλυγμα, ‘to do an abomination,’ reflects the OT Hebrew phrase עשה תועבה *‘āsā tó‘ēbā* (Lev 18:26, 27, 29; 20:13; Deut 12:31; 20:18; 1 Kgs 14:24; Jer 7:10; 32:35; 44:22; Ezek 33:26). An ‘abomination’ usually involves illicit forms of sexual intercourse and idolatry. Similarly, the phrase ποιεῖν ψεῦδος, ‘to do a lie,’ i.e., ‘to lie,’ reflects the Hebrew phrase עשה שקר *‘āsā šēqer* (Jer 6:13; 8:8, 10; Hos 7:1).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1175.]

βιβλίω τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου, *those written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb*. Referenced in 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, the book of life is the citizen registry of the new Jerusalem and only its citizens have permission to enter the city.

B. God's abundant provision, 22:1-5

22.1 Καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι ποταμὸν ὕδατος ζωῆς λαμπρὸν ὡς κρύσταλλον, ἔκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου. 2 ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ξύλον ζωῆς ποιοῦν καρπούς δώδεκα, κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον ἀποδιδούν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ φύλλα τοῦ ξύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν. 3 καὶ πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι. καὶ ὁ θρόνος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσται, καὶ οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ 4 καὶ ὄψονται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν. 5 καὶ νύξ οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν χρεῖαν φωτὸς λύχνου καὶ φωτὸς ἡλίου, ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεὸς φωτίσει ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

22.1 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 2 through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; 4 they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

This final segment completes the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem as the eternal home of the saints of Christ. Verses 1-2 describe the image of the Garden of Eden located inside the new Jerusalem. Verses 3-5 center on the presence of God and its implications.

a) Paradise, vv. 1-2. 1 Καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι ποταμὸν ὕδατος ζωῆς λαμπρὸν ὡς κρύσταλλον, ἔκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου. 2 ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ξύλον ζωῆς ποιοῦν καρπούς δώδεκα, κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον ἀποδιδούν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ φύλλα τοῦ ξύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν. 1 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 2 through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

The introductory phrase Καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι, *And he showed me*, repeats the δείξω σοι, *I will show you* (21:9) and καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι, *and he showed me* (21:10), thus linking these together. The 'he' common to all three in-

stances is identified in 21:9 as εἷς ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων τῶν ἐχόντων τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας τῶν γεμόντων τῶν ἑπτὰ πληγῶν τῶν ἐσχάτων, *one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues*. The NRSV is correct in adding 'the angel' as the subject of the verb here in 22:1.

What the angel showed John this time is defined as ποταμὸν ὕδατος ζωῆς λαμπρὸν ὡς κρύσταλλον, ἔκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου. *The river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb*. John saw a ποταμὸν, *river*. The association of the new Jerusalem with the Garden of Eden or Paradise is relatively common in the ancient Jewish apocalyptic literature: 2 Apoc. Bar. 4:1-7; 1 Enoch 90:33-36; 4 Ezra 8:52; T. Dan 5:12-13.¹⁸ In the background of John's image stands Ezek. 47:1-12.¹⁹

¹⁸In vv 1-2, the New Jerusalem is described with imagery associated with the garden of Eden or Paradise in early Judaism, an association that was traditional (2 Apoc. Bar. 4:1-7; 1 Enoch 90:33-36; 4 Ezra 8:52; T. Dan 5:12-13, 'saints shall refresh themselves in Eden, the righteous shall rejoice in the new Jerusalem'). However, the use of Paradise imagery to describe the New Jerusalem does not cohere particularly well with its earlier description as an enormous cube (Strathmann, TDNT 6:532). [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1175.]

