

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### Revelation: God's Revelation To His Servants Today On Events About To Occur Part IV: "The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter": Events After The Rapture Of The Church

#### G. The Eternal State, Revelation 21:1-22:5

#### 2. God's Reward For Handling Sin By His Grace Versus Human Works (Revelation 21:9-22:5)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We at Nepaug Bible Church have long taught that to be saved from sin and hell and have eternal life, one must trust alone in Christ alone to be justified by God in His unmerited favor, His grace, Romans 3:19-28; Ephesians 2:8-9. This way of salvation differs from all the other faiths that make works at least a part of the means of getting saved.

However, the reputedly conservative evangelical leader, Dr. John MacArthur, has said, "(T)he gospel is simply this: you are calling on someone to turn from their sin and follow Jesus Christ!" (a transcription of a taped question and answer session given on 9/25/90 at the Calvary Baptist Church in Brewer, Maine, Reverend Larry Pawson, Pastor as cited in [middletownbiblechurch.org/salvatio/lordshjm.htm](http://middletownbiblechurch.org/salvatio/lordshjm.htm)) To clarify, in Assurance of Victory -- 1 John 5, p. 12, Dr. MacArthur wrote: "You need to believe that Jesus is God and that He died for your sins, committing your whole life to Him in sacrifice and serving Him as Lord." In his book, Hard to Believe, p. 93, were these words: "Salvation . . . comes from a life lived in obedience . . . The life we live . . . determines our eternal destiny." (Ibid.)

[An editor reportedly inserted these words in the Hard to Believe book, and they have since been removed in later editions. Yet, the **influence** of Dr. MacArthur's works-salvation words even on this editor has been undeniable! (Ibid.)] So, with no reference to trusting in Christ to be saved, Dr. John MacArthur has taught salvation by works.

We thus need to be encouraged to keep asserting that salvation is by "grace" through faith alone in Christ.

Need: *So we ask, "What support does God offer for holding to salvation by 'grace' through faith alone in Christ?"*

- I. **Starting at Revelation 21:9 to ENCOURAGE His people, God CONTRASTED His judgment of the polluted "whore," Babylon the Great, with His future reward for His chaste "bride" of believing saints:**
  - A. As an angel who administered a bowl judgment presented the "whore" of Babylon the Great and her judgment back in Revelation 17:1, an angel who administered a bowl judgment also here in Revelation 21:9-22:5 presents the chaste "bride" of God's saved people down through the ages and their reward, Revelation 21:9ff.
  - B. Thus, Revelation 21:9-22:5 *contrasts* the **blessed reward** of the "**bride**," *God's sanctified people of human history*, with the **judgment** of the *spiritually polluted "whore" of false religion* back in Revelation 17-18.
- II. **This CONTRAST is VAST, seen in comparing Revelation 17:1-18 with Revelation 21:9-22:5 (as follows):**
  - A. Opposite the "whore's" earthly honor gained in compromising herself with a godless world for earthly honor (Rev. 17:2-4), God's "bride" of godly saints of the ages will reflect His holy glory, Revelation 21:10-11a.
  - B. Opposite the "whore's" temporal, earthly jewels gained in wicked compromise with the Zechariah 5:5-11 "ephah" of Satan's ungodly world commercial system (Rev. 17:4), God's "bride" of saints have an eternal home of massive, jeweled construction, the eternal city of the New Jerusalem, Revelation 21:11b-21:
    1. The New Jerusalem "bride" of God's saints has the external appearance of a precious stone, clear as crystal, (Rev. 21:11b), with twelve gates named after Israel's tribes, each gate being a single, colossal pearl (Rev. 21:12-13, 21a) and twelve foundations named after Christ's twelve apostles (Rev. 21:14). The foundations are decorated with 12 different jewels (Rev. 21:19-20), the city lies around 1,500 miles square by 1,500 miles high (Rev. 21:16; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Rev. 21:16) and the city's buildings and street are pure, highly reflective gold (Rev. 21:18b, 21b), all of it being everlasting, Rev. 22:5b.
    2. In vast contrast, the jewels the "whore" wear that are gained by compromise with Satan's world commercial system pale in value and beauty to the "bride's" eternal adornment, Rev. 17:4; Zech. 5:5-11.
  - C. Opposite the "whore's" futile glory won by compromising with godless kings, merchants and ideologies (Rev. 17:2-4, 12), God's glory adorning His saints, the "bride," attracts holy earthly kings to it, Rev. 21:22-24.
  - D. Opposite the destruction of the "whore" by evil kings (Rev. 17:2, 14a, 16), God protects His "bride" of saints so that the New Jerusalem's city gates are never shut for needed defense or battle with foes, Rev. 21:25-26.
  - E. Opposite the evil pollution of the "whore" by the ungodly kings who are in league with her (Rev. 17:12-14), holy kings do not contaminate the "bride" of God, Revelation 21:27.
  - F. Opposite the devastating end of the "whore" in judgment (Rev. 17:16-17), the "bride" is nurtured with eternal life and healing in the New Jerusalem with its "tree of life," Revelation 22:1-3 with Genesis 3:22-24.