¹⁹**Ezek. 47:1-12.** 1 Καὶ εἰσήγαγέν με ἐπὶ τὰ πρόθυρα τοῦ οἴκου, καὶ ἶδον ὕδωρ ἐξεπορεύετο ὑποκάτωθεν τοῦ αἰθρίου κατ' ἀνατολάς, ὅτι τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ οἴκου ἔβλεπεν κατ' ἀνατολάς, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ κατέβαινε ἀπὸ τοῦ κλίτους τοῦ δεξιοῦ ἀπὸ νότου ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον.† 2 καὶ ἐξήγαγέν με κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς πύλης τῆς πρὸς βορρᾶν καὶ περιήγαγέν με τὴν ὁδὸν ἔξωθεν πρὸς τὴν πύλην τῆς ἀλῆς τῆς βλεπούσης κατ' ἀνατολάς, καὶ ἶδον τὸ ὕδωρ κατεφέρετο ἀπὸ τοῦ κλίτους τοῦ δεξιοῦ.† 3 καθὼς ἔξοδος ἀνδρὸς ἐξ ἐναντίας, καὶ μέτρον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ διεμέτρησεν χιλίους ἐν τῷ μέτρῳ, καὶ διήλθεν ἐν τῷ ὕδατι ὕδωρ ἀφέσεως.† 4 καὶ διεμέτρησεν χιλίους, καὶ διήλθεν ἐν τῷ ὕδατι ὕδωρ ἕως τῶν μηρῶν· καὶ διεμέτρησεν χιλίους, καὶ διήλθεν ὕδωρ ἕως ὀσφύος.† 5 καὶ διεμέτρησεν χιλίους, καὶ οὐκ ἠδύνατο διελθεῖν, ὅτι ἐξύβριζεν τὸ ὕδωρ ὡς ῥοῖζος χειμάρρου, ὃν οὐ διαβήσονται.† 6 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς με Εἰ ἑώρακας, υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου; καὶ ἤγαγέν με ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖλος τοῦ ποταμοῦ.† 7 ἐν τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ μου καὶ ἶδον ἐπὶ τοῦ χεῖλους τοῦ ποταμοῦ δένδρα πολλὰ σφόδρα ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν.† 8 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς με Τὸ ὕδωρ τοῦτο τὸ ἐκπορευόμενον εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν τὴν πρὸς ἀνατολάς καὶ κατέβαινε ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀραβίαν καὶ ἤρχετο ἕως ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν ἐπὶ τὸ ὕδωρ τῆς διεκβολῆς, καὶ ὑγιάσει τὰ ὕδατα.† 9 καὶ ἔσται πᾶσα ψυχὴ τῶν ζῴων τῶν ἐκζέοντων ἐπὶ πάντα, ἐφ' ἃ ἂν ἐπέλθῃ ἐκεῖ ὁ ποταμὸς, ζήσεται, καὶ ἔσται ἐκεῖ ἰχθὺς πολὺς σφόδρα, ὅτι ἦκει ἐκεῖ τὸ ὕδωρ τοῦτο, καὶ ὑγιάσει καὶ ζήσεται· πᾶν, ἐφ' ὃ ἂν ἐπέλθῃ ὁ ποταμὸς ἐκεῖ, ζήσεται.† 10 καὶ στήσονται ἐκεῖ ἄλεις ἀπὸ Αἰνγαδίν ἕως Αἰναγαλίν· ψυγμὸς σαγηνῶν ἔσται, καθ' αὐτὴν ἔσται, καὶ οἱ ἰχθύες αὐτῆς ὡς οἱ ἰχθύες τῆς θαλάσσης τῆς μεγάλης πλῆθος πολὺ σφόδρα.† 11 καὶ ἐν τῇ διεκβολῇ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῇ ὑπεράρσει αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ ὑγιάσωσιν· εἰς ἄλας δέδονται.† 12 καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἀναβήσεται ἐπὶ τοῦ χεῖλους αὐτοῦ ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν πᾶν ξύλον βρώσιμον, οὐ μὴ παλαιωθῇ ἐπ' αὐτοῦ, οὐδὲ μὴ ἐκλίπη ὁ καρπὸς αὐτοῦ· τῆς καινότητος αὐτοῦ πρωτοβολήσεται, διότι τὰ ὕδατα αὐτῶν ἐκ τῶν ἁγίων ταῦτα ἐκπορεύεται, καὶ ἔσται ὁ καρπὸς αὐτῶν εἰς βρῶσιν

To be sure, John has taken the river out of Ezekiel's temple in the new Jerusalem and placed it instead in the center of the city connected to the throne of God and of the Lamb. But the depiction of the river in Ezekiel has affinities with that of John.²⁰ The very limited

καὶ ἀνάβασις αὐτῶν εἰς ὑγίειαν.

47.1 Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple; there, water was flowing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. 2 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 the water was coming out on the south side.

3 Going on eastward with a cord in his hand, the man measured one thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep. 4 Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the waist. 5 Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be crossed. 6 He said to me, "Mortal, have you seen this?"

Then he led me back along the bank of the river. 7 As I came back, I saw on the bank of the river a great many trees on the one side and on the other. 8 He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the water will become fresh. 9 Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes. 10 People will stand fishing beside the sea from En-gedi to En-eglaim; it will be a place for the spreading of nets; its fish will be of a great many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. 11 But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. 12 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."

²⁰According to Gen 2:10 a river flowed out of Eden, and a few later texts mention a celestial river (T. Abr. [Rec. B] 8:3; 3 Apoc. Bar. [Greek] 2:1), while many more texts speak of one or more rivers of fire (a theophanic symbol) that flow from the throne of God (see Comment on 15:2). An unattributed baraita says that in the world to come living water will flow from Jerusalem for the house of David and those who dwell in Jerusalem (y. Šeqal. 50a). The abundance of water flowing from the temple is part of several later stock descriptions of the temple (Joel 3:18[MT 4:18]; Ep. Arist. 89; Tacitus Hist. 5.12 refers to a *fons perennis aquae*, 'a constant spring of water') as well as of the city of Jerusalem (Zech 14:8; Ps 46:4[MT 5]; 65:9[MT 10] refers to "the river of God"; Isa 33:21; Sir 50:3; Alexander Polyhistor, according to Eusebius Praep. evang. 9.35–37 [452b–453c], quotes three ancient authors who mention the abundance of water in Jerusalem, probably referring to the Siloam tunnel). Philo quotes Ps 46:4 (MT 46:4; LXX 45:4), referring to the river that makes glad the city of God, to argue that since there are no rivers nor a sea near Jerusalem, the statement should be understood allegorically. According to Simons (Jerusalem, 48 n. 3), the 'visionary springs' of the prophets (Ezek 47:1–2; Joel 3:18; Zech 13:1; 14:8) only indicate that the absence of /living water/ from Jerusalem will be compensated for

supply of physical water for the residents of Jerusalem historically tended to heighten the emphasis upon God supplying abundant water in the restored Jerusalem.²¹

The river flows with the ὕδατος ζωῆς λαμπρὸν ὡς κρύσταλλον, *water of life sparkling like crystal*.²² This image of life giving water takes a common image of water as essential for sustaining physical existence and gives the image a spiritual significance. Ever lasting spiritual life depends upon a divine source, here the throne of God, and water is a natural image for expressing such nourishment.

Also the angel showed John a *tree of life*, ξύλον ζωῆς, alongside the river. John has taken the image of "all kinds of trees" on each side of the river in Ezek. 47:12 and defined them with probably a collective sense of the singular ξύλον ζωῆς.²³

in the abundance in the idyllic future." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1176.]

²¹"The water supply of the historical City of David was dependent upon two springs in the neighborhood of the Southeast Hill, or one spring and one well (Simons, Jerusalem, 47–49; Amiran, "Water Supply," 75–78). The most important were the Spring of the Steps (referred to as Gihon in the OT; 1 Kgs 1:38; 2 Chr 33:14; Sir 48:17; Jos. Ant. 7.347; Simons, Jerusalem, 163–88; Finegan, Archaeology, 112–15; Amiran, "Water Supply," 75–78) and the Well of Jacob (referred to as En-Rogel or the Spring of Rogel in the OT; Josh 15:7; 18:16; 2 Sam 17:7; 1 Kgs 1:9; cf. Jos. Ant. 7.354; perhaps also referred to once as the Dragon Well in Neh 2:13; see Simons, Jerusalem, 158–63; Amiran, "Water Supply," 75–78). Since the Gihon was located outside the city walls, Hezekiah constructed an aqueduct called the Siloam Tunnel to convey the water to a pool inside the city (2 Kgs 20:20; 2 Chr 32:30; Jos. J.W. 5.140; John 9:7, 11). The author of Revelation cannot have the river flowing from the temple, however, since there is no temple in the New Jerusalem (21:22), so he substitutes the throne of God for the temple." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1176–1177.]

²²The phrase ἕρπυς ἕρπυς *myn hyyyn*, 'living water,' is found in a fragmentary context in the Qumran Aramaic document J 7, line 29 (= 11Q18 = 11QNJ ar frag. 24), part of a description of the New Jerusalem (Beyer, Ergänzungsband, 103). In the gnostic Book of Baruch, quoted in Hippolytus Ref. 5.26–27, there is mention (in 5.26.2) of a ritual involving the drinking of 'living water' (πίνει ἀπὸ τοῦ ζῶντος ὕδατος) from a 'spring of living water' (πηγὴ ζῶντος ὕδατος), based on a distinction between the water below the firmament (στερέωμα), which is part of the evil creation, and the spiritually beneficial 'living water' above the firmament (5.26.3). The two motifs of fountains of pure water and fruit-bearing trees are also found in Hellenistic descriptions of the afterlife; cf. Ps.-Plato Axiochus 371C (J. P. Hershbell, ed. Pseudo-Plato, Axiochus [Chico, CA: Scholars, 1981] 47), 'So, then, all whom a good daimon inspired in life go to reside in a place of the pious, where the ungrudging seasons teem with fruits of every kind, where fountains of pure water flow, and where all kinds of meadows bloom with flowers of many colors.'" [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1176.]

²³This is an allusion to Ezek 47:12 (continued in vv 2b and Page 1052

²⁴Clearly the Garden of Eden had multiple trees, although one tree was singled out as forbidden to have its fruit eaten (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-13). But this tree is identified only as τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ γινώσκειν καλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν, *the tree for knowing good and evil* (2:17). Eating its fruit led Adam and Eve into ‘death’ rather than into life. The tree in the new Jerusalem gives life rather than death.

In the five uses of ξύλον ζωῆς in Revelation (2:7; 22:2(2x), 14, 19), this is the only usage where details are given: ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ξύλον ζωῆς ποιοῦν καρποὺς δώδεκα, κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον ἀποδιδούν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ φύλλα τοῦ ξύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν. *On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations* (vv. 2-3).²⁵

From this tree (or, most likely *trees*) comes twelve kinds of fruit on a monthly cycle. Plus the leaves have healing qualities. The point of the image is the abundant provision of God for His people. He takes complete care of all of their needs.

b) Presence of God, vv. 3-5. 3 καὶ πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι. καὶ ὁ θρόνος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσται, καὶ οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ 4 καὶ ὄψονται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν. 5 καὶ νῦν οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν χρεῖαν φωτὸς λύχνου καὶ φωτὸς ἡλίου, ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεὸς φωτίσει ἐπ’ αὐτούς, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. *3 Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; 4 they will see his face,* 2c), which the author has subtly modified by changing ‘all kinds of trees’ on both sides of the river flowing from the sanctuary mentioned in Ezek 47:7, 12 to the collective term ξύλον ζωῆς, ‘tree(s) of life.’ The term ξύλον, ‘tree,’ is a collective referring to numerous trees found along both banks of the river (Swete, 299; Beckwith, 765; Bousset [1906] 452; Charles, 2:176). Examples of the use of the singular ἕξ or ξύλον used collectively are found in Gen 1:11–12; 3:8; Lev 26:20; 1 Chr 16:32; 2 Chr 7:13; Eccl 2:5; Jer 17:2. According to Andreas (Comm. in Apoc. 22:2; Schmid, Studien 1:253), ‘It is customary in many places in Scripture to use the singular ξύλον for many trees.’ [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1177.]