G. Opposite the "whore's" loss of ruling influence at the hands of the antichrist (Revelation 17:16-17, 18), the "bride" eternally rules with the Lord, having His name on the foreheads of these godly saints (Revelation 22:3c-5) versus the vain, wicked antichrist's name like the unsaved did back in Revelation 13:16-17.

**III. The REASON for this HUGE CONTRAST in the DESTINY of these entities is the "whore's" QUEST for SALVATION by WORKS versus the "bride's" QUEST for SALVATION by GRACE THROUGH FAITH:**

- A. The Revelation 21:9-22:5 description of the "bride's" blessings *fulfills multiple Old Testament prophecies*:
1. Isaiah 60:1-2 predicted the glory of God illuminating His people as fulfilled in Revelation 21:10-11.
  2. Isaiah 54:11-12 foretold God's adorning Jerusalem's foundation with colored gems as in Rev. 21:19-20.
  3. Isaiah 60:19-20 predicted God alone would illumine Jerusalem and Isaiah 60:3, 5 predicted the Gentiles would come to Jerusalem's glory, all of which will be fulfilled in Revelation 21:11, 23-24.
  4. Isaiah 60:10-11 foretold how the city's gates would always be opened as fulfilled in Revelation 21:25.
  5. Isaiah 52:1 predicted that no more would evil Gentiles enter Jerusalem to pollute it with sin, a prediction that is fulfilled in Revelation 21:26-27.
  6. Ezekiel 47:12 told of trees that would nurture and heal people in Jerusalem in the Messianic Kingdom, what is fulfilled in a fuller sense in Revelation 22:2 with the use of the tree of life in the New Jerusalem.
  7. Daniel 7:18 predicted the saints of God would rule forever and ever, what is fulfilled in Revelation 22:5c.
- B. Yet, all of these Old Testament prophesied blessings, according to their respective contexts, are **based** on the godly finding *salvation* and *forgiveness from SIN* through **God's grace through faith** as *opposed to works*:
1. The prophecies behind Isaiah 60:1-2, 10-11 and 19-20 occur due to the Isaiah 59:1-21 context where Israel's sins are graciously blotted out and forgiven by the Lord so He can finally bountifully bless her.
  2. The Ezekiel 40-48 context that predicts the Kingdom, and, by application, what often occurs in the Eternal State, follows the context of Israel's gracious forgiveness and cleansing by God in Ezekiel 39:25-29.
  3. The Isaiah 52:1 promise that the ungodly will no more pollute Jerusalem with the Isaiah 51:1-23 promises are preceded by the Isaiah 50:1-11 context where the godly trust God versus the self-help of the ungodly.
  4. The Isaiah 54:11-12 prediction of the adorning of Jerusalem's foundations with precious gems follows the Isaiah 54:8-10 prediction of God's gracious forgiveness that would be signaled by His thus adorning her.
  5. The Daniel 7:18 reference to the saints' everlasting rule of the world can occur only as Daniel 9:24-26 shows how the atonement of Messiah [in His first advent] occurs to make sinners saints who can thus rule!
- C. Then, Revelation 21:27b in view of Revelation 20:11-15 and Romans 3:19-28 explains how those in the New Jerusalem will have been put in the Lamb's book of life for being justified by faith in Christ apart from works:
1. Revelation 20:11-15 with Romans 3:19-20 teaches the unsaved dead are judged by their works, but none of them are saved as they are not written in the Lamb's book of life because their works cannot save them!
  2. Conversely, those in the New Jerusalem "bride" are there upon being written in the book of life (Rev. 21:27), being recorded there not by their works, but by faith alone in Christ alone! (Romans 3:21-28)

***Lesson:*** *The contrast between the destinies of the "whore," Babylon the Great, and God's chaste "bride" of the New Jerusalem saints of the ages is due to the contrast in the means by which each group attempted to handle its sin: the "whore" vainly tried works and the "bride" successfully relied on God's grace through faith in Christ!*

***Application:*** *(1) To handle our sin, may we not rely on human works, but on God's unmerited favor, His grace, to believe on Christ for eternal life, John 3:16, 36. (2) For encouragement to continue to rely on God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone for salvation, may we recall the great contrast between the Revelation 17-18 destiny of the "whore" and the Revelation 21:9-22:5 destiny of the "bride," and keep on relying on God's grace!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . .)

In our sermon introduction, we cited Dr. John MacArthur, a reputedly conservative evangelical leader as claiming that salvation is by works, and one asks how such a Bible teacher could come to such a view.

The answer is his **theology**: Dr. MacArthur holds to **Calvinism**, that God gives men "saving faith" so they even can believe in Christ. (Ibid., [middletownbiblechurch.org/salvatio/lordshju.htm](http://middletownbiblechurch.org/salvatio/lordshju.htm) in citing MacArthur's work, **EPHESIANS**, p. 249) This view has led to Dr. John MacArthur's claiming the Gospel is "calling on someone to turn from their sin and follow Jesus Christ" versus trusting in Christ to be saved! Why? Calvinists hold God regenerates a person so he will believe in the first place, which gives them no reason to call men to trust in Christ! Calvinism thus yields a defective gospel, so **we must avoid Calvinism!**

**May we trust in Christ to be saved and be encouraged by Revelation 21:9-22:5 to HOLD to this gospel!**