²⁴In Pss. Sol. 14:3, the ‘trees of life’ in Paradise are metaphors for the faithful (see also IQH 6:14–19; 10:25–26; Odes Sol. 11.16; Gos. Truth 36.35–37); Andreas understands the phrase ξύλον ζωῆς collectively of Christians who share in the tree of life (Schmid, Studien 1:251). For the metaphor of the faithful as trees, see Ps 92:12–13; Isa 61:3; 1 Enoch 93:2; Odes Sol. 1.2; 11.1.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1177–1178.]

²⁵For some unexplained reason, the NRSV attaches ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς, *through the middle of the street of the city*, to the reference to the river, rather than to the tree. Overwhelmingly the latter connection is understood by both printed Greek text traditions (USB & N-A).

and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Immediately after referencing τῶν ἐθνῶν, of the nations (v. 2b), John asserts only the people of God will be permitted into the new Jerusalem (v. 3).²⁶ Only those redeemed out of the nations are allowed in heaven. Verse 3 matches 21:27 in its thrust on the exclusive entrance into heaven. Several aspects of this emphasis are underscored by John.

Important here is a shift from the aorist verb ἔδειξεν, *he showed* (v. 1) to a series of future tense verbs in vv. 3-5.²⁷ What this shift most likely signals is John’s shifting from describing his vision seen earlier to a projection of what will be implied about the anticipated new Jerusalem in vv. 3-5.²⁸ The use of future tense verbs, rather than completed action aorist verbs, resumes in vv. 3-5 the pattern found in vv. 24-27 depicting the implications of the city having no need of the sun or moon. Thus vv. 3-5 stress implications of the new Jerusalem having this river and tree in it, in parallel to 21:24-27.

καὶ πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι. Nothing accursed will be found there ever.²⁹ Adapted from Zech. 14:11,³⁰ this declaration asserts the exclusion of everything under divine curse of destruction from being evil.³¹ The

²⁶Note that he did the same thing in 21:26b-27, after mentioning τῶν ἐθνῶν. Both patterns reflect John’s desire to not be misunderstood by ‘nations’ that the evil people would somehow make it into heaven.

²⁷One should note that in the content of what the angel showed John in vv. 1-2, no verb exists in this lengthy detailing of the river and the tree. The grammar demands of all modern western languages mandate insertion of verbs in such a detailed description.

²⁸“A series of future verbs in vv 3–5 (a similar series was used in 21:24–27 and then interrupted by 22:1–1) indicates that the author-editor has shifted from describing what he has seen in a vision to a prophetic scenario that he expects to take place in the New Jerusalem in the future.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1178.]

²⁹Note the similarity of this statement to 21:1c, καὶ ἡ θάλασσα οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι. *And the sea will never exist any more.*

³⁰Zech. 14:11. κατοικήσουσιν ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ οὐκ ἔσται ἀνάθεμα ἔτι, καὶ κατοικήσει Ἱερουσαλημ πεποιθότως.

And it shall be inhabited, for never again shall it be doomed to destruction; Jerusalem shall abide in security.

³¹“The problem with this unexpected phrase (which is equally unexpected in the context of Zech 14:11, to which it alludes) is the meaning of κατάθεμα, which occurs only here in Revelation. It is virtually synonymous with ἀνάθεμα, ‘curse,’ and κατάρα, ‘curse’ (κατάθεμα and ἀνάθεμα are distinguished in a late inscription from Attica, though the difference between the terms is not clear; see Horsley, New Docs 4:264). κατάθεμα can mean a ‘curse’ (Auldollent Defixionum 22.23), ‘accursed thing,’ or ‘accursed person’ (Ps.-Clement of Rome Contestatio 4.3), though it is more likely that the meaning of κατάθεμα here is shaped by the allusion to

single use of κατάθεμα in the entire NT seems to reflect John's interpretation of the Hebrew חֵרֶם (*hērem*) in Zech. 14:11, rather than following the LXX rendering of it as ἀνάθεμα. If this is correct, then John is affirming that the last war with evil has taken place (cf. chaps 17-20) and never again will God's people be subject to attack from anything or anyone under divine curse. Nothing under κατάθεμα will ever exist in the new Jerusalem.

καὶ ὁ θρόνος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσται, καὶ οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ καὶ ὄψονται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; 4 they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads (vv. 3b-4). Note this third reference to the dual throne of God and the Lamb first defined in 3:21 and mentioned again in 21:1. The uniquely Christian perspective on the new Jerusalem is highlighted by this. The divine presence gives the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem assurance of safety and protection.

The activity of its inhabitants is defined as καὶ οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ, *and His servants will serve Him*. The language of λατρεύσουσιν envisions God's people in religious service to God much as the priests functioned in the Jerusalem temple. It includes worship but is not limited to it.³²

Zech 14:11, καὶ οὐκ ἔσται ἀνάθεμα ἔτι, 'and there is no longer any curse.' This is a literal translation of the Hebrew לֹא יִהְיֶה עוֹר הַיְהוּדָה *wēhērem lō' yihyeh-ōd*, in which חֵרֶם (*hērem*) (meaning 'devoted to destruction,' 'accursed thing,' 'ban') is regularly translated by ἀνάθεμα in the LXX (GELS, 28). Originally חֵרֶם *hērem* was a ritual whereby the enemy was devoted to destruction, a major constituent element of holy-war theology (Lohfink, TDOT 5:180-99). According to the apocalyptic scenario in Zech 14:1-11, the nations partially succeed in destroying Jerusalem and her people but are finally repulsed by Yahweh (Zech 14:1-5). Victory is followed by an idyllic depiction of eschatological Jerusalem, from the midst of which an enormous river flows (cf. Rev 22:2) and in which 'never again shall the ban of destruction be upon her' (Hanson, Apocalyptic, 382); i.e., never again will hostile nations attempt to destroy Jerusalem (nb. that the phrase עוֹר הַיְהוּדָה *lō' yihyeh-ōd*, 'there will never again be,' reflects the covenant language of Gen 9:11; cf. Isa 54:9) חֵרֶם *hērem* is therefore used in Zech 14:11 as a metaphor for a genocidal form of war that intends nothing less than the complete slaughter and destruction of the enemy (see Isa 34:2; Jer 31:40), and the promise that it will never again occur is couched in the covenantal promise language of Gen 9:11. Therefore it appears that κατάθεμα is the author's way of interpreting חֵרֶם *hērem*. Thus the word refers not generally to curses, accursed things, or persons but specifically to the promise that 'the curse of war' will no longer exist. The phrase οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι, 'will no longer exist,' has a close parallel in 21:1, where it is said that the sea οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι, 'exists no longer.' [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1178-1179.

³²A gnosticized form of this tradition is found in Pistis Sophia 1.32, 35 (ed. Schmidt-Till, p. 31, lines 35-38 = ed. Schmidt-MacDermot, p. 52), in which it is said that God will save the souls of the Gnostics out of all matter and a city will be prepared for them in the light and they will dwell in that city. The notion of God's

Very important to the presence of the divine throne in the middle of the city is καὶ ὄψονται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν, *and they will see His face* (v. 4a).³³ What in this world has only been possible through special vision to a few of the OT prophets and the apostles of early Christianity now becomes fully realized in the new Jerusalem of heaven: we will see God.³⁴

That we truly belong in heaven as God's people will be evident with His name signifying ownership on our foreheads: καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν. *and His name is on their foreheads* (v. 4b). This repeats earlier affirmations in 7:3 and 14:1 (cf. 3:12).

καὶ νῦν οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν χρεῖαν φωτὸς λύχνου καὶ φωτὸς ἡλίου, ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεὸς φωτίσει ἐπ'

servants giving worship to him occurs in Ps 22:23; Isa 49:7; Dan 3:28; it is used in a negative sense of slaves worshipping idols in Diogn. 2:15." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1179.]

³³The phrase 'seeing the face of God' is a metaphor in Judaism and early Christianity for a full awareness of the presence and power of God (Job 33:26; Pss 10:11; 17:15; 3 John 11), for worshipping God in the temple (Ps 42:2), or for seeing God in the context of a prophetic vision (Isa 6:1; see TDNT 5:329-30). In Hellenistic Judaism 'seeing God' can refer to the mystical vision of God perceived mentally or spiritually (Philo Vit. Cont. 11-12; Mut. 81-82; Abr. 57-58; [Philo derives this notion from Platonic tradition]; Origen Contra Cels. 7.33-34; see TDNT 5:329-40). The name 'Israel' was construed as 'one who sees God' because he is 'the firstborn of every living being which is given life by God' (Orat. Jos. 189 [Denis, Fragmenta, 61], a midrash on Gen 32, where Jacob claims in v 30 that he has seen God face to face [cf. 4Q158 = 4QRPa frags. 1-2, line 10]; cf. Philo Mut. 81-82; J. Z. Smith, "Prayer," 253-94)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1179-1180.]

³⁴In early Judaism and early Christianity the privilege of seeing God is often considered an eschatological blessing (Ps 84:7; Matt 5:8; 1 John 3:2; Heb 12:14; Jub. 1:28; 4 Ezra 7:91, 98; 1 Enoch 102:8; cf. 1 Cor 13:12), while in the Greco-Roman world mention is made of the post-mortem ability of souls to behold the gods (Plutarch De Iside 78). Apuleius claims that during his initiation into the mysteries of Isis he approached the gods above and below and 'worshipped them face to face [*et adoravi de proxumo*]' (Metamorphoses 11.24; Griffiths, Isis-Book, 99), a phrase close to the Pauline way of expressing the eschatological vision of God in 1 Cor 13:12, 'then we will see face to face [πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον].' One strand of biblical tradition insists that Moses was forbidden to see God (Exod 33:20-23; cf. 3:6), the sight of whom would be fatal (Exod 3:6; 20:19; cf. Mart. Isa. 3.9 [Denis, Fragmenta, 112]), and in the NT there is a strong insistence that no one has ever seen God (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12; 1 Tim 6:15-16). According to Isa 6:2, even the seraphim hide their faces from God (for rabbinic traditions to the effect that neither the angels nor the living creatures can see God or hear his voice, but only the pious after they die, see Ginzberg, Legends 3:137-38; 6:57 n. 296), though according to Matt 18:10, reflecting Jewish tradition, angels can see God." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1180.]

αὐτοῦς, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων. *And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever* (v. 5). This allusion from Isa. 60:19 repeats the essential affirmation in 21:23-24.³⁵ The darkness of night is banished and the continuous light in the city comes from God Himself. The purity of light signifying God's holiness is powerfully affirmed by this image. Thus darkness cannot exist in light, as v. 3a affirms in more direct language. Nothing sinful or impure will be found in the city.

God's people will forever share in the blessings of His absolute reign in heaven: καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων. That blessing from God's present reign over His creation is already being shared by His people in advance of heaven (5:10 and 20:6). But it will be a much greater blessing as we enter into heaven. The same idea is reflected in 1 Cor. 6:2 with Dan. 7:18, 27 in the background. In this declaration of John in 22:5b the emphasis falls especially on the 'forever and ever' emphasis in εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων.

Wow! What a marvelous picture of heaven John paints for us in 21:9-22:5! He draws upon a wealth of language and images out of his world to describe the vision of heaven granted to him by God through His angel. Had we lived in that same world, these images would be even richer and more wonderful than they are nearly two thousand years later. But John's initial readers in the churches of Asia needed such a powerful affirmation of what lay ahead in the face of the persecution they were experiencing. And for His people suffering such persecution in our world this message becomes all the more significant and important as well.

³⁵Num 6:25, part of the traditional priestly blessing, contains a solar metaphor: 'the Lord make his face to shine upon you' (cf. Ps 118:27, 'The Lord is God, and he has given us light'). The priestly blessing is alluded to in 4Q542 = 4QTQahat a ..., 'And He [God] will shine as a Light upon you and He will make known to you His great Name' (tr. Eisenman-Wise, *Scrolls*, 150). In the OT, the 'shining face' of God is a metaphor for divine favor (Pss 4:7; 31:17; 44:4; 67:2; 80:4, 8, 19; 89:16; 119:35; see M. Noth, *Numbers* [London: SCM, 1968] 59). The priestly blessing is written on two silver plaques or amulets from Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem, dating to the latter half of the seventh century B.C. (A. Yardeni, "Remarks on the Priestly Blessing on Two Ancient Amulets from Jerusalem," *VT* 41 (1991) 176-85; Davies, *AHI* 4:301, 302). See also Isa 60:2. 4 Ezra 7:38-42 contains a lengthy list of twenty-seven things that will no longer exist in the day of judgment (sun, moon, stars, cloud, thunder, lightning, wind, water, air, darkness, evening, morning, summer, spring, heat, winter, frost, cold, hail, rain, dew, noon, night, dawn, shining, brightness, and light), "but only the splendor of the glory of the Most High, by which all shall see what has been determined for them." The italicized natural phenomena center on the theme of light (this list was very likely inspired by Gen 8:22 and Eccl 12:2 as well as by Isa 60:19-20)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, vol. 52C, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1181.]

C. Concluding affirmations, 22:6-7

6 Καὶ εἶπέν μοι, Οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοί, καὶ ὁ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν προφητῶν ἀπέστειλεν τὸν ἄγγελον αὐτοῦ δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει. 7 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ταχύ. μακάριος ὁ τηρῶν τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου.

6 And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true, for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place." 7 "See, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

The literary role of these three somewhat disconnected statements in vv. 6-7 is debated by commentators. Does Καὶ εἶπέν μοι, *And he said to me*, introduce a new section of text material? Some commentators are so persuaded, but most are not.³⁶ In argument against this view is the repeated pattern from chapter four on of first John seeing (Καὶ εἶδον, *and I saw*) to be followed by a secondary unit introduced by John hearing (καὶ ἤκουσα, *I heard*); see 21:1, 3 for an illustration. Inside the unit of 21:9-22:7 this internal literary signaling shifts καὶ ἔδειξέν μοι, *and he showed me* (21:9-10; 22:1) -- still the seeing emphasis -- and to the angel speaking to John as a subunit (cf. 21:15; 22:6) -- still the hearing emphasis.³⁷

³⁶Although many interpreters argue that 22:6-21 constitutes the concluding section of Revelation (Swete, 302; Bousset [1906] 455; Beckwith, 290-91; 771; Caird, 281-82; Kraft, 276; Prigent, 348-49; Hellholm, "Genre," 52; Roloff [ET] 248-49; Vanni, *La struttura letteraria*, 107-15, 298-302; T. Collins, *Apocalypse 22:6-21*, 10-12), the phrase καὶ εἶπέν μοι, 'then he said to me,' does not appear to signal the beginning of a new textual unit (22:6-9 constitutes a transitional section, which concludes 21:9-22:5 and introduces the epilogue in 22:10-20)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, vol. 52C, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1181-1182.]

³⁷One side note of great importance. Modern literary analysis of forms and patterns tend to expect out of ancient literature the sort of clean, dearly defined breaks from one point to another. In none of ancient literature will one find such neatly defined shifts. The ancient mindset -- whatever its language and ethnic orientation -- just didn't think the same way that modern western writers tend to think. Particularly significant is a fundamentally different approach between then and now. Such clean breaks in modern literature serve to give distinction between the previous and subsequent units of idea expression. But the ancient world, and especially the Semitic world including Jewish writers, were far more interested in linking together two separate ideas. Thus tendency of Jewish authors to use the so-called 'kephale' headers where an idea at the end of one unit was repeated somehow in the beginning of the next unit reflects this very different literary approach between the then and the now. Modern literary oriented commentators tend to look for signals of breaks that distinguish two units while analyzing literature written with links intended to connect two units. Unless this difference is clearly understood by the modern commentator -- and the vast majority don't seem to -- some confusion will inevitably

What is happening here is that vv. 6-7 stand as a climax of 21:9-22:7, and also set up the transition into the Conclusio of 22:8-20. This follows a pattern that John has used several times previously.

Structurally the first declaration in v. 6 comes from the angel who had showed John the vision of heaven. But the second and third ones seem to come directly from Christ, even though no narrative introductory statement is given to assert as much.

οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοί, καὶ ὁ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν προφητῶν ἀπέστειλεν τὸν ἄγγελον αὐτοῦ δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει. “These words are trustworthy and true, for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place” (v. 6b). First the angel affirms the reliability of this vision in 21:9-22:5. Previously at the conclusion of units of materials similar or identical statements are made:

19:9b, οἱ λόγοι ἀληθινοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσιν. **These are true words from God.**

21:5, ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοὶ εἰσιν, **because these words are faithful and true.**

These three declarations anticipate the concluding statement in 22:18-19,

Μαρτυρῶ ἐγὼ παντὶ τῷ ἀκούοντι τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· ἐάν τις ἐπιθῇ ἐπ’ αὐτά, καὶ ἐάν τις ἀφέλῃ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ἀφελεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ. **I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.**

When John asserts that his depiction of the vision is πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοί, **reliable and true**, what does he mean?³⁸ Not what most readers of an English translation might think! He is not saying that his depiction of the vision is consistent and coherent. What, instead,

itably be presence in the interpretation.

³⁸“A close parallel occurs toward the end of the fragmentary revelatory discourse of Parmenides *On Nature* where the unnamed goddess who has revealed philosophical truths to Parmenides concludes by expounding the doctrine of being (frag. B8, lines 50–51, ἐν τῷ σοι παύω πιστὸν λόγον ἠδὲ νόημα ἀμφὶς ἀληθείης, ‘Here I conclude for you my reliable account and thought concerning the truth’ [Diels-Kranz, FVS 1:239]).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1182.]

Actually the parallel is not as close as Aune thinks it is, since Parmenides was working off a Greek definition of truth, and John was coming from the Jewish definition as reflected in Jhn. 14:6.

he says is that the words of description reflect the God who is Truth itself and has disclosed this part of Himself and His plan to John through apocalyptic vision. It has an echo of Jesus’ statement at the end of His eschatological discourse in Mark 13:31, ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελεύσονται, οἱ δὲ λόγοι μου οὐ μὴ παρελεύσονται, **Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.** The angel assures John that what he has been showed completely reflects God in revelation to His people.

Second, the angel affirms to John God’s intent to make this vision of heaven available to His people in anticipation of them experiencing it soon: καὶ ὁ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν προφητῶν ἀπέστειλεν τὸν ἄγγελον αὐτοῦ δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει. **And the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent His angel to show to His servants the things necessary to happen soon.** The point here is to affirm that God has been active in sending His angel to reveal (δεῖξαι) to the prophets defined as His servants³⁹ the vision of His plan. The unusual phrase⁴⁰ found only here and in 1 Cor. 14:32⁴¹ in the NT, τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν προφητῶν, highlights what John has repeatedly said about being ‘in the spirit’ when the vision from God came to him: 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10.⁴² He stands in the prophetic tradition

³⁹John’s use of **servants**, δούλοι, in Revelation ranges from being equivalent to Christians (1:1; 2:20; 7:3; 19:2, 5; 22:3) to prophets both OT and early Christian (10:7; 11:18; 22:6).

⁴⁰The phrase also has a relatively close verbal parallel in LXX Num 27:16 (and 16:22), κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης σαρκός, ‘Lord God of the spirits and of all flesh,’ which differs through the addition of a καί, ‘and,’ not found in Hebrew, which reads: יהוה אל הרוחות ואל כל הבשר *YHWH ’elohé hārūhōt lēkol-bāsār*, ‘the Lord God of the spirits of all flesh.’ Num. Rab. 21.15 interprets this phrase to mean that God is acquainted with the spirit of each person and therefore knows the role for which they are particularly suited. Variations of the phrase from Num 16:22 and 27:16 occur only occasionally in subsequent early Jewish and early Christian literature, though always with the emphasis on divine sovereignty. In 2 Macc 3:24, God is called ὁ τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης ἐξουσίας δυνάστης, ‘the ruler over spirits and over every authority,’ using two terms for supernatural or angelic beings. In 1 Enoch 37–71, the so-called Parables of Enoch, composed ca. mid-first century A.D., God is frequently referred to as ‘Lord of spirits’ (e.g., 37:2; 39:12), and similarly, God is called the ‘Father of spirits’ in Heb 12:9.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1182–1183.]

⁴¹**1 Cor. 14:32**, καὶ πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται, **And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.**

⁴²“πνεῦμα, ‘spirit,’ is widely used as an anthropological term for the highest faculty of human beings (1 Cor 7:34; 14:14; 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thess 5:23; a less than satisfactory discussion is found in TDNT 6:434–36). Used in the plural, πνεύματα, ‘spirits,’ refers to the psychic faculty of individual prophets rather than to the Spirit of God, though it is implied that the individual human spirit is the vehicle for the prophetic activity of the Spirit of God. The meaning

of the OT prophets to whom God appeared in visions as the vehicle of revelation. The angelic declaration here anticipates the direct words of Christ to John in 22:16a, Ἐγὼ Ἰησοῦς ἐπεμψα τὸν ἄγγελόν μου μαρτυρῆσαι ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. *It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches.*

The phrase ἐν τάχει repeats 1:1 (cf. 1:19; 4:1) and plays off Dan. 2:29 LXX, “where Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that God alone can reveal the meaning of his dream: ὁ ἀνακαλύπτων μυστήρια ἐδήλωσέ σοι ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι, ‘The one who reveals mysteries has made known to you what must happen’ (cf. Theod Dan 2:29).”⁴³

καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ταχύ. *And behold I come quickly* (v. 7a). The header linking of this statement to the preceding one via τάχει / ταχύ stands behind this sudden shift from the angel’s words to Jesus’ words. Further it echoes the beginning statement in 1:7, Ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν, καὶ ὄψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς ὀφθαλμὸς καὶ οἴτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν, καὶ κόψονται ἐπ’ αὐτὸν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς. *Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. But such declarations also surface in 2:16; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20. Interestingly in the background of this declaration -- found only in Revelation inside the NT -- are magical rituals etc. in the pagan world urging deities to take quick action.*⁴⁴ Here Jesus promises John and his readers that His coming will take place within a reasonably short period.

μακάριος ὁ τηρῶν τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου. *Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book* (v. 7b). This is the sixth beatitude of seven contained inside Revelation: 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14. Note the different blessing

is, therefore, the same as in 1 Cor 14:32, where Paul claims that ‘the spirits of prophets [πνεύματα προφητῶν] are subject to prophets’.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1182.]

⁴³David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1184.

⁴⁴“The ritual impatience of magicians is reflected in many ancient magical texts. Many spells end with various permutations of the formula ἤδη ἤδη, ταχὺ ταχύ, ‘now, now! quick quick!’ (PGM III.123–24; IV.1245, 1593, 1924, 2037, 2098). This impatience can also accompany invocations to a god or daimon to ‘come quickly’ (PGM I.89–90; IV.236–37; VI.14; VII.248–49, 329ff.), by which is meant a ritual theophany whereby the attending divinity places himself or herself at the service of the practitioner for a variety of tasks. Yet in Revelation it is not John who impatiently commands Jesus to come; it is the exalted Jesus who uses formulas typical of magical revelation to announce his own coming, thereby reducing John to a passive role in both the reception of revelation and in responding affirmatively to the eschatological promise of Jesus.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1184–1185.]

promised by the apocryphal Christ in the fictitious [Apocalypse of Paul](#) (51).⁴⁵

Amen, Amen, I tell you, Paul, that whoever will take care of this apocalypse, and will write it and set it down as a testimony for the generations to come, to him I shall not show the underworld with its bitter weeping, until the second generation of his seed. And whoever reads with faith, I shall bless him and his house. Whoever scoffs at the words of this apocalypse, I will punish him.

The Gnostic orientation of this late second century document comes at divine promises connected to written documents differently than John in Revelation.

What is not entirely clear is the one who speaks this beatitude in 22:7b. Evidently it comes from the same source, the voice of Jesus, as does the promise that comes before it. The thrust of the blessing promised in the beatitude is upon the one who obeys the teachings of Revelation which is labeled τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου, *the words of the prophecy of this scroll*. This promise is closer to the first beatitude in 1:3 than the others in its thrust:

Μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα, ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς. *Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near.*

In this sixth beatitude the emphasis shifts somewhat to the written words since the beatitude is coming toward the end of the document. Quite appropriately then as those listening to the document being read in the house church gatherings would be reminded to focus on doing what God has commanded in its contents. Particularly appropriate is this blessing coming at the end of a marvelous vision of the heavenly provision of God for His people.

Thus John brings to a wonderful ending his vision of heaven in 21:9–22:7. Plus this beatitude especially helps set up a transition to the next unit in vv. 8–20 much the same way as the first one in 1:3 helped set up 1:4–8, 9–20.

2. What does the text mean to us today?

What a wonderful set of images focused on God’s

⁴⁵David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 1185.

One of the real challenges of this document is the incomplete nature of most of the existing manuscripts. The Coptic language contains the most complete text but, at the same time, a wide variety of differing versions of chapters 44 to the end. The German publication by Hennecke-Schneemelcher contains the most complete listing of these various endings, and here Aune quotes from one of them.

eternal provision for His people. It hard to see how anyone reflecting on this vision in 21:9-22:7 could not be inspired to faithful commitment and obedience to our God.

The third and fourth subunits of 21:22-27 and 22:1-5 repeat from different angles this indescribable provision of God in heaven. The ancient Greek fascination with a fantasy utopian city where life would be better turns sour and bitter in comparison with John's depiction of the abundant provisions in heaven. The Jewish apocalyptic projections all retain much of the harshness and rigidity of first century Judaism with its central emphasis on Torah obedience. This focused in exclusion of all Jews even but a few who supposedly qualified. Even the peoples of the nations that might be included came only in a second class status inferior to that of the accepted Jews.

But John's picture focuses upon the just treatment of people from all nations who come to Him through Christ. Their national heritage, their ethnicity, their native language -- all of these human separators vanish into irrelevancy around shared commitment to the Lamb of God. What a marvelous message for our lost world today.